



CENTRALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

P. O. Box 609 - 118 W. MAPLE ST.
CENTRALIA, WA. 98531

360.330.7680 FAX 360.807.6210

www.cityofcentralia.com cpd@cityofcentralia.com



Press Release

For Release

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Agency Contact:

Chief of Police Robert Berg 360/330-7680

Crime in Centralia, 2013; Downward Trend Continues

“In 2013, Centralia continued to hold the line on criminal activity in the community. While property crime inched up slightly (about ½ of 1%), violent crime declined significantly to the lowest level in recent memory. Since 2004, we have experienced a 45% reduction in index crime in our community and on a per capita basis; we experienced the lowest crime rate in more than 50 years, surpassing the previous record set in 2012. Holding on to the gains made in 2012 is made more satisfying by the 26.3% reduction in violent crime in our community in 2013,” Chief Bob Berg stated as he released the preliminary 2013 crime statistics for the City of Centralia. The overall number of Part One Index Crimes in Centralia decreased by 1.58% compared to 2012. Statistically this community was the safest it has been in many, many years. “Continued aggressive police work, coupled with support and cooperation from the community no doubt contributed to holding our own in 2013.”

In figures forwarded to the Washington State Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) for inclusion in their annual report on crime in Washington State, Centralia reported 870 index crimes in 2013, down from the 886 crimes in 2012 and continuing a long term trend line indicating a declining crime rate. The Centralia Police Department participates in the WASPC Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program and has submitted such reports to the FBI for years. The UCR program identifies and reports on specific crimes - called Part I Offenses, reported in a uniform way, as a measure of the criminal activity occurring in cities, counties, and states throughout the nation. Violent crimes under this reporting system consist of murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Property crimes include burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

While the overall crime rates for violent and property crime decreased in 2013, certain Part I Offenses increased; including theft (up 6.6% [565 to 602]) and arson (up 20% [8 to 10]). Robbery incidents were the same (18). Five other UCR Part I Offenses were down, including:

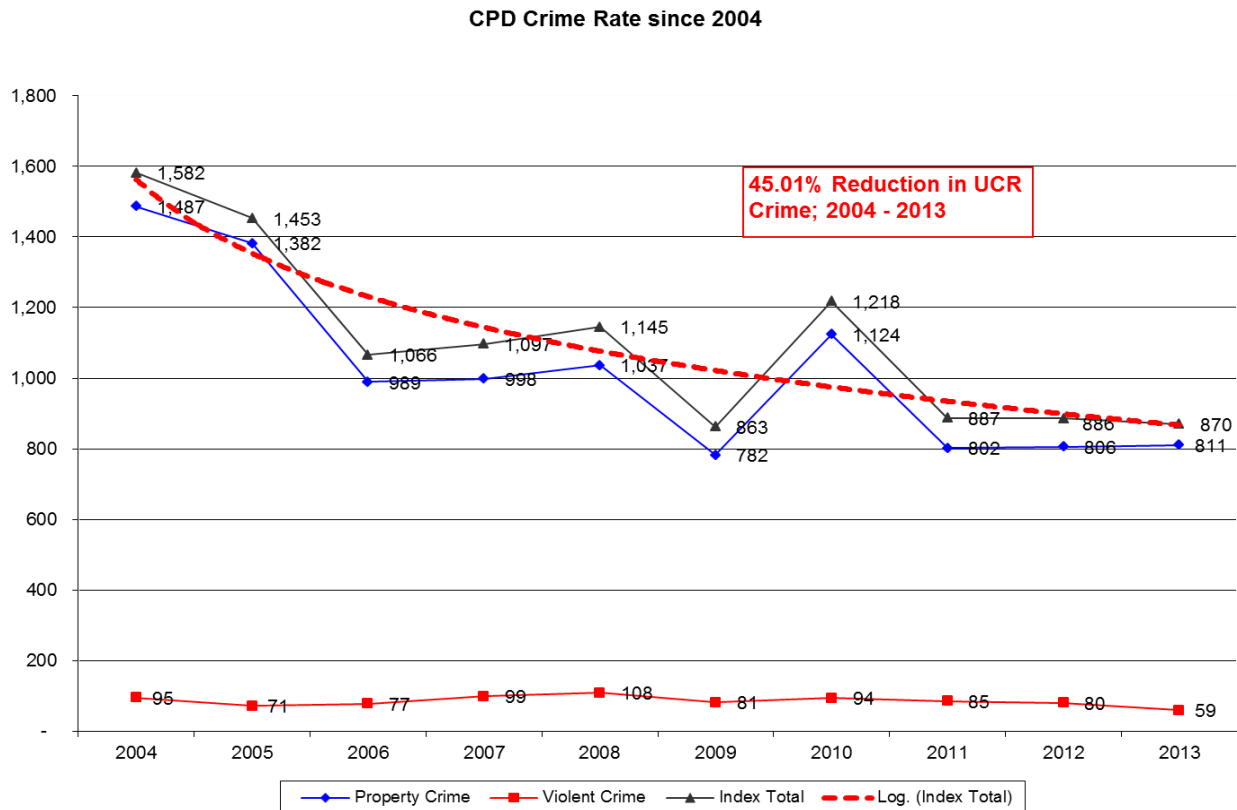
- Murder and Non Negligent Homicide - down 100% (from 2 to 0)
- Forcible Rape – down 50% (from 12 to 6)
- Aggravated (Felony) Assault - down 27.1% (from 48 to 35)
- Burglary - down 13.4% (from 179 to 155)
- Motor Vehicle Theft - down 18.5% (from 54 to 44)

