



PRESTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
Annual Police Report
Calendar Year 2025

Submitted to:

Mayor and City Council
City of Preston

Mayor and City Council
City of Miles

Mayor and City Council
City of Spragueville

Submitted by:

Chad Gruver
Chief of Police

Date:

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Report Overview

This Annual Police Report provides a summary of the Preston Police Department's operations, activities, and accomplishments during calendar year 2025. The report is intended to promote transparency, accountability, and public understanding of the department's role in serving and protecting the community.

Included in this report are highlights of law enforcement activities, staffing and training, calls for service, community engagement efforts, and notable challenges and achievements from the past year. The information presented reflects the department's continued commitment to professional policing, fiscal responsibility, and public safety.



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Preston Police Department

Mission • Vision • Core Values

Mission Statement

The mission of the Preston Police Department is to protect life and property, preserve the peace, and uphold the law with integrity, fairness, and professionalism. We are committed to serving our communities through ethical policing, proactive problem-solving, and respectful partnerships that promote safety, trust, and quality of life for all.

Vision Statement

The Preston Police Department envisions a safe, respectful, and engaged community where residents, businesses, and visitors feel secure and confident in their police department. Through professionalism, accountability, and strong community partnerships, we strive to provide high-quality law enforcement services that earn public trust and enhance quality of life.

Core Values

Integrity

We act with honesty, fairness, and accountability in all decisions and actions.

Professionalism

We maintain high standards of conduct, training, and performance while serving the public with competence and respect.

Respect

We treat all individuals with dignity, compassion, and impartiality, recognizing and protecting individual rights.

Service

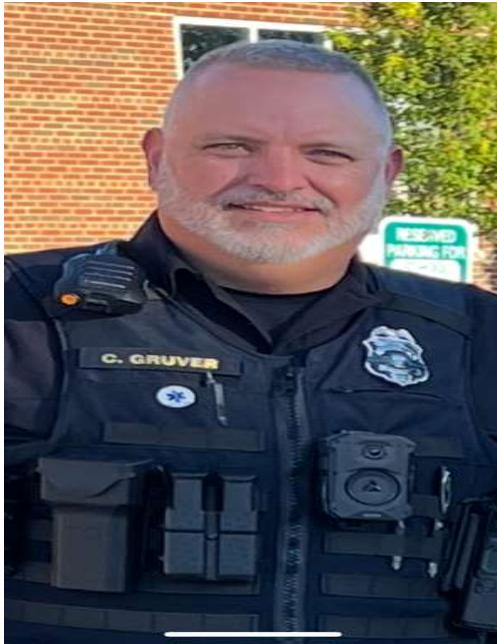
We are dedicated to serving the community with commitment, responsiveness, and care.

Partnership

We believe public safety is achieved through collaboration with the community and partner agencies.

Accountability

We take responsibility for our actions and are committed to transparency and continuous improvement.



A message from Chief Chad Gruver:

On behalf of the Preston Police Department, I am pleased to present our Mission, Vision, and Core Values. These guiding principles define our purpose, establish our priorities, and serve as the foundation for how we serve our communities.

Policing in small communities is both a responsibility and a privilege. Our department is committed to protecting life and property, enforcing the law fairly, and responding professionally to the diverse and often unpredictable challenges of public safety. We approach this duty with integrity, accountability, and respect for the individuals and communities we serve.

Our Mission reflects our commitment to public safety and quality of life. Our Vision emphasizes trust, transparency, and partnership. Our Core Values guide our daily actions and decision-making, ensuring we maintain high standards of professionalism while treating every individual with dignity and fairness.

The Preston Police Department believes that effective law enforcement is built through collaboration. Strong relationships with residents, local officials, and partner agencies are essential to maintaining safe and welcoming communities. Through continued communication and cooperation, we strive to earn and maintain public trust.

I appreciate the continued support of the Mayors, City Councils, and citizens of Preston, Miles, and Spragueville. Together, we remain committed to these principles and to providing professional, responsive, and ethical law enforcement services.

