



**WE  
GOT  
THIS**

**WE GOT THIS**  
  
**MÁS FUERTES  
JUNTOS**

**2020**  
**VAIL POLICE**  

---

**ANNUAL REPORT**



## Message from CHIEF HENNINGER

---

It's been a year like no other. As 2020 ends and we look forward to a better 2021, I am proud to highlight the achievements of the men and women of Vail PD! Even with a global pandemic, unrest and social justice concerns about the police and three of the worst wildfires in Colorado's history, we as an organization were remarkably successful even while being locked down! We accomplished a great many things that have a significant effect on our community as well as many of the guests who visit Vail.

A new Strategic Framework was developed to lead us into 2021-2023; Colorado Police reform measures were passed in SB-217; former TOV IT Director Ron Braden was brought to justice and a significant portion of the funds he stole from the Town were recovered; we learned how to participate in numerous Zoom meetings on many subjects including the county's COVID response; and, held regular All-Hands meetings to help keep everyone informed while at a distance, with an emphasis on our mental health. Serial theft suspects were arrested and new ways to communicate to citizens were implemented in the Communications Center. We used the pandemic as an opportunity to exercise our incident management skills and had a tabletop exercise with the Fire Department leadership team on Zoom. Most importantly we continued to provide excellent public safety services to our community during these difficult times, while doing a stellar job at staying healthy ourselves!

What is important about the Vail Police Department is not the new cars we drive or the building we work in – it is the women and men of the organization who make us unique. We deliver exemplary policing with respect, professionalism, and integrity. In the year ahead we will hopefully see a lessening of COVID-19's impact as vaccines become

available, and we look forward to welcoming back more of our guests as they begin to visit again to enjoy the beautiful outdoors in Vail and to re-engaging with our community members in person as the restrictions are lifted for gatherings.

2021 will be my 20th year as Chief of Police in Vail, and in September I will become the President of the International Association of Chiefs of Police while continuing to serve as Chief here in Vail. I am truly thankful for this extraordinary term of office in such a wonderful organization, and I can't overstate the honor it is to have the support of both Vail PD staff, Town of Vail partners, and our wonderful Town leaders, which has made these 20 years possible. Thank you! I look forward to continuing our work to make Vail PD the very best it can be in 2021 and beyond.



**Dwight Henninger**  
POLICE CHIEF



*Chief Henninger at the White House for discussions on criminal justice reform.*

### About the Cover

After Eagle County weathered months of grappling with COVID-19, new messaging was needed as the community shifted from reaction to resilience. The positive messaging of the “**We Got This**” campaign aimed to inspire positive behavior change to contain the spread of COVID-19, through a unified message. An element of this campaign included championing micro-communities through story telling.

*Cover photo: Charles Townsend Photography*

*Cover Design: 970 Designs*

# OUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

---

Our 2021 - 2023 strategic direction reflects aspects of "Outputs of Greatness" principles laid out in *Good to Great and the Social Sectors* by Jim Collins (2005).

## Mission

To deliver exemplary policing with respect, professionalism and integrity.

## Vision

Serving and inspiring a safe and engaged community.

## Values

### Leadership

Be committed, informed and innovative while serving and protecting.

### Integrity

Hold myself to the highest ethical standards, be accountable for my actions, and be fair.

### Excellence

Continually seek to improve myself, my organization and my community.

### Collaboration

Develop relationships and work with colleagues and the community.

## Metrics of Greatness to Guide our Performance

### Delivers Superior Performance

Exceed our desired results, push our boundaries, deliver on the goals of our social mission.

### Makes a Distinctive Impact

Make a beneficial and authentic connection in service to our community, one which cannot be replaced nor imitated.

### Achieves Lasting Endurance

Achieve exceptional results over a long period of time.



**Chief of Police  
Dwight Henninger**

1 Management Assistant &  
PD Coordinator for Northwest  
Incident Management Team

**Administrative Commander  
Craig Bettis**

**Operations Commander  
Ryan Kenney**

**Communications  
Center Director  
Marc Wentworth**

Professional Standards  
Hiring/Training  
Planning & Research  
Special Events Planning  
Auditing  
Court Liaison  
Accreditation  
Building Maintenance  
Budgeting  
Explorers Program

1 Administrative  
Services Manager

3 Administrative  
Techs

Records  
Crimes & Traffic  
Analysis  
Grants

School Resource  
Officer

4 Tier One  
Volunteers

1 Detective  
Sergeant  
2 Detectives  
1 Systems  
Support /  
Digital Evidence

2 Drug Task Force  
Detectives

1 Community Liaison  
Sergeant

Chaplain

3 Part-Time  
Officers

Day Shift Team  
(Sun-Weds)  
1 Sergeant  
4 Officers  
3 Code  
Enforcement  
Officers

Night Shift Team  
(Sun-Weds)  
1 Sergeant  
4 Officers

Day Shift Team  
(Weds-Sat)  
1 Sergeant  
4 Officers  
3 Code  
Enforcement  
Officers

Night Shift Team  
(Weds-Sat)  
1 Sergeant  
5 Officers

1 9-1-1 Operations  
Administrator  
1 CAD  
Administrator  
4 Dispatch  
Supervisors

17 Dispatchers

Systems  
Engineer

# VAIL POLICE WELLNESS & RESILIENCY

● **Responder Strong**

Colorado first responders and the National Mental Health Innovation Group collaborating to improve support systems for responders and their families.

● **Peer Support**

Confidential discussions between advisors and employees seeking help on work or life issues. Referrals to resources and services are given.

● **Mentoring**

Experienced employees provide new hires with non-judgmental support to reduce stress during rigorous training phrases. A mentor also orients their protégé on social, religious and other activities in the area.



● **AWARE's** 10 domains for long-term maintenance of wellness and resiliency are Occupational, Medical, Psychological, Trauma, Physical, Relational, Financial, Recreational and Spiritual.

● **SIGMA**

Vail's innovative police-specific health-based program includes comprehensive medical tests and individualized treatment plans prescribed by a physician.

● **Mindfulness**

Encouraging mindful awareness of self-care, awareness of others, job readiness, safety and outlooks on career and life. Annual charities with Behavioral Health personnel.

