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**Vernon**  
IOWA

Police Department

Douglas J. Shannon, Chief of Police

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Mount Vernon Police Department

**2015 Annual Report**

*Douglas J. Shannon*  
*Chief of Police*



## Assaults by Type for Year

**2015**

### CRIMES AGAINST PEOPLE

Crimes against people are defined as offenses or crimes against an individual. These offenses are broken down into several categories determined by the seriousness of the offense. (i.e. Simple Harassment to class B Felony of Sexual Abuse 2<sup>nd</sup>) Included is a table detailing number of offenses for the year and percentages of those offenses as they relate to the overall category of crimes against people.

	2014	2015
Harassment	11	5
Simple Assault	9	11
Assault Causing Injury	2	4
Aggravated Assault/Weapon	0	2
Family Offenses: Domestic Abuse/No Contact order	16	15
Child Abuse/Endangerment	1	2
Interfere or Assault Officer	7	9
Indecent contact w/child	1	1
Statutory Rape/Incest	1	1
Sexual Abuse	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>52</b>

This table includes those offenses reported to MVPD for investigation. It is important to mention that police officers responded to numerous other disturbances involving assaults of some type. However, no charges were filed at the victim's request or the parties were gone prior to officer arrival. (Such is the case in many bar related disturbances.)

# Assaults by Type for Year

2015

This table reflects the number of assaults and seriousness of the offense for the past five years.

Assault Type	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Harassment	21	15	10	11	5
Simple Assault	10	7	8	9	11
Court Order Violations	2	2	1	1	2
Child Endangerment	1	0	3	1	2
Interference W/O Acts	3	2	9	7	9
Domestic	0	4	4	10	7
Simple Assault-DA	4	2	0	3	5
Domestic-with Injury	4	3	3	2	1
Assault with Injury	3	1	0	2	4
Aggravated Assault	1	0	1	0	1
Child Abuse/Fondling	5	0	0	1	1
Statutory Rape	0	0	0	1	1
Sexual Abuse	3	0	9	3	2
Armed with intent/weapon	0	0	0	0	1
Attempted Murder	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>52</b>

## Property Crimes for the Year 2015

### Theft Related Crimes

Theft related crimes covers a variety of incident types and is the largest crime group reported. This group of crimes includes: *burglary* (defined as forced entry with theft, or criminal mischief of property within that building); *forced entry to a vehicle* is also classified as a burglary; *theft from a building*, *motor vehicle theft*, *theft from a vehicle* (which includes unlocked vehicles in which property is taken), *shoplifting*, *forgery*, *fraud*, identity theft, *theft by check* (either NSF or against a closed account) and *miscellaneous theft* (which includes theft of yard ornaments, street signs, bicycles, and similar items that do not fit into one of the other defined categories).

Burglary	12
Forgery/Counterfeit	5
Theft from vehicle	28
Theft from building	8
Theft by gas drive off	6
Various fraud cases	3
Identity theft	5
Stolen Vehicle	4
Theft by check	1
Theft of vehicle parts	2
Shoplifting	7
Miscellaneous Theft	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>

The total number of property crimes in Mount Vernon has increased by 23.5% with a total of 95 property crimes in 2015. The police department continues to assist our local businesses & residents with theft prevention efforts.

In 2015 Mount Vernon experienced an increase in burglary and theft from vehicle cases as the result of two specific incident dates. On 5/20/2015 & 10/26/2015 officers received multiple burglary/theft reports from residents. In these two incident dates, suspects were

identified and arrested clearing 26 of the 28 theft from vehicle cases, and 11 of the 12 burglary reports. Burglary & theft from vehicle reports continued to be the crimes that cause the largest dollar loss. This is often due to the damage caused during these types of crimes. These cases also take up a large amount of investigation time, including time to complete reports, dusting for prints, processing evidence, taking evidence to either DCI or Cedar Rapids Police Department for processing and interviewing and obtaining statements from involved parties.

