



# Coles County Sheriff's Office

701 7<sup>th</sup> Street • Charleston, IL 61920-2102 • (217) 348-7332 Fax (217)348-7345

**Kent Martin, Sheriff Tyler Heleine, Chief Deputy**

In 2007, Sheriff Darrell Cox began submitting an annual report to the citizens of Coles County and the Coles County Board. He filed reports during his two terms in office, but the practice was discontinued by Sheriff Jimmy Rankin. I am pleased to announce that I am resuming Sheriff Cox's practice of producing and publishing an annual report. The report will be presented to the Coles County Board and will be published on our agency's website.

I believe citizens have a right to know how their tax dollars are being spent and what their elected officials are doing. My staff and I will strive to provide accurate, comprehensive information regarding the operations of the agency. As I promised prior to my election, I have been meeting individually with all employees of this agency, and their input has played an important part in the creation of this report.

Tyler Heleine served as Coles County Sheriff from February 2022 through November 30, 2022 due to the unexpected resignation of Sheriff Rankin. My term as Coles County Sheriff began on December 1, 2022, and I appointed Heleine to serve as my Chief Deputy. I have relied heavily on Chief Heleine to provide insight and context for the information provided in the report, and I thank him for his dedication and leadership as the agency transitions from the Rankin administration to mine.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve the citizens of Coles County. I pledge to be a good steward of your tax dollars, to uphold the state and federal constitutions, and to make Coles County a safe place for you and your families.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Kent Martin  
March 1, 2023

# Coles County Sheriff's Office Annual Report 2022

## 1. Administrative Section

This section is dedicated to activity that is not specific to corrections, investigations or patrol. In this section you will find summary budget and expenditure reports, a review of all funds generated and collected by the Coles County Sheriff's Office, personnel changes, up-dates on any pending lawsuits, department-wide firearms training, warrant activity and other items of interest. The administrative staff includes the Sheriff, the Chief Deputy, the Captain, three Lieutenants, and three civilian employees.

### Personnel

The Coles County Sheriff's Office experienced a significant amount of turnover during 2022. Most notably, Sheriff Rankin resigned in February 2022. Tyler Heleine was named sheriff and served the remainder of Rankin's term, which ended November 30. Kent Martin was appointed Chief Deputy on October 1, and served in that role until he assumed the office of sheriff on December 1.

Corrections officers and patrol deputies are hired through the Sheriff's Merit Commission. This commission is established by state statute and oversees recruit and promotional testing, hiring, promotions, and some disciplinary matters. The commission is a bi-partisan, five-member board, the members of which are nominated by the sheriff and approved by the Coles County Board.

The following personnel changes occurred during 2022:

<b><u>Hired</u></b>	<b><u>Position</u></b>
Bayles, Jennifer	cook
Bellamy, Dylan	tele-communicator
Cox, Shane	tele-communicator
Degenhardt, Samantha	tele-communicator *
Elam, James	corrections officer
Finney, Derrick	corrections officer
Fischer, Blake	corrections officer
Flynn, Jamey	corrections officer
Johnson, Garin	patrol officer
Katz, Nicole	corrections officer
Martin, Kent	chief deputy
Miller, Joshua	corrections officer
Phillips, Brandon	corrections officer
Strombley, Kyle	tele-communicator
Vantassel, Keith	corrections officer

<u>Separated</u>	<u>Position</u>
Becker, John	corrections officer
Degenhardt, Samantha	tele-communicator * (currently employed)
Elam, James	corrections officer
Elder, Whitney	corrections officer
Lee, Cody	patrol officer
Newcomb, Beverly	cook
Payne, Caleb	corrections officer
Rankin, James	sheriff
Simms, Branden	corrections officer
Spivey, Michael	warrants clerk

Sadly, CCSO lost two members of the family during 2022. Shane Cox and Tammy Coffrin were both tele-communicators. Shane had worked for us for less than a year, while Tammy had been with us since April 2002..

The personnel of the sheriff’s office are covered by collective bargaining agreements and are represented by the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police Labor Council. The civilian employees (administrative secretary, detective secretary, warrants clerk, and telecommunicators) are covered by a CBA, and the patrol officers, corrections officers, sergeants, and lieutenants are covered by a separate CBA. Both of these agreements expire November 30, 2023.

