

# Public Order & Safety

Public safety is *essential* for healthy communities. *Every person, family, neighborhood, and business needs to feel safe and secure* for communities to grow and thrive. Public safety and order involves keeping citizens safe and secure in their homes, neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces. In Springfield-Greene County, this involves a *community-wide effort to prevent and protect citizens* from dangerous events.

The City of Springfield is working to implement a comprehensive strategic plan that addresses public safety. Those involved in the planning recognize public safety involves a system of leaders, professionals, and citizens acting as responsible partners to facilitate a community we can live in without harm or fear. The strategic plan is built on three core pillars: prevention, intervention, and justice. During the past two years, Springfield-Greene County has seen tremendous growth in the areas of emergency management, disaster preparedness, and agency collaboration. However, the community continues to report a high rate of domestic violence, illegal drug use, and an overall increase in crime rates. Although Springfield has been focused on the intervention and justice pillars, our prevention programs are not as strong.

## BLUE RIBBONS

### Safe Community Designation

The 2011 Community Focus report noted Springfield-Greene County's designation as a Safe Community from the International Safe Community Network, a World Health Organization Collaborative Center. This designation is awarded to communities that have demonstrated leadership in promoting safety, reducing injuries,

and preparing their citizens for natural and man-made disasters. This international award was one of only eight given, to date, in the United States. Our community has continued to make significant efforts to reduce safety risks and this year submitted an application for re-designation as a Safe Community. This request was recently approved by the international group and the re-designation of Springfield as a Safe Community took place May 4, 2013.

### Citizen Support for Public Safety

One of the hallmarks of Springfield-Greene County is the support citizens have given to public safety agencies. In recent years, citizens have supported four major renewable tax initiatives including:

- Enhancing the 911 Emergency Notification System;
- A tax to address the Police/Fire Pension shortfall;
- The Greene County Public Safety Initiative designed to provide additional public safety personnel in Greene County; and
- An increase of public safety personnel in the City of Springfield through the use of budget reallocations and grant funds to increase police and fire department personnel.

### Public Safety Center

The \$20 million Springfield-Greene County Public Safety Center opened in August 2012. This center houses Springfield-Greene County 911, the Office of Emergency Management, and includes an Emergency Operations Center where more than 70 federal, state, and local response agencies have the ability to coordinate and sustain 24/7 operations during a disaster event. The Emergency Management Program received national accreditation in April 2012, based on an

assessment using national best practices. At the time, Springfield-Greene County was one of only 13 programs in the nation to have earned this accreditation. Cited as a red flag in the 2011 Community Focus report, community and individual disaster preparedness have improved through public awareness and education programs for schools, nursing home staffs, and civic groups.

### Public Safety Agency Cooperation/Collaboration

A number of initiatives have taken place over the last few years that enhance the safety and security of the region.

- In 2011, Niche, a new Records Management System (RMS), was implemented with the capability of hosting multiple agencies in an effort to share crime information. As a result,

**“Public safety is something most of us take for granted; we only miss it when it's gone. The new community strategic plan does, for the first time, contain a chapter devoted to public safety. During the planning process, as we discovered that every chapter is interrelated, we also recognized the importance of our new community policing philosophy. As Sir Robert Peel recognized 160 years ago when he developed his Principles of Policing: ‘The police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent upon every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.’”**

—Greg Burris, City Manager,  
City of Springfield



The Springfield-Greene County Public Safety Center opened in 2012.

Springfield and other cities in the southwest Missouri region are able to join the RMS for more effective collaboration. The information gathered through the new RMS will allow Springfield-Greene County to more easily identify and apprehend criminals committing crimes in multiple jurisdictions.

- A new Springfield Regional Police and Fire Training Center was built and opened for use in 2012. The new 28,443-square-foot facility was a \$5.2 million project to provide a modern training center for the City of Springfield's Police and Fire Departments. This facility is a regional asset and is accessible to public safety departments around the region.

The community has a multitude of partnerships engaged in making the community a safer place to live and prosper, including:

- The Community Partnership of the Ozarks' efforts to address substance abuse and violence prevention as well as community and neighborhood development;

- The Ozarks Safety Council's efforts to promote injury prevention, and its significant efforts to reduce accidental injuries and deaths in the community;
- Southeast Rotary's anti-drug program, "Don't Meth With Us," offered to all fifth and seventh graders in Springfield schools;
- The formation of Greene County Alliance for Drug Endangered Children;
- The new Child Abuse and Neglect Collaborative;
- The continued expansion of the Springfield Police Department's effort to promote crime prevention programs, such as the Neighborhood Watch; and
- The implementation of a Community Policing Initiative.

## RED FLAGS

### Rising Crime Rates

Identified as a red flag in the 2007 and 2011 Community Focus reports, crimes against persons and property remain a serious issue for the Springfield-Greene County area. Springfield's Uniform Crime Report (UCR) shows an overall rise in reported crime in Springfield since 2011 with a 22.21 percent increase in crimes against persons in 2012.

### Increasing Rate of Domestic Violence

According to the Uniform Crime Report, Springfield experienced a 20 percent increase in aggravated assaults in 2012 with the majority of those assaults attributed to domestic violence. Domestic violence increased from 2,207 incidents in 2011 to 2,476 in 2012. While the core pillars of intervention and justice have been aggressively sought, Springfield-Greene County is in need of prevention services and programs to address the increased rates of domestic violence and child abuse.

