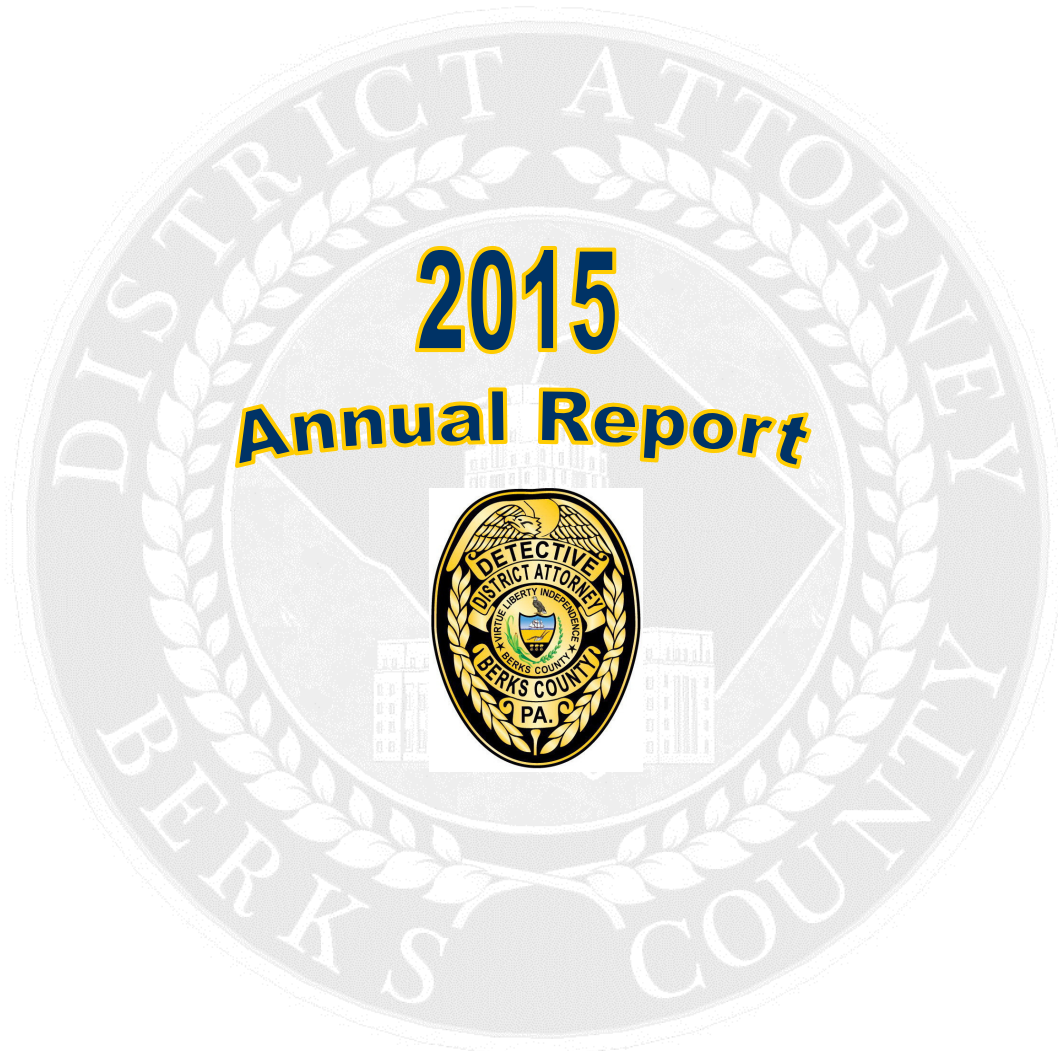


# DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

## BERKS COUNTY DETECTIVES



John T. Adams, District Attorney  
Michael J. Gombar, Chief County Detective  
Lt. Todd E. Trupp, Criminal Investigations Section  
Lt. Nelson Ortiz, Narcotics 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, a sword, and a laurel wreath. Above the shield is a banner with the words "LIBERTY INDEPENDENCE". The outer ring of the seal contains the text "BERKS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY" and "PA." at the bottom. The 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

### Message from the Chief

As the Chief Detective of Berks County, it is an honor to present the 2015 Annual Report of the Berks County District Attorney Detective Unit. The personnel of our detective unit, both sworn and civilian are dedicated and professional individuals that are committed to providing a dependable investigative service to the citizens of Berks County. Each and every one of our members, are an integral part in the success of our detective unit. Each year we strive to improve our services and strengthen our partnership with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.



