



STATE OF DELAWARE
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
February 25, 2010

Delaware Major Crimes
2005 Thru 2009

This report provides a summary of changing monthly major reported crime between calendar year 2005 and December 2009. The purpose of this report is to provide a timely means of tracking recent crime trends. While this analysis is helpful, it should not be viewed as the state's official crime report. The official data is based on the State Bureau of Identifications National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which is much more comprehensive, but not as timely. This report focuses on the major crimes listed in the table below because they represent the greatest risk to public safety and because they are the most likely to result in pre-trial detention and subsequent sentences to jail or prison – and therefore they are most likely to have a significant impact on criminal justice operations and costs.

Types of Reported Crimes Included in the Report

Homicide: Title 11 Sections 631 thru 636, excluding unintentional vehicular homicide

Felony Sex Crimes: Title 11 Sections 768 thru 776 and 778 that consists of Rape 1st thru 4th, Unlawful Sexual Contact 1st and 2nd, and Sexual Extortion and Continuous Sexual Abuse of a Child

Robbery Title 11 Sections 831, 832, 835 and 836 that consists of Robbery 1st and 2nd, Carjacking 1st and 2nd

Felony Assault: Title 11 Sections 612 and 613 that consists of Assault 1st and 2nd -- and Attempted Murder.

Burglary: Title 11 Sections 824 thru 826 that consists of Burglary 1st thru 3rd

Drug Dealing: Title 16 Sections 4751, 4752 and 4753A that consists of Possession with the Intent to Deliver (PWITD) and Drug Trafficking



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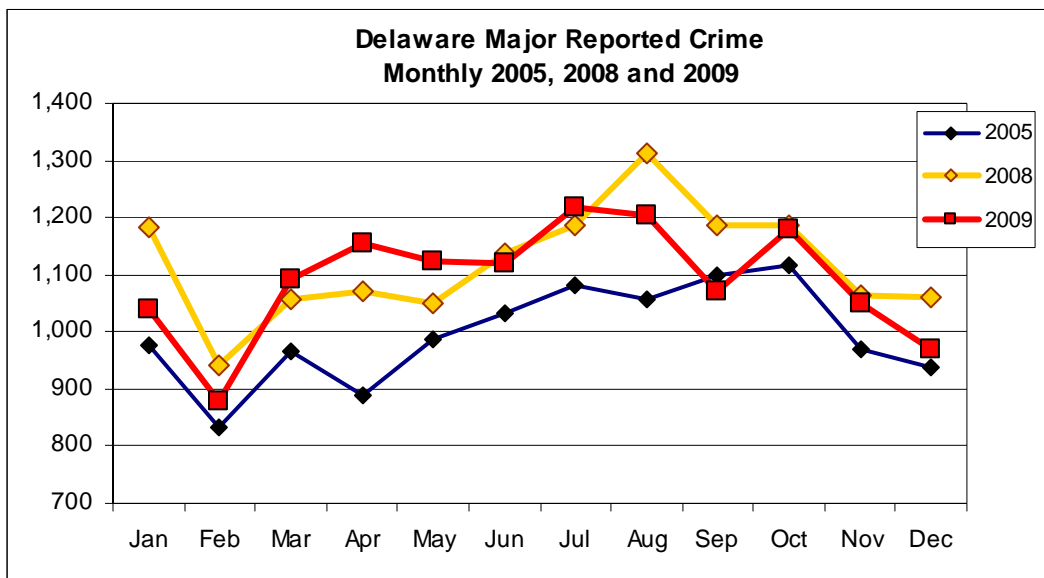
What have the Most Recent Crime Trends Been?

Between 2005 and 2008, major crimes reported have increased 12.4 percent from 11,945 to 13,431 with 2008 being the highest year. With the current economic downturn, conventional wisdom indicates that crime could be on the increase. So it is with some interest that the returns for 2009 are being discussed. As shown in Table 1, reported major crimes have decreased 2.4 percent in 2009 when compared to 2008. In 2009, homicide, robbery and assault, the crimes most related to illegal use of firearms, are lower than 2008. Sex crimes are down 9.1 percent, and drug crimes are 8.9 percent lower than the last year. Offsetting this decrease in violence and illicit drug cases is a 3.9 percent increase in burglary. Overall, the number of reported major crimes decreased by 327 in 2009; from 13,431 in 2008 to 13,104 in 2009. Burglary has a much lower arrest-to-reported-crime ratio (25.4 percent) than the other major crimes that range from 48.7 percent for assault to a high of 98.2 percent for drugs. Therefore the increase in burglary has only a minimal impact on criminal justice system operations. Chart 1 shows that since June of 2009, major reported crimes were lower than the same months in 2008, except for July.

