

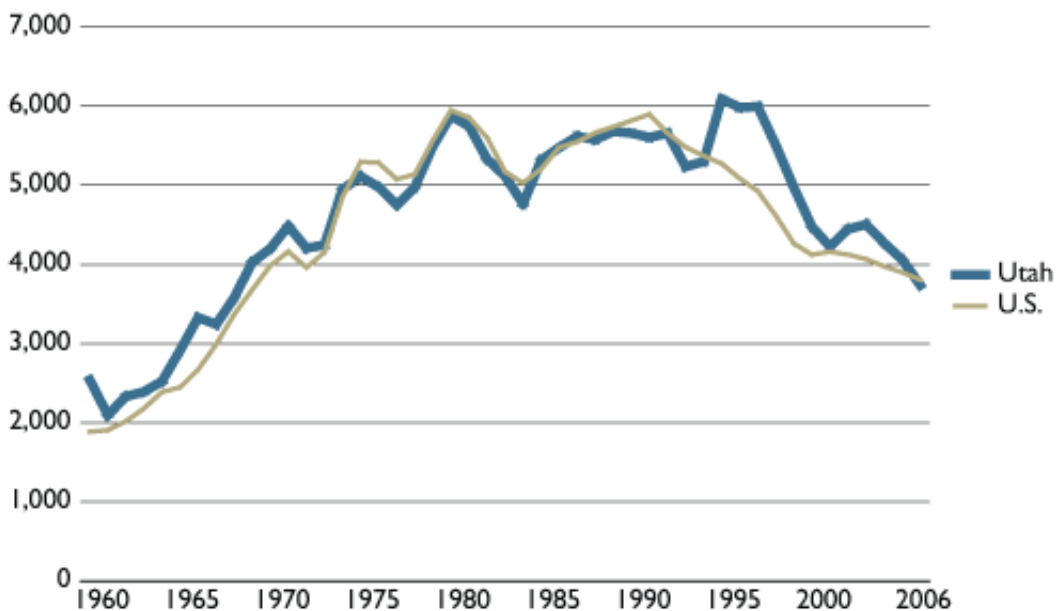
Taking a Bite Out of Crime: 46 Years of Utah Crime Statistics

August 15, 2008

The 2008 Utah Priorities Survey revealed “Crime & Security” to be the sixth-highest issue of concern for Utah residents. Specifically, violent crimes, property crimes, identity theft, sex crimes, and children’s safety were considered “concerning” or “very concerning” for the vast majority of those surveyed.

Figure 1 shows “index crime” rates in Utah and the United States. Index crimes are the crimes reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for its annual Uniform Crime Report (UCR).[1] Since 1960, Utah’s crime rate has generally followed the national trend. After 1994, Utah saw an unusual increase in crime rates while the nation saw a significant decline. One possible explanation for this unusual increase is that it resulted from a change in reporting systems in the Utah State Courts. Until 1992, the circuit courts and district courts remained separate, utilizing the Trial Court Information System (TCIS) and the District Court Information System (DCIS), respectively. Between 1992 and 1996, the Circuit Courts and District Courts combined under a new case management system, the Court Records Information System (CORIS). This change in reporting systems may have affected reported crime rates. Utah’s crime rate fell after 1997 but remained above the national rate until 2006, when it dropped below the national crime rate for the first time in more than a decade.

Figure 1: Index Crimes per 100,000 Population, Utah and U.S.



