

2012

Merrill Police Department



Annual Report

Dear Mayor Bialecki, members of the Police & Fire Commission,
and members of the Common Council,

Not unlike other years in the past, 2012 was a year of change in the Merrill Police Department. Early 2012 brought the retirement of Chief Ned Seubert, who completed a 36 year career dedicated to serving the residents of the City of Merrill. With Ned's retirement, Corey Bennett was promoted to Captain. Then, to fill the patrol vacancy created, a new officer joined us whose last name is very familiar to Merrill law enforcement. Robert Caylor, the son of the late Michael "Loopy" Caylor was welcomed into the Merrill Police Department family. Robert's father served the citizens of Merrill for many years as a police officer, as did Robert's Uncle, Daniel "Hank" Caylor. Then, at the end of 2012, another member of the Police Department, Officer Dale Knapp retired after nearly 20 years of service. Besides changes in personnel, we "retired" a very familiar symbol related to the MPD. On September 1, 2012, the MPD shoulder patch was taken out of service and we began displaying a newly designed, more contemporary uniform patch. All these changes remind us that the only thing permanent in life is change. Because of that fact, it is important for us to plan for the future and be aware that things will always change.

In 2010, the Merrill Police Department participated in its first ever strategic planning project. The planning group was comprised of nine community stakeholders who took a close look at the strengths and assets of the MPD, the opportunities available to us, our vision for the future, the primary expected outcomes of our departmental services and significant challenges that we and the city of Merrill face in the coming years. The strategic plan developed for the specific time frame of June 2010 to May 2013 identified strategic issues, set goals and an action plan for us to follow.

Because we are now entering the final months of that plan, I wanted to briefly mention our accomplishments in the strategic plan, many of which were accomplished during the year 2012.

Goal A: How does the Merrill Police Department effectively improve/foster general communication between the department and the public?

Strategies identified or accomplished with regard to this goal include:

- Development of a Citizen Police Academy. The MPD conducted a Citizen Police Academy in 2011, 2012 and will do so again in 2013. These academies have proven to be a resounding success in communicating to our public what we do and why we do it.
- Development of a Merrill Police Department Website. We now have a website as well as a Face Book page to help communicate with the public.

- Engage in more public presentations and education, more media exposure, conduct focus groups on specific issues and concerns, create and distribute a citizen satisfaction survey. We have increased our involvement in these activities. However, we have more work to do in this area as we move on.

Goal B: What must the Merrill Police Department and City of Merrill do to maintain or increase, when possible, department staffing to ensure the highest level of public safety and service?

Strategies identified with this goal include:

- Public education as to why current levels of staffing are needed or need increasing.
- Develop and use an IT position for use by all city departments. At the time of the planning, the city IT function consisted primarily of a Merrill Police officer from our staff doing part time Information Technology services. The city has since employed a full time IT position which effectively freed up a $\frac{3}{4}$ time officer back to a full time officer.
- Maintain a School Resource officer. The city will need to work with MAPS to renew our cost-sharing agreement during 2013.
- Increase investigation and crime-prevention capabilities. We recently began discussions and implementation of sharing services with the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office particularly in the area of investigations.

Goal C: How does the Merrill Police Department and City of Merrill ensure that patrol officers have the equipment and technology they need to carry out law enforcement efforts in the most effective and efficient way possible?

Strategies identified and/or accomplished with this goal include:

- Continuously acquire the latest safety equipment, most reliable and effective weapons. Thanks to the research conducted by members of the police department and encouragement by the Health & Safety committee, we purchased and are implementing a more suitable, and effective shoulder fired weapon for use by our officers. The new AR-15 platform replaced a substandard 9mm carbine that has been utilized for the past several years. We are finalizing plans for implementation of new handguns projected to take place in 2014 to replace our current Beretta 9mm weapons that are at expected end of life.
- Replace existing radios with new equipment and develop and document a formalized rotation of equipment including squad cars. In 2011, we were able to replace our old portable radios and now each officer is assigned their own portable radio. We have replaced our old and outdated squad video cameras and have developed a rotation plan for replacing squad computers and squad cars.

Goal D: How should the Merrill Police Department provide more professional training and development opportunities for its officers?

Strategies identified and/or accomplished with this goal include:

- Provide additional relevant training, focus training on officer certification needs. During 2012 we made an effort to step up individual officer training opportunities. We have also succeeded in certifying seven officers, thus far, as instructors within our agency. When an officer is certified as an instructor, they become experts on the particular subject and can then pass that knowledge on to other officers. This also gives us the opportunity to provide officers relevant training in-house.
- Identify future departmental leaders and encourage officers to pursue professional development. During 2012 two officers were able to attend Leadership in Police Organizations which is a leadership training sponsored by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and promoted by the Wisconsin Department of Justice Training and Standards as a valuable resource for developing police leadership. We also utilized other related courses such as Mastering Leadership and Performance conducted at Volk Field, and an online Supervisor course made available through UW-Platteville and funded by Wisconsin Department of Justice.
- Work with various entities in the expansion of the Merrill NTC Training Facility. Several of our officers that have become certified instructors have worked with NTC in developing curriculum that will be sponsored and or taught by Merrill Police Officers at the Merrill Center for Excellence. There are a number of exciting plans for the very near future that will promote police training at the Merrill facility involving the Merrill Police Department. These plans also include opportunities to involve Merrill citizens in things such as an advanced Citizen Police Academy for past graduates of the Citizen Academy.

In addition to what was identified in the strategic plan, a number of things have been identified by our officers as other goals that we would like to consider.

These goals include:

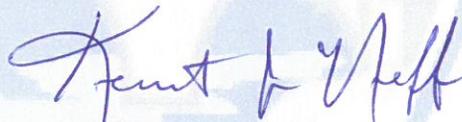
- Developing a Merrill Police Auxiliary which could provide us with the opportunity to increase the services we provide at no additional budgetary cost. Members of the auxiliary would contribute hours of service to the community and the police department in the form of duties such as patrolling and checking our parks, assisting in directing traffic during events such as the Labor Day parade and a number of other duties. Typical members of this auxiliary would be Criminal Justice Students building on a future career in law enforcement, or members of the public interested in volunteering their service.

- Organization of a Crime Prevention team that will work with interested businesses and individuals to discuss crime prevention strategies, provided presentations to groups, and provide available resources to anyone desiring information on crime prevention.
- Development of a Merrill Police K-9 unit that could be funded significantly with community financial support. This effort deserves some attention and research to understand how feasible it would be for the Merrill Police Department and our community.

