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NEWS RELEASE

2010 DAKOTA COUNTY JUVENILE PROSECUTION STATISTICS RELEASED

OVERVIEW

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom has released statistics for 2010 involving **juvenile prosecutions** handled by his Office. **These statistics do not reflect the total number of crimes involving juveniles occurring in Dakota County, but reflect the number of charges filed against juveniles within this jurisdiction.** (These statistics also do not reflect the total number of criminal incidents occurring, as more than one juvenile can be charged in a single incident and a number of crimes occurring in 2010 remain under investigation by law enforcement agencies.) In Minnesota, County Attorneys prosecute all crimes committed by juveniles (youth 10-17 years old) including felonies, gross misdemeanors, misdemeanors and some petty misdemeanors. Backstrom pointed out the following highlights:

- The total number of **juvenile offenders** charged¹ with all levels of crimes in Dakota County decreased from 1,645² in 2009 to **1,445** in 2010 (a 12% decrease).
- The number of **felony-level juvenile offenders** charged also decreased by 12% from 233 in 2009 to **203** in 2010.

2010 INCREASE/DECREASE IN JUVENILES CHARGED (BY CITY)

The following reflects the number of juveniles charged with all levels of crimes based upon referrals from individual cities and the Dakota County Sheriff's Office:

Apple Valley **decreased** from 268 to **224**
Burnsville **decreased** from 238 to **206**
Dakota County Sheriff **decreased** slightly from 95 to **92**
Eagan **stayed about the same** from 190 to **191**
Farmington **decreased** from 93 to **55**
Hastings **increased** from 70 to **83**
Inver Grove Heights **decreased** from 119 to **105**
Lakeville **decreased** from 151 to **129**
Mendota Heights **decreased** slightly from 34 to **30**
Rosemount **decreased** from 125 to **75**
South St. Paul **decreased** slightly from 112 to **110**
West St. Paul **decreased** from 142 to **123**

OVERALL DECREASE IN JUVENILES PROSECUTED

Backstrom said this is the eighth year in a row that Dakota County has experienced a decrease in the overall number of juveniles prosecuted for criminal acts. Backstrom emphasized that most of the charges filed were for misdemeanor level offenses, dropping from 1,320 juveniles charged in 2009 to **1,147** juveniles charged in 2010 (a decrease of 13%). Juvenile prosecutions in the County peaked in 2002, when 2,070 youth were charged with crimes. Dakota County's total population has grown on average about 1% each year over the last decade and is currently home to approximately 400,000 residents. *"It is a good sign that the number of youth charged with a crime in our community continues to drop as the population estimate of our 10-17 year-olds increased by 3% over the past 10 years," Backstrom commented.* (See attached chart reflecting the number of juveniles charged with criminal offenses in Dakota County since 1990.)

JUVENILES CHARGED WITH FELONY OFFENSES

Backstrom said the number of juveniles charged with a felony in 2010 decreased to **203** (compared to 233 in 2009) and down from a peak of 420 in 2001. (See attached chart of juvenile felony offenders for the last ten years.) *Backstrom stated: "A steady decrease in the number of juveniles charged with felonies from year-to-year in Dakota County is remarkable given our size and growth over the years. I am proud of the work being done in our schools and the many partnerships developed with our police departments and school resource officers. We have also implemented a number of prevention and early intervention programs. I believe this commitment to addressing youth problems quickly and proactively is directly reflected in the drops we have experienced in recent years in the numbers of juveniles charged with crimes in our community."*

JUVENILE CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

The number of charges for **violent juvenile offenses**³ also decreased last year. In 2010, **320** charges involving crime of violence were filed against juvenile offenders in Dakota County, compared to 380 the year before (a decrease of 16%). (See attached chart of juvenile violent crime charges in Dakota County over the last decade.) Backstrom said the main violent crime committed by juveniles was misdemeanor assault which decreased from 234 offenses charged in 2009 to **205** in 2010. *Backstrom commented: "The number of violent offenses charged in 2010 is below our 10-year average for these types of charges (402), which is a positive reflection of the overall safety of our community."*

SCHOOL-RELATED CRIME/VIOLENCE

Backstrom estimates about 25-30% of the juvenile offenses occurring in Dakota County occur in schools or on school property which is not that surprising given this is where young people spend most of their time during the school year. However, he emphasized that Dakota County schools (and those elsewhere) remain a safe place for students and staff. The reality is that law enforcement, school staff and the County Attorney's Office, work together and react quickly to incidents involving threats of violence, weapons being brought to school or other crimes.