Calls for Service Trends

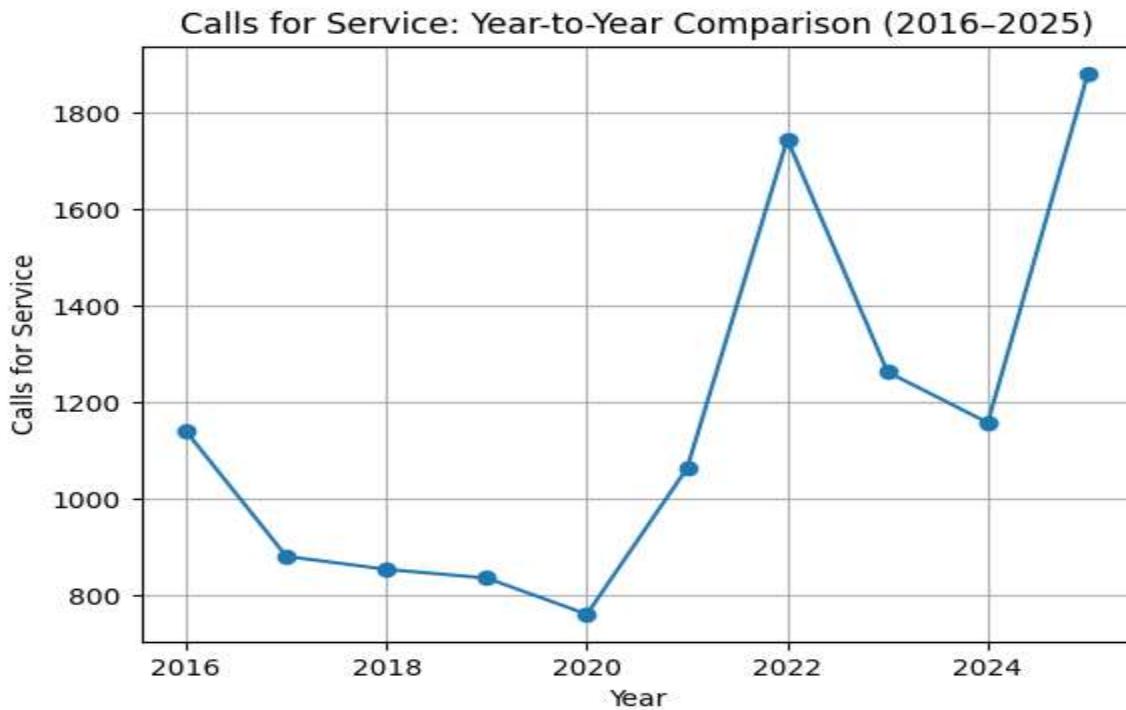
The Preston Police Department continues to experience significant fluctuations and long-term growth in calls for service, reflecting both changing community needs and the expanding role of modern law enforcement.

Year Calls for Service % Change from Prior Year

2016	1,140	—
2017	881	-22.7%
2018	854	-3.1%
2019	836	-2.1%
2020	761	-9.0%
2021	1,064	+39.8%
2022	1,745	+64.0%
2023	1,263	-27.6%
2024	1,158	-8.3%
2025	1,881	+62.4%

Trend Analysis

From 2016 through 2020, calls for service declined steadily, reaching a low of 761 calls in 2020. Beginning in 2021, the department experienced a significant and sustained increase in service demand, with calls rising nearly 40 percent that year and surging another 64 percent in 2022. Although calls decreased in 2023 and 2024, overall activity levels remained well above pre-2021 averages. In 2025, calls for service increased by more than 62 percent compared to the prior year, totaling 1,881 calls and marking the highest call volume in the past decade. This trend reflects the growing demands placed on the Preston Police Department and the expanding role of law enforcement in addressing community needs.



Factors Contributing to Increased Call Volume

The increase in calls for service is not solely the result of traditional criminal activity. A significant portion of this growth can be attributed to the expanded responsibilities placed on law enforcement, particularly in areas where police serve as the primary or default response agency.

