

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

2013 Adult Felony Criminal Prosecutions in Dakota County

OVERVIEW

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom has released statistics for adult felony criminal prosecutions handled by his Office in 2013. **These statistics reflect the total number of adults charged with felonies in Dakota County.** The County Attorney is responsible for the prosecution of all felonies committed by adults, which includes persons 18 years of age and over and any juveniles certified for prosecution as adults. According to Backstrom:

- The total number of **adults charged**¹ with felony offenses in Dakota County decreased by almost 4% (1,545² adults were charged with a felony-level offense in 2013, compared to 1,602 in 2012).

ADULTS CHARGED WITH FELONIES (BY CITY/JURISDICTION)

The following reflects the number of **adults that were charged with felonies** referred from individual cities and the Dakota County Sheriff's Office in Dakota County:

Apple Valley **increased** from 149 to 153
Burnsville **increased** from 286 to 298
Dakota County Sheriff **decreased** from 152 to 99
Eagan **increased** from 195 to 251
Farmington **decreased** from 38 to 33
Hastings **decreased** from 117 to 87
Inver Grove Heights **decreased** from 108 to 107
Lakeville **increased** from 109 to 140
Mendota Heights **decreased** from 29 to 19
Rosemount **decreased** from 52 to 31
South St. Paul **decreased** from 144 to 132
West St. Paul **decreased** from 176 to 136

ILLEGAL DRUG OFFENSES CONTINUE AS TOP PROBLEM

The number of **drug-related offenses** continues to represent the largest category of cases charged by the Dakota County Attorney's Office. The total number of defendants charged with drug offenses in 2013 represents approximately 23% of the entire felony caseload of the Dakota County Attorney's Office. (See the attached chart for drug trends in the past ten years). A total of **350**³ **adults** were charged with felony drug crimes in Dakota County in 2013, down from 389 the year before.

MOST COMMON DRUG PROSECUTIONS:

Although the number of individuals charged with drug-related crimes has decreased, the amount of drugs seized has increased significantly.

Meth-related – **148** individuals charged (172 in 2012). [*One significant case involved the seizure of 12 pounds of meth in Burnsville, along with handguns and cash.*]

Marijuana – **68** individuals charged (72 in 2012). [*One significant case involved the seizure of over 56 pounds of marijuana in Inver Grove Heights.*]

Prescription drugs – **54** individuals charged (62 in 2012).

Cocaine – **37** individuals charged (50 in 2012). [*One significant case involved the seizure of 6 pounds of cocaine along with 2 pounds of meth in Inver Grove Heights.*]

Heroin – **25** individuals charged (30 in 2012). [*One significant case involved the seizure of over 2 pounds of heroin (25,730.5 grams) in Apple Valley, one of the largest heroin busts in Dakota County's history.*]

Backstrom commented: "Illegal drug use in Dakota County and across our state and nation is an enormous problem. We continue to work hard with our law enforcement partners to protect our community from drug offenders and to hold them accountable for their crimes. We also work with others in the criminal justice system to reduce the ongoing cycle of drug abuse."

Backstrom praised the continued efforts of the **Dakota County Drug Task Force**, which consists of officers from the Dakota County Sheriff's Office and police departments in the cities of Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan, Farmington, Hastings, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, Mendota Heights, Rosemount, South St. Paul, West St. Paul and Savage. Backstrom commented: "*This coordinated law enforcement effort is extremely effective in combating illegal drug activity. The Dakota County Drug Task Force, which relies heavily on federal grant funding, is vital in getting illegal drugs off our streets. By working together, we can reduce the problems associated with the use of methamphetamine, marijuana and other illegal drugs in our community.*"

Many individuals who commit drug-related crimes are themselves addicted to drugs. The Dakota County Attorney collaborates with District Court Judges and a team of staff from Dakota County Community Corrections, law enforcement, and other criminal justice professionals in Dakota County's **Adult Drug Court**. Drug Court effectively and efficiently addresses repeat and non-violent drug offenders who demonstrate a willingness to address their chemical addiction. The goal of Drug Court is to resolve cases in a more proactive way, holding offenders accountable with an emphasis on needed treatment and reducing overall recidivism. Currently, there are 34 offenders in the Adult Drug Court program (**11 adults** referred in 2013) working to complete the three phases of the program which involve frequent court appearances and intensive supervision. A total of 40 offenders have graduated since the start of the program in September of 2008.