● **Work-Life Balance**

As an example, saying yes to requests for time away from department work.



This report includes photos from  
Years 2019 and 2020

Unless noted, all photos were taken by  
Dominique Taylor Photography

# STRATEGIC TARGETS & OUTCOMES 2020

---

**Operational emphasis: criminal justice reform, officer training, police reform, incidents involving mental health issues, community outreach, partnerships and interagency communication.**

## Policy & Oversight

*We focused on policy oversight, accountability measures and preserving lessons learned.*

- For Colorado's Enhance Law Enforcement Integrity Bill, we established new procedures for required data collection on officer-initiated contacts and reviewed policies for compliance of the bill's provisions.
- Vail Police earned reaccreditation through the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police validating its adherence to 186 policing standards.
- Notable performances were recognized in annual employee appraisals.
- Reviewed operational work processes for relevancies and efficiencies. An e/ticketing-to-records management system interface is nearly complete and will reduce redundancies.
- Conducted After-Action Debriefs for major road safety events and critical incidents.
- A new Community Liaison Sergeant position is tasked to build community trust and to review body worn and in-car camera video to ensure adherence to policy and procedure.

## Earned Trust

*We focused on community outreach, relationships, procedural justice, and fair and impartial policing.*

- High survey ratings for sense of safety and security (4.7 out of 5) and for confidence in the Vail Police (4.5 out of 5).
- Multiple deployments of Vail Police and Dispatch team members to historic Colorado wildland fires.
- Emergency preparedness included two tabletop drills with first responders, public works and Colorado Northwest Incident Management Team members.
- Assisted Salvation Army with their caseload by interviewing residents applying for rental assistance.
- Modified Shop-with-a-Cop, a food drive, coat drive, and Ride in Remembrance.
- A video produced in 2020 raises awareness of local law enforcement's alliance with our immigrant community.





## Community Policing

*Partnerships, proactive education, road safety, traffic incident management and crime reduction programs.*

- Clearance rate for crimes involving theft, burglary, robbery, aggravated assault, motor vehicle theft and arson reached 24%.
- Officers were vigilant in helping residents and guests understand public health orders during the county's transitional plan for lockdowns and phased re-openings. Of the 115 public health order violations handled, only one ticket was issued.
- Drunk driving offenses were at their lowest in years (29 in 2020) and can be credited to fewer motorists on the road during lockdown.
- Loading and Delivery. Due to COVID-related stresses on businesses, we are delaying a full rollout of this project and instead focusing on the use of E-Vehicles to help with deliveries and reduce the number of trucks in the village. This will serve as a demonstration of the potential positive impact of larger future changes.
- Partnered with the Eagle County Sheriff's Office on an education campaign, called Let's Be Blunt, aimed at responsible recreational marijuana use.
- With over two times the residential area sightings of bears and over three times public area sightings, Vail Police Code Enforcement Officers issued over 560 enforcement actions requiring residents to be more responsible with their trash.
- Vail Officers volunteer on their days off to patrol the slopes of Vail Mountain and assist Ski Patrol in educating skiers on ski safety guidelines.





## Training & Education

*Emergency preparedness, readiness and response, procedural justice, and on fair and impartial policing.*

- Sustained succession planning and leadership development opportunities.
- Scenario-based training to prepare the public safety sector and community for wildland fires and other adverse events.
- Several educational outreach programs suspended for most of the year: Safe Bar Campaign, Project Graduation, Neighborhood Picnics, Adopt-a-Homeroom and more.

## Technology & Social Media

*Outreach expansion, social media, proactive use of technology, smart project implementations.*

- The Vail PD's Facebook and Instagram accounts serve as a link to the community through strong messaging to stay calm and informed during the community's health, economic and political crisis. Facebook followership grew by 13% in 2020.
- Expanded use of a cloud-based patrol briefing portal.
- Targeted messaging through IPAWS, the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System, is translated and sent to all phones within a specific area regardless of carrier or sign-up.
- The Eagle County Alert system allows routine and emergency notifications in English and in Spanish.
- Prepared for a body worn and in-car camera system upgrade.

## LEGACY OF INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

---

Collecting, managing and accessing our collective knowledge is crucial to our long-term success. With the adoption of several new technologies, we have increased our capabilities to store and disseminate information throughout the department.

Employees have access to SmartForce which is a web-based software where information is updated and circulated in real time for efficient communication. Most of our stored information has been moved to a digital format, stored locally and in cloud-based systems.

Situational experiences formally captured on Incident Action Plans are a source for VPD members to understand routinely implemented practices and for a cross-section of teams to be better, more consistent decision makers. Along with the Incident Action Plans for large-scale special events and critical incidents, post event After-Action Reports allow us to document and preserve lessons learned for future generations of VPD members.



**Vail Police rewards and reinforces institutional learning and sharing collective experiences. What we can do for each other inside the department and outside depends on imparting our institutional knowledge and includes everyone giving of themselves in our long-term relationships."**

**– Chief Dwight Henninger**



## Vail Police SmartForce

A cloud-based briefing and information-sharing portal where shift reports and intelligence provide situational awareness; operational and administrative workflows are streamlined; and, collaborative workspaces pull the efforts of many under one roof.

The screenshot shows the SMARTFORCE web application interface for the Vail Police Department. The interface is organized into several sections:

- Left Navigation Menu:**
  - Operations
    - Operations Discussions
    - Briefing Memos
  - Home
    - Digital Sandbox
    - New Alert
    - Training Calendar
    - Training Evaluations
  - COVID-19
  - Links
  - Contacts
    - Internal Black Book
    - DA Staff - 5th Judicial...
    - 50 State DL Photo Re...
    - Public Safety Contacts
- Main Content Area:**
  - Executive Alert:** Letter From the Chief to Vail Business Owners. Please view the attached letter from Chief Henninger to Vail Business.
  - Operation Alert:** From the Chief: Join All Hands Call on Feb 25, 20201 @ 4PM For Employee and Your Families. [DETAILS] Zoom M
  - Operation Alert:** VPD Situational Status Report. [includes UPDATED links to key documents]
  - Operations Discussions:** MVAs in Brazos
  - Briefing Memos:**
    - Extra Patrol- Possible Narcotics Activity
    - Hit and Run MVA
    - 21-222, Civil/Harassment?
    - Follow up for IR 338 and 339
    - Blood Kit
  - Announcements:**
    - March 2021
    - February 2021
    - January 2021
  - Pass Along:** (Section header)
  - Vail PD News:**
    - Town of Vail - Police
    - Vail Reminds Public of Mask Protocols and Patience Ahead of Busy Weekend
  - Town of Vail News:** (Section header)
  - Tweets by @VailPolice:**
    - Vail Police @VailPolice: If you need to travel I-70 this weekend, morning if you can. It's going to get nast...