These expanded responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- **Mental health-related calls**, including welfare checks, crisis intervention, and individuals experiencing behavioral or emotional distress
- **Civil and social service-related incidents**, such as domestic disputes without criminal elements, landlord-tenant issues, and custody or welfare concerns
- **Medical and assist-agency responses**, where police are requested to assist EMS, fire, or social services
- **Quality-of-life complaints**, including nuisance issues, traffic concerns, and community disputes
- **After-hours coverage gaps**, where law enforcement is often the only available public service resource

As other systems face limitations in staffing, availability, or resources, law enforcement agencies are increasingly relied upon to respond to non-criminal and complex social issues. These calls are often time-intensive, require specialized training, and may involve repeated contacts with the same individuals or locations.

Operational Impact

The continued rise in calls for service directly impacts staffing, scheduling, training, and resource allocation. Even during years where call volume temporarily declined, the complexity and duration of individual calls continued to increase. Mental health and social-service-related incidents, in particular, often require extended on-scene time, follow-up, and coordination with outside agencies.

The Preston Police Department remains committed to responding professionally and compassionately to all calls for service while balancing fiscal responsibility and staffing limitations. Understanding these trends is critical when evaluating operational needs, training requirements, and future budgeting considerations.

As calls for service continue to increase in both volume and complexity, the need for a third full-time police officer is growing. Expanded responsibilities, particularly mental health-related calls, welfare checks, and other time-intensive non-criminal incidents—have placed additional strain on current staffing levels. Limited staffing must also accommodate patrol coverage, training, court obligations, and leave, which can create coverage gaps and reduce proactive enforcement and community engagement. Adding a third full-time officer would improve consistent coverage, enhance response capacity, reduce reliance on overtime or outside agencies, and better position the department to meet current and future service demands.

Current Staff

Chad Gruver – Chief of Police

Chief Gruver began his duties with the Preston Police Department on September 11, 2023, bringing more than 34 years of law enforcement experience. He previously served as Preston's Police Chief from 2005 to 2010 and completed 15 years of service with the Jackson County Sheriff's Office. His career also includes service as Police Chief in Sabula, an officer with the Maquoketa Police Department, and a deputy with the Clinton County Sheriff's Office. Chief Gruver currently serves as a School Resource Officer for the Easton Valley Community School District and as the department's Firearms Instructor. He holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice with a minor in forensic psychology, is a graduate of Northwestern University's Supervision of Police Personnel program and has completed two stars of the Institute for Credible Leadership Development (ICLD). Chief Gruver also is a member of the Community Ambulance Service and is a Nationally Certified Emergency Medical Responder (EMR).

Adam McPherson – Police Officer

Officer McPherson began full-time service with the Preston Police Department in July 2024 after several years as a part-time officer. Prior to full-time employment with Preston, he worked 3½ years as a Park Ranger for the Jackson County Conservation Board and previously served as Chief of Police in Sabula from 2015 to 2021. He began his law enforcement career as a Reserve Officer with the Maquoketa Police Department, is a graduate of the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy, is certified in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) and as an AR-15 Armorer and has over 11 years of law enforcement experience. Officer McPherson is currently enrolled in the EMT course, and we hope to have him certified soon. Officer McPherson is also a member of the Community Ambulance Service

Wes Unke – Police Officer (Part-Time)

Officer Unke began part-time service with the Preston Police Department on January 8, 2024, and is currently employed full-time as a Deputy Sheriff with the Jackson County Sheriff's Office. He previously served 30 years with the Clinton Police Department before retiring and later worked as a Correctional Officer with the Clinton County Sheriff's Office. Officer Unke joined the Jackson County Sheriff's Office in 2021 and has more than 34 years of law enforcement experience.

Joel Driscoll – Police Officer (Part-Time)

Officer Driscoll began part-time service with the Preston Police Department on June 10, 2024, and is currently employed full-time as a Deputy Sheriff with the Jackson County Sheriff's Office. His prior experience includes service as a police officer with the Preston and Bellevue Police Departments. Officer Driscoll is a 2003 graduate of the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (Class 196) and has over 23 years of law enforcement experience.

