

# Opinion: Violent crime decreasing in SLT

By Brian Uhler

Police officials recently completed the official Uniform Crime Report for 2014. Overall, violent and property crimes are down.



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Here are some details comparing 2013 and 2014 in the South Lake Tahoe Police Department:

<b>Violent Crime</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
Homicide	3	0
Forcible Rape	14	8
Robbery	21	16
Aggravated Assault	77	89
<b>Violent Crime Total</b>		<b>116</b>

**112                      Down 3.4 percent**

**Property Crime**

Burglary		171
	147	
Larceny		368
	332	
Motor Vehicle Theft		46
	37	

**Property Crime Total**  
**585                      516                      Down 11.8 percent**

During 2014, the police department focused attention on habitual, repeat offenders and drug related crime.

This work included:

- **Felony drug arrests**                      **67**
- **Illegal marijuana grows**                      **24**
- **Habitual offender arrests**                      **56**

These efforts appear to have had a positive influence on crime; however, it is important to recognize that crime rates are heavily influenced by many factors such as overall economy, demographic change and more.

So, why are crime rates important? Crime rates are always considered an important factor for publications like, "best places rated" (to live, visit, retire, etc). When crime is a problem, community attractiveness suffers. While this is a critical factor for South Lake Tahoe as a tourist destination, crime rates are important for all of us to feel secure. High crime rates affect things like insurance costs and can have a devastating effect on the overall economy.

I am hopeful that next year we will see a continuing downward turn in crime. The effects of Proposition 47 (e.g. lowering crimes from felonies to misdemeanors and letting criminals out of prisons) may make this prospect difficult. Given this challenge, your police department has plans to focus resources to counteract these negative effects.

*Brian Uhler is the South Lake Tahoe chief of police.*