I encourage you to take the time to review the vast amount of information contained within this annual report. This report will provide an overview of the District Attorney's Detective Unit and various detailed statistical information that you may find useful.

I am extremely proud of our accomplishments and the successes we achieved during this past year, and we look forward to the challenges of a new year.

Lastly, 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



# 2015 PROGRAMS



## Pharmaceutical Drop Box Program

In 2013, Berks County District Attorney John T. Adams announced the launching of Berks County Pharmaceutical Drop Box Program in Berks County, at the Berks County AG Center. This program was developed as a cooperative effort between the District Attorney's Office, the Council on Chemical Abuse (COCA), and Berks County Solid Waste Authority.

This pharmaceutical / medication drop box disposal program will allow Berks County residents to discard unused or unwanted medication year round at secure locations.

Medications are collected in many forms including: tablet, liquid, ointment, inhaler, powder or patch. This pharmaceutical/medication drop box disposal program will allow Berks County residents to discard unused or unwanted medication year round at secure locations.

Drop Boxes are located at the following locations:

- Amity Police Department, 2004 Weavertown Road, Douglassville
- Bally Police Department, 425 Chestnut Street, Bally
- Berks County Coroners Office, 1047 MacArthur Road, Bern Township
- Berks County Detectives, Berks Co. AG Center, 1238 Welfare Rd., Leesport
- Bern Twp. Police Department, 1069 Old Bernville Rd., Bern Twp.
- Birdsboro Police Department, 200 East Main Street, Birdsboro
- Boyertown Police Department, 100 S. Washington St, Boyertown
- Brecknock Police Department, 889 Alleghenyville Road, Mohnton
- Caernarvon Twp. Police Department, 3307 Main St., Morgantown
- Central Berks Regional P.D., 2147 Perkiomen Ave., Mt. Penn
- Exeter Twp. Police Department, 4975 DeMoss Rd., Exeter Twp.
- Fleetwood Police Department 110 West Arch St., Fleetwood
- Kutztown Police Department, 45 Railroad St., Kutztown
- Muhlenberg Police Department, 210 George Street, Muhlenberg Twp.
- Penn State Berks Campus, Tulpehocken Road, Spring Township
- Reading Police Department, 815 Washington Street, Reading
- Shillington Police Department, 999 East Broad Street, Shillington
- Sinking Spring Police Department, 3940 Penn Ave., Sinking Spring
- Spring Twp. Police Department, 2800 Shillington Rd., Sinking Spring
- Tilden Township Police Department, 870 Hex Highway, Hamburg
- Tulpehocken Police Department, 22 Rehrersberg Road, Rehrersberg
- West Reading Police Department, 500 Chestnut Street, West Reading
- Western Berks Regional P.D., 100 N. Reber Street, Wernersville
- Wyomissing Police Department, 22 Reading Blvd, Wyomissing



In 2015, 7420 pounds were collected, an increase of 29% over the 5516 pounds collected in

# Criminal Investigations Section

In general, the police departments in Berks County are staffed by twenty-five or fewer sworn officers. The majority of these officers are assigned to patrol duties and have limited specialized training. These departments must balance their resources, manpower and finances with the concerns and demands of the community. Often it becomes difficult to stretch their available resources and address community issues.