In 2010, a total of **14** youth were charged with school-related violent offenses (including both felonies and gross misdemeanors), compared to 24 in 2009. Of those 14 youth, **8** were charged with making terroristic threats and **10** were charged with possession of a dangerous weapon on school property (dangerous weapons include: BB guns, replica firearms, and knives). Most notable was the 14-year-old boy who brought a gun to Hastings Middle School on April 5, 2010 and terrorized several classrooms. Fortunately, no one in the school was physically injured and the youth was taken into custody, charged and pled guilty to three counts of Assault in the Second Degree and was sentenced under the EJJ statute. He is subject to oversight by the Juvenile Court until age 21.

The County Attorney's Office continued to **Prioritize Prosecutions in Schools** (PPS) in 2010 by prioritizing and quickly prosecuting crimes that occur in school or at school-related activities. The ongoing working

relationship between the County Attorney's Office, schools and local law enforcement allows for personalization of training, prevention programming and sharing of information, in addition to fast tracking of crimes associated with school activities. Backstrom noted: *"We are dedicated to working with our law enforcement partners and school administration to keep school safe for students and staff."*

PREVENTION, EARLY INTERVENTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAMS

Prevention of juvenile crime has long been a priority for County Attorney Backstrom, who is a member of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, a national organization committed to informing policy-makers and the public about the importance of youth prevention and early intervention efforts. Backstrom has also served as a co-chair of the Juvenile Justice Committees for both the Minnesota County Attorneys Association and the National District Attorneys Association in the past. *"I believe the most effective thing we can do to reduce crime in America is to invest our time, resources and energy in our nation's children. This occurs with effective and appropriate early intervention efforts aimed at preventing crime before it occurs and intervening quickly when problems arise."*

Backstrom indicated that the Dakota County Attorney's Office coordinates a number of **youth accountability programs for first-time offenders** involved in the illegal use of alcohol, small amounts of marijuana, and lower-level property crimes. A more intensive program for second time users of alcohol or small amounts of marijuana is also available. In total, **931 juvenile offenders were referred to various accountability programs** as an alternative to juvenile court in 2010.

Juveniles successfully completing these programs are not prosecuted in juvenile court for these offenses. Backstrom commented: *"Youth accountability programs are designed to appropriately deal with youth committing certain first or second time non-violent offenses. These youth are held responsible for their criminal behavior outside of the criminal process."* Each program requires the involvement of a parent or guardian and focuses on education and prevention. For most youth accountability programs the youth must pay for the cost of attending these alternatives to court, pay restitution to the victim, do community work service, write letters of apology and complete a variety of other sanctions within a timely manner.

Another program that has been in operation since 2003 is the **Juvenile Drug Court**. This "problem-solving" court intervention is designed to provide greater oversight and treatment of youth who are chemically addicted. In 2010, **12-15** youth were participating in the Juvenile Drug Court Program at any given time. The Juvenile Drug Court handles cases involving any type of crime where alcohol or drugs are the primary contributing factor for the criminal behavior. *Backstrom commented: "While nowhere near the problem it is involving adult crime, possession and use of illegal drugs is still a significant concern involving juveniles as well. Drug courts involve more interaction between the judge and other criminal justice professionals with the juvenile offender and emphasize more intensive monitoring and treatment. Drug courts can help offenders overcome their chemical addictions and have a proven success rate in reducing recidivism across America."*

The **Peer Court program**, which is a joint project of the Dakota County Attorney, Community Corrections and District Court, has been in existence since 2000 and takes place in seven area high schools Eastview (Apple Valley), Burnsville, Hastings, Simley (Inver Grove Heights), Lakeville North and South, and South St. Paul. Peer Court allows teens to serve as jurors and personally become involved in resolving the problem of juvenile crime in their community. *"The mission of Peer Court is to proactively address illegal activities of juvenile offenders by encouraging them to take responsibility for their own actions. Peer Court also serves as a great learning experience for the members who serve as jurors in the process,"* Backstrom noted. In 2010, **28** juveniles were referred to Peer Court. District Court Judge Tom Poch was instrumental in establishing this program and will finish this school year as the judge overseeing the program. District Court Judge Joseph Carter will oversee Peer Court during the 2011-12 school year.