### **Civil Process**

The Coles County Sheriff’s Office is charged with serving all civil process papers generated by our courts. Furthermore, we serve civil process from other counties where the plaintiff / respondent reside in Coles County. By law, only sheriff’s deputies or licensed process servers are charged with serving these court papers. Unlike warrants, local police departments may not serve these papers. We received 2631 papers for service which was a 2% increase from last year. The Sheriff’s Office served 2012 civil papers for a success rate of 76%. Last year our success rate was 72%.

The total number of papers received and served dropped significantly from 2018 to 2020. During the COVID-19 pandemic a moratorium was imposed on evictions and other civil actions. This moratorium resulted in fewer papers being available for service. The total number of papers received and served since 2018 are as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Issued</u>	<u>Served</u>	<u>Success Rate</u>
2018	2897	2245	77%
2019	2610	2129	82%
2020	2233	1747	78%
2021	2582	1850	72%

That reduction, combined with the increased use of private civil process servers and an increase in the number of “pauper” cases, resulted in a significant decrease in revenue from 2018-2021.

Revenue increased again beginning in 2022. The totals are as follows:

2018	\$66,023
2019	\$43,514
2020	\$32,275
2021	\$28,194
2022	\$35,623

## **Grants**

In 2022, the Coles County Sheriff’s Office received a grant from the US Department of Justice (the Patrick Leahy Bulletproof Vest Partnership Program.) This grant provides reimbursement for 50% of the cost of vests purchased in 2022. Bulletproof vests expire every 5 years and must be replaced to ensure the integrity of the vest worn by the deputies of the sheriff’s office. This reimbursement has not yet been received.

The Coles County Sheriff’s Office also received a grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation titled the Sustained Traffic Enforcement Program or STEP grant. This grant provided funding in the amount of \$2926.24. These funds are used to pay the salary of deputies during hire-backs to enforce traffic laws specifically in areas that have a high number of traffic crashes. These funds are broken into different campaigns that encompass time periods around holidays and other special events with higher traffic concentrations. The purpose of the funding is to provide the financial resources to enforce traffic laws with the goal of reducing the number of accidents which cause serious injuries.

## **Crisis Response Team**

The Coles County Crisis Response Team (CRT) was established as a multi-agency tactical team in 1999. Founding members included the Coles County Sheriff’s Office, Charleston Police Department, Mattoon Police Department, and Eastern Illinois University Police Department. The team has since grown to include Lake Land College Police Department and Mattoon Fire Department. Tactical medics from MFD are inserted with the team to provide emergency medical treatment in the event of injury to a team member, suspect, or other person. The team schedules training on a monthly basis and plans for a multi-day training activity annually.

CRT responded to 11 incidents in 2022, almost all of which involved the use or possession of a firearm by the suspect(s). These occurred in Charleston, Mattoon, and Shelbyville.

## **Firearms Training**

The Coles County Sheriff's Office has trained and certified firearm instructors on staff. Sergeant Steve Spear is the Chief Range Officer. Detective Sergeant Shane Duzan and Sergeant Brady Coe serve as Range Officers. Every deputy sheriff is required by law to qualify annually with his or her sidearm. All officers passed this qualification course. CCSO also requires each patrol deputy to qualify with their patrol rifle if they choose to carry one. Deputies are also required to qualify with any off-duty sidearm they choose to carry.

In 2022 the agency conducted firearms training in April, May, and November. The topics consisted of basic fundamentals, annual qualification, and low-light shooting, respectively. We typically conduct a 4<sup>th</sup> training exercise but could not schedule one last year, mainly due to staffing. Deputies expended approximately 13,000 rounds last year. These rounds were fired during the previously listed trainings and qualifications, Crisis Response Team monthly training, patrol rifle certification class (attended by 5 deputies), officers attending corrections and/or patrol basic training academies, and Sgt. Coe attending Firearms Instructor certification class.

## **Budget**

The Coles County Sheriff's Office FY22 budget, covering December 1, 2021 through November 30, 2022, totaled \$4,167,270. While exact final numbers won't be available from the County Treasurer's Office until later this spring, it appears CCSO has finished the fiscal year under budget by \$102,038. Out of 22 line items, half were over budget and half were under.

Expenditures exceeded the budgeted amount in the following areas: Extra Pay Benefits, Inmate Medical Expenses, Non-Emergency Dispatch, Inmate Meals, Fleet Fuel, Police Equipment, 911 Fees and Services, Travel, Fleet Maintenance, Automobiles, and Other Contractual. All other line items broke even or showed a surplus.