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

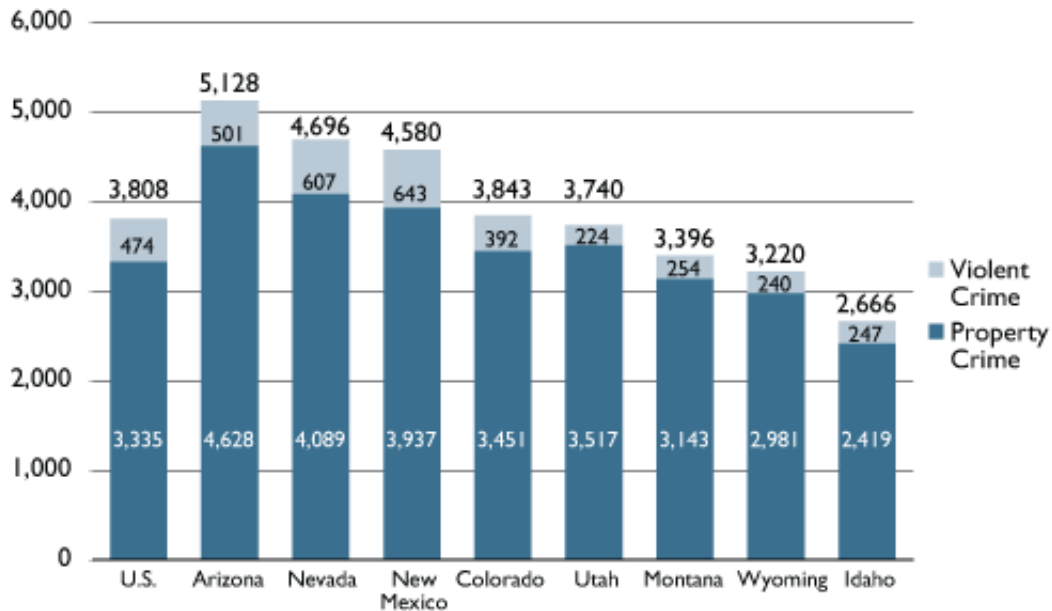
The United States experienced significant declines in its crime rates beginning in the 1990s, while Utah’s crime rate did not begin to drop until the end of the 1990s. Various theories exist as to why this crime decline occurred, including an increase in the number of police officers, an increase in the prison population, and a decrease in the number of males aged 15-25, a demographic group responsible for a large portion of total crimes; for example, in 2006, Utah males aged 15-24 were 8.9% of the population yet were 35% of the offenders involved in index crimes. While researchers have been unable to prove exactly why this decline occurred, Utah’s per capita expenditures for police protection do appear to have some correlation with the decrease in Utah’s crime rate.

During this period, Utah’s drop in crime lagged behind the drop in the national crime rate. After peaking in 1995 and leveling off in 1997, crime rates dramatically dropped by 29.5% between 1997 and 2001. During this same time, Utah’s per capita state and local government spending on police protection began to significantly

increase. Between 1996 and 1997, Utah's per capita expenditures increased from \$131 (versus \$168 nationally) to \$148 (compared with \$178 nationwide); as a result, Utah's state rank in per capita expenditures went from being 32nd to 26th highest in the country. Utah has continued to close the gap between its per capita expenditures and the nation's, and between 1991 and 2005 it increased per capita expenditures 61%, compared to a national increase of 35.2% (adjusted for inflation).

In terms of the amount of crime, Utah's crime rate has fallen by 30.6% since its peak in 1995. Utah currently has the 27th highest index crime rate, with a rate of 3,740 index crimes per 100,000 people, compared with the national index crime rate of 3,808.^[2] Index crimes are classified as either violent crimes or property crimes. Violent crimes include murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, aggravated assault, and robbery. Property crimes include burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. Figure 2 compares the overall, violent, and property crime rates of Utah with the rates of other mountain states, as well as the national average rates.

Figure 2: Index Crimes Per 100,000 Population, Rocky Mountain States and U.S., 2006

