

Ask the Chief

Dear Chief: As we embark on a new year, what crime trends have been noticed in 2012 and what is expected in 2013?

Dear Concerned Citizen:

Crime data ebbs and flows and is influenced by a variety of factors (employment/economy, weather, opportunity, etc.). In addition, Alamosa has a consistent population (probation, parole, community corrections, and jail) of supervised offenders that is greater than most towns and cities our size in Colorado; our crime data is reflective of these numbers. Trends in number of convicted offenders who are currently being state-supervised will remain steady and possibly increase as a result of the State of Colorado's effort to reduce prison populations.

There is good news and bad news regarding criminal activity reported in 2012. The good news is that as of November 1, 2012 we were trending downward in the total number of violent (aggravated assault, robbery, sexual assault, and homicide) crimes by about 30% as compared to 2011, motor vehicle accidents are down about 8%, and property (burglary, theft, vehicle theft, and arson) crime is trending upward at about 12%. Overall we have experienced success in reducing violent crime and motor vehicle accidents, but beware, crime trends can be short-lived and reverse quickly. I expect that with continued saturation of substance abuse issues, early prison release, and number of offenders in our community, property crime will continue being our greatest challenge in 2013.

From an organizational perspective, we (Alamosa Police Department) will continue to prioritize our activities and resources on the most serious offenses (violence and accidents) and offenders. Specifically, we will continue addressing root-cause issues such as alcohol and prescription drug (oxycodone, oxycotin, percocet, etc) abuse. We will continue teaming with our local, state and federal partners by targeting prescription drug dealers, while paying closer attention to those who irresponsibly prescribe or fill prescriptions. We will continue our active participation on the San Luis Valley Community Corrections Board of Directors; as they are critical to our mission and the Board enjoys the local authority to decide what offenders are brought into our community from certain offender populations. We will also continue to host weekly information sharing meetings with colleague agencies and by doing so we will do a better job of preventing crime before it happens and solving crime when it occurs.

Finally, in 2013 we will continue building partnerships with our citizens. As an example, we are offering a technology grant program to local businesses in hopes of providing seed money for the purchase of additional audio/video technology that is present in the community. Second, police officers will deploy body-worn audio/video technology that will capture valuable evidence of crimes and criminals. Third, we will bring greater consistency of service by increasing employee expectations to be more approachable, visible, and engaged with citizens during down (non-enforcement) times.

As our partners in crime-fighting we are hopeful citizens will take a stand with us and NOT be tolerant of crime and criminals. Craig Dodd, Chief of Police