

Berks County District Attorney's

Annual Report



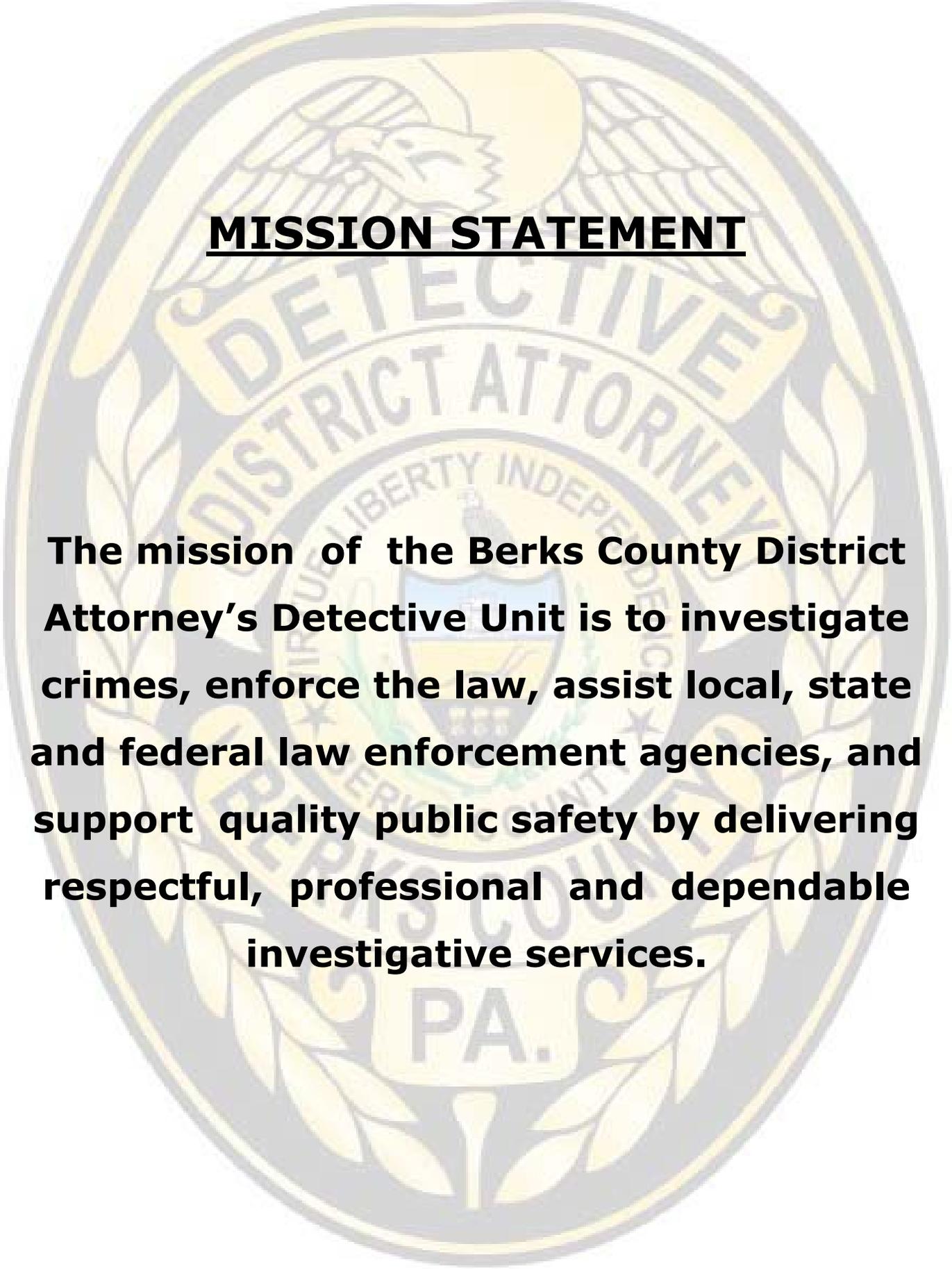
2012

John T. Adams, District Attorney
Michael J. Gombar, Chief County Detective
Lt. Leon Domsic, Narcotics Section
Lt. Todd E. Trupp, Criminal Investigations Section

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The seal of the Berks County District Attorney's Office is a large, circular emblem in the background. It features a central shield with a scale of justice, surrounded by a laurel wreath. Above the shield is a banner with the words "DETECTIVE" and "DISTRICT ATTORNEY". Below the shield is a banner with "PA.". The outer ring of the seal contains the text "BERKS COUNTY" and "LIBERTY INDEPENDENCE".