The Criminal Investigation Section is comprised of two distinct entities, Forensic Services and Crime Unit. Detectives from the Criminal Investigation Section work closely with police officers from over forty local Berks County police departments, state and federal law enforcement agencies. The majority of the Berks County Detectives are seasoned veterans with a vast amount of police experience and expertise, which they acquired from specialized schools and training. The Berks County Detectives offer their specialized services to those departments that do not have the expertise and/or resources to successfully investigate a specific crime. The Criminal Investigation Section is led by Lieutenant Todd Trupp.

Sgt. Gerardo Vega and Sgt. Harold Shenk are the first line supervisors for the crime unit. The Crime Unit is responsible for the following:



- Auto Theft Task Force
- Bad Check Restitution Program
- Bingo Enforcement
- Child Abuse
- Domestic Violence Unit
- Financial Crimes
- Elderly Abuse, physical and financial
- Megan's Law Enforcement
- Precious Metals Unit

Sgt. Robert Johnson is the first line supervisor for Forensic Services. Forensic Services is responsible for the following:



- AFIS—Automated Fingerprint Identification System
- Computer and Cellular Telephone Forensics
- Crash Reconstruction
- Berks County DUI Processing Center
- Pharmaceutical Drop Box Program





# Criminal Investigations Section

## Statistical Comparison

### CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

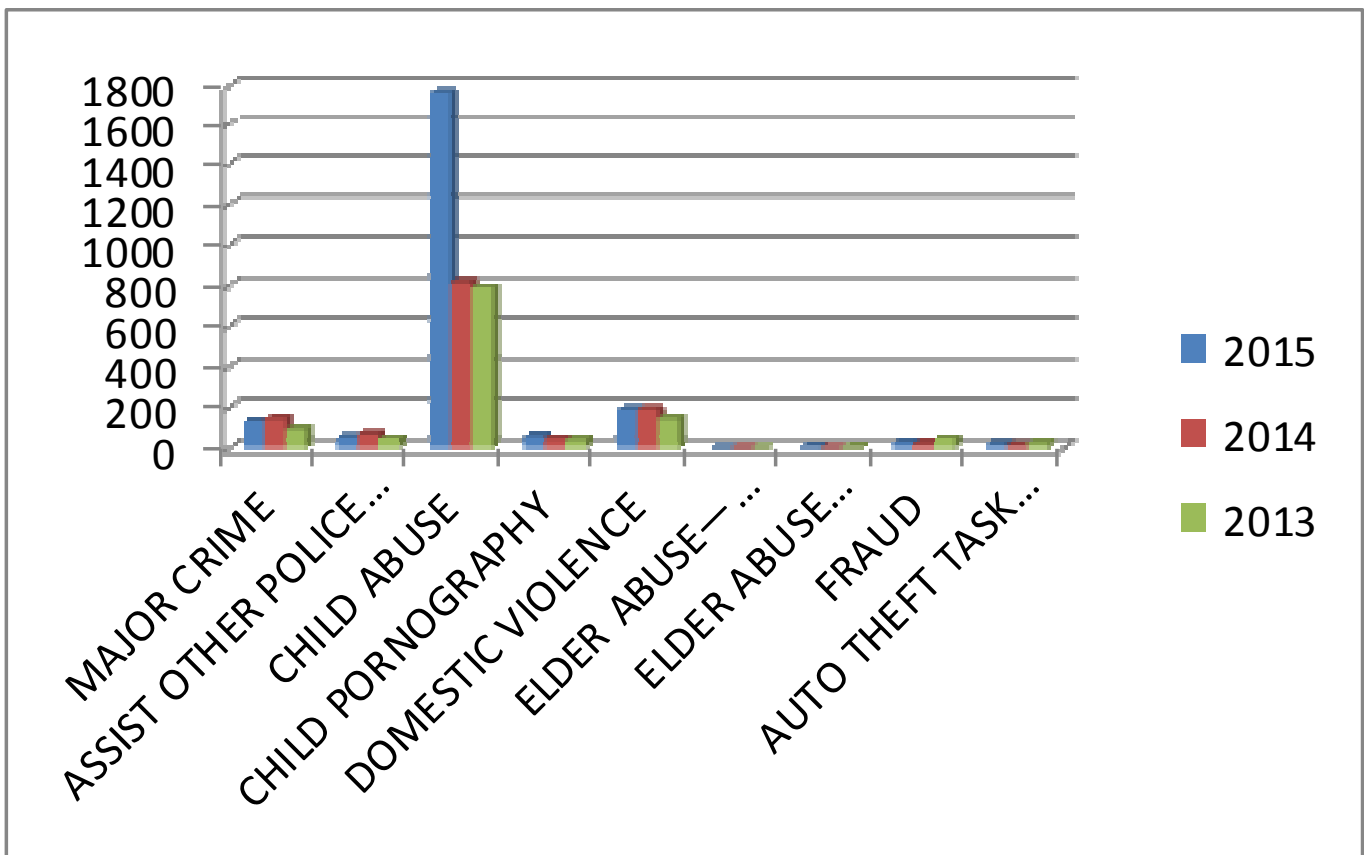
	2015	2014	2013
MAJOR CRIME	137	147	94
ASSIST OTHER POLICE DEPARTMENT	52	69	48
CHILD ABUSE	1769	816	796
CHILD PORNOGRAPHY	58	47	41
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	192	191	147
ELDER ABUSE—PHYSICAL	2	1	2
ELDER ABUSE FINANCIAL	5	2	4
FRAUD	28	21	48
AUTO THEFT TASK FORCE	20	11	24

