

Durham, Lee Two of Safest Places in State **Foster's Daily Democrat**

By Morgan Palmer
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LEE — The towns of Lee and Durham have been recognized as two of the safest in the state.

Home security company Safe Wise compiled a list of the top 30 safest cities in the state based on the most recent FBI Crime Report data, which was received in 2012.

According to those statistics, the Granite State reported that 1.87 violent crimes occur per 1,000 citizens, which is around 50 percent less than the national average of 3.67 per 1,000. Nationally, New Hampshire has the third lowest violent crime rate.

Additionally, the New Hampshire reported around 15 percent less incidents of property crime than the typical U.S. state.

Out of 30 cities, the town of Lee was named the fourth safest in the state, with only .68 of violent crimes occurring per 1,000 citizens. This is almost 85 percent less than the national average. It was also reported that Lee had 7.5 property crimes occur per 1,000 citizens.

Lee Police Chief Thomas Dronsfield was pleasantly surprised by the recognition.

“I think it is a definite indication of how hard our officers work,” he said. “We believe in proactive law enforcement rather than reactive.”

Dronsfield said he has found that a strong police presence is a major deterrent for crime in the town. While the numbers of arrests in town have grown, Dronsfield said he believes there has been a decrease in crime in Lee.

“Our numbers of arrests have doubled from last year,” he said. “That is (from) being more proactive and being out in the community.”

Lee followed New Ipswich, Atkinson and New London, all of which reported no violent crimes in 2012.

The town of Durham was named the ninth safest city in the state, with 1.42 violent crimes occurring per 1,000 citizens. It was also reported that Durham had 7.88 property crimes occur per 1,000 citizens.

Durham Police Chief David Kurz said he is pleased with that number, considering Durham is a college town.

“It is a safe community, and that is due to the hard work of our organization,” he said. “We take great pride that people can walk on our streets virtually any time of the day or night without worrying.”

Out of all 30 cities on the list, only one murder and nine robberies were reported. To see the full list, visit www.safewise.com/blog/30-safest-cities-new-hampshire/