Tony Urwin – Police Officer (Part-Time)

Officer Urwin began part-time service with the Preston Police Department on February 10, 2025, and is currently employed full-time as a Police Officer with the Bellevue Police Department. His prior experience includes service as the Chief of Police for the City of Lake Park, IA. Officer Urwin previously served as a part-time officer with the Preston where he attended the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy in 2007. Officer Urwin has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.



Chief Gruver and Officer McPherson in 2025 at Eaton Valley Elementary in Miles

School Resource Officer Program

Easton Valley Community School District

The Preston Police Department provides a half-time School Resource Officer (SRO) to the Easton Valley Community School District to enhance student safety, support school administration, and strengthen relationships between students and law enforcement. The SRO position is currently fulfilled by Chief Chad Gruver, who brings extensive experience in law enforcement leadership, youth engagement, and crisis response.

Chief Gruver maintains a consistent on-campus presence during the school year, serving as a visible and approachable law enforcement resource. His role extends beyond enforcement and includes prevention, education, and early intervention, helping to address issues before they escalate into safety concerns or criminal matters.

Key Activities and Measurable Outcomes

- **Daily school presence and patrol**, providing immediate response capability and increasing visibility during high-traffic periods such as arrival, dismissal, and events
- **Student engagement and mentoring**, with regular informal contacts that support positive relationships and encourage early reporting of concerns
- **Mental health and welfare interventions**, including crisis response, threat assessment participation, and coordination with school counselors and administrators
- **Safety planning and preparedness**, assisting with emergency drills, lockdown procedures, and building security assessments
- **Incident prevention and de-escalation**, resolving many student-related issues at the school level without the need for formal enforcement or court involvement
- **Parent and staff collaboration**, serving as a point of contact for safety concerns and providing guidance on behavioral or security-related matters
- **Training and education support**, including classroom presentations and safety-related instruction as requested by the district

Program Impact

The SRO program has contributed to improved communication, faster response to safety concerns, and stronger relationships between students, school staff, and law enforcement. By addressing mental health issues, behavioral concerns, and safety risks early, the program reduces the likelihood of incidents escalating into criminal matters or requiring outside intervention.

The Preston Police Department values its partnership with the Easton Valley Community School District and recognizes the SRO program, led by Chief Gruver, as a proactive investment in school safety, student well-being, and community trust.



Red Ribbon Week – 2025



Shop with a cop December 2025

Infrastructure, Vehicles & Equipment

The Preston Police Department occupies the Southeast offices of the Preston City Hall, which is also attached to the Library, City Clerk's Office, and Council Chambers. The facility was built in 1999. The police department functions as a separate office, with no set hours of operation. The police department always remains locked and requires a key fob for access. Parking is located on the facilities East side.

The police department manages a firearms range located near the Preston Wastewater Lagoons, North of Preston approximately 1 mile on 435th Avenue. This area is used for required firearms and less lethal defensive weapons training. The Jackson County Sheriff's Office and the Preston Police Department host joint training on a semi-annual basis. The police department also manages and maintains a garage facility directly across from the police department. This facility is used jointly by police and fire departments. The facility currently houses the fire department's antique fire engine, and police vehicles. It also contains a full-weight exercise room.



Weight and Exercise room



The Police Department currently operates two Dodge Durango V-6 SUVs for patrol operations. These vehicles are equipped with modern Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs), M-4 rifles, 12-gauge shotguns, and less-lethal bean bag shotguns. Each patrol unit is also stocked with emergency medical equipment and automated external defibrillators (AEDs), allowing officers to respond to medical emergencies and provide their certified levels of care prior to the arrival of ambulance services. Both patrol vehicles are equipped with new radar units funded through a grant from the Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau. Additional department equipment includes vehicle lockout assistance tools, crime scene processing equipment, and evidence collection supplies.

In addition to the patrol vehicles, the Jackson County Conservation Board gifted the Police Department a 2009 Arctic Cat side-by-side UTV during the summer. While some mechanical repairs and minor upgrades were required to place the unit into service, it has proven to be an excellent addition to the department's transportation resources. The UTV is utilized for football games and special events and provides access to areas that are not reachable by traditional patrol vehicles.