### FORENSIC SERVICES

INCIDENT TYPE	2015	2014	2013
CRASH RECONSTRUCTION	27	26	15
AFIS (AUTOMATED FINGERPRINT IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM)	567	552	695
COMPUTER FORENSICS	135	129	111
DUI BOOKING CENTER	602	665	620
FORENSIC PROCESSING	122	79	136
TELEPHONE KIOSK	42	46	13

# Criminal Investigations Chart

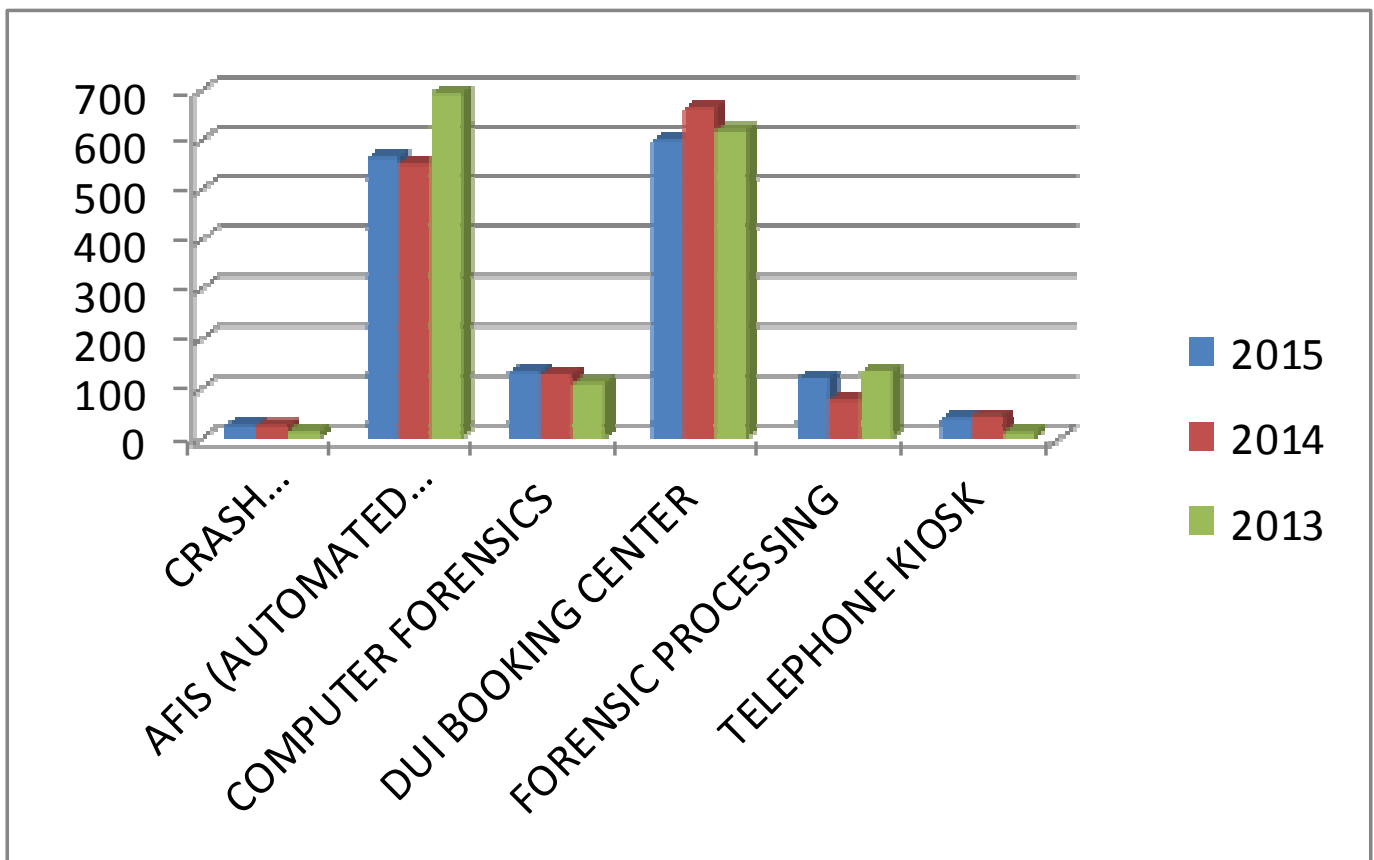
In 2015, the Crime Section experienced the fourth consecutive year of growth in the area of child sexual and physical abuse. The reporting law was changed in the latter part of 2014, so we saw a large increase in the number of reports of alleged Physical Child Abuse cases. Child abuse more than doubled from 2014 to 2015. Two additional detectives were hired as a result to work exclusively on Child Abuse investigations. In 2015, Berks County Detectives served 1849 child victims of child sexual and physical abuse while investigating 1769 separate incidents.





# Forensic Services Chart

In 2015, the total number of calls for Forensic Services remained on par with 2014. We did experience an increase in Forensic Processing as we assisted the Reading Police Department with their case load. The District Attorney hired two civilian Computer Forensic Analysts directly upon graduation from Bloomsburg University. The civilians being the expertise and professionalism that is expected from the District Attorney's Office.



# 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. **BAD CHECK RESTITUTION PROGRAM**

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.

The program has certainly been a success, evidence by the fact that merchant losses have decreased every year since it's inception in 2008. Victim filings have decreased by almost one hundred percent in 2015. While the restitution is down, that it as of a direct result of fewer cases filed with the District Attorney's Office.

	2015	2014	2013
Restitution Returned	\$ 17,845.06	\$50,115.11	\$28,820.17
Checks Filed	236	847	568
Victim Filing	124	237	195
Class Attendance	34	97	75

# Narcotics Section

## The Berks County District Attorney's Drug Task Force

The Berks County District Attorney's Drug Task Force is committed to investigating and enforcing local, state, and federal laws as they apply to individuals and corrupt organizations or gangs that may be responsible for the distribution and manufacturing of illegal controlled substances, and the illicit or unlawful possession of firearms within Berks County. The drug task force is comprised of eleven detectives and one intelligence analyst, led by Lieutenant Nelson Ortiz. There are many Berks County police officers who participate in the drug task force, which include federal and state agents, state troopers, and city and county officers. The Drug Task force participates with the following Federal Law Enforcement Task Forces: Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

