

**LIVINGSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
ANNUAL REPORT NARRATIVE**

YEAR 2009

Prepared by: Darren Raney, Chief of Police

Statistics:

The annual reports of statistics are recorded as accurately as possible, with an attempt at using consistent criteria from year to year. Data was retrieved from annual reports, monthly reports, docket books and the current Sleuth records management system.

Personnel Related:

The department experienced significant personnel changes in 2009. One additional full time officer's position was gained after the City was awarded a federal COPS hiring grant which will pay 100% of the wages and benefits for 3 years. With this new position, the police department's budgeted staffing consists of 14 full-time sworn officers and 1 part-time parking enforcement officer. The rank structure remained unchanged from the previous year, consisting of the chief, assistant chief, 3 sergeants, 7 patrol officers, one full time detective, one School Resource Officer (SRO) and a parking enforcement officer.

Officer Jim Sulages resigned in early July to accept employment with the Montana Highway Patrol, and Officer Jerry Harmon retired in December. Officer Shawn Misner was hired in October to replace Officer Sulages. Officer Tim Williams was also hired in October to fill the newly created COPS funded position. Officer Misner has previous law enforcement experience and is eligible to obtain Montana POST certification upon completion of an equivalency course. Officer Tim Williams will be attending the basic course at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy beginning in January 2010 and is expected to graduate in April. The City expects to hire someone in early 2010 to fill the vacancy created by Officer Harmon's retirement.

The additional officer will help provide depth of coverage during times of staffing shortages created by vacations, sick leave, resignations, or other long term leaves of absence. These shift shortages have previously been filled with officer overtime or by simply operating with only one officer assigned to certain shifts. Insufficient manpower not only reduces our ability to effectively respond to citizen calls for service and conduct criminal investigations, but exposed officers to extreme danger.

Activity:

The department received 6603 calls for service, a 7% decrease from the previous year and the second year of decline following the 2007 peak of 7385 calls. Officers generated 953 investigative incident reports, fairly consistent with 956 the previous year.

409 adults were arrested for various criminal offenses, one more than the previous year. Juvenile arrests declined 12% from the previous year. DUI arrests were up 22%, while drug related charges were down 31%. The legalization of medical marijuana has likely attributed to the decline in drug charges.

There were 7% fewer domestic disturbance incidents, following a 30% decline in 2008. This marks a four year decline. The number of persons arrested for a partner or family member assault increased by one.

The number of traffic citations increased 7%, but remains considerably lower than the 25 year average. Proactive traffic enforcement requires officers to be free from other duties. As the number of calls for service increase, the number of traffic citations decrease. The increase in the numbers of citations in 2008 and 2009 seem to correspond with the decrease in calls for service, allowing more uncommitted time for dedicated traffic enforcement.

Officers completed 160 vehicle accident reports, a 27% decrease from the previous year and well below the previous 30+ year average of approximately 223 accidents per year. The number of vehicle accidents reported in 2009 was the lowest since at least 1972. Even though the City has assumed jurisdiction of more roads through annexation in recent years, the accident rate continues to remain relatively static over time and has declined the past two years.

Theft reports decreased 21%, the lowest number in at least 30 years. This continues to reflect a general decline since 2002. Vandalism reports decreased 32%. There were 19 reported business and residential burglaries, down from 30 the previous year.

The department investigated 1 death declared suicide.

There were 5 vehicles reported stolen, down from 11 in 2008, 19 in 2007, 12 in 2006 and 15 in 2005.

Several specially trained officers continued to conduct bicycle patrols throughout the City at various times of the day and night, depending on workload and the availability of enough officers to provide vehicle patrol. Staffing shortages through much of the summer reduced the amount of bicycle patrols. The additional officer acquired through the federal COPS hiring grant should accommodate increased bicycle patrols this year and beyond.

The Livingston Police Department DARE program continued to provide instruction to elementary students in Livingston and Park County schools. Funding constraints have again limited instruction to core classes (5th grade).

