

# *BERKS COUNTY DETECTIVES*



## *2010 Annual Report*

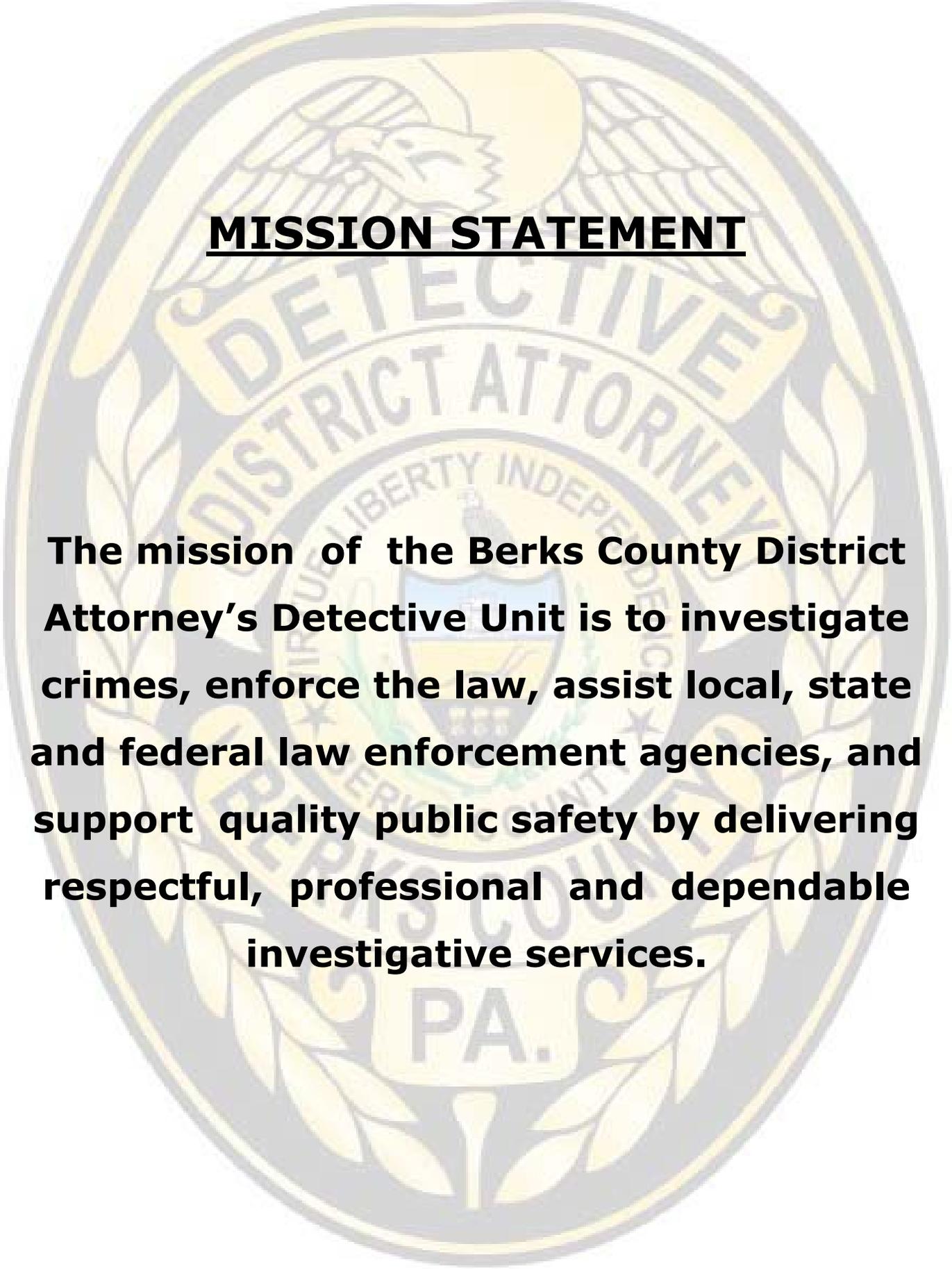
*John T. Adams, District Attorney*

*Michael J. Gombar, Chief County Detective*

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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 an eagle with its wings spread, perched on a globe. The text "DETECTIVE" is written in a banner above the shield, and "DISTRICT ATTORNEY" is written in a banner below it. The words "LIBERTY INDEPENDENCE" are written in a smaller banner above the shield. The words "BERKS COUNTY" are written in a banner below the shield, and "PA." is written at the bottom. The entire seal is rendered in a light, semi-transparent yellow and grey color.