CRIMES OF VIOLENCE

In 2013, **412 adults** were charged with 621 violent offenses in Dakota County. As to charges, this represents a decrease from the 552 adults charged with 712 violent crime charges filed in 2012. The following is a breakdown of these crimes:

- 9** individuals were charged with murder, attempted murder or manslaughter
- 7** individuals were charged with criminal vehicular homicide/injury
- 196** individuals were charged with felony assault (includes domestic-related)
- 58** individuals were charged with felony sex-related
- 8** individuals were charged with kidnapping
- 117** individuals were charged with terroristic threats
- 37** individuals were charged with robbery
- 30** individuals were charged with dangerous weapons

Backstrom stated: "It is important to keep in mind that our violent crime rate is statistically quite low for the size of our County. Dakota County remains a safe community in which to live."

DEFENDANTS CHARGED WITH MURDER

Backstrom stated, “*Dakota County historically has averaged about three homicides/year which is a remarkably low number for a jurisdiction of over 400,000 persons.*” In 2013 in Dakota County **9 adults** were charged with **murder, attempted murder or manslaughter** involving 5 victims compared to 9 persons charged with murder and attempted murder involving 4 victims in 2012.

FELONY STRANGULATION CASES DECREASE

It is a felony to strangle or attempt to strangle someone during a domestic violence struggle. A total of **63 adults** were charged with felony domestic violence in Dakota County in 2013 (compared to 85 in 2012). Backstrom commented: “*Domestic violence is a significant problem in our society and we need to protect the victims of these serious crimes as well as hold offenders accountable for these acts of violence.*” Most domestic violence-related cases are either misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor and are handled by city attorneys.

FELONY DWI'S CONTINUE TO DECREASE

Each year in Minnesota, more than 32,000 people are arrested for DWI. There were **31 individuals** charged with felony-level DWI in Dakota County in 2013 (compared to 35 in 2012). A felony DWI occurs if an offender has been previously convicted of three DWI's in the last 10 years (among several other ways) and commits a fourth DWI offense. A DWI offense can result in loss of license for up to a year, thousands of dollars in costs and possible jail time. There are stronger sanctions for all repeat DWI offenders, as well as for motorists arrested for a first-time DWI with an alcohol concentration level of 0.16 and above. Under these sanctions, DWI offenders must use ignition interlock for at least a year or face at least one year without driving privileges. Ignition interlock requires the driver to provide a breath sample under 0.02 for the vehicle to start. As with most domestic violence-related cases, city attorneys prosecute the bulk of DWI's (misdemeanors and gross misdemeanors) in Dakota County and do an excellent job on these important cases.

In 2013, there was a decrease in the number of deaths in motor vehicle crashes in Minnesota (**377⁴** persons were killed in 2013 compared to 395 in 2012). Approximately one out of every three fatalities in Minnesota is alcohol-related. In Dakota County last year, **18** individuals were killed in motor vehicle crashes with an estimated 23% being alcohol-related, compared to 19 individuals who died in 2012 in such crashes.

Backstrom praised Dakota County law enforcement agencies for their ongoing commitment to eliminate driving under the influence and keeping our roadways safe. *Backstrom commented: “We must remain vigilant in our efforts to prevent impaired driving which kills or seriously injures thousands of people each year in America. I remain committed to preventing these senseless tragedies from happening in our community.”*

PROPERTY CRIMES DECREASED

In 2013, **631 adults** were charged with 742 felony-level property criminal charges in Dakota County, compared to 641 adults charged with 783 such charges in 2012. The following is a breakdown of these crimes:

- 238** individuals charged with theft-related offenses
- 127** individuals charged with forgery or credit card fraud
- 126** individuals charged with burglary
- 96** individuals charged with stolen property
- 44** individuals charged with criminal damage to property

