



Contact:

Captain Sean Wethington

231-527-0025

swethington@cityofbr.org

January 18, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Big Rapids City Fire Department Responds to Fire on Cardinal Court

Big Rapids-At 5:10 p.m. on January 17, 2021, the Big Rapids City Fire Department was dispatched to a structure fire at 157 Cardinal Ct., on Ferris State University property. The caller stated they could hear people inside of the apartment yelling. A Ferris State University Department of Public Safety Officer arrived on scene at 5:12 p.m. and reported smoke in the building.

At 5:14 p.m., the Big Rapids City Fire Department arrived on scene. Within 3 minutes of arriving, Fire Department personnel had begun their attack on the fire. During a primary search, fire crews located a 22-year-old female who had sustained smoke inhalation and burns. She was removed from the apartment by fire crews and transported to Spectrum Health Big Rapids Hospital and later to Butterworth Hospital for treatment. The fire was called under control at 5:32 p.m.

The fire origin appears to be in the kitchen area of the apartment. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

The Big Rapids City Fire Department was assisted on scene by the Big Rapids Township Fire Department, Ferris State University Department of Public Safety, MECEOLA Central Dispatch, Mecosta County EMS, Mecosta County Sheriff's Department, and the Big Rapids Police Department.

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Contact:

Officer William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

January 18, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Two Suspects Arrested for Larcenies from Vehicles

Big Rapids- In the early morning hours of Saturday, January 16, 2021, Big Rapids Police Department Officers were dispatched to the 600 block of Bjornson Ave. in reference to two subjects attempting to break into a vehicle. The complainant had observed two males attempting to get into his locked pickup truck on his video surveillance from earlier in the morning. A description of the suspects was obtained at that time. Officers also observed fresh footprints around almost all the cars in the area and it appeared several had been rummaged through. Through the investigation, it was determined that several unlocked vehicles had been gone through from the 600 block of Bjornson, south on Fourth St., through Parkview Village Apartments towards downtown.

Earlier in the morning, a Big Rapids Officer had stopped two subjects that had been seen acting suspiciously near downtown. These two subjects were identified. They were released due to the lack of evidence, at the time, to link them to a specific crime. They were later found to be the same two subjects on the video surveillance of the original complainant. Officers responded to their residence and took them into custody for larceny from a vehicle and providing false information to a police officer. They were lodged at the Mecosta County Jail.

At the time of their arrest, several items were located that did not belong to the suspects. These items include sunglasses, clothing, a blanket, and miscellaneous electronic charging equipment. If you, or anyone you know, had these items stolen from your vehicle, please contact the Big Rapids Police Department at 231-527-0005 to provide a description of the items.

As a reminder, please lock your doors to your vehicles. In 2019, thefts from vehicles accounted for 27.1% of all larcenies according to FBI UCR Crime Statistics. Remember not to leave purses, wallets, phones, or guns in your unlocked vehicles. If you do have something stolen from your vehicle or residence, report it as soon as possible so we can attempt to find the suspect(s) and your belongings.

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Contact:

Officer William Sell

231-527-0005

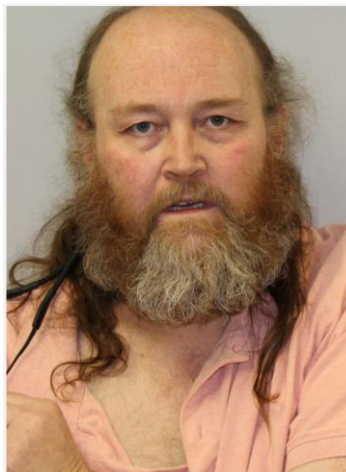
wsell@cityofbr.org

January 28, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Man Arrested on 2009 Arson Warrant

Big Rapids- On Tuesday, January 26, a Mecosta County Sheriff's Office Deputy performed a traffic stop on a vehicle in Green Charter Township. The deputy identified the driver as Gerald Scott Sutton (3/2/1967). The deputy was notified by MECEOLA Central Dispatch that Sutton was wanted out of the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety in reference to an arson that occurred in March of 2009 in the 100 block of W. Madison Ave. Sutton had been living in California since 2009. Sutton was arrested on the outstanding 2009 warrant for Arson of a Residence. Sutton was arraigned through the 77th District Court on a \$35,000 surety.



