

Sanilac County Drug Task Force

2024 YEAR END REPORT



Board Members

Cole Wood - Marlette Township Resident

William Gray - Lexington Township Resident

Roger Ballard - Sanilac County Board of Commissioners

Brett Lester - Sandusky Police Chief

Paul Rich - Sanilac County Sheriff

Brenda Sanford - Sanilac County Prosecutor (Chairperson)

** Prevention – Enforcement – Education **

ENFORCEMENT UNIT

JAMES JOHNSON – DIRECTOR

TINA WILLIS – ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

MATT ARMSTRONG – SERGEANT

JORDAN KATT– DEPUTY

(Promoted 4/21/24)

JOSHUA JAMES- K9 DEPUTY

(Resigned 5/3/24)

MEGAN LODING – DEPUTY

(Promoted 12/29/24)

MICHAEL RICH –DEPUTY

(Started 4/21/24)

JENNIFER DEIOTTE – K9 DEPUTY

(Started 9/8/24)

EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS

T.E.A.M. OFFICERS

Officer BRANDON FORD – Brown City Schools

**Deputy MATT GEZEQUEL – Carsonville - Port Sanilac Schools and
Croswell - Lexington Schools**

Chief FRED AMEEL – Deckerville Schools

Officer JAMES SANCHEZ – Marlette Schools

Chief ROB MAJOR – Peck Schools

Officer MATT GEZEQUEL - Sandusky Schools

SCHOOL PREVENTION SERVICES

SANILAC COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

CRYSTAL BELL, LBSW - SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION EDUCATOR

ENFORCEMENT



The *Enforcement* portion of the Drug Task Force (DTF) Millage provides funding to support the investigation and enforcement of drug-related crimes throughout Sanilac County. This includes:

- **Personnel Support:** Funding covers four full-time investigators dedicated to drug enforcement efforts. These positions currently include a Lieutenant, Sergeant, three Deputies assigned to investigations, and one Deputy/K9 Handler. All personnel are provided by the Sanilac County Sheriff's Office.
- **K9 Enforcement:** A K9 unit is specifically designated for drug enforcement and interdiction. K9 Phoenix, who returned to the Task Force in September 2024, has proven to be a valuable asset. Both his initial acquisition and ongoing care are fully funded by the DTF millage.
- **Equipment and Resources:** The millage also funds essential investigative tools, equipment, and resources utilized by all law enforcement agencies in Sanilac County.

The *Enforcement Unit* is tasked with receiving tips, conducting investigations, executing search warrants, preparing cases, and apprehending individuals involved in the use, manufacture, or distribution of illegal drugs. A primary focus remains on controlled substances, including the misuse of prescription medications.

Methamphetamine continues to be the most impactful drug affecting Sanilac County, mirroring state and national trends. The Enforcement Unit employs a variety of proactive tactics to combat the presence of methamphetamine and other illicit substances, including interdiction efforts using the K9 unit.

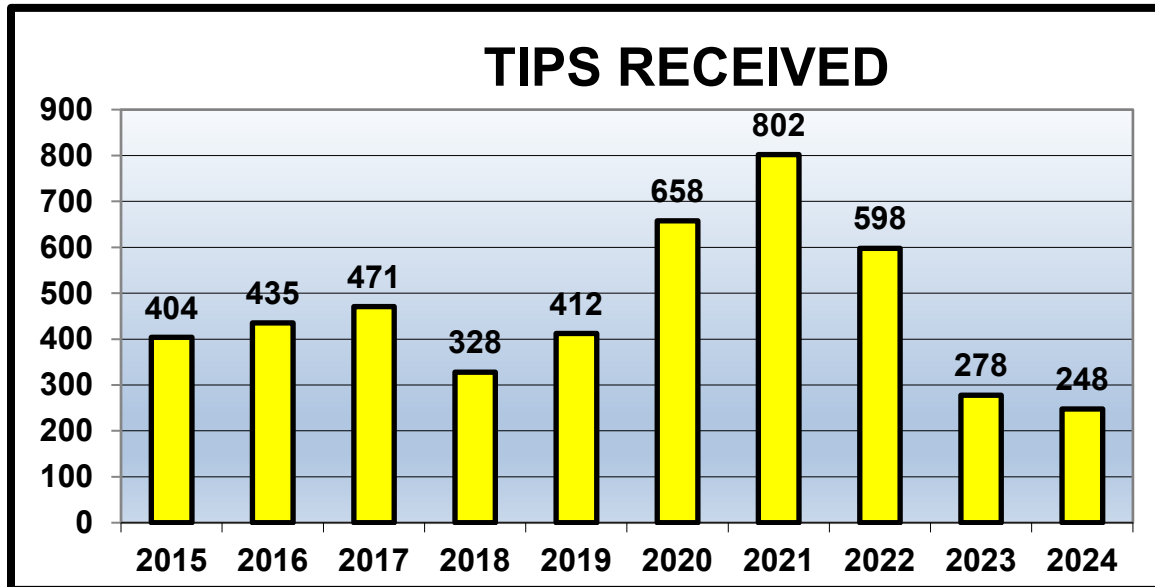
Collaboration plays a critical role in the success of the unit. The Drug Task Force works closely with local police departments, federal agencies, and specialized units across Michigan and beyond. This interagency cooperation enhances the effectiveness of enforcement strategies and ensures a unified approach to tackling drug-related crime. We are grateful for the continued partnership and support of our local and statewide law enforcement community.