# OUR STRENGTH IS OUR PEOPLE

---

We strive to provide exceptional service to a global community in conjunction with our international resort, as such our employees need to be as diverse as our clientele.

## Recruiting Strategy

Our recruiting strategy focuses on drawing in people from all walks of life without regard to age, gender, race, ethnicity or country of origin. Community Liaison Sergeant Chris Botkins will support the Administrative Commander in increasing our diversity recruiting strategies in 2021. Currently, 13% of officers and 59% of civilians are women, and 12% of employees are visible minorities.

## Professional Announcements

Vail Drug Task Force Detective **Josh Larson** was selected in a competitive process for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office as a COPS Fellow.

Dispatcher **Fernando Almanza** was selected to attend the Naval Postgraduate School/Center for Homeland Defense - Emergence Program which explores emerging trends in the world.

## Recognitions

**Ryan Kenney, Justin Liffick, Lachlan Crawford, Angela Sommer, Greg Schwartz, Marc Antonio, Josh Larson, Justin Dill**

Commander Kenney and this group of dedicated law enforcement officers spent the better part of 4 months tracking and then searching for a dangerous felon who was released and then fled pretrial monitoring for a series of crimes against the taxpayers and officers of the Town of Vail.

**Randy Braucht**

Sergeant Braucht was recognized with a Meritorious Service Award for his outstanding performance, inter-agency cooperation and exceptional investigative work involved in the safe apprehension of two severely disturbed individuals in two separate events.

**Justin Liffick**

Detective Sergeant Liffick received a Rotary Public Safety Award for his role as Deputy Incident Commander on a Search and Rescue Mission for a missing toddler.

**Craig Westering**

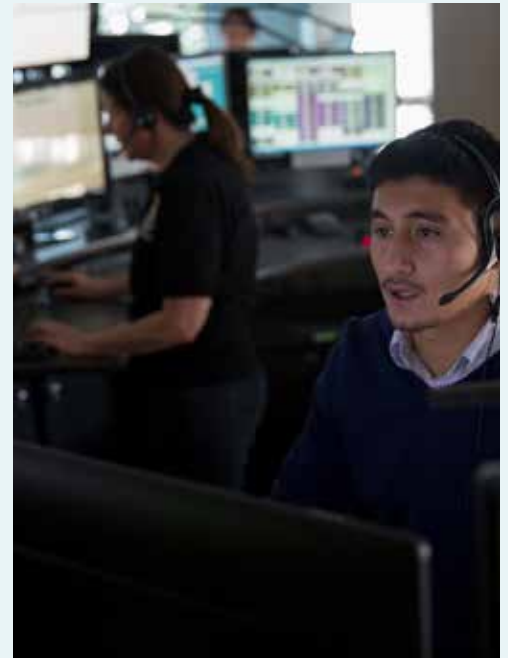
Officer Westering received a Meritorious Service Award in recognition of the gratitude received from a man he arrested on DUI in 2007. In March, the man contacted the Vail PD to thank Officer Westering for saving his life.

**Angela Sommer**

Officer Sommer was recognized for her exceptional investigation on a felony case involving multiple jurisdictions.

**Bonnie Collard, Charles Fleming, Ben Spacek, Michelle Aranda, Aly Fernberg, Cassie Ruch, Kelly Klein**

This Dispatch team received a team commendation for their work involving a vehicle pursuit that spanned Eagle County, ending in the arrest of a triple homicide suspect from California.



# COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

## Employee Health & Resiliency

*Infection prevention and physical, mental and psychological support*

- COVID-19 personal protection equipment assigned
- Public Health nurse designated as direct contact for first responders showing an onset of symptoms
- Chief conducting virtual All-Hands (department) meetings to share information and sustain morale
- Outside speakers invited to department calls including town manager, mental health counselors, county emergency manager, public health director
- Dispatchers assigned to the same console and their off-duty movements followed strict protocols
- Teams isolated from each other
- Police personnel assigned to specific vehicles
- Cleaning protocols heightened



## Effective Crisis Team

*Preparedness, response and risk management*

- Crisis team and specialized resources deployed
- Collaborations across multi-systems and multiple disciplines were instigated
- Risks, vulnerabilities and capabilities were assessed
- Central buying team for critical supplies established







## Policy & Protocols

*Operational service changes and capacity.*

- Citizen contact protocols established
- 4-step model for obtaining compliance with public health orders
- Online crime reporting for non-emergency crimes
- Shelters identified for Vail Pass closures during peak infection periods
- Limited self-initiated traffic enforcement between March - June except for most serious violations
- Suspension of several non-essential services

## Facility Management

*Infection prevention and facility access*

- Heightened rules to disinfect workspaces and patrol cars
- Electrostatic sprayers used daily
- Built an HVAC system which uses hydrogen peroxide
- Municipal building closed to general public
- Plexiglass installed at police front counter

## POLICING VAIL

## GOVERNANCE

## AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### Colorado Senate Bill 2020-217

In June, Colorado legislators passed the [Enhance Law Enforcement Integrity Act](#) following nationally publicized cases of police brutality. The State becomes the first in the nation to eliminate qualified immunity as a defense for officers if state civil rights laws are violated.

Previously, under the qualified immunity doctrine, officers were not subject to personal liability for incidents if acting in good faith and in accordance to Colorado law and department policy.

Passage of this landmark bill has propelled law enforcement everywhere to look, if they had not done so already, at their governance, use of force policies and accountability for police conduct, agency practices and the protection of civil liberties.

The Vail Police Department's policies are continuously revised and amended as case law and statutes evolve. In the case of SB217, the Department only had to make minor changes to its policies and immediately trained members on these changes.

