

**2006 VERMONT CRIME REPORT RELEASED:
TOTAL CRIME UP BY NEARLY 6%**

The 2006 Vermont Crime Report was released today by the Vermont Crime Information Center (VCIC) 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 2006. Crimes reported to state police, 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.

Total Crime

The Crime Report indicates that the total number of reported crimes statewide in 2006 increased by 5.7% from 2005. The increase is a reversal from the five previous years which marked steady declines in reported crimes statewide. In 2006, crimes against persons increased by 3.5%, crimes against property increased by 1.85% and crimes against society increased by nearly 14%. The increase of crimes against society was primarily driven by increases in drug crime.

Though the crime rate declined in Chittenden County between 2005 and 2006, Chittenden County continues to have the highest crime rate statewide at 62 crimes per 1000 population. Essex County has the lowest crime rate at 28 crimes per 1000 population. Among larger cities in Vermont the City of Rutland has the highest crime rate at 109 crimes per 1,000 population followed by Burlington at 99, and Brattleboro at 92 crimes per 1,000 population.

Violent Crime

In order to gauge the level and types of violent crimes occurring across the nation, the FBI has developed the Violent Crime Index. This Index is based on the number of murders, forcible rapes, robberies and aggravated assaults reported in a jurisdiction. Preliminary figures reported by the FBI indicate that the National Violent Crime Index showed an increase of 1.3% from 2005. The Violent Crime Index for the Northeast remained nearly unchanged from 2005. Unlike the national and regional trends the Vermont Violent Crime Index saw an increase of 12.2% -- an increase from 713 Violent Crime Index crimes in 2005 to 800 in 2006.

Homicides statewide were up from 8 victims in 2005 to 13 in 2006. Forcible rapes increased by 5.4% from 166 statewide to 175. Robberies increased 56% from 72 in 2005 to 112 in 2006. In 2006, aggravated assaults increased by 7% from 467 statewide to 500. Aggravated assaults involve very serious or life threatening injuries usually inflicted with some type of weapon.

The increases in Vermont's Violent Crime Index Crimes mirror what is happening in other rural jurisdictions. Nationwide the increases in Violent Crime Index Crimes were greater in rural areas than in urban areas. In particular, increases in 2006 for murder, robbery, and aggravated assault were greater in rural areas than in urban areas. Though forcible rapes were down nationwide the decreases

in rural areas were less than those posted in urban areas. Contrary to national trends, Vermont experienced an increase in forcible rapes in 2006.

Approximately 4,300 individuals were victims of violent crimes in Vermont in 2006; forty-three of the victims were law enforcement officers. Fifty-five percent of victims of violent crimes were women. Men and women in the age group 21- 29 were more frequently the victims of violent crime than any other age group. Men and women over the age of 50 years old were the least likely to be victims of violent crime. In nearly 95% of violent crimes the defendant was either an acquaintance, intimate partner, or family member of the victim. In slightly more than 96% of the violent crime incidents the victim received either no injuries or minor injuries. Dangerous weapons including firearms were used in nearly 9% of violent crimes. Approximately 60% of violent crimes occurred in residences. Approximately 15% occurred on public streets or highways.

Property Crime

The FBI has also developed a Property Crime Index which is comprised of the number of burglaries, thefts, and motor vehicle thefts reported in a jurisdiction. Preliminary figures from the FBI indicate that the National Property Crime Index was down by 2.9% from 2005. The Northeast reported nearly a 1% decline in 2006. The Vermont Property Crime Index, however, increased by 2.7%.

While burglary in Vermont was up by 8% from 2005 and theft was up by 1.7%, motor vehicle theft declined by nearly 7%. Though the decrease in Vermont's motor vehicle thefts was consistent with the trend in other rural jurisdictions, Vermont's increases in burglary and theft were contrary to the trends in other rural areas where these crimes decreased.

In Vermont the total property loss in 2006 due to criminal activity reported to law enforcement agencies statewide was nearly \$21 million, up more than \$800,000 from 2005. The average property loss per property crime was \$862. Larceny is the most costly property crime accounting for losses of over \$9 million in 2006. Burglary was second accounting for \$3.9 million in losses. While 30% of larcenies occur at commercial establishments another 30% occur at residences. Cash is the most frequently type of property stolen in Vermont.

Drug Crime

More than 1,758 (67%) of drug crime incidents in 2006 involved marijuana. Cocaine and Crack Cocaine cases amounted to nearly 15% of the drug crimes. Cases involving opium, depressants, hallucinogens, stimulants, morphine, hashish, "other" narcotics, and marijuana all had double digit increases between 2005 and 2006 though the total number of cases statewide for each drug type, other than marijuana and "other" narcotic drugs was typically less than 50. Crack cocaine cases declined by 15% and heroin cases declined by 36%.

Vermont Crime On-Line

Interested readers can access the complete 2006 Vermont Crime Report by using Vermont Crime On-Line from the Department of Public Safety's web page at www.dps.state.vt.us. Ten years of crime data are now available on the web site.

Vermont Crime On-Line makes it easy for the public to view standard crime reports or to create their own custom reports instantly on-line. Vermont Crime On-Line reports information on the time and day when crimes occur, crime location type, the amount of property crime loss, victim injuries, bias motivation, statistical information on the age, gender, and race of both victims and defendants and other crime circumstance data of interest to the public, law enforcement, public administrators, legislators, and researchers.

Summary

Though Vermont has enjoyed steady declines in reported crimes since 2000, the state saw a significant increase in crime in 2006. An additional 2100 crimes were reported statewide in 2006. Crime incidents increased in 2006 for nearly 60% of the 50 crimes for which data was reported. The increases in the Violent Crime Index Crimes were consistent with increases posted in other rural jurisdictions nationwide. Violent Crime Index Crimes on average increased more in rural jurisdictions throughout the country than they did in urban areas. Increases in Vermont's Property Crime Index Crimes generally ran contrary to decreases experienced in other rural areas. It will be important to monitor these findings during the upcoming months to determine whether the increases recorded in Vermont during 2006 are an anomaly or the beginning of a trend towards increasing crime incidents statewide.