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Maricopa County Outpaces U.S. in Falling Crime Rates

PHOENIX – Crime in Maricopa County continues to fall by a greater margin than the nation as a whole, according to the latest data released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In its annual report, *Crime in the United States, 2014*, the FBI notes the number of violent crimes in the U.S. fell 0.2 percent last year while the number of property crimes dropped 4.3 percent. Over the same period, Maricopa County saw a 3.8 percent drop in violent crime and a 5.5 percent drop in property offenses, according to figures compiled by the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

The drop in the rate of offenses per 100,000 inhabitants in Maricopa County also outpaced national figures, with the violent crime rate falling 5.6 percent compared to a 1 percent decline in the U.S., and the property crime rate falling 7.2 percent countywide compared to a 5 percent decline in the nation as a whole.

“These figures are the latest indication that our current criminal justice policies are having the desired effect of protecting the community from serious and violent offenders as well as repeat felony offenders,” said Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery. “But rather than accept these lower levels of crime as a new baseline standard, we will continue applying and expanding these policies wherever necessary so that we may continue to push our crime rates even lower,” he added.

While the county’s overall rate of crime is comparably higher than the U.S., Montgomery pointed to several important risk factors specific to Maricopa County that contribute to this difference. “As a border state, Arizona experiences disproportionate criminal impacts related to illegal immigration, human smuggling and drug trafficking. Our success in reducing crime by a greater margin than the U.S. as a whole is all the more remarkable when viewed in this context.”

Montgomery also expressed general support for an initiative announced by FBI Director James Comey to collect data from law enforcement agencies on officer-involved shootings and animal cruelty offenses.

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