A ROBUST  
POLICY MANUAL AND  
STANDARDIZATION OF  
OPERATIONAL PRACTICES,  
OFFICER PERFORMANCE  
MEASUREMENTS, PROFESSIONAL  
STANDARDS, DATA COLLECTION,  
AD-HOC STATISTICAL REPORTING  
AND EMPLOYEE TRAINING ARE  
FIXED ELEMENTS OF  
ACCOUNTABILITY  
PLANS.

### Significant policing reforms in SB217:

- banning of chokeholds
- banning of the use of deadly force in non-violent offenses
- mandate to collect data on officer-initiated contacts and report to state and federal agencies
- mandate to report officer names to a nationwide database who are decertified, terminated or who have resigned while under investigation
- directives for use of body worn cameras and release of footage
- police must establish a legal basis for contacting someone



## Dispositions of Investigated Complaints in 2020

Standards Category	Incidents	Dispositions
Improper Conduct	0	
Traffic Accidents	2	1 verbal counseling 1 suspension
Use of Force	11	within policy
Wildlife Destruction	6	within policy
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	

## Professional Standards

The department receives letters of appreciation for employee dedication to duty, bravery and public-spirited acts as well as public complaints which are grouped into three categories – service, policy, conduct.

In 2020, there were zero incidents of misconduct, compared to six in 2019 of which three were reported by citizens and three internally.



*Customers surveyed in 2020 gave the Vail PD a rating of 4.4 out of 5 (highest) for "appropriate presence of foot and vehicle patrol".*

# REPORTED CRIME & ACTIVITY

The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown impacted the quantity of calls for police service. Monthly call volumes decreased while the nature of calls resulted in different crime patterns.

PERSONS CRIME	3-yr range	3-yr average	2019	2020	% change from average	Notes on 2019 & 2020 data
Homicide	0-2	1	0	2	-	Attempted homicide, 36-yr old male shot 6 rounds through a door, hitting his roommate in the legs
Sex Offenses	5-9	8	9	5	-38%	Victim intoxicated in 2 cases; Victim a juvenile in 2 cases
Robbery	0-3	2	3	0	-	Last robbery was in July 2019 where boyfriend stole girlfriend's purse
Assault	54-81	70	76	81	+15%	17 cases involved serious bodily injury, 3 cases involved assault on an officer
Menacing	6-17	11	11	17	+55%	23-yr old male arrested for attacking restaurant staff with a wine glass
False Imprisonment	1-10	5	3	10	+100%	All cases involved domestic violence
Threats/Intimidation	1-9	6	9	1	-83%	Husband intimidated wife by threatening to take daughter away and asking family members to contact her repeatedly on his behalf
Stalking	3-5	4	5	4	-	1 case domestic related; 3 cases involving women being stalked at work
Child Negligence/Abuse	4-6	5	4	4	-20%	1 case of a 1- and 4-yr old left home alone while the babysitter went to a party
Domestic Violence	39-63	51	39	51	-24%	1 case of boyfriend and girlfriend being arrested after she punched him and he threw her dog over a balcony (the dog was ok)
PROPERTY CRIME						
Arson	0-1	1	1	0	-	Last case in Nov of 2019, 22-yr old male arrested for burning American Flag
Burglary	23-30	26	30	23	-12%	18 residence non-force, 3 non-residence non-force, 1 residence force, 1 non-residence force
Theft	212-398	282	236	212	-25%	19 incidents involved more than \$5000 in stolen money/goods
Auto Theft	5-16	11	11	16	+45%	Multiple cases linked to one group from Denver targeting the area, keys left in vehicle for most
Criminal Extortion	0-2	1	2	0	-	No incidents of criminal extortion in 2020
Fraud	78-141	107	141	102	-5%	Scams involving rental property, IRS, online classifieds and ski pass frauds
Forgery	6-14	10	6	14	+40%	Store employee caught processing returns to his personal credit card
Trespassing	30-96	59	49	30	-49%	Mostly people returning to businesses where they have been previously banned
Vandalism	82-104	91	87	82	-10%	Majority involved intoxicated offenders

# REPORTED CRIME & ACTIVITY

SOCIETY CRIME	3-yr range	3-yr average	2019	2020	% change from average	Notes on 2019 & 2020 data
Drug Offenses	18-53	37	40	18	-52%	Heroin, cocaine, fentanyl, methamphetamine, marijuana
Impaired Driving	24-47	34	47	24	-29%	Majority impaired by alcohol
Weapon Violations	3-6	4	3	6	+50%	Man illegally possessing firearm attempted to disarm a peace officer
Liquor Law Violations	7-35	22	22	7	-68%	Underage drinking in all cases
Indecent Exposure	1-4	3	2	1	-67%	Man seen naked on the Nature Center trail along Gore River
Prowler	2-3	3	3	2	-33%	1 man repeatedly ringing doorbell, 1 man suspiciously pacing in front of the house
Resisting/Obstructing Officers	10-15	12	10	15	+25%	Typically resulted from contact for another purpose
Disorderly Conduct	36-49	43	49	36	-16%	Most occurring at bars; 2nd top location is in parking structures
Public Drunkenness	85-124	109	116	85	-22%	Custodial holds to prevent danger to themselves/others
<b>QUALITY OF LIFE</b>						
Harassment	77-96	86	96	84	-3%	Majority of cases involving roommates, former girl/boyfriends and spouses
Noise Complaints	190-274	222	190	274	+23%	Majority are loud party noise complaints
Animal Complaints	303-385	349	385	357	+3%	115 cases involving domestic animals, 207 wildlife, 1 livestock, 8 bites
Code Violations	549-1,029	820	1029	880	+7%	Education efforts precede enforcement actions
Suspicious Activity	673-705	687	682	705	+3%	An informed community helps to report suspicious activity
Civil Standbys	143-185	166	185	143	-14%	Roommate disputes, evictions, child custody exchanges
Welfare Checks	96-114	106	106	114	+8%	Mainly, persons making concerning remarks to family
Missing/Overdue Persons	58-62	60	59	58	-4%	Overdue individuals and separated family members
Runaways	0-1	1	1	0	-	No runaways reported in 2020
Suicidal Calls	37-92	63	60	79	+25%	VPD partnering with Eagle Valley Behavioral Health Center to combat this crisis
Wildlife Calls	95-218	173	218	207	+19%	Presence of bighorn sheep on roadways; increase of moose and bear calls
Bar Checks	338-921	624	921	338	-45%	Officers look for underaged persons, intoxicated persons and over capacity
Home/Business Checks	319-472	379	472	344	-9%	Exterior property checked when vacant for extended periods
<b>PARKING ISSUES</b>						
Parking Problems	3,420-3,777	3,630	3,777	3,420	-6%	Vail continues to work towards expanding parking options
Parking Tickets	4,021-4,461	4,208	4,461	4,142	-2%	Includes 2,407 warnings in 2020
Abandoned Vehicles	11-61	40	61	11	-75%	8 vehicles abandoned on Interstate 70 and its ramps

