



The City of Morgantown

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Crime Rate in Morgantown Metropolitan Statistical Area does not Reflect Crime Rate within City Limits

Statistics show violent crime rates in the City of Morgantown have decreased, police say

MORGANTOWN – Just how high is the crime rate in Morgantown?

A recent article listing ten U.S. cities in which violent crimes are on the rise pinned Morgantown at number 6, reporting a 50.8 percent increase in the violent crime rate over five years.

The publication stated aggravated assaults have largely driven that rate up between 2007 and 2012, even though other violent crime rates have declined. What the article doesn't report, however, is where exactly these incidences occurred and how the data was gathered and compiled.

Officer Balderson with the Morgantown Police Department cleared up this confusion at the Neighborhood Coordinating Council's February meeting.

These figures come from an analysis of the 1,017.2-square-mile Morgantown Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which was designated by the U.S. Census and combines Monongalia and Preston Counties, he told the Council. This area encompasses all incorporated and unincorporated municipalities and communities within the two counties, using Morgantown as the anchor city.

Within the entire MSA, the incidence of violent crime increased between 2007 and 2013, as have forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Murder and non-negligent manslaughter, property crimes, larceny and motor vehicle thefts have all decreased within that same time period.

The City of Morgantown, the area served by the Morgantown Police Department, makes up 10.62 square miles of Monongalia County - just one percent of the Morgantown Metropolitan Statistical Area by land mass and 23.2 percent of its entire population.

The incidence of violent crime, murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, property crimes, burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft all decreased between 2007 and 2013 within Morgantown city limits, even though some of these categories show increases among the Morgantown Metropolitan Statistical Area as a whole, the Morgantown Police Dept. reported.

"Individual Crime numbers have decreased within the City of Morgantown, while the overall population has continued to increase during this same timeframe, complimenting the efforts of the citizens, visitors and employees of the City of Morgantown," said Ed Preston, chief of police for the Morgantown Police Dept. "The constant and continued reduction of criminal behavior is a tremendous indicator of the awareness and involvement by the citizens of Morgantown."

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