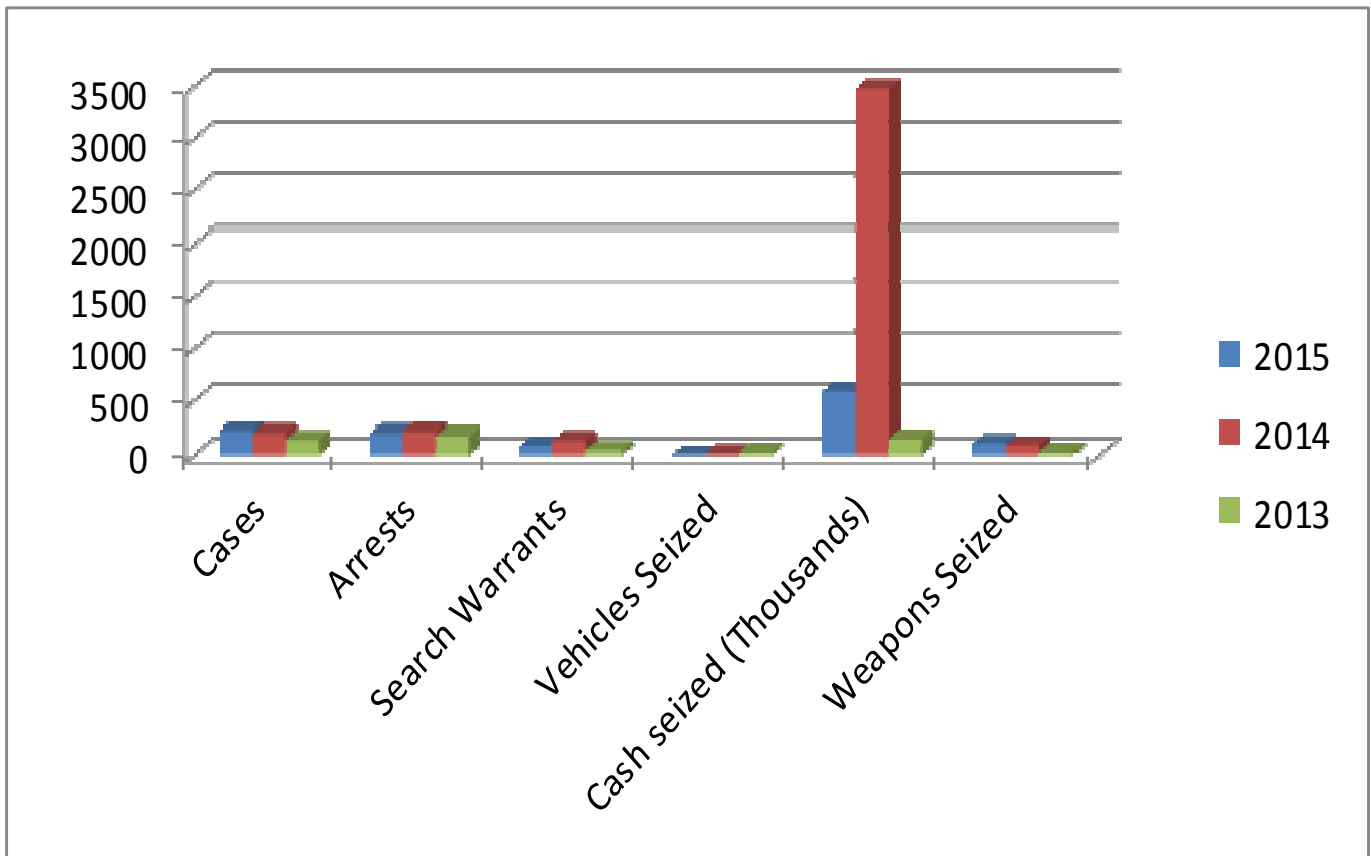
In 2015, the Narcotics Unit was involved in many investigations with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies. The Unit continued to work closely with members of the Berks County Drug Task Force to decrease drug activity throughout the County.