Table 1: Reported Major Crimes Decreased in 2009

	2009	2008	Count Change	Percent Change
Homicide	42	57	-15	-26.3%
Sex	630	693	-63	-9.1%
Robbery	1,692	1,849	-157	-8.5%
Assault	1,338	1,479	-141	-9.5%
Burglary	7,153	6,884	269	3.9%
Drugs	2,249	2,469	-220	-8.9%
Total	13,104	13,431	-327	-2.4%

Chart 1

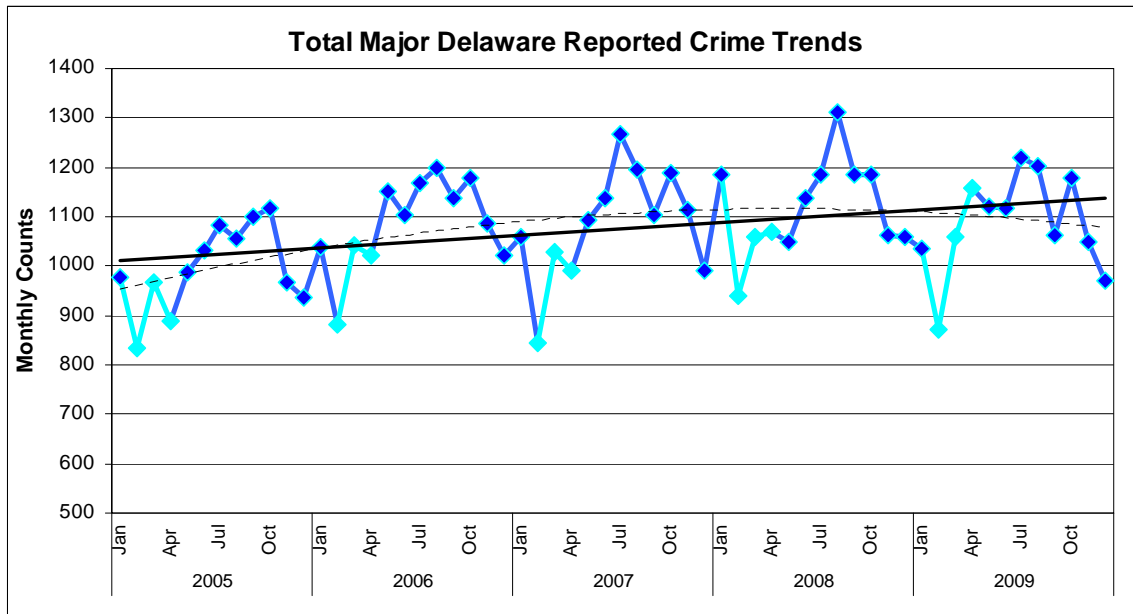


What is the Long-term Crime Trend?

Chart 2 below shows the monthly major reported crime counts in Delaware since January of 2005. The solid straight line (linear trend) shows an approximate 15 percent increase in major crime between January 2005 and third quarter of 2009. Interestingly, however, the “polynomial fit,” which is a method of curve fitting that is more sensitive to changes over time, indicates the major crimes in Delaware have started to decrease beginning in 2008. Which representation is more accurate? At this point it is not possible to really know, as the trend results at this time are mixed. The long term linear trend indicates a continued growth in major crimes, while the polynomial fit indicates that a turning point may have been reached.

Another important finding seen in Chart 2 is that there is a strong seasonal down turn in reported major crime in the first quarter of most years. An aberration occurred in 2008, when the decrease was not as large as previous years. This means the 2009 versus 2008 decrease in major crimes is in part an aberration too. The downturn in first quarter major crime in 2009, which created a lot of attention, is not that exceptional when it is compared to 2007, 2006 or 2005 (light blue).

