

From the Sheriff:

Often, taxpayers perceive public employees as those that do just enough to get by, difficult to terminate, and leaching a living off the public. Employees in the public sector are always the ones who are criticized when there are wage increases or negotiate enhanced benefits. This type of criticism can be healthy. We do, in fact, work for you the taxpayer and your input and comments are respected and important. I will say that no employee within the Sheriff's Department takes their responsibility lightly and each is earning his/her wages. But then, how do you the taxpayers gauge the failures or successes of the Sheriff's Department? How do you find out if we are doing our job? Are we providing you the level of services that is commensurate with the property taxes you pay to support?

Many of you gauge performance or lack thereof by media reports and coffee clutches. These are not very subjective ratings of performance but still a valuable tool. As a manager, I try to evaluate department performance by using both subjective information and quantitative information. The State of Wisconsin aids in this effort by tracking Uniformed Crime statistics – crimes committed and crime solved. The Sheriff's Department just received our latest report from the state and we were moderately pleased with the information within the report – our report card.

Of significance is that violent crimes have not increased since 2002. Violent crimes include offenses such as rape and robbery. The Sheriff's Dept.'s report of 22 violent crimes in 2005 remains constant. We are pleased to say we solve 95% of those violent crimes.

Property crimes are also tracked and they include burglary, theft, and Criminal Damage to Property. We have experienced significant improvement in this area. In 2002 we experienced 369 property crimes. In 2003 we had 310, 328 in 2004 and 259 in 2005, a pleasant trend. Of those crimes committed we are solving 30%, an above average number when compared to similar counties.

Another number that is tracked by the state is the number of adult and juvenile arrests. Adult arrests have increased by 100%. In 2002 we arrested 732, 866 in 2003, 1,541 in 2004, and 1,122 in 2005. With the drop in property crime that correlates with an increase in adult arrests it appears to be a positive trend. In the area of juveniles, we arrested 180 in 2002. Those numbers dropped after 190 arrests were made in 2003, to 158 in 2004, and 134 in 2005.

The division managers have had an opportunity to study the latest report and have concluded that much of what they are doing is working. You can implement all the programs and changes you want but if you don't actively track their worthiness you may just be wasting resources.

Our hope is to continue on this positive path and maintain the current rates and not allow them to creep back up. This will not be an easy task. The landscape of Dodge County is changing. More and more families are retreating to the scenic rural areas of our county. The county population may not be increasing but those requiring the services of the Sheriff's Dept. continue to grow as they migrate from city to rural life.

We ask a lot from each of our employees and they have executed each and every task required. They are a dedicated bunch who work hard for little recognition or fanfare. Do me a favor, next time you see one of those dedicated public employees, say thanks, their report card is straight A's'. Thanks for listening tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us

