

## 2003 Crime Drops to 22-Year Low

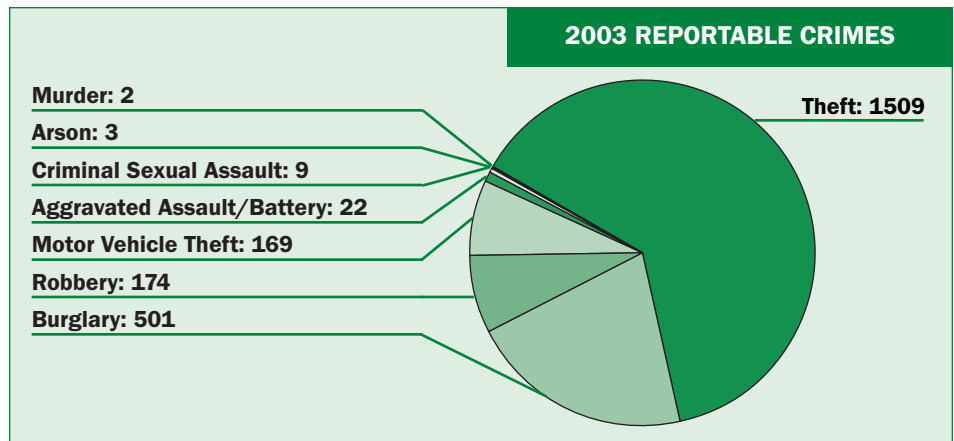
Crimes committed in the Village last year dropped to the lowest level in 22 years, a trend police attribute to increased citizen involvement and a growing willingness of residents to report suspicious activities.

Some 2,389 crimes were committed in Oak Park during 2003, compared to 2,554 in 2002, a 6.5 percent decrease, and the fewest since 1981, the earliest year for which comparable data is available. The 2003 statistics represent the continuation of a downward trend especially evident over the past 12 years.

The decrease in crime was attributed in large part to the cooperative spirit of citizens. An alert citizen can often stop a crime and help police catch a criminal in the act. That's why police urge citizens not hesitate to call 9-1-1 when they encounter suspicious people or incidents.

Burglaries and thefts, which police consider crimes of opportunity, represented about 85 percent of all 2003 crimes. Thieves mostly targeted garages — often unlocked or open — and took personal items left unattended or inside vehicles.

Police say by taking a few simple steps like closing and locking garages,



removing personal property from plain view in autos and not leaving personal items unattended can do wonders to reduce the crimes of opportunity that represent the vast majority of criminal activity in the community.

Here's a brief overview of the 2003 crime statistics:

- Burglaries dropped to 501 in 2003, as compared to 541 in 2002. Burglary arrests were up. Sixty-four individuals were arrested in 2003 compared to 62 in 2002. The vast majority of burglaries in Oak Park continued to be to garages and autos.
- Thefts were down in 2003, totaling

1,509 compared to the previous year's 1,575 incidents. Arrests for theft increased to 320 in 2003, up from 316 in 2002. Most thefts in Oak Park are petty, including bicycles, license plates and retail shoplifting.

- Two murders were committed in 2003, compared to none in 2002. One murder was committed during a burglary, and the defendant is awaiting trial. The other murder was a Chicago gang/drug related, drive-by shooting that occurred on the Oak Park side of Roosevelt Road, but was unrelated to the Village or any resident.

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## Ride the Free Shuttle

■■■■■■■■■■ Look inside for information on Oak Park's new free shuttle service. ■■■■■■■■■■

## Village adopts performance-based management system

**M**easuring how much work is done, with how much effort and with what result is becoming business as usual at Village Hall as a performance-based measurement approach is adopted to better manage costs and ensure the highest level of service quality. The new internal management initiative, launched last month, will have Village workers tracking activities to better link service demands to the allocation of resources, both personnel and financial. The end result should be the numerical information critical to effective budgeting, a need that grows as officials seek to balance costs with available resources. Working with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the professional and educational organization for municipal administrators in cities, towns and counties, Oak Park municipal staff are adopting practices typically only used in much larger communities. The practices are applicable here because the complexity and level of municipal services provided in Oak Park far exceed those of most communities of similar geographic size and population. By working with the ICMA, the Village also will be able to compare its performance data to other communities that may have similar attributes. Performance measures compiled in Oak Park also will become part of a national database that can be accessed by other communities as well. For more information on the program, call 358.5460 or email [finance@oak-park.us](mailto:finance@oak-park.us).