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Contact:

Officer William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

January 28, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Big Rapids Man Arrested for Home Invasion

Big Rapids- In the early morning hours of Tuesday, January 26, 2021, Big Rapids Police Department Officers responded to the 800 Block of Country Way in reference to a possible home invasion in progress. The caller advised there was a male in her apartment who was refusing to leave. Upon arrival, officers located Ryan Scott Schmidt (5-11-1984) in the caller's residence. Through the investigation, it was determined Schmidt had forced his way into the residence and had threatened to sexually assault the caller. Schmidt was arrested for Burglary with Forced Entry and was lodged at the Mecosta County Jail. Schmidt was arraigned through the 77th District Court on a \$75,000 surety.



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Contact:

Officer William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

February 12, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Big Rapids DPS to Initiate Dog Walker Watch Program

Big Rapids- The Big Rapids Department of Public Safety is committed to keeping the citizens of our community safe, and we are excited to announce a new Community Safety Program!

Dog Walker Watch is one of our efforts to improve safety and prevent crime in Big Rapids. Dog Walker Watch, initially created by the National Association of Town Watch, is designed to increase the number of trained "eyes and ears" in our community. Dog Walker Watch allows you to improve the safety of the community on your own schedule while doing something you enjoy.

Dog Walker Watch Training is open to all Big Rapids residents as well as those who walk in/through Big Rapids. During training, we will show you what to look for and make sure you know who and how to call if you see something that police need to check on. We will also share some safety tips for you and for your pet. It is not required that you have a dog to participate in this training, and in fact, training is for humans only. Anyone who walks and is interested in learning more about what to do to improve personal safety and recognize crime risks in the community is welcome to attend!

The training will take place virtually on Wednesday, March 3rd from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. If you are interested in attending this virtual training, please e-mail wsell@cityofbr.org with your name, address, telephone number, and email address, or call Officer William Sell at 231-527-0005. This class is also open to non-residents. You can visit <https://vimeo.com/169253232> to see more about Dog Walker Watch.

We look forward to seeing you on March 3rd!

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Contact:

Officer William Sell

231-527-0005

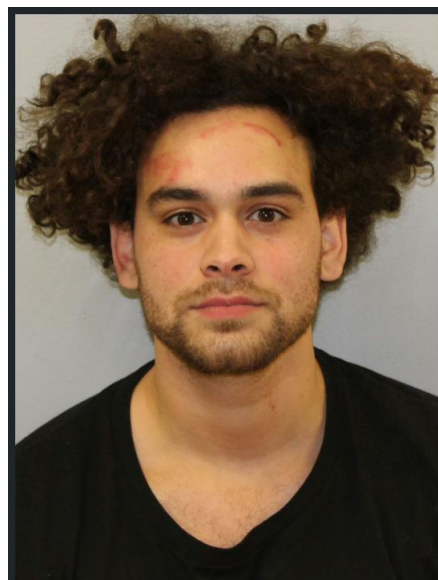
wsell@cityofbr.org

February 22, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Man Arrested for Domestic Assault and Assault on Officer

Big Rapids- On Friday, February 19, 2021, officers responded to the 800 Block of Water Tower Rd in reference to a possible Breaking and Entering in progress. The caller stated her ex-boyfriend was in her residence and stealing her belongings. When they arrived, they found Kavoceya Alexzay Vanassche exiting the rear of the residence. While attempting to take Vanassche into custody, he fought with officers. During the scuffle, one officer was injured. Vanassche was lodged at the Mecosta County Jail for several charges, including Felonious Assault on a Police Officer, Resisting Arrest, and Felonious Domestic Assault. Vanassche was arraigned through the 77th District Court and is being held on a \$100,000 surety.



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Contact:

Officer William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

March 22, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Officers Investigate Alleged Assault

Big Rapids- On Saturday, March 20, 2021, officers responded to Spectrum Health Big Rapids Hospital for the report of an assault that had occurred earlier in the morning. The caller advised she had been the passenger in a vehicle and had been assaulted by another passenger of the same vehicle. Several witnesses have been identified and are being interviewed. The case is open currently under investigation. At this time, no charges have been filed and no arrests have been made.