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Berks County District Attorney's Detective Unit is to investigate crimes, enforce the law, assist local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, and support quality public safety by delivering respectful, professional and dependable investigative services.

Michael J. Gombar

Chief County Detective

Message from the Chief

As the Chief Detective of Berks County, it is an honor and pleasure to present the 2012 Annual Report for the Berks County District Attorney's Detective Unit. Each year, we strive to improve and evolve as a Detective Unit in strengthening our connection with all local, state and federal law enforcement departments, along with the Berks County community that we serve. I trust you will find this report filled with useful information.



The year was extremely busy and challenging for our detectives. We continued our concentration towards five disciplines of investigation: (1) Narcotics Investigations, (2) Child Abuse Investigations, (3) Financial Investigations,(4) Crimes against the Elderly and (5) Forensic Services. Additionally, many of the local police departments of Berks County reached out for our expert investigative support and assistance.

In September, District Attorney John T. Adams and I coordinated with law enforcement agencies throughout Berks County in offering the residents free access to an online mapping program of crime incidents using the internet base resource CrimeMapping.com. This program allows 410,000 residents of Berks County to know in nearly real time exactly what is happening in terms of crime incidents. Additionally, crime mapping assists police departments in reducing crime through a better informed citizenry.

To conclude, I want to express my appreciation and deep pride that I have for the men and women of the Berks County District Attorney's Detective Unit for their endless devotion to this organization, who strive every day, to ensure the safety and enhance the quality of life in Berks County. I am truly proud to be the Chief Detective of this unit, which I consider one of the finest in our Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Gombar
Chief County Detective

2012 PROGRAMS

In 2012, the Berks County District Attorney's Detective Unit, partnered with the Berks County Solid Waste Authority to collect unused and unwanted prescription medications from residents of Berks County.



Berks County Detectives assisted the Berks County Solid Waste Authority with the annual spring and fall pharmaceutical collections. The spring collection was held at the Exeter Police Department. The fall collection was hosted at First Energy Stadium. A total of 1450 residents participated in the events. 3600 pounds of pharmaceuticals were collected at the events. There was no cost to Berks County residents.

The 2012 collection was the most successful to date. The Berks County District Attorney's Office intends to participate in all future collections that directly benefit the residents of Berks County by removing potentially hazardous and dangerous medications from our homes.

2012 SPECIAL EVENTS



Detectives from the Berks County District Attorney's Office routinely attend special community events to promote the services we provide to the citizens of Berks County. Below is a list of the special events attended by the Berks County Detectives.

- **National Night Out**, Spring Township Police Department, August 6, 2012
- **National Night Out**, Muhlenberg Twp. Police Department, August 6, 2012
- **Berks Connections—BCPS Annual Softball Tournament**, June 2, 2012
- **City of Reading Holiday Parade**, Reading, PA, November 17, 2012.



Berks County District Attorney's Office Sponsored Training



The District Attorney's Office is committed to assisting police personnel in Berks County by hosting several law enforcement related training sessions annually. Lieutenant Todd Trupp, of the Berks County Detectives, was named Chairman of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 71 Training Committee, by District Attorney John T. Adams and FOP President Joseph Brown. In 2012, 202 law enforcement officers from Berks County received free training in the courses listed below.

- March 20-25, 2012—Reading Police Only—40 Hour Evidence Technician Class
- May 8-10, 2012— Blood Spatter Analysis
- September 10-14, 2012— 40 Hour Fingerprint Comparison
- October 1-5, 2012 — 40 Hour Evidence Technician
- November 27-29, 2012 — Standardized Field Sobriety Testing
- December 13, 2012 — Crash Reconstruction

In addition, officers from surrounding counties have attended training this past year, for a fee that helps offset training costs for Berks County Law Enforcement.



