

OFFICE OF DAKOTA COUNTY ATTORNEY
JAMES C. BACKSTROM
COUNTY ATTORNEY



Dakota County Judicial Center
1560 Highway 55
Hastings, Minnesota 55033-2392
Phillip D. Prokopowicz, Chief Deputy
Karen A. Schaffer, First Assistant
Monica Jensen, Community Relations Director

Telephone
(651) 438-4438
FAX: (651) 438-4479 (Civil Division)
FAX: (651) 438-4500 (Criminal Division)
FAX: (651) 438-4499 (Juvenile/Admin Division)
E-mail: attorney@co.dakota.mn.us

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NEWS RELEASE

2011 DAKOTA COUNTY JUVENILE PROSECUTION STATISTICS RELEASED

OVERVIEW

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom has released statistics for 2011 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 2011 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 1,445² in 2010 to **1,334** in 2011 (a decrease of almost 8%).
- The number of **juvenile offenders** charged with felony-level crimes decreased slightly from 203 in 2010 to **192** in 2011.

2011 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 224 to **210**
Burnsville **decreased** from 206 to **179**
Dakota County Sheriff **increased** from 92 to **154**
Eagan **decreased** from 191 to **169**
Farmington **increased** from 55 to **69**
Hastings **decreased** from 83 to **63**
Inver Grove Heights **decreased** from 105 to **68**
Lakeville **increased** from 129 to **153**
Mendota Heights **decreased** slightly from 30 to **29**
Rosemount **decreased** from 75 to **62**
South St. Paul **decreased** from 110 to **97**
West St. Paul **decreased** from 123 to **75**

OVERALL DECREASE IN JUVENILES PROSECUTED

Backstrom said this is the ninth 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 1,147 juveniles charged in 2010 to **1,072** in 2011 (a decrease of almost 7%). 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 2011 decreased slightly to **192** (compared to 203 in 2010). This is significantly less than our peak of 420 juveniles charged with a felony in 2001. (See attached chart of juvenile felony offenders for the last ten years.) *Backstrom stated: "We have seen a steady decrease in the number of juveniles charged with felonies each year in Dakota County, which is remarkable given our size and growth over the years. I am proud of the partnerships we have developed and the great work being done in our schools, police departments and community organizations. 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 decline we have experienced in the last decade in the numbers of juveniles charged with crimes in our community."*

JUVENILE CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

The number of charges for **violent juvenile offenses**³ increased last year. In 2011, **383** charges involving crimes of violence were filed against juvenile offenders in Dakota County, compared to 320 the year before (an increase of almost 20%). (See attached chart of juvenile violent crime charges in Dakota County over the last decade.) Backstrom said the most common violent crime committed by juveniles was misdemeanor assault which increased 10% from 205 offenses charged in 2010 to **226** in 2011. *Backstrom commented: "It should be kept in mind that even with the increase in violent juvenile crime charges this past year in Dakota County, these charges last year were significantly lower than they were a decade ago and less than the 10-year average for such offenses. Both of these facts are a positive reflection on the overall safety of our community."*

One of the most notable of juvenile crimes of violence charged in 2011 was a 17-year-old boy charged with numerous crimes for breaking into several homes in Eagan and in one home assaulting a 17-year-old female. He pled guilty to Burglary, Attempted Burglary, and Attempted Criminal Sexual Conduct and was sentenced under the EJJ statute (which extends juvenile court oversight until age 21 and includes a stayed adult prison sentence which could be executed if later violations occur).

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. 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 2011, a total of **15** youth were charged (one was charged twice) with school-related violent offenses (including both felonies and gross misdemeanors); compared to 14 in 2010. All were charged with either gross misdemeanor or felony possession of a dangerous weapon (dangerous weapons include: BB guns, replica firearms, and knives) or terroristic threats.

The ongoing working relationship between the County Attorney's Office, schools and local law enforcement allows for implementation of training, prevention programming and sharing of information, in addition to prioritizing crimes associated with school activities. Backstrom indicated that his Office continues to prioritize crimes occurring in schools or associated with school activities. These crimes are dealt with under the "Prioritizing Prosecutions in Schools" initiative which has been in place since 2001. Backstrom commented: *"We are dedicated to working with our law enforcement partners and school administration to keep schools safe for students and staff. School-related crimes remain a priority in our Office."*

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. In recent years, 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. Backstrom commented: *"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. We accomplish this 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 2011, a total of **1,023 juvenile offenders were referred to various accountability programs** as an alternative to juvenile court compared to 931 in 2010 (an increase of almost 10%).