# Narcotics Section

## Statistical Comparison

Type	2015	2014	2013
Cases	226	202	142
Arrests	200	218	175
Search Warrants	85	136	47
Vehicles Seized	10	16	21
Cash seized (Thousands)	587	3480	150
Weapons Seized	107	90	26



# 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. Bar and after hours business checks were conducted by the team, in an attempt to curb late night violence associated with these types of establishments. 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 District Attorney's Office, Adult Probation Office, Juvenile Probation Office, Reading Police Department and the Berks County Sheriff's Office. It is the responsibility of Lieutenant Nelson Ortiz to coordinate Operation Nightlight and maintain the scheduling, statistics, and budget.

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Number of Patrols	59	43	48	24
Bar Checks	0	630	429	343
Number of Home Visits	724	584	266	270
Detained on Parole Violations	17	66	65	39
New Charges	24	50	84	69



# Promotions - Recruitments - Retirements



Detective George Taveras joined the District Attorney's Narcotics Unit in January of 2015 after serving 14 years with the Reading Police Department. During his career he held the positions of patrolman, patrol operations instructor and criminal investigator. In 2008, Detective Taveras was the recipient of the prestigious Reading Police Officer of the Year Award.



Detective David A. Reidler joined the District Attorney's Forensic Services Unit in January of 2015 after serving 20 years with the Reading Police Department. During his career he held the position of major evidence technician. Detective Reidler is a highly qualified in all aspects of major and minor crime scene investigations.



Detective Craig Ziemba joined the District Attorney's Forensic Services Unit in April of 2015 after serving 21 years with the Reading Police Department. During his career he held the position of major evidence technician. Detective Ziemba is a highly qualified in all aspects of major and minor crime scene investigations.



Detective Frank C. DeBellis joined the District Attorney's Child Abuse Unit in October of 2015 after serving the past 22 years with the Pennsylvania State Police. In 2011 Detective DeBellis was promoted to Corporal and assigned to the Criminal Investigation Section, stationed at Troop L-Hamburg Barracks. Detective DeBellis has successful experience in diverse areas of all types of criminal investigations, including homicide, robbery, rape, burglary and theft. Also, Detective DeBellis was a member of the PA State Police Special Emergency Response Team.

# Promotions - Recruitments - Retirements



Detective John M. Solecki joined the District Attorney's Child Abuse Unit in October of 2015 after serving the past 24 years with Reading Police Department. In 2002 he was promoted to Detective Sergeant in the Criminal Investigation Section. Prior to working with the Reading Police Department, Detective Solecki worked as a patrolman from 1984 to 1992 with the Sinking Spring Police Department, Wernersville Police Department, South Heidelberg Police Department and the Newport News, VA Police Department. During his 32 years of law enforcement experience, Detective Solecki has participated in numerous successful major crime investigations, including homicides, robbery, rape, burglary and theft.



Christopher Luciano and Sophie Eddinger joined the District Attorney's Forensic Services Unit in 2015 as Computer Forensic Specialist. Both Christopher and Sophie are recent graduates from Bloomsburg University with Bachelor of Science degrees in Digital Forensics. As Computer Forensic Specialist they examine computers and other hardware devices, including cellular telephones and portable devices, to recover data in support of our criminal investigations and prosecutions.



Jessica J. Ebling was promoted to Intelligence Analyst in May of 2015 and assigned to the Narcotics Unit. She graduated from Shippensburg University in 2002 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice Administration. Previously, she held the positions of office support III and evidence intake.

# Promotions - Recruitments - Retirements



Detective Ronald E. Linderman retired from the District Attorney's Detective Unit in February of 2015 after eight years of outstanding service. He started his law enforcement career in 1979 with the Cumru Police Department and served twenty-seven proud years with them. We wish him the best with his well deserved retirement.

# Awards



The 2015 Caron Foundation Community Service Award - Caron Foundation is an organization that operates drug and alcohol residential treatment centers in Wernersville, Pennsylvania and three other states.

Caron's Community Service Awards pay tribute in a tangible and meaningful way to individuals, organizations and institutions that have made an outstanding contribution in the on going battle against alcohol and drug addiction in the community.