# POLICING VAIL

## PROTECTION AND PREVENTION

### Visibility

Although Police and Code Enforcement Officers were directed to reduce self-initiated traffic stops during peak pandemic infection periods except for serious violations, traffic enforcement was increased in heavy construction zones.

In May through early June, the Vail PD saw a massive surge in social media impressions with a series of timely posts, starting with an effecting photo of a joint-agency tribute to victims of COVID-19, a powerful response on May 16 to the George Floyd incident written in conjunction with the rest of the county's law enforcement on June 3 and a post stating Vail PD's stance in support of the peace rally in Vail Village June 4. Vail Police was the only one of the agencies to post June's letter in full natively to Facebook and Instagram, which increased views through comments, likes and shares. The overwhelmingly positive response to this and the peace rally posts were a bright spot in a critical time for law enforcement.



### Enforcement of Public Health Orders

As Eagle County continued to see a rise in COVID-19 cases, Vail Officers helped with issues relating to businesses being over capacity, private gatherings, and outdoor events. Borderline public health violations were handled with an emphasis on education. Violations were documented in writing and with body worn camera footage. The Communication Center received 115 calls for service involving public health violations.

### Crisis Intervention Training

CIT Programs train law enforcement to manage the risk of encounters with individuals with untreated mental illness. Learning verbal and non-verbal tactics and other intervention strategies to de-escalate the physical and emotional energy of a person in crisis helps to reduce violent incidents and injuries.

Close to 95% of veteran department staff has participated in role-playing scenarios with health professional. New hires are scheduled to attend a CIT program sponsored by the Vail PD in 2021 at Colorado Mountain College.



Chief Henninger marched with over 1,000 protestors who took to Vail's streets following the killing of George Floyd to condemn targeted police brutality and institutional racism.

Photo credit: Christopher Dillmann Photography



The actions of those 4 officers involved in George Floyd's death are very disappointing. We need to focus on community outreach and building trust at the local level, one contact at a time. It's important that we acknowledge that people of color have been treated poorly for hundreds of years – put yourself in their shoes – be patient, be sensitive, even if you or your ancestors had no part in any mistreatment. Listen and continue to build trusting relationships with people."

– Chief Dwight Henninger

# CHIEF HENNINGER'S SERVICE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

## The Association

Vail Police Chief Henninger was sworn into the executive board of the International Association of Chiefs of Police as 1st Vice President in September 2020, becoming President in September 2021. The IACP is the world's largest and most influential association of police leaders. This highly respected position is a pivotal one that gives 31,000 members in 165 countries a compelling voice in society, media presence, and connections through advocacy work. Vail Police staff and town officials could not be prouder of our Chief for earning the trust of the IACP and its members to represent them.

## President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice

Chief Henninger served on the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice in 2020. These next two years are critical for implementing the recommendations of each working group. The Commission examined the country's criminal justice system, policing practices, courts, corrections, victims rights, national security, racial inequalities, police force diversity, juvenile delinquency and more.

ADVANCING THE  
POLICE PROFESSION  
THROUGH RESEARCH,  
LEGISLATION,  
COALITIONS AND  
VOLUNTEERISM.



IACP 2020 - 2021 President Cynthia Renaud and Chief Dwight Henninger



# BIO OF CHIEF HENNINGER

---

## IACP Vice President 2020, President 2021

- The world's largest professional association of police leaders  
– theiacp.org
- Additional IACP committee membership roles served: National Security and Transnational Crime Policy Group, Environmental Crimes, Financial Review, Homeland Security
- Criminal Justice Reform Commission

## Vail Police Chief

- Chief of Police, Vail, Colorado, 19 years
- President, Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police 2007 - 2008
- California law enforcement, Garden Grove, Irvine, Laguna Beach, 19 years total
- Board member, Colorado Information Analysis Center 2010 - 2016
- National Law Enforcement Immigrant Task Force
- Co Chair, Eagle County Law Enforcement Immigrant Alliance
- Vail Interfaith Chapel, 50th Anniversary Capital Campaign Advisory Committee

## Local, State, Federal

- Colorado Northwest Incident Management Team
- Safety and Security Committee Chair, 2015 Alpine World Ski Championships
- Member, FEMA's Local, State, Tribal and Federal Preparedness Task Force 2013
- Chair, FEMA Region 8, Regional Advisory Council

## International Security

- Panel member, Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, June 2016 conference
- International Ski Federation, 2011 World Alpine Championships, Germany
- Public Safety Volunteer, Vancouver Olympics 2010

## Awards

- COPS Office, Sutin Civic Imagination Award for Eagle County Law Enforcement Immigrant Advisory Alliance Leadership 2013
- Colorado Information Analysis Center, Terrorism Liaison Officer Executive Recognition 2015
- Eagle County Public Safety Council, Rotary Leadership Award 2015
- Colorado State Patrol, Colorado Pro Challenge Leadership Award 2014
- Colorado Drug Investigators Association, Leadership Award 2014
- Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police, Ralph Smith Innovation Award 2004
- California Reserve Officer of the Year 1981
- Garden Grove Police Department, California, Medal of Courage 1980

# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

To mitigate the impacts of both unexpected and anticipated real-life events and emergencies, the Vail Police and the Vail Public Safety Communications Center undergo careful planning, preparation and training through Town of Vail-sponsored exercises and participation in Colorado Northwest Incident Management Team deployments. 2020 has been especially busy for IMT members.