2025 Dodge Durango V-6 Patrol – Mileage 5,100



2023 Dodge Durango V-6 Patrol – Mileage 19,441



Community Based Initiatives and Partnerships

The Preston Police Department remains committed to community-based initiatives that strengthen trust, promote public safety, and address the needs of residents beyond traditional enforcement. These efforts emphasize prevention, engagement, and collaboration with community partners to improve quality of life while ensuring responsible and effective use of law enforcement resources.

Shop with a Cop

Shop with a Cop continues to be one of the department's most impactful community engagement initiatives. This program provides local children with the opportunity to shop for holiday gifts alongside police officers in a positive, supportive environment. The event fosters meaningful interaction between officers and youth while supporting families who may face financial challenges during the holiday season.

The 2025 Shop with a Cop event was successful due in large part to the generous financial support provided by the **City of Preston**. The City's donation allowed the department to expand participation and ensure the program remained a meaningful experience for all involved. The event reinforced positive relationships between law enforcement and the community and highlighted the department's commitment to serving residents beyond enforcement activities.

Crisis Co-Responder Program

The Preston Police Department participates in a Crisis Co-Responder Program designed to improve responses to calls involving mental illness, emotional distress, or crisis situations. Under this model, a trained mental health professional responds alongside law enforcement officers to assist individuals and families during critical incidents.

The co-responder program allows individuals to be connected with appropriate services and community resources at the time of contact, helping address underlying issues rather than relying solely on traditional enforcement. This approach has proven effective in de-escalation, improving outcomes for those in crisis, and reducing repeat calls for service. It also lessens the burden placed on law enforcement officers, who are not always specifically trained or equipped to manage complex mental health needs independently.

Additional Community Engagement Efforts

In addition to Shop with a Cop and the School Resource Officer Program, the Preston Police Department engages in a variety of ongoing community-based initiatives, including:

- Visible presence at community events, school functions, and local activities
- Informal outreach and relationship-building with residents and local businesses
- Assistance with non-criminal community concerns, including welfare checks
- Collaboration with city departments, schools, and county agencies to proactively address community needs

These efforts reflect the department's commitment to proactive problem-solving and positive community interaction.

Commitment to Community Policing

Community-based initiatives remain a core component of the Preston Police Department's policing philosophy. Through continued investment in programs such as Shop with a Cop, participation in the Crisis Co-Responder Program, and ongoing community engagement efforts, the department strives to build trust, enhance public safety, and provide professional, compassionate law enforcement services to the cities of Preston, Miles and Spragueville.

Partnerships

The Preston Police Department continues to strengthen public safety through strategic partnerships and intergovernmental agreements that extend professional law enforcement services beyond the City of Preston. These cooperative efforts allow for efficient use of resources, consistent service delivery, and enhanced public safety throughout the region.

Police Protection Agreements

The City of Preston maintains formal police protection agreements with the City of Miles and the City of Spragueville. Under these agreements, the Preston Police Department provides contracted law enforcement services to both communities, ensuring residents receive reliable and professional police coverage.

These agreements include patrol services, response to calls for service, traffic enforcement, criminal investigations, and coordination with county, state, and federal agencies as necessary. Contracted services are structured to meet each community's needs while maintaining Preston's primary responsibility to its residents.

Regional Collaboration and Benefits

Providing police protection through intergovernmental agreements benefits all participating communities by:

- Ensuring consistent and professional law enforcement coverage
- Maximizing the efficient use of personnel and equipment
- Enhancing officer familiarity with surrounding communities

- Improving regional coordination and mutual aid capabilities
- Reducing the financial burden on smaller municipalities while maintaining high service standards

These partnerships allow the Preston Police Department to deliver quality law enforcement services while fostering regional cooperation and shared responsibility for public safety.

Commitment to Service

The Preston Police Department remains committed to maintaining strong working relationships with the Cities of Miles and Spragueville. These agreements reflect a shared commitment to public safety, accountability, and collaboration, and they continue to be an important component of the department's overall mission and operational strategy. To further show our commitment to serving our partners, we've added the below decal to our marked patrol car.