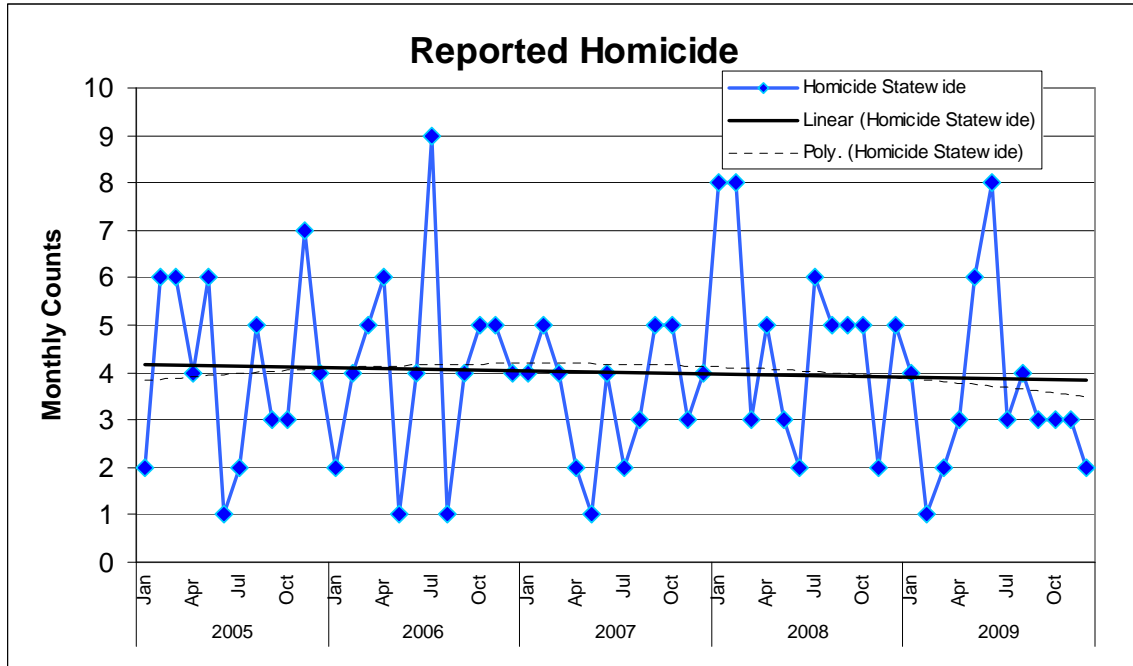
Chart 2



Crime Trends by Type of Crime

Chart 3 shows the reported homicides between 2005 and 2009. On average, the linear trend shows that there are 4 reported homicides per month in Delaware. Although homicide counts decreased in 2009, the homicide linear trend line and the polynomial curve indicate a stable long term pattern indicating that homicides may continue to follow the historical pattern.

