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News Release

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CRIME NUMBERS SHOW INCREASE IN ST. CHARLES PARISH SINCE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office reports crime to the F.B.I. through the Uniform Crime Reporting System (U.C.R.). This system tracks crime through seven categories consisting of murder, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, theft, and auto theft.

Crime in the seven U.C.R. categories continued to fall during the first quarter of 2020, following a record low in 2019. However, primarily due to the numbers of assaults and thefts, we experienced an increase in crime numbers as the COVID-19 Pandemic began to take hold. Over 60+ of the thefts reported occurred at the Walmart in Boutte.

Throughout the first quarter of 2020 (January through March), St. Charles Parish experienced a 6.1% **decrease** in crime when compared to the same period of 2019. During the second quarter of 2020 (April through June), crime numbers began to rise due to significant increases in assaults and thefts. Assaults during the second quarter rose from 143 to 182 (27% increase). Thefts rose from 132 to 208 during the second quarter as well – an increase of 57%. The other five categories of crime had minimal or no increases in numbers during the second quarter. Murder, robbery, burglary, and auto theft rates actually fell during the second quarter of 2020. Overall, crime increased 11% in the first half of 2020 when compared to the same period in 2019. Note* the third quarter will reflect the two homicides that occurred in July.

Sheriff Champagne released the following statement:

The increase in assaults seem to be related to domestic violence, exacerbated by the COVID-19 “lockdown” and unemployment, with families being confined in close quarters for such an extended period. This continues to be a problem and deputies are constantly responding to domestic violence calls and neighborhood disputes. While many young people are law abiding, this has been an extended summer, which in turn leads to kids getting bored and it is not unusual for thefts to rise during summer months. The courts and my office have also been lenient with the use of bail releases and summonses, due to the COVID-19 threat with the incarcerated. As a result, many chronic offenders are able to stay out of jail, thus, crimes such as theft go up.

I applaud our deputies, detectives, and correctional officers for the work they have done during this pandemic, putting themselves at risk, yet continuing to serve under extraordinary pressures, which we are all too familiar with.

We have worked very hard over many years to continually reduce crime in St. Charles Parish. In 2019, we observed the lowest documented crime records in the history of St. Charles Parish. With this in mind, it only takes a few additional crimes to indicate an upward trend. This year has presented several new challenges for deputies, as well as the citizens of St. Charles Parish. Rest assured, the members of the St. Charles Parish Sheriff's Office are dedicated to providing the highest quality of service to our citizens.

This is a team effort. I urge our residents not to become complacent. Please, be vigilant and most importantly, secure your belongings and property! Many of the recent thefts were reported to deputies working the security detail at Walmart. Others were a result of unlocked vehicles and valuables left unattended in easily accessible places.

The individual U.C.R. statistics from January to June of 2019, compared to 2020, are as follows:

Months	2019	2020
January	102	101
February	134	134
March	124	103
April	96	114
May	105	155
June	122	162
Total Crimes	683	769

Index Crime	2019	2020
Murder	2	0
Rape	1	5
Robbery	12	6
Assault	266	318
Burglary	66	65
Theft	319	356
Auto Theft	17	19
Total Crimes	683	769