

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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OBJECTIVE

This comprehensive strategy aims to enhance the Cape Coral Police Department's engagement with the community and improve internal communications. It focuses on leveraging social media to build trust and transparency externally, while internally fostering a more informed and cohesive department.

- The strategy has been met by strengthening community engagement through social media and improving internal communication. Social media and our podcast both foster trust and transparency with the public by providing regular updates and direct interaction. Internally, enhanced communication tools and practices have created a more cohesive and informed department, improving overall effectiveness and public perception.

GOALS

External Communication Goals:

1. Build Trust with the Community: Through authentic storytelling and highlighting the human aspect of policing.

- Our use of Body Worn Camera footage accelerates transparency by providing a first-person perspective of police interactions, allowing the public to see events as they unfold. This firsthand view helps build trust by offering an unfiltered account of actions and decisions, reinforcing accountability and fostering a clearer understanding of law enforcement activities. The PAO uses Body Worn Camera to highlight human, positive moments, as well as important events, crimes, and tactics. This also helps us give our followers a better understanding of officer safety measures.

2. Provide Transparency: Share insights into department operations and decision-making processes.

- Transparency has remained a guiding principle for the Cape Coral Police Department. Through platforms such as the Cape CopCast podcast and the weekly Chief's Chat, we consistently provide the public with insight into department operations, strategic decisions, and community priorities. These outlets have allowed the Chief and other leadership to discuss traffic initiatives, enforcement strategies, and ongoing plans in an open, accessible format.
- While these communication efforts have strengthened public understanding of our work, the recent change to restrict public commenting on social media has influenced the perception of transparency by limiting the public's ability to engage in dialogue. Moving forward, we will continue to explore alternative ways to maintain genuine two-way communication while upholding professionalism and safety on our digital platforms.

3. Increase Engagement: Using diverse and interactive (Q&As, content across multiple social media platforms).

- Engagement throughout the year has varied depending on the type of content shared. Posts highlighting human-interest stories or positive community interactions consistently generated the highest levels of engagement. For example, a video featuring Officer W. Rodriguez purchasing a tank of gas for a resident experiencing financial hardship received remarkable attention and support from the community. In contrast, engagement on routine updates and news releases has declined significantly, largely due to the current

restriction on social media comments. Without the ability for followers to comment, tag others, or start conversations, the organic reach of these posts has been reduced. The department continues to explore creative and interactive ways to maintain connection and visibility across all platforms despite these limitations.

- Throughout this year, we have implemented more BWC into social media than ever before. BWC gives the audience an inside look into an officer's perspective. One highlight featured Officer Russ delivering a fruitcake to a woman, assisting a member of our community. BWC has also been used to share positive community interaction and helps us achieve our departmental goals of fostering public trust.
- We filmed a ride-along with a Patrol Officer to showcase day-to-day calls and activities. The PAO team plans to do this more frequently in 2026, offering more Q&A's, and showcasing different positions in the department.
- We need to explore more availability for feedback and public perception to get a better pulse on what our community wants to learn and wants to see. This benchmark is limited due to turned off comments.

4. Tailored Content Across Platforms: Utilizing Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn to reach different segments of the community and department.

- **Facebook:** With the Facebook side of social media, we focused on community-building and information sharing. We shared updates on community events, arrests, and general storytelling through engaging posts, photos, and videos. Posts were designed to target a broad audience including families and local community members. We also posted informational/educational flyers to reach a broader audience. Facebook was also a primary source to post "Attempt to Identify" requests, which yielded several successful outcomes.
- **Twitter/X:** X should focus on real-time updates and concise communication. This past year, the department used X more strategically to deliver real-time, concise updates that aligned with its communication goals. Posts became more frequent and standardized, with abbreviated news releases, relevant photos, and clearly labeled road closure information to support quick public awareness. X also proved to be an effective channel for reaching legacy media, which monitored the feed closely for timely and verifiable updates. As a result, the platform became a reliable tool for communicating road closures, active scenes, and case developments, helping ensure that both the community and media partners received accurate information as situations evolved.
- **Instagram:** Instagram continued to serve as a key platform for visual storytelling and youth-focused engagement this year. We maintained and expanded our use of high-quality, "vanity" photos that highlight officers, equipment, and facilities in a professional, approachable way. To keep the main feed more polished and mission-focused, we intentionally reduced the number of road closure posts appearing there. Instead, we leveraged Stories more heavily to promote events, share ATIs, and feature candid photos that might not fit the aesthetic of the grid but still showcase positive aspects of the department. This approach allowed us to preserve a cohesive, visually appealing feed while using Stories for timely, high-utility updates and authentic day-in-the-life content that strengthens our connection with the community.
- **YouTube:** On YouTube, we were able to use long-form informational content. Utilizing the Cape CopCast, we produced videos covering topics such as crime prevention tips, community program highlights, and interviews