## Colorado Northwest Incident Management Team

The CONWIMT formed in 2006 and is made up of a number of public safety responders from the Vail Police Department, Vail Public Safety Communications Center and other public safety agencies throughout Northwest Colorado. The team supports local jurisdictions responding to man-made disasters, natural disasters and large-scale events. Vail PD provides administrative support teams.

In April 2020, the Town of Vail and its public sector partners used the town's continued response to the pandemic for a table-top exercise. The drill combined real-life events with simulated scenarios involving flooding, debris flows and a wildland fire to hone incident management team skills.

## Unified Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Vail Police collaborated with its partners to respond to and manage the pandemic. Collaborations included a countywide joint information center, command and general staff meetings, countywide dashboards for situational awareness, Vail Police situational reports and a strong messaging campaign.



Photo credit: Dominique Taylor

## Community Evacuations

- Evacuation zone definitions have been refined and new maps produced to support early notification to Dispatch and smooth community evacuations.
- An ECAAlert campaign will encourage residents to sign up their cell phone numbers with a physical home address to assist with evacuation orders.



## Deployments

2020 was a record setting fire season in Colorado. In August the Pine Gulch Fire became the largest wildland fire in state history only to be surpassed by the Cameron Peak Fire later in the year. The Vail Police Department and Vail Public Safety Communications Center spent a combined 1,020 hours supporting fires throughout the state in various communications, logistics, and planning functions. Resources were sent to support the Sieber Fire, Pine Gulch Fire, Grizzly Creek Fire, the Four Eagle Fire, and the East Troublesome Fire.

Along with the various wildland fire incidents throughout the state the Vail Public Safety Communications Center's Incident Dispatch Team also supported several events within the Town of Vail and Eagle County.



Sergeant Justin Dill who retired in 2020



# NOTABLE CASE INVESTIGATIONS

---

## Follow the Money

Investigation into the wrongdoings of Ron Braden, a former Town of Vail Information Technology Director, began after a Denver PD detective contacted the VPD about active warrants out on him for child prostitution. Following Braden's immediate detainment, and subsequent look into his financial history while working as the IT Director at the Town of Vail, Commander Ryan Kenney began what would turn into a long and hyper-detailed investigation. VPD investigators found that Braden had been using business fronts that he himself had created to skim money the town had allocated for contract work. Between 2012-2018 Braden had diverted nearly half a million dollars of town funds to his personal bank accounts.

After 18 months of working directly with the FBI and District Attorney to compile evidence against Braden, who had long since resigned from his position at the Town of Vail, warrants were drafted for Braden's arrest. A later investigation of his vehicle, following his arrest, revealed an AR-15 rifle along and multiple boxes of ammunition, a weapon Braden was not permitted to be in possession of due to past convictions.

Four months after being released on bond from the Eagle County Detention Facility, Braden had tripped his 24-hour pre-trial monitoring device's tamper alert and fled his residence. Both of Braden's vehicles were found at

different locations and he himself was nowhere to be found at his home address. Commander Kenney and detectives located Braden with a search warrant revealing Braden's call and text information and a possible location revealed themselves; before removing his monitoring device Braden had set up the purchase of a motorcycle and began planning an escape to Arizona. On the day Braden removed the GPS monitor he texted his siblings that he would commit suicide at a nearby location while at the same time contacting a prospective renter in Arizona looking for a living space. A later text confirmed that Braden was indeed in Arizona and planned to meet with the renter. The day after local authorities were contacted regarding Braden and his whereabouts the VPD was informed that upon isolating and confronting Braden, who had been riding in a vehicle with his prospective renter, Braden decided to take his own life, dying on scene from a single gunshot wound to the head.

## Cold as Ice

We don't think anyone would be surprised by our community saying that Vail looks amazing during the winter season. Between the lights and other decorations, the town takes on an entirely new personality throughout the ski season, which only begs the question: how cold would you have to be to purposefully destroy an ice sculpture? In this incident, where an ice

sculpture was found vandalized and knocked over, the VPD was fortunate enough that a video camera caught the whole act in progress, lest it end up a cold case.

Using the video, which showed the cold-hearted offender kicking over the sculpture, VPD officers were able to issue a press release including images of the offender. After receiving tips to who the offender might be further investigation chipped away at the possibilities until a single possible offender was identified. Soon after a warrant was issued, the offenders turned themselves in. And with our ice pun quota met this story is over with hope for a silver lining: Perhaps this story could be a new way for the offender to break the ice in the future.

## Stranger than Fiction

We've handled multiple events where a simple incident is unnecessarily complicated for absolutely no reason. That said there's always room for further surprise, like in the event of the following abandoned vehicle.

The vehicle in question, left on the median on the snow-covered interstate, was found empty; a trail of footprints leading from the vehicle to the lane of travel indicating the driver had probably been picked up. Not long after the owner of the vehicle called in with an explanation: that she had stopped to try and assist a man who was walking on the interstate only for the man to draw a gun on her. The

owner of the vehicle accelerated in an attempt to flee, only to skid on the icy roadway causing her vehicle to slide into the median.

In an attempt to identify the mystery gunman, officers looked into footage from the interstate to discover there was in fact, no one on the interstate entirely. Footage showed the vehicle in question applying its breaks and skidding into the median, without any evidence of it stopping prior for any armed man on the interstate. With video evidence and the owner of the vehicle's testimony falling apart, the now offender was charged with the false reporting of a fake crime; a bit of an upgrade from a simple abandoned vehicle, and hopefully a lesson learned in telling the truth.

## **The Sincerest Form of Flattery**

It's quite understandable when we say that it's unnecessary to explain why impersonating a police officer is a bad idea. Even throwing the moral and legal implications aside and looking at it from a purely logical standing it just amounts to a terrible idea.

The incident started with the offender receiving a private parking ticket, having improperly parked in an apartment complex's lot. A Hispanic employee noticed the vehicle and notified their manager who contacted the VPD and asked to have a Code Enforcement Officer ticket the vehicle. Upon driving out to

deliver the ticket the offender returned to the scene and began to argue with the employee, manager and CEO unfruitfully.