Our largest overrun was for Extra Pay Benefits, which was \$136,233 over our budgeted amount of \$333,840 and is primarily the result of significant overtime hours being logged in the Corrections Section. Inmate Medical Expenses exceeded projections by \$42,702.36, due in large part to an inmate requiring extremely expensive medication during their incarceration. This inmate was housed in our facility for several months, and the cost of the medication was approximately \$6000 per month. Fuel expenses were high due to the spike in gasoline and diesel fuel prices during early- and mid-2022. Some of the line items where we went over are inter-related. As an example, there is a lot of expense incurred when a new corrections officer is hired. CCSO is responsible for pre-hire physical and psychological screenings, providing uniforms and equipment, and sending the officer to the corrections academy for 6 weeks of training.

## **Funds Generated**

Funds are generated from a variety of sources. These sources include restitution, grants, and various fees. Many of these funds are restricted to specific uses. As an example, the DUI Restitution Fee may only be used to offset the costs associated with drunken driving enforcement and equipment purchases. Arrestee Medical is used to supplement the Medical Expense line item and the Drug Fund is used, obviously, for drug enforcement.

The income generated in 2022 was as follows:

Training Reimbursement	\$7402.94
Civil Process Fees	35,623.25
Traffic Fines	63,465.61
Criminal Cases	214,376.52
Reports	972.50
Fingerprint Fees	240.00
Sheriff Sales	9,600.00
Tow Fees	3,250.00
Kiosk Fees	7,325.50
Delivery of Felons to IDOC	2874.20
Sex Offender Registration	1,900.00
Arrestee Medical	13,895.91
DUI Restitution	10,969.22
E-Citation Fees	712.47
Police Vehicle Fund	117.25
Failure to Appear Fees	15,331.04
Bond Fees	20,652.48
Execution of Warrant Fees	31,498.51
Total	\$440,207.74

## **East Central Illinois Task Force**

CCSO has been a member of the drug task force since its inception in 1989. The task force investigates illegal drug activity in Douglas and Coles counties. We currently have one deputy assigned to this task force, which is based out of Mattoon. The task force is under the command of the Illinois State Police.

In 2022, the task force opened 91 cases, resulting in 76 arrests, 74 convictions, and 1 acquittal. Fifteen cases were dismissed, and one is pending. The breakdown of charges is as follows:

Super X felony	1	1.3% of total arrests
Class X felony	22	29%
Class 1 felony	6	7.9%
Class 2 felony	8	10.5%
Class 3 felony	18	23.7%
Class 4 felony	9	11.8%
Federally indicted	12	15.8%

The following substances were involved in the 76 arrests by ECITF agents last year:

Methamphetamine	56	73.7% of total arrests
Cannabis	8	10.5%
Cocaine	4	5.3%
Other	4	5.3%
Heroin	3	3.9%
Fentanyl	1	1.3%

The following charges were filed in these arrests:

Delivery of Controlled Substance	37	48.7% of total charges
Possession of Controlled Substance	27	35.5%
Delivery of Cannabis	8	10.5%
Other charges	4	5.3%

The following amounts of drugs were seized:

Cannabis	683,024.14 grams	\$13,913,581 street value
Fentanyl	10,442.2	2,088,440
Methamphetamine	6,947.92	694,882
Heroin	514.8	64,340
THC	1,033.3	19,686
Cocaine	106.6	10,660
LSD (doses)	42	303
Hydrocodone (pills)	19.5	130
Psilocybin mushrooms	6.3	126
Ecstasy (pills)	4	100
Various pharmaceuticals	6.7	85
Total 65.5 pills/doses	702,081.96 grams	\$16,791,800 street value

ECITF also seized twelve firearms and one set of brass knuckles. The firearms consisted of 4 semi-automatic pistols, 3 revolvers, 2 rifles, and 3 sawed-off shotguns. Additionally, \$121,341 in United States currency was also seized.

## **Fleet Information**

We traveled a total of 331,762 miles in 2022. We consumed a total of 23,759.59 gallons of gasoline and 2,951.10 gallons of propane. Several years ago, under Sheriff Cox, the agency began converting some patrol units to liquid propane as a cost saving measure. There was no loss of performance, the mileage was similar, the propane-fueled vehicles experienced longer engine life, and the oil needed changed with less frequency. There was also a rebate program that covered approximately 2/3 of the conversion cost. We still have a few fleet vehicles running on propane, but due to expiration of the rebate program and the unavailability of EPA compliant conversion kits, we are phasing out LP vehicles.