with department members. The Chief's Chat editions of our podcast focused on topical strategies and initiatives. Our podcast is most successful on YouTube.

- **LinkedIn:** Our LinkedIn presence has focused on recruitment and departmental achievements. Content was increased during times of heavy recruitment. LinkedIn maintained appropriate content to mirror Instagram and Facebook. LinkedIn should highlight posts about career opportunities, employee recognition, and partnerships, targeting professionals and people looking to network for a career in law enforcement.

5. Strive to be Ahead: The PAO will publish on a daily basis, when feasible, content that informs and educates the public on the department's crime prevention efforts, community outreach programs, and police matters of concerns to the public.

- Our basic statistics show that we were able to successfully adhere to a daily publishing schedule by prioritizing relevant topics with current department events, ensuring timely dissemination of information for both the media and social media. When current events were not feasible, the PAO was able to compensate with pre-scheduled content or evergreen content.

6. Media Relations: Coordinate with media outlets regularly to maintain a positive relationship and share important updates. The media can help to amplify our message to a broader audience that the Public Affairs Office may be unable to reach through traditional social media outlets.

- The PAO team continued to have productive relationships with our legacy media outlets that included consistent communication. We also took our efforts to the next level by intentionally providing visual mediums to the outlets to improve the chances of our story being taken on by reporters.
- We hosted multiple "New Reporter Orientations" that helped establish clear protocols and expectations. This further improves relationships and allows reporters to feel comfortable asking us to partake in more specialized ideas that feature aspects of the department outside of a basic news release.

7. Beat the Media: Take a proactive approach to informing our community, rather than waiting for the media to ask us about a particular incident or situation. We are our own "news agency."

- We also act as our own outlet by posting content to our own platforms before disseminating it to media outlets.

Internal Communication Goals:

1. Improve Information Flow: Ensure timely and accurate dissemination of information from the Chief's office to all department members.

- The internal department newsletter continued to be a forefront leader with internal communication. Issues are put out every month and includes the opportunity for feedback and possible agenda changes from each bureau commander.

2. Gain Buy-In on Department Initiatives: Foster a culture of involvement and feedback, ensuring that all staff are aligned with department goals and initiatives.

- During this reporting period, the Cape Coral Police Department strengthened internal buy-in on key initiatives by expanding meaningful opportunities for staff participation across all bureaus. The department recorded its highest level of engagement with its podcast to date, using this platform to highlight ongoing projects, recognize employee contributions, and connect day-to-day work with broader organizational goals.

3. Encourage Officers and Professional Staff to be Involved: Send in photos, communicate positive interactions with the community, and participate in projects the PAO Team puts together to give the community an inside look.

- Numerous outreach events were planned that required collaboration and attendance from every bureau, reinforcing the expectation that community engagement and communication are shared responsibilities rather than specialized tasks. Patrol personnel played a central role in social media initiatives designed to humanize the badge, including filmed ride-alongs, candid photos, and storytelling that showcased the professionalism and personality of officers in the field. Collectively, these efforts fostered a culture where staff feel informed, involved, and valued, and where feedback is actively sought and incorporated into future planning. Key Strategies

4. Regular Internal Updates and Feedback Mechanisms: Establishing clear communication channels within the department for sharing information and receiving feedback.

