

Ft. Pierce Police Department

News Release

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R. Sean Baldwin

Chief of Police

920 S. U.S. #1

Ft. Pierce, FL 34950

Violent crimes committed by juveniles down 29 percent in city

Overall juvenile crime dropped also

FORT PIERCE – Police Chief R. Sean Baldwin announced today that juvenile crime in Fort Pierce dropped during the first 10 months of 2009 as compared to the same time last year.

As part of an evaluation of juvenile arrest activity since the implementation of a new program, the review revealed there was a 29 percent decrease in violent crime arrests of juveniles and an overall 17 percent decrease in juvenile arrests during January through October of 2008 and 2009. The data reflected decreases in all but two categories reviewed, Chief Baldwin said.

“The decrease in juvenile crime is an encouraging sign that what we are doing is working,” said he said. “Protecting the community we serve is a priority, and proactive programs, like JAM, will continue to help us in achieving that mission.”

The program, called Juvenile Arrest and Monitoring or JAM, started in December 2007 as a way to intensely monitor juveniles who are on probation and find it difficult to abide by court ordered sanctions and continue to be arrested. Officers check daily on juveniles they are assigned to monitor, both at home and at school. The officers take a zero tolerance approach to any violations of the juvenile’s court-ordered sanctions, said Officer Danie Dreizehnter, who has taken a lead in the implementation of JAM.

The report looked at violent crimes including sex offenses, robberies, aggravated assaults, simple assaults and batteries. Also non-violent crimes reviewed included residential burglaries, commercial burglaries, vehicle burglaries, thefts (shoplifting), criminal mischief and fraud.

In addition to the significant decreases in juvenile arrests, there has been a decrease in the amount of repeat offenders. In 2009 the percent of repeat offenders dropped to 8.8 percent, down from 14.4 percent.

In order to make this work the department partnered with the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Circuit 19 Juvenile Judge, State Attorney’s Office, Public Defender’s Office, Saint Lucie County Sheriff’s Office, Saint Lucie County School Board Security, Juvenile Assessment Center and the Saint Lucie County Executive Round Table.

“The Office of the State Attorney has noticed that JAM juveniles have become more compliant as they are being monitored by the Fort Pierce Police Department, said Assistant State Attorney Carlos Wells, who handles juvenile cases.

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Audria V. Moore
Public Information Officer

Cell: 772-370-1848
Fax: 772-465-5181

Office: 772-461-3820 ext. 5203
Email: fppio@fppd.org