

From the Office of the Sheriff:

“Prompt Response is Paramount”

During my initial campaign for the office of Sheriff in 2002 I promised faster response times to emergency calls for service. At the time our average response time (from time of call until time of deputy's arrival) was 12 minutes 16 seconds. This was unacceptable and we initiated numerous changes to improve our response. In March of 2006 I penned a column which reported on our initiatives and we had in fact reduced our response time to 10 minutes 44 seconds. Reducing our response 1 minute 32 seconds may not appear to be a huge success, but it is. For those who have been on the waiting end of an emergency response you have sat through those minutes and seconds, which often feel like hours. We also knew we could do better.

I felt it necessary to re-visit this subject for a whole host of reasons. The primary motivation was the recent media coverage of law enforcement response times in the City of Milwaukee. Media interviews with citizens reflect they wait several hours for a response to a personal injury traffic crash, days for a burglary and no response what so ever for other calls which we respond to immediately. I also wanted to gauge the impact of several of our initiatives we implemented over the past few years. Now, we are not Milwaukee but some lessons can be learned by the investigation the media conducted regarding response times to calls for service by the citizens of Milwaukee.

So, in reviewing our 2011 response to emergencies such as traffic crashes, EMS calls, domestic violence, fights, and alarms, our average time from call to arrival on-scene was 5 minutes 13 seconds. This was a pleasant surprise. We cut the response time in half compared to 2006. This is remarkable customer service.

There are a host of reasons for this success. I will attribute most of the success to the passion our deputies have in responding to those in need of help. They understand the feeling of helplessness and want to be there as soon as they safely can to provide the relief you are seeking. We also know the sooner we arrive and mitigate the situation the less likely the call could escalate to something more serious. Part of the passion and motivation behind these deputies is the appreciation shown by you the caller. I routinely receive cards, emails, and phone calls complimenting the staff for their work and thanks for the prompt and professional handling of your case. Your thanks are greatly appreciated.

We also contribute this success to our E911 Center staff that answer the calls and assign them to the nearest deputy. We have drastically reduced the amount of time this process takes by installing our squads with GPS locators. The E911 staff can now instantly see where the deputies are located in the county in relation to the call. We also assign squads to sectors, a tool which should ensure a squad is always within 8-10 miles of any residence at any time day or night. Should we need a more immediate response, we mutual aid our partners from the municipal agencies to assist.

To all the hunters out there, have a safe and legal hunting season. Identify your target, wear plenty of orange, and only hunt on property in which you have permission or own. Thanks for listening [tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us](mailto:tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us).