



**LAKELAND POLICE DEPARTMENT
MEDIA RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

February 9, 2005

LAKELAND POLICE RELEASE 2004 ANNUAL CRIME REPORT

"Violent crimes drop by 19% in 2004"

Violent crime in Lakeland declined by 19% during 2004 as compared to 2003, Chief of Police Roger Boatner announced today with the release of the Department's annual Uniform Crime Report. Property crime remained unchanged while overall crime decreased by 1%.

Since 1993, index crimes have dropped an incredible 53%.

The downward trend in violent crimes occurred in all categories including a 40% decrease in homicides, a 20% drop in sex offenses, a 25% decrease in robbery, and a 13% drop in aggravated assaults. "Crime is a complex social issue that requires a wide range of strategies to control," Boatner noted. He added, "While we are pleased with the results from last year, we continue to seek innovative ways to work with community groups and other government agencies to keep our streets safe."

Property crimes had significant changes as well. Auto theft continued a long range decline with an 11% decrease in 2004. Larcenies dropped 2% during the same period. Burglary was the only crime category that had an increase in 2004, up 14%. Early monitoring of crime trends identified the problem which prompted an immediate response in 2004. What was projected at mid-year to be a 17% - 20% increase was reduced to the 14% mark.

In response to the burglary trend, the Department redeployed existing resources to create a Neighborhood Enforcement Team (NET) in the summer of 2004 that targeted problem areas. Using covert surveillance and enforcement strategies, NET was designed to work in neighborhoods where emerging crime trends are developing. Additional resources from throughout the department were directed to problem areas as well. "We expect to see decreases in 2005," Chief Roger Boatner commented.

The Department received a federal Project Safe Neighborhoods grant to bolster its crime analysis function by adding two new analysts to the workforce. The new analysts will provide even faster crime analysis and trend identification which permits commanders to shift resources where crimes are occurring.

Calling the crime numbers for 2004 an overall good report for the community, Assistant Chief Bill LePere noted the job is not complete. "We applaud the community for the ongoing partnerships that are addressing local crime problems and quality of life concerns. While many successes are noted in these crime numbers, there is still work to be done," LePere said.

Attached to this media release are a data table showing the index crimes for 2004 and a chart that illustrates the declining crime rate between 1993 and 2004.

Persons seeking more information are asked to contact Mr. Jack Gillen, Public Information Officer, at 863-834-6949.

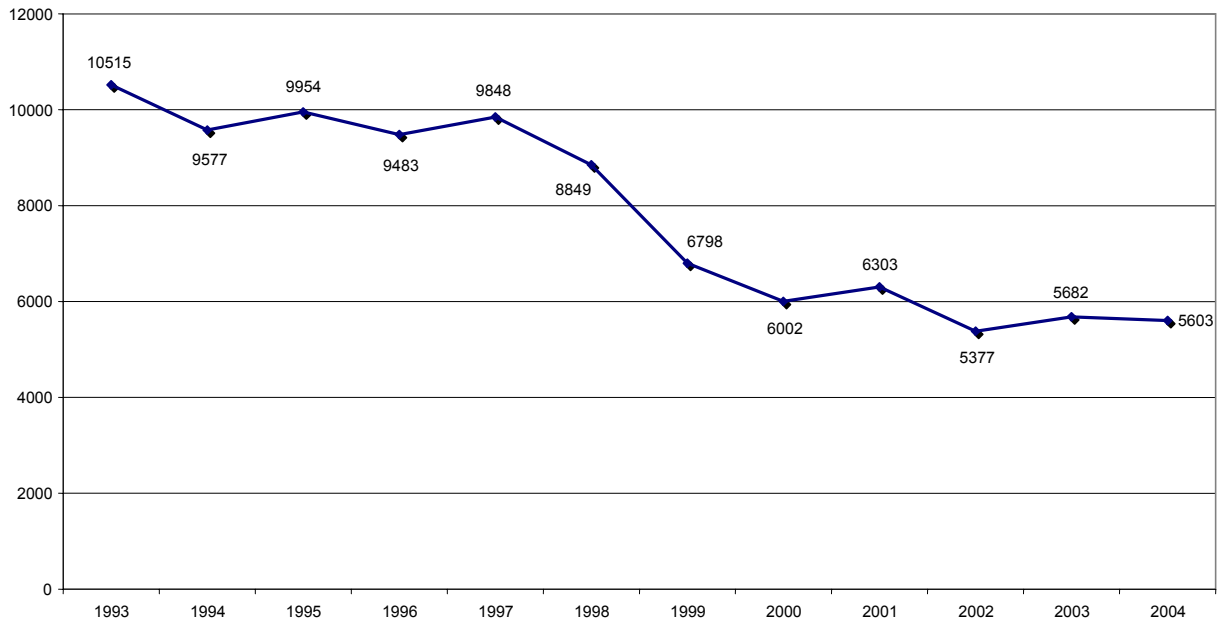


**LAKELAND POLICE DEPARTMENT
MEDIA RELEASE**

2004 Uniform Crime Report & Crime Rate

| Crime Category | Actual Crime Counts | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 2004 | 2003 | % Change |
| Murder | 3 | 5 | -40% |
| Sex Offenses | 63 | 79 | -20% |
| Robbery | 162 | 215 | -25% |
| Agg Assault | 189 | 217 | -13% |
| Violent Crimes | 417 | 516 | -19% |
| Burglary | 1084 | 953 | 14% |
| Larceny | 3774 | 3845 | -2% |
| Auto Theft | 328 | 367 | -11% |
| Property Crimes | 5186 | 5165 | 0% |
| Index Crimes | 5603 | 5681 | -1% |

1993 - 2004 Index Crimes



#