This is where things took a turn for the odd however, as not long after the ticketing took place the manager of the apartment complex, as well as other employees, started to receive calls from someone identifying themselves using the name of the prior CEO. This caller, who asked strange questions regarding the Hispanic employee's citizen status, oddly sounded just like the offender from the parking ticket incident, and after the manager called out the caller on this, and received affirmation that it was indeed the offender, the VPD was notified and charged the offender with impersonating a public servant. If this story proves anything it's that you can't impersonate a good attitude.

## **The Worst Strike in Bowling**

New Years can be a busy and exciting time in Vail with what the town has to offer both its residents and visitors. Celebration and inebriation however can quickly make for a volatile mix however, as this incident describes. Responding to a report of an assault, Vail Officers were dispatched early in the morning of the 2020 New Year to find the victim of this incident left beaten and unconscious on the street. Quickly administering medical aid

and calling an ambulance for the victim, Vail Officers and Investigators began to gather information as to what exactly had happened that night.

After meeting with employees of local establishments and gathering video evidence from nearby cameras a narrative began to form. The victim had spent the evening at a local bowling alley where drinking and another possible altercation left him leaving the establishment quite drunk. At some point during his wandering the victim ran into another group, quite literally, and after some belittling words from one of the men in the group led to the then unknown offender striking the victim to the ground and assaulting him, leaving him in the street where he was found by officers.

Now looking to identify the offender, VPD officers and investigators began utilizing other avenues for collecting information, contacting the victim's friends and family to stitch together what video evidence they could compile from those that were there that night and putting out a press release with images of the offender. New video evidence with clearer images and audio was collected including a video in which the offender bragged to his group about the assault before boarding a bus. After a tip was received which confirmed the offender's identity, VPD detectives contacted the offender and not long after he had turned himself in being charged with second degree assault.



## ROAD SAFETY

### COMMITTED TO SERVICE

**Maintaining a safe and unrestrained flow of traffic on Interstate 70 and in-town streets involves cooperation and partnerships across diverse government agencies.**

The goals and strategies to maintain a safe and productive road environment, even under difficult circumstances like adverse weather conditions and avalanches, have been laid out in the Colorado Department of Transportation's and Colorado State Patrol's Traffic Incident Management Plan for Eagle County.

With Vail's immediate proximity to Vail Pass, we target road safety and reduction in traffic collisions, fatalities, injuries and road blockages. We are committed to ensuring interstate commerce does not come to a standstill and adversely impact residential and business areas. During the 2019 - 2020 winter season, the duration of pass closures involving Town of Vail resources were significantly reduced.





# POLICING VAIL

## PROTECTION AND PREVENTION

Vail Patrol handled over 35,000 calls for service, wrote over 1,500 incident reports, 375 traffic crash reports and issued nearly 2,200 traffic citations and warnings. Officers handled everything from petty theft to embezzlement. One event emerged as the most challenging of the year: the investigation of a former Vail IT director who channeled town funds into fake businesses.

### Fraud

Bait advertising, defrauding merchants, credit card fraud and imposter scams made up the bulk of 2020 fraud cases.

A coordinated ransomware attack on the Town of Vail's website in June forced the Vail PD to take some of its data offline.

### Assaults

There were 81 assaults in 2020, a 15% increase over 2019. Of those 81 cases, three cases involved assault on an officer.

### Domestic Violence

Stay-at-Home Public Health Orders contributed to a rise in domestic violence where substance abuse and the inability of victims to escape their homes contributed to a 24% increase in domestic violence calls in Vail.

Every effort is made to prevent further victimization of children who witness the abuse of a parent. Officers will work with the Department of Human Services, victim advocates and schools to monitor behavior caused by trauma and the child's well-being.

### Motor Vehicle Thefts

Officers responded to 16 reports of auto thefts, often where vehicles were left warming and unattended. In one case, relentless investigation led to the arrest of two Denver residents who stole a vehicle valued at over \$40k and two bicycles valued at over \$7k. When shown surveillance footage and asked by a Vail Detective who the female in the footage was, the female offender said "that would be me."



**FOR CRIMES INVOLVING THEFT, BURGLARY, ROBBERY, AGGRAVATED ASSAULT, MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT WAS REACHED BY VAIL POLICE.**

## Co-Response to Mental Health Incidents

Integral to a co-responder model is the relationship between law enforcement, paramedics and behavioral health professionals who all share a common goal – to keep individuals in a mental health crisis from being incarcerated or from being admitted to an emergency room. In Vail and Eagle County, a coordinated response to the mental health crisis is helping to provide the best outcome for individuals. In 2020, the Vail Police, Eagle County Paramedic Services, the Hope Center and Eagle Valley Behavioral Health handled over 23 emergency calls utilizing mental health resources.

## Suicidal Calls

Although not everyone with suicidal thoughts are mentally ill, mental health issues are a big part of suicides and suicide attempts. In 2020, Vail Officers responded to 79 incidents where suicide was threatened by the individual or, where friend and family members asked for police intervention.

Family members alerted Vail Police to one young woman who sent text messages of "goodbyes", another individual mentioned there were "no other options", another said "they had no money," and one man became agitated and suicidal after eating marijuana edibles.

IN 2020 VAIL  
POLICE RECEIVED

79  
CALLS

INVOLVING A SUICIDE  
OR SUICIDAL  
THREAT



## Crimes Involving Marijuana

While Vail Officers educate citizens and tourists to use cannabis responsibly, the presence and use of marijuana have been contributing factors in 47 crimes or welfare checks in 2020. Most encounters were with individuals who believed it was legal to smoke in public or who had strong reactions to marijuana edibles.



The Let's Be Blunt Campaign is a joint effort by Vail Police and Eagle County Sheriff's Office to educate marijuana consumers on responsible use.