It is truly exciting to think about the future of the Merrill Police Department and what we can offer our citizens as we move ahead. Looking back on how we accomplished so many of the goals that were established in the strategic plan, feeds our desire to continue to enhance our relationship with the citizens we serve in this community. This excitement is evident from every level of our agency. From the very new officers beginning their careers with the Merrill Police Department, to the “seasoned officers”, both of which continue to suggest new and different ways to serve our citizens. It is encouraging to watch our officers working so diligently toward accomplishing our mission of protecting life, property, and maintaining order, while assuring fair and equal treatment.”

Our officers really do live up to our motto of “Serving Merrill with Pride.”

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth J. Neff,
Chief of Police

From the Captain,

The task of summarizing an entire year of operations into a concise annual report is certainly interesting. As we look over the information provided to you in this report, there always seems to be more information that could or should be available to help present a more complete picture of our operations at the Merrill PD. In the end, we have to accept the limitations of our reporting systems and the traditionally concise format of this report. This report will, however, reflect upon many key points of 2012 operations of the Merrill PD and identify some goals for 2013.

Operations

General call volume continues to decrease which has been the trend in most statistical areas for the last couple of years. We also continue to see a positive decrease in calls for service at our public schools thanks to the efforts and active involvement of SRO Heckendorf. We continue to observe a decrease in OWI arrests and crashes despite the rare, high profile fatal crash the Merrill PD investigated in 2012. The continued decrease in OWI incidents can be largely attributed to constant enforcement vigilance and the increased use of private taxi services. This interpretation reveals quite a positive message in that decision making is improving by those normally tempted to operate while under the influence. Ultimately, it is good decision making that leads to a safer community.

It is apparent to us when examining the historical activity that we need to increase our focus on the “nuts and bolts” of police work, for lack of a better term. Keeping this in mind, we have made a renewed effort to focus on many of these areas throughout 2013 and beyond. These areas include:

- **A daily focus on traffic safety:** Shift supervisors have been directed to assign traffic enforcement detail on every shift, when sufficient manpower is available.
- **Standardized reporting and review:** Establishing a consistent standard across all patrol shifts regarding incident response, investigation, reporting, and supervisory review.
- **Crime Prevention:** Engaging in one-on-one contacts with businesses and neighborhoods to address crime prevention, information sharing, and building positive relationships.

These 2013 operational changes and goals have already been seeded and appear to be having an immediate effect. Specifically, enhanced traffic enforcement has yielded some notable arrests already in 2013.

Equipment

Our focus on department equipment initially involved a basic assessment of our current status, estimated life cycles, and prioritizing replacements. Currently, the Chief has outlined a responsible replacement plan for most of these assets. Some notable items replaced this year include the squad video systems and squad rifles.

The existing squad video systems were aging, commonly defective in many respects, and had limitations on the accessibility of the video files themselves. After much research and comparisons we purchased the Panasonic Arbitrator 360 systems. This system combined the most features while being the most cost effective. The Arbitrator system not only archives squad video but potentially unifies all other digital evidence into a single software solution accessible by any user at any network location. We are currently in the process of fully integrating this solution. We expect to complete this project in 2013 when squad 8 is replaced.

Another significant purchase in 2012 was the replacement of our department squad rifles. The basic idea was to replace our pistol ammunition based shoulder-fired weapon, which has limited range and abilities. Those current weapon capabilities were far from the minimum training standards of our profession and far from the expectations of a Law Enforcement agency in northern WI. As early planning was happening to replace these weapons with AR-15 platform rifles, we received some unexpected support and nudging from members of the City Council. It was that support and conversation that spurred the purchased of (10) AR15 squad rifles. Fortunately, we took delivery of those rifles before firearm industry demands skyrocketed and the prices nearly doubled! We currently are facing challenges in securing the remaining necessary supplies for full implementation. However, we expect to be fully implemented, with basic training, in the first quarter of 2013.

The final "big ticket" item we acquired in 2012 was the Cellebrite UFED mobile device forensic tool. Unexpected NORDEG funds became available to Lincoln County as a whole in late 2012. Working in conjunction with the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office and the Tomahawk PD, agencies realized that mobile device technology is clearly taking over, if not already dominant. Our ability to capture this information when needed was completely dependent upon the availability and assistance of other agencies who had refrained from charging us for their services to this point. These NORDEG funds allowed us to purchase our own forensic analysis tool with a limited term of maintenance. We are already observing positive results from its use thus far in active drug investigations. In 2013, we have the opportunity to send an investigator to a Cellebrite specific training program which is normally outside of our ability to afford and attend. Fortunately, an unexpected ICAC grant will fund the majority of this rare and valuable training.

Training

2012 was an exceptional year for training within the department. We were able to take advantage of some unique opportunities at Volk Field which tends to provide high quality on-base training and housing at no cost to the department. We hope to continue relying on this resource as much as possible. Further, the NTC Public Safety Center for Excellence in Merrill is fast becoming a reality and has already provided some interesting training opportunities. As we see that facility come to completion we will continue to utilize this local resource and likely observe unique training come to our city. With our contingent of certified instructors we may even be able to host local training courses in the near future. In short, our focus to develop our staff continues in multiple areas of expertise. We recorded over 2300 hours of instruction, training, or attendance at professional seminars in 2012, which is 35% more than the year prior! In 2013 we will continue this broad approach to staff development. It is a stark reality that we must do this in order to ensure specific expertise and competencies remain within our ranks despite attrition and the obvious experience gap. Additionally, we have a stated goal on improvements to our firearms training program which coincide with our new equipment purchase. Resources will also be used to bring our entire agency up to a specified level of training and awareness in the Incident Command System and local interim plan.

Community

The Merrill PD continues to have community involvement and strengthen relationships either directly or indirectly through our members. Directly, we had continued involvement in our own 2012 Citizen's Academy, DARE program, Safety patrol, Special Olympics events, representation on various boards, training events for the public, and attendance at various meetings. Indirectly, our employees donate their time and resources to wonderful local causes and activities including but not limited to: Hunter Education, Youth Turkey Hunt, coaching local sports teams, and multiple charity events. Even though this participation happens on their private time, it certainly reflects positively on the MPD and the City of Merrill in general. Additionally, the efforts of the Merrill Police Benevolent Association has raised an increasing amount of dollars in the past couple of years allowing the organization to donate thousands of dollars to local events, projects, charities, and more on an annual basis. The MPBA is also a primary sponsor of the MPD DARE program.

Overall in 2012, MPD members participated in over 225 meetings, functions, events, etc. We do this, in part, because we value the spirit of community and we value staying connected with our community. In 2013, we expect these values to only strengthen as we develop the operational crime prevention initiatives mentioned before.

