



# City of Salem Sheriff's Office

---

## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



“TO SERVE WITH HUMILITY SO THAT WE BECOME  
THE EXAMPLE TO OTHERS”



*City of Salem Sheriff's Office*  
*Table of Contents*

**INTRODUCTION**

**Page**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Letter from Sheriff Staton               | 3 |
| Mission Statement and Guiding Principles | 4 |

**AGENCY ACTIVITIES**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Courthouse Security                                  | 5  |
| Transportation of Persons in Custody                 | 6  |
| Civil Process – Training                             | 7  |
| Sheriff's Workforce – Unclaimed and Indigent Persons | 8  |
| Community Involvement                                | 9  |
| Sheriff's Office Website and Social Media            | 12 |
| 2023 Brings Change                                   | 13 |
| Sheriff Appointments – Awards                        | 14 |
| Drugs in Roanoke Valley – Guide to Resources         | 17 |
| Goals and Objectives for 2024                        | 18 |
| Commendations or Concerns                            | 19 |

**AGENCY STATISTICS**

|                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| 2023 Workload Measures | 20 |
|------------------------|----|



Dear Citizen:

On behalf of the City of Salem Sheriff's Office, I offer you a copy of our 2023 Annual Report. As an accredited agency, this document is prepared to comply with standards set forth by the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC) and offers transparency of our operations. I hope you will find the report both interesting and informative.

While many agencies struggled in 2023 with recruitment and retention, and we were no exception, our struggles were minimal compared to others. We hired two new full-time and one part-time deputy and successfully transitioned our part-time Administrative Assistant position to full-time. I believe the reason we are so successful in our retention efforts is because of the positive culture within our agency. We genuinely care about one another and it's obvious in the daily interactions.

Our focus remains on our guiding principles and humility which allows us to stand apart from other agencies as we interact with citizens and community partners. The team improved on professional development, community relations opportunities and excelled in customer service. I am elated to offer you the best trained, most professional, and humble law enforcement staff in the Commonwealth of Virginia...in my humble opinion!

As always, it is a pleasure and an honor to serve as your Sheriff! Thank you!

Please reach out should you have any questions, concerns, or compliments.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "April M. Staton".

Sheriff April Staton

Contact Information: (540) 375-3040  
sheriff@salemva.gov





## **MISSION STATEMENT**

We, the professional men and women of the Salem Sheriff's Office are empowered to defend the Constitution of the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Through courtesy, care, trust, and commitment, we will work diligently to provide the most effective and safe delivery of court services to our citizens.

---

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

### **Integrity**

We have integrity. We serve the citizens with the highest moral and ethical standards. Honesty and moral courage guide us in our relations with all persons.

### **Respect**

We show respect. We treat each other and all people with respect in a consistent manner.

### **Professionalism**

We are professionals. We listen compassionately and act with respect, sincerity, and courtesy when interacting with each other and the citizens. We are firm in our convictions in upholding the laws, while treating others as we would want to be treated.

### **Commitment**

We are committed. We work in a partnership with court personnel, city officials, other law enforcement agencies and the citizens of Salem to gain mutual respect and appreciation for one another. Together we will provide responsive and efficient quality service through cooperation, problem solving, and accountability.

## **COURTHOUSE SECURITY**

One of the primary functions of the Salem Sheriff's Office is security of the courts. This responsibility includes ensuring the safety of all courthouse staff and members of the public who enter the building for court or personal business. For security reasons, we use the x-ray machine and magnetometer to screen every person who enters the courthouse for weapons and prohibited items.



At the front checkpoint, deputies scan visitors and the items they bring inside the courthouse.

They monitor the x-ray scanning machine and help direct visitors to the correct offices and courtrooms.

In 2023, there were 139 Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court sessions, 153 General District Court sessions, and 124 Circuit Court sessions. The Grand Jury met five (5) times.



## **TRANSPORTATION OF PERSONS IN CUSTODY**



Western Virginia Regional Jail staff and Salem deputies work together to ensure the safe transportation of inmates who have court dates at the Salem courthouse.