### **Criminal Mischief (Vandalism)**

Criminal mischief includes those incidents most people would call vandalism. These types of crimes are the result of damage done to private or public property that results in damage of property, resulting in the loss of use or expense to repair the property. Types of incidents that fall into this include, but are not limited to, damage to signs, car damage (i.e. vehicles scratched down the side, windows broken out, tires cut, antenna damaged), spray paint incidents and damaged bikes.

In total, these types of offenses rose slightly but remain relatively low. Previous high numbers of criminal mischief incidents were recorded in 1996 and 1998 at 107 incidents.

<b>Offense</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Criminal Mischief	38	24	11	18	22

### **Drug Related Crime**

Drug related crime covers those incidents where the primary case is drug related. (i.e.: traffic stop for speed and drug paraphernalia is observed in the vehicle, resulting in an arrest report as a result of the drug paraphernalia). Other drug related crimes may be included in other incidents, such as a traffic stop for OWI during which an illegal substance such as marijuana is discovered. In this case, the primary offense is an OWI and the marijuana possession (PCS) charge would be a secondary offense. These offenses are on the increase and could be a result of what has occurred in Colorado and other states that have legalized recreational use of marijuana. Drug related crimes account for approximately 33% of all arrests.

<b>Charge</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Possession of Controlled Substances (PCS)	19	16	21	24	30
Possession of Drug Paraphernalia (PDP)	4	7	21	29	29
Disorderly House Violations	-	-	-	4	2
OWI While Drugged	3	1	2	0	1
Attempt to Elude (drug related)	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>63</b>

<b>Alcohol Related Offenses for the Years 2011-2015</b>
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Alcohol related offenses are comprised of OWI, Possession under the Legal Age, Public Intoxication, and .02 Violations. A .02 violation refers to the law suspending driving privileges of those under the legal age of 21 who are stopped while driving a vehicle and have a blood alcohol level of .02 or greater but less than .08.

<b>Offense</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>OWI</b>	22	27	20	23	19
<b>.02</b>	1	0	0	2	0
<b>PULA</b>	11	16	9	10	11
<b>Public Intox/urination</b>	22	20	19	21	25
<b>Totals</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>55</b>

### Police Activity Summary for the Year 2015

Officers had 6,329 calls for service for 2015. This is comprised of 2,185 dispatched trips & 4,144 observed trips. (Dispatched trips are requests for services; Observed trips are officer initiated contacts such as traffic stops, building checks, parking tickets, house checks, etc).

The department completed 354 incident reports resulting in 193 arrests for the year. Our department responded to over 149 motor vehicle crashes, resulting in 91 local collision reports. Of these collisions, 13 were deer related, 19 were hit & run accidents, 74 were property damage only, 25 were injury related, 3 were unknown injury and 1 was a fatal accident.

**Other related activity:**

Theft	82	Parking Violations	169
Burglary	12	Alarms/Open doors	82
Assault	25	Felony Arrests	13
Criminal Mischief	21	Misdemeanor Arrests	101
Juvenile	46	OWI Arrests	19
Motor Vehicle Collisions	149	Towed Vehicles	38
Public Assists	5,493	Assist Agency	599
Warnings	583	Suspicious Vehicles	86
Moving Violations	188	Animal	93
Non-Moving Violations	53	Disturbances	184
Administrative Time	2106.63 hrs	Investigative Time	229.7 hrs
Cornell Related	131.65 hrs	Lisbon	51.4 hrs
Medical	60.28 hrs		

## **Department Staffing / Community Growth**

The police department operates within City Hall at 213 1<sup>st</sup> Street NW in Mount Vernon. Due to growth and increased need for space, our department also uses two other structures for evidence, records and property storage. When City Hall was built in 1988 the department consisted of four fulltime officers and four reserve officers and was designed to house four officers. The department currently consists of six full time officers and six reserve officers. The staff consists of one Chief of Police, four Patrol III Officers and one Patrol I Officer. The department has been at the current staffing levels since 1997 while our community has grown considerably both in area patrolled as well as population.