## **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

It is an honor and pleasure to present the 2010 Annual Report of the Berks County District Attorney's Detective Unit. This report will provide you with information about the activities in the Detective Unit this year. I trust that you will find it filled with useful information.

As we enter the New Year, we are faced with new challenges and we accept these challenges with the enthusiasm to succeed. As we are well aware, the poor financial economy of our nation has affected the law enforcement community. The City of Reading is planning to reduce the ranks of its police department due to dire financial circumstances. Inevitably, this will correlate in a spike of all forms of criminal activity within our neighborhoods, which will jeopardize the safety and quality of life for the citizens of Berks County.



It is imperative that we respond to this situation with our continued support. It is our duty to sustain and supplement the efforts of the Reading Police Department in combating the myriad of both violent and non-violent crimes for the benefit of Berks County and the citizenry. We must and will continue our collective policing efforts to be successful.

District Attorney John T. Adams and I are extremely proud of the accomplishments of the Detectives and the successes achieved during the 2010 year. Our Detectives continue to support quality public safety by delivering respectful, professional and dependable investigative services. Our success could only be accomplished with the support of our local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

To conclude, I want to express my sincere appreciation to the men and women of this organization. I am truly proud to be the Chief Detective of this unit.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael J. Gombar, Chief County Detective

# 2010 PROGRAMS

In 2010, the Berks County District Attorney's Office, Berks County Detectives, partnered with the Berks County Solid Waste Authority to collect unused and unwanted prescription medications from residents of Berks County.



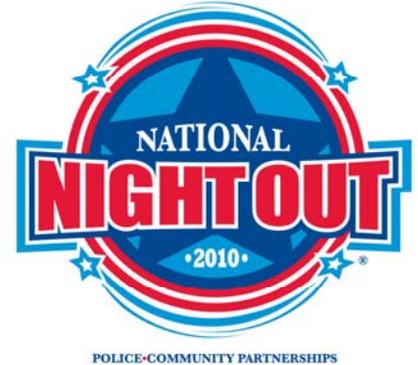
Berks County Detectives assisted the Berks County Solid Waste Authority for the annual spring and fall pharmaceutical collections. The spring collection was held at the Exeter Police Department. The fall collection was hosted at First Energy Stadium. A total of 519 residents participated in the events. 1844 pounds of pharmaceuticals were collected at the events. There was no cost to Berks County residents.

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.



# 2010 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 3, 2010
- **National Night Out**, West Reading Police Department, August 3, 2010
- **Berks Connections—BCPS Annual Softball Tournament**, August 2010
- **City of Reading Holiday Parade**, Reading, PA, November 27, 2010.



# 2010 SPECIAL EVENTS

## 2010 National Victim Rights Walk

Each year the nation sets aside one week in April to raise awareness about victims' rights. In 2010, National Crime Victims' Rights Week provided an opportunity for us to raise awareness of the foundation of victims' rights – Fairness, Dignity, and Respect – and to recommit to honoring those values by ensuring that all victims are afforded their legal rights and provided with assistance as they face the financial, physical, and emotional impact of crime.

National Crime Victims Rights Week reminds us that crime can strike anyone at any time. Statistics say that 8 out of 10 Americans will become a crime victim at least once in their lifetime. Therefore, victims' rights are everyone's rights.

The Berks County District Attorney's Office Victim/Witness Unit sponsors these events annually. Detectives from the Berks County Detectives assist with this worthwhile event.





# Crash Reconstruction Task Force

The Berks County Crash Reconstruction Task Force was formed in 2010 to support law enforcement efforts throughout the county by providing trained and experienced investigators to assist with the critical and difficult task associated with fatal accident scene investigations.