Our office is responsible for the safe transportation and handling of inmates who are scheduled for court appearances in Salem. Transportation may be from any local jail or detention facility in the Commonwealth of Virginia, unless the inmate is housed at the Western Virginia Regional Jail (WVRJ). Per our agreement, the WVRJ transportation staff deliver and pick up Salem inmates housed in their facility.

Our staff completed a total of 605 court transports in 2023. We transport inmates housed at the Roanoke County/Salem Jail to medical appointments or during emergencies as needed.

Other responsibilities include inmate transfers from one facility to another, mental health transports by court order, extraditions of inmates from other states, and any other court-ordered transportations issued by a judge.

We traveled 46,771 miles in performance of our duties. There were twenty-three (23) mental health transports.

## **CIVIL PROCESS**

Civil process service is the delivery of legal documents to named persons in a lawful manner. These documents typically arise from the courts, but we also process paperwork issued by or on behalf of attorneys, businesses, and members of the public.

Our staff answers questions people may have about the documents being served on them.

We processed 28,386 documents in 2023.



Deputy Akers posts a legal document at a Salem residence.

## **TRAINING**

The Salem Sheriff's Office is committed to ensuring that all appointees receive the best training possible to face the current challenges of law enforcement. Along with hundreds of hours of out-of-office training, we also completed in-house training utilizing our own certified instructors.

Training attended this year included Lawful Employment Practices for Law Enforcement Personnel, 2023 VSA Annual Conference, Background Investigations, Executive Management Training, Use of Force Training Program, Executive Leadership Institute, Administrative Professionals Training, and LEAN.

## **SHERIFF'S WORKFORCE PROGRAM**

The Salem Sheriff's Office workforce program, implemented in 2010, is an alternative to incarceration for low level offenders. Instead of reporting to jail, participants voluntarily work at departments within the City of Salem. Those who successfully complete the program may, at the discretion of the Judge, have their charges dismissed or their jail time suspended. Those who are unsuccessful are returned to court and may then be convicted of the crime as charged.

Sgt. Jonathan Branson is the direct supervisor over all participants in the program. He checks in with participants and tracks their progress and partners with departments such as the Salem Civic Center and Parks and Rec, where many participants complete their required hours. There were thirty-two (32) workforce volunteers who completed a total of 408 hours in 2023, with fifteen (15) current volunteers going into 2024.

## **UNCLAIMED AND INDIGENT PERSONS**

The Salem Sheriff's Office works closely with Lewis Gale Hospital and several local funeral homes to assist in cases where persons who lived or died in Salem have no known next of kin or whose next of kin meet state poverty guidelines.

Lt. Brian Herndon and Administrative Assistant Lisa Swope conduct research to locate family or friends who may want to claim the body of a loved one, and they review applications for financial assistance. Through our partnerships with local funeral homes, we often take on the responsibility of providing for cremation in these situations. In 2023, we processed six (6) unclaimed person cases and eleven (11) indigent cases.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This year we welcomed community members of all ages to visit the courthouse, and we volunteered our time within the community.



Above: Good times with friends at the courthouse and around town

A group of adults from Didlake Day Support Program visited us in early 2023 and enjoyed some hands-on learning about what we do at the courthouse. Didlake is an internationally accredited nonprofit agency that provides employment and day support services and creates opportunities to enrich the lives of people with disabilities. We also welcomed students and teachers from Carver Elementary who made a field trip to the Salem courthouse in the spring.

Among other volunteer activities, Sheriff Staton spent time at Feeding Southwest Virginia Community Solutions Center, a neighborhood food pantry that provides healthy foods and kitchen staples to neighbors in the greater Roanoke City area.



