



## City signs up for e-permits, a boon to builders

*The Columbia Press*

Contractors who do work in Warrenton will have an easier way of obtaining building permits soon.

The city is joining the state's e-permit program. Clatsop County joined a year ago.

In addition to making it easier for contractors, the program should also lessen the load for one of the county's smallest planning departments.

"The whole department is pretty excited about the process," City Manager Linda Engbretson said. "We waited until the county had put it in place and worked out some of the bugs, so we're ready to move forward."

The e-permit system was developed in 2008 and allows contractors to apply for building permits online, thereby making the process more flexible and lessening the need for on-duty city staff at all hours.

Nearly 50 cities and 29 of Oregon's 36 counties use the system.

"In my first term, I heard a lot of complaints about the planning director," City Commissioner Rick Newton

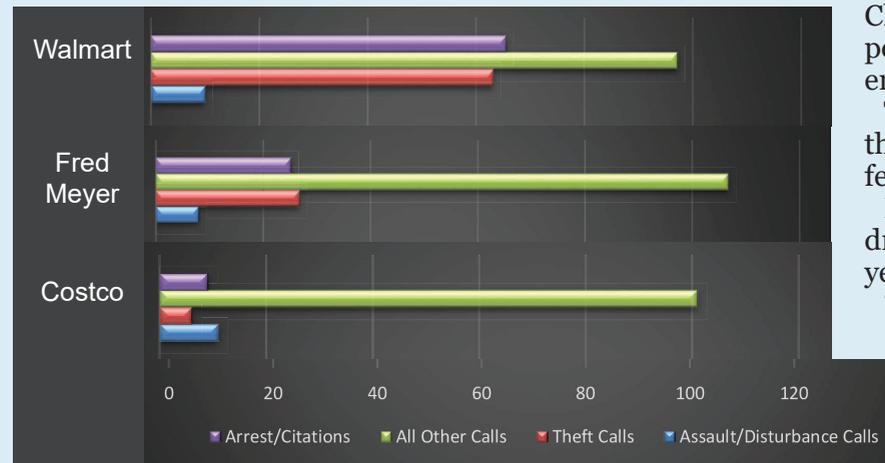
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## Crime rate drops, thanks to pandemic

**BY CINDY YINGST**  
*The Columbia Press*



Walmart accounted for 34 percent of Warrenton's police calls.



The pandemic likely contributed to a decrease in crime during 2020, Warrenton's police chief said.

There were fewer opportunities for bad behavior, such as drunken driving, because eating and drinking establishments were closed, fewer tourists were in town, and residents were asked to stay home.

Traffic collisions and other infractions took a 34 percent dip, going from 2,461 in 2019 to 1,629 in 2020.

"I see this as a direct effect of the pandemic, with fewer people on the roadways during the tourist season, a change in patrol tactics making fewer stops at the beginning of the pandemic, moratoriums on expired plates, etc.," Chief Matt Workman wrote in his annual report, which he presented to city commissioners at their Tuesday night meeting.

The department also was short-staffed throughout the year, which meant there were fewer officers handling traffic calls, he said.

Instances of drunk or drugged driving dropped 35 percent, from 46 in 2019 to 30 last year.

"Again, this can be attributed to the same reasons for the decrease in traffic events," Workman said.

Even drug offenses were down in 2020

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