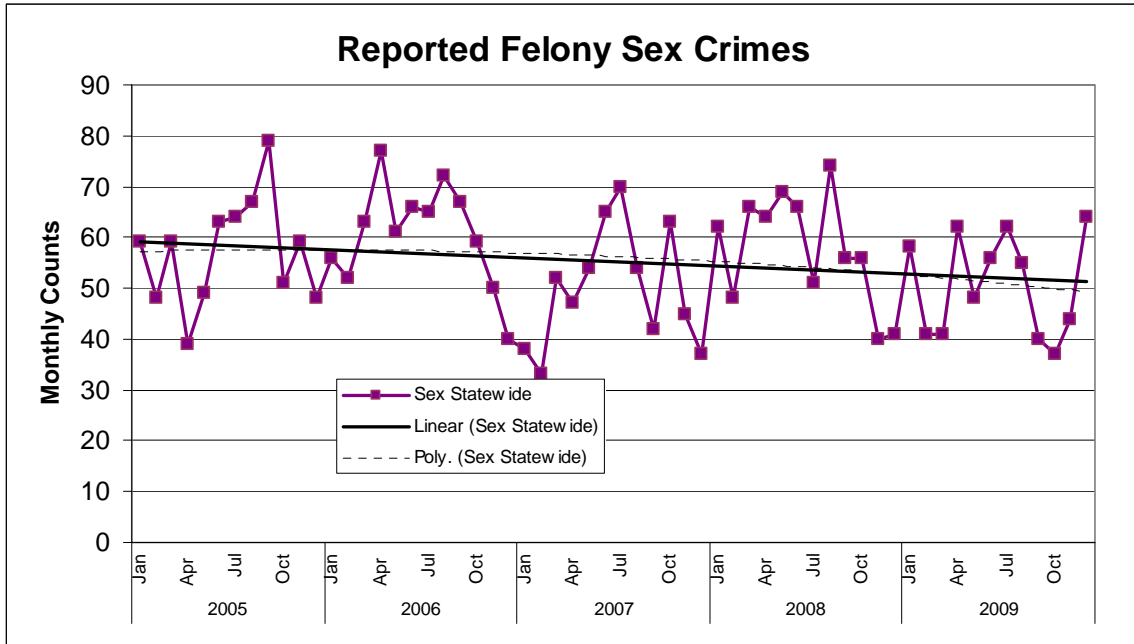
Chart 3



	Statewide Reported Homicide												Annual	Percent Change
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		
2005	2	6	6	4	6	1	2	5	3	3	7	4	49	
2006	2	4	5	6	1	4	9	1	4	5	5	4	50	2.0%
2007	4	5	4	2	1	4	2	3	5	5	3	4	42	-16.0%
2008	8	8	3	5	3	2	6	5	5	5	2	5	57	35.7%
2009	4	1	2	3	5	8	4	4	3	3	3	2	42	-26.3%

Chart 4 shows the reported felony sex crime trend between 2005 and 2009. The felony sex crime linear trend line and the polynomial curve indicate a gradual, but small, decrease in felony sex crimes. The monthly number of felony sex crimes has decreased from about 60 per month to about 50 per month by 2009.

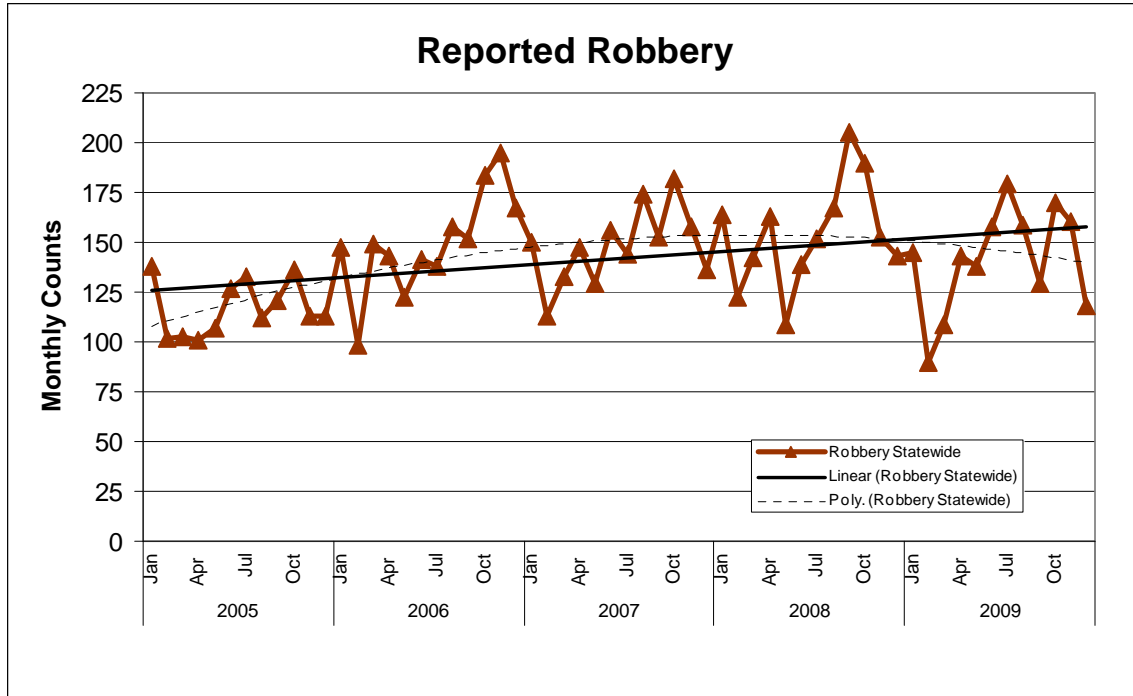
Chart 4



	Statewide Reported Felony Sex Crimes												Percent Change	
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual	
2005	59	48	59	39	49	63	64	67	79	51	59	48	685	
2006	56	52	63	77	61	66	65	72	67	59	50	40	728	6.3%
2007	38	33	52	47	54	65	70	54	42	63	45	37	600	-17.6%
2008	62	48	66	64	69	66	51	74	56	56	40	41	693	15.5%
2009	58	43	47	63	49	60	63	57	45	37	44	64	630	-9.1%