One of the two structures being used is the Old Fire Station located to the west of City Hall. The old station is being used primarily as garage space for our three patrol units. The structure provides a secure/temperature controlled environment that has helped to reduce costly vehicle repairs and damage to electronic equipment within each of the three patrol vehicles. Items include mobile data computers, printers and AED's (Automated External Defibrillators). Future renovation of this structure would provide a safe, secure and efficient office space for the police department, while opening up space in City Hall for City Staff.

In 2000, the census for Mount Vernon reflects a population of 3,390 compared to the 2010 census that shows our population at 4,506. The 2000 census included 987 Cornell College students and the 2010 census included 1191 Cornell students. This is an increase of 1,116 individuals during the 10 year period and includes an additional 204 Cornell students.

During that time period Mount Vernon experienced growth in residential developments in several areas of town, including:

- 1) Stonebrook – located west of the New High School in the South West quadrant (Approximately 100 homes)
- 2) Wolfe Martin addition – located in the NE quadrant of our community (approximately 47 homes)
- 3) Candlestick Drive – Addition that includes about 13 homes NE quadrant
- 4) Hill View Drive – the extension of Oak Ridge Estates – SE quadrant (approximately 29 homes)
- 5) Meadow Brook addition – located in the SW quadrant (approximately 35 dwellings)
- 6) Cornell College has added two significant housing facilities – Russell Hall and Smith Hall dorms located in the SW quadrant on the campus of Cornell College.

## **DARE**

In 2015, Officer Todd Gehrke facilitated both the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade D.A.R.E programs at Mount Vernon Community Middle School. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Officer Gehrke is providing instruction to approximately 107 students on core topics including consequences of drug use, self-esteem, decision making skills, and peer pressures students encounter and how to deal with that pressure. It also includes conflict resolution, how to refuse drug offers, alternative choices to drug use and other skills needed to live a drug and violence free lifestyle.

The focus of the Mount Vernon 7<sup>th</sup> grade D.A.R.E. program is similar to that of the core program used in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. During 7<sup>th</sup> grade classes, Officer Gehrke teaches approximately 97 students. The curriculum acts as a refresher to aid students in preventing or postponing the first, or future, use of drugs or alcohol by the student. These lessons cover many of the same areas as the core program, however they are more in-depth and give the students an opportunity to discuss real situations they may have encountered.

## **Police Officer Bike Program**

During 2015, Officers patrolled using a bike for a few events, including patrol shifts during Heritage Days. Bike patrol is a great resource for police response during events such as Ragbrai & Heritage Days. There currently are two certified bike officers.

## **Training Instructors**

The Mount Vernon Police Department continues to have department members trained as instructors for various applications. For instance, Officer Daniel Daubs is the department firearms instructor, Officer Gehrke is a defensive tactics instructor, and Officer Kelley is a taser instructor.

Deadly force and the use of firearms are two of the biggest areas of liability faced in law enforcement. Having certified instructors provides the opportunity to perform additional training to officers, helping to ensure proper technique and response in high risk situations, ensuring proper procedures are clear and reducing liability and injury to the suspect and officers. Weapon proficiency and safety improve with the increased number of hours spent in weapons-related training. This past year the department was able to train at the range to ensure firearms proficiency. Taser and Defensive tactics have been incorporated into yearly trainings to ensure officers are current on proper use of force and appropriate tactics when force is necessary.

Officer Daubs is the department's Precision Driving instructor, providing training to various members of the department. Officer Daubs also spends time with newly hired officers instructing them on vehicle operations within the guidelines of department policy. Topics include non-emergency, emergency and pursuit driving.

Officer Todd Gehrke is a certified instructor for the R.A.D. (Rape, Aggression, and Defense) program. Officer Gehrke holds two courses annually. The training has been well received by participants, and this year we have added another session to accommodate those interested in the training.

