



**Greene County Sheriff's Office**  
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Greensboro, Georgia 30642

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ATHENS, GA  
PERMIT #11

# SHERIFF'S LINE

**DO NOT CROSS SHERIFF'S LINE DO NOT CROSS CRIME SCENE**

## 12 Years & Looking Forward

June 2009

### What is Happening at School?



On the average 28 people will die this year in our Nation's schools. That is, if no unforeseen disaster strikes! This has been the norm over the last 14 years, and as such 395 people are dead! There was a time when it was public policy to build our schools so that the design was inviting to all people. It was suppose to help overcome the stigma of segregation and be a bill board to welcome all people to the warmth of education. Well folks, times have changed and the term "all people" includes dangerous psychopaths, misguided children armed with guns, and adults who plan to commit a crime on campus. The National School Safety Center reports that nearly 3 million crimes are committed on or near a school campus each year, accounting for

1. National School Safety Center

11% of all reported crimes in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

In the 20 years that I have been in law enforcement, I have paid close attention to the young people of the communities and have found that they are quite often at the heart of what is happening and they network better than adults. Sometimes children bring the affects of crime with them to school. It matters not where a crime occurs, if a young person is a victim or a witness, the Sheriff's Office gets a call. We are called by teachers, counselors, principals, parents, and sometimes by staff members. Our mission is not to arrest somebody; the mission is to keep the peace, use common sense while enforcing the law, and to contribute to the overall mission of safety for students, staff, and community.

A study released by the U.S. Secret Service in 2002 examined school shootings and school-based attacks from 1974 to 2000 with the purpose of determining the characteristics of the perpetrators so the administrators could identify them and get them help before the violence erupted. Unfortunately, the study uncovered no set profile. What it did discover, however, is that almost

three in four of the attackers felt BULLIED, and only one in three had received a mental health evaluation. I do not know about the rest of the nation, but the mental health profession in Georgia has FAILED! The state of Georgia has also failed to properly fund mental health. And as a result, our schools and jails are reaping with mental health issues that are so costly that it is easier for the state to ignore them rather than face them, leaving local governments to cover the cost.

Where do we go from here? All of us are feeling the pinch of our uncertain economic times. Revenues have dropped off and budgets are being cut. Government officials have to make tough decisions about which services need to be cut, or cancelled. While I believe that the Greene County School District will need to continue some type of police or security presence, I do not think that it will be the Sheriff's Office meeting those needs. In a time when the economy is struggling, crime is usually on the rise. Further cuts to the Sheriff's budget will require a reduction in force. This will demand our 100% full attention to be directed towards fighting crime in the County.



SHERIFF CHRIS HOUSTON

It is hard to believe that 12 years have passed since I first took office as your Sheriff. I should first give proper credit to GOD for the blessings and protection that have sustained all members of the Sheriff's Office over the years. I also would like to thank you for allowing me to run unopposed for the last two terms and for your continued support!

Almost twenty years ago Advance Auto Parts ran an advertisement proclaiming that their best part was their people. This is also true of the sheriff's office; our people are our best part! Fortune 1000 companies are now conducting intelligence test for employ-

ees that will fill jobs that require a great deal of discretion. In law enforcement, most every assignment requires the greatest level of discretion and our employment pool does not include Harvard graduates. Nonetheless we now have a great staff and we are fortunate to have them! However, it will be a great challenge for us to keep them if and when the economy recovers. At that time many people who are highly marketable will return to the private industry for better pay.

Recently the Commissioners created a hazardous duty pay incentive of one dollar an hour for patrol officers and a nighttime differential of 50 cents an hour for all county employees who have to work night shifts. While these types of incentives do help with turnover issues, they also inflate the Sheriff's Budget. Keep in mind that this was the same Commissioners that were complaining a few months ago about the budget being too high. I estimate that these pay incentives will cost Greene County around 85,000 a year depending on overtime and other variables. I support our deputies and staff being paid well, but times are hard and I will be looking at the total budget for ways to cut. So far we have been able to keep crime down in spite of the failing economy. If things remain the same for much longer, we should expect an increase in crime.

The budget woes are among us for certain, however it is during poor economic times that law enforcement is needed the most. We are pulling our belt tight and are looking for new and more efficient ways of fighting crime. At some point though, additional budget cuts could require us to lay off people which will equate to a reduction in services. This year we have applied for a grant that would save some jobs if we are awarded the grant. I hope to hear from the budget submissions and the grant by September.