Finally, 2012 was most decidedly a year of transition for the Merrill PD. We observed the retirement of Chief Ned Seubert and our most senior Police Officer, Dale Knapp. We thank them for their many years of service to the City of Merrill and wish them well in retirement. The results of the leadership they provided will most certainly be observed for years to come.

Respectfully submitted,



Corey Bennett, Captain

2012---CITY OF MERRILL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS---2012



COMMON COUNCIL MEMBERS

William Bialecki - MAYOR

1st Ward - Chris Malm

5th Ward - John Burgener

2nd Ward - Steve Hass

6th Ward - David Sukow

3rd Ward - Ryan Schwartzman

7th Ward - Rob Norton

4th Ward - Kandy Peterson

8th Ward - Anne Caylor

POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION

Kurt Helmstadter - President

Robert Smallman

Don Heyel

Carol Holz

Mike Ravn

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Anne Caylor - Chairperson

Dave Sukow

Kandy Peterson

Dr. Greg Gill - Health Officer

Norbert Ashbeck - Deputy Health Officer

Kenneth Neff, Police Chief

Robert Odegard, Fire Chief

“Serving Merrill with Pride”

Vision:

It is the vision of the Merrill Police Department to be continually recognized as a professional law enforcement agency that is responsive to community needs and whose employees are committed to serving the citizens of this community with pride.

Mission Statement:

The Merrill Police Department is committed to protecting life, property and maintaining order, while assuring fair and equal treatment.

Guiding Principles:

Integrity

We discern between what is right and what is wrong and then act on what is right even at personal cost.

Commitment

We use a positive set of beliefs, coupled with an equally positive set of actions and behavior. We are dedicated to the duties entrusted to us by our community.

Professionalism

We strive to achieve and maintain the highest standards of conduct, reflecting the integrity of Police professionals.

Responsiveness

We recognize and respond to the needs of our community and promptly act using problem-solving methods.

Teamwork

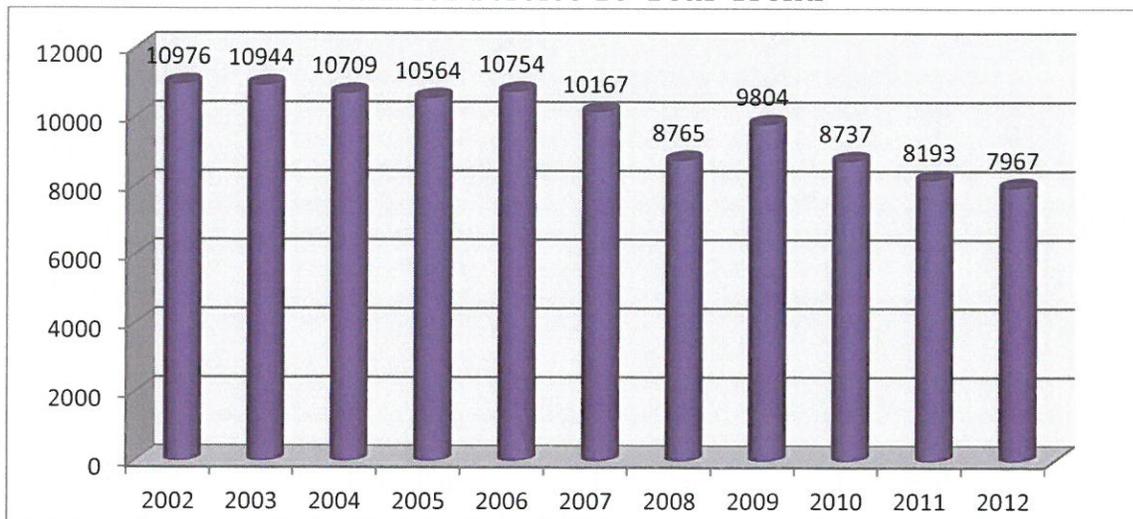
We recognize each other as valuable members of our team and work together to identify and solve organizational and community issues. We seek citizen involvement in our mission.

MERRILL POLICE DEPARTMENT

COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATED

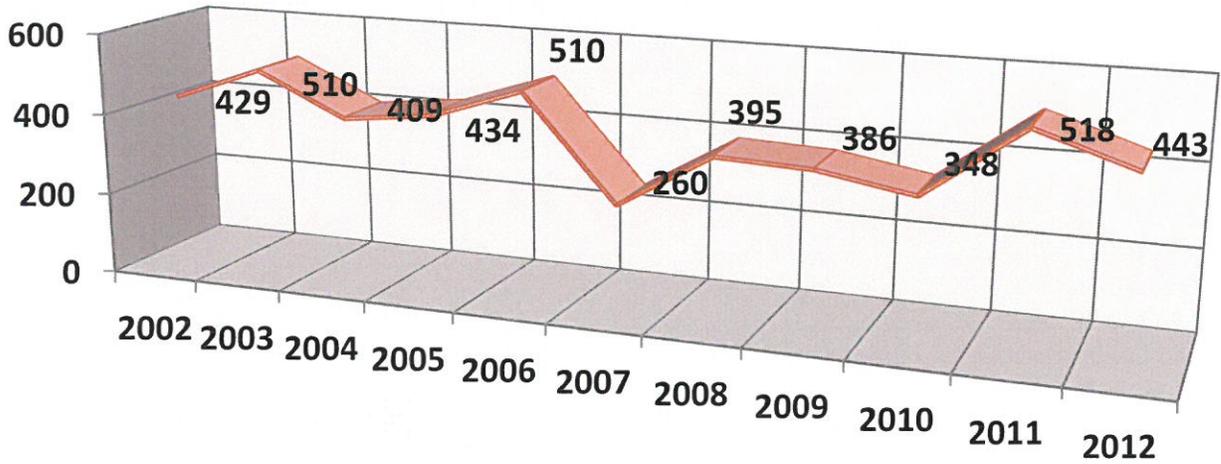
<u>TYPE OF COMPLAINT</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Alarms	166	173
Animal Complaint	262	328
Burglary	42	68
Disturbance/Noise	153	174
Domestic Disturbance	93	103
Escort	88	83
Hit & Run	60	68
Open Door/Window Found	60	62
Warrant/P&P/DSS Apprehension Arrests	310	331
Prowler/Suspicious Activity	302	377
Request to Watch Home/Building	11	5
Snowmobile/ATV	11	8
Vandalism/Property Damage	154	173
Vehicle Lockout	383	341
Miscellaneous	6,098	5,673
Total Calls For Service Received	8,193	7,967