FINANCIAL AND WHITE COLLAR CRIMES

Backstrom said his Office prosecuted a number of complex financial crimes involving theft of funds or embezzlement from a company or organization. Backstrom explained: “*Financial crimes can be very complex and involve many hours of investigation by law enforcement, including the Minnesota Department of Commerce, the Minnesota Department of Revenue, and the prosecutor assigned to the case.*” There were **6** individuals charged in Dakota County last year with theft, theft by swindle or theft by false representation involving losses to businesses, government agencies, faith communities, and youth-serving organizations, with victim losses totaling over **\$725,000.00** compared to 8 such cases charged in 2012. “*These crimes involve significant financial losses in addition to a serious breach of trust,*” Backstrom added.

SERVING VICTIMS OF CRIME

The Victim/Witness Unit of the Dakota County Attorney's Office served hundreds of victims in 2013. In addition to providing adult and juvenile victims what is required by statute, advocates explain the charges, the criminal justice process, how to receive restitution, write a victim impact statement and all other aspects of their case. Staff also accompany the victim to court as needed. *"Assisting crime victims who have suffered great personal trauma or financial loss is one of the most important services provided by the Dakota County Attorney's Office,"* Backstrom noted.

CRIMINAL APPEALS

Backstrom indicated that his Office was involved in filing or responding to **44 appeals** in criminal cases in 2013, compared to 43 in 2012. Appeals involve significant staff resources and are necessary in efforts to insure accountability for criminal offenders and the fair administration of justice.

COURT HEARINGS

A total of **14,083** court calendar events were scheduled in 2013 involving cases prosecuted by the Dakota County Attorney's Office (compared to 14,088 in 2012).

Attached is a chart detailing adults charged with felony-level crimes and the number of charges filed by the Dakota County Attorney's Office in 2013. Also attached are charts comparing statistical information about adult felony prosecutions for the last decade. This information is also available on the Dakota County Attorney website at www.co.dakota.mn.us under Law & Justice.

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 Some of these defendants may have been charged in the same or separate behavioral incidents.

³ Some of the defendants were charged with crimes involving more than one illegal drug in the same or separate behavioral incidents.

⁴ This number is provided by the Office of Traffic Safety of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

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JAMES C. BACKSTROM
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1560 HIGHWAY 55
HASTINGS, MN
55033-2392
651-438-4438