The **Juvenile Firesetter Education and Intervention program** is for youth ages 6-17 that exhibit inappropriate behavior about or are actually caught lighting fires. In 2010, **13** Dakota County juveniles were referred to this program. This program involves a quarterly educational class, coordinated by the Dakota County Attorney's Office, which has been well received and is a joint project with the State Fire Marshall's Office and local Dakota County fire departments.

JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION INITIATIVES

County Attorney Backstrom continued his **anti-bullying initiative** which he began during the 2002-03 school year. This program has been presented to over 14,500 students, staff and parents. It has been reported that 160,000 children skip school every day in America because they fear being attacked or intimidated by another student. Up to 60% of children who bully will have a criminal record before the age of 24. This past year Backstrom continued to address issues facing middle and high school students with increasing technology use. *"Making good choices, about sending a text message, email or other form of technology is very important for teens today. Educating students on the potential dangers of bullying, harassing or aggressive behaviors and the dangers associated with "sexting" and how this conduct could lead to criminal charges is important in our efforts to keep our kids safe,"* Backstrom added.

Staff from the Dakota County Attorney's Office also continued to work school officials and county **truancy** officers to identify and address causes for the unexcused absences with parents. Backstrom said that studies have shown that children who are truant from school are more likely to engage in criminal behavior and abuse alcohol and other drugs.

Other prevention programs/efforts of the Dakota County Attorney's Office include: the annual Anti-Drug/Anti-Violence Poster and Calendar Contest; prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse prevention packet; resources on internet safety; materials on keeping teens safe when driving; dangers of chemical abuse; prevention materials for non-English speaking parents and students; and ongoing support to the Safe & Drug Free School Coordinators throughout Dakota County.

COURT HEARINGS

A total of **3,696** court calendar events were scheduled in 2010 in Dakota County Juvenile Court. Of those, 2,139 were delinquency hearings and jury trials. In 2010 the Juvenile and Protective Services division opened **3,470** files involving delinquency, truancy, child and vulnerable adult protective services and commitments compared to 4,114 in 2009 (a decrease of 16%). These caseload decreases played a part in the reorganization of the Dakota County Attorney's Office effective in January of this year. As part of this reorganization, all criminal prosecutions, including those cases involving both adults and juveniles, are now handled through the Criminal Division of the County Attorney's Office. All protective services and commitments are now handled through the Civil Division of the County Attorney's Office.

Details of the juvenile cases charged by the Dakota County Attorney's Office in 2010 are broken down on the attached charts by type of crime and jurisdiction. In addition to the three statistical charts, attached are three separate charts that cover trends in overall juvenile delinquency prosecutions, juvenile violent crime charges and juvenile dangerous weapons charges. This information is also available on the Dakota County Attorney website at <http://www.dakotacounty.us/attorney>. **If you have any questions, contact James Backstrom at 651-438-4438.**

¹ Criminal charges are not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

² An individual may be charged with more than one felony offense in one behavioral incident.

³ Violent juvenile offenses include all levels of homicide, attempted homicide, assault, offenses involving dangerous weapons, kidnapping, robbery, sex offenses and terroristic threats. The statistics in this section reflect the number of charges and not the number of juvenile offenders. A juvenile offender may be charged with more than one offense in a single behavioral incident.

2010 JUVENILE FELONY OFFENSES**

OFFICE OF DAKOTA COUNTY ATTORNEY JAMES C. BACKSTROM COUNTY ATTORNEY 1560 HIGHWAY 55 HASTINGS, MN 55033-2392	Burglary	Drug Related *	Sex Related	Dangerous Weapons	Theft Related	Assault Related	Criminal Damage to Property	Receiving Stolen Property	Terroristic Threats	Unauthorized Use Motor Vehicle	Robbery	Fleeing In A Motor Vehicle	Forgery Related	Arson	Public Health & Safety	Kidnapping	Homicide (Including Attempts)	TOTAL CHARGES	TOTAL OFFENDERS
Apple Valley	4	4	5	3	3	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	20
Burnsville	12	2	1	4	5	2	2	5	4	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	40	31
Dakota County Sheriff	0	2	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9
Eagan	13	2	4	2	5	1	8	0	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	41	38
Farmington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hastings	1	1	1	2	1	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	15	11
Inver Grove Heights	6	2	0	5	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	18	15
Lakeville	13	5	9	1	0	4	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	27
Mendota Heights	4	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	8
Other Law Enforcement	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	14	11
Rosemount	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	7	6
South St. Paul	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	17	15
West St. Paul	4	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	12	12
TOTAL	59	36	25	25	23	18	14	10	9	8	6	4	2	2	2	1	0	244	203

* Drug-related are reported under the city in which the offense occurred. The Drug Task Force includes representatives from the Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan, Farmington, Hastings, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, Mendota Heights, Rosemount, Savage, South St. Paul and West St. Paul Police Departments and the Dakota County Sheriff's Office.