The Task Force consists of 15 police officers from 11 participating police departments. The Task Force is headed by Detective Nicholas Bolognese of the Berks County District Attorney's Office.





# Internet Safety Grant

The Verizon Foundation has awarded the Berks County District Attorney's Office two grants totaling \$32,000 to further develop programs involving Internet Safety.

Assistant District Attorney Kelly Kline, Detective Heather Rhoads and Detective Christopher Erb travel to local schools, and other places in the community to speak to students, parents, and citizens to warn them of the dangers facing us as a result of the Internet.

The funds have allowed the office to purchase additional equipment to enhance the programs and to develop media.

In 2010, members of the District Attorney's staff traveled to fifteen locations throughout Berks County and spoke to over 2200 attendees about Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying.



## 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 2010, 202 law enforcement officers from Berks County received free training in the courses listed below.

- May 10-12, 2010 - Digital Photography for Law Enforcement
- June 8-10, 2010 — Standardized Field Sobriety Testing
- June 22-24, 2010 — Fundamentals of Traffic Collisions
- July 7—9 , 2010—Drug Interdiction
- July 2010 — Momentum Analysis
- September 21, 2010 - Evidence Technician Update
- October 4-8 , 2010 - 40 Hour Evidence Technician Course
- November 11, 2010 - Courtroom Testimony
- November 15, 2010 — Human Trafficking



# Digital Photography for Law Enforcement

The course was designed to assist qualified police officers in achieving a level of proficiency to successfully complete essential crime scene, close-up, investigative, and surveillance photographic assignments. This proficiency will come as a result of in depth classroom instruction followed by hands on use of a digital camera package supplied by the Berks County District Attorney's Office. Upon completion of the exercises, the students had the knowledge to properly transfer and save the captured images for evidentiary use and ultimately prepare images for courtroom presentation.

District Attorney John T. Adams provided funding for the equipment utilized in this course. Each two man team retained possession of the photographic equipment for their respective police departments. In many cases, this equipment was a vast upgrade to the photographic equipment they previously used.

In 2010, the following police departments participated in this training:

## **Pennsylvania State Police**

**Sinking Spring**

**Shillington**

**Exeter Township**

**Tilden Township**

**Caernarvon Township**

**Berks Lehigh Regional**

**Robeson Township**

**Lower Heidelberg**

**Amity Township**





# 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, sponsor a 40 hour evidence technician course. The course is offered free of charge to police officers in Berks County. The course is held annually at the Berks County Fire Training Center. All officers are trained in all aspects of evidence collection and preservation. The course concludes with the investigation of a mock homicide crime scene.



In 2010, the following police departments participated in this training:

- |                              |                       |                    |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Berks-Lehigh Regional</b> | <b>Amity Township</b> | <b>Shillington</b> |
| <b>Bern Township</b>         | <b>Birdsboro</b>      | <b>Bally</b>       |
| <b>Sinking Spring</b>        | <b>Reading</b>        |                    |





## Criminal Investigations Section

The Berks County Detectives Criminal Investigations Section is broken down into two distinct disciplines, the Crime Unit and Forensic Services. This section is comprised of seventeen detectives led by Lieutenant Todd Trupp.

The Crime Unit investigates allegations involving child abuse (physical and sexual in nature), elder abuse (physical and financial in nature) and major crimes. The Criminal Investigations Section's first line supervisor is Sergeant Gerardo Vega.

In addition to the duties listed above, detectives assigned to this unit handle collateral duties that involve the following disciplines:

- Megan's Law Enforcement
- Homeland Security
- Auto Theft Task Force
- Precious Metals
- Bingo Enforcement
- Berks County DUI Processing Center
- Bad Check Restitution Program

In 2010, the Berks County Commissioners agreed to fund two additional detectives for the Child Abuse Unit. This unit is now responsible for investigating the majority of child abuse allegations in Berks County.

Child abuse investigations increased by 133 percent in 2010. The Criminal Investigations Sections also saw an increase in fraud, which includes internet scams and contractor fraud. Fraud investigations across the board increased by 100 percent.