ENFORCEMENT

2024 DETAILS:

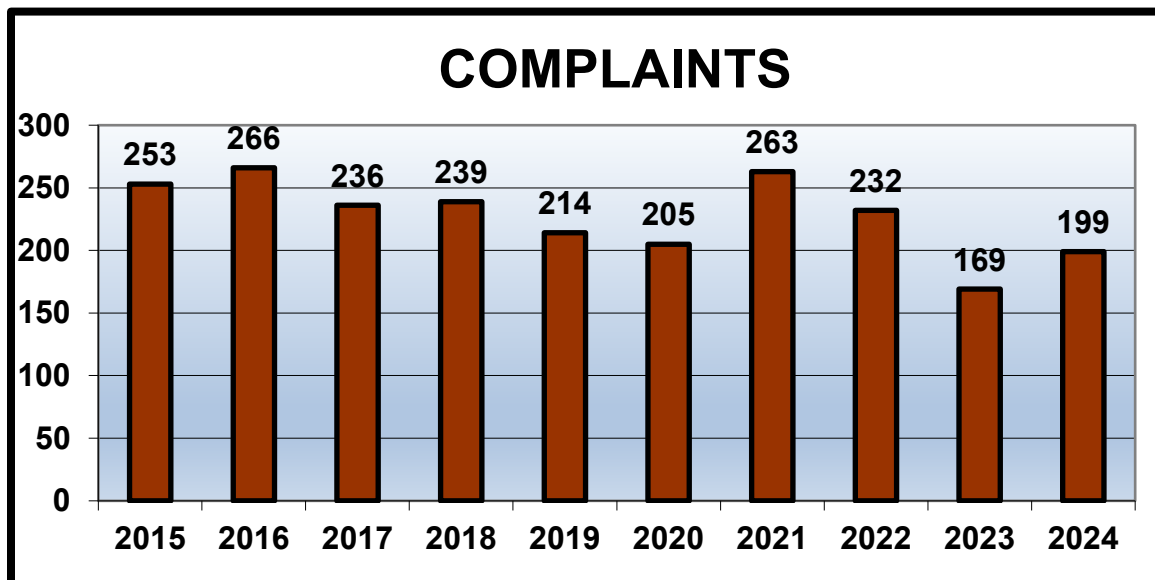
TIPS RECEIVED:

248 Tips received. *Tips included information from phone calls and emails, information from local agencies and anonymous tips.*



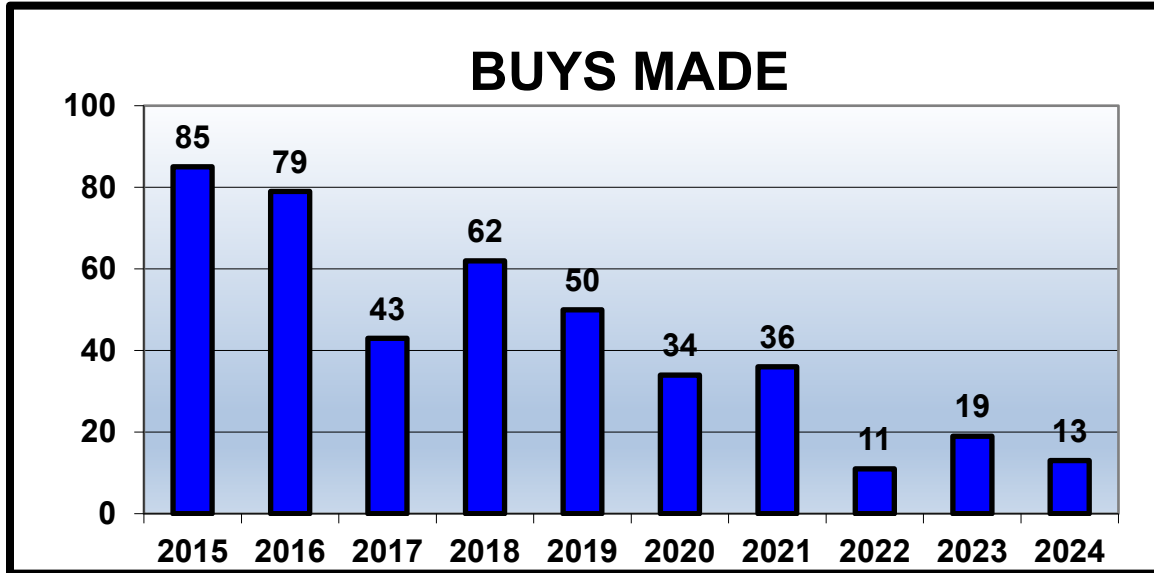
COMPLAINT - INCIDENT / INVESTIGATIONS:

199 Complaints investigated – *The amount of time in each investigation varies widely.*



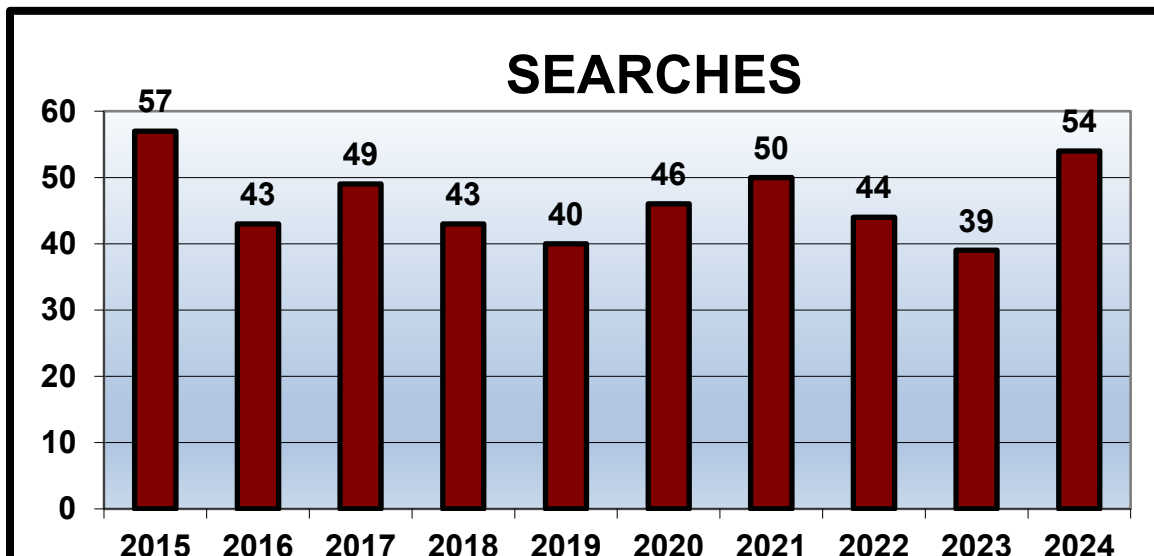
UNDERCOVER BUYS MADE:

13 Undercover Buys. *These buys were conducted by undercover officers or through the use of confidential informants.*



SEARCH WARRANTS & CONSENT SEARCHES:

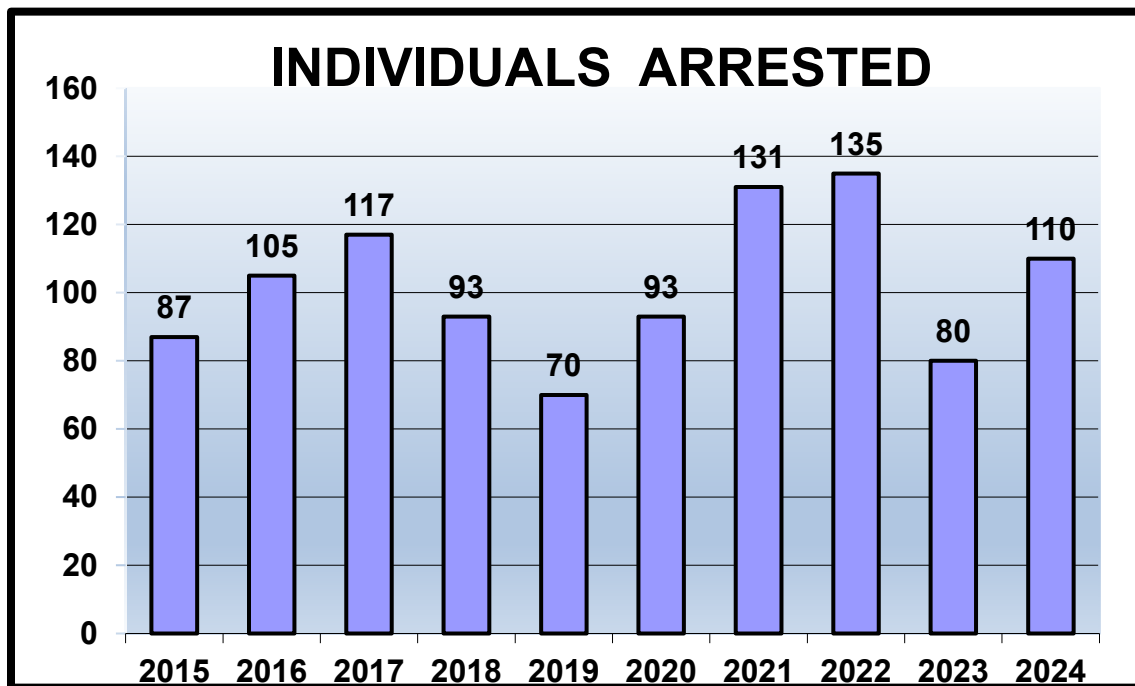
54 Searches conducted. *These searches include residences and vehicles, either through the use of a search warrant or through consent. Further searches may be conducted on specific evidence located during the search of a residence, vehicle or person. The recovery of stolen property, weapons, drugs, drug proceeds and paraphernalia and equipment related to illegal activities is the basis of DTF executed searches.*