** Numbers in all categories include charges of attempts to commit the crime.

2010 JUVENILE GROSS MISDEMEANOR OFFENSES**

OFFICE OF DAKOTA COUNTY ATTORNEY JAMES C. BACKSTROM COUNTY ATTORNEY 1560 HIGHWAY 55 HASTINGS, MN 55033-2392 651-438-4438	Burglary	Obstructing Justice	Theft	Sex Related	Criminal Damage to Property	Dangerous Weapons	Assault-Related	Forgery Related	Traffic Related	Stolen Property	Stalking Related	Disorderly Conduct	Arson	Criminal Vehicular Injury	Abuse/Neglect of Minor	Furnishing Alcohol to a Minor	TOTAL CHARGES	TOTAL OFFENDERS
Apple Valley	7	2	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	15
Burnsville	2	4	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	13	12
Dakota County Sheriff	0	2	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	5
Eagan	5	1	5	4	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	20
Farmington	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Hastings	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	8
Inver Grove Heights	5	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	11
Lakeville	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4
Mendota Heights	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Law Enforcement	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Rosemount	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	8	6
South St. Paul	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2
West St. Paul	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	7	6
TOTAL	19	18	15	11	10	7	5	5	5	5	2	1	1	0	0	0	104	95

** Numbers in all categories include charges of attempts to commit the crime.

2010 JUVENILE MISDEMEANOR & PETTY MISDEMEANOR OFFENSES**

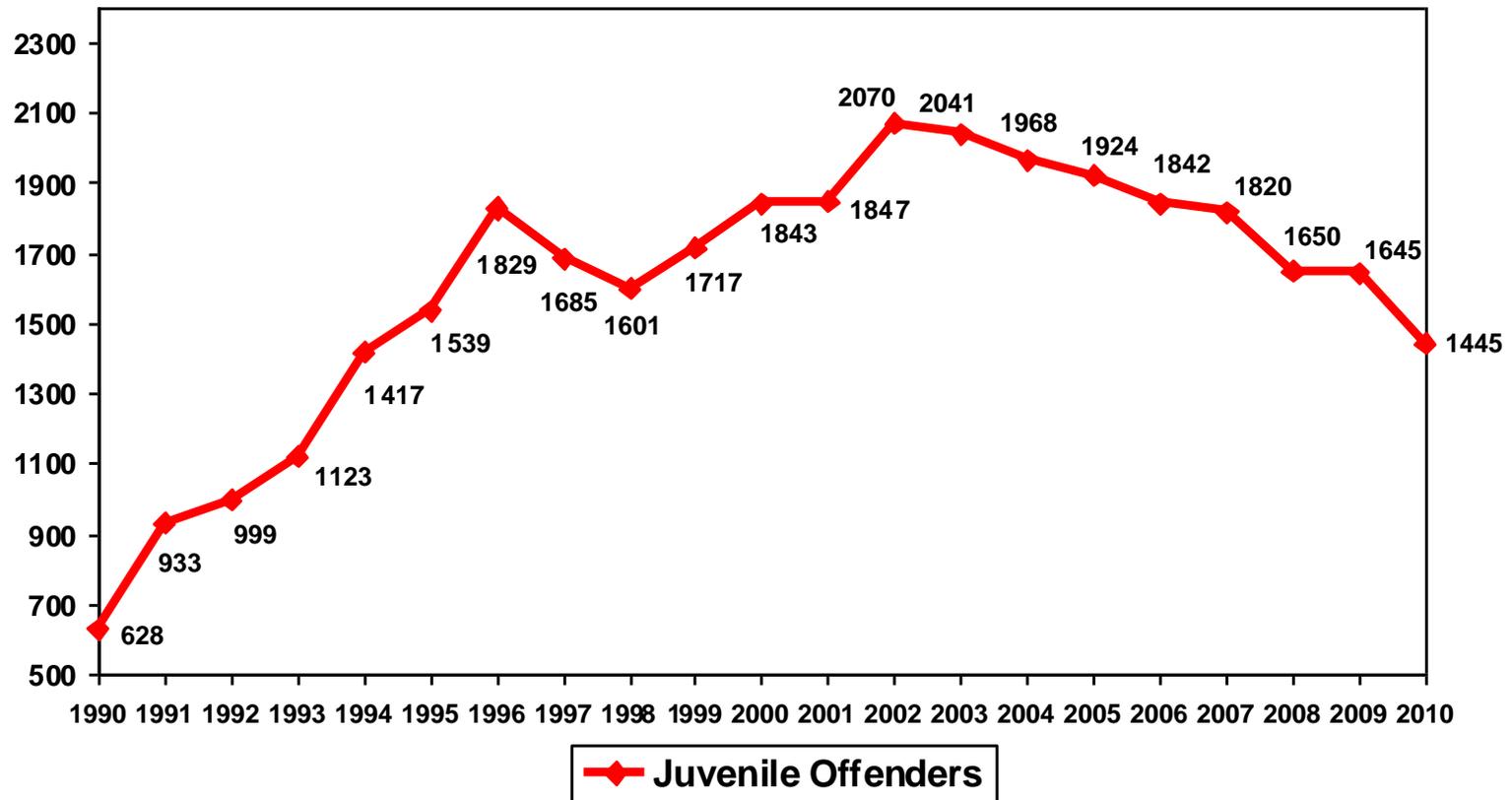