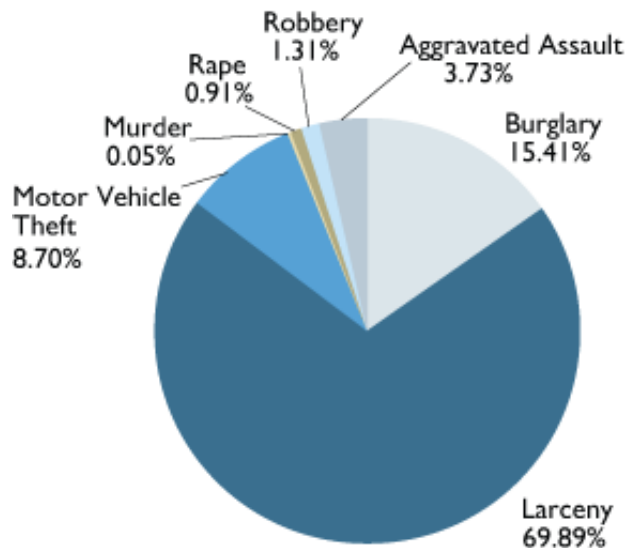


Source: FBI.

Violent Crimes

With a violent crime rate well below the national rate (224.4 versus 473.5 violent crimes per 100,000 people), Utah continues to be one of the safest places to live in the United States in terms of violent crime. Only South Dakota, New Hampshire, Vermont, North Dakota, and Maine have lower rates of violent crime. Of all the crimes committed in Utah in 2006, violent crimes accounted for only 6% of the total, with property crimes accounting for the remaining 94% (see Figure 3).

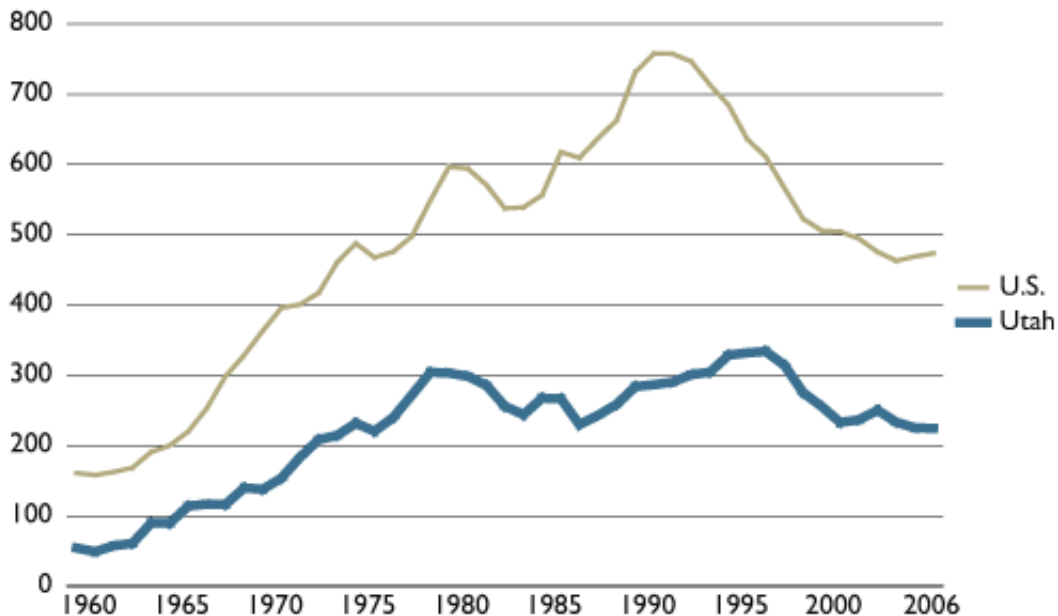
Figure 3: Index Crimes by Offense in Utah, 2006



Source: FBI.

While Utah's violent crime rate has been consistently lower than the national average, it has nonetheless followed national trends (Figure 4). Since a peak in violent crimes in 1997, the violent crime rate in Utah has fallen 32.8% as of 2006. During the same time period, the United States violent crime rate decreased 22.5%.

Figure 4: Violent Crimes per 100,000 Population, Utah and U.S.