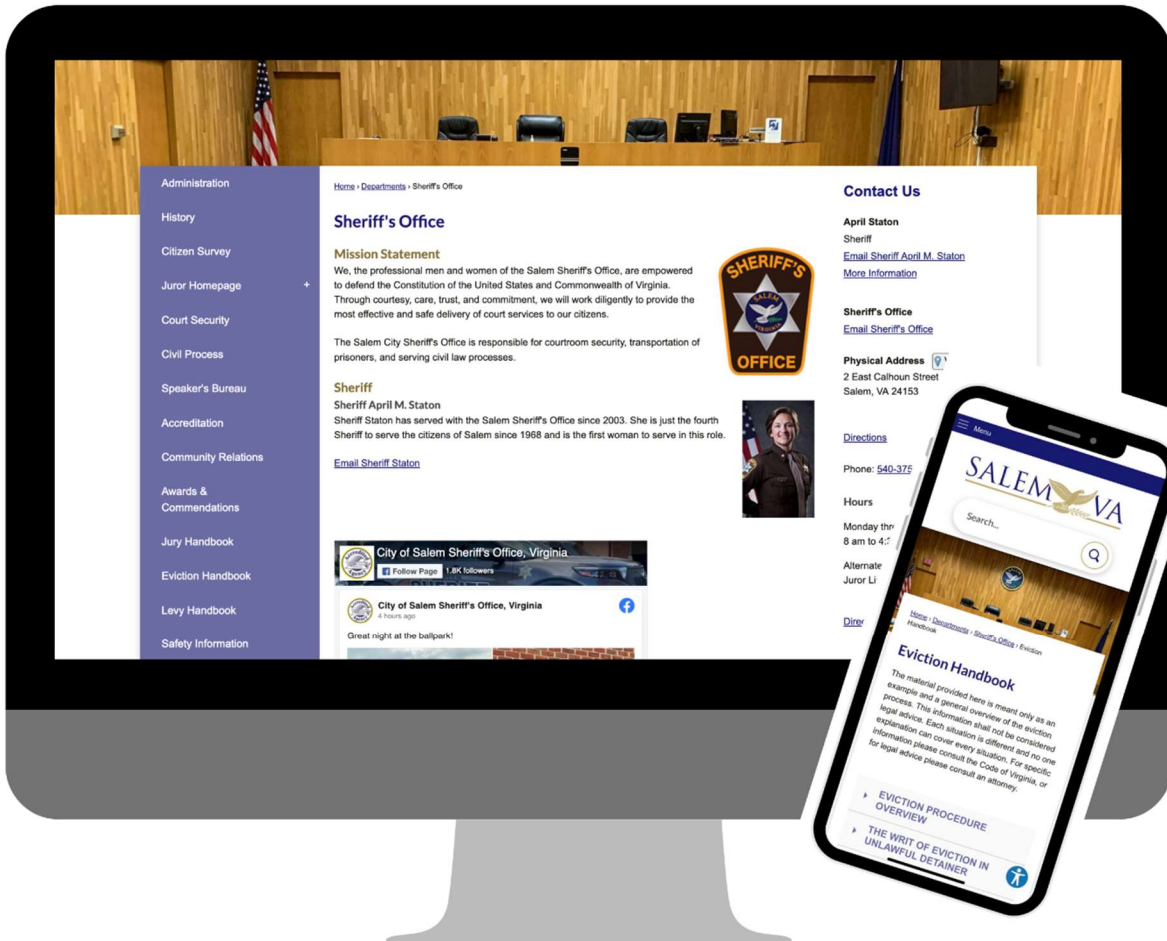
Above: Sheriff Staton volunteering at the Community Solutions Center



This year's Open House was bigger than ever. With help from our friends in the Commonwealth Attorney's Office, we distributed about 200 treat bags and cups of popcorn. And in keeping with tradition, we held a free bike raffle.

## SHERIFF'S OFFICE WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Salem Sheriff's Office maintains a user-friendly, informative website for our citizens. It provides helpful information about office staff and contact information, as well as eviction and levy processes, jury duty, office initiatives, and more.



We encourage our citizens to become familiar with this site and provide feedback on how we can improve its content or any other suggestions that may be of concern regarding our office. Please visit our Sheriff's Office Facebook page, where you can follow our community interactions and more!

## 2023 BRINGS CHANGE

In March, we welcomed two new members to our team: Deputy Drew Sturgill and Deputy Nick Akers. Sturgill came to us as a certified law enforcement officer from Roanoke County Police Department where he served as a patrol officer since January 2020. Akers came to us from the City of Salem Water Department where he worked since May 2021. And in August, we welcomed part-time Deputy Silas Chapman.