In 2010, Berks County Detectives charged Michelle Kalina with Criminal Homicide relative to the deaths of several infants, a case which gained national attention. The Criminal Investigations Section and Forensic Services Section worked closely with the Reading Police Department and Muhlenberg Township Police Department throughout this coordinated investigation. Kalina is currently incarcerated in Berks County Prison awaiting trial.

# BERKS COUNTY DETECTIVES



## Forensic Services

Forensic Services include AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System) Crime Scene Unit, Computer Forensics and Crash Reconstruction. The Forensics Services Section's first line supervisor is Sergeant Robert Johnson. Sergeant Johnson also runs Berks AFIS.

Automated fingerprint identification is the process of matching one or many unknown fingerprints against a database of known and unknown prints. Automated fingerprint identification systems are primarily used by law enforcement agencies for criminal identification initiatives, the most important of which include identifying a person suspected of committing a crime or linking a suspect to other unsolved crimes.

Berks AFIS carries the largest county operated case load of any AFIS operation in Pennsylvania. Berks AFIS also carries a larger case load than several Pennsylvania State Police AFIS labs.



Every police department in Berks County, including the Reading Police Department, submits fingerprints taken from crime scenes to Berks AFIS for identification. The Pennsylvania State Police do operate their own out-of-county AFIS labs, but submissions have been made through Berks AFIS to expedite their identification process.



The District Attorney's Office has been providing Computer Forensic Services since 1999. The caseload has increased annually. In 2010, 92 devices were submitted for examination, an increase of 32 percent from 2009. In 2010 the Computer Forensics Section obtained a Cellebrite Unit to forensically examine cellphones and smart phones. This device was used on several homicide investigations in Berks County.

The Berks County Crash Reconstruction Task Force assisted local police departments on thirty-two occasions in 2010. The majority of these investigations resulted in criminal charges being filed against the responsible vehicle operator.



# Criminal Investigations Section Statistical Comparison

## **FORENSIC SERVICES**

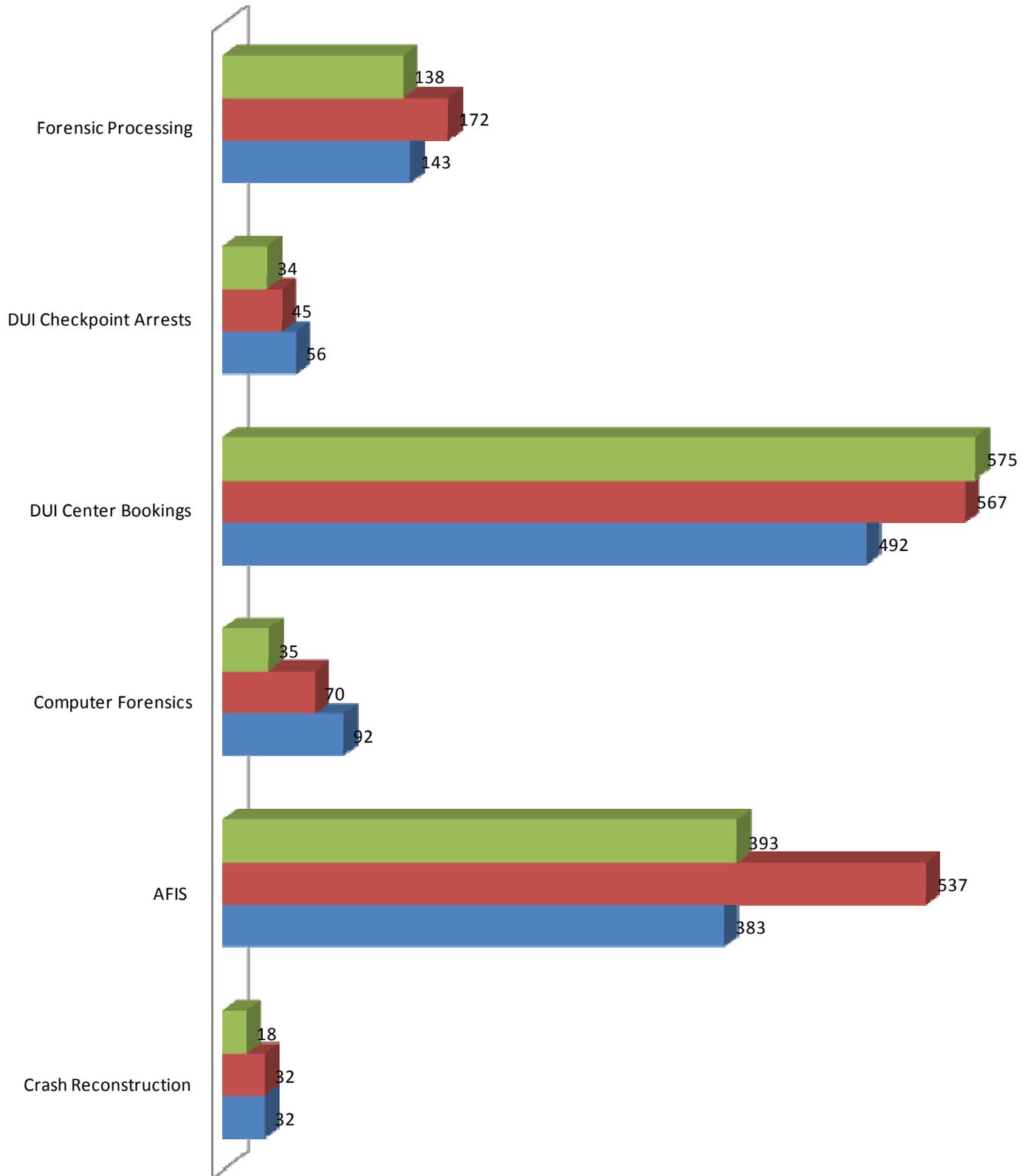
<b><u>INCIDENT TYPE</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2008</u></b>
<b>Crash Reconstruction</b>	32	32	18
<b>AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System)</b>	383	537	393
<b>Computer Forensics</b>	92	70	35
<b>DUI Center Bookings</b>	492	567	575
<b>DUI Checkpoint Arrests</b>	56	45	34
<b>Forensic Processing</b>	143	172	138