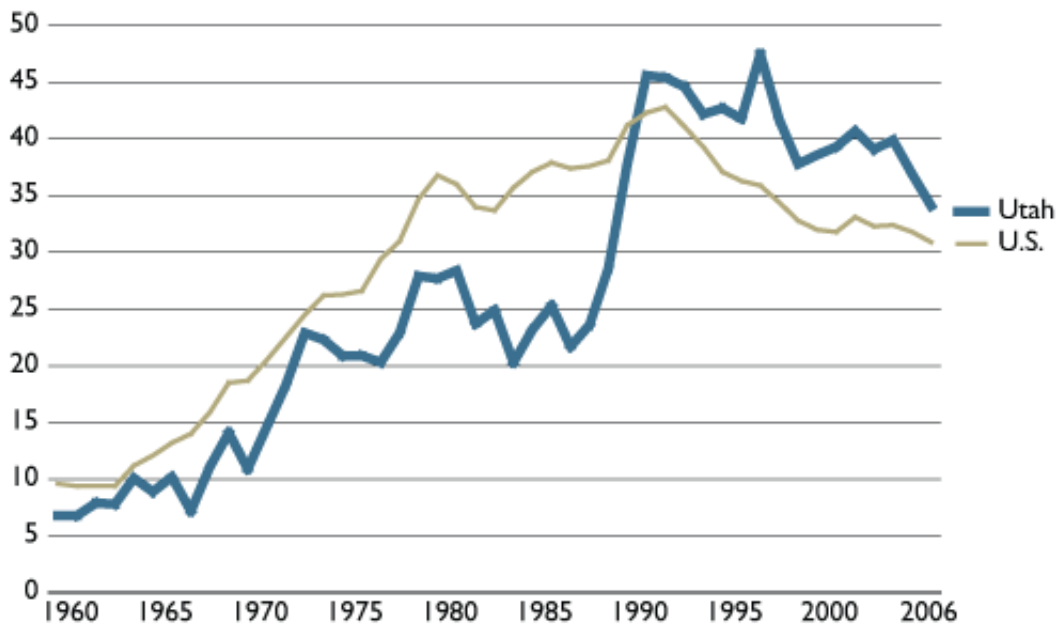
Source: FBI.

Unfortunately, Utah's forcible rape rate is significantly higher than the national rate, at 34.1 versus 30.9 incidences per 100,000 people. Although Utah is only 46th in the nation in terms of violent crime, Utah had the 21st highest rape rate among states in 2006. This, however, is a vast improvement since Utah Foundation reported on crime in 2004, when Utah ranked 13th, with a rape rate of 40.7.

The rate of forcible rape rose sharply between 1988 and 1991, as shown in Figure 5. According to the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ), a large reason for Utah's high forcible rape rate is attributed to a vast improvement in the reporting of rapes. Considering that UCR statistics are only as accurate as the law enforcement agencies reporting the crimes, a dramatic improvement in the reporting of rapes would result in higher figures being reported to the UCR. Another factor to consider is the crime reporting guidelines.

According to Utah's Bureau of Criminal Identification, "[i]f more than one Part I offense is committed in the same criminal episode, only the most serious offense is reported."^[3] Part I offenses, in order of severity, are homicide and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Other states could conceivably have higher numbers of individuals who are raped than are reflected in the UCR, but if another offense occurs in conjunction with a rape—homicide, for example—then the only crime reported in the UCR would be homicide.

Figure 5: Forcible Rapes per 100,000 Population, Utah and U.S.