*Michael Lawson of the ICMA discusses performance measurement issues with Village staff.*

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## Hours extended for absentee voting

**R**egistered Oak Park voters who will be unable to vote in person in the March 16 General Primary Election can cast absentee ballots in the Office of the Village Clerk, in Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Votes can be cast during regular business hours of 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., Tuesday through Friday, and until 7:30 p.m. Mondays. Ballots also can be cast during special extended hours of 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., on Saturdays, March 6 and 13, and until 7:30 p.m., on Thursdays, March 4 and 11. In person, absentee voting will end at 5 p.m., Mon., March 15. In addition, absentee ballots can be cast by mail. Applications for ballots to be cast by mail must be received by the Cook County Clerk's Office by March 11. Applications for mail-in ballots are available from the Village Clerk or directly from the County Clerk, 69 W. Washington, 5th Floor, Chicago. Other deadlines include:

- **Write-in candidate** – 5 p.m., Tues., March 9, is the last day to file a notarized declaration to be a write-in candidate. Declarations must be filed at the Cook County Clerk's office, 69 W. Washington, 5th Floor, Chicago.
- **Physically disabled** – Mon., March 15 is the last day physically disabled voters can request voting assistance on election day. Contact the Cook County Clerk's office at 312.603.0929 to arrange for assistance.

For more information on the election and deadlines, call 358.5670 or e-mail [clerk@oak-park.us](mailto:clerk@oak-park.us).

## 2003 Crime Drops

*continued from front page*

- Arsons declined to three as compared to the previous year's seven cases. No arson arrests were made in 2002 or 2003.
- Motor vehicle thefts were down in 2003, totaling 169 as compared to 218 in 2002. Arrests for motor vehicle theft also were down, totaling 16 in 2003, compared to 21 in 2002.
- Nine criminal sexual assaults were reported in 2003, up from five in 2002. However, typically in these types of cases the victim knows the assailant. Arrests in this category were up as well, from four in 2002 to seven in 2003.
- Robberies decreased to 174 in 2003 from the previous year's 180, a drop police attribute in part to enhanced police patrols, the creation of the newly formed Street Crimes Team whose mission is to suppress crime through proactive law enforcement tactics, and the efforts of an involved citizenry. Arrests for robberies also were down, totaling 99 in 2003 as compared to 133 in 2002.
- Aggravated assault/battery incidents declined to 22 in 2003, compared to 28 in 2002. Thirty individuals were arrested in this category during 2003, compared to 29 in the prior year.
- Drug-related arrests increased overall to 156 in 2003, as compared to the previous year's 106 arrests. Arrests for possession of cannabis grew to 56 from the previous year's 44 and arrests for possession of controlled substances grew to 43 from 19. Arrests for possession of hypodermic syringes decreased to 17 in 2003 from 20 in 2002, and arrests for possession of drug paraphernalia increased to 40 from the previous year's 23.

For more information on crime in Oak Park or community policing programs, call 386.3800 or email [police@oak-park.us](mailto:police@oak-park.us).

## Survey gathering resident views on Eisenhower impact issues

**R**esidents and building owners who live within two blocks of the Eisenhower Expressway and a random sample of 800 residents throughout the Village have been asked to share their views and concerns, and help set priorities for a study of covering the Ike through Oak Park. The formal survey, mailed in late February, is intended to gather important background information for the *Cap the Ike Study* now underway. The study is part of Village efforts to address community interests and long-standing problems associated with the Eisenhower's route through the community. The eight-page survey contains 30 questions, including one unstructured request for additional comments. The format requires simple check-offs, and is estimated to take about 20 minutes to complete. All individual answers and respondents



are confidential and an independent survey firm will tabulate results. Surveys should be returned either enclosed in the postage-paid reply envelope included with each survey or dropped off at the Welcome Center in Village Hall, 123 Madison St., during regular business hours of 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Anyone who did not receive a mailed survey, but wishes to participate, can fill out an

identical questionnaire online at [www.captheikestudy.com](http://www.captheikestudy.com). Questionnaires received through the website will be tabulated separately from the mailed ones. Results of the mail and online surveys will be posted on the website as well. The website also posts public meeting summaries and dates of important upcoming meetings. The citizen volunteers on the Cap the Ike Study Stakeholders Advisory Committee developed and is overseeing the study. The committee includes residents and business owners appointed by the Village Board, and institutional representatives such as from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Chicago Transportation Authority (CTA), PACE and the freight railroads. For more information on the survey or the study, call 358.5778 or email [CapTheIke@oak-park.us](mailto:CapTheIke@oak-park.us).

