



Village of Skokie

January 25, 2012
For Immediate Release

Crime Down in Skokie During 2011 *Marks Fourth Consecutive Year of Decline in Crime*

Preliminary statistics show that, overall, crime in Skokie declined by four percent in 2011 from 2010 crime levels. This marks the fourth consecutive year of declining crime in the community.

Police Chief Anthony Scarpelli comments on the statistics, “This decline is attributable to a number of factors. The slight improvement in national economic conditions contributed to lower crime, as did some changes in law enforcement investigation and response tactics. Of continued importance, though, is the public’s contribution by calling the police when they observe any unusual activity. The Skokie Police Department has stressed this for many years. Calls from citizens are always welcome and appreciated, and certainly contribute to lower crime.

“Another significant factor is the Village’s growing Neighborhood Watch Program. There are nearly 200 blocks actively participating in the initiative that puts an entire neighborhood on the lookout for suspicious activity.”

A total of 4,866 crimes occurred in Skokie in 2011, which is down from 5,078 in 2010. The number of crimes reported in 2011 is below the five-year average of 5,072 total crimes per year, and also below the 20-year average of 5,195 total offenses per year.

According to the preliminary data, robberies were down by 34 percent in 2011, burglaries were down by 10 percent, theft decreased by 9 percent and motor vehicle theft dropped by 3 percent. The largest increase in any crime category was in theft from a motor vehicle. A rash of thefts from motor vehicles occurred during the late summer months of 2011. Police investigations found that the vast majority of the targeted vehicles were unlocked.

The other significant increase was in narcotics offenses. The increase coincides directly with the coordinated efforts of the Department’s Tactical Mission Team and other Police Department units to focus on crime trends, gang activity and narcotics/drug-related offenses. The Tactical Mission Team investigates suspected drug-related crimes and the individuals and groups involved, and the upward trend in arrests correlates directly to the Team’s interdiction with drug-related crimes. The trend also reflects the Department’s continued emphasis on youth activities in and around parks and an increasing community awareness of the dangers of drugs and drug-related activities.

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While selected crimes against persons, excluding domestic offenses, dropped by approximately 10 percent in 2011 when compared to 2010, and also remain consistent with the five-year average, Chief Scarpelli comments on the impact these crimes have on the community.

“Although crimes against persons are fewer in number than most property crimes, they are typically more newsworthy, thus garnering more publicity and possibly contributing to a misperception that overall crime is rising in the community. It is important to note that approximately 8 to 9 percent of all crimes are against persons, with the remaining 91 to 92 percent of crimes against property.”

Chief Scarpelli further explains that often there can be a pre-existing relationship between the suspect and victim in crimes against persons, including homicides and criminal sexual assault cases, and by definition is a factor in both aggravated and simple domestic offenses.

“This unwelcome trend is, unfortunately, largely unpreventable through law enforcement measures. The Police Department works closely with the Village’s Human Services Division, schools in the community and other social service agencies for a coordinated approach to the difficult issues that can contribute to domestic disturbances,” says Chief Scarpelli. “Further, this spike coincides with the difficult economic climate in the country, which can greatly increase stress on families and contribute to domestic difficulties.”

A more detailed analysis on the final 2011 Skokie crime statistics will be published in the April or May 2012 edition of *NewSkokie*, the Village newsletter.

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