

Crime is Down in Alton According to Statistics

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The preliminary numbers are in for 2014 and crime is down 6 percent overall in the city of Alton. Since taking office in May of 2013, Chief Simmons has encouraged officers to get out of the car to get to know business owners and residents in an effort to reduce crime. Business contacts, initiated by the officers, were up 120 percent from last year.

When asked about the Burglary rate being down 24 percent, Chief Simmons said, "I believe the officers increasing patrols in neighborhoods and getting out of their cars to speak with residents and business owners had a tremendous impact on the Burglary rate in Alton. If a person thinks a police officer may come around the corner at any time, they may think twice about trying to gain access to a house or business."

"A 6 percent decrease in overall crime is the direct result of the hard work of each and every member of the Alton Police Department," said Mayor Walker. "I would like to

recognize Chief Simmons for his leadership and commend all members of our Police Department for their continued commitment to the safety of our city.”

Robbery was also down 15 percent and theft was down 5 percent. The numbers went up in a few categories too. Sex offenses occurred 45 percent more, but the arrest rate increased 250 percent. Assault and Battery increased 27 percent and the arrest rate matched it exactly, also increasing 27 percent.

“The category that concerns me this year is the rate of Motor Vehicle Theft. Our numbers went up 30 percent in that category, and to me that is unacceptable,” Chief Simmons said. He continued, “That is why we have plans to work more with the Illinois State Police Auto Theft Task Force and utilize tools such as the bait car we discussed about a month ago.” Looking at the increase, Chief Simmons remained strong in his opinion that the majority of motor vehicle thefts that occur in Alton are not committed by Alton residents.

“We can tell by where we locate the vehicles,” Chief Simmons added. “These cars are being taken and driven over to north St. Louis. Our residents are good people. We will use all of the resources available to try to see this number decrease instead of continuing to climb.”

Alton had two murders in 2014, up from one in 2013. As in 2013, all murders were solved and the offenders were arrested. “When you see an increase of 100 percent in the murder category it can be scary, but when you really look at it, there were two murders in the City of Alton and neither were random. Both incidents were related to other criminal activity and the Alton Police are working diligently to see rates on that type of activity go down,” said Alton Police Department Public Information Officer Emily Hejna.

In 2015 Alton residents should expect to see programs such as the Alton Police Bike Patrol continue and the implementation of new programs to further relations with the community in hopes that we can all stay informed and crime can go down even more.