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HOMICIDES DOWN 41%, OVERALL CRIME DOWN 22% PAST TWO YEARS CRIME REDUCTION IS A LONG-TERM FIGHT

As we address the most recent surge in violence, we must remember that crime reduction is not a short-term goal or effort. Rather, it is a long-term effort that requires continued vigilance; not only in the face of a crime emergency, but during the periods of calm as well. Too often, we measure crime-reduction by the latest shooting incident(s) and lose sight of the crime reductions that have been made, as well as the gains in our capacity to respond to crime in more strategic and comprehensive ways.

Crime and violence rates have dramatically dropped over the past two years. For example, in 2005, we experienced 15 homicides and 174 shootings. There were more homicides in 2005 than 2006, 2007 and 2008 (to date) combined.

Since 2005, homicides have dropped by 41%, shootings by 7%, and overall crime has dropped by 22%. There have been reductions in every major crime category over the past two years. Below is a chart that compares the combined total of crime from 2006, 2007, and the first quarter of 2008, to the combined total of crime for 2005, 2004, and the first quarter of 2003.

Crime Category	2006 – 2008	2003 – 2005	Percentage Change
HOMICIDE	14	24	-41%
RAPE	42	56	-25%
ROBBERY	212	238	-11%
ROBBERY/FIREARM	105	107	-2%
ASSAULTS	723	975	-26%
ASSAULTS/FIREARM	258	277	-7%
BURGLARY	718	798	-10%
THEFTS	701	1166	-40%
AUTO THEFTS	675	702	-4%
TOTALS	3085	3959	-22%

These notable reductions do not suggest “mission accomplished”. To the contrary, our crime and violence rates remain unacceptably high, and there is much work to do. These reductions do, however, suggest that we are heading in the right direction and must continue our efforts.

As we debate public safety and the best use of Measure C funds, we must remember that crime reduction requires a comprehensive strategy that focuses on three primary goals: Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression. Enforcement alone is not the answer, and the police alone cannot reduce crime. Sustainable crime reduction requires the three (3) Cs: City Leadership, Community Involvement, and Collaboration with other agencies. The 3 Cs have worked in the past, and I am confident they will work in the future.

As we near the summer, we must roll-up our sleeves and enhance our fight against crime and violence. We should first, however, take a well-deserved moment to acknowledge the outstanding work that has been done by our officers and so many community members and organizations. There are too many to name; however, their efforts and programs, such as parole reentry, drug rehabilitation, sponsored employment, boxing, track and field, youth mentoring, mural arts and music, and many other after-school and anti-gang initiatives, are largely responsible for our success.

Of equal importance to our crime-reduction efforts, is the day-to-day actions of community members who call the police to report crime, participate in Beat Meetings, work with young people as mentors, take the initiative to keep our community clean, and embrace the notion that everyone can contribute to making our community safe.

Yet, despite these tremendous efforts, programs and successes, we cannot afford to rest on our laurels, nor allow periodic spikes (and dips) in violence to weaken our resolve or symbolize defeat.

So far this year, there has been 1 homicide. It must be our goal to end 2008 with just that 1 homicide. This is a tenable goal if we continue to work together.

Respectfully,

Chief Ronald Davis