Upon seeing the continuing increase of cases in 2012, a community Domestic Violence Task Force was formed involving the Police Department, the Prosecutor's Office, Harmony House, and many other agencies that serve domestic violence survivors. This Task Force was created in an effort to reach out to victims, inform them of services, and encourage them to take action to create safer lives for themselves. The Springfield Police Department also has partnered with the Greene County Prosecuting Attorney's Office to aggressively investigate and prosecute repeat offenders of domestic violence, produce high quality cases, and open lines of communication between law enforcement and victims. While aggressively dealing with this issue, a related problem is the shortage of resources available to address the growing need. Harmony House, the main provider of emergency shelter, reports it was able to provide emergency shelter

**22.21%**  
Increase in crimes against persons in 2012 compared to 2011

## UNIFORM CRIME REPORT RATES IN SPRINGFIELD

VIOLENT CRIMES	2010		2011		2012	
	CRIMES	ARRESTS	CRIMES	ARRESTS	CRIMES	ARRESTS
Murder	11	7	5	4	16	14
Forcible Rape	120	13	106	4	137	12
Attempted Rape	0	0	4	0	4	0
Robbery	310	106	286	105	353	88
Aggravated Assault	887	385	905	237	1,086	231
<b>TOTAL CRIMES &amp; ARRESTS</b>	<b>1,328</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>1,306</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>1,596</b>	<b>345</b>

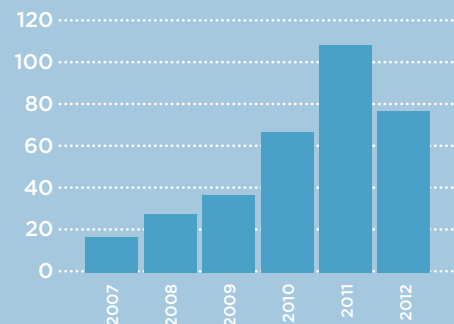
  

PROPERTY CRIMES	2010		2011		2012	
	CRIMES	ARRESTS	CRIMES	ARRESTS	CRIMES	ARRESTS
Burglary	2,188	129	2,053	146	2,215	189
Larceny/Theft	12,025	1,915	11,391	1,421	11,239	2,301
Auto Theft	1,005	109	974	143	1,052	179
Arson	65	17	48	8	61	10
<b>TOTAL CRIMES &amp; ARRESTS</b>	<b>15,283</b>	<b>2,170</b>	<b>14,466</b>	<b>1,718</b>	<b>14,567</b>	<b>2,679</b>

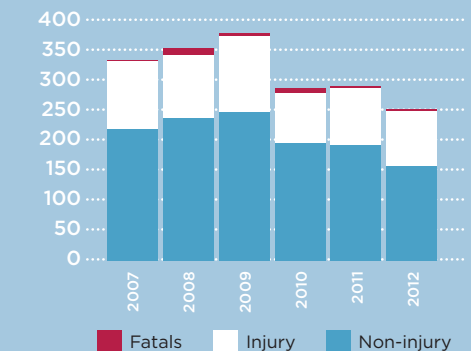
TOTAL	2010	2011	2012
<b>CRIMES</b>	<b>16,611</b>	<b>15,772</b>	<b>16,163</b>
<b>ARRESTS</b>	<b>2,681</b>	<b>2,068</b>	<b>3,024</b>

### METH LABS DISCOVERED IN SPRINGFIELD



Source: Springfield Police Department, 2012

### ALCOHOL-RELATED TRAFFIC INCIDENTS



for 560 women and children in 2012, but had to turn away more than 1,100 referrals because bed space was not available.

### Illegal Drug Use

Since 2004, illegal drug use has been identified as a red flag in Community Focus reports and remains a major problem for the Springfield-Greene County area. While fewer meth labs were discovered in 2012, compared to 2011, there is still concern with the proliferation of labs in the community. To further combat the meth lab problem, the Springfield Police Department has taken a proactive stance and is supportive of the City Council proposed "prescription only" ordinance for ephedrine and pseudoephedrine products.

Another major drug issue is the use of synthetic narcotics, with multiple "head shops" opening in 2012, making thousands of dollars a day selling dangerous products known as bath salts and K2. The Springfield Police Department

aggressively investigated numerous retail businesses involved in the sale and distribution of these narcotics resulting in a 21-person indictment.

### Alcohol-Related Traffic Incidents

Alcohol-related accidents remain a red flag issue for the community, and while we have seen a decrease since 2008, we remained relatively flat over the past few years. These accidents are a serious problem in terms of loss of life, injury, and property loss. In Greene County, all patrol officers now receive training in accident investigation, DWI detection, standardized field sobriety testing, and breath analysis of blood alcohol content. Individuals arrested for DWI are required to complete a Substance Abuse Traffic Offender Program for education and treatment options. Greene County also operates a DWI Court dedicated to changing the behavior of arrested offenders. In 2011, the National Association of Drug Court Professionals identified Greene County's DWI Court as one of four "academy courts" throughout the country recognized for its exemplary practices.