

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 17, 2022

Butler County officer-involved shooting

BUTLER COUNTY – The Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) responded to investigate an officer-involved shooting that occurred Thursday afternoon, critically injuring a Leon man.

The Butler County Sheriff's Office contacted the KBI at approximately 2:20 p.m. requesting assistance investigating the shooting. KBI agents and the Crime Scene Response Team responded.

Preliminary information indicates that deputies from the Butler County Sheriff's Office were attempting to serve an arrest warrant on James B. Watts, 53, of Leon. Deputies were following Watts' vehicle when he parked at Vintage Bank at 101 S. Main St., in Leon. They attempted to call Watts out of the vehicle in a controlled manner, but he ignored commands. Watts exited the vehicle armed with a pistol. Deputies continued to give commands for him to drop the gun, but Watts reached the entrance of the bank. When Watts attempted to enter the bank, three deputies fired multiple times toward Watts, striking him several times.

Deputies and EMS rendered first-aid and Watts was transported to a Wichita hospital. After surgery he is in critical, but stable condition.

The KBI will conduct a thorough and independent investigation into this shooting. Once completed the findings will be turned over to the Butler County Attorney for review.

The investigation is ongoing.

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