



Crime on the decline in Mount Clemens

Sheriff's Office compares 2008 to 2009 crime statistics

By Sarah Cormier - C & G Staff Writer - April 15, 2009

MOUNT CLEMENS — Ever since the mob attacks that occurred in May 2008, deep worry and concern about crime has plagued the residents of Mount Clemens.

More recently, residents likely heard about several local students getting charged in the beating of an acquaintance, which seemed to unravel nerves further. Landlords renting to undesirable tenants and blight issues also seem to top concerns of the locals who come to the City Commission meetings.

Shortly after the May 2008 mob attack incident, the Mount Clemens City Commission spearheaded several joint effort meetings between local government, businesses and churches. The meetings were crime forums, designed to both give residents the opportunity to tell officials about what was going on in their neighborhoods, as well as to think about solutions to the problems.

And it appears that those efforts have helped out. Crime reports obtained from the Macomb County Sheriff's Office show an overall decrease in criminal acts in the city of Mount Clemens from 2008 to 2009. The records are divided up into four different categories:

- **Non-assault/property calls, which include curfew violations, prostitution and drunken driving offenses.**
- **Assaultive crimes, which include items such as aggravated assault, burglary and larceny.**
- **Service calls.**
- **Traffic calls.**

According to the reports, in January 2009, there was a 14.83 percent decrease in the amount of non-assault/property crimes compared with last year. Assaultive crimes were reduced by 35.37 percent and service calls by 7.84 percent. Traffic calls increased by 6.29 percent.

In February 2009, non-assault/property reports went down 21.97 percent compared with February 2008; assaultive crimes decreased by 8.33 percent; and service calls went down by 4.6 percent. Traffic calls increased by 2.71 percent.

In March 2009, there was a decrease of 11.02 percent in non-assault/property crimes, a 2.07 decrease in service calls and a 5.98 percent decrease in traffic calls. There was, however, a 20.51 increase in assaultive crimes.

Capt. Dave Teske of the Macomb County Sheriff's Office, said that a spike in assaultive crime as seen in March can be explained by a big event, such as the mob student assault, where several people are involved, but added that it isn't representative of a year-long trend.

"Stats sometimes don't paint a real true picture," he said.

He encouraged people to call the Sheriff's Office as soon as they see problems and not to let them fester.

"You're going to report some of those things, which we hope you do, but don't wait until they stack up," he said.

City Commissioner Matt Dreger agrees with Teske, stating that often, residents don't tell police when there is criminal activity and then get upset when it doesn't stop.

"They don't react until they are overly frustrated," he said.

Dreger added that usually criminal activity is isolated — at a couple of specific houses or areas — and not representative of an entire city's activities.

"I think people that are affected by crime personally ... get focused and see that as the general environment versus isolated cases," he said.

Dreger also said that if someone is afraid of retribution for a calling in about a crime, to let the city know and they'll contact law enforcement.

"Let us know. Call. Be proactive," he said.

January, February and March of this year also show that increased police presence may be a good thing to have in Mount Clemens, as officers not assigned to patrol Mount Clemens dealt with 45 percent of the calls. A year ago, it was 39 percent.

The current contract the city has with the Sheriff's Office calls for four patrol cars per shift, plus a supervisor. Teske said that sometimes, especially during bar hours, the police assigned to Mount Clemens have to call for help.

"We tie up a lot of resources on the bar crowds in Mount Clemens," he said.

Dreger said that the city is currently looking into purchasing security cameras for downtown Mount Clemens, which he said will act as a watchdog for the area. For several months now, Dreger has also been encouraging residents to turn their front porch lights on to scare away criminals.

Teske said he understands how residents feel.

"Even if you have one or two incidents happening on their street, I, myself, personally, would feel [it was] unacceptable," he said.

However, Teske said that those problem areas are just that.

"Overall, the city is in much better shape," he said.

Dreger said that by working with the city and Sheriff's Office, residents can create a better living environment.

"Everybody's got to be proactive," he said.

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