Our Mission

Work in partnership with our community to protect life and property, reduce crime, and enhance the security and quality of life in our city

“As a department we understand the ups and downs of crime in our community, but we remain pleased at the overall downward trend we have seen in the past ten years. This continued positive trend for Centralia is good for community safety and long term economic development” Berg said.

The following chart depicts the overall number of “Part One Index Crimes” committed in our community for the past ten years:



“The trend lines associated with crime in Centralia indicate a downward trend over time, with stability in the past three years indicate that the greatest reductions in criminal activity have probably already been achieved. Apart from a large spike in 2010 the crime rate has been relatively stable with a slight downward trend for the past five years” Berg stated.

In terms of our community and its 16,600 residents, these statistics translate to the following crime frequencies in our community last year (2012 shown in parenthesis):

- One theft occurred every 14½ hours (one every 15½ hours)
- One burglary occurred every 57 hours (one every 50 hours)
- One vehicle was stolen every 8 days (one every 7 days)
- An aggravated assault occurred every 10 days (one every 7½ days)
- A rape occurred every 8½ weeks (one every 4½ weeks)
- A robbery occurred every 20 days (one every 20 days)
- An arson occurred every 5½ weeks (one every 6½ weeks)
- No homicides occurred (one every six months)

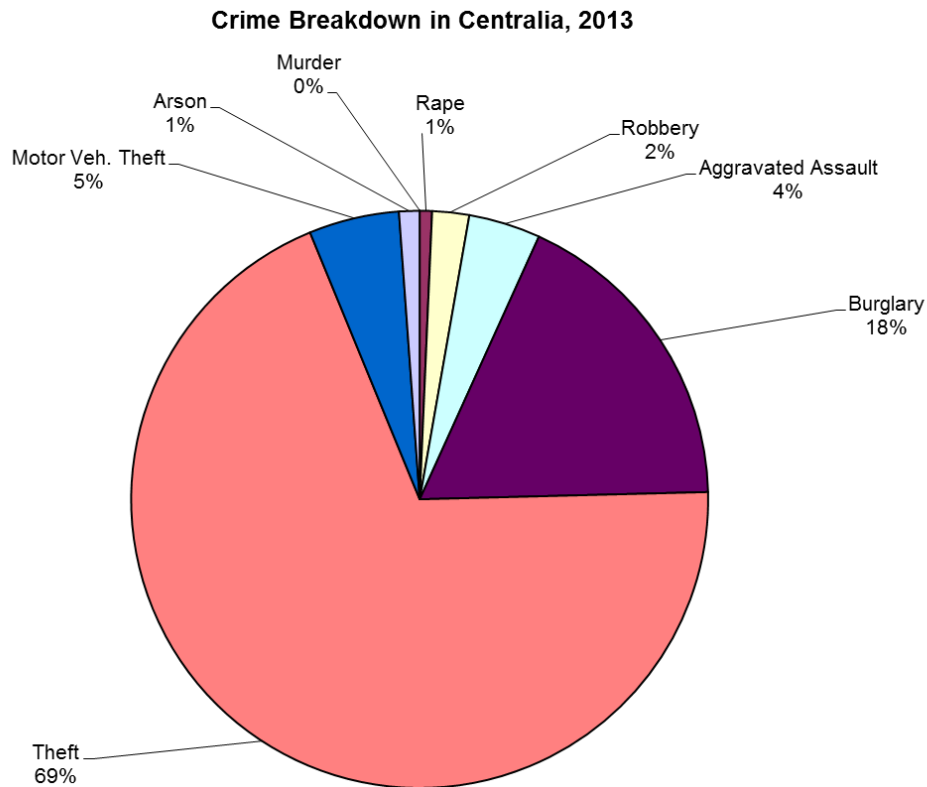
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From a personal security perspective, our community remains a safe place to live. The statistical probability of a Centralia resident being the victim of a violent crime in 2013 was less than 1/2 of 1%, or 3.55 per 1,000 residents (down from 4.80 per 1,000 in 2012). For property crime, the 2013 rate was 48.85 per 1,000 residents (up from 47.93 per 1,000 in 2012). **The overall crime rate for our community in 2013 was 52.41 crimes per one thousand residents, compared with**