ARRESTS:

110 Individuals arrested. *The DTF was involved in the direct / indirect arrests of these individuals with **194** criminal charges in Sanilac County, **99** being misdemeanor and **95** being felony. Additional charges on some of these individuals were sought by surrounding entities in Huron, Lapeer and St. Clair Counties.*

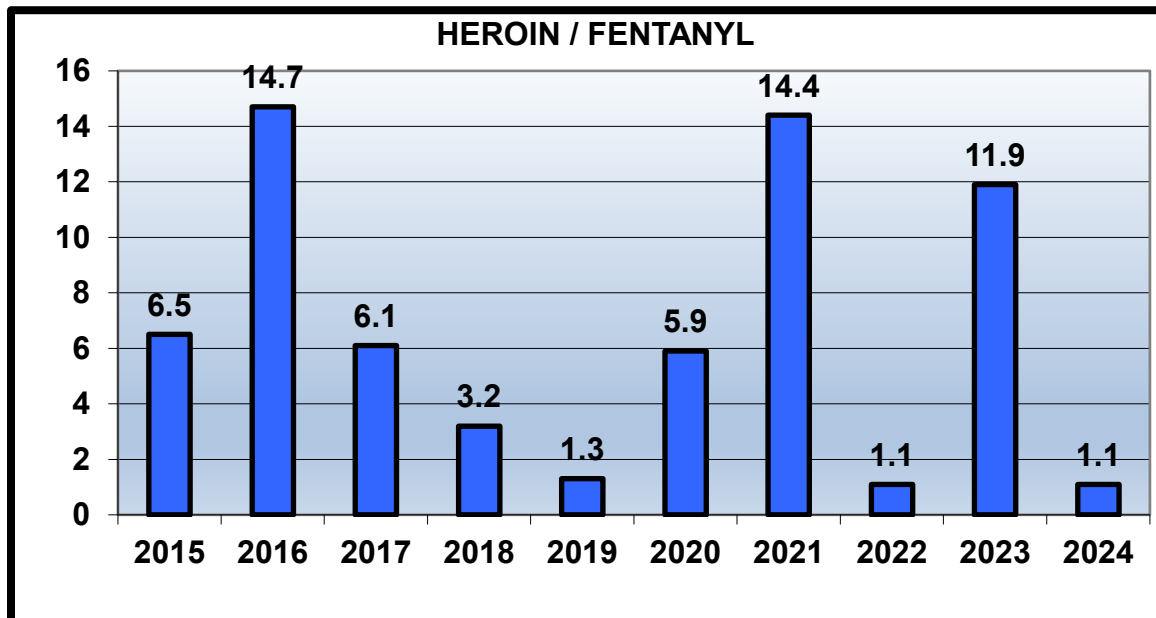
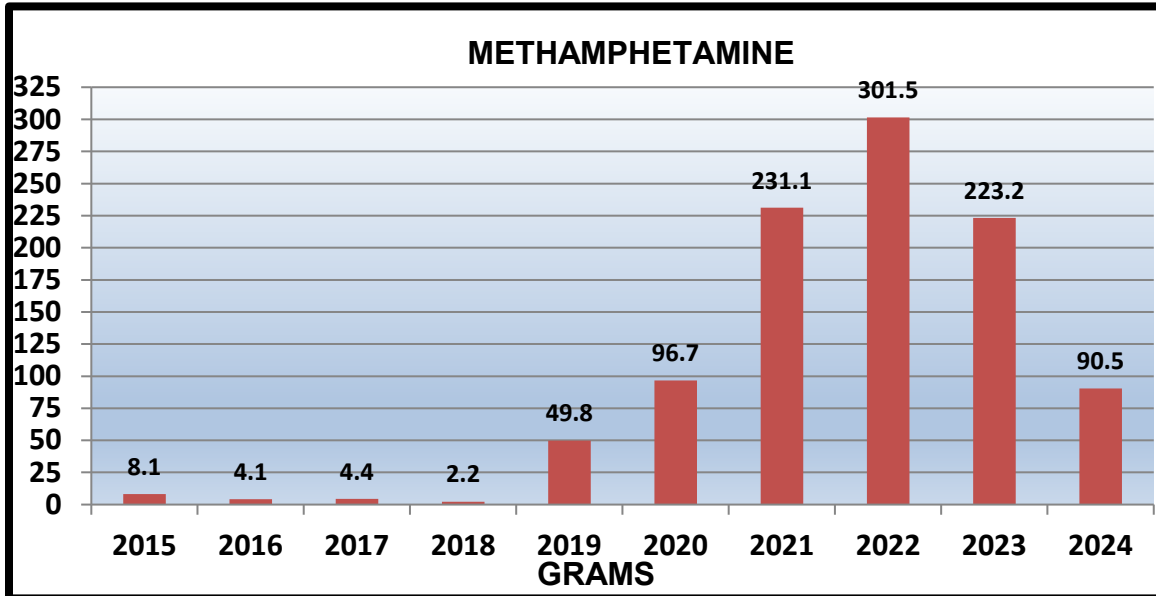
The Drug Task Force continues to provide many hours of investigative and surveillance assistance toward the apprehension of those involved in criminal activity to all local law enforcement agencies.