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

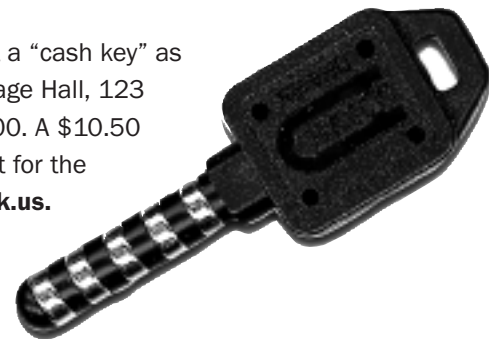
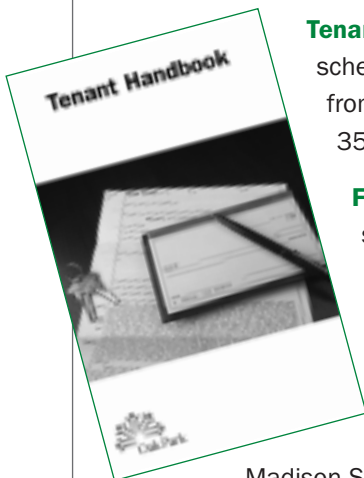
**Tenants' seminar...**Renters can learn about their rights and responsibilities at an informational seminar scheduled for 7:30 p.m., Tues., March 30, in Council Chambers of Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Panelists from various Village government departments will provide handouts, including the *Tenant Handbook*. Call 358.5409 or email [comsvcs@oak-park.us](mailto:comsvcs@oak-park.us).

**First-time homebuyer's seminar...**A free seminar to help prospective first-time homebuyers understand loan programs available in Oak Park is scheduled for 7 – 8:30p.m., Wed., March 24 in Room 101 at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Financial assistance programs will be explained and participants will receive a free packet of helpful information. Pre-registration is required. Call 358.5408 or email [comsvcs@oak-park.us](mailto:comsvcs@oak-park.us).

**Coinless parking...**Many parking meters in the Village accept a "cash key" as an alternative to coins. Available in Parking Permit office at Village Hall, 123 Madison St., each key can be pre-programmed in \$10 increments up to \$100. A \$10.50 deposit is required. Users just insert the key into the meter, which then debits the account for the time you wish to use the space. For details call 358.PARK or email [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us).

**Day in our Village deadline...**Local civic, cultural and business organizations, and restaurants have until April 15 to apply for space in the community-wide festival celebrating Oak Park's diversity and the sharing. The event is scheduled for Sun., June 6. For information call 358.5409 or email [comsvcs@oak-park.us](mailto:comsvcs@oak-park.us).

**Cable television or modem service problem...**If you are unable to resolve a problem directly with the cable company at 630.716.2000, contact the Village where a dispute resolution procedure is in place to help. The Village also records and tracks all problems or complaints for cable franchise performance review. For assistance or to register a complaint, contact the Village Manager's Office at 866.594.1234 (toll-free) or email [village@oak-park.us](mailto:village@oak-park.us).





## Larger recycling carts part of new refuse hauling program

**B**lue carts have replaced the familiar blue bins as the Village's official recycling containers. The new 64-gallon recycling containers, which hold about three times as much as the blue bins they are replacing, are part of a broader program that also allows residents who opt for a smaller garbage cart to pay \$2.50 less per month for waste hauling services than those who keep the current 96-gallon container. Every household received the larger recycling container, but only those property owners who request a smaller garbage cart will get one. Effective March 1, residents served by the Village's refuse hauling program who don't downsize their garbage carts will

pay \$15.80 per month for disposal services, while those who choose a smaller container will pay \$13.30 per month. The pay-for-use program was created as part of a new contract with the Village's private contractor that required the first residential refuse hauling rate hike here in three years. The move to larger recycling bins coincides with modest, but steady, increases in the amount of recyclables collected in Oak Park over the past five years, and an increase in the range of containers that can be recycled. The larger recycling carts should make it easier for residents to take full advantage of the latest "single-stream" collection approach that eliminates the need to separate recyclables. In addition to providing more space for recyclables, the new carts have wheels, which will make it easier for residents to move the recyclables to the collection point, and lids that should help reduce litter by keeping out animals and eliminat-

ing wind-blown paper. To request a new, smaller garbage cart, call 358.5700 or visit [www.oak-park.us](http://www.oak-park.us) — click on news, then the recycling program icon along the right margin. Requests also can be made by email to [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us). Email requests should include the property owner's name, property address, water billing account number, number of units in the building and the regular refuse pick-up day. The Village provides collection services only to single-family homes and multifamily buildings of five or fewer units.

