

Opinion: Cracking down on crime, blight

By Brian Uhler

Great news: Compared to last year, our violent crime rate is down 41 percent; from 112 occurrences in 2014 to 66 in 2015.

The news is not all good. Our property crime rate is up 6 percent; from 516 in 2014 to 548 in 2015. This was not unexpected as we reported on a significant upward trend in property crime six months ago. Total crime is down 2.2 percent over last year.



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Last summer and fall, we noticed a significant rise in bicycle thefts along with other thefts. It is our belief that a contributing factor is “loosening” of the laws and penalties for committing property crime – AB109 and Proposition 47. We will continue our effort this spring through the use of “bait” bikes and crime-prevention property marking programs like microdots.

Homicide case

On Jan. 30, police responded to a homicide. In this case, a robbery stemming from a marijuana deal led to the shooting death of 40 year old Dennis Wright Jr. The work on this case has been ongoing with the arrest of four suspects and warrants

for two others pending. In such cases, we have the duty to follow every lead and solve the case. To do so our detectives have worked tirelessly and we have been fortunate to have support from other law enforcement organizations to include the El Dorado District Attorney's Office, SLEDNET, the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department and law enforcement professionals from Benicia, Fairfield, Vallejo, Contra Costa Sheriff's Department and several others which cannot be named to preserve the integrity of the ongoing investigation.

Spring cleaning—code enforcement

This year we are planning to bolster community awareness regarding the city's physical appearance—especially in the area of our most traveled and visited Highway 50 corridor. Here's the plan: working with community members and staff members, we are developing a Visual Appeal Index. With this we will grade individual properties and our city as a whole. After the grading phase, we plan notify property owners of the results to include positive reinforcement elements for nice-looking businesses and useful information to improve a given business' appearance. As you might expect, we will take action if in the course of doing this work we discover violations of existing code. We're from the government and we're here to help.

Brian Uhler is the South Lake Tahoe police chief.