The polynomial fit for robbery in Chart 5 shows that we experienced an increase in robbery between 2005 and 2007, but since then we have experienced a small decrease. Per the polynomial fit, the average number of monthly robberies increased from about 100 in 2005 to just over 150 in the summer of 2007. Since then there has been a small decrease back to about 135 per month. However, the linear trend shows a steadily increasing trend. At this point the projections are mixed, however the 8.5 percent decrease in robberies in 2009 may be a positive future indicator.

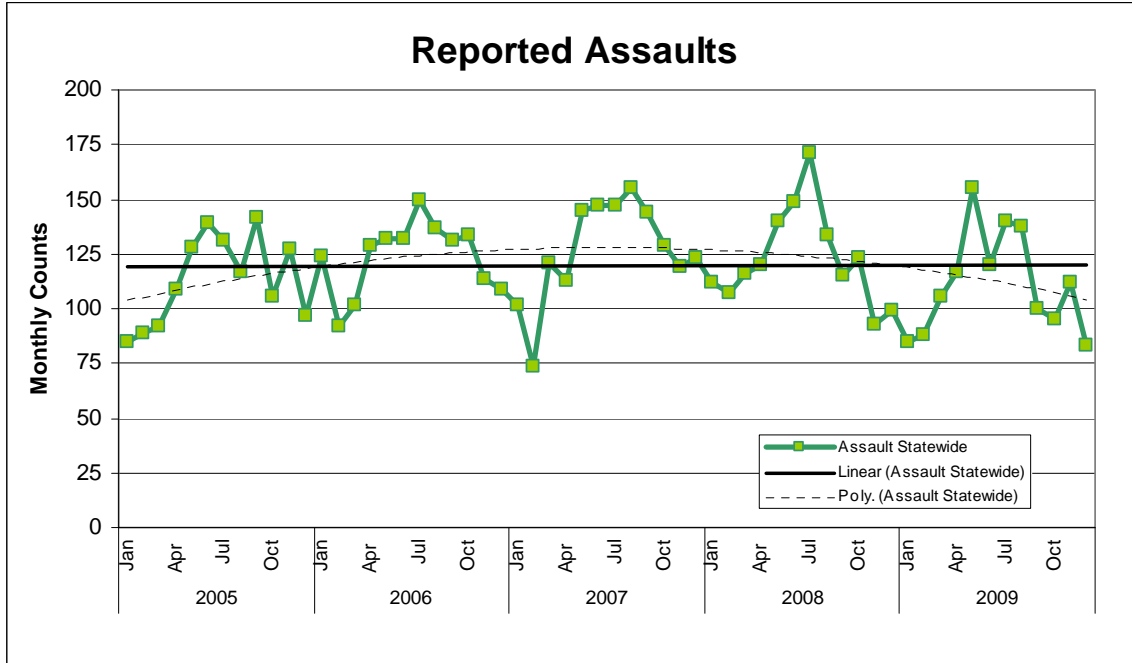
Chart 5



	Statewide Reported Robbery												Percent Change	
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual	
2005	138	102	103	101	107	127	133	112	121	136	113	113	1,406	
2006	147	98	149	143	122	141	138	158	152	184	195	167	1,794	27.6%
2007	150	113	133	147	129	156	144	174	153	182	158	136	1,775	-1.1%
2008	164	122	142	163	109	139	152	167	205	190	153	143	1,849	4.2%
2009	145	89	109	143	138	157	178	158	127	170	160	118	1,692	-8.5%

Assaults have been averaging about 120 per month since 2006. While the linear trend is flat, the polynomial fit shows we are experiencing a decrease in assaults. This decrease is reflected in the year-to-year count summaries where assaults show a 2.6 percent decrease in 2008 and a 9.5 percent decrease in 2009.

