



# HUGO

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | APRIL 2025



## ECRC ADDS CRISIS TELECOMMUNICATOR

Washington County's Emergency Communications Response Center (ECRC) is set to launch a new program to improve responses to people in crisis. Starting soon, a clinical social worker will work alongside telecommunicators, providing a crucial mental health professional as an initial responder to many mental health-related calls. The goal of this innovative program is to ensure people in crisis are directly connected to a qualified mental health expert as soon as they reach out for help. This initial contact potentially will help reduce the need to involve law enforcement or other emergency services, thus promoting more appropriate responses to those in need.

In addition, the program seeks to foster better coordination between the Sheriff's Office and Community Services. It aims to streamline referrals to specialized teams like the Crisis Response Unit (CRU) and the Coordinated Response Team (CRT). Established in 2020, CRT pairs social workers with detectives to provide follow-up outreach to people who have had a crisis. This team works to connect people with community-based resources and services, aiming to reduce future crisis calls and prevent recurring issues.

The new initiative marks another significant step toward a more integrated approach to mental health crisis management, prioritizing direct access to mental health professionals and improving long-term support for residents in Washington County.

NUMBER OF  
INCIDENTS

412

TRAFFIC  
STOPS

243

CITATIONS

92



# WC25014354

## RUNAWAY

14XXX FOXHILL AVENUE N

At 9:08am on March 17, deputies went to a residence where parents were reporting their teen missing. The teen had left the house, without a cell phone or backpack, while the parents were getting ready for work. The parents told deputies about recent arguments regarding the teen's school attendance and ongoing behavioral issues for which the teen was receiving treatment. That morning's discussions apparently were a boiling point, and the teen had left the house, reportedly walking across Hwy 61 toward a city wellhouse. Deputies checked that area first with no initial results. Shortly thereafter, a deputy searched again and saw a teen matching the description heading back toward the wellhouse. The deputy made contact and was able to bring the teen home, where deputies and the family had a conversation. They decided the teen would go to school for the rest of the day and that night they would meet with a Washington County Crisis Response Unit mental health professional with whom they've been working, for additional resources and strategy.

## MESSAGE FROM THE SHERIFF

Effective communication is a cornerstone of quality public safety, and the Washington County Sheriff's Office is dedicated to continually improving in this area. Recent advancements, including the integration of a clinical social worker in the ECRC and a new computer aided dispatch interface, are enhancing our ability to serve the community efficiently.

Highlighted on the front page of this newsletter, the introduction of an embedded clinical social worker in the Emergency Communication Response Center strengthens the ability of the Sheriff's Office and Community Services to provide comprehensive support in times of crisis.

In addition, a new computer interface has been launched that enables direct communication between the WCSO Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and M Health Fairview's CAD. This important technology streamlines the dispatch process by allowing ECRC telecommunicators to transmit emergency medical service incidents directly between the two CAD systems. Previously, staff had to make manual calls to dispatch ambulances for communities served by M Health Fairview. With thousands of medical-related calls handled annually by the ECRC, this new interface will expedite ambulance dispatch, ensuring a faster and more seamless emergency response.

We're exploring additional CAD-to-CAD interfaces with bordering agencies, and we're encouraged by the opportunity to add more in the months ahead. I want to express my appreciation for the team that worked tirelessly to bring this important solution online, and in doing so enhancing public safety to those we serve.



In service,

*Dan Starry*

Sheriff Dan Starry