We ordered 5 vehicles in 2022 through the ARPA program. We purchased 3 Dodge Durangos and 2 Dodge Charger sedans. The utility style vehicles typically run \$8-10,000 more per vehicle. However, due to the geography of our county and the amount of snow we sometimes receive, I intend to prioritize the purchase of SUVs going forward.

## **Warrants**

Arrest warrants issued by Coles County courts are received by the sheriff's office and entered into a statewide database (LEADS-the Law Enforcement Agency Data System.) Most felony warrants are entered into a national database called NCIC (National Crime Information Center.) When law enforcement across the country has contact with an individual, the person's name and date of birth are checked against these databases to determine if there is an outstanding arrest warrant for that person. Patrol deputies attempt to serve local warrants and out-of-county warrants for individuals residing in Coles County.

The CCSO warrants clerk is responsible for entering the warrants as they are received by the agency. We work diligently to update our records by removing warrants for individuals who are deceased and removing warrants that have been quashed.

The following table includes information on the number of Coles County warrants issued, served, and quashed. Please note that the "number served" does not necessarily indicate that all warrants served in a given year had been issued in that year. Warrants may be quashed for a number of reasons, including but not limited to the death or incarceration of the suspect, the inability or unwillingness of a victim to continue with the prosecution of the case, or the discovery of new information or evidence in the case.



<u>Year</u>	<u>Issued</u>	<u>Served</u>	<u>Quashed</u>
2017	1230	1091	328
2018	1611	1326	276
2019	1684	1435	287
2020	1525	1088	194
2021	1856	1208	249
2022	1441	1259	237

### **Freedom of Information Act Requests**

Coles County Sheriff's Office received a total of 76 requests for information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act. The agency has a designated FOIA officer who processes these requests and ensures the agency responds to them as required by law.

## 2. Corrections Section

This section is dedicated to topics related to the Coles County Safety and Detention Center. Topics include a description of corrections officer staffing, daily population information, cost and number of inmate meals, inmate medical expenses, and other information pertaining to the operation and staffing of the facility.

### Staffing

The current staffing in the jail consists of one Lieutenant (who serves as Jail Administrator), four sergeants, and twelve correctional officers. Out of this group, one CO is attending the Corrections Academy in Belleville and one is deployed with the United States Armed Forces. Our authorized staffing for corrections officers is 24 and our current number (as of February 2023) is 17 (including the officer on deployment.) We are currently so understaffed that patrol deputies are working overtime assignments in the jail. In addition to corrections staff, one full-time cook, a part-time cook, and three tele-communicators work in the jail.

### Daily Population

Our average daily population for 2022 was 101. Of this number, the average number of males was 88 and the average number of females was 14 (this number does not equal 101 due to rounding.) The breakdown per month was as follows:

January	105	July	106
February	104	August	102
March	106	September	98
April	101	October	104
May	108	November	85
June	97	December	94

### Inmate Meals

According to Illinois Jail Standards, we are required to serve a minimum of 1800-2000 calories per day spread across three meals. At least one of the meals must be a hot meal. Our food expense for 2022 was \$130,594. We served 104,830 meals for an average cost of \$1.25 per meal. When figuring in the other costs of preparing meals, such as disposables, detergent/chemicals, and laundering, the county spent an additional \$5585. This increased the average cost per meal to \$1.30. Our dietician spends several hours a week comparison shopping to obtain the best value for our tax dollars. We will diligently explore ways to hold down the cost of meals and associated expenses throughout my term of office.

## **Inmate Medical Expenses**

The Coles County Sheriff's Office contracted with Advanced Correctional Healthcare for inmate medical services many years ago. That partnership still exists today. Advanced Correctional Healthcare provides a nurse to the detention center 40 hours per week, and a doctor makes weekly sick call visits. As the result of a resolution passed by the County Board several years ago, CCSO is charged Medicare rates for inmate emergency care.

## **Miscellaneous Information**

The corrections officers perform a wide variety of duties. These duties include, but are certainly not limited to, booking inmates into the jail, transporting inmates to court proceedings in Coles County and other jurisdictions, extraditing inmates from other jurisdictions (both in-state and out-of-state), transporting inmates to the Illinois Department of Corrections, providing transportation to and security for hospital/doctor visits, and ensuring the safety and security of the inmates.

