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News Release

Police department reports statistical improvement in 2015 crime

Arkansas City rates the same as or better than Winfield in various measures

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (July 20, 2016) — The Arkansas City Police Department announced a sizable drop in 2015 crime statistics at Tuesday night's City Commission meeting, falling into a tie with Winfield in overall crime index and coming in even lower than its sister city in the property crime index.

"While I knew our stats for 2015 had decreased, I did not know how we compared to the other agencies in Kansas for the year," said Police Chief Dan Ward.

"I was very happy to see that while our crime rates dropped in virtually every area, most agencies across Kansas saw fairly large increases. The net effect of our rates dropping and others increasing gave us very acceptable statistics."

For example, Arkansas City's overall crime index dropped from 44.3 to 38.2 in 2015. At the same time, the state average increased from 34.6 to 36.5. This means that Arkansas City has an overall crime index that is about average for the entire state of Kansas.

Winfield's crime index increased from 30.6 to 38.2, meaning Ark City and Winfield have the same crime index for the first time in recent memory. In 2012, Winfield was 10 points lower on that same index.

Meanwhile, Arkansas City's property crime rate dropped from 39.2 to 33.5, while Winfield increased from 33.7 to 36.8, meaning Arkansas City now has a lower property crime rate than Winfield.

Theft cases in Arkansas City have fallen from a high of 383 in 2012 to 296 in 2015, a 22-percent decrease. Burglary cases have fallen from a high of 128 in 2012 to 88 in 2015, a decrease of 31 percent.

"I am so very impressed with the results of everyone's hard work and commitment to reduce our property crime rates," Ward said in an email to his officers and police department personnel.

For immediate release

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“This marks the second year of decreasing crime rates in Ark City, all because of your proactive and aggressive efforts. The micro hot spotting, targeting high crime areas for police presence, and aggressively investigating and identifying those responsible for crimes has been very successful.”

“Thanks for your service,” said Vice Mayor Dan Jurkovich. Mayor Duane Oestmann, Commissioner Charles Tweedy III and Commissioner Karen Welch also thanked the police chief and his officers.

Citizens may watch a replay of the City Commission meeting at https://youtu.be/H_BIQbCIAYY.

2016 Burglary Task Force

The 2015 decline in property crime rates in Arkansas City came despite a noted spike in reported burglaries and thefts across Cowley County, starting in mid- to late October 2015.

This trend continued to grow despite the Arkansas City Police Department's crime prevention efforts of being in targeted areas during targeted times. In response, ACPD formed a Burglary Task Force in January, in an attempt to identify those responsible for the rise in property-related crime.

Between January and April, the task force arrested a total of 17 individuals and cleared 24 different cases in Arkansas City. Additionally, it recovered more than \$300,000 worth of stolen property. Some of the individuals arrested were connected to additional crimes in Cowley County and Oklahoma, as well.

While the burglaries and thefts slowed down for at least a few months due to the efforts of the Burglary Task Force, the best defense against property crime remains being vigilant and aware.

The Arkansas City Police Department suggests the following tips to reduce the chances that residents might be the victims of a home burglary:

- Routinely inspect the outside of homes and report any damage to property or stolen items. A well-maintained property will show that the property is being occupied. Problems encountered should be reported so that the police department can deploy more resources to affected areas.
- Lock doors and windows to homes, garages, sheds and automobiles. Locking things up makes it more difficult for thieves to gain entry to property. Furthermore, if they make any noise by kicking in a door or breaking glass, a witness is more likely to notice it and call the police.
- Do not leave items of value in plain sight, especially in a car. A high-dollar item in a car might be worth breaking the window to grab, so either remove the item or conceal it from view.

- Invest in outdoor lighting, including motion detection lights. Burglars look for the easiest targets first. A well-lit home or garage is less likely to be entered than a poorly lit structure. Alarm systems and video surveillance also are great for deterring crime, but can be very costly.
- Be aware of the surroundings. Thieves might travel through a neighborhood for a number of reasons. Report anyone who looks out of the ordinary, especially people who are looking around neighbors' homes. Many times, burglars will knock on doors or ring doorbells to see if anyone is home. If someone is home, the person might ask for a person who does not live there or ask to use a telephone.
- Make a record of all belongings that includes serial numbers. Burglars target electronics, guns and jewelry. Being able to provide serial numbers for electronics and guns gives law enforcement another means to track down stolen property.