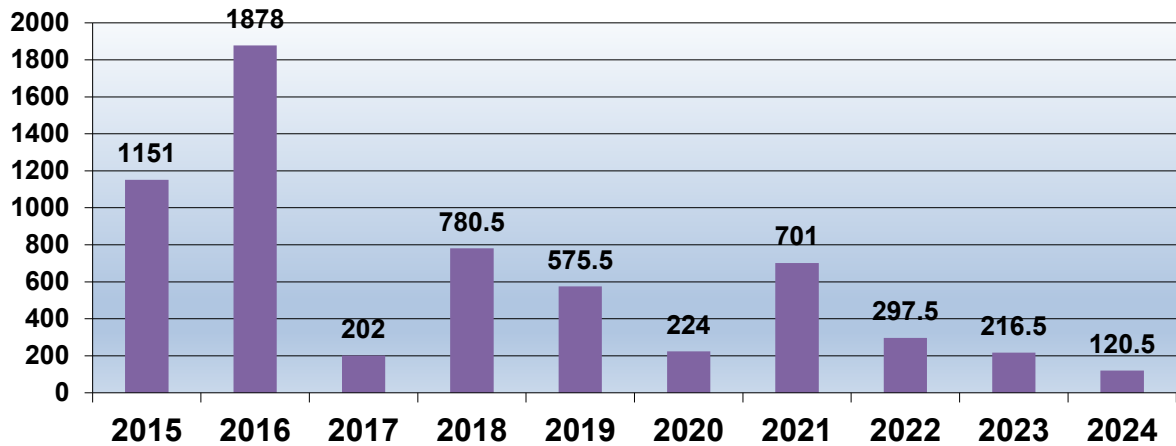
CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE SEIZURES:

Although the number of complaints handled was up from the previous year, the total weight of drug seizures overall was down for 2024 compared to 2023. The amount of Methamphetamine seized was also down from the previous year but Methamphetamine continues to be the most prevalent drug in Sanilac County.

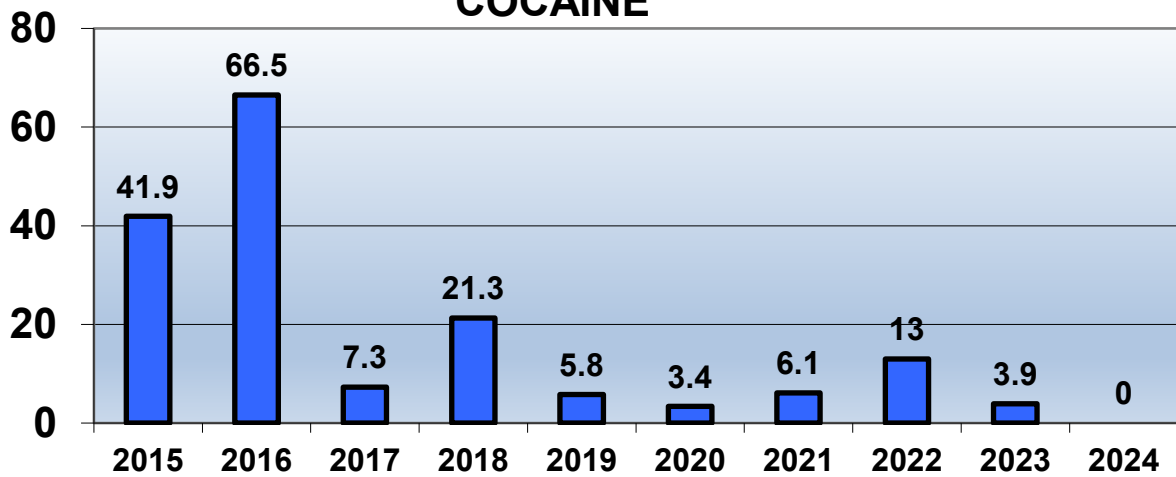
The reported drug seizures for 2024 are as follows:



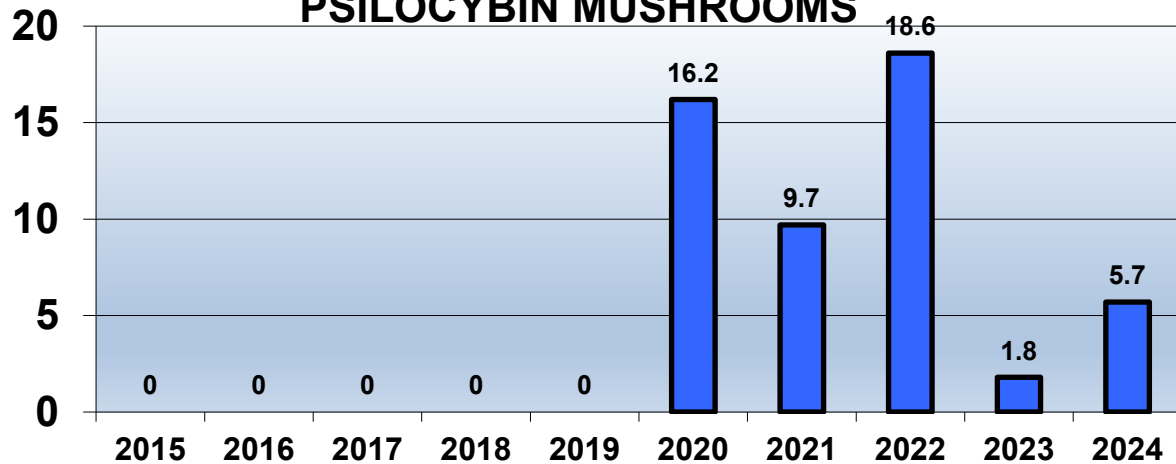
PRESCRIPTION MEDS

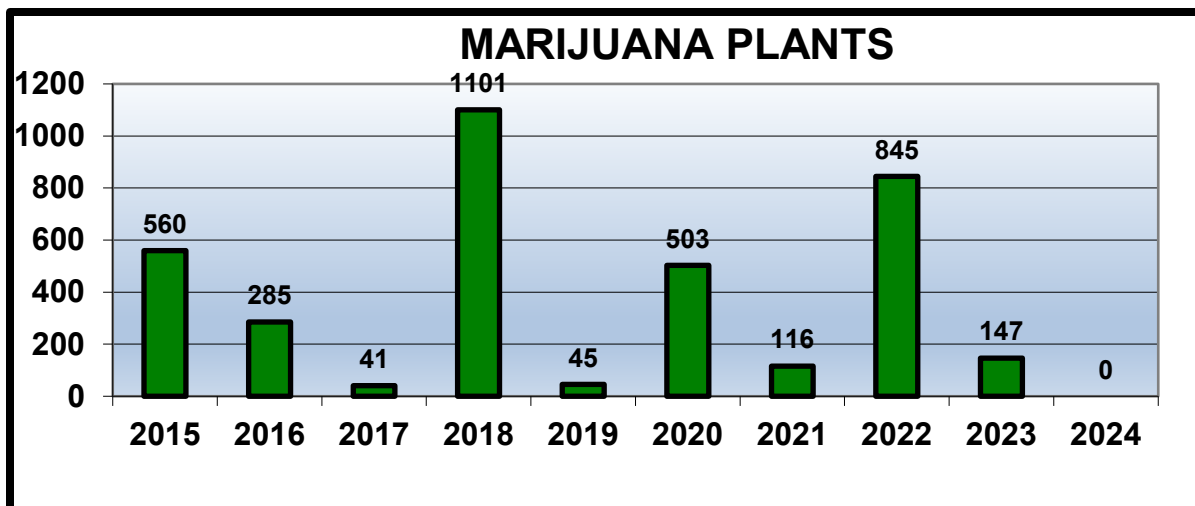
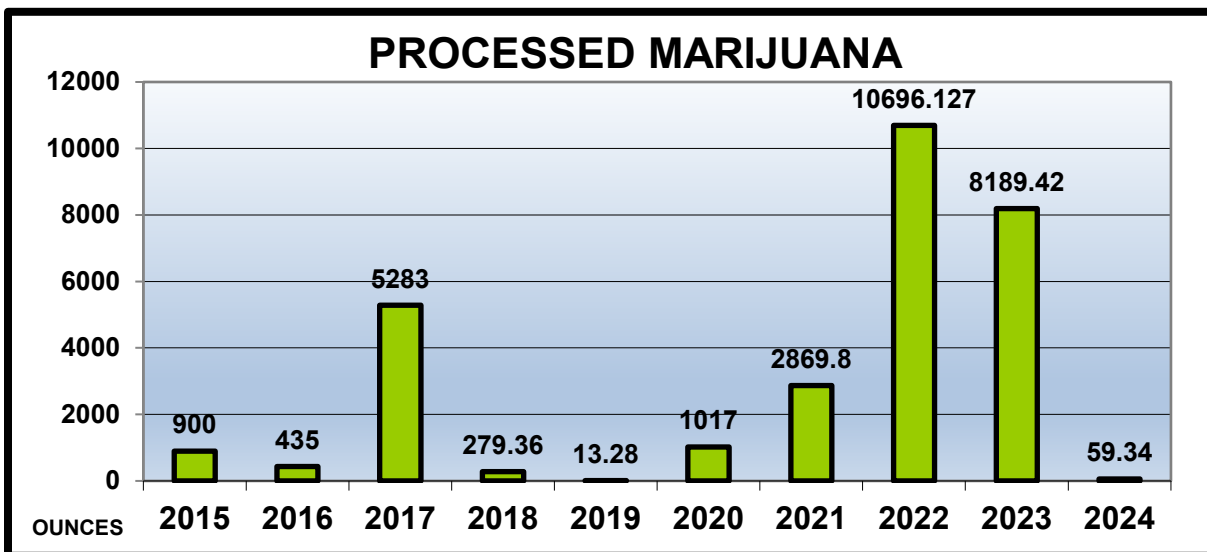
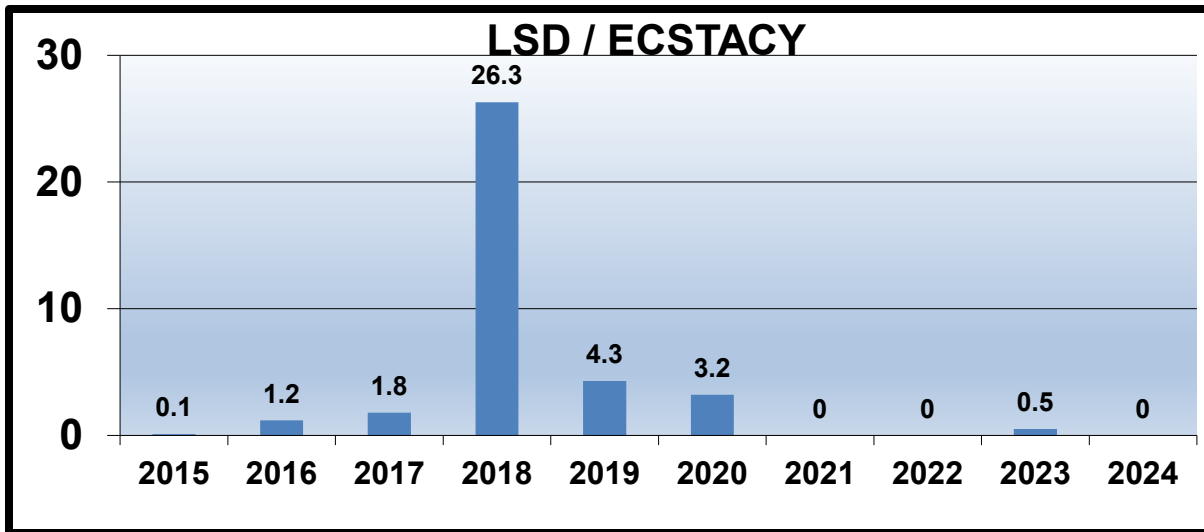


COCAINE



PSILOCYBIN MUSHROOMS







EDUCATION



T.E.A.M. Program – Teaching, Educating, and Mentoring

The millage provides essential funding for the **T.E.A.M. Program** in all seven school districts in Sanilac County. This program is taught by uniformed officers from local law enforcement agencies and is designed to deliver segmented, age-appropriate instruction for students in grades K-12.

T.E.A.M. covers a variety of timely and relevant topics including:

- Drug and alcohol prevention
- Vaping awareness
- Bullying prevention
- Sexting education
- Cell phone and internet safety
- Social responsibility and decision-making

One of the strengths of the T.E.A.M. model is its flexibility—it allows officers to tailor their presentations to address specific and current concerns within each individual school district.