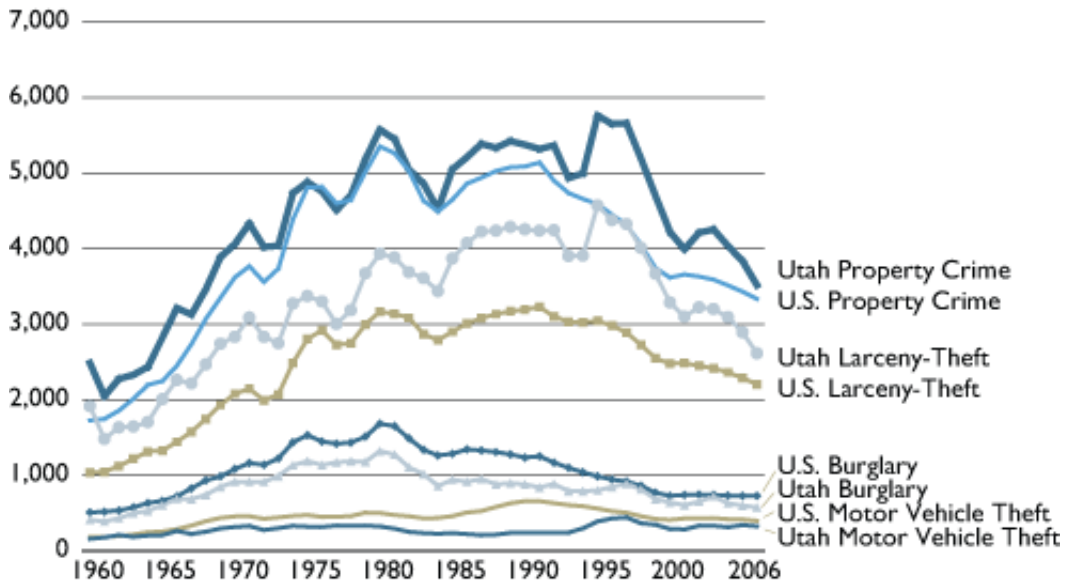


Source: FBI.

Property Crimes

Property crimes are the second category of index crimes reported to the FBI for its annual crime report. Utah's property crime rate, at 3,516.7 offenses per 100,000 people, is above the national average of 3,334.5 crimes per 100,000 people in 2006. This ranked Utah 22nd highest in the nation.

Figure 6: Property Crime Rates by Category, Utah and U.S.



Source: FBI.

The large number of larceny-thefts committed in Utah accounts for Utah's high property crime rate, and also

accounts for the bulk of Utah's overall index crime rate. According to the FBI, larceny-theft is defined as "the unlawful taking of property without use of force, violence or fraud." Motor vehicle thefts are reported separately and not included in larceny-thefts. Larceny-theft accounted for nearly 70% of the crimes committed in Utah in 2006 (see Figure 3). Burglaries and motor-vehicle theft are the next most frequent crimes, accounting for, respectively, 15.4% and 8.7%, of the total number of crimes committed in Utah.

According to the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, larceny-thefts are crimes occurring in Utah at consistently and significantly higher rates than the national average. Figure 6 compares the historical property crime rates of Utah and the United States. From 1997-1999, Utah had the highest larceny-theft rate in the country. After peaking in 1995, Utah's larceny-theft rate fell 42.8% by 2006. Conversely, Utah's burglary and motor-vehicle theft rates had been much lower than the national average until the mid-1990s (Figure 6), when the gap began to close and almost disappear by 2006.

In 2006, the 27.8% overall rate of recovery of stolen goods in Utah was below the national rate of 31%. However, Utah has a significantly better record with recovering locally stolen motor vehicles, which in 2006 accounted for a third of all stolen property. The recovery rate of stolen vehicles was 69.1% in Utah in 2006, higher than the national rate of 59%.

Crime Incidence in Utah Cities

The FBI's UCR provides offense data for all cities whose law enforcement agencies provide complete reports for the entire year. The following table shows the Utah cities with populations of more than 5,000 people with the highest and lowest rates of crime. It should be noted that not all Utah cities reported crime statistics to the FBI, so this comparison is somewhat limited (see the list of nonreporting cities in the endnote).^[4]

Figure 7: Crime Rates in the Five Highest and Lowest-Ranked Utah Cities With Populations 5,000 or Higher

TOP 5 for Highest Crime Rates

VIOLENT CRIME	Murder	Rape	Agg. Assault	Robbery
1 South Salt Lake	South Salt Lake	South Salt Lake	Salt Lake City	Salt Lake City
2 Salt Lake City	Clearfield	Park City	South Salt Lake	South Salt Lake
3 Ogden	Syracuse	Midvale	West Bountiful	Ogden
4 West Valley	Brigham City	Tooele	Ogden	West Valley
5 West Bountiful	Bountiful	West Valley	West Valley	Midvale