In 2022, corrections officers booked 1763 inmates, transported and/or escorted 2274 inmates to court appearances in Coles County and 47 in other jurisdictions, transported 64 inmates to state prison, and made 97 off-site medical care trips (including dentist visits, lab work at Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center, and other medical related appointments.)

## **Coles County Jail 2022 Compliance Monitoring Report**

The Coles County Safety and Detention Center is subject to an annual inspection by the Illinois Department of Corrections. Our most recent inspection was on September 21, 2022. The inspector noted several improvements that were made since the 2021 inspection. Those improvements included the following:

- Numerous areas of the jail have been painted to remove graffiti.
- Upgraded Guardian RFID personal observation system.
- Thicker mattresses in use throughout the facility.
- Increased observation in medical unit.
- Additional reading material purchased for inmate library.
- Upgraded/replaced linens and uniforms.

Two areas for improvement were noted in the inspection report: 94.6% of personal observations of inmates were made on time, and there was no annual audit of the jail commissary.

According to IDOC standards, "Direct supervision means direct and continuous supervision of detainees by a jail officer on a 24-hour basis. The jail officer shall be in direct visual and oral

contact with the detainees, without separation by security walls or other barriers.” The acquisition and implementation of the Guardian RFID system should address this deficiency. This system includes a timer that monitors the amount of time that’s elapsed since the last cell check and alerts the corrections staff when the time for another check is approaching. Corrections staff utilizes a handheld scanning device to record the cell checks, thereby creating a documented record of the time the checks were conducted.

IDOC standards also state, “Accurate accounting for all purchases, sales and expenditures of the commissary system, including phone services and, if provided, email access, shall be maintained. An annual audit shall be arranged with the county auditor or county treasurer.” CCSO will schedule an annual audit of the jail commissary through the Coles County Treasurer’s Office to comply with this standard.

### **3. Investigations Section**

The investigations section of the Coles County Sheriff's Office generally works from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Of course, they are subject to call-outs and scheduling adjustments based on operational need. Lt. Christina Stephen, Sgt. Shane Duzan, and Det. Marshall Reinhart are assigned to this section. Lt. Stephen was on light duty for a portion of 2022. When staffing permits, a deputy can be assigned to this section temporarily to participate in "OJT", or on-the-job training. This allows deputies to work alongside detectives and learn advanced skills such as crime scene processing, interviewing/interrogation techniques, and evidence collection and processing. We have not had any deputies participate in this very valuable program due to staffing shortages.

CCSO deputies David Pickering, Marshall Reinhart, Butch Beadles, Ransom Beadles, and Cody Parsons serve as crime scene technicians. We have the training and equipment needed to process most of our own scenes, reducing the need to rely upon the Illinois State Police for crime scene services and evidence collection.

The investigations section is responsible for numerous tasks, some of which include reviewing criminal offense reports, assigning reports for follow-up investigation, and creating case folders and "hot files" for entry into the Law Enforcement Agency Data System (a computer network that allows law enforcement agencies the ability to access information on an individual's driving record, license and vehicle registration information, and criminal history, among other things.) Other duties include handling evidence, preparing disposal orders for evidence, conducting background investigations on prospective employees of this agency and outside agencies, review pawn shop records, providing reports to the State's Attorney's Office for prosecution, maintaining case files, reporting index crimes to state and local entities, and providing courtroom testimony.

A total of 305 cases were assigned to detectives in 2022. Please note that CCSO historically has at least three detectives in this section, but operated with only 2 for the majority of 2022. 256 Cases were cleared, leaving 49 pending cases from last year. Cases may be cleared or administratively closed for a number of reasons. Cases are cleared by arrest, by referral to another agency having jurisdiction, by death of the suspect or offender, if the victim is uncooperative, or if the case is unfounded. Administratively closed cases include instances where no offender is identified, there is not enough evidence to sustain a charge, or an arrest cannot be made. These cases may be reopened later if more information becomes available.

## 4. Patrol Section

### Patrol Activities

The Coles County Sheriff's Office provides police protection, investigates criminal activity, and responds to calls for service in the small municipalities and unincorporated areas of the county. We also assist the Charleston, Mattoon, Eastern Illinois University, Lake Land College, and Oakland police departments as needed.

In 2022, we were involved in 12,700 incidents. These incidents covered a wide variety of topics, such as traffic accidents, fire and medical responses, civil standbys, community policing activities, follow-up investigations, criminal complaints, motorist assists, and traffic stops.