OFFICE OF DAKOTA COUNTY ATTORNEY JAMES C. BACKSTROM COUNTY ATTORNEY 1560 HIGHWAY 55 HASTINGS, MN 55033-2392 651-438-4438	Disorderly Conduct Related	Theft	Assault Related	Petty Offenses	Traffic Misdemeanors	Obstructing Justice (Non-Traffic)	Criminal Damage to Property	Consumption/Possession of Alcohol / MJ	Burglary; Trespassing	Tampering with a Motor Vehicle	Stolen Property	Ordinance Violation/Non-weapon	Public Nuisance	Traffic Citations	Dangerous Weapons	Possess Small Amount Marijuana-Petty	Arson	Legend Drugs & Equipment	Ordinance Violation/Weapon Related	Violation of an OFP or Harassment Order	Coercion	DNR, Game & Fish	TOTAL CHARGES	TOTAL OFFENDERS
Apple Valley	77	52	38	15	15	14	10	8	2	6	5	3	3	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	253	189
Burnsville	23	83	16	19	9	9	9	9	19	4	6	1	1	2	3	4	2	0	1	1	0	0	221	163
Dakota County Sheriff	53	3	24	5	7	2	9	5	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	114	78
Eagan	39	49	24	16	11	6	9	11	2	11	5	3	5	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	196	133
Farmington	30	6	7	8	1	4	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	61	52
Hastings	29	14	20	6	4	5	11	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	95	64
Inver Grove Heights	43	11	16	2	5	2	7	5	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	102	79
Lakeville	14	31	15	19	15	10	8	7	3	8	6	3	2	5	1	2	5	1	0	0	0	0	155	98
Mendota Heights	14	2	7	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	30	22
Other Law Enforcement	2	1	2	3	9	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	24	8
Rosemount	20	3	11	17	6	8	1	5	5	1	2	7	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	93	63
South St. Paul	25	18	14	15	6	7	8	3	9	6	9	6	2	1	5	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	138	93
West St. Paul	32	55	11	8	8	12	1	6	0	4	1	2	1	1	3	2	0	1	3	1	0	0	152	105
TOTAL	401	328	205	134	96	80	76	66	46	42	39	28	17	16	14	13	13	10	5	3	1	1	1634	1147

