



MEDIA RELEASE

January 19, 2010

Crime Decreases in St. Mary's County by Deputy First Class Cindy Allen

St. Mary's County Sheriff, Timothy K. Cameron, State's Attorney Richard Fritz and Maryland State Police Leonardtown Barrack Commander Lt. Michael Thompson are pleased to announce a steady decrease in major crimes in St. Mary's County, Maryland for the past two years in a row. In 2008, population growth in St. Mary's County increased 1.6% while the total crime rate decreased 7.1%. This is significant in Southern Maryland, as both the populations of Charles and Calvert counties decreased. Calvert County's population decreased 1.1% and Charles County's population decreased .2%. Yet crime in both jurisdictions increased in 2008; Calvert by 19.5% and Charles County by .5%.

Compiled by the Maryland State Police and encompassing all jurisdictions in Maryland, the Maryland Preliminary Uniform Crime Report indicated, "Crime in Maryland decreased nine percent in the first six month of 2009 compared to 2008 as measured by the Crime Index Offenses." Violent crimes, which consist of murder, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assaults, decreased in Maryland by 4 percent. St. Mary's County experienced a significant decrease of 9.7% in violent crime which more than doubled the statewide decrease. Most notably, St. Mary's County did not experience any homicides in 2009.

To what do State's Attorney Fritz, Sheriff Cameron and Lt. Thompson attribute the decrease in crime? Sheriff Cameron believes significant factors include the increase of communication and the building of partnerships among government, private entities, and the community as a whole. "Communication is key," stated Sheriff Cameron. "Since instituting CompStat and the Southern Maryland Information Center, we have been successful in gathering an abundant amount of intelligence which is discussed weekly at our CompStat meetings. We are then able to target our resources to effectively deal with the issues at hand, thus allowing for the most up-to-date information to be distributed to the deputies on the street and the community at large. "

Partnerships and collaborative efforts to reduce domestic violence also contributed to the overall decrease in crime. The Family Violence Coordinating Counsel (FVCC), which addresses family violence and prevention issues, is an example of a very successful collaborative effort among the Sheriff's Office, State's Attorney's Office, State Police, Walden Sierra, Three Oaks Shelter, Department of Human Services, St. Mary's Hospital, Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy, Department of Social Services and community representatives.

In 2008, the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office incorporated a Lethality Assessment which is completed for domestic violence incidents involving first degree assaults, assaults with visible signs of injury; weapon is involved, or based on the deputy's experience a lethal situation may

develop after they have left the scene. The purpose of the assessment is to identify the victims of domestic violence who are at the highest risk of having their lives taken by their abuser. All assessments are forwarded to the Lead Agency Case Review Team, which is comprised of community service advocates, the State's Attorney's Office and the Sheriff's Office. "This process helps us determine those individuals who are at risk and in need of immediate assistance, and assures a coordinated response. Our ultimate goal is for no domestic violence victim to fall through the cracks," stated Sheriff Cameron.

St. Mary's County State's Attorney Richard Fritz points out that St. Mary's County, Maryland is one of only two jurisdictions in the greater metropolitan area, as highlighted in the January 1, 2010 edition of the Washington Post, with no homicides in 2009. Like Sheriff Cameron, State's Attorney Fritz credits the low homicide rate to the cooperative efforts in combating and aggressively prosecuting crimes related to domestic violence. "As long as 65 to 70% of all homicides are domestic-related, it is important for law enforcement and social service agencies to continue their coordinated efforts to intervene in domestic cases before they turn into violent encounters wherein death or physical injury may be the end result."

State's Attorney Fritz also believes programs involving law enforcement school resource officers and D.A.R.E. provide positive role models for St. Mary's youth and help at-risk children to make responsible decisions when it comes to drug use. "We are not seeing our young people experimenting with drugs such as crack cocaine or heroin, and I believe it is a direct result of the D.A.R.E. programs in our middle schools."

State's Attorney Fritz continues, "Our cooperative efforts to target gang-related crime, which is tracked through prosecution and sentencing, along with the aggressive and swift arrest and prosecution of those who use handguns in crimes of violence, have also had a significant impact on crime reduction and community safety."

Maryland State Police Barrack Commander Lt. Michael Thompson believes:

"The reduction in serious crimes that St. Mary's County has enjoyed in 2009 is a direct reflection of the hardworking men and women that comprise the 'Law Enforcement Team' here in St. Mary's County.

This is further evidenced by the work of the St. Mary's County Bureau of Criminal Investigations. In 2009, this investigative unit conducted 942 investigations and garnered a 94% closure rate, placing their accomplishments 49% above the national average. This tenacious group of investigators has become the 'model' for Maryland Law Enforcement agencies with respect to combined units, collaborative efforts and enormous successes.

I am very proud to say the true benefactors of the St. Mary's County Bureau of Criminal Investigations are the citizens of Southern Maryland, particularly St. Mary's County."

Sheriff Cameron sums it all up by stating:

"The law enforcement profession has learned it is important to police smarter to combat crime. When law enforcement and prosecutors form partnerships with public and private entities which are then combined with proven scientific methodologies to track and map crime in at-risk areas of the community, criminal activity is deterred.

Our efforts to provide our citizens with a myriad of individual and family support services also aid in preventing crime. It is the goal of our collaborative efforts to serve the needs of the entire community. Lastly, for those individuals who do not

heed our warning and choose to commit crimes in St. Mary's County, know our partnerships have a proven record. We will track you down, charge you and prosecute you to the fullest extent of the law."



St. Mary's County Sheriff Timothy K. Cameron, St. Mary's County States Attorney Richard Fritz and Maryland State Police Leonardtown Barrack Commander Lieutenant Michael Thompson