## Traffic Management and Road Safety Measures

- Traffic Incident Management Plan
- Stakeholder coordination with governmental partners including the Colorado Department of Transportation, the Colorado State Patrol and neighboring agencies
- Radio and communication protocols for first responders
- Chain law inspections
- Safe tire tread inspections
- Emergency notifications and media outreach
- Encouraged reporting of unsafe driving behavior
- Promotion of pedestrian and bicycle road sharing
- Neighborhood speed management
- Speed awareness mannequin
- Variable message signs
- Click-it or Ticket
- DUI Task Force
- Loading and delivery regulation enforcement
- Commercial Vehicle Passenger Transportation Ordinance
- Traffic data analysis
- SmartForce – a law enforcement info-sharing tool



*Average traffic volumes on Interstate 70 through Vail is 36k vehicles daily. Commercial freight trucks make up 11.6% of total mountain corridor traffic and contribute to 16.6% of traffic crashes.*



Photo credit: Vail Sergeant Lachlan Crawford

# EAGLE COUNTY

---

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

---

## IMMIGRANT ALLIANCE

---

This innovative, award-winning program focuses on strategies to foster strong affiliations between police and the immigrant community. Outreach work includes a coat drive, community-oriented educational sessions, volunteer interpreter program, open forums, victim assistance, visits by consulates, a frequently asked questions brochure and resource guides.

An outcome of the alliance's success is a decrease in the percentage of Hispanics victimized from 18.3% in 2017 to 16.5% in 2020 as compared to the total service population.

Top calls from immigrant community members in 2020 involved questions about immigration/visa status as many lost their jobs during the pandemic. For reference, it is always the responsibility of the employer to tell federal immigration authorities about any change in the visa-holder's employment status.



# SPECIAL EVENTS



## Special Events Planning

As anyone who lives or works here, or just loves to visit Vail knows, there's always something going on in the villages or on the mountain. Vail is one of America's most acclaimed mountain resorts and home to prestigious sporting events, parades, dance and music festivals, and large concerts. We work closely with event producers, promoters, and private entities

which have helped to secure the return of many events year after year.

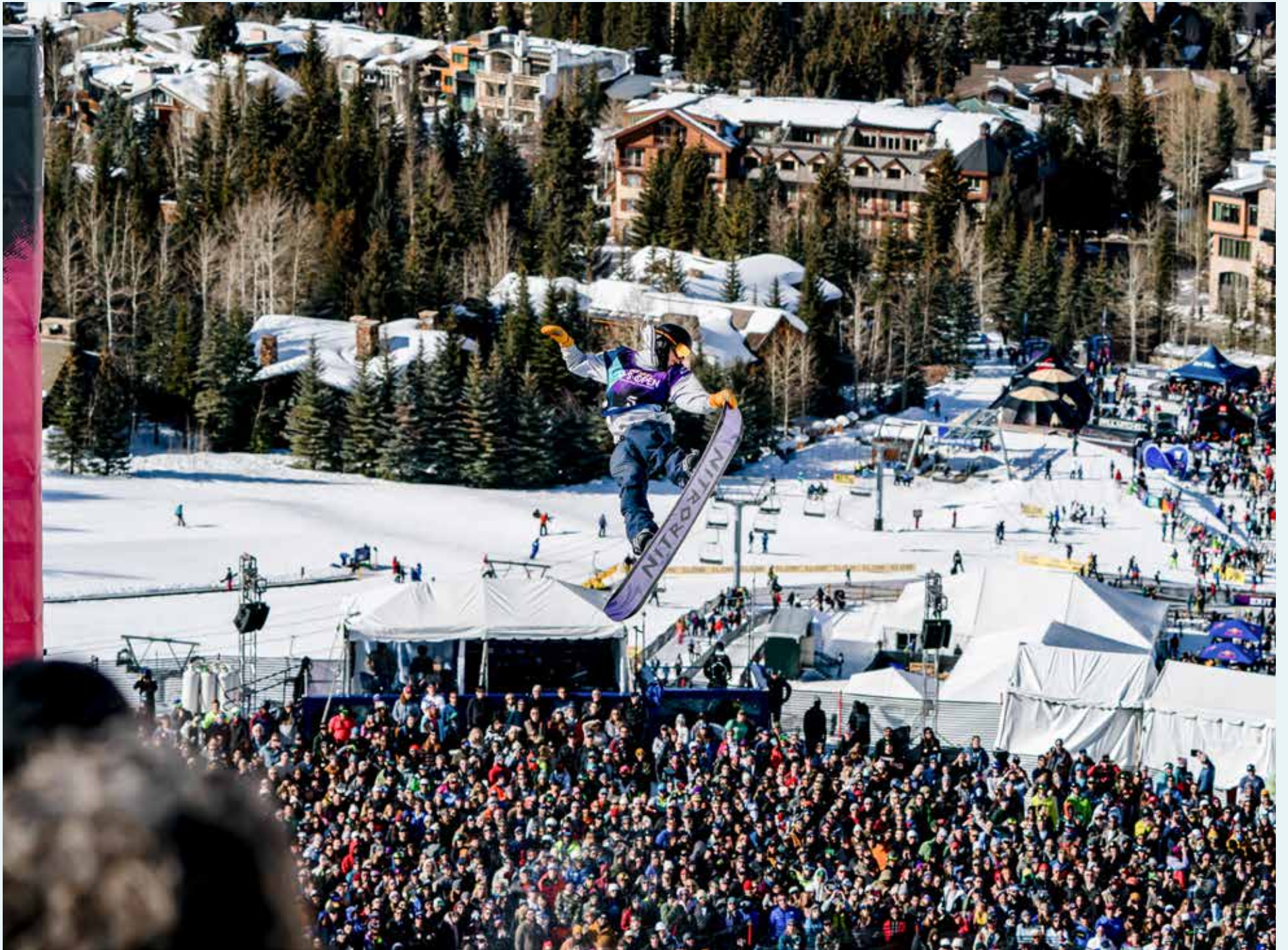
When the mountain closed down in March 2020 to stop the spread of the virus, the Town of Vail canceled special events planned for the remainder of the year.



**When Vail Mountain closed to skiers in March 2020 to stop the spread of the virus, we spent a good deal of time honing our public safety coordination skills through incident management drills with special event scenarios.**

**– Sergeant Braucht**







**75 Frontage Rd W • Vail, Colorado 81657**  
**970.479.2210 • 970.479.2216 fax**  
**[www.vailpolice.com](http://www.vailpolice.com) • [vailpolice@vailgov.com](mailto:vailpolice@vailgov.com)**  
**[twitter.com/vailgov](https://twitter.com/vailgov) • [facebook.com/VailPD](https://facebook.com/VailPD)**