2015 Kansas Crime Index findings

The Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) compiled the following 2015 statistical crime report, based on a snapshot of data submitted by local and state law enforcement agencies as of May 1, 2016:

- Homicides were 15.5 percent above the 13-year average. While 2015 saw the largest number of homicides in that 13-year period, 19 percent of those were drug or gang related. This is almost double the percentage of most years. Only 2006 and 2007 were similar, at 17 percent and 20 percent, respectively. Domestic violence homicides have averaged between 25 and 30 percent in recent years. In 2015, domestic violence homicides equaled 23 percent of the total.
- Rapes were 4.9 percent above the 13-year average. Reported rapes began a steady decline in 2001. In 2014, there was a slight uptick, followed by an even larger increase in 2015. Some may be inclined to say this was due to the Federal Bureau of Investigation changing the definition of rape to include all sexual assaults, but for its reports, KBI continues to report rape, sodomy and sexual assault individually. It is likely the focus on rape kits has made local agencies aware of the importance of accurately reporting these numbers and is at least partially responsible for the two-year rise in the number of rapes reported.
- Robberies were only 1 percent above the 13-year average. While historically, robbery offenses have moderate and unpredictable changes, 2015 saw a 31.3-percent rise.

- Aggravated assaults and batteries were 1.5 percent above the 13-year average. Historically, aggravated assault and battery offenses have only modest changes from year to year. 2015 saw a 6.8-percent increase.
- Burglaries were 17 percent below the 13-year average. Burglary was the only index crime to decrease in 2015. In fact, the 2015 total was the lowest of the 13-year period. There is no known explanation for this decline.
- Thefts and larcenies were 15.3 percent below the 13-year average. Theft offenses have been declining since 2001, with occasional moderate bumps. Last year appears to be similar to those bumps and still is the second-lowest total behind 2014.
- Motor vehicle thefts were 7.9 percent below the 13-year average. Motor vehicle thefts have been relatively flat for the past five years.
- Arsons were 19.6 percent below the 13-year average. Arson offenses tend to vary largely and thus are not included in the indices.
- Violent index crime was only 1.9 percent above the 13-year average, despite an 11.2-percent increase in 2015. These totals have a heavy dependence on aggravated assault and battery.
- Property index crimes were 15.1 percent below the 13-year average. Property index crimes have been declining, with a very minor 1.6-percent increase in 2015, and still are at the second-lowest total behind 2014.
- Total index crimes were 13.3 percent below the 13-year average. Total index crimes have been declining, with a very minor 2.6-percent increase in 2015, and still is the second-lowest total behind 2014. The total index crime has a heavy dependence on property index crime.

About the Kansas Crime Index

The Kansas Crime Index is published each July 5 for the prior year's crime statistics by the Kansas Bureau of Investigation's (KBI) Incident Based Reporting Unit in Topeka.

The data represent the most accurate information available, reflecting crime as reported by law enforcement agencies through the Kansas Incident Based Reporting System (KIBRS).

There are three crime indexes referred to in this report. The indexes are calculated based upon the number of reported crimes per 1,000 in population. Data are gathered in one of three ways:

1. **Manual** — Reports are mailed from law enforcement agencies to KBI and the data are entered manually by KBI staff into the KIBRS system. These reports must pass a variety of edits in order to be accepted by the system.
2. **Electronic** — Agencies that have passed a certification process may submit their reports directly into the system through an electronic gateway. These reports also must pass a series of edits in order to be accepted by the system.
3. **Direct** — Direct reporting, more commonly called summary reporting, involves an agency merely providing KBI with a count for each crime. This form of reporting is dependent on the agency making proper classifications of offenses and does not provide any detailed incident information regarding a case. Direct reporting data were collected on a quarterly basis for 2015.

The overall crime index is a broad measure of crime in Kansas. The overall index includes both violent and property-related offenses.

The violent crime index is a broad measure of violent offenses reported in Kansas. It consists of murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

The property crime index is a broad measure of property-related crime in Kansas and consists of burglary, theft, and motor vehicle theft. Arson is included as an index crime for trend purposes, but is not calculated into the index due its large fluctuations year to year.

The following factors should be considered when viewing crime index data:

- Beginning with 2005 data, the number of arsons reported for each jurisdiction is included in this report. However, arson figures are not calculated into violent or property indices and are meant to stand on their own.
- Also beginning with 2005 data, this report distinguishes between agencies that have sent no data and those that sent incomplete data. If an agency does not submit at least three months of offense reports or a zero report, it is listed as not having submitted data. If an agency is missing data for a particular number of months, it is listed as not submitting complete data.
- Beginning with 2011 data, this report separates university police from the county in which they reside and places them in a grouping of all campus police. This was done in order to provide consistency as compared to state agencies and tribal police.
- The following guidelines are used for purposes of counting offenses: Murders, rapes and aggravated assaults are counted per victim. Robberies, burglaries, thefts and arsons are counted per incident. Motor vehicle thefts are counted per vehicle stolen.