Calls for Service 10-Year Trend

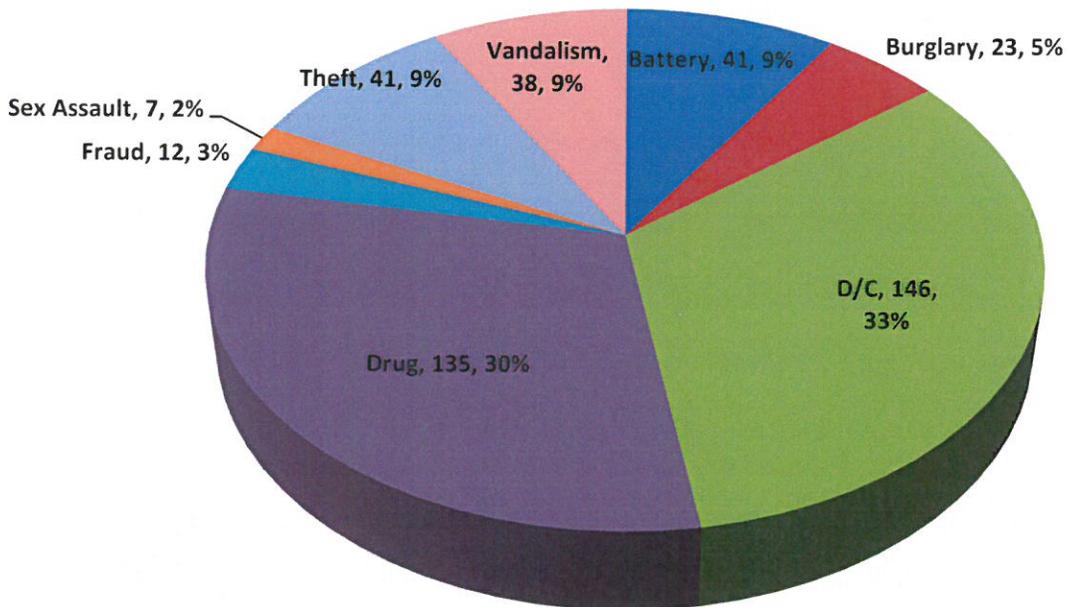


ADULT ARRESTS

Total Arrests 10-Year Trend

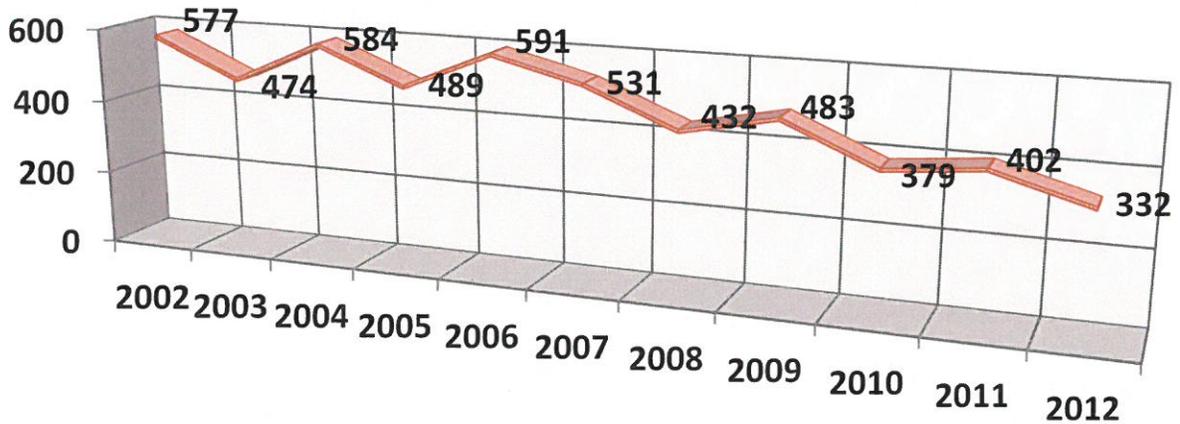


2012 Adult Arrests

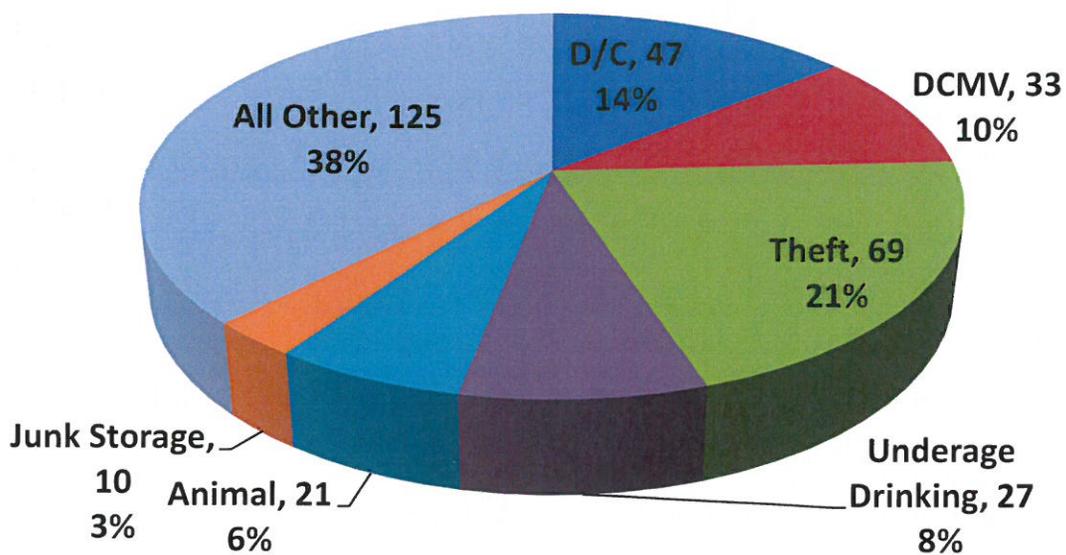