###



Big Rapids
Department of Public Safety
435 North Michigan Avenue
Big Rapids, MI 49307



(U//LES) FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

WANTED & ARMED

MICHAEL LEWIS BUTLER 9/7/1971

AKA: MICHAEL BUTLER 4/2/1974



Photo from 12/05/19

On 3/16/21 at approximately 1830 hrs, officers from BRDPS were dispatched to the 500 block of S. Michigan Ave, in Big Rapids to a possible home invasion. Officers had been informed that BUTLER had fled the scene after the caller had began screaming at him. BUTLER forced his way into the victims apt. threatening the victim with a knife. Officers executed a search warrant on his apartment and discovered that BUTLER removed his GPS tether and left his phone in the residence. The knife, described as a pocketknife, with a curved 3-4 in blade, black handle, with a white stripe has not been recovered. BUTLER has a history of similar crimes in other areas of the country. BUTLER has limited connections to the Big Rapids area and we do not believe he is in the local area at this time. Information has been shared through multiple agencies requesting assistance in attempting to locate BUTLER. If you have any information, please contact BRPDPS at 231-527-0005 ext 4 for the tip line. If you see BUTLER please do not approach him and call 911 with as much information as you can safely provide.



Contact:

Officer William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

March 22, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mecosta County Sheriff's Office and Big Rapids Department of Public Safety Announce New Summer Program

Big Rapids- The Mecosta County Sheriff's Office and the Big Rapids Police Department are excited to announce a new program for youth this summer, the Mecosta County Youth Academy.

The Mecosta County Youth Academy is a one-week program open to boys and girls, ages 12-14. It will be held from July 19-23, 2021. During the academy, 15 students will be introduced to the roles and responsibilities of first responders in our area.

Topics to be discussed are:

- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Physical Fitness
- Defensive Tactics
- Firearms Safety
- First aid
- Fire Safety

Students will learn from instructors from the Mecosta County Sheriff's Office, the Big Rapids Police Department, the Michigan State Police, Ferris State University Department of Public Safety, the Big Rapids City Fire Department, and MANY MORE!

If you are interested in applying to be a part of this exciting academy, please contact Officer William Sell at 231-527-0005, ext. 1036, or email him at wsell@cityofbr.org. Space is limited so act fast!

###



Contact:

Officer William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

March 25, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wanted Suspect Taken into Custody in Arkansas

Big Rapids- On Wednesday, March 24, 2021, the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety was notified by Jonesboro, Arkansas officials that Michael Lewis Butler was arrested on his outstanding warrant after a multi-state manhunt was conducted. Butler is in the process of being extradited back to Mecosta County for arraignment by the 77th District Court, for a Home Invasion and Felonious Assault that occurred in Big Rapids on March 16, 2021. The BRDPS was assisted in the arrest by the Jonesboro Police Department, Jonesboro, Arkansas; the Hardy Police Department, Hardy, Arkansas; and the U.S. Marshall Fugitive Recovery Task Force. Thanks to open communication, multi-agency coordination, and the assistance of multiple resources Butler was taken into custody without incident. Further information will be released after Butler is arraigned on his charges.

*These are charges only and persons accused of a crime are presumed to be innocent. *



###



Contact:

Officer William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

April 9, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Driving? Put down that phone!

*Law enforcement urging distracted drivers to remember:
U Drive. U Text. U Pay*

Big Rapids — April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month.

The Big Rapids Police Department will be joining forces across the country this week to intensify enforcement of state and local texting and distracted-driving laws, and to raise awareness about the dangers — and legal implications — of distracted driving. This annual campaign is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) national *U Drive. U Text. U Pay*. high-visibility enforcement effort that runs from April 8 to April 12, 2021.

According to the Michigan State Police Criminal Justice Information Center (CJIC), in Michigan in 2019 there were 18,096 distracted driving crashes, resulting in 70 fatalities. Nationwide in 2019, the number of fatalities linked to driver distraction was 3,142, or almost nine percent of all fatalities that year. This included 566 non-occupants (pedestrians, bicyclists, and others) killed in crashes involving a distracted driver.

Over the years, millennials have become some of the biggest texting-while-driving offenders, also using their cell phones to talk and scroll through social media while behind the wheel. According to NHTSA, young drivers 16- to 24-years-old have been observed using handheld electronic devices at higher rates than older drivers since 2007. In fact, in 2019, nine percent of people killed in teen-driving crashes (ages 15-19) died when teen drivers were distracted at the time of the crash. Female drivers are most at-risk for being involved in a fatal crash involving a distracted driver.

"Every day, we ticket drivers who haven't gotten the message that using their cell phones while they drive is illegal, and puts every other road user at risk," said Chief of Police Danielle Haynes. "We all know the dangers associated with distracted driving. Whether it's eating and drinking behind the wheel, using GPS, talking to other vehicle passengers, or using the cell phone, it's all dangerous when you're driving.