PROPERTY CRIME	Burglary	Larceny-Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
1 South Salt Lake	South Salt Lake	South Salt Lake	South Salt Lake
2 Salt Lake City	Salt Lake City	Salt Lake City	Salt Lake City
3 Park City	Bountiful	Park City	Midvale
4 Ogden	Ogden	Ogden	West Valley
5 Midvale	Park City	Riverdale	Taylorsville City

BOTTOM 5 for Lowest Crime Rates

VIOLENT CRIME	Murder[#]	Rape	Agg. Assault	Robbery^{**}
1 Alpine/Highland		North Park [^]	Mapleton ^{^^}	
2 North Ogden		Sunset [^]	Pleasant View ^{^^}	
3 North Park		Tremonton [^]	Kaysville	
4 Pleasant View		Alpine/Highland	North Ogden	
5 Mapleton		Syracuse	Syracuse	

PROPERTY CRIME	Burglary	Larceny-Theft	Motor Vehicle Theft
1 Heber	West Bountiful	Heber	Pleasant View
2 Clinton	Clinton	Alpine/Highland	Mapleton
3 Alpine/Highland	Smithfield	Syracuse	North Ogden
4 Syracuse	Heber	Clinton	Alpine/Highland
5 Mapleton	Ephraim	Mapleton	Richfield

[#]36 Cities had murder rates of zero.

^{**}13 cities had robbery rates of zero.

[^]3 cities tied for lowest forcible rape rates.

^{^^}2 cities tied for lowest aggravated assault rates.

Source: FBI.

White-Collar Crime in Utah

One issue of concern for many Utah residents is white-collar crime, with a popular conception that Utah is particularly high in these crimes. The definition of “white-collar crime” is subject to debate, but this report will use the FBI’s definition, which focuses on the type of crime committed, rather than the type of offender.^[5] Of all the categories of crime that the Utah Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI) reports statistics on, the following four could be classified as being white-collar crimes: bribery, fraud, counterfeiting/forgery, and embezzlement. According to the BCI’s 2006 annual “Crime in Utah” report, those four offenses accounted for 6.3% of all crimes committed in Utah that year.

Figure 8: All Utah Crimes, 2006

Offense	Number of Incidents	% of Category	% of Total Crimes
Crimes Against Persons			
Assault Offenses	22,212	86.90%	13.44%
Homicide Offenses	39	0.15%	0.02%
Kidnapping/Abduction Offenses	435	1.70%	0.26%
Sex offenses, forcible	2,683	10.50%	1.62%
Sex offenses, nonforcible	190	0.74%	0.11%
Total	25,559		15.46%
Crimes Against Society			
Drug/Narcotics Offenses	17,241	86.43%	10.43%
Gambling Offenses	1	0.01%	0.00%
Pornography/Obscene Material	108	0.54%	0.07%
Prostitution Offenses	548	2.75%	0.33%
Weapon Law Violations	2,049	10.27%	1.24%
Total	19,947		12.07%
Crimes Against Property			
Arson	347	0.29%	0.21%
Bribery*	3	0.00%	0.00%
Burglary/Breaking & Entering	11,287	9.42%	6.83%
Counterfeiting/Forgery*	3,586	2.99%	2.17%
Destruction/Damage/Vandalism of Property	32,818	27.40%	19.86%
Embezzlement*	91	0.08%	0.06%
Extortion/Blackmail	34	0.03%	0.02%
Fraud Offenses*	6,709	5.60%	4.06%
Larceny/Theft Offenses	55,253	46.13%	33.43%
Motor Vehicle Theft	7,304	6.10%	4.42%
Robbery	1,102	0.92%	0.67%
Stolen Property Offenses	1,241	1.04%	0.75%
Total	119,775		72.47%
Grand Total	165,281		