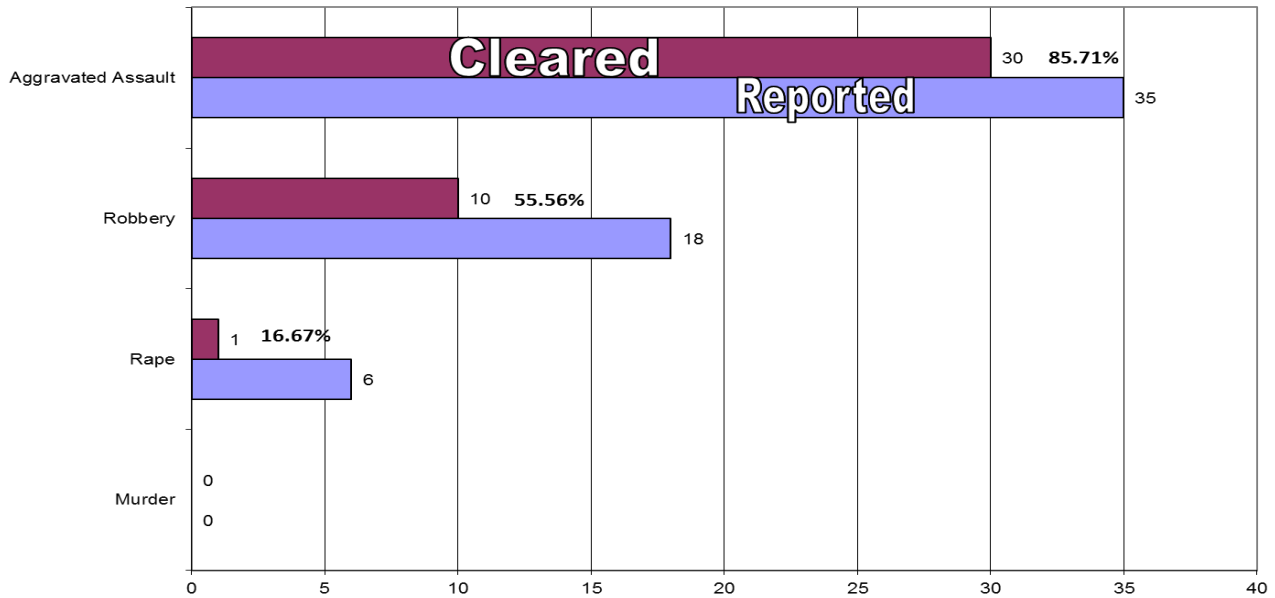
- 52.85 per 1,000 in 2012
- 53.16 per 1,000 in 2011
- 78.23 per 1,000 in 2010
- 55.52 per 1,000 in 2009
- 73.78 per 1,000 in 2008
- 70.68 per 1,000 in 2007
- 68.33 per 1,000 in 2006
- 94.35 per 1,000 in 2005

The following chart depicts the breakdown of violent crime and property crime in Centralia in 2013