Ordinance Citations

Citations Issued for specific offenses 10 Year Trend

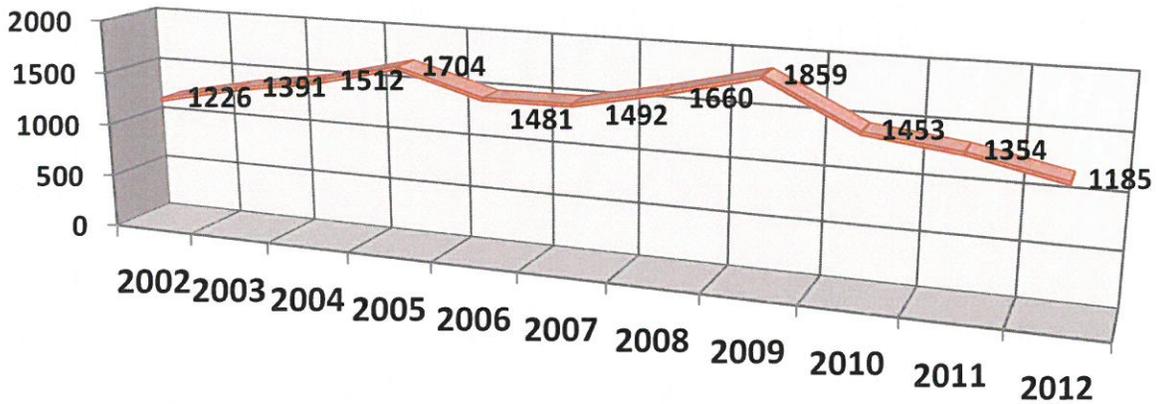


2012 Adult Citations Issued

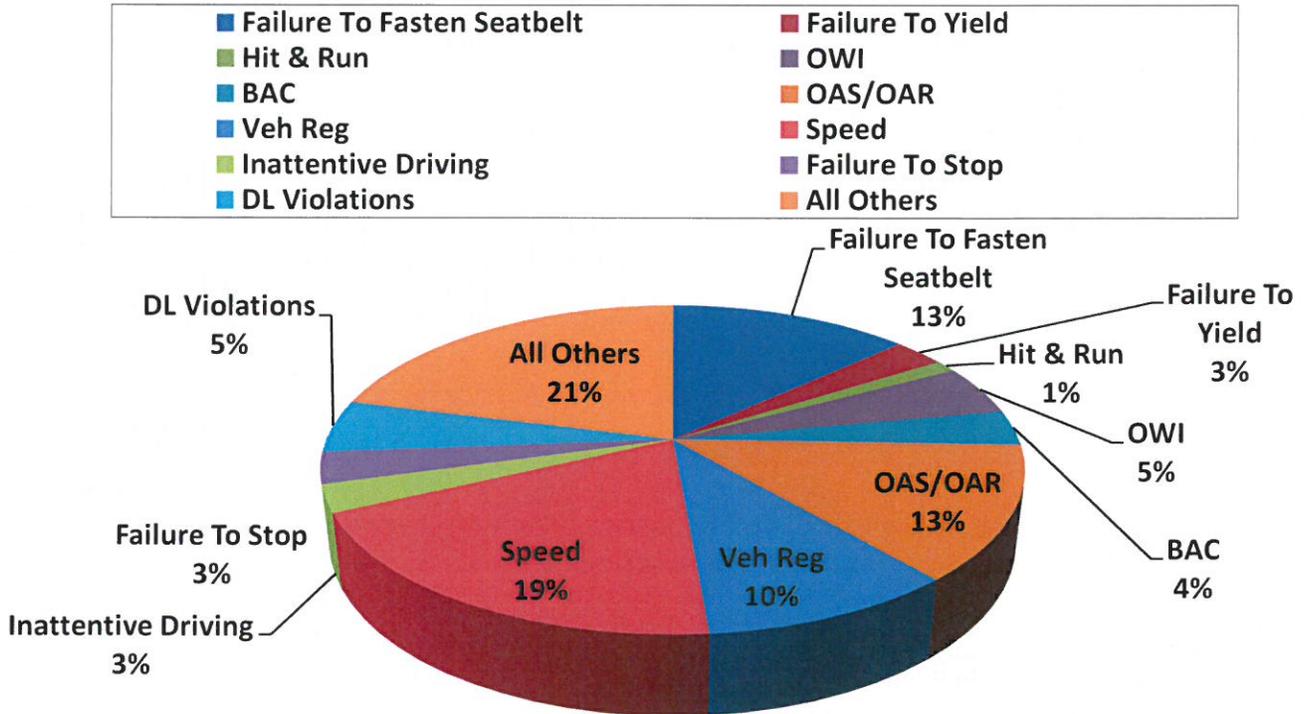


Traffic Citation Statistics (Adults and Juveniles)