The final responsibility for data submissions rests with the individual law enforcement agency.

Although KBI makes every effort through its editing procedures, training practices and correspondence to ensure the validity of the data it receives, the accuracy of the statistics depends primarily on the adherence of each contributor to the established standards of reporting.

This system enables crime information from standard offense and arrest reports to be reported by the responsible law enforcement agencies.

This report does not represent all criminal incidents committed throughout the state of Kansas because it is dependent on victims reporting crimes to law enforcement agencies and on those agencies submitting incident reports to KBI.

This information is designed to support the "Crime in the U.S." report published annually by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). However, the FBI excludes certain data when fluctuations fall outside of its mathematical equations, resulting in slightly different numbers than in this state report.

In other business Tuesday night, the City Commission:

- Received a monthly financial update from South Central Kansas Medical Center officials.
- Heard presentations on 2017 budget requests from Cherokee Strip Land Rush Museum and the Arkansas City Public Library.
- Unanimously approved the following consent agenda items: approval of the July 5 regular meeting minutes as written; ratification of Oestmann's appointment of Richard Humphrey to the Beautification and Tree Advisory Board.
- Instructed City staff to put a proposed traffic study of North First Street on the Aug. 2 agenda.
- Unanimously approved a resolution scheduling a special meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday in the commission room at City Hall, 118 W. Central Ave., to discuss the proposed 2017 budget.
- Heard a first reading of and voted unanimously to table until Aug. 2 an ordinance modifying Article 25 of the Zoning Regulations to combine the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Planning Commission, and amending Municipal Code to so reflect. Bob Mathews spoke in opposition.
- Heard an update from Ward and City Manager Nick Hernandez on ACPD receiving a Compassionate Police Department Award from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals for rescuing a dog found hanging by a leash outside a vehicle window on July 8.

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- Heard an update from Hernandez and Fire Chief Bobby Wolfe about a recent swift-water rescue of two women and a dog on the Arkansas River, as well as the need for an improved boat launch on the river and potentially additional boat types to ensure future rescue successes.
- Heard an update from Hernandez on cuts to the 2016 budget, totaling more than 13 percent, in order to free up enough cash to pay South Central Kansas Medical Center's bond principal and interest payment, due Sept. 1. The City estimates at least \$660,967.50 will be needed, along with an additional \$100,000 due to Quorum Health Resources. At the end of 2016, SCKMC is projected to owe the City at least \$1.6 million on special assessments and three large loans.
- Received a presentation from Neighborhood Services Superintendent Richard Brown regarding a structure he had declared an imminent danger at 1225 N. Second St. He showed pictures of the building beginning to collapse into its basement and break apart. The commissioners instructed him to begin demolition immediately to remove the danger from the neighborhood.

In other business July 5, the City Commission:

- Unanimously approved the following consent agenda items: approval of the June 21 regular meeting minutes as written; approval of a resolution authorizing the City to accept a grant from the Federal Aviation Administration for the rehabilitation of Runway 13/31 and connecting taxiways at Strother Field Airport; approval of a Certificate of Special Assessment for dangerous structure demolitions and directing City staff to file it with the Cowley County Clerk's Office for inclusion on the 2016 property tax rolls.
- Voted unanimously to designate the Cowley CourierTraveler as the City's official newspaper.
- Unanimously approved a resolution authorizing an agreement with Union Pacific Railroad Company for the purchase of 7.24 acres south of Madison Avenue, for an amount not to exceed \$30,000. The property is needed for a waste line from the new Water Treatment Facility to the Wastewater Treatment Facility, as well as to eventually extend the hike-bike trail north.
- Heard a first review of a recommendation from the Arkansas City Planning Commission to modify Article 25 of the Zoning Regulations to combine the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Planning Commission, and amend Municipal Code to so reflect. The commissioners voted unanimously to postpone any action on the changes until the Planning Commission could review them again at its July 12 meeting.

- Heard updates from Hernandez on the proposed traffic study of North First Street and the next steps in the budget process, which include external agency presentations and a work session.
- Discussed various street improvement projects with Public Works Director Eric Broce. The commissioners instructed him to proceed with engineering for a \$300,000 mill and overlay of West Radio Lane and postpone any chip sealing until 2017.
- Heard a proposal from Hernandez to hold “community conversations” meetings at local eateries to inform the public of upcoming projects and answer citizens’ questions.
- Heard from Public Information Officer Andrew Lawson regarding the new Citizen Request Tracker that is in development for the City website.