"We are determined to impress upon these drivers: Keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road."

An analysis by the AAA Foundation of 2009-2012 data found that while more than 80 percent of drivers believed it was completely unacceptable for a motorist to text behind the wheel, more than a third of those same drivers admitted to reading text messages while operating a passenger motor vehicle themselves.

“People know texting and driving is dangerous and illegal, but they do it anyway, and it puts others at risk,” said Officer William Sell. “Beginning April 8, you will see increased law enforcement efforts, as officers will be stopping and ticketing anyone who is caught texting and driving. And we are not trying to rack up citations — we are trying to save lives.

“If you text and drive, you will pay.”

Drive Safe Every Trip

The Big Rapids Police Department and NHTSA urge you to put your phone down when you get behind the wheel. If you need to text, then pull over and do not drive. If you’re driving, follow these steps for a phone-free experience:

- If you are expecting a text message or need to send one, pull over and park your car in a safe location. Once you are safely off the road and parked, it is safe to text.
- Designate your passenger as your “designated texter.” Allow them access to your phone to respond to calls or messages.
- Do not engage in social media scrolling or messaging while driving.
- Cell phone use can be habit-forming. Struggling to not text and drive? Put the cell phone out of reach in the trunk, glove box, or back seat of the vehicle until you arrive at your destination.

Texting while driving is dangerous and illegal. Break the cycle. Remember: *U Drive. U Text. U Pay.*

For more information, visit www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov.

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Contact:

Officer William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

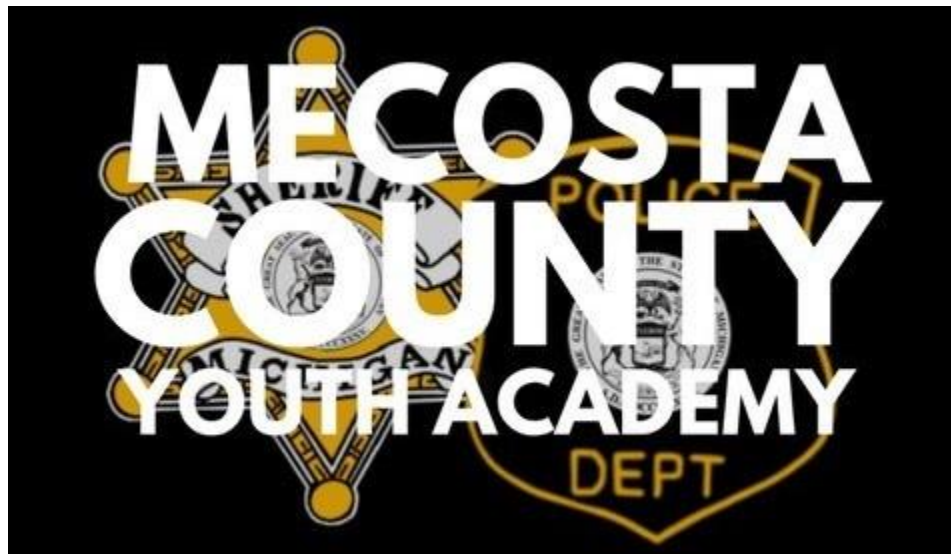
May 4, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Applications for Mecosta County Youth Academy Being Accepted

Big Rapids-The Mecosta County Youth Academy is now accepting applications for their camp in July. The Mecosta County Youth Academy is a one-week program for boys and girls ages 12-14. It will be held July 19-23 from 8:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. The academy will focus on several topics, including teamwork, leadership, physical fitness, defensive tactics, firearms safety, first aid, and fire safety. The academy is being sponsored by the Mecosta County Sheriff's Office, the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety, and the Michigan State Police. Space is limited, so act fast!

For more information, or to receive an application, please contact Officer William Sell at the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety, wsell@cityofbr.org or 231-527-0005. Applications are due by May 14, 2021 at 4:00 P.M.



###



Contact:

Officer William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

May 11, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Man Arrested for Home Invasion and Attempted Assault

Big Rapids- On May 11, 2021, at approximately 12:55 A.M., officers were dispatched to the 1100 block of Fuller Ave for the report of a home invasion and attempted assault that had just occurred.

The caller advised she had been woken up by a naked male pulling her toward the edge of her bed and attempting to assault her. When she struggled, he fled the scene. As she called 911, he returned and attempted to assault her again. She screamed and he fled the scene again. While officers were on scene speaking with the caller, the suspect was observed running by the residence. After a short foot pursuit, he was apprehended. He was lodged at the Mecosta County Jail without further incident.