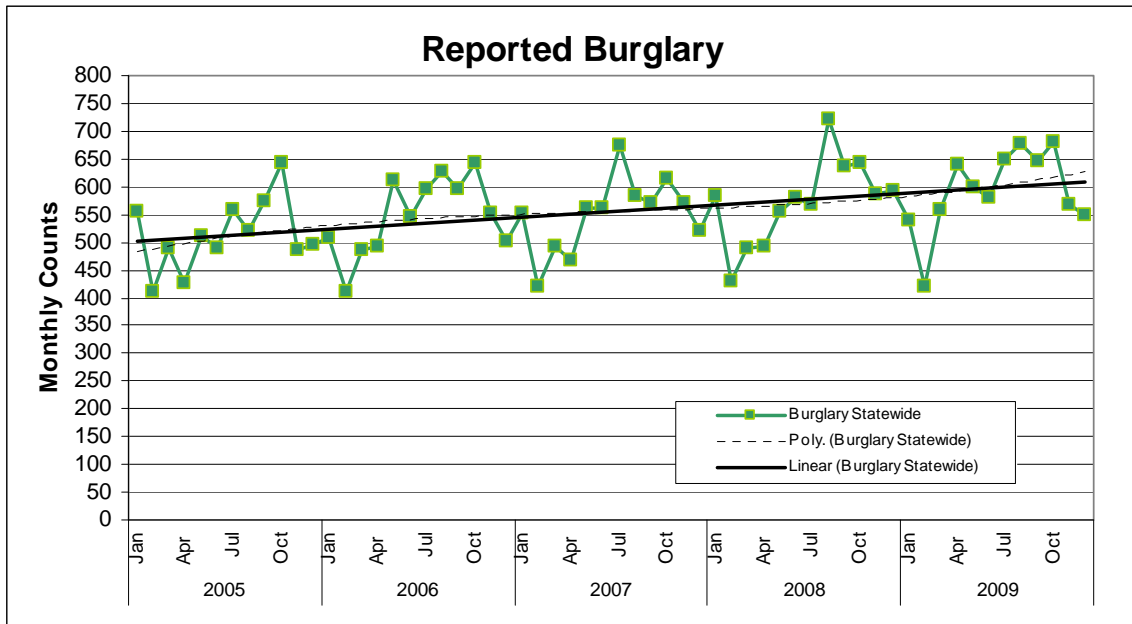
Chart 6



	Statewide Reported Assault												Percent Change	
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual	
2005	85	89	92	109	128	139	131	117	142	106	127	97	1,362	
2006	124	92	102	129	132	132	150	137	131	134	114	109	1,486	9.1%
2007	102	74	121	113	145	147	147	155	144	129	119	123	1,519	2.2%
2008	112	107	116	120	140	149	171	134	115	123	93	99	1,479	-2.6%
2009	86	88	105	117	155	121	138	138	100	95	112	83	1,338	-9.5%

Both the linear trend and the polynomial fit in Chart 7 show that we have been experiencing and will most likely continue to experience an increase in the number of reported burglaries. In 2005 we experienced, on average, about 500 burglaries per month and by the end of 2009 we could be experiencing nearly 560 per month. In 2009, the polynomial trend is starting to increase faster than the long term linear trend. This may indicate that burglary may exceed the 3.9 percent growth we have experienced in 2009.

