

AROOSTOOK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE

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Sheriff's Office reports compelling results after only six months of enhanced patrol coverage in The County

In January of 2014, the law enforcement unit of the Sheriff's Office underwent a significant transformation. For twelve years, the Sheriff's Office had a "call sharing agreement" with the state police. Under that agreement, Sheriff's Deputies patrolled only one fifth of the county each week, on a five week rotation. In January, the Sheriff's Office opted to go back to covering the entire county every day. As we were planning this change, we projected a 25 – 30% increase in our calls for service in the first year. Through the first six months that increase is 35%. Our dispatchers have logged over 7,000 calls for service so far this year.

A compelling bellwether of how this move has increased our efficiency is our clearance rate, as tracked by the FBI. In a nutshell, for every "index crime" reported to the FBI, we are also asked to report whether we were able to solve that crime through prosecution of an offender or by other means. Index crimes are defined as homicide, rape, robbery, burglary, assault and theft. I am proud to report that our clearance rate for the first six (6) months of 2014 is 67%, with the most currently reported Maine average being 32%. For comparison, our 2013 clearance rate was 37%. In addition, our overall arrests have increased by 40% over last year at this time. Many of the crimes solved by our Deputies are property crimes such as thefts and burglaries. Given that the revenue used to pay for the efforts of our Deputies comes from property taxes, this is something that will continue to be one of the highest priorities for us.

The reason our success rate with criminal investigations has improved so dramatically is primarily due to our new resident Deputy approach. Our Deputies are now working in the same communities every day...the same communities they live in. They really get to know the people, which increases their ability to effectively deter and solve crime. This approach has also been useful in diffusing situations before they have become crises. Quietly and effectively preventing the worst from happening is a big part of progressive, modern policing. We are consciously making this part of what we focus on each day.

These results are only possible because of the dedication of our Deputies; plain and simple. We could plan, equip and direct all we want, but if the work force is not motivated to make a difference, nothing positive will happen. Our people – throughout our organization – are our greatest asset.

The positive feedback from civic leaders and members of the communities we serve, regarding our increased visible presence throughout The County, has been tremendous. We have no plans to change this approach and only hope to continue improving upon our service to our neighbors.