###



Contact:

Sergeant William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

May 28, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Officers Promoted to Rank of Sergeant

Big Rapids- Chief Haynes is pleased to announce two promotions! Officers David Flore and William Sell were both promoted to the rank of Sergeant.

David Flore is promoted to the rank of Sergeant and assigned to the Patrol Division. David began his law enforcement career in 2009 as a bike patrol officer for Cadillac PD. He also worked as a part-time officer for Mundy Township in Genesee County. In 2010, Flore was hired as a full-time officer for Big Rapids Police Department. In 2012, he received a Life Saving Award and has received multiple merit awards. David has served on CMET and the Mecosta County Honor Guard. He is the department's Radar instructor, a Field Training Officer, and has taken an active role in the hiring process and revamping of the field training process. He earned his bachelor's degree from Ferris State University.

William Sell is promoted to the rank of Sergeant and assigned to the Patrol Division. William began his law enforcement career in 2010 as a deputy for the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office in Sarasota, Florida. There, he served on the department's Honor Guard and as a Field Training Officer. In 2017, he received a Life Saving Award and was nominated for Patrol Division Employee of the month. In 2018, he moved to Big Rapids with his family and was hired by the Big Rapids Police Department. Since coming here, William has served as a Field Training Officer and has taken an active role in helping create policy and procedures for the department and helped to revamp the department's evidence packaging and handling procedures. He received his associate degree from Manatee Community College, in Bradenton, Florida.

"I am proud to promote these two officers," said Chief Danielle Haynes. "Sergeants Flore and Sell represent our agency with integrity and professionalism. I am sure they will be excellent leaders for their colleagues and this community."

###



Contact:

Sgt R. Myers

231-527-0005

rmyers@cityofbr.org

June 14, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Woman Arrested for Stabbing

Big Rapids- On 6/14/2021, at approximately 1:14 P.M., BRDPS officers responded to the 500 block of S. State St. in reference to a possible stabbing. Upon arrival, they found a 35-year-old male with an apparent stab wound to his upper chest. He was transported to Spectrum Health Big Rapids Hospital by Mecosta County EMS with non-life-threatening injuries. A 41-year-old female on scene was identified as the suspect and was taken into custody. She was transported to the Mecosta County Jail and will be arraigned by the 77th District Court.

The Big Rapids Department of Public Safety was assisted on scene by Ferris DPS, the Mecosta County Sheriff's Office, the Michigan DNR, City of Big Rapids Rescue, and Mecosta County EMS.

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Big Rapids
Department of Public Safety
435 North Michigan Avenue
Big Rapids, MI 49307



Big Rapids Department of Public Safety News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HEADLINE: Multi-Jurisdiction Traffic Enforcement: “2021 GREAT LAKES, HIGH STAKES”

OFFICER: Sgt. Ryan Myers

DATE AND TIME: 06/16/2021

SUMMARY OF INCIDENT:

Michigan is stepping up speed enforcement during regional traffic safety campaign

Michigan aims to stem troubling rise in speed-related fatalities

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began more than a year ago, law enforcement agencies across the nation have reported an alarming rise in speeding and fatal crashes.

To combat this disturbing and dangerous trend, the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Region 5 Office are partnering with five other states on a regional traffic safety campaign. As part of the "Great Lakes, High Stakes" campaign, more than 30 municipal, county, and Michigan State Police (MSP) law enforcement agencies will focus on speeding drivers between June 19 and 27, 2021.

Nationally in 2019, 9,478 traffic fatalities involved crashes in which one or more drivers were speeding. While Michigan has seen a 22-percent reduction in traffic crashes -- 245,432 in 2020 compared to 314,377 in 2019 -- there has been an increase in fatalities. Crash data from the MSP Criminal Justice Information Center indicates 1,083 people died from crashes on Michigan roads in 2020, a 10-percent increase over 2019, with 985 deaths reported. In 2020, there were 200 speed-related fatalities on Michigan roadways compared to 185 in 2019, an 8-percent increase.

**For further information contact the Big Rapids Police Department.
(231) 527-0005**



Big Rapids Department of Public Safety

435 North Michigan Avenue
Big Rapids, MI 49307



Also in Michigan, according to the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI), in 2020:

- Out of male drivers involved in all traffic crashes in 2020, 6.4 percent were speeding.
- 15.2 percent of motorcycle riders involved in fatal crashes were speeding.
- 11.2 percent of drivers in the 15- to 20-year-old age group involved in crashes (4,650 out of 41,685) were speeding.
- Out of all drivers who were drinking in crashes, 15.1 percent were speeding.

