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City Efforts Reduce Violent Crime Rate

Violent crime in Perris fell by more than 25 percent in 2014, a reduction Police Chief Michael Judge attributes to the partnerships forged between his department, the City Council, Perris community, business owners and volunteer groups committed to keep the City safe.

“This is a huge feather in the City’s cap that’s the result of its leadership, dedication and commitment to public safety,” Judge said. “The City of Perris is very pro-public safety and gives us the tools we need to do our jobs effectively.”

The number of violent crimes—defined by the FBI as murder, rape, robbery and assault—fell 25.3 percent last year. The City’s property crimes—burglary, auto theft, larceny and arson—declined 6.4 percent. Overall, the Perris crime rate declined by 8.5 percent.

And response times to major crimes actually fell last year, despite major construction activities on Interstate 215 and several major road corridors and the closures of Perris Boulevard and the D-Street onramp to the freeway, the police chief said.

Judge said the Perris Police Department has forged strong relationships with the business community and residents through its Neighborhood Watch program and by working with the Citizens Patrol volunteer force. The City also employs zone policing, which keeps the same officers in the same neighborhoods so they get to know the residents and can more easily spot suspicious people and behavior.

Judge said the City hired an additional officer last year for its Special Enforcement Team. The new addition will further strengthen the relationship between the police and Perris residents, which is a key element in keeping crime in check.

“Without the public’s support we could do very little,” he said. “We need the public’s support to combat crime.”

Judge’s preliminary crime report was presented to the Perris City Council during its March 10 meeting.

Perris elected officials welcomed the news and reiterate their support for robust policing and public safety.

Mayor Daryl Busch said the drop indicates that 2014 “was a great year in our crime-fighting efforts in Perris.”

“We are real pleased with the efforts—and the results,” he said. “We are providing very good service for our residents. By working with our law enforcement team and by created partnerships with citizens, volunteers and businesses, we think we are doing the right things for our residents.”

Mayor Pro-Tem Tonya Burke was equally pleased,

“It’s great to live in a City that works so diligently to reduce its crime rate,” Burke said.

Burke said her family have been victims of home and auto burglaries, so she knows how it feels to be victimized. She has served as a Neighborhood Watch caption, worked to establish more Neighborhood Watch groups in Perris and hopes one day the City can boast 100-percent participation in the crime-prevention effort.

“Neighborhood Watch helps build communities and in communities where people are looking out for one another, crime is less likely to occur,” she said.

City Councilman David Starr Rabb said that without effective law enforcement, communities fail to thrive.

“Without a safe and inviting community, you don’t get economic development, you don’t have happy children and families, you don’t have safe seniors. I am pleased we are making tremendous progress in helping Perris become a place families want to spend the rest of their lives living in.”

City Councilwoman Rita Rogers praised the police department’s commitment to working with all segments of the Perris community, including church pastors. Such cooperation between various elements in the City means “Perris can work out issues that affect our community in a positive way.” She credits Judge and the police department with maintaining a high level of public safety despite Perris’ growing population and an economic slump that lasted for years.

“We are making a wonderful, cohesive effort to keep our City safe,” Rogers said. “We want a safe City, it’s our top priority. With today’s economic challenges to see a reduction in crime in the City of Perris is truly wonderful.”

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