40 Hour Evidence Technician Course

The District Attorney's Office with assistance from the Wyomissing Police Department and in conjunction with the Berks County Chiefs of Police Association, sponsored a 40 hour evidence technician course. The course was offered free of charge to police officers in Berks County. This year's course was held for the first time at the Forensic Services Center located at the Berks County Agricultural Center. All officers were trained in all aspects of evidence collection and preservation. The course concluded with the investigation of a mock homicide crime scene. In addition we hosted a Reading Police only class to assist that department in restocking it's patrol evidence technician pool.

The following departments attended in 2012:

**Berks County District Attorney
Cumru Township
Douglas Township
Fleetwood
Lancaster
Lower Heidelberg
Mohnton
Reading Police
Sinking Spring
Tilden Township
West Reading**





Blood Spatter Identification

The Berks County District Attorney's Office hosted its third Blood Spatter Identification Course in 2012. The 2012 course was instructed by detectives from the Berks County Detectives. The course consisted of classroom lecture and hands on practical exercises designed to replicate actual crime scenes.

Blood Spatter Identification is one of several specialties in the field of forensic science. The science of bloodstain pattern analysis applies scientific knowledge from other fields to solve practical problems. Bloodstain pattern analysis draws on the scientific disciplines of biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics. If an analyst follows a scientific process, this applied science can produce strong, solid evidence, making it an effective tool for investigators. Students were taught the accepted means of documenting a blood scene through sketching, stringing, and photography.

The following departments attended the three day course:

- Allentown
- Berks County District Attorney's Office
- Bern Township
- Lower Heidelberg Township
- Muhlenberg Township
- Reading
- Wyomissing



Calculating the Impact Angle

1. Measure the Width (a)
2. Measure the Length (c)
3. Use the following formula

$$\text{SIN } \theta = \frac{\text{Width (a)}}{\text{Length (c)}}$$



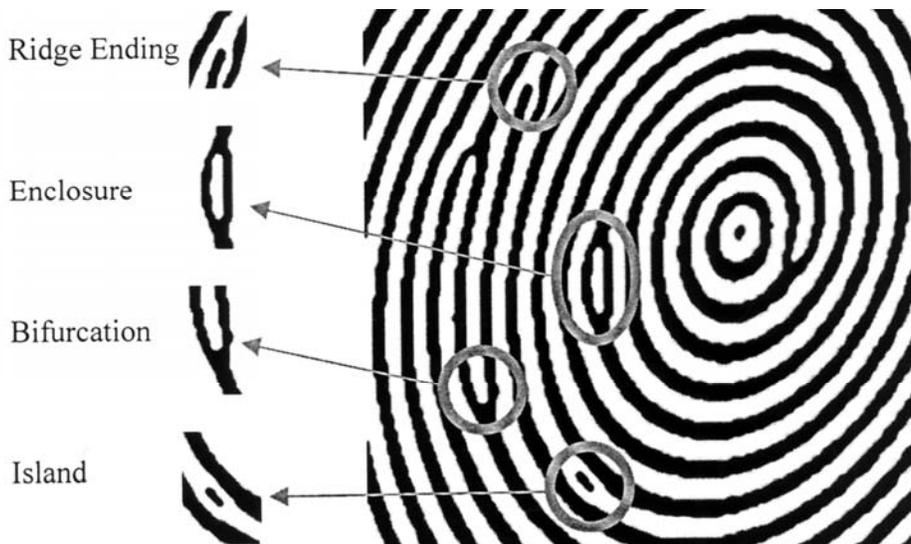
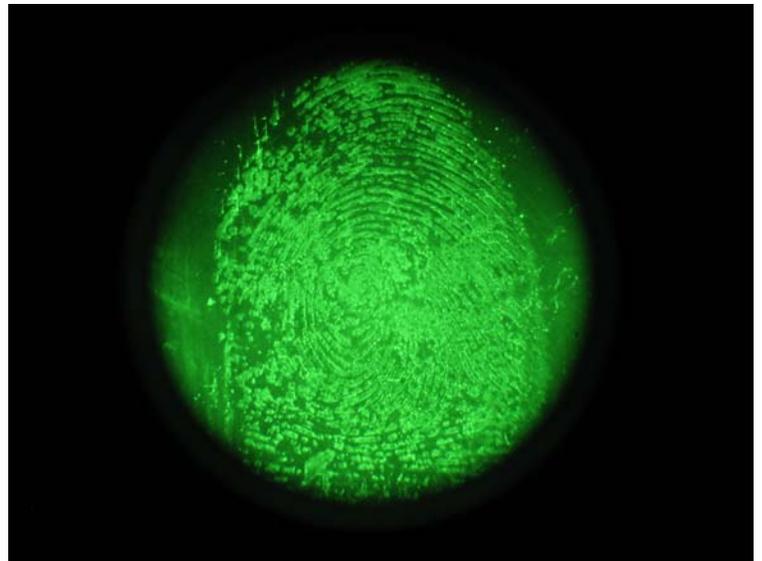
40 Hour Fingerprint Comparison