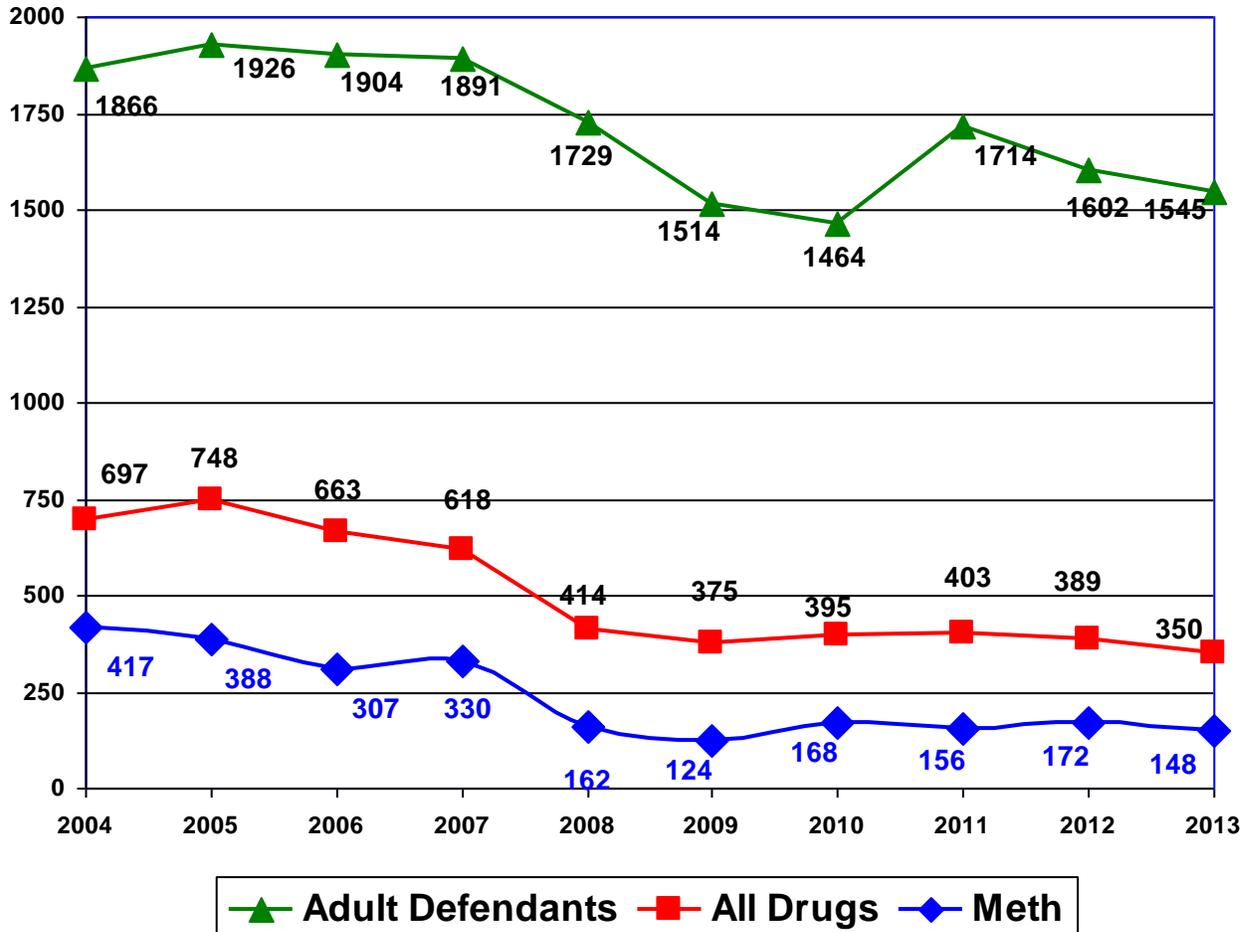
**Dakota County Attorney's Office
Adult Felony Statistics 2013
Cases Charged**