The Mecosta County Sheriff's Office, the Big Rapids Police Department, and the Ferris State University Department of Public Safety are partnering up to engage in this speed and safety enforcement with other Michigan agencies and the Office of Highway Safety Planning.

Our goal throughout this enforcement period is to educate the public on hazards of speeding and not having proper child safety seats. We want the public to know that safety while on the roadway is a major concern for our area and hope that through this enforcement period that we can affect positive change.

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**For further information contact the Big Rapids Police Department.
(231) 527-0005**



Contact:

Sgt. Ryan Myers

231-527-0005

rmyers@cityofbr.org

June 25, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Criminal Sexual Conduct Arrest

On Wednesday, June 23, 2021, officers with the Big Rapids Police Department arrested 22-year-old Turner Scott Lindsey on an outstanding felony warrant for Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC). The felony warrant was the result of a 7-month investigation conducted by the Big Rapids Police Department. Turner Lindsey was taken into custody and lodged at the Mecosta County Jail. He was arraigned by the 77th District Court and formally charged with four (4) counts of Criminal Sexual Conduct 3rd degree (a person 13-15 years old) and one (1) count of Accosting a Child for Immoral Purposes. The CSC charges are felonies with a penalty of 15 years in prison and the accosting a child charge is a 4-year felony. His bond was set at \$75,000 (10% surety required). His next court date is scheduled for July 14, 2021.



###



Contact:

Sgt. Ryan Myers

231-527-0005

rmyers@cityofbr.org

June 25, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Witness Intimidation Arrest

On Wednesday, June 23, 2021, officers with the Big Rapids Police Department arrested 21-year-old Taylor Hagel on an outstanding felony warrant for Witness Intimidation and Stalking a Minor. The felony warrant was the result of a 7-month long investigation conducted by the Big Rapids Police Department. Hagel was taken into custody and lodged at the Mecosta County Jail. She was arraigned by the 77th District Court and formally charged with one (1) count of Witness Intimidation, a four (4) year felony, and Stalking a Minor, a five (5) year felony. Her bond was set at \$20,000 (10% surety required). Her next court date is scheduled for July 14, 2021.



###



Contact:

Sgt Ryan Myer

231-349-2428

rmyers@cityofbr.org

June 26th, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fatal Accident – Ives Avenue at South Street.

Big Rapids- At 04:18 a.m. on June 26th, 2021, The City of Big Rapids Police Department (B.R.P.D.) and Fire Department (B.R.F.D.) were dispatched to Ives Avenue and South Street for a one-vehicle accident. The original caller advised that the vehicle had struck a tree and was on fire. City personnel along with Ferris State University DPS initially responded to the scene.

Within 8 minutes after arriving on the scene, B.R.P.D. personnel advised that there was a trapped, deceased victim inside the fire. While searching the area, a trail of blood was found moving away from the scene. The search of the area found a male walking around the Ferris State University campus with apparent injuries. The male was provided medical attention and was transported to Butterworth Hospital for treatment.

B.R.P.D. was assisted with the on-scene investigation by a Mecosta County Sheriff's Office Accident Investigator and the Medical Examiner's Office. The cause of the accident is still unknown and is under investigation. More information will be provided as it is gained and available to be released.

The City of Big Rapids Police Department and Fire Department want to thank the following agencies for their assistance: the MECEOLA Central Dispatch, Ferris State University Department of Public Safety, Mecosta County EMS, the Medical Examiner's Office, and the Mecosta County Sheriff's Department.

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Contact:

Sgt. William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

July 26, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Big Rapids DPS Announces National Night Out

Big Rapids- Everyone is invited to attend the upcoming National Night Out Event on Tuesday, August 3, 2021 from 5 to 8 p.m. in Downtown Big Rapids. This FREE event is hosted by the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety and the Big Rapids Housing Commission. National Night Out is a fun family-friendly event where you will find FREE food, music, games, and prizes. This year the event will take place in the heart of Downtown Big Rapids. Michigan Avenue will be closed during the event so police cars and fire trucks can be brought into town for children to explore. This event is partnered with other National Night Out events going on across the country, U.S. Territories, and U.S. Military bases worldwide on the same day. National Night Out is designed to enhance relations between law enforcement and the Big Rapids community. This event provides a positive way for all of us to come together and build relationships within our community. Many local downtown businesses have stepped up to get involved in this special event, so there will be a lot of new things to explore. Please plan to join us this year in our new downtown location!