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 who commit 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.

One area of concern involving teens is the abuse of prescription medications. Teens are using these medications because they believe that: these medications are safer to use than illicit drugs; there are fewer stigmas attached to using them; there are fewer side effects than illicit drugs; and parents don't care as much if the youth gets caught. These beliefs are misguided. Misuse of prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs is dangerous, can have deadly consequences and is illegal.

The Dakota County Attorney's Office collaborated with the Dakota County Sheriff, Dakota County Drug Task Force, Dakota County Public Health and Dakota County Environmental Management in distributing an educational packet on the dangers of Rx/OTC abuse. Rx and OTC abuse prevention materials were included as a key component of the Dakota County Attorney's Office booth at the County Fair last August. *"This is an opportunity for parents and young people in our community to learn about the potential dangers of these medications when not used as prescribed,"* Backstrom added.

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom, Sheriff Dave Bellows and our law enforcement, public health and environmental management partners worked together in 2011 to make it easier to properly dispose of unwanted, unused or expired prescription and OTC medications. Drive-up disposal sites now exist at the Law Enforcement Center in Hastings, the Burnsville Police Department and the West St. Paul Police Department for the safe disposal of prescription and OTC medications no longer needed. Backstrom noted: *"Safely disposing of unwanted and unused medications also protects our environment."*

Another program to address chemical addiction issues involving youth is the **Juvenile Drug Court**, which has been in operation since 2003. This “problem-solving” court intervention is designed to provide greater oversight and treatment of youth who are chemically addicted. In 2011, **11-12** 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 and the juvenile offender, with an emphasis on more intensive monitoring and treatment. Drug courts can help offenders overcome their chemical addictions and have a proven success rate across America in reducing recidivism.”*

The **Peer Court program**, which is a joint project of the Dakota County Attorney, Community Corrections and the 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 to personally become involved in resolving the problem of juvenile crime in their community. Backstrom noted: *“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 participants who serve as jurors in the process.”* In 2011, **57** juveniles were referred to Peer Court. District Court Judge Tom Poch was instrumental in establishing this program and handed the reins over to the Judge Joseph Carter this school year.

The **Juvenile Firesetter Education and Intervention program** is for youth ages 6-17 that exhibit inappropriate behavior about starting fires or who are actually caught lighting fires. In 2011, **15** Dakota County juveniles were referred to this program. This program is a joint project with the State Fire Marshall’s Office , local Dakota County fire departments and the Dakota County Attorney’s Office and includes referral to a quarterly education class which has been well-received by participants and their parents.

JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION INITIATIVES

County Attorney Backstrom continued his **anti-bullying initiative** which he began during the 2002-03 school year. To date, this program has been presented to over 15,500 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 also continued to address issues facing middle and high school students concerning increasing use of technology. *“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.

Other prevention programs/efforts of the Dakota County Attorney’s Office include: the annual Anti-Drug/Anti-Violence Poster and Calendar Contest; a prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse prevention packet; resources on internet safety; materials on keeping teens safe when driving; materials relating to 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

Last year a total of **1,991** delinquency hearings and jury trials were scheduled in Dakota County Juvenile Court compared to 2,139 delinquency hearings and jury trials the year before.

Details of the juvenile cases charged by the Dakota County Attorney’s Office in 2011 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 [://www.dakotacounty.us/](http://www.dakotacounty.us/) . **If you have any questions, contact James Backstrom at 651-438-4440.**

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.

