

City and Crime

Crime in the city of Clio hit a 30-year low last year. "This is absolutely wonderful for our citizens, our businesses, and our visitors," said Police Chief Louis Gates. Clio has a population of 28,000, but it has at least 30 gangs. The gangs make most of their money from dealing drugs and offering "protection." They also commit violent crimes, such as murder, battery, and rape.

There were 1,486 thefts last year. Most of the thefts involved cars. Thieves also robbed the people at gunpoint or pickpocketed them. They broke into houses and businesses at the alarming rate of two a day two years ago, but that rate was down to only one a day last year. "That's a 50-percent decrease in one year," beamed Gates. "I think the officers deserve a big pat on the back. Even better, maybe they'll get that 10-percent raise that they are all hoping for next fiscal year."

Citing an example of how the police force has helped reduce crime, Gates talked about bicycle thefts. "For years and years, kids were locking up their bikes at bike stands in front of schools, libraries, and malls. About 10 percent of the time, the kids would come out of the school or wherever and discover that their bike was no longer there. Someone had cut the lock and stolen their bike. We wracked our brains trying to find a solution to this problem. Finally, at the beginning of last year, we hit upon it. We simply removed most of the bike stands. Then the bicycle theft rate came down quickly."

Most cities in the state have similar problems. They all involve too many people, too much crime, too few police, and too little funding. These problems are part and parcel of civilization everywhere. They might diminish, but they will probably never disappear. All people can do is hope for the best and prepare for the worst.