###



Contact:
Officer William Sell
231-527-0005
wsell@cityofbr.org

September 2, 2021
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Big Rapids Department of Public Safety to host *Coffee with a Cop* on October 6th, 2021

Program offers opportunity to meet local officers, discuss community issues

Big Rapids—On October 6th, 2021, officers from Big Rapids Department of Public Safety and community members will come together in an informal, neutral space to discuss community issues, build relationships, and drink coffee.

All community members are invited to attend. The event begins at 8:30am on October 6th at Currie's Amoco, 620 Maple St. Please contact Officer William Sell with questions: 231-527-0005, wsell@cityofbr.org.

Coffee with a Cop provides a unique opportunity for community members to ask questions and learn more about the department's work in Big Rapids' neighborhoods.

The majority of contacts law enforcement has with the public happen during emergencies, or emotional situations. Those situations are not always the most effective times for relationship building with the community, and some community members may feel that officers are unapproachable on the street. *Coffee with a Cop* breaks down barriers and allows for a relaxed, one-on-one interaction.



"We hope that community members will feel comfortable to ask questions, bring concerns, or simply get to know our officers," said Police Chief Danielle Haynes. "These interactions are the foundation of community partnerships."

Coffee with a Cop is a national initiative supported by The United States Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Similar events are being held across the county, as local police departments strive to make lasting connections with the communities they serve.

The program aims to advance the practice of community policing through improving relationships between police officers and community members one cup of coffee at a time.



Contact:

Officer William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

September 20, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Three Departments To Host “Stuff a Cop Car”

Big Rapids- The Big Rapids Police Department, the Mecosta County Sheriff's Office, and the Ferris State University Department of Public Safety, in partnership with the Faith Communities of Big Rapids, are teaming up to collect non-perishable items for Manna Pantry of Big Rapids. This event is held in conjunction with National Faith and Blue Weekend.

Come out to the Big Rapids Meijer, Walmart, or Aldi on Saturday, October 9th, from 9:00 A.M. until 12:00 P.M. to stuff a police car FULL of items. Items needed are soup, peanut butter, jelly, spaghetti sauce, pasta, hamburger helper, gelatin/pudding boxes, saltine crackers, Spam, mac & cheese, tuna fish, canned fruit & veggies, pork n beans, cereal, toilet paper, syrup, canned chicken, toothpaste, and toothbrushes.

Faith & Blue Weekend is a national event with activities in communities across the country that bring together law enforcement and residents to build connections, create mutual understanding, and enhance justice and reconciliation.

If you have any questions, please contact Office William Sell at 231-527-0005 or wsell@cityofbr.org.

###



Contact:

Ofc. William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

October 8, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ADDITIONAL ROAD CLOSURES ON S. THIRD AVE

Big Rapids- Be aware that there will be additional road closures coming up next week near the intersection of Colburn and S. Third Ave. as water mains get replaced and construction is completed.

S Dekrafft Ave, Gilbertson Ave, Pemberton Ave, and S. Bronson Ave (from the North) will all remain closed to Colburn Ave.

S Third Ave will remain open, though traffic may be slowed or stopped at times for short durations. S Third Ave will also have temporary lane reductions to two or one lane.

S Bronson Ave (from the South) will remain open to Colburn Ave.

If possible, please seek an alternate route. Construction is slated to be completed by Friday, October 15th.

###



Contact:

Officer William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

October 15, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Detroit Man Arrested for Attempted Murder

Big Rapids- In the early morning hours of Thursday, October 14, officers responded to the 1200 block of Perry Ave. for the report of a shooting that had just occurred. The victim stated he had received a message from a subject he did not know via Snapchat asking him where he was at. The victim tried to get the identity of the subject contacting him but was unable to.

A short time later, the victim noticed a vehicle following his vehicle. In an attempt avoid the vehicle following him, he went through an apartment complex and a shopping center on Perry Ave. He advised that while he was stopped at the traffic signal to exit the shopping center, the suspect vehicle stopped on Perry and fired a single shot at him from a handgun out of the vehicle's window. The victim returned to his apartment and called the police. There were no injuries reported. The victim described the suspect as an unknown black male with a beard.

