

From the Office of the Sheriff:

“A year in review”

As 2007 comes to a close, we look back on our progress, our successes and our needs improvement. We do this simultaneously with setting our goals for 2008. Our intent is to build upon our successes and work on our “needs improvement”. This past year has been very good for the Sheriff’s Department. We installed our Mobile Data Computers, ICOP Video systems, and several other technology enhancements. We consolidated the City of Beaver Dam into our dispatch center and upgraded our E911 center to allow us to identify the location of our cell 911 callers.

The Detention Facility has broke the previous records for our contract beds and closes out another year of safe and secure jail operations. Our investigators started the year working with our local partners, solving a significant burglary ring and the arson to Charter Raceway. Our 2007 budget looks great and we anticipate returning several hundreds of thousand dollars back to the county general fund in the form of excess revenues.

Yes, 2007 was a great year for us. Yet, we will not slow down. We continue to work hard to influence statistics in a positive manner. For instance, as 2007 comes to a close we sit at 14 traffic fatalities. Historically we fall into the top ten of seventy-two counties state-wide, averaging 20 deaths each year for the past five years. In 2002 we experienced 29 and in 2004 we had just 12. Today, we are 15th of the 72 counties. We as law enforcement agencies can only do so much to impact that number. We can add enhanced alcohol enforcement, conduct safety belt enforcement, and increase our visibility. But in the end, it is you, the drivers, those on the road that have the greatest impact of all. Of our 14 road deaths this year, 8 were alcohol or drug related. Eight lives, senselessly taken due to their own or someone else’s decision to drive when they should not have.

Five of those killed were the drivers themselves, intoxicated or under the influence of drugs. Two of our fatalities were at the hand of another who drove when they should not have. Our deaths this year range from age 23 – 79 years of age. How often have you heard about the teenagers or the elderly who cause all the problems and deaths? Not so in Dodge County in 2007. The average age was 42, half were county residents, and just three were wearing seat belts. Does a seat belt ensure your life in a crash? No, of course not. But using it in conjunction with other safety features such as air bags will surely increase your odds of life. Four of our deaths were motor cyclists.

Another statistic we gauge and try to influence is our burglaries. In 2006 we had 117 burglaries and as I write this we are at just 61. A great statistic that we can influence. Of the 61 to date, 18 were to properties that were not locked. We do conduct many business checks during the evenings and I hope our visibility is acting as a deterrent. We are proactive and investigate those suspicious characters who just don’t quit fit in. Most credit goes to you, those whom watch out for your neighbors homes and call in those suspicious vehicles and activity.

Soon we will publish our annual report for your review. You can review the previous years by visiting our website at www.dodgecountysheriff.com . In my eyes our 2007 grade is an “A-”. You better than anyone have feelings on what we need to maintain and what we need to improve upon. It’s your tax dollars at work, and we welcome your opinion. Thanks for listening, tnehs@co.dodge.wi.us.