## **CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS**

<b><u>INCIDENT TYPE</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2008</u></b>
<b>Assist Other Police Departments</b>	35	65	55
<b>Child Abuse DA Cases</b>	480	210	191
<b>Domestic Abuse</b>	103	67	4
<b>Elderly—Physical</b>	2	2	2
<b>Elderly—Financial</b>	12	12	28
<b>Fraud—All Types</b>	287	136	70

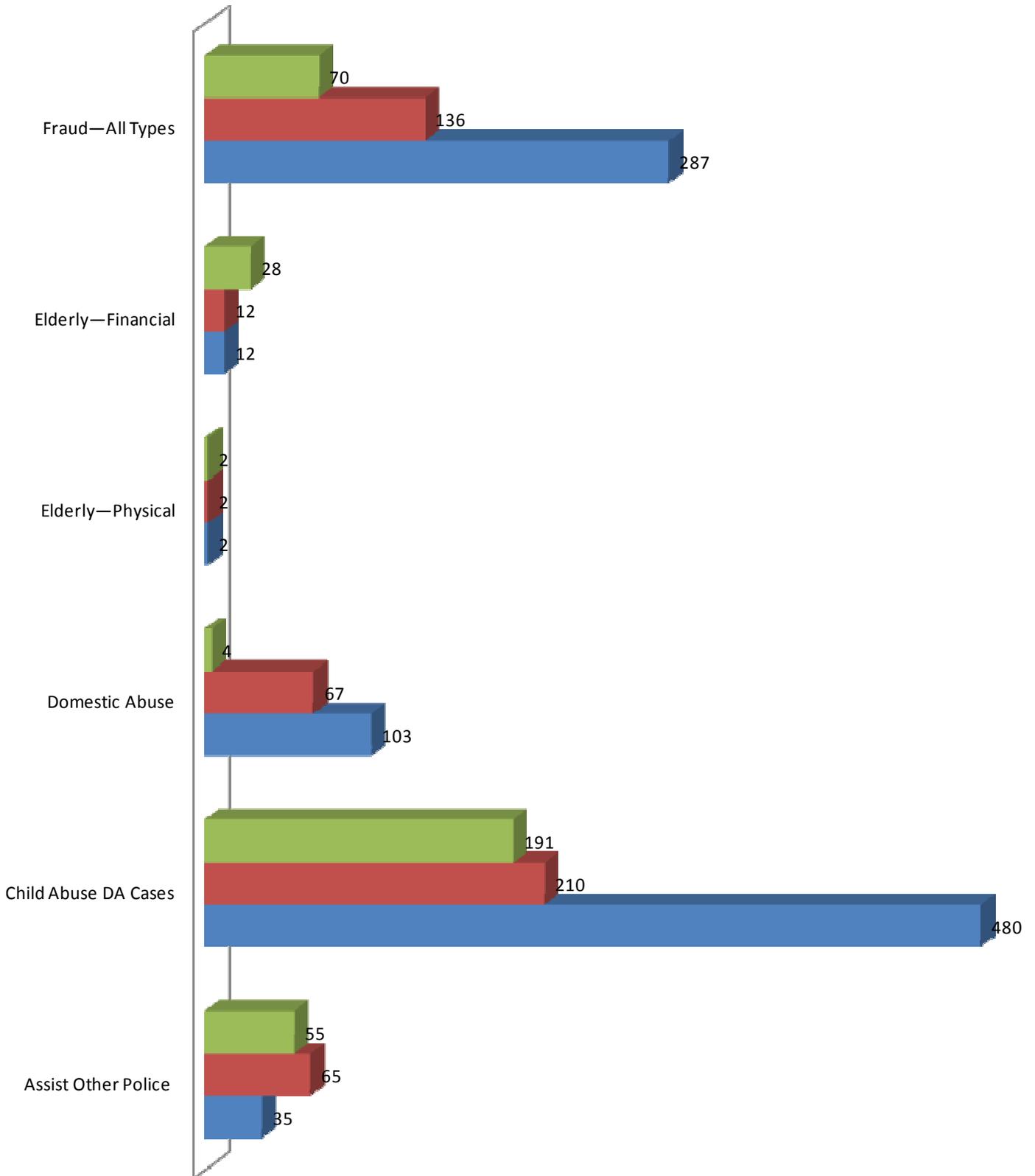
# Forensic Services Incident Comparison

2008 2009 2010



# Criminal Investigations Incident Comparisons

■ 2008 ■ 2009 ■ 2010



# 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.

In 2010, the number of bad check offenses in Berks County, as reported to the Bad Check Restitution Program, dropped significantly.

	2008	2009	2010
<b>Restitution Returned</b>	<b>\$41,030</b>	<b>\$68,256</b>	<b>\$56,973</b>
<b>Checks Filed</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>963</b>	<b>649</b>
<b>Victims Filing</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>229</b>