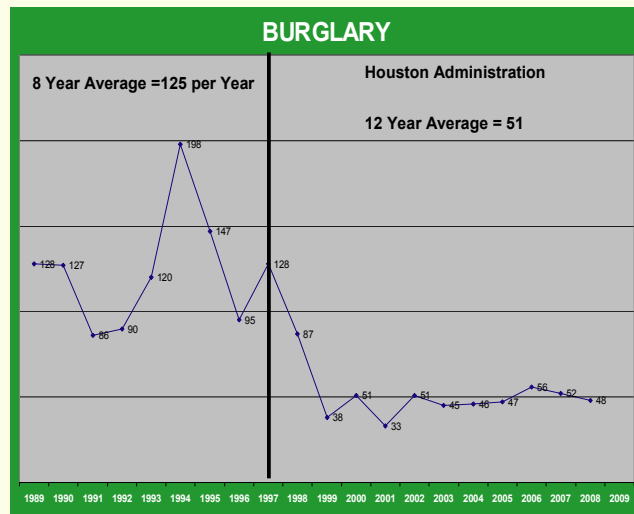
As for the future, one of our goals for the coming years will be to develop the next generation of law enforcement leaders for Greene County. In our desire to address the immediate needs of the County, we sometimes fail to plan for the future. We have put together a talented corps of deputies, at all levels. They are faced daily with a variety of challenges, competing demands, and ever-changing community expectations. They need our continued support!



# Crime Statistics for Greene County

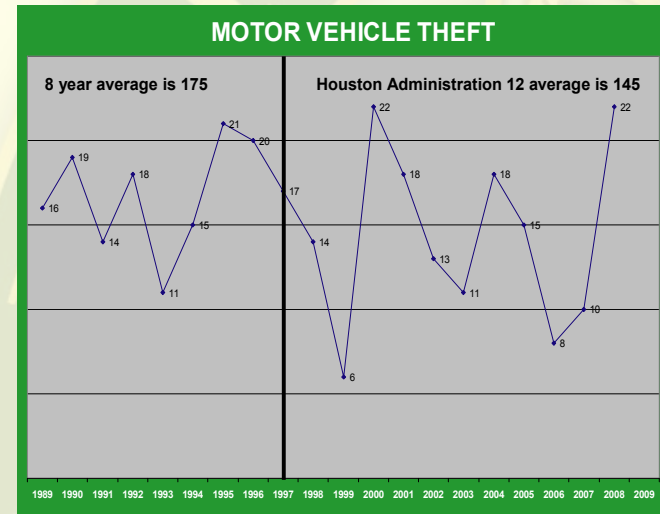
## BURGLARY

8 years prior to the Houston Administration Greene averaged 126 burglaries a year. During the past 12 years that Sheriff Houston has been in office the burglary rate has been reduced to an average of 51 per year. This could be looked at as 900 burglaries that did not happen over the last 12 years as a result of Sheriff Houston and his staff.



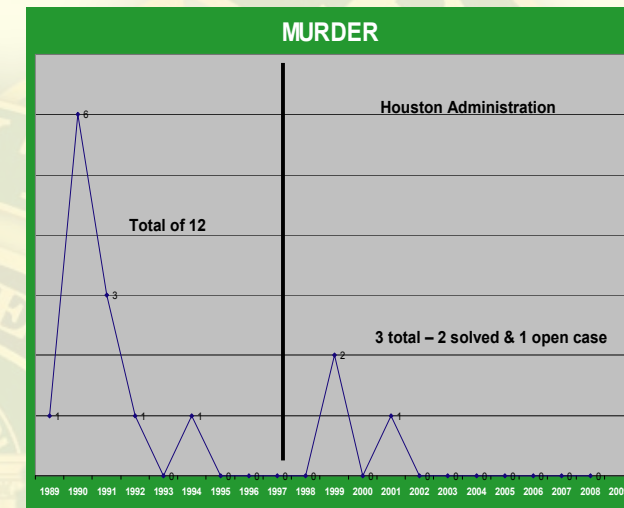
## MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT

As you can see the crime of motor vehicle theft is a trend that is up one year and down the next. We can thank Interstate 20 and our close proximity to Atlanta for this type crime. I am afraid that there will come a day when violent crime will follow this path.



