

Crime and fire report shows 2011-13 trends

Annual report indicates increase in public property crimes, forcible sexual offenses and more during the past three years.

BY JOHANNA BURNS
Staff Reporter

The Truman State Department of Public Safety released their 2014 Annual Security and Fire Report last week, which indicated various rises and falls in crime rates between the 2011 and 2013 calendar years.

The report is compiled by DPS and includes statistics from various university departments. The report includes crime and residential hall fire statistics for the 2011, 2012 and 2013 calendar years. The document shows that on-campus, off-campus and public property crimes of forcible sexual offenses, burglary and drug law violations that were referred for disciplinary action increased between 2011 and 2013. The report also shows a decrease of the number of aggravated assaults, liquor law arrests, liquor law violations and thefts. Drug law arrests, which decreased during 2012, increased during 2013. The fire statistics show two incidents for the past three years. Fire incidents are only included if they involved an open flame.

DPS Director Thomas Johnson said there is no real way of determining the reasons behind the changes. He said the cause could be that people are reporting more than they have in the past or that more crimes have been committed. He also said that the report is used to educate students, parents and the public about current trends.

"We try to make people aware as much as possible about what is going on," Johnson said. "This is one step towards that."

Johnson said the majority of the reported thefts are for stolen bicycles. He also said one way to reduce the chances of a bike theft is to ensure the bike is locked up safely and to check on it periodically. Johnson said if you don't anticipate using a bike during the winter, it would be a good idea to take it home.

"During the year we're always tracking trends and that type of thing within our own records-keeping systems," Johnson said.

Johnson said that DPS works closely with the Office of Citizenship and Community Standards.

Michelle Horvath, Director of the Office of Citizenship and Community Standards, said her office deals with situations where a student violated the Student Conduct Code whether or not that violation originally was reported to DPS.

"With gender-based misconduct, there are certain things I have to report to the police," Horvath said. "There are instances where I don't contact DPS, but most of the time we coincide."

Horvath said the Office of Citizenship and Community Standards submits all its statistics to the Annual Security and Fire Report, which is mandated by federal law.

Horvath also said the report is published mainly for the benefit of prospective students or anyone interested in coming to the campus, as part of the Jeanne Clery Act. This federal act mandates that schools disclose information about crimes that take place on or around campus.

"We now know as a University, one of the things that has been entrusted to us is your safety, and so this is a way to ensure that we are trying to keep you all as safe as possible," Horvath said. "The idea was that, had Jeanne Clery known about this, she would have taken more precautions."

The act came into effect after the murder of Lehigh University student Jeanne Clery during 1986. Clery's parents organized the Clery Center and pushed for the approval of the 1990 Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act, which later was renamed for Jeanne Clery.

According to the Clery Center for Security on Campus mission statement, the goal behind the Clery Act is to inform students and campus citizens about crimes or issues of safety, so that additional crimes might be prevented.

Jim Hughes, Kirksville Chief of Police, said that the Kirksville Police Department works with the University to supply DPS with whatever data they might need for the report concerning off-campus incidents.

"It's not just limited to Truman," Hughes said. "We get requests like that every year ... absolutely any time that anybody asks us, we will provide them with that information. And it's not just limited to other law enforcement agencies. If someone were to come down and ask, 'What data do you have associated with this kind of event,' we would be able to provide them whatever data we had available."

Kirksville Police Detective Justin Jones said that in the event that two related incidents occur within the University's jurisdiction and the city's jurisdiction the two

IF A STUDENT REPORTS A SEXUAL ASSAULT THAT IMPLICATES THEM IN A LESSER CRIME, SUCH AS A MINOR IN POSSESSION, SAID STUDENT WILL BE GRANTED AMNESTY FROM THE LESSER OFFENSE.

CHANGES TO THE STUDENT CONDUCT CODE REGARDING SEXUAL ASSAULT IN EFFECT

AS OF SUMMER 2014

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FACULTY AND RESIDENCE LIFE STAFF ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

SOURCE: DEAN OF STUDENTS LOUANN GILCHRIST

CONDUCT CODE | Truman addresses sexual assault with updates to the University's Student Conduct Code during summer 2014

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Sally Herleth, Executive Director of Human Resources and Title IX coordinator at Truman, said she has been given oversight regarding any complaint filed involving sexual harassment. She said the process has been simplified so any complaint of sexual harassment is now in her jurisdiction. She said as a result, there isn't as much confusion as to who will be a part of the investigation, and matters can be handled in a timely fashion. Herleth said Title IX violations are not a common issue at Truman and while they do still happen, she said she is happy she works for a university that is addressing the issue before any major problems occur.

"I'm hoping these changes will encourage students who believe they've been assaulted or harassed to come forward so we can try to take action," Herleth said.

Senior Kayla Gunter, chair of the Sexual Assault Prevention Ad Hoc Committee for Student Government, was in attendance for an address that Gilchrist gave to Student Government regarding these policy changes. She said it is likely Truman will see more changes to the Student Conduct Code regarding sexual assault soon.

Gunter said bystander and consent/coercion/consequences training is available to all organizations on campus, and freshmen are required to attend presentations on these issues during Truman Week.

Gunter said a possible future policy change that Gilchrist addressed was a "yes means yes" addition. Gunter said "yes means yes" goes beyond "no means no" by requiring an affirmative, conscious and voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity.

AMEREN | Area residents respond to plans for the Ameren Mark Twain Transmissions Project

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According to Ameren's About the Project site, the transmission line would consist of two segments capable of holding 345 kilovolts. The website shows the proposed segments of power line run from Palmyra, Missouri, to Kirksville and then from Kirksville to the Iowa state border. Ameren's site designates a width of about 150 feet of land they will purchase the right to use specifically for the transmission line. The site shows the span crossing through Missouri will be above ground and between 90-130 feet tall.

In a resource packet provided by Ameren for community members on their website, construction jobs would be generated by the project, along with other potential revenue associated with these jobs. The construction will begin during 2016 if the project is approved, according to the timeline shown on the website.

Kirksville resident Ethan Hughes reiterated citizens' concerns for their health. Hughes

has officiated the last three citizen open forums. During the open forum Sept. 22, Hughes said Ameren has a policy against building power lines near nurseries because of their emission of electric and magnetic fields. Hughes said citizens used this information as evidence to claim the new power line comes with new health risks.

Hughes said environmental issues are another of his

"If it comes to it, at least 50 people are willing to block the [construction] with their bodies."

Kirksville resident Ethan Hughes

concerns. He said trees will be cut down to make room for the power line and herbicides will be sprayed along its path. Hughes said these actions could have environmental effects, which could have negative consequences for thousands of people.

Hughes said he thinks it still is possible to stop the construction of this power line. He

said the main alternative to the power line was a decrease in the use of electricity, which would not require a dramatic change in behavior. Hughes said a reduction in the use of electricity would eliminate the need for the transmission line.

"Without any major change in lifestyle, using modern technology and energy saving devices can decrease use of electricity by 70 percent," Hughes said.

Hughes said there has been an increase of attendance at meetings and residents have begun to write letters to state and local representatives about the power line. He said these actions are signs of progress of the movement, and encouraged Truman students to get involved. Hughes said

anyone who opposes the power line and is interested in helping the community can email noamerenpowerline@gmail.com for more information. Hughes said he is confident in the community's ability to halt the progress of the power line.

"If it comes to it, at least 50 people are willing to block the [construction] with their bodies," Hughes said.

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