- The newsletter has been a vital source of information to pass through past, current, and future department endeavors. In 2025, we were able to push out multiple internal surveys that assisted with boosting morale.

5. Crisis Communication and Rapid Response: Developing protocols for timely and accurate information dissemination during critical incidents.

- The Public Affairs Team maintained and followed established crisis communication protocols, ensuring timely and accurate information sharing during critical incidents. The team coordinated closely with other city departments, external agencies, and command staff to verify details before release, minimizing confusion and misinformation. Pre-approved messaging frameworks and clear internal notification pathways allowed for rapid deployment of initial alerts, followed by updates as situations evolved. By consistently using these procedures, the department strengthened public trust and reinforced its reputation as a reliable source of information during high-stress events.

6. Employee Advocacy and Engagement: Encouraging staff to participate in and share departmental initiatives and successes.

- The PAO team has highlighted the positive impact of officers' work on the community through internal communication channels, such as newsletters and awards. They are also highlighted on social media. When employees see the tangible outcomes of their efforts, they feel more motivated to share and support the department's initiatives. Our officers continue to send us possible content that further supports our mission/vision/values directly relating to the community we serve.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Content Calendar & Consistent Messaging: To maintain a regular and strategic flow of content.

- The PAO team maintained consistency throughout social media and determined an appropriate content schedule that incorporated everyday police activities, special unit highlights, and posted news releases directly to social media.
- The PAO team tested out multiple scheduling platforms. Some were too expensive, some did not have apps for use outside of a computer. We will continue to explore this avenue, as it assists with workflow issues. Many scheduling sites had issues with Meta sharing sources and data at times.
- It should be noted that because we did not have official scheduling software, we also did not have consistent analytics. While Facebook and Instagram allow you to track, measurements can vary depending on the statistics you are looking for.

2. Independence: Posting content that marks our department as its own source of news that does not consistently rely on surrounding media agencies to disseminate news.

- The PAO team can successfully say that news was disseminated to the public independent of any legacy media sources. News releases were published directly to social media to share the unadulterated facts of arrests and cases. This allowed the PAO team to control the narrative of the police department.
- The podcast, specifically starting “Chief’s Chat” episodes, was the best way to control the narrative and “steer the ship” in the direction we are trying to go. Utilizing these episodes weekly allows for current updates, explanations on hot topics straight from the source, and pushing the agenda for ideas that the department intends on executing.
- Instagram/Facebook reels featured a lot of high engagement content, such as ride-alongs and a patrol-focused element that our community seemed to enjoy.

3. Training & Analytics: Regular training for the team and use of analytics to track performance and adapt strategies.

- PAO attended an FBI-LEEDA Course focused on media and public relations.
- See below extension for Analytics Section

4. Regular Review and Adjustment: Continuously assessing both external and internal communication effectiveness and making necessary adjustments.

- The monthly newsletter was a continual source for internal communication. The newsletter also hosted multiple surveys that allowed the department to review officers’ thoughts and feedback.
- The PAO needs to integrate yearly surveys, despite CALEA only requiring surveys every two years.

5. ADA Compliance: Posting content and pictures described to serve special populations.

- Most of the PAO team’s videos have captions on them for the hard of hearing. All platforms used have compatibility with AI software to describe pictures and read captions. The PAO team does not post screenshots/PDF’s of news releases, which enables software for the deaf to interact with content.

CONCLUSION

This strategy is designed to position the Cape Coral Police Department as a leader in community engagement and internal communications within law enforcement. By effectively using social media and internal communication tools, the department can build stronger community relations and a more unified, informed internal environment.

- In conclusion, the PAO Team continued to evolve and refine its communication strategies throughout 2025, ensuring consistency and professionalism across all platforms, including X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn. While measuring overall success proved challenging due to comment restrictions implemented mid-year—which impacted engagement metrics such as shares and interactions—the team remained committed to transparency and effective storytelling. By adapting to changing digital landscapes and fostering innovative ideas, the PAO Team successfully maintained a unified voice that reflects the Cape Coral Police Department's values. Moving forward, the team will continue building relationships across all divisions, embracing creativity, and strengthening public trust by keeping the community informed and connected, while continuing to humanize the badge.



SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS

Facebook: The PAO Team's Facebook performance in 2025 continued to demonstrate strong growth and impact in community engagement. The team posted an average of 50 times per month, maintaining a consistent and deliberate content schedule that helped sustain visibility and connection with the public. One of the most notable accomplishments of the year was gaining more than 20,000 new followers, bringing the total to just over 92,000—a significant increase that reflects the success of creative and relevant content.

Engagement levels fluctuated month to month, often influenced by the reach of “viral” posts that resonated widely within the community. While tracking engagement was more challenging after July due to the transition from Hootsuite to Meta's reporting tools, the platform continued to perform as one of the most valuable communication assets for the department. Through the strategic use of video and dynamic storytelling, the PAO Team effectively leveraged Facebook to strengthen relationships, promote transparency, and humanize the badge, further supporting the Cape Coral Police Department's broader communication and engagement goals.

Twitter/X: The PAO Team's presence on X (formerly Twitter) continued to serve as an important tool for real-time communication and information sharing throughout 2025. Over the course of the year, the platform gained 1,146 new followers, reflecting steady growth supported by consistent posting and timely updates. With an average of 18 posts per month, the team maintained a reliable flow of information tailored to X's fast-paced nature and its audience of media professionals, community members, and public safety partners.

This platform proved especially valuable for sharing breaking news, active incidents, and recent arrests—ensuring that both the media and public received accurate, up-to-date information directly from the department. While overall engagement levels remained moderate, which is typical for X's format, the steady increase in followers underscores the effectiveness of the team's consistent approach and reinforces the platform's importance in the department's broader communications strategy.

Instagram: The PAO Team's Instagram presence in 2025 continued to emphasize visual storytelling and community connection, reinforcing the platform's role as one of the most engaging spaces for the department. The team averaged 58 posts per month, maintaining a steady and intentional posting rhythm that balanced aesthetic content with authentic, humanizing moments. Instagram Stories were heavily utilized to share live event coverage, “Attempt to Identify” content, and candid photos that showcased the people behind the badge.

Despite comments being turned off mid-year, engagement on Instagram remained consistent, reflecting the platform's loyal follower base and strong visual appeal. The page gained 9,306 new followers, bringing the total to 29,942—an impressive indicator of ongoing growth and audience interest. Instagram continues to be a key tool for connecting with younger audiences, highlighting department initiatives, and supporting public safety through community cooperation and transparency.

YouTube: In 2025, the PAO Team continued to strengthen the department's presence on YouTube, building on the foundation established with the launch of the Cape CopCast. The platform remained primarily dedicated to hosting the department's podcast, with a new episode released each month regardless of Chief's Chat editions. In addition to podcast content, the team continued to upload educational videos that detectives actively used in presentations and community outreach efforts.

Posting frequency ranged between one and seven uploads per month, supporting consistent visibility and engagement throughout the year. The channel saw steady growth, gaining 171 new followers in 2025, with engagement levels remaining stable across content types. While YouTube is not the department's largest social media platform, it continues to play an essential role in long-form communication, community education, and reinforcing transparency through accessible video content.

LinkedIn: In 2025, the PAO Team continued to effectively utilize LinkedIn to support the department's professional outreach and recruitment efforts. The platform gained 237 new followers—comparable to the growth seen in 2024—demonstrating steady progress in expanding the department's professional network. With an average of 12 posts per month, the team maintained a consistent posting schedule that emphasized career opportunities, departmental achievements, and professional development initiatives.

A key milestone for the year was the successful launch of a recruitment campaign targeting lateral officers, which contributed to noticeable engagement increases during active recruitment periods. While overall engagement remained moderate compared to more public-facing platforms like Facebook or Instagram, LinkedIn continues to be a valuable space for showcasing the department's professional environment, fostering industry connections, and attracting qualified candidates to join the Cape Coral Police Department.