Total Traffic Citations Issued 10-Year Trend

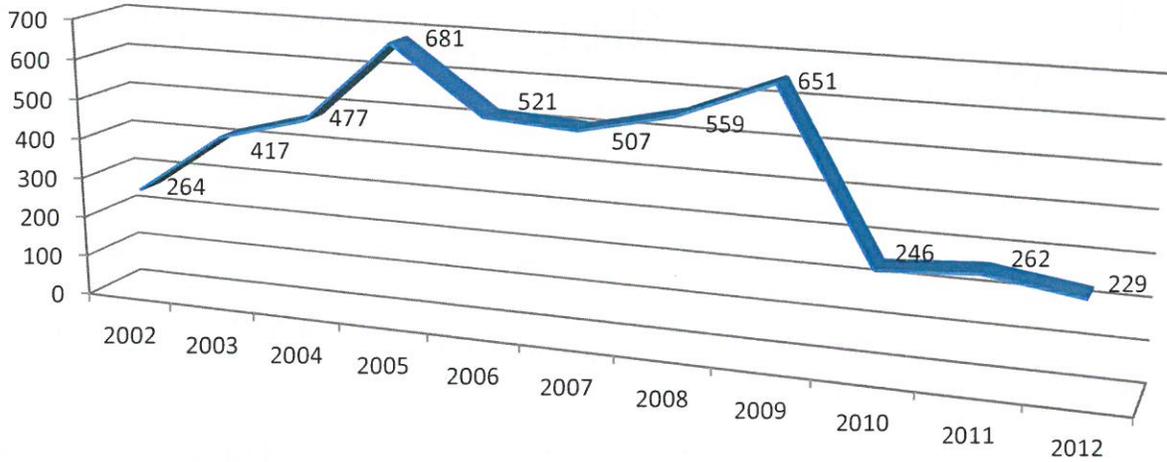


2012 Traffic Citations Issued

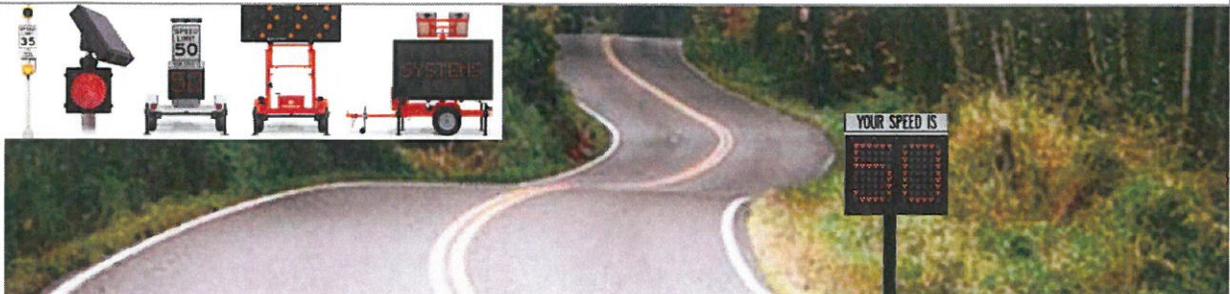
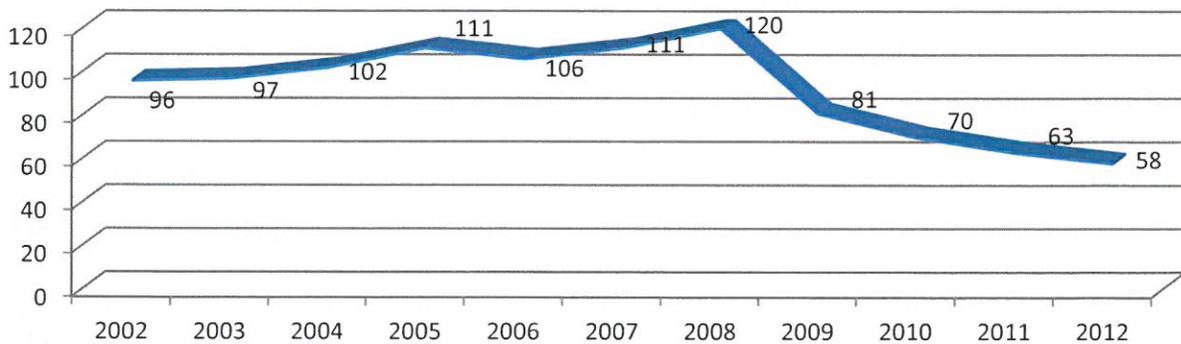


Traffic Citations Continued.....

Speeding Citations 10-yr Trend

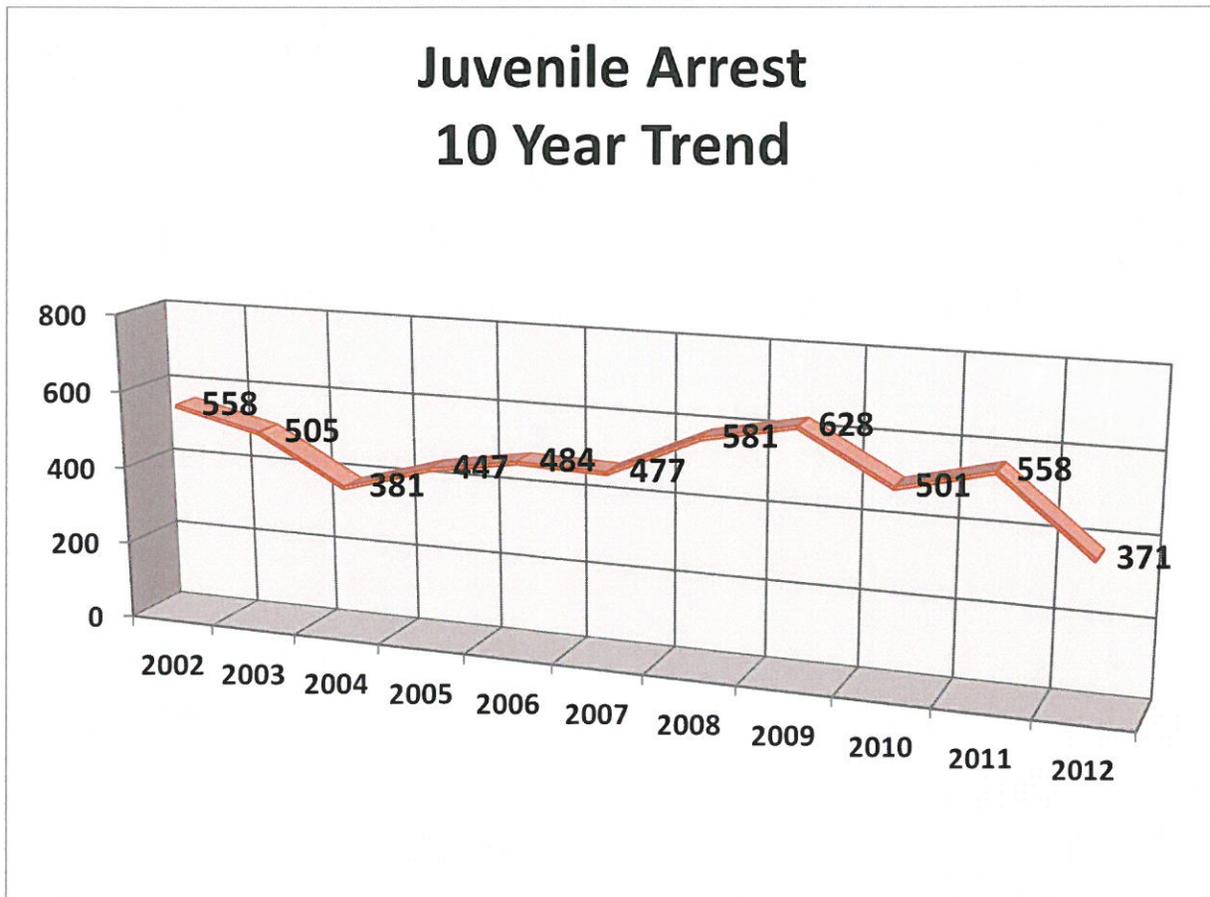
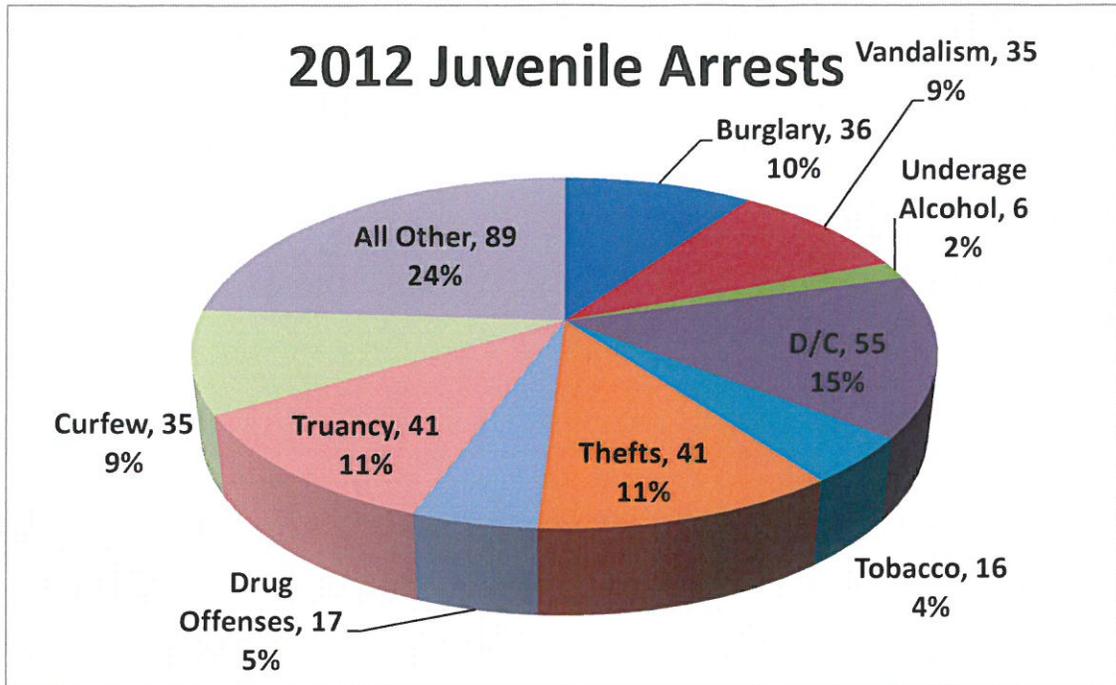


