

COMMUNITY

# Hermiston crime rates on par with last year

**Total crimes 34 percent less than 10-year average**

BY SEAN HART  
HERMISTON HERALD

Last year, 35 percent fewer total crimes were recorded in Hermiston than the previous year, and statistics from the first three months of this year show a continued reduction.

According to Hermiston Police Department's first-quarter statistics for eight index crimes reported to the FBI, 125 total incidents occurred from January through March, compared with 126 for the three-month period last year.

With one homicide, one rape, one aggravated assault and no robberies so far this year, the three violent crimes equal last year's number, when only three robberies were recorded. On average over the last 10 years, no homicides, one rape, three robberies and six aggravated assaults were recorded during the first quarter.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said he is encouraged by the property crime statistics.

Of the 122 total property crimes, 100 were larceny cases, compared with 103 last year and a 10-year average of 133. The 2014 number was the lowest on record in the last 10

years until this year. "Of the 100 incidents, we cleared the matter via arrest 65 times, which is an incredibly high clearance rate," Edmiston said. "Per the FBI, the national average for clearance of larceny is 21 percent, so we are three times that."

He said he was encouraged by the burglary incidents, which were also the lowest in the last 10 years. Nine burglaries were recorded this year, compared with 16 last year and a 10-year average of 32.

"We have focused resources on burglaries and solid investigations, ensuring officers have the time to dot the I's and cross the T's, the last three years," he said.

Auto thefts increased 500 percent from last year's two to a total of 12 in the first quarter this year, but that figure is still less than the 10-year average of 13.

"This category is historically very cyclical and is evident by the previous year's numbers, with a (10-year) low of two and a high of 26 for the first quarter comparatively," Edmiston said. "Of the 12 we experienced, we cleared four via arrest, which is a 33 percent clearance rate. Per the FBI, the national average for clearance of auto theft is 12 percent."

One arson case was recorded, compared with two last year and a 10-year average of one.

Incident Type	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Avg	Normal Range	2015	% Change Avg-'15	% Change '14-'15
Homicide	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0-1	1	100%	100%
Rape	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	2	0	1	0-2	1	0%	-100%
Robbery	2	2	3	2	3	2	5	3	3	3	2-4	0	-100%	-100%
Aggravated Assault	2	6	14	7	9	6	5	2	0	6	3-9	1	-83%	100%
Burglary	38	49	39	26	24	35	41	16	16	32	21-42	9	-72%	-44%
Larceny	162	162	153	125	128	115	136	115	103	133	122-145	100	-25%	-3%
Auto Theft	14	26	18	13	4	7	14	17	2	13	7-19	12	-8%	500%
Arson	1	2	1	0	1	0	2	1	2	1	0-2	1	0%	-50%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>163-213</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>-34%</b>	<b>-1%</b>
<b>TOTAL VIOLENT</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5-13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-67%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>TOTAL PROPERTY</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>156-201</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>-32%</b>	<b>-1%</b>
<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>15025</b>	<b>15410</b>	<b>15780</b>	<b>16080</b>	<b>16210</b>	<b>16745</b>	<b>16865</b>	<b>16995</b>	<b>17240</b>			<b>17314</b>		

Hermiston Police Department 2006-2015 1st Quarter Crime Stats

January through March 10-year Trends

Edmiston said other first-quarter department statistics show calls for service were 37 percent less than 2014 and 30 percent less than the six-year average.

"This does cause me concern because the decision to consolidate our dispatch center may be a variable in play," he said. "We

have made our stance to the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office very clear: If a citizen wants to speak with a Hermiston police officer, a call for service is to be created and an officer will handle it."

With the reduction in calls for service, Edmiston said officer-initiated activity has in-

creased 81 percent and reports taken have increased 33 percent from last year.

He said total arrests have also increased 38 percent from last year, which is a "good sign of an active department trying to positively impact the livability of our citizens."

## City requesting enhancement project recommendations

**Proposals to beautify town due May 7**

The city of Hermiston is looking for ways to enhance the aesthetics and livability of the community, and people can submit their own ideas.

The Community Enhancement Committee has developed a preliminary draft of ideas for projects to enhance the community and is soliciting additional ideas from the public before making a recommendation to the City Council, according to a city press release. Residents may submit their ideas through the city's website at [www.hermiston.or.us/feedback](http://www.hermiston.or.us/feedback) by 5 p.m. May 7.

Enhancement projects currently in the "Enhance Hermiston" draft phase include a re-designed downtown entryway, increasing pedestrian pathways through the city, creating visual buffers near railroad right of way

through the city, water tower painting, decorative way-finding signs, enlarging Hodge Park by assuming control of an existing train display and installing and maintaining decorative plantings in existing median boxes on Highway 395 south of town. The full draft list of recommendations can be found at [www.hermiston.or.us/news](http://www.hermiston.or.us/news).

The "Enhance Hermiston" plan is intended to provide a logical, systematic and financially viable approach to implementing projects to improve the visual appeal of the city, according to the press release. City officials receive many recommendations for various projects to benefit the community, and many of them are excellent ideas, but the costs and planning necessary to implement them often prevent them from gaining traction. The Enhance Hermiston plan will get viable projects onto a list with preliminary project scope, intention and cost

estimates. Creation of this list of viable projects then will allow the city to plan for future funding or move quickly to take advantage of opportunities if they arise because much of the initial planning has already taken place.

The enhancement plan was one of several projects the City Council gave to the Community Enhancement Committee when it was created in 2014. The committee has since been brainstorming

and vetting various projects for the plan but has not yet made a formal report to the City Council because the group wanted to get some additional public input first.

After public proposals, or comments on existing proposals, are received, the committee will review them and discuss adding them to the draft plan at the May meeting. Once a draft plan is finalized, it will go to the City Council for consideration.

## Financial report wins another award

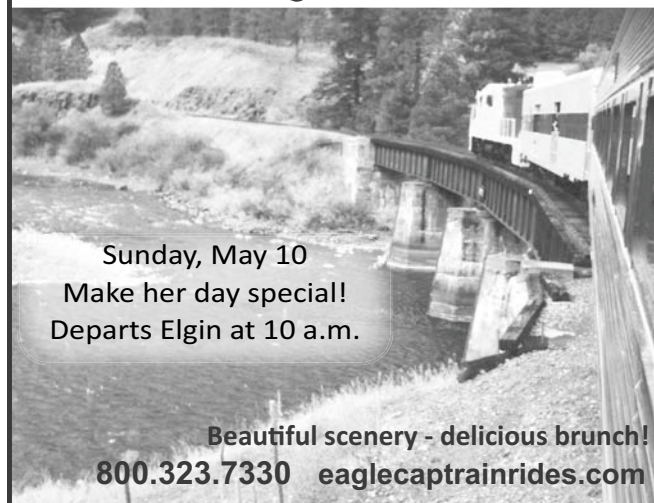
The city of Hermiston has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association for the city's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the 23rd year in a row, according to a city press release.

The certificate is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its man-

agement. The financial report has been judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program including demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the report.

Current and historical financial reports are available for review under the Finance Department tab of the city of Hermiston's website, [www.hermiston.or.us](http://www.hermiston.or.us).

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