

From the Office of the Sheriff: “Criminal Investigations”

From 2003 – 2008, 1,798 crimes were reported to the Sheriff’s Department. Of those, 208 were classified as violent, which include murder, rape, aggravated assault and robbery. The remaining 1, 511 were property crimes - burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. The responsibility to investigate these crimes, from evidence collection, to arrest and conviction, falls on the shoulders of the seven investigators of the Criminal Investigation Division. Of the seven, one is dedicated full-time to drug investigations which are not included in these numbers and another is dedicated full-time to our four state correctional institutions, handling criminal investigations that occur in them. The remaining five investigators handled the case load of 360 cases each over that time period or 60 cases per investigator per year.

The past seven years has brought about significant change within this division. The division also received its first Lieutenant of Detectives. This administrator provides leadership, oversight, case management and liaison with the different divisions within the department as well as outside agencies. We also worked in cooperation with the District Attorney’s Office and assumed the costs and responsibility for the DA Investigator. This allowed the DA’s office to use those financial resources for more pressing matters.

We started with a turnover of all but one senior investigator. The opportunity allowed us to promote several dedicated employees with a host of crucial skills. It is these skills that reflect the successes of this division as noted in our county Uniform Crime Report. Submitted monthly to the Office of Justice Assistance, we use the report as a tool to gauge trends in Dodge County as well as compare our efforts to other counties and state averages. So how are we doing?

In the area of violent crime, Dodge County has solved 92%, almost twice the state average of 49%. In the area of property crimes, Dodge County has solved 24% which is one percent above the state average. In 2007 our property crime solve rate was 38%, by far the highest in the previous ten years. More significantly, of the two-million dollars in property stolen we recovered \$767k of it or 38%, that’s 4% more than the state average. This does not include the \$1 million plus in solved arsons. What are our trends? Incidents of violent crime have doubled since 2002. The increase is in the areas of rape and aggravated assault. Dodge County aggravated assaults over the past few years are up substantially, several of which included death of the victim. The incidents of property crimes are actually down. In 1999 we peaked with 323 property crimes, in 2008 we had just 266. From 2006 to 2007 burglaries were down 38% from 117 to 73, a reward for our unprecedented surveillance efforts during that time period. All the numbers in this article are solely Dodge County Sheriff’s Dept. and do not reflect crimes from the various municipal law enforcement agencies whom submit their own reports.

Aside from personnel changes, we have greatly enhanced our level of technology. From digital interview rooms, a crime scene response unit, surveillance equipment, portable laptops, training and education, and a new evidence management system, we are very proud of the tremendous leap this division has taken over the past seven years. Significant case loads, investigation of internet crimes, and legislative changes have placed significant burdens on these investigators, yet they perform admirably. Thanks for listening, tnehs@co.dodge.wi.us.