Later in the day, the victim called again stating he had found the car that had followed him. Contact was made with the resident of the apartment. A male, matching the description that was given by the victim, was located inside the apartment. After further investigation, it was determined 22-year-old Amari Lee Jenson (02/07/1999), of Detroit, was the suspect who had fired the firearm at the victim. Jenson was taken into custody for Attempted Murder and transported to the Mecosta County Jail. He was arraigned through the 77th District Court and is being held on \$ surety.

*These are charges only and persons accused of a crime are presumed to be innocent. *



The Big Rapids Department of Public Safety was assisted on this case by the Mecosta County Sheriff's Office, The Ferris State University Department of Public Safety, and Meceola Central Dispatch.



Contact:

Officer William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

November 12, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Big Rapids Police Announce Season of Giving 2021

Big Rapids- Chief Danielle Haynes is proud to announce the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety, Police Division, is hosting the second annual Season of Giving gift drive to benefit Eagle Village.

Eagle Village is a 681-acre campus in Hersey that serves hundreds of kids each year through residential treatment, adoption and foster care, short-term interventions, and specialized summer camps. In 2020 they had 110 kids in residential care, they placed 62 kids in foster care, completed 20 successful adoptions, and had 225 kids either attend summer camps or complete Challenge Weekends. They have been doing this for over 53 years.

The Season of Giving Gift Drive was launched by the Big Rapids Police Department in 2020. With the help from department members, residents, local businesses and organizations, BRPD donated more than 700 gifts to Eagle Village.

"We were overwhelmed by the success of this toy drive last year and we are excited to do it again this year." said Chief Danielle Haynes. "The outpouring of support in 2020 really shows how the citizens of Big Rapids and the surrounding communities are always willing to come out and help each other."

The holiday gift drive will take place on Saturday, December 11th, from 9 a.m.- Noon at The Big Rapids Department of Public Safety, 435 N. Michigan Ave. Santa and his "reindeer" Boomer will be on site to accept your donation and take pictures with. Masks are encouraged and appreciated, and selfies with Santa and Boomer are a given!

Please see the attached list for items that Eagle Village needs.

For more information on the event, contact Officer William Sell at 231-527-0005 or wsell@cityofbr.org.

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2021 Eagle Village Youth Christmas List

Fidgets – bubble pops, squishy balls, koosh or Arggh balls

Bullet Journals and supplies, Gel Pens, Notebooks (not spiral bound)

Headphones, ear buds

Weighted Blankets

Duffle Bags

Books – nature, adventure tales, heroic stories

Clothing

- Winter Gloves, Hats
- Fuzzy Sock
- Socks
- Sweatshirts

Personal Hygiene Items

- Hairbrushes
- Hair Ties – Scrunches, wraps
- Body Spray
- Lotion
- Nail Polish

Art Supplies

- Craft Kits
- Coloring Books
- Crayons
- Canvases
- Paint
- Paint Brushes
- Diamond Art
- Scrap Books
- Picture Books
- Sketch Pads (not spiral bound)
- Glue Sticks
- Playdough
- Stickers

Games

- Board Games
- Card Games
- Decks of Cards
- Puzzles
- Game Books

Musical Equipment

Sports Equipment

- Softball
- Volleyball
- Basketball
- Fishing Kits

Tabletop games

- Air Hockey
- Ping Pong
- Foosball
- Basketball

Toys

- Dolls
- Stuffed Animals
- Toy Trucks
- Sand Equipment
- Flashlights
- Bubble lights – battery operated
- Kites



Contact:

Ofc. William Sell

231-527-0005

wsell@cityofbr.org

November 17, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Personal Injury Accident at S. State St and Knollview Dr

Big Rapids- On 11/16/2021 at approximately 11:50 P.M., Big Rapids Police Department officers responded to a head on collision at S. State St and Knollview Dr.

Through the investigation, it was determined a 59-year-old female from Howard City had turned from a side street and headed south in the northbound lanes of S. State St. The driver of the other vehicle, a 21-year-old male from Wisconsin, was heading north in the inside lane of S. State St. Both vehicles crested the hill at Knollview Dr. at the same time and were unable to avoid the head on collision.

The female driver was transported to Spectrum Health Big Rapids Hospital for non-life-threatening injuries. The male driver of the other vehicle was uninjured.

The Big Rapids Police Department was assisted on scene by the Big Rapids Fire Department, The Ferris State Department of Public Safety, Mecosta County EMS, and MECEOLA Central Dispatch.

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