The Berks County District Attorney's Office hosted its first 40 hour Fingerprint Comparison Course 2012. The 2012 course was instructed by detectives from the Berks County Detectives, Forensic Services Unit. The course consisted of classroom lecture and hands on practical exercises.

The course consisted of: History of Friction Ridge Comparisons and researchers, Identification of Pattern Types, Development of Friction Ridge Skin, ACE-V Methodology, Comparison Techniques, Prominent Court challenges and report writing.

The following departments attended the three day course:

Bern Township
Central Berks Regional
Muhlenberg
Manor Township
PA State Police
Reading
West Reading





Criminal Investigations Section Statistical Comparison

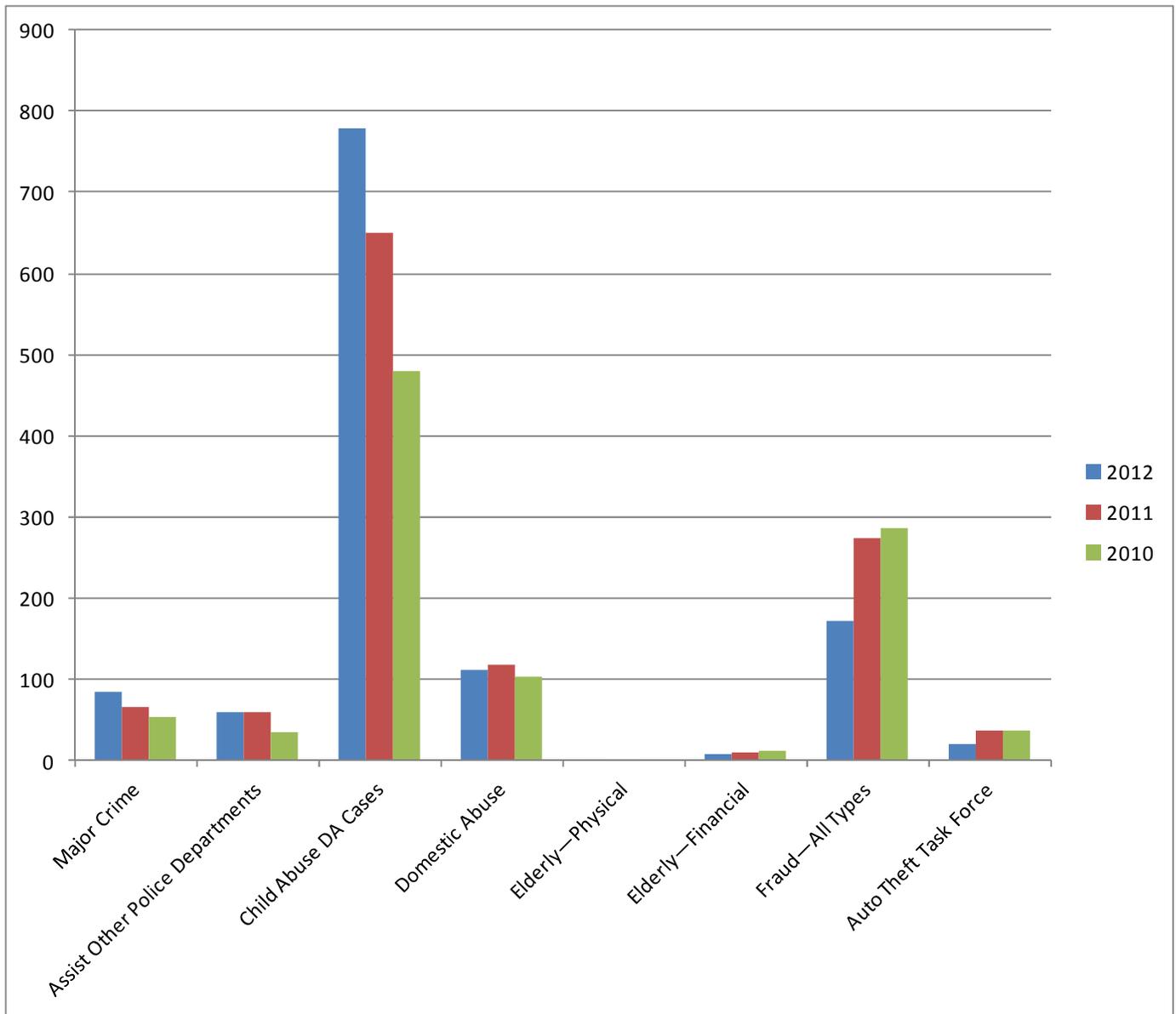
FORENSIC SERVICES

<u>INCIDENT TYPE</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
Crash Reconstruction	40	31	32
AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System)	831	352	383
Computer Forensics	134	87	92
DUI Center Bookings	587	522	492
Forensic Processing	191	135	143

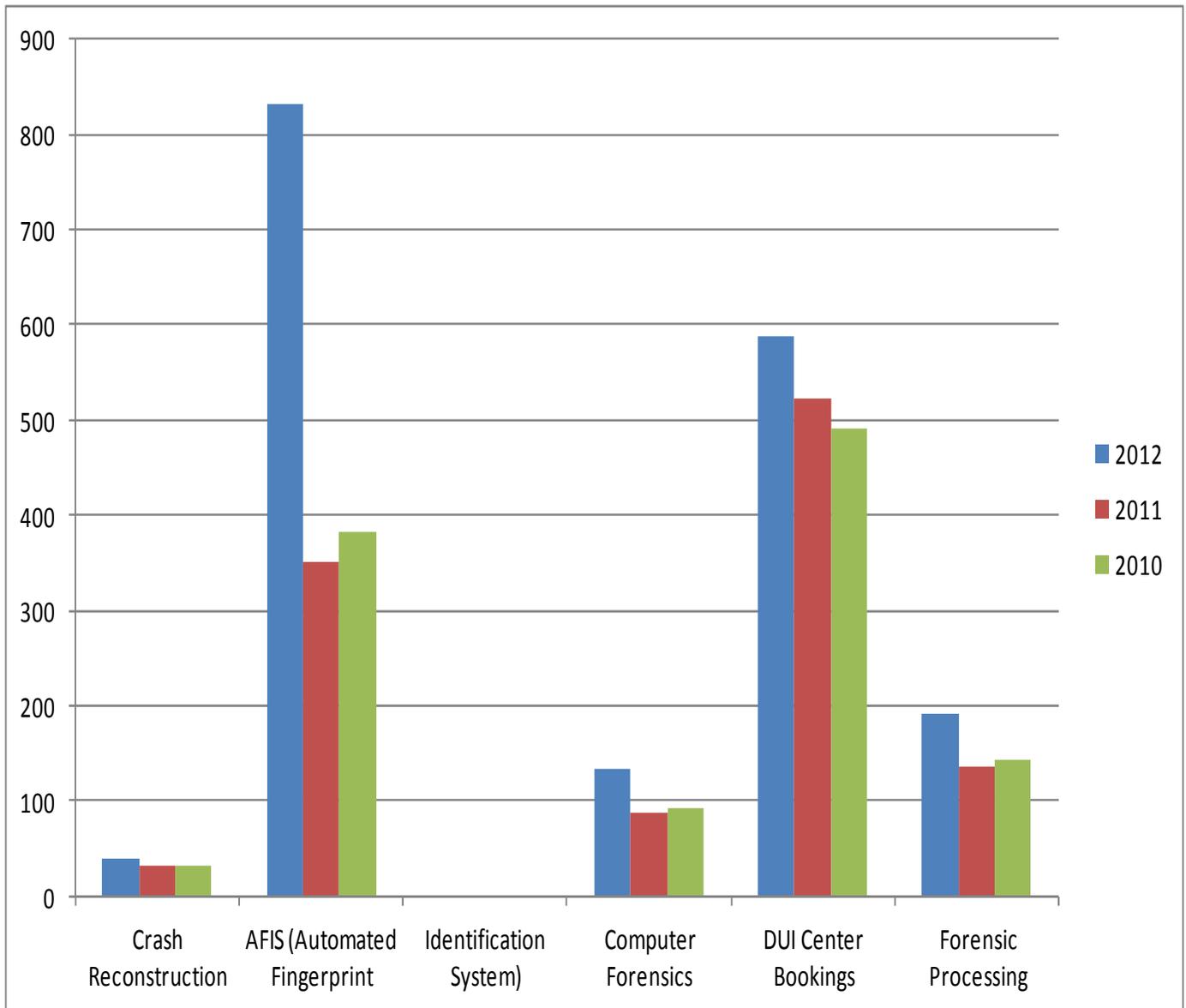
CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