Our parking enforcement officer issued 2242 parking citations in the downtown district, continuing a pattern of reduction over the past several years. The parking enforcement officer continues to maintain some of the responsibilities of managing the parking ticket computerized database, allowing the City finance department to function with minimal staffing. Although this has accommodated a reduction in workforce, the parking enforcement officer completes one less enforcement round each day.

The City of Livingston Police Department continued to be a member of the Missouri River Drug Task Force, a multi-jurisdictional effort funded by a federal grant with partial contributions from participating agencies. Pursuant to the agreement, the City of Livingston and Park County equally fund a portion of the costs necessary to provide one full time Park County deputy who works with the task force as a full time investigator. Our officers work closely with this investigator, sharing drug related intelligence and forwarding cases for follow up investigation by the task force. These joint efforts have been successful in prosecuting drug offenders in Livingston and Park County.

Notable Crimes:

An armed robbery of a local casino was reported in October. The lone female employee was confronted by a suspect with a handgun after she closed and was leaving the business. After barricading the victim inside a room unharmed, the suspect fled with cash. Following a cooperative investigation between the Livingston PD and several outside agencies, two male suspects were arrested in Memphis, TN within a few days.

Racial Profiling:

Pursuant to the requirements of 44-2-117 MCA, which were revised by the 2007 Montana legislature, effective October 1, 2007, department policy requires the collection of data for each traffic stop that determines whether any officer has a pattern of stopping members of minority groups for violations of vehicle laws in a number disproportionate to the population of minority groups residing or traveling within our jurisdiction. Officers are required to document the race or ethnicity of the driver and record the information into our records management system to be used to compile racial profiling data.

Consistent with the requirements of law, department policy provides for an annual review of this data. If the review reveals a pattern of any officer(s) of the Livingston Police Department stopping members of minority groups for violations of vehicle laws in a number disproportionate to the population of minority groups residing or traveling within our jurisdiction, an investigation must be conducted to determine whether the officer(s) routinely stop members of said minority groups for violations of vehicle laws as a pretext

for investigating other violations of criminal law. The required review is incorporated into the Livingston Police Department Annual Report of Statistics, and this shall be considered the required review.

Statistical information is included with this 2009 annual report, which includes information compiled from each traffic stop. One page contains racial profiling statistics from the entire department. There are also statistics from each individual officer who was employed during 2009. Upon review of these statistics, and having received no complaints alleging racial profiling from any person, there is no reason to conclude that officer(s) routinely stop members of minority groups for violations of vehicle laws as a pretext for investigating other violations of criminal law.

Taser Deployments:

Tasers were purchased in 2009 with federal grant funds and issued to officers. The grant requires data to be compiled regarding Taser use incidents. The following data satisfies the reporting requirements:

Taser deployments in 2009_____	0
Officers injured from Taser deployments_____	0
Suspects / Citizens injured from Taser deployments_____	0

Summary:

The overall crime rate declined significantly in 2009, continuing to show positive trends in Livingston. Domestic violence reports were the lowest since 1992 and have declined each year since 2005. The reported crimes of burglary and vandalism were the lowest number since at least 1972, the year annual reports of statistics are available for review. Reported thefts were the lowest number since 1975.

Although we have enjoyed a pattern of decreased criminal activity, this trend should be viewed with caution as things can quickly turn around. There are many variables that are attributed to crime rates, some that may be controlled to some degree and others are beyond our control. Despite the declining numbers of reported crimes, the number of adult arrests has remained fairly consistent. Officers aggressively pursue criminal offenders and proactively identify individuals and situations that pose a threat to the community. Reasonably aggressive law enforcement, facilitated by competent and well trained officers, is a key factor in reducing crime rates. Citizens must also be willing to take an active role in safeguarding their community. They should recognize potential threats and take action to reduce their chances of becoming a victim, rather than being complacent and ignore obvious risks. They should report suspicious persons or activity.

Crime rates are effectively reduced when citizens and law enforcement work in unison to create a community wide atmosphere that is not desirable for the criminal element.