



**CITY OF ALTON
ILLINOIS**

OFFICE OF MAYOR
TOM HOECHST

101 E. THIRD ST.
ALTON, IL 62002

Mayor Tom Hoechst Statement

Good afternoon.

I want to thank the US Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois Steve Wiggington, Madison County State's Attorney Tom Gibbons and Alton Police Chief Scott Waldrup for joining me here today. Recently Chief Waldrup gave the annual overview about Alton's crime statistics for 2012 and how the crime rate has dropped from 2011. I want to share with you not just the figures from 2012 as compared to 2011 but to give Altonians a view of the crime rate over many years and compared to where we are today as a City. As you can see from the chart crime in Alton simply is not what it used to be.

Actually it is significantly less than what it was in the mid 1990's and early 2000's. In fact, it is almost half what it was. Specifically the rate for 2012 is **43.8%** lower than the rate from the mid 90's.

Also keep the number **17** in mind; since I've been Mayor the rate has dropped **17.7%** and is now at its lowest level in **17** years! That is something all Altonians should feel good about.

But, stereotypes and perceptions are long lasting and hard to change. We have to get the word out that if you are still thinking "Alton has a crime problem like it did 20 years ago" that view is simply not true. It is outdated.

Do we have more work to do? Of course we do. I'm not saying "because crime is almost half what it was 17 years ago" this means I don't think we have areas where we need to improve.

No one here is saying we don't have to do more but we've made tremendous progress and it's important we recognize that because cutting the crime rate nearly in half is progress.

There isn't one specific reason for this decline crime. It's a combination of factors, each of which feed off each other. I can tell you we have some great police officers, some of the finest in the Metro East area. We also have many dedicated residents who have worked very hard to improve their neighborhoods and who work with the Police Department and our Building and Zoning Department. Even though the Weed and Seed Strategy technically ended years ago the meetings with residents have continued.

So the cooperation between residents and law enforcement is one factor.

Another factor has been our continued effort to tear down vacant, derelict properties.

These properties attract crime and disorder and bring down property values. In the last four years we've eliminated nearly 200 of them. The elimination of the eyesore these properties cause is one benefit but the elimination of the criminal activity they attract is another.

But, in short, it is a combined effort among many people and the result of great partnerships with people like the US Attorney and the State's Attorney.

Moving forward, the Alton Police Department has a specific strategy with how the City of Alton will address crime and for that I want to bring up Chief Waldrup and then we'll have some comments from Mr. Wiggington and Mr. Gibbons.

Again I want to thank the US Attorney and the State's Attorney for joining me here today. You will recall the Weed and Seed Strategy brought together their offices, and many other law enforcement agencies, in 2001 with a coordinated focus on a few Alton neighborhoods.

Today, the City of Alton, the Alton Police Department, the US Attorney's Office and the State's Attorney's Office are partnering together again because now that we have the lowest

crime rate in 17 years we don't want to let up. We want to drive this rate even lower and to do that every now and then we have to rededicate ourselves to working as closely as we can. Today we are announcing a renewed partnership with the US Attorney and the State's Attorney to work together more often, communicate more often and do all we can to keep the Alton crime rate going down.

With that, I'd like to turn it over to Mr. Wiggington and Mr. Gibbons. Thank you both. I can't tell you how important it is to have the relationship we do with the US Attorney's office and the State's Attorney's office.

In addition to the renewed focus from the State's Attorney and the US Attorney, in the days to come I will be making at least one additional announcement about changes the City of Alton will be making so that we don't rest on the success we've had and to keep our focus on reducing crime even more.

Thank you all for being here.

Index Crime Drop Alton Illinois

2012 – 1365

2011 – 1551

2010 – 1523

2009 – 1660

2008 – 1710

2007 – 1958

2006 – 1960

2005 – 2123

2004 – 1789

2003 – 2262

2002 – 2145

2001 – 2045

2000 – 2171

1999 – 1933

1998 – 2348

1997 – 2195

1996 - 2433

ALTON CRIME DROP