# **VIRGINIA SHERIFFS' INSTITUTE AND ASSOCIATION**



Sheriff Staton was elected to serve as Treasurer for the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute (VSI) for the 2023-2024 term. The VSI provides education for Sheriffs and staff and offers grants to Salem students pursuing careers in criminal justice.

The VSI Board of Directors consists of nine sheriffs who are elected at the annual spring meeting. This Board is responsible for approval of the VSI annual budget and work plan and serves as the policy making, governing body of the Institute.

In addition, the Virginia Sheriffs' Association (VSA) Board of Directors reviewed all sheriff requests for appointment and reappointment at its May meeting. The VSA Board unanimously voted to appoint Sheriff Staton to represent the Virginia Sheriffs' Association on Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC) for a three-year term beginning June 1, 2023.

## **AWARDS**

In August, the Kiwanis Club held a luncheon in recognition of Salem First Responders who have gone above and beyond the line of duty. Deputy John Lynch was honored with an award.



Deputy Lynch has served his community and country in many ways. He served in the United States Marine Corps and worked at the Western Virginia Regional Jail. After retiring from WVRJ, he joined the Sheriff's office in October, 2021, as a part-time deputy. When a full-time position opened, he quickly informed the Sheriff that he wanted to apply.

Because of his hard work, dedication, and professionalism, John's supervisors know that when they assign him a task, he will carry it out properly, professionally, and thoroughly. John was responsible for developing an Action Plan for the Salem High School's After Prom event in 2023. The event took place at the newly renovated high school, and John had little information about how the event would operate and where each station would be located. However, he worked diligently to

develop a plan that provided safety for more than 250 students and adult volunteers.

In preparation, he considered the strengths of each deputy working the event and possible trouble areas at the facility. He also took time to visit the high school and meet with leadership so that no detail would be left out. As the event approached, it was normal to see John working late. For him, the task was not something to be taken lightly but was a responsibility to take seriously and give his full attention to. Thanks to John's attention to detail, the event took place safely.

In his role at the Sheriff's Office, John has been assigned as lead bailiff in Circuit Court. He has shown himself to be dependable by staying up to date with trials, changes to the dockets, and handling of inmate transports to the court. John was also recently chosen to represent the city at the annual Law Enforcement Memorial.

John is an excellent teammate both in and out of the office, willing to help others whenever possible. He displayed this helpful attitude when one of our new deputies was preparing to enter Cardinal Criminal Justice Academy. Because he wanted to see his new teammate succeed, John helped the new deputy prepare his uniform and advised him on what to expect in the academy.

Deputy Lynch sets a great example to all of us with his work ethic, faithfulness to his community, and high level of professionalism.

## **DRUG USE IN THE ROANOKE VALLEY**

Many of you probably know of someone who has been affected by addiction.

Drug abuse brings with it an increase in retail theft, hospitalization, and overdoses. As a community, we need to do what we can to help those families in need and to provide resources so that those affected can work to improve their quality of life.

If you know of someone who is affected by drug use, we have listed some resources that offer opportunities for those in need of treatment. Let's work together to make a difference. Please share these numbers:



- ❖ **Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center (Salem): 540-982-2463 x2585**
- ❖ **LewisGale Center for Behavioral Health (Salem): 540-772-2801**
- ❖ **Mount Regis Center (Salem): 540-389-4761**
- ❖ **Center for Emotional Care (Salem): 540-387-3105**
- ❖ **Roanoke Comprehensive Treatment Center (Roanoke): 540-227-8426**
- ❖ **Intercept True North Health Clinic (Roanoke): 540-523-8080 x1**
- ❖ **Carilion Clinic Psychiatry & Behavioral Medicine (Roanoke): 540-981-8025**
- ❖ **Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare Recovery Center (Roanoke): 540-343-3007**
- ❖ **Bethany Hall for Chemically Dependent Women (Roanoke): 540-343-4261**
- ❖ **Thriveworks Counseling (Roanoke): 540-788-509**