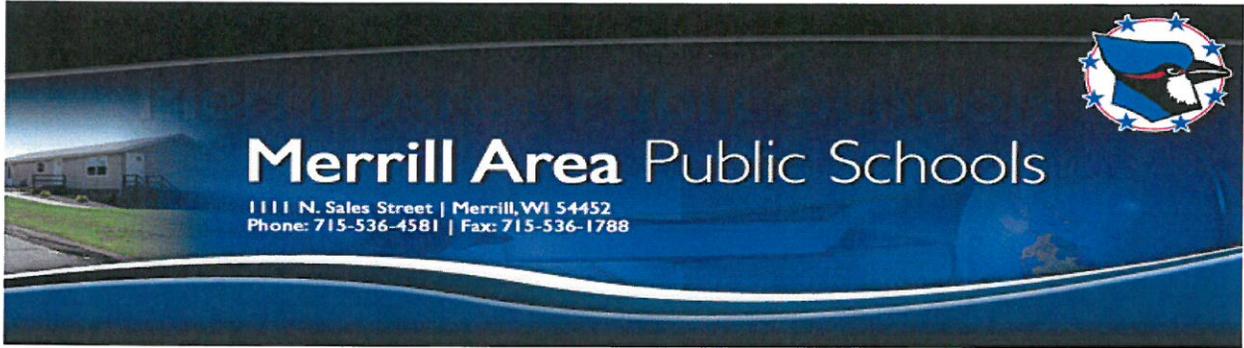
Operating Motor Vehicle While Intoxicated 10-year Trend



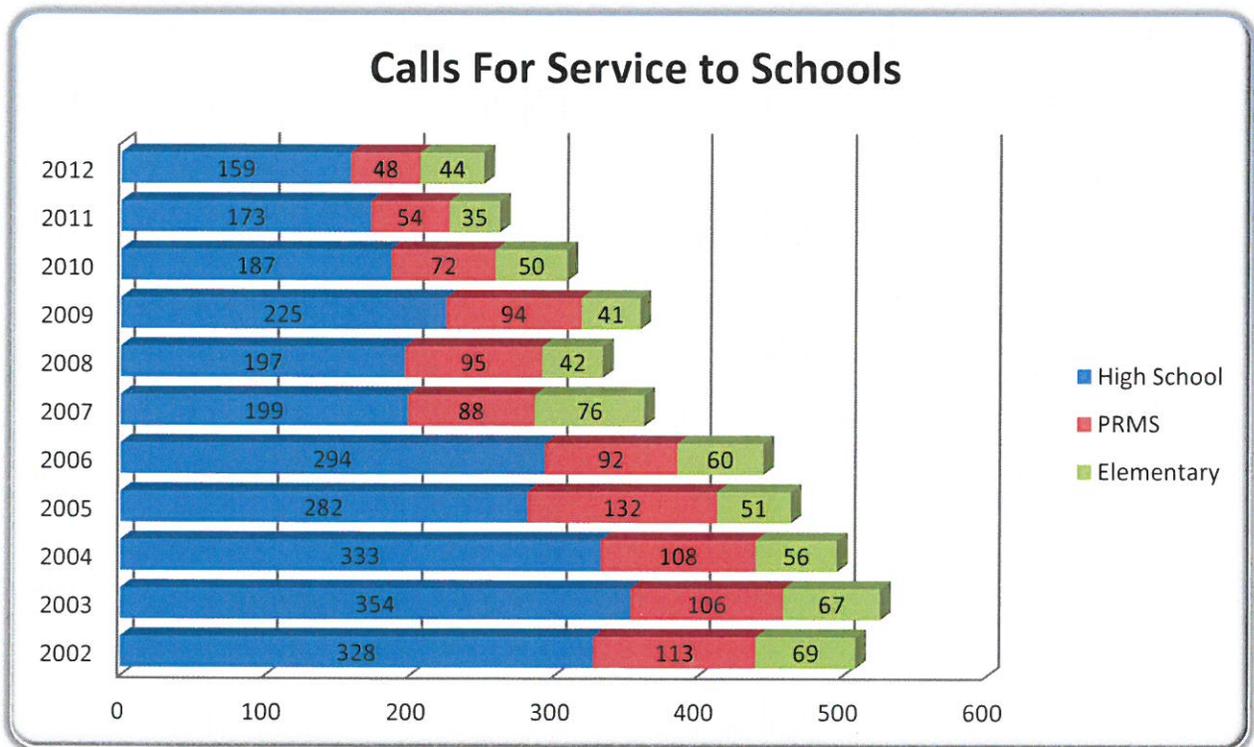
Juvenile Arrest Statistics

(16 years of age and under)





