

## Hats off to Conroe PD - Recovered \$2.2 million in 2008

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Keeping pace with the city's population growth, Conroe Police Department investigators handled 5.3 percent more cases in 2008 than the previous year, according to statistics compiled by the department.

The CPD Criminal Investigations Division was assigned 5,541 cases, ranging from misdemeanor theft to homicide.

In 2007, the CID investigated 5,260 cases.

In major crimes against property or people, the sharpest rise was in burglaries of buildings (commercial), which had 107 more cases than in 2007. Burglaries of residences also rose, but by only 41 cases, according to the statistics.

Burglaries of motor vehicles, however, dropped by 34 cases from 2007.

Conroe's population in January 2008 was estimated at 55,129 by the Texas Office of State Demographer, a 4.7 percent increase over the U.S. Census Bureau's figure of 52,516 for 2007.

The city also annexed 1.3 square miles of property in 2008.

Other than the current state of the economy and the increase in population, Police Chief Charlie Ray said there are no real answers regarding the rise in commercial building burglaries.

"The (number of) patrol staff is relatively the same," he said. "We have 54 patrol officers and 10 patrol supervisors. We're down six people right now, but we do meet minimum staffing levels. The past year, we asked for another patrol sergeant and got it."

About a year and a half ago, the department went to four shifts.

"That allows us to put more people on the street at peak times for calls," Ray said.

Peak times are those times when more people are out, generally between 6 p.m. and 2 a.m.

There were five homicides in 2008, while there was only one in 2007. However, according to a CPD report on 2008 crime statistics, all five homicides were solved.

"Seldom seen in Conroe," the report states, there were two homicides within a six-hour period. Both homicides were solved within a 24-hour period."

The two homicides occurred Dec. 19 and 20. Brice Wade Boudreaux of Willis, was shot to death during a custody dispute. Then, a robbery and carjacking resulted in the shooting death of a Madisonville man.

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February 2, 2009

Conroe Courier - News

Investigators either recovered or accounted for property and assets totaling approximately \$2.2 million, according to the report.

"... property investigators gained access to **LeadsOnline**, which has assisted in recovering approximately \$150,000 worth of stolen property," the report states.

**LeadsOnline** is an Internet-based investigation tool that is used to automatically collect and analyze transaction records from businesses that take in property from the public, its website states.

Narcotics investigators also were successful in 2008, seizing \$56,390 in cash, more than 1.5 pounds of cocaine and intercepting 388 pounds of marijuana destined "to be sold within the city of Conroe within hours of the onset of Hurricane Ike," the report states.

Narcotics investigators also were able to identify approximately 20 gangs with either organized local cliques or individual members living in Conroe during 2008.

The city's war on drugs, started in 2004 by former Mayor Tommy Metcalf, will continue, Ray and Mayor Webb Melder said.

"It's a positive attitude that we're not going to sit back and do nothing," Melder said. "From the calls I get at City Hall, I know our citizens have really gotten involved (in reporting crime). That puts a lot of extra eyes and ears out there."

The CPD's mobile command unit, stationed every Thursday at Daviss Park in the Dugan area, is helping spur more citizen participation in reporting crime, Sgt. Bob Berry said.

"We've had a lot of contact down there with kids and adults," he said. "It's a positive thing for us and it gives (residents) a sense of security. We're down there and we have a presence."

Conroe police are always looking for trends as far as crime patterns and areas, Ray said.

"We try to maneuver our resources to those areas where we see patterns develop," he said. "We've tried to do some proactive things on (patrol) shifts, to think outside the box and interdict crimes.

"We're always trying to think of things to do to improve."

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