Autism Awareness

In recognition of Autism Awareness Month in April, Preston Police Department officers will be wearing Autism Awareness patches on their uniforms as a visible show of support for individuals and families affected by autism. This initiative reflects the department's ongoing commitment to community engagement, inclusion, and awareness of neurodiversity. By participating in Autism Awareness Month, the department aims to promote understanding, foster positive relationships, and reinforce its dedication to serving all members of the community with professionalism, compassion, and respect.



Future Goals and Priorities (Budget-Aligned)

The Preston Police Department's future goals are closely aligned with the proposed budget and are designed to maintain essential public safety services while exercising fiscal responsibility. Each priority reflects current staffing levels, operational demands, and the need for predictable, sustainable funding.

Staffing Stability and Overtime Management

The department's primary goal is to maintain staffing stability and consistent service coverage while controlling overtime costs. Budgeted personnel expenditures are intended to support retention of experienced officers, appropriate use of part-time staffing, and responsible scheduling practices. These measures help ensure coverage for emergencies, investigations, court obligations, and special events without excessive reliance on overtime.

Training and Risk Management

Training expenditures are budgeted to meet mandatory requirements and reduce liability exposure. Continued use of online training platforms allows the department to control costs while ensuring officers remain current with legal standards, use-of-force policies, de-escalation practices, and officer safety training. Limited in-person training is budgeted only when required or operationally necessary.

Community Programs and Prevention

The department will continue community-based initiatives that provide measurable value with minimal cost impact. Programs such as Shop with a Cop rely on donations and partnerships, limiting the need for ongoing budget commitments while delivering significant community benefit. Maintaining officer presence at community and school events supports prevention efforts and reduces long-term calls for service.

Crisis Response and Mental Health Collaboration

Continued participation in the Crisis Co-Responder Program supports both public safety and fiscal efficiency. By connecting individuals experiencing mental health crises with appropriate services, the program helps reduce repeat calls for service and unnecessary enforcement actions. This collaborative model allows law enforcement resources to be used more effectively while improving outcomes for individuals and families.

Equipment, Technology, and Capital Planning

Budgeted equipment and technology expenditures focus on maintaining existing systems rather than expansion. Planned funding supports patrol vehicle upkeep, required safety equipment, and ongoing camera and communication system obligations. Long-term replacement planning and pursuit of grant funding help minimize unexpected costs and reduce financial impact on the City.

Fiscal Responsibility and Transparency

The department will continue to use conservative budgeting practices that account for the unpredictable nature of police operations. Expenditures are prioritized based on operational necessity, safety, and long-term sustainability. Transparency in budget planning remains a core goal to ensure the Mayor and City Council clearly understand how public safety funds are allocated.



Joint firearms training at the range in Preston, October 2025

Conclusion

The Preston Police Department remains committed to providing professional, responsive, and community-focused law enforcement services while operating within the fiscal and staffing realities of a small department. Throughout the reporting period, the department balanced traditional enforcement responsibilities with proactive community engagement, required training, and collaborative problem-solving efforts.

This annual report reflects a continued emphasis on responsible budgeting, careful resource management, and long-term planning. Investments in personnel, training, equipment, and technology were guided by operational necessity, officer safety, and accountability to the residents of the City of Preston. When possible, the department utilized partnerships, grants, and shared services to minimize financial impact while maintaining service levels.

Community-based initiatives, including Shop with a Cop, the School Resource Officer Program, and participation in the Crisis Co-Responder Program, demonstrate the department's commitment to addressing public safety needs beyond enforcement alone. These programs strengthen community trust, support prevention efforts, and improve outcomes for individuals and families while allowing law enforcement resources to be used more effectively.

Despite the challenges associated with modern policing, the Preston Police Department continues to adapt to evolving service demands and community expectations. Through ongoing training, collaboration with local and regional partners, and transparent communication with City leadership, the department remains focused on ethical, effective, and compassionate policing.

The Preston Police Department appreciates the continued support of the Mayor, City Council, and the residents of Preston, Miles and Spragueville. Moving forward, the department remains committed to maintaining public trust, enhancing community safety, and responsibly stewarding the resources entrusted to it.

Respectfully submitted,

Chad Gruver
Chief of Police
Preston Police Department