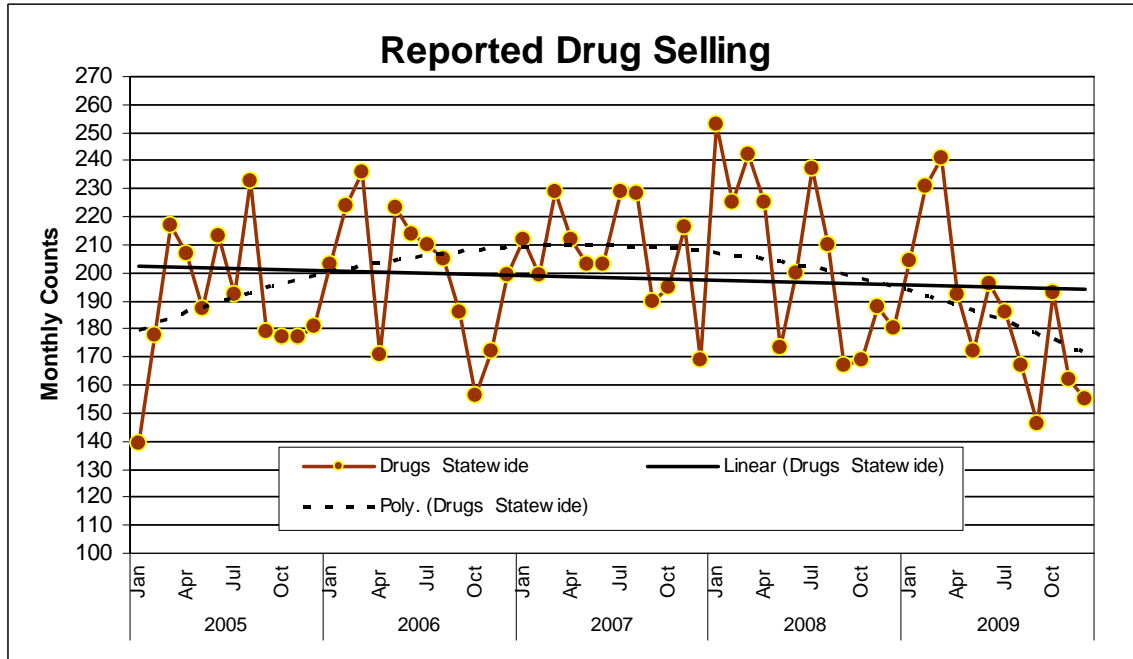
Chart 7



	Statewide Reported Burglary												Annual	Percent Change
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		
2005	555	410	489	428	511	489	560	522	575	644	485	495	6,163	
2006	508	411	487	494	613	546	596	626	596	642	552	502	6,573	6.7%
2007	553	421	491	469	561	561	675	583	571	616	571	521	6,593	0.3%
2008	585	431	489	493	555	580	569	723	638	642	587	592	6,884	4.4%
2009	543	425	588	639	603	579	650	679	648	682	568	549	7,153	3.9%

The polynomial fit in Chart 8 indicates that a decreasing trend for reported illicit drug selling started in 2007. The linear trend is negative, when in early reports it still showed a small increasing trend. While still at a high level, after a decade of increasing illicit drug selling cases, the trend has appeared to reverse. In 2008 we experienced an average of 206 reported drug selling events per month and in 2009 that count has decreased to 187 per month.

Chart 8



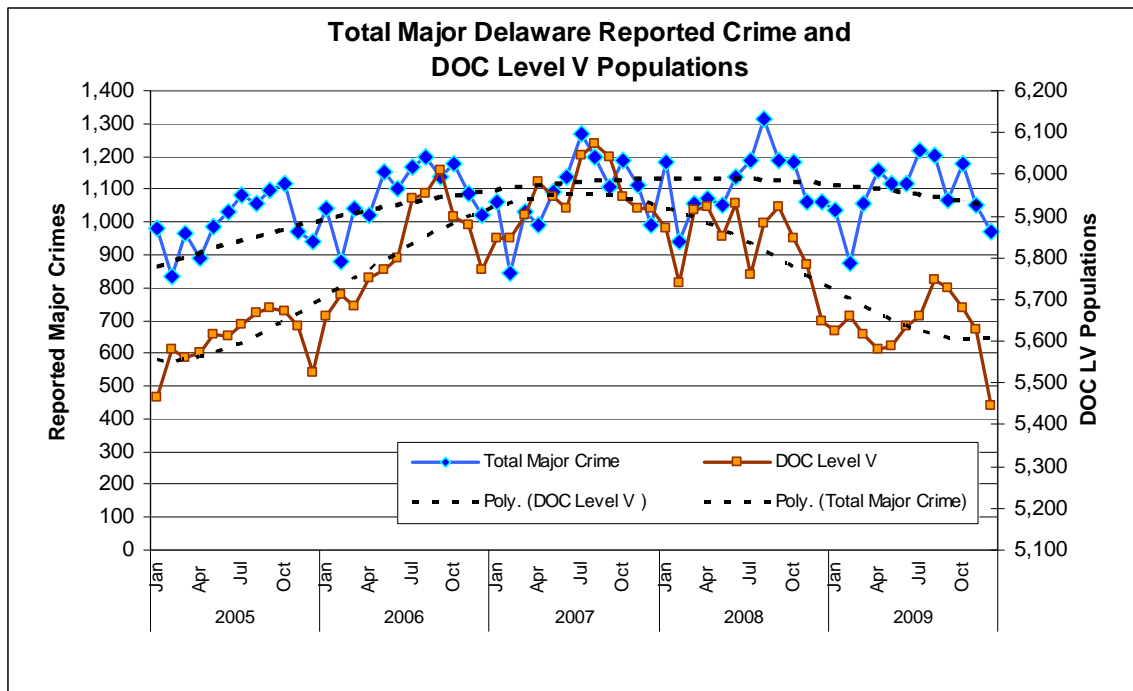
	Statewide Reported Drug Selling												Annual	Percent Change
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		
2005	139	178	217	207	187	213	192	233	179	177	177	181	2,280	
2006	203	224	236	171	223	214	210	205	186	156	172	199	2,399	5.2%
2007	212	199	229	212	203	203	229	228	190	195	216	169	2,485	3.6%
2008	253	225	242	225	173	200	237	210	167	169	188	180	2,469	-0.6%
2009	205	231	242	191	173	196	186	167	148	193	162	155	2,249	-8.9%