2024 T.E.A.M. Instructors included:

- Matt Gezequel – Sandusky PD / Sanilac County Sheriff's Office
- Brandon Ford – Brown City PD
- James Sanchez – Marlette PD
- Fred Ameel – Deckerville PD
- Rob Major – Peck PD

Several additional officers have also participated in prior years. In 2024, T.E.A.M. instruction reached students in various grade levels across all seven districts.

A dedicated line item in the DTF Millage budget supports the T.E.A.M. Program. Participating agencies receive reimbursement based on each district's student population, helping cover instructional costs. All materials and training for the program are funded by the millage.

EDUCATION

Training for Emergency Services & Community Partners

The millage also supports ongoing **training initiatives** for law enforcement, fire departments, EMS personnel, and other key community stakeholders. In 2024, the Drug Task Force facilitated and participated in several training opportunities aimed at increasing awareness of current drug trends and best practices for response.

Training sessions were provided to:

- Local police departments
- Fire departments
- EMS providers
- Area hospitals
- Department of Human Services staff
- School administrators and principals

This multi-disciplinary training helps build a cohesive understanding of how to identify, report, and respond to drug-related issues in Sanilac County.

Community Engagement & Awareness Events

DTF personnel remain committed to public education and outreach. In 2024, the Task Force participated in a variety of **community events** to increase awareness and foster positive relationships, including:

- Booths at the **Sanilac County Youth & 4H Fair**
- Presentations at **Career Day** events
- Participation in various **Halloween trail events**
- Attendance at **Township, City, and Village meetings** to provide updates to governing bodies and citizens

The Task Force also proudly sponsored and assisted with the **33rd Annual Drug Task Force Junior High Track Meet**, a longstanding tradition promoting youth engagement and positive lifestyle choices.



PREVENTION



School-Based Services – Health Department Partnership

The DTF Millage funds a full-time Substance Use Prevention Educator through the Sanilac County Health Department. **Crystal Bell, LBSW**, provides on-site confidential support for middle and high school students in all seven school districts.

Services are voluntary, free, and extend into the summer months. Each school tailors the implementation based on local policy.

2024 Program Highlights:

- **653 total student service units** delivered (10% increase over FY 2023)
- Crystal Bell continues to receive high praise from school administrators

SCHOOL ANNUAL UNIT REPORT-FY 2024

Quarterly Units	Jan.-March	April-June	July-Sept.	Oct.-Dec.
Brown City High School	31	32	6	24
Carsonville- Port Sanilac HS	26	14	2	17
Croswell-Lexington HS	21	36	7	36
Deckerville High School	20	35	7	30
Marlette High School	44	29	9	36
Peck High School	10	15	5	33
Sandusky High School	46	36	8	38
Quarterly Units Total	198	197	44	214
Combined Total	198	395	439	653



Prescription Drug Disposal – Drop Box Program

In 2024, DTF and local police collected **618 pounds** of unused medications through permanent drop boxes and DEA Take Back Day events.

Drop Box Totals by Location:

- Sanilac County Sheriff's Office/DTF – 310 lbs
- Croswell PD – 152 lbs
- Marlette PD – 69 lbs
- Deckerville PD – 41 lbs
- Lexington PD – 42 lbs
- Brown City PD – 3 lbs

All pills collected are safely incinerated by the DEA.

Additional Efforts:

- Free home pick-up of unused meds
- Ongoing efforts to expand drop box access

2024 FINANCE SUMMARY

2024 YEAR END FORFEITURE FUND BALANCE:

\$108,044.78

The starting Forfeiture Fund balance for January 2024 was \$93,554.37.
The generated funds or proceeds in 2024 was \$14,490.41.

2024 YEAR END BALANCE:

\$ 1,039,409.68

A portion of these funds has been strategically allocated to support the long-term sustainability of the K9 Program, including the K9 Deputy position and associated operational costs. When K9 Phoenix was acquired in 2021, the available carryover balance was earmarked to support the program throughout the K9's working life.

Rather than being depleted as expected, the balance has grown modestly due to staffing shortages within the Drug Task Force (DTF), a challenge currently being faced by many law enforcement agencies across the county, state, and nation. This has temporarily reduced operational expenses.

We anticipate DTF will be fully staffed by mid-2025, at which point program expenses will normalize and the carryover balance will gradually decrease as those funds are utilized. For 2025, \$86,346.60 from the current balance has already been applied to support the K9 program budget.

This approach reflects our commitment to careful, forward-looking financial stewardship and ensuring essential public safety programs remain supported without requiring additional tax burdens.

Thank You to Our Community Partners

The Sanilac County Drug Task Force extends its sincere thanks to our partner agencies, school districts, community leaders, and citizens who support our enforcement, education, and prevention efforts. Together, we continue to make Sanilac County a safer and healthier place to live.



MILLAGE FUNDED

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