	TOTALS	Crim Vehicle Homicide/Injury	Escape/Obstruct Justice/Tamper with Witness	Public Health & Safety/Coercion/Fail to Register	Sex Related	Strangulation/Assault Related	Burglary/Trespassing Related	Crim Damage to Property	Abuse/Neglect of a Minor	Drug Related	Election/Campaign	Fleeing	Forgery/FTC Fraud	Fugitive From Justice	Gambling	Harassment/Stalking	Homicide/Aiding Suicide	Kidnap/False Imprisonment	Motor Vehicle Theft/Tampering	Patently/Child Support/Custody Related	Public Assistance Fraud	Robbery	Stolen Property Related	Tax Related	Terroristic Threats	Theft Related	Weapons/Explosives	Alcohol Related Traffic	Arson/Neg. Fires	
TOTALS	Charges Cases	2223 1545	13 7	15 13	25 22	108 58	265 196	160 126	45 44	5 3	453 350	1 1	51 51	146 127	62 62	3 3	91 68	20 9	9 8	49 46	1 1	29 17	40 37	103 96	10 3	130 117	288 238	35 30	59 31	7 7
Apple Valley PD	Charges Cases	214 153	3 1	0 0	2 2	15 11	15 11	11 8	6 6	0 0	48 37	0 0	7 7	16 14	4 4	2 2	9 6	4 1	3 3	3 3	0 0	0 0	5 3	5 5	0 0	14 13	36 30	2 2	4 2	0 0
Burnsville PD	Charges Cases	446 298	2 2	6 5	7 7	16 9	69 46	42 29	6 6	4 2	72 57	0 0	4 4	32 27	11 11	1 1	16 13	2 1	3 2	10 8	1 1	0 0	14 13	21 17	0 0	29 28	61 54	8 7	9 5	0 0
Dakota County Sheriff's Office	Charges Cases	144 99	0 0	1 1	1 1	1 8	7 4	4 3	1 1	0 0	21 19	0 0	7 7	3 2	19 19	0 0	11 4	0 0	1 1	5 5	0 0	28 16	0 0	7 7	0 0	4 4	17 11	3 3	2 1	0 0
Eagan PD	Charges Cases	366 251	0 0	0 0	2 1	17 8	34 29	32 26	11 11	1 1	70 52	0 0	11 11	39 31	6 6	0 0	7 7	0 0	1 1	11 11	0 0	0 0	8 8	18 17	0 0	19 18	69 52	2 2	8 3	0 0
Farmington PD	Charges Cases	42 33	0 0	1 1	0 0	3 2	7 6	5 4	2 2	0 0	9 7	0 0	2 1	1 0	0 0	7 6	2 1	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 1	0 0	1 1	1 1	0 0	0 0	0 0	
Hastings PD	Charges Cases	112 87	0 0	0 0	4 4	4 3	19 15	2 2	3 3	0 0	22 18	0 0	2 2	9 7	2 2	0 0	3 3	0 0	0 0	2 2	0 0	1 1	9 9	0 0	12 10	14 12	4 4	0 0	0 0	
Inver Grove Hts PD	Charges Cases	145 107	1 1	2 2	1 1	1 18	26 8	8 8	3 3	0 0	36 30	0 0	3 3	11 11	2 2	0 0	4 4	0 0	0 0	1 1	0 0	1 1	2 2	7 7	0 0	15 12	17 15	3 3	0 0	1 1
Lakeville PD	Charges Cases	211 140	1 1	2 1	2 2	22 8	16 13	24 18	2 1	0 0	37 27	0 0	4 4	8 8	3 3	0 0	10 8	0 0	0 0	4 3	0 0	0 0	3 3	19 17	0 0	14 10	28 28	0 0	11 7	1 1
Mendota Heights PD	Charges Cases	24 19	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 1	1 4	4 0	0 0	5 4	0 0	0 0	2 2	2 2	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 1	0 0	3 3	3 2	0 0	2 1	0 0	
MN State Patrol/ East Metro Div	Charges Cases	44 25	6 2	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 1	0 0	0 0	19 11	0 0	1 1	0 0	1 1	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	2 2	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 1	0 0	2 2	0 0	2 2	9 5	0 0	
Rosemount PD	Charges Cases	41 31	0 0	0 0	0 0	8 3	2 2	5 4	2 2	0 0	5 4	0 0	2 2	2 2	2 2	0 0	1 1	2 2	0 0	1 1	0 0	0 0	1 1	0 0	2 2	5 4	0 0	0 0	1 1	
South St Paul PD	Charges Cases	174 132	0 0	2 2	3 2	5 4	37 27	16 13	5 5	0 0	49 42	1 1	5 5	4 3	4 4	0 0	12 8	0 0	1 1	6 6	0 0	0 0	3 3	5 5	0 0	3 3	2 1	7 4	3 2	1 1
West St Paul PD	Charges Cases	194 136	0 0	1 1	3 2	8 5	29 19	6 6	4 4	0 0	28 24	0 0	3 3	16 16	6 6	0 0	11 8	10 4	0 0	4 4	0 0	4 4	7 7	0 0	10 10	29 22	3 2	11 5	1 1	
Other Agencies	Charges Cases	66 34	0 0	0 0	0 0	7 2	1 1	1 1	0 0	0 0	32 18	0 0	0 0	3 3	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 1	10 3	2 1	6 6	1 1	0 0	2 2	

1. Drug-related statistics are reported under the city where the offense occurred (drug offenses occurring in townships are recorded under the Dakota County Sheriff or Other Agencies). 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.
2. Sex-related includes child pornography.
3. Homicide offenses include charges for murder, attempted murder, conspiracy to commit murder, and manslaughter.
4. Numbers in all categories include charges of attempts to commit the crime.

Dakota County

All Adults Charged with a Felony, Drug-Related and Meth-Related Crimes 2004-2013



Compiled by: James C. Backstrom, Dakota County Attorney