

# Crime down in county

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The overall crime rate for the unincorporated parts of Santa Cruz County was down 13 percent last year from the year before.

Sheriff Al Noren released his annual report this week, showing a drop in the occurrence of almost every major crime in the last year.

Homicides were down from 15 in 1986 to 10 in 1987, Noren reported, and robberies declined from 58 to 55.

There was little or no change in the numbers of rapes and aggravated assaults.

Burglaries dropped by 14 percent to 1,445 last year; auto thefts were also down 14 percent, to 319; and larceny was down 10 percent.

Other interesting statistics in the sheriff's report:

- Of the six sheriff's patrol "beats" or areas of the county, Live Oak is by far the busiest for the deputies. Live Oak accounts for 29 percent of the crimes reported to the Sheriff's Office. In contrast, the South San Lorenzo Valley and Watsonville areas each account for about 16 percent; Aptos makes up 15 percent; Soquel, 13 percent; and the North San Lorenzo Valley, only 12 percent.

- The Sheriff's Office received 2,771 fewer calls for service last year than the year before. Noren said that perhaps people are not reporting incidents they would have in the past as a result of the publicity surrounding the sheriff's battle for more funding. Noren said this concerns him.

Last year the Board of Supervisors turned down a request by Noren to increase his staffing, then went to the voters to ask them to pay a fee to support additional patrol deputies. The voters said "no."

- Volunteer reserve deputies worked more than 12,000 hours last year, providing the county the equivalent of \$147,000 in manpower, based on a deputy sheriff's starting salary.

- Sheriff's Office vehicles covered a total of 967,000 miles last year.

- Suicides were down last year from 49 in 1986 to 40 in 1987.

- The Santa Cruz County Narcotics Enforcement Team made more arrests in the city of Santa Cruz than anywhere else in the county. In Santa Cruz, there were 51 narcotics arrests by CNET; the unincorporated areas followed with 33 arrests; then Watsonville with 23 arrests. The cities of Capitola and Scotts Valley had only one arrest apiece by the narcotics team.

- The records and warrants divisions collected a total of \$6.2 million last year, up sharply from the previous year's \$4.6 million. The collections include cash bails, bonds and fines.