## **Salem Sheriff's Office**

### **Goals and Objectives for 2024**

- **Ensure daily delivery and practice of core values while fulfilling the mission of the office**
- **Promote professional growth and development of appointees**
- **Continue to research and apply for grant opportunities**
- **Continue to refine our outreach with the youth in the community by building lasting relationships and create trust in law enforcement**
- **Ensure courthouse facilities meet the evolving needs of the community and the Sheriff's Office**
- **Work in partnership with the community to enhance programs that ensure the highest level of service**
- **Continue to build trust and support with our citizens and community partners**
- **Continue to provide a safe and secure courthouse environment through awareness, education, and training**
- **Continue to be fiscally conservative with budget requests, yet not forsake the importance of manpower and other needs that maximize the safety of our community and Sheriff's Office appointees**
- **Work to ensure the office is sufficiently staffed and that employee morale remains high**

## **COMMENDATIONS OR CONCERNS**



We, the staff of the Salem Sheriff's Office, strive to deliver to the public the most professional and efficient delivery of court services. There may be times when you wish to commend or compliment one or all members of our staff for a job well done. If so, we would like to hear from you personally. You may e-mail, call, or come by our office and ask to speak to a supervisor.

We also recognize that there may be times when you have a question, concern, or even a complaint about our operation. If you would like to voice these concerns or register a complaint, please come by our office and we will instruct you as to the proper procedure.

We would like to thank our citizenry and encourage input whenever possible. Together we can strive to meet our goals and perform our mission as it pertains to the overall administration of justice.

**For more information, please visit our website:  
<https://saalemva.gov/Departments/Sheriffs-Office>**



CITY OF SALEM SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
WORKLOAD MEASURES FOR 2023

| <i>Service of Court Papers</i>                        |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| Levies  | 9                 |
| Writ of Possessions/Evictions or Writ of Fieri Facias | 194               |
| Subpoenas served                                      | 7,116             |
| Jury summons served                                   | 697               |
| Temporary Detention Orders served                     | 19                |
| Criminal warrants served                              | 16                |
| Other civil process served                            | 20,541            |
|   |                   |
| <b>TOTAL SERVICES</b>                                 | <b>28,386</b>     |
|   |                   |
| <i>Collections</i>                                    |                   |
| Fees and Commissions                                  | \$3,296.48        |
| Collections on Levies                                 | 0                 |
| Sheriff's Sales                                       | 0                 |
| Total Money handled and disbursed                     | \$3,296.48        |
|   |                   |
| <b>REMITTED TO TREASURER</b>                          | <b>\$3,296.48</b> |
|   |                   |
| <i>Courts Worked</i>                                  |                   |
| Circuit Court   | 124               |
| General District Court                                | 153               |
| Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court                   | 139               |
|   |                   |
| <b>TOTAL SESSIONS</b>                                 | <b>416</b>        |
| Courthouse Visitors                                   | 32,303            |

| <i>Transportation</i>  |        |
|--|--------|
| Adult Court Related Transports                               | 507    |
| Juvenile Court Related Transports                            | 98     |
| Inmate medical events  | 29     |
| Transfers  | 56     |
| Adult mental transports                                      | 20     |
| Juvenile mental transports                                   | 3      |
|  |        |
| <i>Extraditions</i>  |        |
| Extraditions (out of state)                                  | 2      |
|  |        |
| TOTAL TRANSPORTS   | 715    |
| TOTAL MILEAGE  | 46,771 |
|  |        |
| <i>Custody</i>   |        |
| Persons taken into custody                                   | 103    |
| Inmates placed in Roanoke Co/Salem Jail                      | 773    |
| Inmates placed in WVRJ                                       | 923    |
|  |        |
| <i>Deputy Accidents/Injuries</i>                             |        |
| Consecutive days in 2023 without a lost-time accident/injury | 365    |
|  |        |
| <i>Use of Force</i>  |        |
| Use of Force Incidents                                       | 0      |
| Use of Force Incidents-Policy compliant                      | 0      |
| Use of Force Incidents-Requiring disciplinary action         | 0      |
| Use of Force Complaints                                      | 0      |

# Thank You!



*City of Salem Sheriff's Office  
April M. Staton, Sheriff  
2 East Calhoun Street  
Salem, Virginia 24153*