

Opinion: Crime increasing in South Lake Tahoe

By Brian Uhler

Community outreach: The Meet the Police outreach campaign is going well. As a reminder, Coffee with a Cop happens on Thursdays and ends on Aug. 27. The Police Open House was well attended and we look forward to doing it again next year.

Operation Chill: To make connections with younger people in situations which are not related to law enforcement, the department has partnered with 7-Eleven in something called Operation Chill. Our officers will look for young people doing something positive and “ticket” them with a coupon for a free Slurpee. Such good acts might be things like wearing bike helmets, using crosswalks, being nice, or just as a way for police staff to start a conversation with young people.



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General summer information: So far, the community has fared very well this summer from a police perspective. Our July 4 festivities went very well with our visitors only being minimally mischievous. While traffic flow has been difficult with summer construction and a high number of tourists, we have had only a few serious accidents. Tragically, one accident was a motorcycle accident where a young female passenger died from a head injury. Motorcyclists are reminded to always wear a proper helmet with the DOT sticker.

Live at Lakeview: The summer music events have been going smoothly. While we would prefer to have those attending follow the simple rules, it has been necessary for our officers to write three or four citations during each of our Thursday events (mostly for open alcohol container or smoking). Let's work together to make sure these events remain family friendly.

Crime: While we are pleased to see rape and motor vehicle thefts are down, our community has seen large increases in the numbers of assaults and thefts this year. Overall, this year's crime rate is up 12 percent. Essentially, the positive results for 2014 compared to 2013 have been reversed. In 2014, we saw a decrease in violent crime (down 3.4 percent) and a decrease in property crime (down 11.8 percent). The following chart compares the first seven months of last year against the first seven months of this year:

Crime

2014

2015 **% change**

Homicide

0

0

N/A

Rape

6

4

-33%

Robbery

8

10

+20%

Assault

229

255

+10%

Burglary

59

59

0%

Theft

187

234

+20%

Motor Vehicle Theft

27

21

-22%

Total

516

583

12%

Crime prevention: In light of the above information, please lock-up your things and avoid situations which might lead to an assault. While this may seem overly simple, we see many occasions where these simple measures might have prevented a crime altogether. Lastly, do your part to report suspicious activity so we might have a better chance at catching those who commit crime.

Brian Uhler is the police chief in South Lake Tahoe.