<b>Class Attendance</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>132</b>

**Total Program Satisfaction Rating in 2010 was 4.2 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.

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.



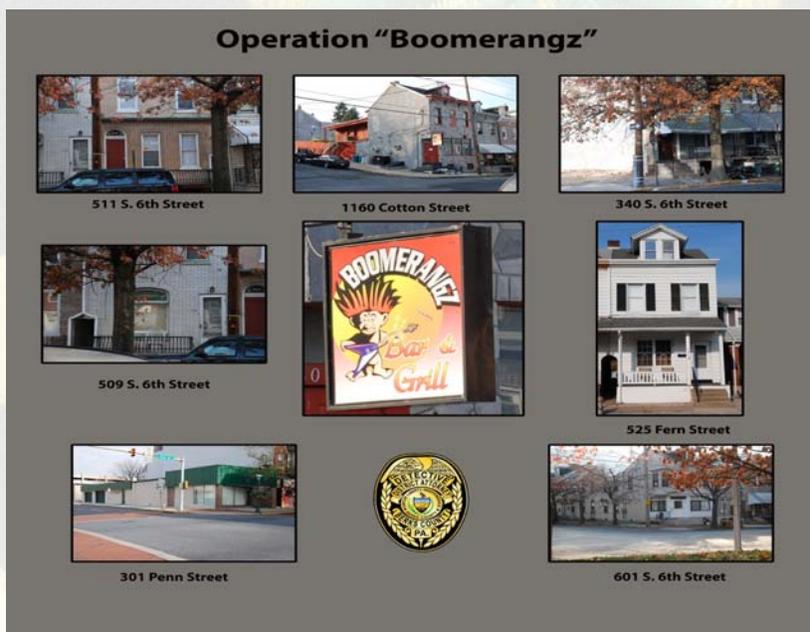
The year began with the continuing investigations into prostitution activities occurring at oriental massage parlors in Berks County. From January thru December of 2010, Berks County Detectives and members of the Drug Task Force executed a total of fourteen (14) search warrants at various massage parlors located throughout Berks County, arresting thirty-one (31) women for prostitution charges and seizing approximately \$39,096.00 in U.S. Currency and related paraphernalia. Agents from the Department of Homeland Security (ICE) assisted in these investigations and helped in determining the legal citizenship status of twenty-two (22) of these defendants.