Officer Gehrke is also a certified TIPS (Training for Intervention Procedures) trainer and conducts annual trainings for area businesses serving and selling alcohol related beverages. His certification to train TIPS is the result of the department's ongoing partnership with the Mount Vernon Community School District's federal grant projects. The department has participated for several years with the school and other surrounding rural Linn County school districts on the DFC (Drug Free Community) grant. This is for environmental changes (such as signage) within the participating communities.

Officer Todd Gehrke is a certified ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and evacuate) instructor. The department conducts In-Service training with the Mount Vernon School District staff and Cornell College staff. Training and review of practices and procedures within the school for emergency issues is ongoing.

#### **Drug Recognition Expert**

Chief Doug Shannon has been a Drug Recognition Expert since March 2003. Since that time, Shannon has assisted several area agencies and officers with case preparation of drug impaired drivers. The department will be attempting to certify another officer as a DRE to assist with OWI-drugged investigations.

#### **Hazardous Material Training**

Officer Steve Moel is certified in the area of hazardous materials that relate to Meth Lab evidence, crime scenes and removal of related items.

#### **National Incident Management System (NIMS)**

Members of the department completed the National Incident Management System (NIMS) ISO-100, 200 and several have the NIMS 300, 400, 700 and 800 courses completed.

#### **Certified Safety Seat Belt Technician**

Officer Gehrke is certified as a Seat Belt Technician trained in the proper usage and installation of child safety seats. The department conducts safety seat belt checks as requested. Previous years witnessed the department working with Lynch Ford to hold events highlighting proper safety seat installation and use. Members of the community can call anytime to set up an appointment with Officer Gehrke to assist them in proper child seat installation and usage.

In 2015 Officer Gehrke partnered with Lynch Ford and Linn County Safe Kids Coalition to host a Child Safety Seat inspection event at Lynch Ford. In 2015 there were a record number of inspections with 26 inspections occurring during this event.

### Community Efforts to Reduce Underage Drinking & Related Issues

Chief Shannon has been working with Cornell Campus Safety Director and the Dean of Students at Cornell College to address underage drinking & drug related issues, on and off campus. Discussion focus on the problems associated or attributed to underage drinking, as well as focusing on behavior of Cornell students in general. The information exchange has been very helpful to Cornell and the police department in attempts to reduce problems in the community. This information exchange began about 7 years ago with several discussions which included business owners and students, with the goal being to make all parties aware of the issues that arise from underage drinking such as vandalism and thefts associated with that behavior. The police department has partnered with RC Rail and ASAC on developing a Social Host Ordinance in Mount Vernon that would allow civil penalties for all persons in control of the property (tenants or landlords) where underage drinking or drug use may be occurring.

### School and Community Grants

Chief Shannon and Officer Gehrke attend various meetings the RC Rail (Rural Communities Rising Above the Influence in Linn). RC Rail is based at the Mount Vernon Community School District, but works closely with other communities in Linn County as that are part of the DFC Grant. The police participate with in-kind contributions by providing school training, TIPS trainings, attending meetings and holding Community Drug Drop off events.

Police officer's meet with coalition members to discuss various community safety, prevention and substance abuse related issues. These grant projects have funded officers attending out-of-state law enforcement trainings in Texas, California and Washington DC.) These have been the direct result of the department's collaboration with the Mount Vernon School District grants.

### Community Services

The Police Department has a broad area of responsibility within the community and responds to a variety of calls for assistance. During 2015, the department responded to 2,185 dispatched calls for service and 4,144 officer initiated contacts in Mount Vernon or the surrounding area. Officers respond to all types of calls, including medicals, fire emergencies, disturbances, domestics, civil issues, drug violations, suspicious persons, car & house unlocks, child & animal abuse or neglect complaints, parking problems, traffic violations and many other community safety needs.

In 2015 Mount Vernon experienced numerous community events requiring additional police resources to ensure public safety. These events included Ragbrai, Chalk the Walk, Heritage Days, Antique Extravaganza and several Presidential campaign events, including visits from Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders and Bill Clinton.

