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EPCSO: 26-percent decrease in crime in 2017 compared to 2016

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EL PASO, Texas - The El Paso County Sheriff's Office reports a drop in crime of 26 percent compared to 2016.

The statistics come from the end-of-year Uniform Crime Reports (UCR).

"We have to recognize UCR is not perfect because it only counts crimes that are reported to us," El Paso County Sheriff Richard Wiles said. "What you try to do as an agency is to encourage citizens to report crime by giving them confidence and trust in your agency, and making it as easy as possible for them."

Here's how the numbers break down:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Violent Crimes</u>	<u>Property Crime</u>	<u>Total</u>
2016	267	847	1114
2017	217	603	820
Difference	-18%	-28%	-26%

The department defines violent crimes as: murder, sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault. Property crimes are defined as: burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.

"On a daily and weekly basis, we have meetings with the patrol supervisors to identify crime trends and put the resources where we need to," Wiles said.

Wiles also said his department has been trained in what's called Data-Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS). DDACTS is a law enforcement model that integrates

location-based crime and traffic crash data to determine the most effective ways to deploy resources. His department was trained in DDACTS in 2014.

"[We're using] traffic stops not as a means of giving tickets for traffic offenses, but as a means to identify people and to determine if they're involved in criminal activity in high-crime areas," Wiles said. "We believe that has had the biggest effect in dropping our crime rate."

Since Wiles took over as sheriff in 2009, UCR statistics show violent crimes dropped by three-percent overall, and property crimes dropped by 50 percent.

"That's even with an increase of 15,000 in population. With that population comes additional structures, businesses and housin