In June of 2010, Berks County Detectives assisted police from the City of Reading, the Pennsylvania State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) with an investigation that concluded with the arrests of 25 street-level drug dealers. They were charged with possession, intent to deliver and delivery of drugs to an undercover police officer. Berks County Drug Task Force members also assisted the Reading Police and Federal Bureau of Investigation with an operation involving a Blood's street gang which resulted in the arrests of nineteen (19) individuals on various drug related charges.

# Narcotics Section

In August of 2010, Berks County Detectives focused on drug activity at a local bar called Boomerangs located on the south side of the City of Reading. Detectives utilized wiretaps and electronic surveillance in this investigation. In December, seven search warrants were executed and nine individuals were arrested. Berks County Detectives seized five pounds of marijuana, 2 pounds of cocaine and one pound of methamphetamine, with a combined value of \$96,250.00. Detectives also seized four handguns, eight vehicles and \$92,835 in U.S. Currency.



# Narcotics Section

In 2010, detectives spearheaded an investigation into an internet prostitution escort business in Berks County. During this investigation, detectives learned that the business was being operated by Paul Sewell, AKA: "GOD". Sewell advertised as many as twenty women of different ethnic backgrounds to facilitate his prostitution operation. He directed the women to address him as "GOD" and required each of them to be branded with a tattoo on the back of their necks, identifying each with a nickname prefaced with the possessive word "GOD'S". Some the branding names included: God's Star, God's Angel, God's Secret, God's Blessing, God's Jewel and God's Property. Sewell conducted his business from two locations in the City of Reading.

On July 28, 2010, detectives dismantled Mr. Sewell's illegal business. Search warrants were served on the aforementioned locations and arrest warrants were served on Sewell along with three prostitutes. Evidence revealed that Sewell was trafficking minors and forced adults to participate against their will.



Detectives continued the investigation and teamed their efforts with the FBI. Together they uncovered additional information and evidence. The cooperative efforts with the FBI resulted in a federal indictment against Paul Sewell and co-defendant Michael Johnson. This indictment was filed under seal on November 4, 2010. If convicted, Sewell and Johnson face maximum possible sentences of life imprisonment. This was the first internet prostitution operation ever prosecuted by a law enforcement agency from Berks County.

## Statistical Comparison

<u>Statistics for the year</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Number of open cases:	135	165	162
Number of arrests:	132	158	178
Number of search warrants served:	13	22	84
Number of vehicles seized:	8	9	20
Total value:	\$40,000.00	\$71,000.00	\$74,600.00
Number of cash seizures:	17	10	48
Total value:	\$150,549.56	\$14,829.00	\$174,398.50
Total number of weapons seized:	8	12	40

# 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.

	2008	2009	2010
<b>NUMBER OF PATROLS</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>CONTACTS UNDER SUPERVISION</b>	<b>1159</b>	<b>1056</b>	<b>718</b>
<b>NUMBER OF HOME VISITS</b>	<b>1119</b>	<b>892</b>	<b>673</b>
<b>DETAINED ON PAROLE VIOLATIONS</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>DETAINED</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>NEW CHARGES</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>



# Recruitments - Retirements



The District Attorney's Detective Unit proudly welcomed Detective Harold T. Shenk to the Unit in January of 2010. He is assigned to the Crime Unit, where the majority of his duties will focus on child physical and sexual abuse. Detective Shenk served twenty years with the Reading Police Department.



