

Watsonville crime up slightly in '95

Rate has come down since high in mid-'80s

WATSONVILLE — The city's crime rate rose slightly last year, with an increase in aggravated assaults and a decrease in thefts.

The city's crime rate was up 1.2 percent from 1994, based on an FBI index that counts crimes on a per capita basis.

The index includes murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, vehicle theft and arson.

Aggravated assaults were up from 286 in 1994 to 411 last year.

Robberies increased from 83 to 98, and vehicle thefts went from 174 in 1994 to 189 last year.

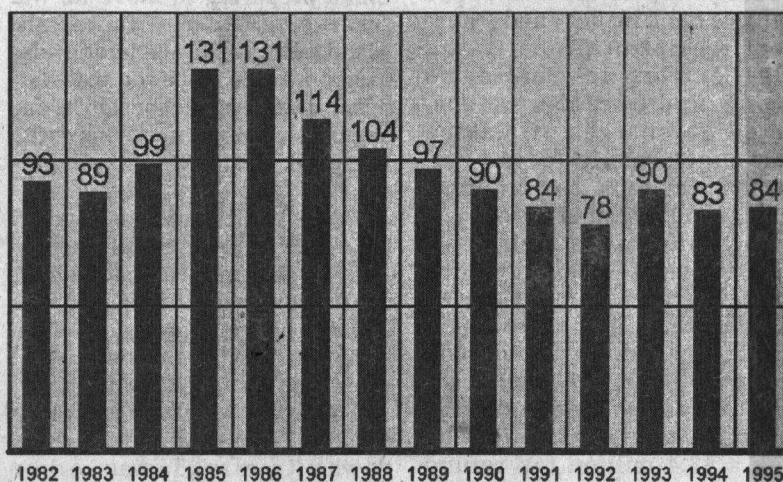
Of the aggravated assaults last year, 31 percent were domestic violence, and 9 percent were gang related.

The burglary rate held steady, rising from 357 to 359.

"We've been working on reducing home burglaries," Chief Terry Medina said. "We're getting a lot o

Crime rate

City of Watsonville



Watsonville crime rate

Case	1995	1994
Homicide	1	1
Rape	18	14
Agg. assault	411	286
Robbery	98	83
Burglary	359	357
Auto theft	189	174
Larceny (theft)	1,745	1,839
Arson	9	8

Source: Police Department

help from the people. More and more of them are forming neighborhood watch groups, and we've made a significant number of arrests" because people have been alert to burglars in their area.

The crime rate has been steady in the '90s after rising in the mid-'80s, then falling steadily in the late '80s. The 1994 rate was the lowest in Watsonville since 1983.

Medina said he hopes to keep the rate down, although some experts are predicting crime rates will increase nationwide in the coming

years because there will more young people.

Statistics for 1995 aren't available yet, but Medina said there has been "a disturbing trend in juvenile violence."

Police and social-service agencies have put extensive effort into programs to reduce youth violence, Medina said, adding that it's an issue that needs continuous attention.

"I know we have to do better," he said. All the statistics in the world won't help if the people don't feel safe, he said.