

CRIME DOWN IN VERMONT 2001 VERMONT CRIME REPORT RELEASED

The *2001 Vermont Crime Report* was released today by the Vermont Crime Information Center at the Department of Public Safety.

The Report contains an analysis of crime reported to law enforcement agencies throughout the State of Vermont during calendar year 2001. Crimes reported to state police, game wardens, municipal police, sheriff departments, and other state law enforcement agencies are analyzed in the Report. Crime statistics are arranged statewide, by county, and by town.

The Report indicates that the Vermont Crime Index was down by 6 percent from 2000. Due to an increase in the population of Vermont in 2001, the Vermont Crime Index Rate (the number of reported crimes per 100,000 population) declined by 9 percent. This decline compares favorably to the Nation's Crime Index reported by the FBI which shows an increase of 2 percent from 2000. The FBI's figures are based on preliminary findings for 2001.

The Vermont Crime Index is comprised of violent and property crimes. Overall, reported violent index crimes in Vermont, which include murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault were down by 7 percent from 2000 as compared to national violent index crimes which were relatively unchanged from last year. The Vermont violent index crime rate decreased by 9.5%

Murders in Vermont declined from 12 in 2000 to 11 in 2001. Rape decreased by 32 percent, and robbery was down by 4 percent. The only increase in Vermont violent index crimes was for aggravated assault, which increased from 421 in 2000 to 429 in 2001 – an increase of 4 percent. Aggravated assaults involve very serious or life threatening injuries usually inflicted with some type of weapon.

Reported Vermont property index crimes which include burglary, larceny (theft), motor vehicle theft and arson decreased by 6 percent from 2000 as compared to national property index crimes which increased by 2.2 percent from last year. The Vermont property index crime rate decreased by 9 percent. In Vermont cases of reported arson were down by 16 percent, burglaries were down by 8 percent, larcenies declined 6 percent and motor vehicle thefts were down by 2 percent.

Decreases in other non-crime index crimes were reported in Vermont as well. Embezzlement was down 24 percent from 2000, possession of stolen property was down 12 percent, and liquor law violations, which comprise mostly illegal sales to minors, were down by 15 percent. DUI crime was down by 2 percent.

All the news is not good, however. Reported drug crimes increased by 14 percent from 2000 - the greatest increase in any other reported crime in Vermont. This increase

follows the 7 percent increase in drug crimes reported last year. During the past five years, reported drug crimes increased by 44 percent from 2,052 reported crimes in 1997 to 2,963 in 2001. During that same time period the population of Vermont only grew by 3 percent.

For the first time this year, the Vermont Crime Report includes expanded crime information on victims, defendants, and the circumstances of crimes. Included in this year's report is statistical information on the age, gender, race and type of victims. Also included is information on the the age, gender, and race of defendants. Information on the nature of the relationship between the victim and the defendant, the location of crimes, the time of day and day of the week, as well as the type of weapons used by defendants is available in a series of tables and graphics. Financial information is also reported on the value of property loss due to crime and the value of stolen property recovered or seized by law enforcement. The Vermont Center For Justice Research at Norwich University analyzed the data for this part of the report. The project was funded by a grant from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

The expanded crime information in this year's Crime Report is meant to be illustrative of the kind of information which is available from the new crime reporting system known as the National Incident Reporting System (NIBRS). The NIBRS program is administered by the FBI and will eventually replace the outdated Uniform Crime Reporting System which has remained relatively unchanged since its inception in 1929. Vermont has been a national leader in the implementation of NIBRS. Currently, participation by Vermont law enforcement agencies in the NIBRS program is voluntary. During 2001, approximately 92 percent of the crime reported in Vermont was reported by law enforcement agencies who are participating in the Vermont NIBRS program. Therefore the information in this year's special NIBRS section needs to be viewed as an estimate of crime circumstances rather than as a complete enumeration. Participation in the Vermont NIBRS program will be mandatory beginning in 2004.