## Expert sought to help update downtown planning documents

**A** call has gone out to planning firms asking them to present their qualifications for helping draft a comprehensive master plan for the greater downtown area, including the Marion Street and Lake Street-Oak Park Avenue business districts. The Request for Qualifications (RFQ), which was developed with citizen input, was submitted to more than a dozen firms with related experience. The firm selected to help craft the downtown plan will be required to look at a range of factors, including quality of life, economic viability, building height, building design, density, parking, traffic, housing types, public improvements, environmental impacts and land use. The plan also will address the Downtown Tax Increment Finance District (TIF), a necessary step should the TIF be extended beyond its 2006 expiration date. The Village Board likely will interview potential planning consultants in April, and make a selection by May. The actual development of the plan would include extensive input from residents and business operators through tools such as public meetings, focus groups and a community survey. The RFQ is part of increased efforts to focus on planning during the current budget year in response to the growing interest in the greater downtown area. Funds also have been earmarked to update the Village's award-winning Comprehensive Plan, which was last updated in 1990. For more information on planning, call 358.5425 or email [comsvcs@oak-park.us](mailto:comsvcs@oak-park.us).

### Who to Call at Village Hall

Main number	383.6400
Village TTY	383.0048
Info Line	445.3340
Building & Property Standards	358.5430
Licenses/Permits	358.5433
Zoning	358.5449
Codes/status of plans	358.5434
Property complaints	358.5443
Inspections	358.5440
Community Services	358.5400
Community Relations	358.5423
Housing	358.5424
Planning/Community Development	358.5425
Information Technology	358.5450
Finance	358.5460
Utility Billing Inquiries	358.5478
Fire Non-Emergency	445.3300
Public Health	358.5480
Animal Control	358.5680
Development Services	358.5640
Human Resources	358.5650
Law	358.5660
Village Clerk	358.5670
Police Non-Emergency	386.3800
Crime Tip Hotline	386.0740
Police/Fire TTY	848.1911
West Suburban Consolidated Dispatch Center	771.9110
Public Works	358.5700
Snow Hotline	358.SNOW
Parking Office	358.PARK
Night Parking Passes	358.NITE
Day Parking Passes	358.DAYS
Village Manager's Office	358.5770
Village Board	358.5784
Village Web Page	<a href="http://www.oak-park.us">www.oak-park.us</a>

**POLICE/FIRE/MEDICAL  
EMERGENCIES**

**911**

## Late Fees Also Waived on Vehicle Stickers

### Parking Ticket Amnesty Offers Chance to Pay Without Penalties

An amnesty program now underway offers anyone with outstanding parking tickets issued before Jan. 1 until March 15 to pay up without late fees or penalties, as administrators move to reduce older computer files, while also collecting a share of the nearly \$4.3 million from 139,000 outstanding tickets. Collection activities including booting will be suspended during the amnesty. But once the temporary reprieve ends, any remaining parking accounts will be turned over to a collection agency to seek the full amount due, including late fees and penalties. Booting of vehicles with five or more outstanding tickets will then resume as well. Penalties for late payment can range from \$10 to \$50 per ticket. Offering amnesty is one phase of ongoing Village efforts to improve parking administration and enforcement. Efforts also include a new computer records system and traffic court at Village Hall through an administrative adjudication program. Under the adjudication program launched in early January, administrative law judges hear parking cases at Village Hall, eliminating the need for residents to travel to the Cook County Circuit Court in Maywood to challenge parking citations. As an added incentive to participate in the amnesty program, the Village Clerk will waive late fees on vehicle stickers. The vehicle sticker fee increases \$5 per month after the June 30 purchase deadline, which is added onto the standard \$45 sticker cost when violators are ticketed. For more information on the amnesty program, call 358.5700 or email [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us).

## Village testing new overnight parking permit hours

Hoping to minimize the difficulty on-street overnight parking permit holders sometimes have finding a legal space in their zones, the Village is testing new permit parking hours of 9 p.m. to 10 a.m. in residential areas, and 11 p.m. to 10 a.m. in areas adjacent to business districts. Prior to this change, parking restrictions did not go into effect until 2:30 a.m., timing that often put permit holders at odds with visitors for spaces in permit zones. Village crews already are at work temporarily changing signage to reflect the new hours, which will go into effect after the signs are changed and permit holders notified. The new hours are expected to be fully enforced by early March. Impact of the change will be evaluated over the next six months to determine if the change should be permanent. For more information call 358.5750 or email [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us).

## HEALTH NEWS

358.5480 or email [health@oak-park.us](mailto:health@oak-park.us)

### Animal limit review

The citizen volunteers of the Oak Park Board of Health will hold a public hearing on the Village ordinance limiting the number of animals per household at 7 p.m., Wed., March 29, in Council Chambers of Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Oral and written public comments will be taken. For more information on the meeting or the current animal limitation ordinance call 358.5680.