In other business June 21, the City Commission:

- Received a monthly financial update from South Central Kansas Medical Center officials.
- Heard from Ken Harader regarding the ongoing traffic issues on North First Street due to the new Family Dollar store at 1313 N. Summit St. The commissioners instructed staff to look into a potential traffic study as an action item on a future agenda. They also heard from Adrian Sotelo, who protested the three-minute time limit for those addressing items that are not on the agenda.
- Recognized ACPD Capt. Mark McCaslin’s graduation from the FBI National Academy. They also voted unanimously to authorize the purchase of a 2014 Ford Taurus, for an amount not to exceed \$14,000, to replace McCaslin’s Dodge Durango, which was totaled during his absence.
- Unanimously approved the following consent agenda items: approval of the June 7 regular meeting minutes as written; receiving and filing the 2015 audit by Jarred, Gilmore and Phillips.
- Voted unanimously to authorize funding for an amount not to exceed \$175,000 for financial, operational and strategic assessment consulting services for South Central Kansas Medical Center. The Public Building Commission voted 8-0 on June 20 to approve an agreement with Quorum Health Resources to provide those services over a 12-week period and give a report.
- Heard a second reading of and unanimously approved a charter ordinance regarding the City’s form of government, by exempting itself from the provisions of L. 2015, Chapter 88, Section 7; amending Charter Ordinance No. 27; reaffirming the commission-manager form of government; and providing provisions for the election of officers, terms of office, transitions to November elections, filling of governing body vacancies and nomination petitions.

- Held a public hearing and voted unanimously to authorize Oestmann to execute a Certificate of Approval for the use of sales proceeds at Arkansas City Presbyterian Manor, 1711 N. Fourth St.
- Heard a first reading of and unanimously approved an ordinance authorizing the imposition of a special, 1-percent citywide sales tax for South Central Kansas Medical Center bond payments.
- Heard a first reading of and unanimously approved an ordinance modifying court costs in Municipal Code. The costs will rise from \$93 to \$96 due to an increase in the state's portion.
- Unanimously approved a resolution authorizing the purchase of a 2016 Kubota Model F2690 mower from Price Bros. Equipment in Wichita, for an amount not to exceed \$17,385. The suggested purchase of a second, slightly cheaper mower was not approved by commissioners.
- Voted unanimously to appoint Tweedy to replace Chad Giles on the Strother Field Commission, with Jurkovich and Welch serving as alternates.
- Voted unanimously to appoint Oestmann to replace Tweedy as an ex officio member of the Arkansas City Public Library Board of Trustees.
- Heard updates from Hernandez on the upcoming Cowley CourierTraveler merger and a potential reduction in funding, from the requested and approved \$168,000 to \$110,000, for Cherokee Strip Land Rush Museum to help with freeing up enough cash to make the hospital's upcoming bond payment. The commissioners told him to proceed with the museum funding cut.
- Discussed various street improvement priorities with Broce.

In other business June 7, the City Commission:

- Witnessed the 2015 AAA Traffic Safety Gold Award presentation to the Arkansas City Police Department. This is the fifth straight year ACPD has earned the award.
- Witnessed the swearing in of new Arkansas City Police Department Officer Kelsey Horinek.
- Unanimously approved the following consent agenda items: approval of the May 17 regular meeting and June 3 special meeting minutes as written; approval of Open Door Policy, Organizational Structure, Chain of Command, Position Classification Plan, Performance Evaluation and Merit Increase, and Safety Footwear personnel policy updates; ratification of Oestmann's appointment of Ken Miller to the Building Trades Advisory Board; ratification of Oestmann's reappointments of David Billings, Mike Munson and Shandon Weston to the Public Building Commission.

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- Voted 3-1 to appoint Welch to fill Giles' unexpired term. Tweedy cast the dissenting vote.
- Received the Arkansas City Police Department's annual report for 2015.
- Heard a first reading of a charter ordinance regarding the City's form of government, by exempting itself from the provisions of L. 2015, Chapter 88, Section 7; amending Charter Ordinance No. 27; reaffirming the commission-manager form of government; and providing provisions for the election of officers, terms of office, transitions to November elections, filling of governing body vacancies and nomination petitions.
- Heard a first reading of an unanimously approved an ordinance modifying Municipal Code Part II, Chapter 2, Article III, Divisions 4 and 8, to combine the Human Relations Commission and Accessibility Advisory Board into the Equal Opportunity and Accessibility Advisory Board.
- Voted unanimously to request that the Arkansas City Planning Commission hold a public hearing and consider an amendment to Article 25 of the Zoning Regulations to combine the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Planning Commission.
- Heard updates from Hernandez on the upcoming Cowley CourierTraveler merger, the potential need for new banking services in light of RCB Bank's acquisition of CornerBank and groundbreaking on the new Water Treatment Facility.
- Briefly discussed McCaslin's recovery from his recent illness.

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