A closer look at the 2016 Madison County Sheriff's Office official report

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
February 3 2017 1:59 PM

EDWARDSVILLE - Calls to the **Madison County Sheriff's Office** were up nearly three percent in 2016, according to its 2016 annual report

According to the report, the Madison County Sheriff's Office handled 27,760 calls for service, which was up by 2.92 percent from 2015's number, 26,973. Several crimes had also increased in volume from previous years, including criminal sexual assault, robbery, aggravated battery, burglary, burglary from motor vehicles, theft, motor vehicle theft and arson. In all, both crimes against persons and properties increased from 2015 to 2016. The sheriff's office handled zero murders in 2016, which continues that positive trend since 2014 (the oldest date given in the report).

Crimes against persons increased from 131 in 2015 to 160 in 2016. Criminal sexual assault jumped from 23 to 32, robberies increased from 11 to 18 and aggravated battery increased from 97 to 110.

Property crimes were also on the increase in 2016, continuing a trend since 2014. In 2014, there were 974 property crimes, 1,083 in 2015 and 1,178 in 2016. The majority of those crimes were thefts, which increased from 535 in 2015 to 592 in 2016. Burglary from motor vehicles was the second-most reported property crime, with 264 reported in 2016, up from 247 in 2015. Burglary itself was also up, with 250 in 2016 and 237 in 2015. Motor vehicle theft was also up from 59 in 2015 to 66 in 2016. The least frequently reported property crime, arson, was also up by one, with six cases of arson reported in 2016 and five in 2015.

Traffic-related statistics paint a more positive picture, with the sheriff's office responding to only one fatal accident, which is down from four in 2015 and six in 2014. The traffic citation number shows a slight decline from 1,514 in 2015 to 1,502 in 2016. Both of those numbers are significantly lower than 2014's count of 1,839. Hit and runs were down by one, with 119 in 2016, compared to 120 in 2015.

Some of the traffic related statistics showed more disturbing trends, however. Driving under the influence nearly doubled from 39 in 2015 to 70 in 2016. Both of those numbers are lower than 2014's 76, though. Property damage calls from traffic crashes increased from 860 in 2015 to 906 in 2016, and personal injury increased slightly from 112 in 2015 to 118 in 2016. The total number of crashes was also the highest of the three years given in 2016 at 1,144, compared to 1,096 in 2015 and 1,137 in 2014.

Misdemeanors, domestic battery and false alarms decreased in 2016. Misdemeanor charges dropped from 994 in 2015 to 923 in 2016, continuing a three-year trend. Domestic battery fell from 277 calls in 2015 to 228 in 2016, and false alarms continued a dramatic decreasing trend, falling from 434 in 2014 to 308 in 2015 to 260 in 2016.

Warrant arrests and ordinance violations increased dramatically in 2016. Both numbers are nearly the sum of the two previous years, with ordinance violations at 115 in 2016, compared to only 29 in 2015 and 64 in 2014. Warrant arrests increased from 546 in 2014 to 677 in 2015 to a whopping 1,011 in 2016.

Drug offenses also had a modest increase from 258 in 2015 to 277 in 2016.

The Madison County Sheriff's Office investigative division handled 1,304 cases in 2016, clearing 1,073 of them (approximately 82.3 percent). In 2015, the division was assigned 1,335 cases, clearing 1,088 of them (approximately 81.5 percent). In 2014, the division was assigned 1,927 cases, clearing 1,604 of them (approximately 83.2 percent).

According to the report, the Madison County Sheriff's Office collectively completed as many as 8,330, with the majority of those being logged in basic training. Other high-priority training topics include the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS) with 800 hours, investigation with 789 hours and firearms training with 702 hours. The least amount of training was given to report writing with 16 hours and active shooter with 20 hours.

The majority of Madison County 911 calls went to the sheriff's office at 22 percent. The second-most call volume went to Alton with 20,813 calls, making 16.6 percent. Granite City was not far behind Alton with 20,392 calls, making 16.2 percent. The least amount of calls came from the training facility with 198 calls, making 0.2 percent and SIUE with 927 calls, making 0.7 percent. The total number of calls coming into Madison County 911 dispatchers in 2016 was just over 125,000.

The report also included some good news from the Madison County Sheriff's Office regarding community involvement, including the implementation of an Internet Purchase Exchange Location. There are currently two areas in the parking lot of the sheriff's office where citizens can exchange items purchased over the internet. Those locations are under 24-hour surveillance and are dedicated to the family of Taylor Clark, who lost his life during such an exchange in 2015. Those spots were dedicated on July 1, 2016.

Facebook was also a large part of the report, citing its popularity as "an invaluable tool for fighting crime." The page has 10,463 likes as of the afternoon of Friday, Feb. 3, 2017. The report stated those "likes" have contributed to real-world crime fighting.

Citizens' efforts, information and willingness to share and discuss information provided by the sheriff's office, has led to identifying suspects involved in and solving residential burglaries, robberies and thefts.

In 2016, the Madison County Sheriff's Office handled an aggravated kidnapping case. The case involved a juvenile and her newborn infant. A Facebook post the sheriff's office made regarding the case was able to reach over 1.4 million people, was shared over 35,800 times and had nearly 300,000 post clicks.

Facebook has been utilized to share safety instructions (including):

- *How to protect yourself from identity theft*
- *How to protect yourself in an active shooter situation*
- *How to protect yourself during poor weather conditions (heat, cold, rain, snow)*

The Madison County Sheriff's Office described social media as "invaluable for the office," saying it encourages additional participation.

The full report, which also includes statistics for the Madison County Jail, can be found at http://www.co.madison.il.us/document_center/Sheriff/Sheriff%202016%20Annual%20Report.pdf