2011 JUVENILE FELONY OFFENSES**

OFFICE OF DAKOTA COUNTY ATTORNEY JAMES C. BACKSTROM COUNTY ATTORNEY 1560 HIGHWAY 55 HASTINGS, MN 55033-2392	Burglary	Sex Related	Drug Related *	Theft Related	Assault Related	Criminal Damage to Property	Robbery	Dangerous Weapons	Terroristic Threats	Unauthorized Use Motor Vehicle	Receiving Stolen Property	Forgery Related	Stalking-related	Fleeing In A Motor Vehicle	Physical Abuse of Minor	Traffic-related	Arson	Obstructing Justice	TOTAL CHARGES	TOTAL OFFENDERS
Apple Valley	4	5	0	3	1	3	6	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	30	27
Burnsville	4	3	7	3	3	5	1	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	28
Dakota County Sheriff	0	1	0	2	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	9	9
Eagan	10	5	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	29	23
Farmington	3	0	1	5	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	12
Hastings	0	1	3	2	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	13	13
Inver Grove Heights	0	4	0	0	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	8
Lakeville	0	9	8	7	3	3	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	30
Mendota Heights	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
Other Law Enforcement	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Rosemount	5	1	0	1	11	0	8	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	31	12
South St. Paul	4	1	8	1	3	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	26	21
West St. Paul	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3
TOTAL	31	31	31	29	29	22	22	10	9	6	5	5	2	2	2	1	1	1	239	192

* 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.

2011 JUVENILE GROSS MISDEMEANOR OFFENSES**

OFFICE OF DAKOTA COUNTY ATTORNEY JAMES C. BACKSTROM COUNTY ATTORNEY 1560 HIGHWAY 55 HASTINGS, MN 55033-2392 651-438-4438	Theft	Assault-Related	Obstructing Justice	Dangerous Weapons	Sex Related	Forgery Related	Criminal Damage to Property	Burglary	Furnishing Alcohol to a Minor	Stolen Property	Traffic Related	Stalking-related	Escape from Custody	Arson	TOTAL CHARGES	TOTAL OFFENDERS
Apple Valley	4	3	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	14	11
Burnsville	1	0	2	4	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	10	9
Dakota County Sheriff	0	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	11
Eagan	5	1	3	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	16	10
Farmington	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Hastings	1	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	5
Inver Grove Heights	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Lakeville	4	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	11	8
Mendota Heights	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Law Enforcement	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Rosemount	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
South St. Paul	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
West St. Paul	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
TOTAL	18	14	12	12	10	4	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	85	70