<u>INCIDENT TYPE</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
Major Crime	84	66	54
Assist Other Police Departments	60	59	35
Child Abuse DA Cases	780	649	480
Domestic Abuse	112	118	103
Elderly—Physical	1	2	2
Elderly—Financial	7	10	12
Fraud—All Types	172	274	287
Auto Theft Task Force	20	37	37

Crime Section Chart



Forensic Services Chart



Bad Check Restitution Program

The District Attorney's Bad Check Restitution Program was initiated in the spring of 2008 to combat the negative impact of bad checks passed to local businesses. Millions of dollars are lost every year by merchants as a result of this ongoing problem. Bad checks affect everyone. Specifically, bad checks result in higher consumer costs that must be passed on to offset losses and increased taxes to cover the additional costs for law enforcement and prosecution.



In an effort to alleviate this problem, the Bad Check Restitution Program has been organized to assist local merchants with bad check losses. The primary goal of the program is to obtain full restitution for the victim without adding to the financial burden of the criminal justice system.

Accordingly, first time bad check offenders are given the opportunity to avoid criminal prosecution by attending a mandatory intervention class in addition to paying restitution. All of this is accomplished without any cost to the taxpayers.

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Restitution Returned	\$56,973	\$39,295	\$39,223.71
Checks Filed	649	694	631
Victims Filing	229	217	204
Class Attendance	132	115	123

Total Program Satisfaction Rating in 2012 was 4.1 out of 5

Narcotics Section

The Narcotics Unit is committed to investigating and enforcing local, state, and federal laws as they apply to individuals and corrupt organizations that may be responsible for the distribution and manufacturing of illegal controlled substances, illicit or unlawfully possessed firearms within Berks County. This unit is comprised of eleven detectives led by Lieutenant Leon L. Domsic.

In 2012, the Narcotics Unit was involved in many investigations with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies. The Unit continued to work closely with members of the Berks County Drug Task Force to decrease drug activity throughout the County.

There has been an increase in the use of synthetic-drugs. Synthetic-drugs may be called synthetic, but they're not phony. They are real enough to send users to the morgue. Within Berks County we have seen so-called legitimate businesses stocking these items (synthetic-drugs) on their shelves and/or behind their counters.



The names of some of these synthetic-drugs are called "Bath Salts" and "Herbal Incense". They are named intentionally to mislead young people. Some synthetic-drugs seized during Berks County investigations were packaged in colorful packets and labeled as "Double Bubble Gram," "Scented Giggle" and "Cloud 9". It's giving young people the impression that these "items" are safe to ingest. Users have no idea how dangerous or addicting their first "hit" can become.