What is the Relationship between Reported Major Crime and Department of Correction Level V populations?

Reported major crimes included in this analysis (homicide, felony sexual assault, robbery, assault, burglary and drug selling) to some degree are factors affecting the size of the DOC Level V populations. The DOC Level V populations in this report include offenders housed in a DOC facility as pre-trial detainees, sentenced offenders (ranging from a short jail term to life without the possibility of release), and Level IV offenders housed at a Level V facility awaiting space at Level IV.

Chart 9 provides a comparison showing the relationship of reported major crimes and the DOC Level V populations. In a very general sense, as expected, they are related. That is as reported crime increased the DOC Level V population increased, and as reported crime decreased so did the DOC Level V population. While the direction of change makes some sense the degree of change does not. The DOC Level V population varies to a much greater degree than the reported crime. This indicates that there are intervening actions that have as much, and maybe even more, independent influence on the DOC Level V population. Previous DelSAC studies have shown that changing VOP and prosecutorial patterns have significant independent impact on the DOC population (DelSAC January 2005 and January 2008). The sharp decrease in the DOC population in December of 2009 is a seasonal decrease that is usually followed by an increase in the population in January of the next year. For instance in January 2010, the DOC population has returned again to the 5,600 level.

Chart 9



Crime Measures and Caveats

With the exception of homicide, crimes are counted as single events based on one or more occurrence within a complaint number. Homicide complaint counts are increased to the number of victims in complaints with multiple victims. This is a simpler method and is markedly different from official NIBRS reporting where all crimes against persons are counted by the number of victims. Multiple crimes in a single complaint may be counted in more than one of the selected crime groups (that is, there is no hierarchical filtering of crime counts). Statutes referenced in the most recent crime supplement for each incident report identify the crimes. All groups include attempted crimes except for homicide; attempted homicide is included in the felony assault group.

A hazard related to providing timely crime reporting is that it takes time for the information to be put into the computer system and even longer in some cases to be finalized. This is most noticeable in the area of homicides that tend to get immediate detailed media coverage, but are cases that take some time for the investigation to finalize the legal results for entry into the computer files. For instance, in the first half of 2008, there were 29 media references to homicide of which 26 are posted on the crime computer files. Interestingly, there were four other cases that had been posted as homicides earlier, but in the most recent “police supplements” these cases had flawed information that took them off the homicide list, at least temporarily reducing the count from 26 to 22. When the dust settles it is expected that most of these cases “under review” will be listed as part of the homicide counts. To take into account the fluidity of crime information, updates to this report include updating reported crimes and arrests going back to the most recent calendar year. Therefore, while the system reflects actual crimes near real time, the most recent months of this report should be read to some degree as being preliminary as complex cases may take more time to investigate and to enter into the computer system.

This information is extracted from the Delaware Criminal Justice Information System’s (DelJISs) crime complaint files. The methodology for this report was prepared in consultation with DelJIS, the Delaware State Police’s State Bureau of Identification (SBI) and the Attorney General’s Office. It is important to know that this is unofficial crime information based on the most recent and accurate interpretation of active files that are frequently updated. The official Delaware crime data is provided annually through SBI’s National Incident Based Crime Reporting System, which includes a process that meets national standards of measurement using scores of edits, verifications and corrections.