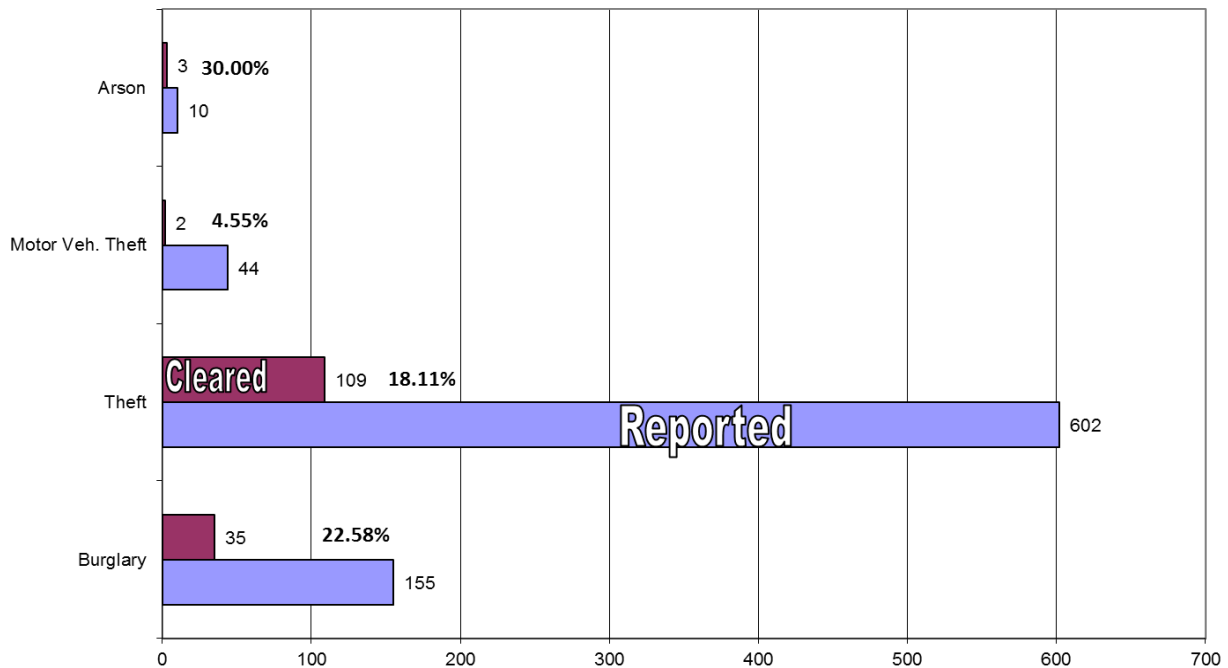


The department's clearance rate for all index crimes in 2012 was 21.84%, an increase of 2.32 percentage points from our 19.52% clearance rate in 2012. Our clearance rate for violent crimes in 2013 was 69.5% (up from 57.5% in 2012) and our clearance rate on property crimes was 18.37% (up from 15.7% in 2012).

Violent Crime Clearance Rate, 2013



Property Crime Clearance Rate, 2013



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Berg stated “The police department continues to work hard to reduce the amount of criminal activity in our community. The decline in violent crime, while a bit surprising in terms of the low number, is something for which we are grateful. The continuing hard work of our anti-crime team, traffic unit, school resource officer, along with our detective and patrol divisions is outstanding. We are concerned that the loss of two police officer positions may have an impact in the special programs we run to impact crime in Centralia.”

Officers of the Centralia Police Department handled 21,666 calls for service, made more than 2400 misdemeanor and felony arrests, including the service of almost 1,000 arrest warrants.

Berg concluded, “At the end of the day, the crime rate in the community is not just a prism through which to observe the effectiveness of the police department. The crime rate also has much to do with employment, housing, schools, and being good neighbors and parents as well.

“We continue to work cooperatively with surrounding law enforcement agencies, and work with neighborhood groups to address the challenges of drugs and crime. We ask for the public’s assistance in making our community a safe place to live, work, and play. Preventing crime is a community responsibility. Please protect yourself, secure your homes and vehicles, don’t leave your keys in your vehicle, and be sure to keep valuables out of sight if you leave them in your car. Be a good neighbor, and report suspicious activity to your police department.”

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