In February, the Berks County Detectives along with the Pennsylvania State Police started working on one of the largest synthetic-drugs investigations of its kind. The investigation not only involved Berks but Schuylkill and Centre Counties as well. Six businesses were raided, including one in the City of Reading and as a result a huge amount of synthetic-drugs and drug paraphernalia were seized. Just in the Reading location, the Berks County Detectives along with Reading Police seized synthetic marijuana, other synthetic-drugs known as bath salts and drug paraphernalia with the retail value of \$125,000.00. In addition, seized during the course of the entire investigation involving all three counties was 2.5 million dollars in proceeds from illegal sales of synthetic-drugs.

Narcotics Section

In July, 80 officers from Berks and Lancaster counties descended on six homes, five in Berks, one in Lancaster County, several vehicles and one storage unit with search warrants. The search warrants were simultaneously executed. As a result, cocaine with the street value of \$100,000, methamphetamine with the street value of \$70,000.00, heroin with the street value of \$1,000.00, nine guns, \$33,000.00 in proceeds were seized. All nine individuals were apprehended and arrested; a major drug ring was dismantled.

In August, the Berks County Detectives with the assistance of the Pennsylvania State Police, Spring Township and Wyomissing Police Departments arrested three individuals for trafficking heroin from New York City to Berks County. One of the individual's residence was located in the City of Reading, one was a Connecticut resident and the third a New York resident. During the course of the investigation, it was determined the three individuals were major sources of heroin in Berks County. Detectives via undercover purchases and search warrants seized about a pound of heroin most of it from the suspects' vehicles in Wyomissing. Detectives estimated the street value of the heroin to be \$120,000.

In September, the Berks County Detectives, with the assistance of the California Department of Justice, arrested the owner of a California medical marijuana store. The man was a resident of Eureka, California with business ties to Wyomissing. Law-enforcement intercepted a parcel containing 25 pounds of high-grade marijuana. According to California Department of Justice, the parcel was packaged and addressed to a fictitious person in Wyomissing. After obtaining a search warrant, county detectives opened the package and found 30 large packages containing high-grade marijuana with a combined street value of \$150,000.

In December, the Berks County Detectives, with the assistance of the Reading Police Department, concluded a several month investigation involving an individual who was trafficking large amounts of cocaine within the City of Reading. As a result of undercover purchases and a search of the individual's residence, over 200 grams of cocaine with the street value of \$16,000.00, \$945.00 in proceeds and drug paraphernalia were seized during the investigation.

Narcotics Section

Statistical Comparison

<u>Statistics for the year</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Number of open cases:	162	217	236
Number of arrests:	178	134	157
Number of search warrants served:	84	58	54
Number of vehicles seized:	20	18	12
Total value:	\$74,600.00	\$135,000.00	\$90,000
Number of cash seizures:	48	24	33
Total value:	\$174,398.50	\$160,115.87	\$132,000
Total number of weapons seized:	40	16	30

Operation Nightlight

The thrust of the Operation Nightlight is to combine law enforcement efforts with other prevention and intervention programs. The plan pairs probation officers with police officers who together would make unannounced visits to the homes, schools and workplaces of high-risk probationers during non-traditional hours. By doing this, the officers would not only respond to criminal violations but also take steps to prevent the probationers from violating the conditions of their probation or becoming victims of violence themselves. Operation Nightlight is a joint operation with the Berks County Adult Probation Office, Juvenile Probation Office, Reading Police Department and the Berks County Sheriff's Office. It is the responsibility of Lieutenant Leon Domsic to coordinate Operation Nightlight and maintain the scheduling, statistics, and budget.

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of Patrols	66	53	52	59
Contacts under supervision	1056	718	493	796
Number of Home Visits	892	673	724	724
Detained on Parole Violations	16	6	19	17
New Charges	4	13	16	24



Promotions - Recruitments - Retirements



Detective Nelson Ortiz was promoted to the rank of Corporal for the District Attorney's Narcotics Unit. In 2008, he was assigned to Narcotics Unit and became a valuable member of the District Attorney's Drug Task Force. Prior to joining the District Attorney's Narcotics Unit, he served twenty proud years with the Reading Police Department, where he spent sixteen years assigned to their Vice/Narcotics Unit. He was awarded the prestigious honor of Police Officer of the Year in 2001 by the Reading Police Fraternal Order of Lodge #9 for dismantling two major drug organizations in Berks County. We are proud of Detective Ortiz' accomplishments and congratulate him on his well deserved promotion.