### K-9

Our canine, Jett, is a black lab. His handler is Sergeant Nick Clapp. Jett was deployed 19 times for various reasons. These include vehicle and building searches, article searches, and tracking missing and/or endangered persons. Jett located 5 items of drug paraphernalia and 22.09 grams of methamphetamine in 2022. A total of 200.2 training hours were completed.

The K-9 team earned the following certifications:

State of Illinois narcotics certification      April 6, 2022  
USPCA (United States Police Canine Assoc.) Trials November 15, 2022

### Motor Vehicle Accidents

Deputies responded to a total of 283 traffic crashes during the year, with four fatalities and 87 injuries reported. A total of 70 traffic citations were issued. The busiest day for accidents was Friday, with 53. The worst time of day was 5:00pm-6:00pm, with 25. Please see the following tables:

<u>Day of Week</u>	<u>Total Accidents</u>
Sunday	34
Monday	45
Tuesday	40
Wednesday	32
Thursday	36
Friday	53
Saturday	43

<u>Time of Day</u>	<u>Accidents</u>	<u>Time of Day</u>	<u>Accidents</u>
12:00am-1:00am	5	12:01pm-1:00pm	12
1:01am-2:00am	4	1:01pm-2:00pm	9
2:01am-3:00am	2	2:01pm-3:00pm	12
3:01am-4:00am	10	3:01pm-4:00pm	18
4:01am-5:00am	3	4:01pm-5:00pm	19
5:01am-6:00am	9	5:01pm-6:00pm	25
6:01am-7:00am	16	6:01pm-7:00pm	11
7:01am-8:00am	10	7:01pm-8:00pm	9
8:01am-9:00am	10	8:01pm-9:00pm	22
9:01am-10:00am	11	9:01pm-10:00pm	17
10:01am-11:00am	10	10:01pm-11:00pm	10
11:01am-12:00pm	19	11:01pm-11:59pm	11

## 5. Summary

The Coles County Sheriff's Office is staffed with a dedicated group of hard-working, professional men and women. The office performs a wide range of public safety and law enforcement functions. These services include uniformed patrol, investigations, serving civil papers, housing inmates, and associated clerical/administrative tasks.

As part of my efforts to compile the information contained in this report, I have met individually with nearly every member of this agency. Two very common themes emerged from these meetings-staffing and compensation. We are experiencing a critical staffing shortage, particularly in the corrections section. The demands being placed on our corrections officers are leading to physical and mental fatigue. Our COs are being required to work overtime on a consistent basis, either by working more than 8 hours in a day or sacrificing days off. I am focusing on attracting qualified applicants for these positions and getting them on the payroll. The costs of recruiting, training, and equipping officers, both in time and financial resources, are high. We are currently paying salaries for officers to attend the training academy and paying overtime for officers to cover shifts in the jail. My primary focus right now is to get a sufficient number of COs hired, trained, and on duty so we can significantly reduce the amount of overtime costs and improve the overall well-being of our corrections staff. This should also pay dividends by increasing retention rates. We are beginning to prepare for retirements and separations that are anticipated within the next 1-3 years, while researching ways to increase compensation and/or fringe benefits to aid recruitment, stop attrition, reduce overtime, and increase morale.

Other areas of the agency appear to be functioning relatively effectively and efficiently. Equipment has been or is in the process of being replaced, namely body cameras and communication equipment. Plans are being made to address training mandates and other requirements of the Illinois SAFE-T Act, should that legislation be upheld by the courts after the appeals process runs its course. As we move further into 2023, I will continue meeting with my administrative staff and supervisors to determine the best strategies for streamlining both the day-to-day and long term operations of the agency. Chief Deputy Heleine shouldered a large burden this past year, as he was essentially performing the duties of both sheriff and chief deputy. I will be working with him to delegate some of the duties he is currently performing so the administrative tasks are divided appropriately among the sheriff, chief deputy, and captain. I expect this to result in increased productivity and efficiency, and to reduce the amount of stress and burnout experienced by the administrative staff.

I am very proud of the work being done by the members of the Coles County Sheriff's Office. As the agency moves out of the COVID era, we will work to maintain the high quality of service we have provided for many years. I encourage anyone with concerns, comments, suggestions, or compliments to contact me at [kmartin@co.coles.il.us](mailto:kmartin@co.coles.il.us) or at 217-348-0584.