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

2011 JUVENILE MISDEMEANOR & PETTY MISDEMEANOR OFFENSES**

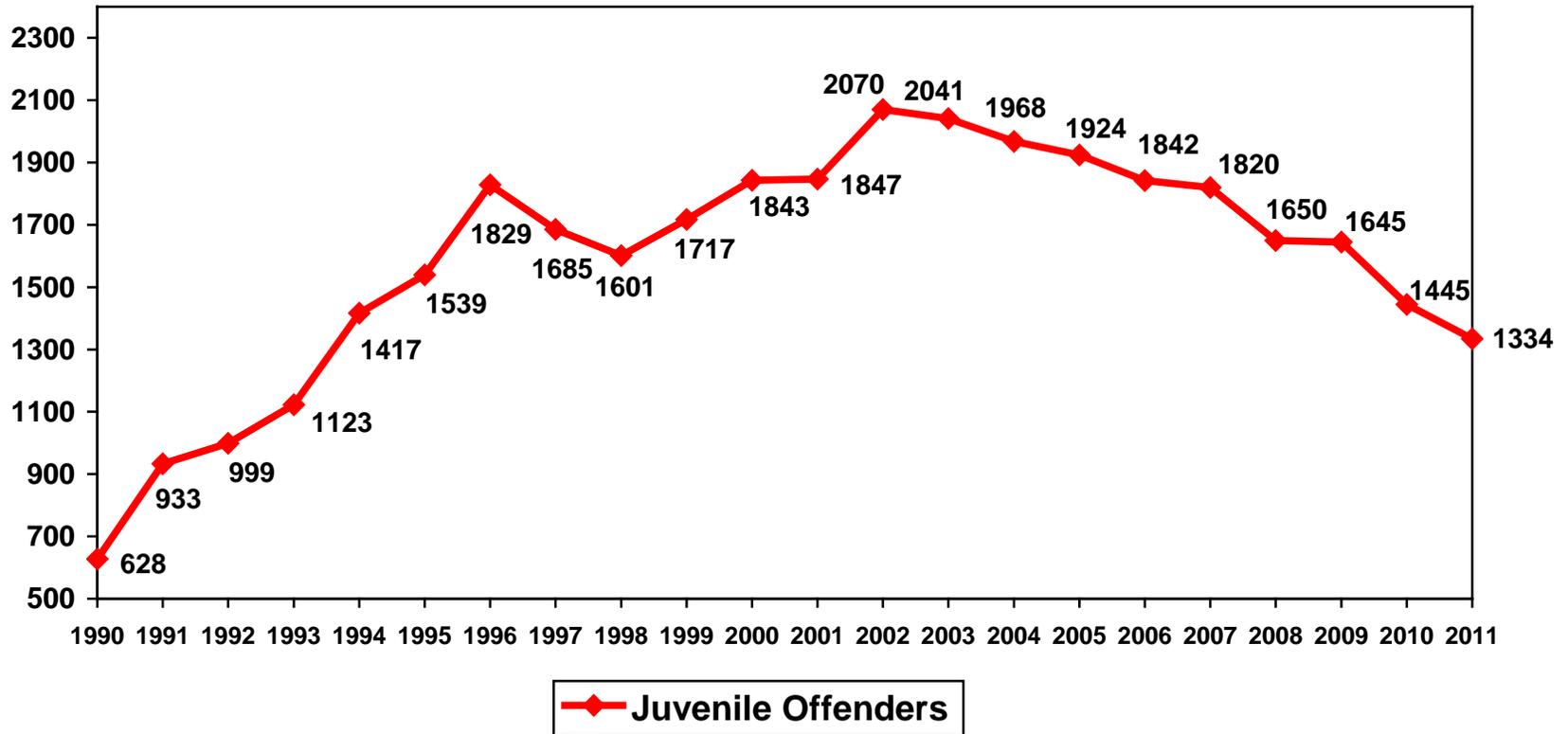
OFFICE OF DAKOTA COUNTY ATTORNEY JAMES C. BACKSTROM COUNTY ATTORNEY 1560 HIGHWAY 55 HASTINGS, MN 55033-2392 651-438-4438	Disorderly Conduct Related	Theft	Assault Related	Petty Offenses	Consumption/Possession of Alcohol	Criminal Damage to Property	Traffic Misdemeanors	Obstructing Justice (Non-Traffic)	Traffic Citations	Stolen Property	Burglary; Trespassing	Ordinance Violation/Non-weapon	Possess Small Amount Marijuana-Petty	Tampering with a Motor Vehicle	Dangerous Weapons	Public Nuisance	Legend Drugs & Equipment	Violation of an OFP or Harassment Order	Arson	Ordinance Violation/Weapon Related	DNR, Game & Fish	TOTAL CHARGES	TOTAL OFFENDERS
Apple Valley	61	43	30	19	10	9	13	7	1	6	6	6	5	3	3	5	1	0	1	1	0	230	172
Burnsville	16	79	14	17	4	0	18	13	6	3	9	2	5	6	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	199	142
Dakota County Sheriff	86	11	32	9	1	18	6	6	0	2	0	3	3	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	181	134
Eagan	42	36	41	8	21	8	4	6	17	1	0	1	3	4	4	2	1	0	0	1	0	200	136
Farmington	17	11	18	2	10	1	1	2	5	2	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	75	56
Hastings	14	7	13	5	2	6	1	2	0	1	4	0	5	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	65	45
Inver Grove Heights	24	15	16	4	4	4	0	3	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	75	57
Lakeville	13	37	17	37	26	9	9	10	6	8	7	16	7	4	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	213	115
Mendota Heights	14	3	4	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	24
Other Law Enforcement	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	4
Rosemount	15	13	5	5	1	1	4	4	2	3	1	1	2	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	62	49
South St. Paul	37	10	23	8	2	7	1	1	0	3	3	1	0	5	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	106	71
West St. Paul	19	32	13	3	3	2	3	3	3	5	2	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	93	67
TOTAL	358	297	226	118	87	67	64	58	44	35	33	33	31	29	20	11	11	6	3	2	2	1535	1072