*White collar crimes

Source: Utah Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Identification

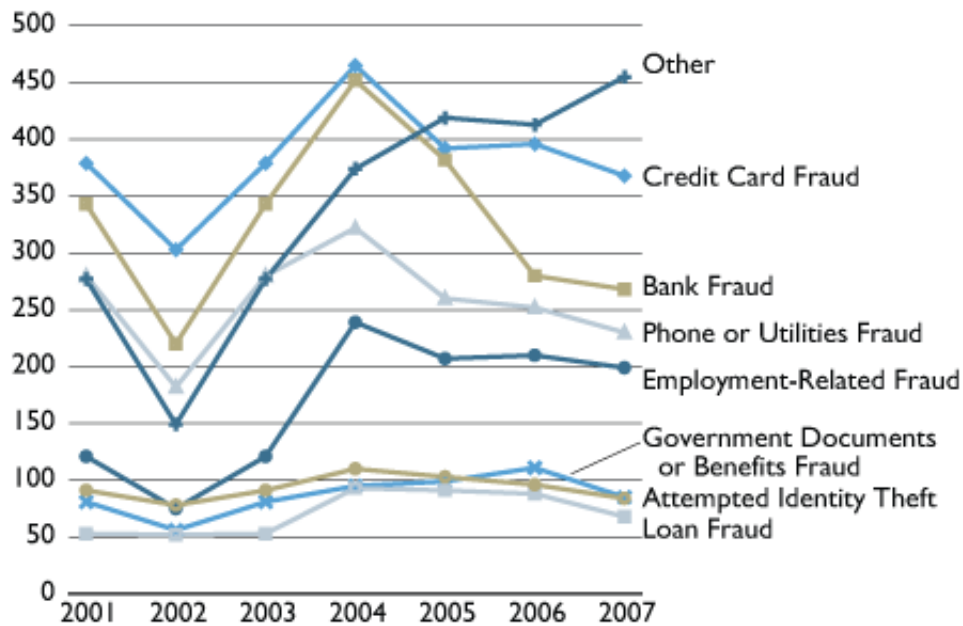
Another perspective of white-collar crime in Utah comes from Federal sources. The FBI collects arrest statistics for many different offenses other than those reported in the UCR. Three of those offenses—forgery/counterfeiting, embezzlement, and fraud—would be considered white-collar crimes. This arrest data reveals Utah to be 34th in the nation in terms of white-collar crime arrests, or 16th-lowest in the country (Montana and the District of Columbia did not report arrest data). At 86.4 arrests per 100,000 people, Utah's rate is significantly lower than South Carolina, the state with the highest rate of white-collar crime arrests at a rate of 569.3 arrests per 100,000. In terms of white-collar crime arrests as a percentage of total arrests, Utah ranked 40th, with only 1.6% of arrests resulting from white-collar offenses.

Fraud and Identity Theft

A major component of fraud—which was the most common form of white-collar crime committed in Utah in 2006—is identity theft. In 2007, the Federal Trade Commission received over 800,000 complaints regarding consumer fraud, which resulted in consumer losses of \$1.2 billion. Of these claims, 32% were of identity theft. [6] Respondents to the Utah Priorities Poll identified identity theft as the third-highest concern within crime, safety and security issues. Utah residents are justifiably concerned, considering that identity theft is now the most common consumer fraud complaint and the fastest-growing crime in America. In 2007 there were 1,529 identity theft complaints from Utah victims. Credit card fraud, once the leading type of identity theft, was the second most-common complaint, with “Other” types of identity theft accounting for the largest number of

complaints. Figure 9 details the identity theft types that were reported by Utah victims.

Figure 9: Identity Theft Complaints from Utah Victims, 2001-2007



Source: Federal Trade Commission.

Crime Prevention & Law Enforcement

Crime prevention and law enforcement in Utah largely falls on the 125 municipal police departments and county sheriffs' offices. In addition to local law enforcement agencies, the state has three law enforcement agencies: the Highway Patrol, Parks and Recreation, and Wildlife Resources.