Calls for Service to Schools in 2012



Value of Property Stolen

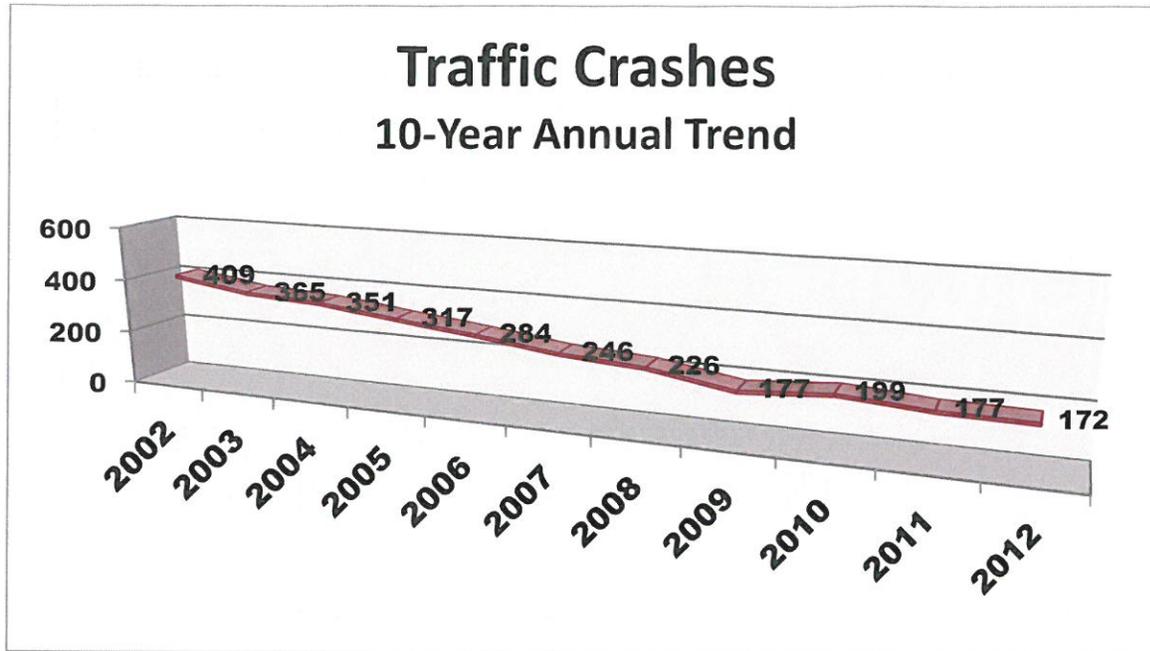


Type of Property	2011 Amount Stolen	2012 Amount Stolen
Motor Vehicles	\$53,862	\$24,306
TVs & Stereos	\$8,838	\$10,466
Currency	\$25,578	\$16,354
Bicycles	\$4,102	\$6,760
All Other Property	\$72,610	\$79,101
Total Property	\$164,990	\$136,987

This chart indicates the total amount of property stolen for 2011 and 2012.

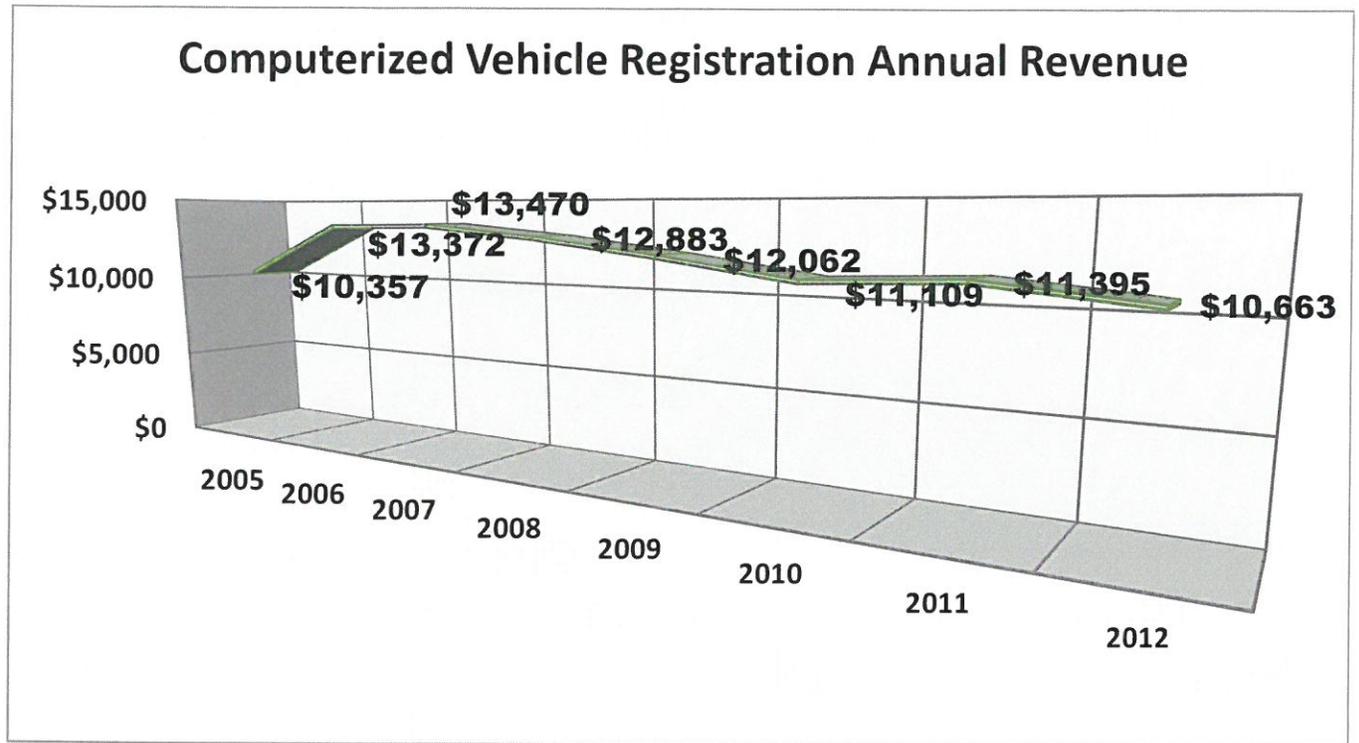


Traffic Crash Summary



	2010	2011	2012
Total Crashes	199	177	172
Occupants	427	383	404
Number Injured Restrained	23	40	26
Number Injured Unrestrained	9	6	3
Fatalities	0	0	2
Occupants Wearing Seatbelts	401	364	368
Seatbelt % Compliance	94%	95%	91%
Citations Issued	115	112	100
Alcohol Involved	6	4	3
Deer	4	6	1
Bicyclists	3	5	2
Pedestrians	0	0	0
Controlled Intersection Stop Sign	26	32	36
Controlled Intersection Traffic Light	15	6	6
Controlled Intersection Yield Sign	0	3	4
Controlled Intersection Other	1	0	0
Uncontrolled Intersection	34	26	19
Non-Intersection	63	60	51
Private Property	9	8	4
Parking Lot	51	42	52
Roundabout	-	7	6

Computerized Vehicle Registration Annual Revenue



The Computerized Vehicle Registration service that is provided by the Merrill Police Department continues to generate revenue. This service gives citizens an option for taking care of vehicle registration needs without having to travel to a Department of Transportation Service Center in another area.