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

Juvenile Offenders

All Levels of Juvenile Offenses Charged

1990-2011

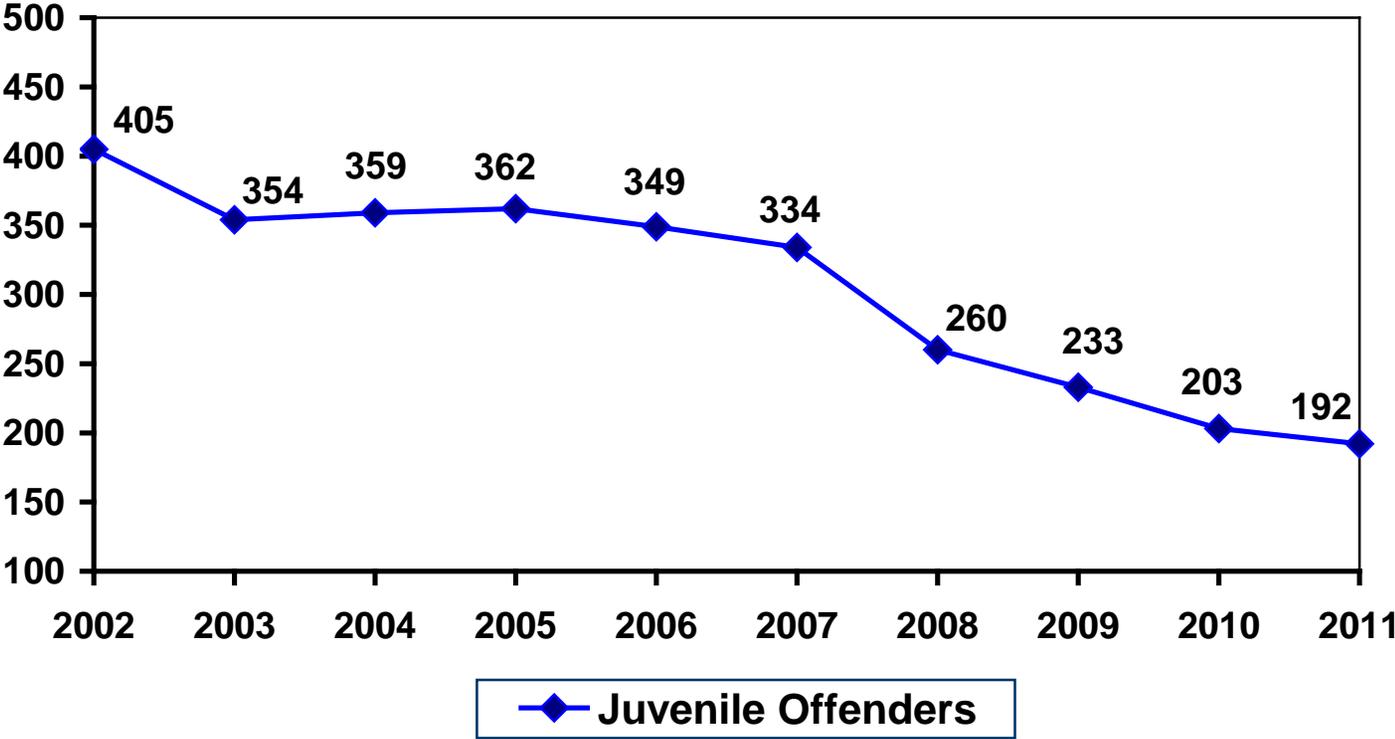


These include some petty misdemeanors and all misdemeanors, gross misdemeanors and felonies committed by youth under the age of 18 in Dakota County.

Compiled by:
James C. Backstrom
Dakota County Attorney

Juvenile Offenders Felony Level Offenses

2002-2011



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 2002-2011

(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>
2002	487
2003	454
2004	375
2005	407
2006	382
2007	371
2008	413
2009	380
2010	320
2011	383
Ten Year Average . . .	397

**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 2002-2011

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Felonies	30	23	30	26	30	16	30	25	25	10
Gross Misdemeanors	3	8	17	7	15	9	7	10	7	12
Misdemeanors	4	11	11	2	10	3	7	12	14	20
Ordinance Violations	11	9	5	19	11	8	14	7	5	2
TOTAL:	48	51	63	54	66	36	58	54	51	44

Ten-Year Average is

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