The 2015 Caron Foundation Community Service Award was presented to Sergeant Pasquale Leporace of the Berks County District Attorney's Drug Task Force for his continued battle of not only enforcing the drug laws of PA, but for his relentless dedicated efforts to prevent illegal drug usage in our Berks County community through education and awareness.



# 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 2015. 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 \$13,056 from the Edward Byrne Grant. This grant is used for equipment and training for the Berks County District Attorney's Office Criminal Investigations Unit.

## 2015 Coverdell Forensic Science Grant

Prior to 2015, the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant was awarded to states and units of local government to help improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services.

In 2015, the purpose of the grant was to assist police crime laboratories in the pursuit of international accreditation in the field of Forensic Science.

As a result, the Berks County District Attorney's Office applied for and was awarded \$50,759 dollars, towards the goal of being named an accredited facility, under the standards set forth by the International Standards Organization.

The accreditation process is explained further on page 18.

# International Standards Accreditation Process

Starting in 2006, the Berks County Forensic Services Unit has applied for and has been the recipient of grant funds on an annual basis for Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Funds. Coverdell grants are administered by the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) with money from the Federal Government. The Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program (the Coverdell 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.



Over the years the Berks County Forensic Services Unit has used Coverdell funding to equip its lab and personnel with the most up-to-date equipment which has helped the unit reach the above stated Coverdell goals. In 2015 the focus of the grant was for the accreditation of Forensic Crime Laboratories/Units and/or the certification of Forensic Science Specialists. It has always been a stated long range goal of the Berks County Forensic Services Unit to become accredited under ISO standards to follow recommendations published by the National Academy of Sciences in the 2009 study, ***Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward***.

The 2015 Coverdell grant has provided funding in the amount of \$50,759 dollars to pay for the unit's accreditation. The Berks County FSU has made application to ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board to be accredited under standard ISO/IEC 17020. The standard is recognized globally and is a standard that was put forth by the International Standards Organization located in Geneva, Switzerland. The ISO is a body of 163 nations which adopts international standards for manufacturing, science, inspection, and any other process where quality is paramount. All ISO standards are focused on verifying quality work through a good Quality Management Program, internal and external assessments, and changes to procedures when the assessments indicate a problem.

It has always been the goal of the Berks County FSU to provide best quality service to our customers in each and every case. Accreditation will recognize the commitment to that goal as well as ensure constant checks and balances to maintain the best quality. The men and woman of the FSU look forward to meeting this goal in 2016 and providing the best quality service possible.

# 2015 Table of Organization

## CHIEF COUNTY DETECTIVE

Michael Gombar

## LIEUTENANT - CRIME

Todd Trupp

## LIEUTENANT - NARCOTICS

Nelson Ortiz

## SERGEANT - FORENSICS

Robert Johnson

## SERGEANT - CRIME

Gerardo Vega

## SERGEANT - NARCOTICS

Todd Harris

## FORENSIC SERVICES

Justin Morrow  
David Reidler

## CHILD ABUSE

Donna Tothero  
Ivan Martinez  
Michael Fick  
Christopher Santoro  
Anthony Garipoli  
Frank DeBellis

## NARCOTICS

Scott Errington  
James Gresh  
Joseph Walsh  
John Lackner

## COMPUTER FORENSICS

Christopher Luciano  
Sophie Eddinger

## SERGEANT - NARCOTICS

Pasquale Leporace

## CRASH RECONSTRUCTION

Nicholas Bolognese

## SERGEANT - CRIME

Harold Shenk

## NARCOTICS

Camilla Karns  
Edwin Santiago  
George Taveras  
Michael Rowe

## PROPERTY - FORFEITURE

Anthony DeFazio

## MAJOR CRIMES

Robert Heiden  
Pamela Mathias  
Thomas Weaver  
Trevor Ritter  
Heather Calabria  
John Solecki

## AUTO THEFT TASK FORCE

George Forsyth