According to the most recent statistics available from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (September 2004), there were 7,919 full-time employees in Utah's 134 state and local law enforcement agencies.^[7] This is an increase from the 6,346 full-time employees and 129 agencies reported by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics in June 2000.^[8] When compared to a national rate of 367 employees per 100,000 people, Utah's rate of 331 employees per 100,000 people was 34th highest in the country (including the District of Columbia). Excluding full-time employees who were not sworn officers reduces that figure to 4,573 employees, or 191 per 100,000 people; the national rate is 249 and Utah's state rank is 44th. An alternative look at law enforcement employment statistics compares the number of full-time employees in local police departments. Utah's 3,161 full-time employees, coming from 91 different agencies, are the equivalent of 132 employees per 100,000 people. Utah ranks 44th when compared to the national rate of 195 employees per 100,000 people. Including only those employees who are sworn officers reduces the number of employees to 2,446, or 102 per 100,000 people. Utah retains its 44th highest rank when compared to the national rate of 152 employees per 100,000 people.

A different view of Utah's law enforcement results when comparing Utah's number of full-time state-level law enforcement agency employees with national averages. With 1,018 full-time employees—or 43 per 100,000 residents—Utah's 10th highest ranking is much higher than the national rate of 30 full-time employees per 100,000 people. Including only the 538 sworn personnel (23 per 100,000 residents) still places Utah 17th highest in the number of full-time sworn officers with State agencies. The national rate is 20 per 100,000 residents.

Conclusion

Utah's crime statistics reveal a state with very low violent crime offenses, but a property crime rate that has been historically higher than the nation's. Utah's crime situation has improved consistently since the 1990s. The property crime rate, as well as the overall crime rate, has come down since peaking in 1995. While controlling crime is not an exact science, some of the factors involved in controlling crime do appear to be a result of public policy decisions, such as the amount spent on law enforcement.

Endnotes

[1] These statistics come from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Report (UCR). Crimes

included in this report are called index crimes and are limited to violent crimes and property crimes, as reported by local law enforcement agencies. Violent crimes include murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, aggravated assault, and robbery. Property crimes include burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. These statistics do not, therefore, give a comprehensive view of crime, due to the number of crimes excluded from the report, and are only accurate insofar as local law enforcement agencies are in reporting them.

[2] All national rankings used in this report include the 50 states and the District of Columbia, making the rankings out of 51.

[3] Department of Public Safety. Bureau of Criminal Identification's annual report of crime statistics in Utah. "2006 Crime in Utah." Available from <http://des.utah.gov/bci/docs/2006.pdf>.

[4] For a complete list of the cities that reported to the FBI in 2006, please see http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/data/table_08_ut.html. For further information regarding cautions against ranking cities according to UCR data, please see http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/about/variables_affecting_crime.html. The following are the 23 cities with populations 5,000 or greater as of July 2005 which did not submit 12 months of data for the UCR and are therefore not included in the rankings: Bluffdale, Cedar Hills, Centerville, Eagle Mountain, Farmington, Herriman, Holladay, Hyrum, Ivins, Lindon, Murray, North Logan, North Salt Lake City, Providence, Riverton, Santa Clara, Saratoga Springs, South Weber, St. George, Vernal, Washington Terrace, West Haven, and West Point.

[5] "Those illegal acts which are characterized by deceit, concealment, or violation of trust and which are not dependent upon the application or threat of physical force or violence. Individuals and organizations commit these acts to obtain money, property, or services; to avoid the payment or loss of money or services; or to secure personal or business advantage." From Cynthia Barnett's "The Measurement of White-Collar Crime Using Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Data." Available from <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/whitecollarforweb.pdf>.

[6] Federal Trade Commission. "Consumer Fraud and Identity Theft Complaint Data: January-December 2007." Available from <http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2008/02/fraud.pdf>.

[7] U.S. Department of Justice. Bureau of Justice Statistics. "Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies, 2004." Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cslla04.pdf>.

[8] U.S. Department of Justice. Bureau of Justice Statistics. "Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies, 2000." Available from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cslla00.pdf>.

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