

## Stats Show Decline in Crime in Two Rivers

A May 20 front page article in the Herald Times Reporter carried a headline exclaiming “Crime Numbers Rise in City.” While a well-written article, it did not provide any information on crime rates for the HTR’s “other” city—Two Rivers—nor for Manitowoc County as a whole.

This column is intended to provide such information, and to put our local crime rates in perspective, relative to state, regional, and national indices. Overall, the story is very positive for our area.

Preliminary 2004 crime statistics released on May 16 by the State’s Office of Justice Assistance show that so-called Index Offenses, used for tracking crime rates in Wisconsin communities and statewide, dropped by about 6.5 percent in Two Rivers in 2004. This compares with a 5.8 percent drop state-wide. Manitowoc’s 2004 rate was up by 12.8 percent, according the May 20 article.

Here in Two Rivers, violent crimes, including murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, dropped from 5 in 2003 to 2 in 2004. Property crimes, including burglary, larceny theft, motor vehicle theft and arson, declined from 241 in 2003 to 228 in 2004.

The OJA’s May 2005 Report (available on the web at <http://oja.state.wi.us>) confirms Wisconsin’s reputation as a relatively low-crime state, with crime rates far lower than the Midwest as a region or the U.S. as a whole. Violent crimes in Wisconsin numbered 208 per 100,000 population in 2004 (down from 217 in 2003); this compares with rates of 397 per 100,000 for the Midwest and 475 per 100,000 nationally. (Regional and national stats are for 2003, the most recent year available)

Property crimes in Wisconsin numbered 2,641 per 100,000 in 2004 (down from 2,857 in 2003). Again, this is far below a rate of 3,370 per 100,000 for the entire Midwest, and 3,588 per 100,000 nationally. (Regional and national stats again from 2003).

Our area can take at least two very positive messages from the OJA’s statistics. They are:

- 1. Message to current and prospective residents: Wisconsin is a low crime state, and Manitowoc County and its cities are relative safe havens within our great state.**

2003 statistics show that violent crimes occurred at a rate of 85 per 100,000 residents for the County, 80 per 100,000 for the City of Two Rivers 92 for the City of Manitowoc. Contrast this with the above-cited 2003 rates of 217 for the state, 397 for our region, and 475 for the entire U.S.

Property crimes are also well below the statewide average cited above, at 1,942 per 100,000 for the County, 1,917 for Two Rivers, and 2,842 for Manitowoc. This compares favorably with the above-cited 2003 rates of 2,857 for the State, 3,370 for the region, and 3,588 for the entire U.S.

**2. Message to potential criminals: If you commit a crime in our area, there is a better than average chance you will be arrested.**

2003 clearance rates for violent crimes were 47 percent nationally, 45 percent regionally (Midwest), 52 percent for Wisconsin, 77 percent for Manitowoc County, and 90 percent in Two Rivers (68 percent in Manitowoc).

2003 clearance rates for property crimes were 16 percent nationally, 17 percent regionally, 22 percent for Wisconsin, 27 percent for Manitowoc County, and 28 percent for Two Rivers (same for Manitowoc).

Preliminary statistics for 2004 show TR's clearance rate for property crimes rose to 37 percent, contributing to an overall 39 percent crime clearance rate—that's right, of 230 index offenses, fully 39 percent were cleared.

Being safe from crime is a major factor in community quality of life. And while our area faces its share of challenges and issues, we still enjoy crime rates that are substantially below state, regional and national indices. Through the cooperative efforts of citizens, community groups, and our law enforcement agencies, we can keep it that way.

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