Detective Ivan R. Martinez also joined the District Attorney's Detective Unit in January of 2010 after proudly serving twenty years with the Reading Police Department. He is assigned to the Crime Unit, where the majority of his duties will focus on child physical and sexual abuse. The District Attorney's Detective Unit proudly welcomes Detective Martinez to the Unit.



The District Attorney's Detective Unit proudly welcomed Detective Christopher M. Erb to the Unit in March of 2010. He is assigned to the District Attorney's Forensic Unit, where he will participate in major crime scene investigations and specialize in computer forensics. Detective Erb served twenty-one years with the Lancaster City Bureau of Police. Det. Erb was previously assigned to the Philadelphia FBI Regional Computer Forensic Lab.



Detective Todd F. Harris joined the District Attorney's Detective Unit in February of 2010 after serving over twenty-one years with the Pennsylvania State Police, leaving with the rank of Corporal. He is assigned to the Narcotics Unit, where he investigates drug trafficking, prostitution and illegal gambling. The District Attorney's Detective Unit proudly welcomes Detective Harris to the Unit.



Detective Donald Stewart retired from the District Attorney's Detective Unit after nine years of outstanding service. He was assigned to the Forensic Unit, where he specialized in computer forensic investigations. The detectives will miss his contribution to the Unit.

# Berks Lodge #71 Police Officer of the Year

Detective James D. Gresh was the recipient of the Berks Lodge #71, 2010 Police Officer of the Year Award. This annual award is presented to one deserving police officer from Berks County for his/her outstanding contribution and dedicated work in the field of law enforcement.

Detective Gresh was given this award for spearheading an investigation which led to the dismantling of the first internet prostitution operation ever by a law enforcement officer in Berks County. His passionate hard work put a stop to Paul Sewell's prostitution operation, which promoted the exploitation of minors, and the degradation and physical violence against women. Detective Gresh is a hero and we are profoundly proud of him.



# 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 2011. 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 \$24,400 from the Federal Justice Assistance Grant. This grant will be used for equipment and training and for investigative needs for the Berks County District Attorney's Office Crash Reconstruction Task Force.

## National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators Grant

The Berks County District Attorney's Office Drug Task Force was awarded the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigator's Grant in the amount of \$5,000. NADDI's LE (Law Enforcement) Grant is sponsored by Purdue Pharma to help address the complex problem of prescription drug abuse and diversion through the provision of resources to local law enforcement entities engaged in combating the abuse and diversion of scheduled prescription drugs. The LE Grant Program is designed to recognize law enforcement agencies that have achieved excellence in the investigation of pharmaceutical diversion

## 2010 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice 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 2010, the Berks County District Attorney's Office applied and was awarded in excess of \$75,000 dollars to purchase equipment for our forensic services section. The equipment will be used for Crime Scene Management, Crash Reconstruction and Computer Forensics.

## Verizon Internet Safety Grant

The Berks County District Attorney's Office received two grants totaling \$32,000 from the Verizon Foundation. The grants were awarded to further develop programs involving Internet safety for the citizens of Berks County.

# 2010 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  
Marc Creary

CHILD ABUSE

Donna Tothero  
Ronald Linderman  
Richard Steffie  
Ivan Martinez  
Harold Shenk

CORPORAL —NARCOTICS

Scott Errington

COMPUTER FORENSICS

Heather Rhoads  
Christopher Erb

NARCOTICS

Camilla Karns  
Trevor Ritter  
James Gresh  
Anthony DeFazio  
Edwin Santiago  
Douglass Weaver  
Joseph Walsh  
Nelson Ortiz  
Todd Harris

CRASH RECONSTRUCTION

Nicholas Bolognese

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Michael Kurtz  
James Kellett  
Robert Heiden

PROPERTY - FORFEITURE

Jack Killian

AUTO THEFT TASK FORCE

David McQuate