** Numbers in all categories include charges of attempts to commit the crime.

Juvenile Offenders

All Levels of Juvenile Offenses Charged

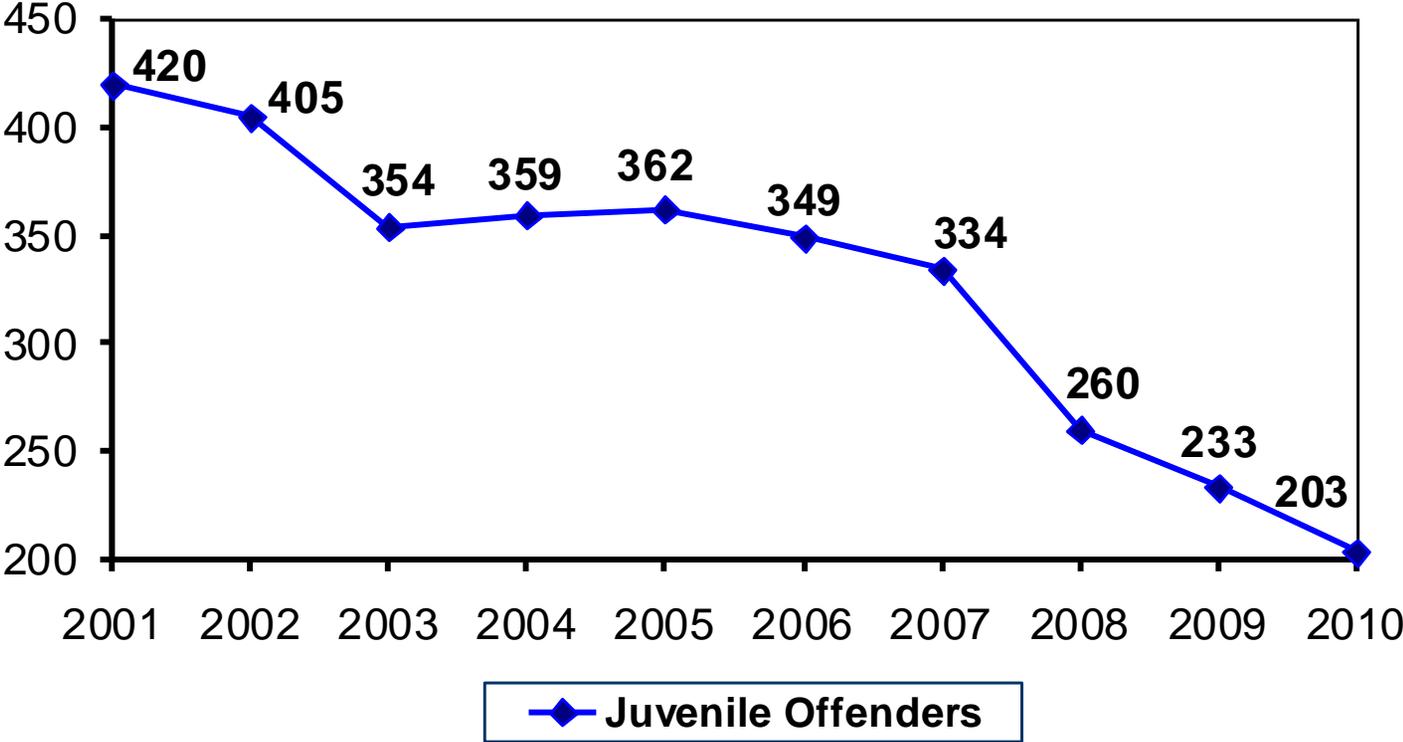
1990-2010



These include some petty misdemeanors and all misdemeanors, gross misdemeanors and felonies committed by youth under the age of 18 in Dakota County.

Compiled by:
James C. Backstrom
Dakota County Attorney

Juvenile Offenders Felony Level Offenses 2001-2010



This includes felonies committed by youth under the age of 18 in Dakota County.

Compiled by
James C. Backstrom
Dakota County Attorney

Juvenile Offenders

Violent Crime Charges

2001-2010

(Homicide, Attempted Homicide, Assault, offenses involving Dangerous Weapons, Kidnapping, Criminal Vehicular Homicide/Injury, Robbery, Sex Offenses and Terroristic Threats*)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Violent Crime Charges</u>
2001	430
2002	487
2003	454
2004	375
2005	407
2006	382
2007	371
2008	413
2009	380
2010	320
Ten Year Average . . .	402

Compiled by:
James C. Backstrom
Dakota County Attorney

* The statistics do NOT include any juveniles prosecuted as adults for any of these crimes.

Juvenile Offenders Dangerous Weapons- Related Charges (2001-2010)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Felonies	35	30	23	30	26	30	16	30	25	25
Gross Misdemeanors	6	3	8	17	7	15	9	7	10	7
Misdemeanors	8	4	11	11	2	10	3	7	12	14
Ordinance Violations	12	11	9	5	19	11	8	14	7	5
TOTAL:	61	48	51	63	54	66	36	58	54	51

Ten-Year Average is 54.2

**Compiled by:
James C. Backstrom
Dakota County Attorney**