### Stop smoking help

"Freedom From Smoking," a six-week program developed by the American Lung Association, will have an orientation session at 7 p.m., Tues., March 2, in the Maze Branch Library, 845 Gunderson St. The \$20 cost is refundable to participants who attend all six sessions. Financial assistance is available. Call 358.5484.

### Live animal trapping begins

Residents who need to relocate nuisance wildlife can borrow a trap from the Village beginning April 5. Animal Control officials also will help with relocation once the animal is trapped. For more information, call 358.5679.

### Affordable insurance available

Adults and children are now being enrolled in low-cost free health care plans. *KidCare* offers health care coverage to children and pregnant women and help in paying premiums of employer-sponsored or private insurance plans. Access to *Care* covers doctor visits, x-rays, prescriptions and lab tests for a small co-pay. Participants must meet financial eligibility guidelines. Call 358.5484 to apply.

### Public Health Week activities planned

In observance of National Public Health Week, April 5 – 11, area individuals and organizations that have made exceptional contributions to the community's health will be honored. Local activities will focus on letting resident know more about efforts such as income-based insurance programs, health education and information initiatives, exercise programs, smoking cessation groups and community-based coalitions that have helped make a difference in overcoming health care disparities. For more information, call 358.5484.



Village of Oak Park

Village Hall

123 Madison Street

Oak Park, Illinois 60302-4272



Village President

Joanne E. Trapani

Trustees

Diana Carpenter Galen Gockel

Ray Johnson Gus Kostopoulos

Robert Milstein David Pope

Village Clerk Sandra Sokol

Village Manager Carl Swenson

Residential Customer Local  
Oak Park, Illinois

Postal Carrier  
Pre-Sort

PAID  
U.S. Postage  
Standard  
Presort  
Permit No. 26  
Oak Park, IL

## Village Hall goes on the road

# Residents invited to discuss service delivery

Village Hall is going on the road to discuss service delivery with residents in weekly neighborhood gatherings to be held in each of the community's eight elementary schools, beginning March 9. The Village Manager, department directors, police and fire chiefs, and senior staff will be on hand at each gathering to talk one-on-one with residents. They will answer questions, provide information on Village services and programs, and take requests for a closer look at any specific concerns individuals may have about municipal services in their neighborhoods. The purpose of the neighborhood gatherings is not to talk about policies and laws, which can only be addressed by the Village Board, but discuss how municipal services are provided. Residents who attend one of the neighborhood gatherings won't have to listen to a lecture or watch a presentation. The gatherings will be set up like an open house, with each Village department manning an informational table. Residents can stroll among each department's display, collecting literature, asking questions or simply chatting with key Village staff. The neighborhoods for each of the gatherings has been defined by elementary school boundaries because the school parameters provide not only a manageable meeting size but also offer an excellent gathering facility. Each gathering will be from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. For more information call 358.5770 or email [village@oak-park.us](mailto:village@oak-park.us).

### MEETING SCHEDULE

- Tue., March 9  
Beye, 230 N. Cuyler Ave.
- Thu., March 11  
Mann, 921 N. Kenilworth Ave.
- Tue., March 16  
Irving, 1125 S. Cuyler Ave.
- Thurs., March 18  
Lincoln, 1111 S. Grove Ave.
- Tue., March 23  
Hatch, 1000 N. Ridgeland Ave.
- Thu., March 25  
Longfellow, 715 S. Highland Ave.
- Wed., April 7  
Holmes, 508 N. Kenilworth Ave.
- Thu., April 8  
Whittier, 715 N. Harvey Ave.

## Private parking spaces sought

Anyone with off-street parking space they would be willing to lease to a neighbor, is urged to contact Parking Services at 358.5750 or via email at [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us). Parking Services maintains a list of private property owners who have parking spaces available for rent. The Village does not manage these spaces or negotiate fees, but only helps individuals make contact. Residents in need of parking can view the list in person at the Parking Permit Office at Village Hall, 123 Madison St.

### March VOP-TV6 Programming Highlights

Daily at 6 a.m., 8 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., 10 p.m.

- 2004 Budget Message
- Developing A Plan For Our Parks Neighborhood Programs:
- Commitment to Community
- Oral Health Coalition: Making More Smiles
- Preventing Home Burglary

### NASA Programming

Tuesday – Friday 3 – 5 p.m.

### Regular Board Meetings

Live at 7:30 p.m. first & third Mondays, rebroadcast Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.