Police officers respond to fatal incidents/accidents or other deceased individuals. Initial response involves officers checking for signs of life and rendering aid if possible. If a

person is deceased, officers begin investigating & assist the coroner in determining the cause of death. In these situations, officers have the unwanted task of making many of the notifications to friends and family. Mount Vernon police officers respond to serious highway vehicle crashes in and around Mount Vernon which often result in serious injury and occasionally death of the driver or a passenger. (Sometimes these deaths include personal close friends.)

Police officers assist the Mount Vernon Fire Department at fire-related calls by handling traffic control, evacuations and providing any other assistance requested. Additionally, Mount Vernon police respond to medical calls and are the first responders on scene to assist with medical care as needed. Officers are trained in CPR and AED use. AED's are standard equipment in each patrol vehicle.

The Department responds to calls to assist those who have locked keys in a vehicle or have been locked out of their home, assisting whenever possible. Additionally, the Department performs regular house checks for those leaving town for extended periods of time. Officers perform regular building checks of business locations and school buildings.

Police officers respond to domestic disturbances. Domestic disputes are one of the most hazardous calls law enforcement officers encounter. Additionally officer may be required to assist young children who may be present in the home, and may have witnessed violence.

Other police department activities include:

- Holding various training for businesses & organizations in the area of Fraud, NSF/Closed account checks, drug & alcohol training, and tobacco & alcohol sales;
- Making recommendations, when requested, about security features for home and businesses;
- Providing assistance with animal related problems within the community;
- Assisting with the identification of lighting, signage and other safety issues and forwarding those concerns to City Hall for repairs or installation;
- Acting as a sounding board for someone when they have not received the response or result they were seeking in a City or other personal matter;

Additionally, the Department performs routine patrol around schools, businesses and homes to reduce crime and lesson the opportunity for someone to commit a serious crime. Officers issue traffic citations to correct inappropriate driving behavior, as established by society, to reduce the chance of injury or death associated with vehicle crashes, and to reduce costs incurred during those crashes.

The police department is a resource for those individuals who have been victimized by crime. Officers investigate criminal activity, identify those associated with it and charge those individuals involved when certain criteria is met. The department becomes the agency responsible for forwarding charges and reports to the County Attorney, and City Attorney when necessary, to resolve an incident.

#### Department Technology Changes

The Court system has begun requiring department to file paperwork, criminal charges, civil processes and other legal documents electronically. Officers use software provided by the State of Iowa to complete crash reporting, citations, criminal complaints, OWI processing and many other day to day reports. Officers use mobile computers, scanners and printers to complete these tasks in the field. Additionally the mobile computers have improved officer efficiency and communication by using mobile computers to check databases and communicate directly with officers and dispatchers. This advancement, however, comes with a cost of hardware, software and support. The department is currently in the process of replacing the mobile computers with rugged tablets.

Body cameras and in-car video advancements also have added to the cost of providing service to our community. High profile incidents across the country have changed the way many departments report and document contacts with violators and others that we have contact with during patrol. The hardware and back end support are costs that have made an impact on our department budget however I believe supporting this new technology is in the best interest of our community. The video has proven to be a necessary component of policing. Our department has used captured video to aid in criminal prosecution and assist with internal investigation when complaints against officers are brought forward. The video has also proven valuable in protecting the city against civil litigation claims.

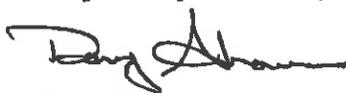
## SUMMARY

This report has outlined a variety of calls and services the Mount Vernon Police Department provides to the citizens of Mount Vernon. This report is not all-inclusive, but only a synopsis of what our officers experience. While much of law enforcement involves responding to incidents as they occur, mitigating them as safely, effectively, and efficiently as possible, the most important part of our profession is the relationships we form with the citizens we serve.

As the Chief of Police, I am hopeful this information will provide citizens with the insight to the department's activities for 2015.

All of these activities are carried out or performed to maintain order, build positive relationships and provide a safe environment for everyone whether, residing in Mount Vernon or visiting our Community.

Respectfully submitted,



Doug Shannon

Chief of Police