Detective Thomas M. Weaver joined the District Attorney's Detective Unit in May of 2012 after serving 25 years with the Pennsylvania State Police. During his career he held the positions of Patrol Trooper, Polygraph Examiner, Vice/Narcotics Trooper and Criminal Investigator.

Detective Weaver is assigned to our Crime Unit, where the majority of his duties will focus on investigating child abuse and white collar crimes. The District Attorney's Detective Unit proudly welcomes Detective Weaver to the Unit.



Detective Justin D. Morrow joined the District Attorney's Unit in August of 2012 after serving as a criminal investigator with the Berks-Lehigh Regional Police Department. During his assignment as a criminal investigator, he had the opportunity to investigate a variety of crimes, many of which resulted in the successful arrest and prosecution of criminals.

Detective Morrow is assigned to our Crime Unit, where the majority of his duties will focus on financial investigations and child abuse cases. The District Attorney's Detective Unit proudly welcomes Detective Morrow to the Unit.



Detective Richard P. Steffie Jr. retired from the District Attorney's Detective Unit in June of 2012 after twelve years of outstanding service. He started his law enforcement career in 1971 with the Pennsylvania State Police and served twenty-five proud years with them. The law enforcement community of Berks County will miss Detective Steffie. We wish him the best with his well deserved retirement.

Grants Awarded

The Berks County District Attorney's Office has applied for all applicable financial grants to supplement our operating budget. The grants listed below were applied for and awarded in 2012. These grants have allowed us to purchase equipment, attend training and pay other associated costs, without effecting the county budget.

Justice Assistance Grant

The Berks County District Attorney's Office was awarded a total of \$15,463.00 from the Edward Byrne Grant. This grant is used for overtime, equipment, training for investigative needs for the Berks County District Attorney's Office Crash Reconstruction Task Force, as well as overtime for Operation Nightlight Details.

2012 Coverdell Forensic Science Grant

The Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program awards grants to states and units of local government to help improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services. Among other things, funds may be used to eliminate a backlog in the analysis of forensic evidence and to train and employ forensic laboratory personnel, as needed, to eliminate such a backlog. In 2012, the Berks County District Attorney's Office applied and was awarded in excess of \$75,000 dollars to software and related components for the LIMS, the Lab Information Management System.

Awards

Berks Chiefs of Police Association

President's Award



President Paul R. Stolz Jr. gave the president's award to District Attorney John T. Adams for his leadership in forming a unified crime-fighting front since taking office four years ago. Those efforts included forming a countywide drug task force and a countywide major crimes task force to pool the investigative resources of his office and the municipal police departments.

Berks Chiefs of Police Association Executive Board Award



Lieutenant Todd Trupp was given the Executive Board Awards for his effort in providing technology enhancements such as automated criminal complaint interfacing.

2012 Table of Organization

CHIEF COUNTY DETECTIVE

Michael Gombar

LIEUTENANT - CRIME

Todd Trupp

LIEUTENANT - NARCOTICS

Leon Domsic

SERGEANT - FORENSICS

Robert Johnson

SERGEANT - CRIME

Gerardo Vega

SERGEANT—NARCOTICS

John Snyder

FORENSIC SERVICES

David Wright
Albert Schade III

CHILD ABUSE

Donna Tothero
Trevor Ritter
David McQuate
Ivan Martinez
Michael Fick

CORPORAL —NARCOTICS

Nelson Ortiz

COMPUTER FORENSICS

Heather Rhoads
Christopher Erb

FINANCIAL CRIMES

James Kellett
Robert Heiden
Justin Morrow
Thomas Weaver

NARCOTICS

Scott Errington
Camilla Karns
James Gresh
Edwin Santiago
Douglass Weaver
Joseph Walsh
Todd Harris
Pasquale Leporace

CRASH RECONSTRUCTION

Nicholas Bolognese

PROPERTY - FORFEITURE

Anthony DeFazio

MAJOR CRIME TASK FORCE

Harold Shenk

AUTO THEFT TASK FORCE

Ronald Linderman