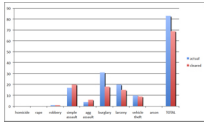


County crime rate unchanged during the first half of year

Written by From Staff Reports
Saturday, 12 July 2014 13:29



The crime rate overall in Hopkins County during the first half of 2014 was unchanged from 2013, when the 14-year record low was set at 83 crimes recorded from Jan. 1 through June 30, according to Uniform Crime Reports data provided by Hopkins County Sheriff's Office.

And, the clearance rate for nine major reporting crime categories continues to remain above 80 percent. Overall, 69 crimes were cleared by arrest, exception or other means compared to the 83 reported, giving HCSO an overall clearance rate of 83.13 percent for 2014.

That's four fewer cases cleared than in 2013, a dip of 2.82 percent. The best clearance rate during the first six months of any year since 2001 was 94.7 percent in 2008, a year in which 151 cases were reported and 143 cleared. The worst clearance rate since 2001 was 46.02 percent in 2002, a year in which HCSO recorded 176 new cases and cleared only 81 cases. By most standards an 80 percent clearance rate is considered fairly high.

"We feel that's pretty to good have 80 percent cleared. Our goal is to clear cases and, where applicable, try to get back as much stolen property as we can, get the suspect identified and arrested or defendant to court, and hopefully some restitution back on it," said HCSO Sheriff Butch Adams.

He credits the continued low rate to increased patrols and dedication of officers in his department.

"We have several members of patrol who have stepped up, are being more observant and are out trying to find information on cases to give to investigators; they have been working a lot. They are doing this while still handling other parts of their work load, which sometimes is hard to do. They are all doing an excellent job serving the citizens of Hopkins County," Adams said.

While there were no more crimes reported from Jan. 1 through June 30 of 2014 compared to 2013, there were some fluctuations in the nine major major reporting categories on the UCR

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data provided by HCSO. Crime rose in four categories, dropped in three and showed no crimes at all in two categories for at least the second consistent year.

There have been no homicides recorded during the first half of the year since 2011, and only 1 then. In fact, during the last 14 years only two other years had homicides during the first 6 months of the year, one each in 2004 and 2009. The homicide clearance rate in 2004 was 100 percent. In 2005, while no new homicides were reported one pending case was cleared.

No arson cases were recorded for the second straight year. In only two of the last 14 years were any arson cases recorded. In 2003, a year when the overall crime rate was 171 crimes and the clearance rate 57.89 percent, three arsons were recorded but only one arson case cleared. The clearance rate for arsons in 2012 was 100 percent, with two arsons recorded and two cleared. While no new arsons were recorded in 2008, one arson case left unresolved from a previous year was cleared.

For the first time since 2006, there were no rapes recorded in Hopkins County. The only other year in which there were no rapes during the first half of the year was in 2002. The most rapes recorded in the last 14 years was six, first posted in 2006, a year in which the crime rate was 144 and the overall clearance rate was 90.97 percent but only half as many rape cases were cleared in 2006. There were six rape cases in 2008 and 2011 too; five rapes were cleared in 2008 and 100 percent in 2011.

There were four fewer simple assaults in 2014 than the 21 recorded in 2013. However, the same number of simple assaults, 20, were cleared in both years. Which means the department not only kept pace with the number of cases coming in but cleared three additional cases that were still on the book from a previous reporting period as well. The most simple assaults recorded in the first half of the year during the last 14 years was 58 in 2001, the least was 16 in 2011 when 13 cases were cleared.

The number of aggravated assaults recorded was less than half of the number posted in 2013, with five fewer cases in 2014 than the nine recorded in 2013, making 2014's four the second lowest number of aggravated assaults recorded in 14 years. The low for aggravated assaults was one case reported and cleared in 2010, a year in which the overall crime rate was 93 with 64 cases were cleared.

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While there were more burglaries reported this year, 31 compared to 24 in cases in 2013, officers cleared almost the same number of cases as last year, 18 in 2014 versus 19 in 2013. The 14-year high for burglaries reported in the first six month of the year was set at 68 in 2001, and the low set at 23 in 2012, when 18 burglaries were cleared.

There was one more larceny theft in 2014 than the 19 in 2013; 15 larcenies were cleared in 2014 too, one fewer than in 2013. The most larcenies since 2001 was 70 in 2004, although only 21 larcenies were cleared that year; the overall crime rate for 2004 was 204, with 116 cases or 56.86 percent of cases overall cleared from the books.

There were two more vehicle thefts recorded by HCSO in 2014 than the eight of 2013, when six cases were cleared. In 2014, nine vehicle thefts were cleared. The only other year during the 14-year period in which the vehicle theft rate reached double digits was 16 in 2008, the year the clearance rate peaked at a whopping 94.7 percent, with 151 cases recorded and 143 cleared.

Adams said he anticipates more of those cases, especially the burglary and theft cases, still pending from the first half of the year to be cleared from the books in the second half of the year.

“A lot more are being worked so we expect to clear a bunch of those still on the books in the next six months,” Adams said. “Over the next six months, we hope to clear some of these cases still pending; that might bring our clearance rate up.”

He also added that the continued low crime rate, 105 or lower for the last five years, and the clearance rates of 75 percent or higher are also due in large part to community members who are more alert to what’s going on in their neighborhoods and willing to contact authorities immediately when they notice something awry on their properties or others nearby.

“We encourage the community to contact us if anything looks suspicious or not right to them. They live in their neighborhood and know their neighbors. They are the first to know if something is not right. We hope they’ll call our department right then. We’ll send someone there to see if everything’s good or not. Most times people won’t be concerned that we come out; they recognize we are checking not to see if they’re doing something wrong but to make sure everything is OK. We love citizens who call and say something is just not right,” the sheriff said,

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adding citizens can call 903-438-4040 to report non-emergency issues.

Adams noted that the stats aren't a full reflection of the officers' full work and case loads. Alcohol and drug cases, for instance, aren't reflected in these UCR stats, just the nine major reporting categories. Many of those cases, however, are crimes related to drugs or alcohol offenses — for instance thefts and burglaries, he explained.