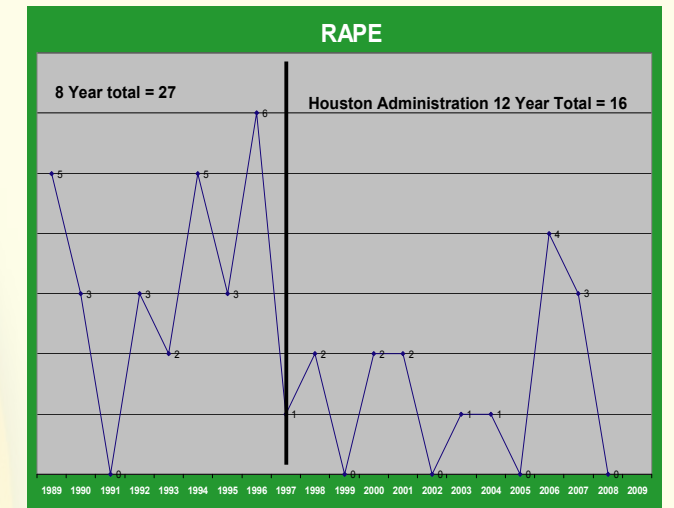
## MURDER

8 years prior to the Houston Administration Greene had a total of 12 Murders. In the 12 years of the Houston administration there has been 3 murders with two convictions and one open case.



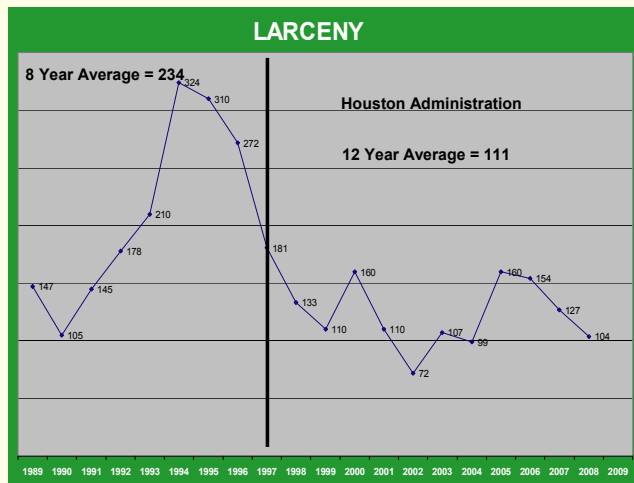
## RAPE

8 years prior to the Houston administration there were a total of 27 reported rapes. In the 12 years of the Houston administration there have been 16 reported rapes.



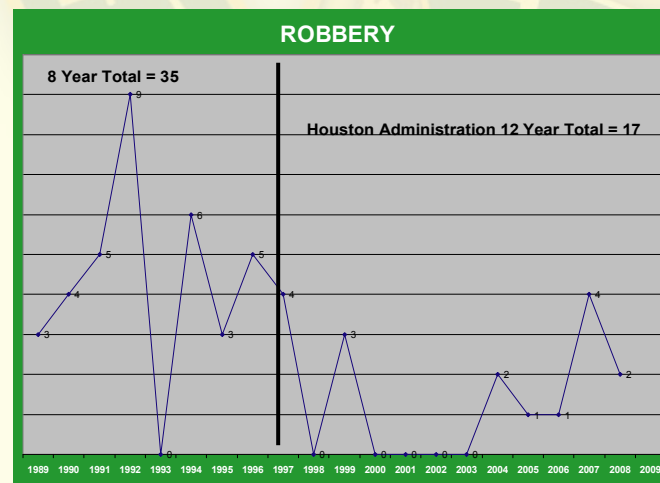
## THEFT BY TAKING

8 years prior to the Houston Administration Greene averaged 234 thefts a year. During the 12 years that Sheriff Houston has been in office the theft rate has been reduced to an average of 111 per year.



## ROBBERY

8 years prior to the Houston Administration Greene had a total of 35 robberies. During the 12 years that Sheriff Houston has been in office Greene had a total of 17 robberies.



## ASSAULTS

Initially it was believed by the GBI that the substantial increase in assaults could be attributed to the victims reporting at a higher rate out of a belief that law enforcement would take appropriate action under a new administration. This statistic can be misleading in that this is the only one that consists of 4 different criminal charges: simple assault, aggravated assault, simple battery, and aggravated battery. The previous sheriffs may not have reported this way which would help to explain the difference in the numbers.

Please take a minute to visit [www.greeneso.org](http://www.greeneso.org) and register so we can keep you informed on issues in and around our county.

