

STATS

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rape, robbery and aggravated assault. The overall rate also includes property crimes such as burglary, larceny, auto theft and arson.

The statistics show 30 serious crimes per 1,000 people in 2013, compared to 36 in 2012. The number is down from 53 serious crimes per 1,000 people in 2007.

Similarly, the number of property crimes decreased, with an 18 percent decrease from 2012.

Watsonville Police Chief Manny Solano gave credit for the decline to his police department, but said several community organizations also played a large role in helping to reduce the rates. These include the Caminos "Roads to Success" program, the Watsonville Police Activities League, Pajaro Valley Prevention and Assistance and Pajaro Valley Unified School District.

The programs serve hundreds of young people deemed early offenders every year. According to Solano, only five in 100 participants re-offended.

"The combination of these services reduces their chances of committing a second offense," he said.

But with the economic recession still affecting the city, and grappling with low officer staff-

ing, Solano said he is counting on the passage of Measure G to increase staffing and continue to fund the Caminos program.

Staffing at WPD is down from 75 officers 10 years ago to 63. If the numbers get any lower, the department will be forced to resort to alternative staffing, which could include 12-hour shifts for officers, Solano said.

Measure G, set to go before voters in June, is a half-percent sales tax increase expected to generate \$2.8 million annually and \$20 million over seven years.

Despite the downward trends, Solano said Watsonville residents are still seeing gang crime. Police reported three homicides in 2013, all gang-related.

Police are investigating a drive-by shooting that occurred Saturday, in which an unknown assailant shot a victim who has been identified as a gang member several times.

"We will not stop doing everything we can to stop these things," Solano said. "The gang members are fighting for the hearts and minds of our youth, and we have to do the same thing."

2013 Crime Statistics Highlights

- Overall FBI Crime Rate decreased by 16 percent.
- Violent Crime Rate declined 7 percent.
- Property Crime Rate declined 18 percent.

- The City's Violent Crime Rate was 4.6 violent crimes per 1,000 — the lowest in the last 10 years.

- The City's Property Crime Rate was 25.5 property crimes per 1,000 — the lowest in the last 10 years.

- The number of adults arrested increased by 6.35 percent.

- The number of juveniles arrested decreased by 25 percent.

- Homicides decreased 25 percent.

- Strong-arm robberies decreased 26 percent.

- Robberies committed with a dangerous weapon increased by 75 percent.

- 32 percent of robberies involved a firearm.

- Strong-arm robbery, where attacker used hands, feet or fists, made up 39 percent of the robberies in 2013.

- Aggravated assault comprised 60 percent of the city's violent crime.

- Larceny made up 63 percent of property crimes, while motor vehicle theft was at 20 percent.

- Burglary hovered at 16 percent, and arson made up 1 percent.

Arrests

- Watsonville Police in 2013 arrested 2,410 adults and 326 juveniles. The adult arrests were an increase of 6 percent, but those of juveniles decreased by 25 percent.

Police: Overall crime rate down

Crime + Criminals - 2000

Violent, property
crime lowest in
decade

By TODD GUILD

OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

WATSONVILLE — The overall crime rate in Watsonville decreased by 16 percent in 2013, reflecting 295 fewer crimes than the previous year, according to statistics provided Monday by the Watsonville Police Department.

The crime statistics report shows a similar trend when focusing specifically on violent crime such as forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault, which showed a 7 percent decline — 4.6 crimes per 1,000 people — from 2012 and down significantly from a 2007 spike of 7.9 crimes per 1,000 people. The city's property crime rate also decreased to 25.5 property crimes per 1,000 people.

The decline in violent crime and property crime bring those to their lowest point in 10 years.

The information, compiled from the FBI Crime Index, measures murder, non-negligent manslaughter, forcible