



Athena Research Corporation  
January 2, 2014

---

# Summary and Interpretation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Crime in the United States, 2012

*Shannon M. Brick  
Crime Analyst*

*Rosemary J. Erickson, Ph.D.  
President*

*Sandra J. Erickson, MFS  
Research Associate*



**Summary and Interpretation of the  
Federal Bureau of Investigation's Crime in the United States, 2012**  
**Shannon M. Brick<sup>1</sup>, Rosemary J. Erickson, Ph.D<sup>2</sup>, and Sandra J. Erickson, MFS<sup>3</sup>**  
**Athena Research Corporation**  
**January 2, 2014**

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has released its annual report regarding crime in the United States in 2012. The key findings, taken from there, are discussed and interpreted below.

**CRIME VOLUME**

This section is on crime volume, as compared to crime rate. Crime volume is based on the total number of crimes. Crime rate is the number of offenses per 100,000 persons. Violent crime slightly increased by 0.75% from 2011 to 2012. Comparing 2012 violent crime to 2011 violent crime, the category of murder increased by 1.13%; rape increased by 0.24%; robbery decreased slightly by 0.06%; and aggravated assault increased by 1.11%. The percentage change from 2011 to 2012 is shown in Table 1 below. Property crime also decreased in the same period by 0.9%. Larceny/theft remained practically the same over the two year period, and motor vehicle theft went up 0.6%. Burglary, on the other hand, decreased by 3.72%.

**TABLE 1: PERCENT CHANGE IN VIOLENT CRIME VOLUME**

<b>CRIME CATEGORY</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>
<b>Violent Crime</b>	<b>0.75%</b>
<b>Murder</b>	<b>1.13%</b>
<b>Rape</b>	<b>0.24%</b>
<b>Robbery</b>	<b>-0.06%</b>
<b>Aggravated Assault</b>	<b>1.11%</b>

For the five year period from 2008 to 2012, violent crime overall was down 12.9%. Murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault decreased over this five-year period. Murder decreased 9.9%, rape by 7.0%, aggravated assault by 9.8%, and robbery by 20.1%.

---

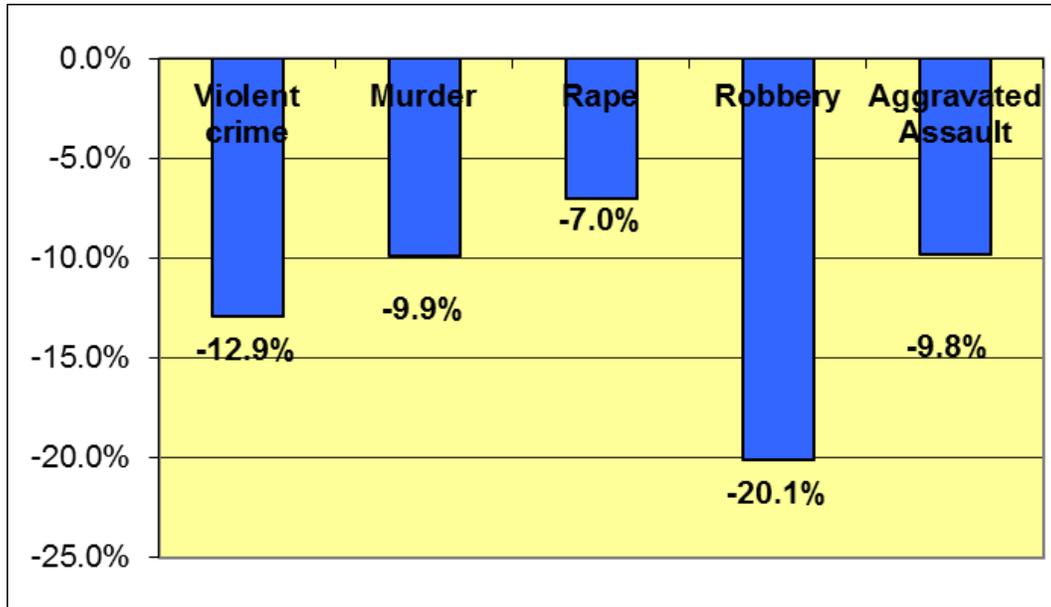
<sup>1</sup> Shannon M. Brick is an undergraduate student of Psychology and Crime Analyst for Athena Research.

<sup>2</sup> Rosemary J. Erickson holds a Ph.D. in Sociology: Justice and is president of Athena Research.

<sup>3</sup> Sandra J. Erickson holds a Masters in Forensic Science and is a research associate at Athena Research.



**CHART 1: VIOLENT CRIME VOLUME COMPARED TO FIVE YEARS AGO – 2008 TO 2012**



In addition to percentage increases and decreases in crime, it is important to keep in mind the actual numbers. There were 1,214,462 violent crimes committed in the United States in 2012, down from 1,206,005 the previous year. Murders totaled 14,827 in 2012, down from 14,661 in 2011. There were 354,520 robberies reported in the United States in 2012, down *slightly* from 367,832 in 2011. Rapes totaled 84,376 in 2012, up slightly from 84,376 in 2011. In 2012, there were 760,739 aggravated assaults, down from 752,423 in 2011.

In the period of 2011-2012, all regions of the country experienced an overall increase in violent crime volume. The Northeast saw a decrease of 1.2%, the Midwest an increase of 1.5%, the South a decrease of 0.3%, and the West an increase of 3.2%. Murders decreased in the Northeast, and the South, but increased in the Midwest, South, and West. The number of murders committed decreased by 3.1% in the Northeast, while the number of murders committed went up by 2.8% in the Midwest, 1.6% in the South, and by 1.7% in the West. Rape volume was up slightly in the Midwest and Northeast, and down slightly in the West and South in 2012 as compared to 2011. It increased by 1.4% in the Midwest and 1.1% in the Northeast, and decreased 0.7% in the West and 0.2% in the South. Robberies increased by 4.6% in the West, and decreased 2.4% in the Midwest, 1.9% in the Northeast, and 0.8% in the South. Firearms were used in 41.0% of all robberies in 2010 nationwide, a very slight decrease from 41.3% in 2011. During robberies in 2011, the South experienced the highest firearm usage at 48.4%, and the West experienced the lowest usage at 31.4%. During murders in 2012, the Midwest experienced the highest firearm usage at 73.7%, and the West experienced the lowest usage at 65.3%.

## **CRIME RATE**

This section is on rate, not volume. Rate is the number of offenses per 100,000 inhabitants. The violent crime rate slightly decreased by just 0.05%. The property crime rate also decreased 1.6% in that same period. From 2011 to 2012, the murder rate did not change,



rape decreased 0.37%, robbery decreased 0.88%, and aggravated assault increased 0.33%, as shown in Table 2 below. These changes are very slight, and indicate there was not a major change in these violent crime rates from 2011 to 2012.

**TABLE 2: PERCENT CHANGE IN VIOLENT CRIME RATE**

<b>CRIME CATEGORY</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>
<b>Violent Crime</b>	<b>-0.05%</b>
<b>Murder</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Rape</b>	<b>-0.37%</b>
<b>Robbery</b>	<b>-0.88%</b>
<b>Aggravated Assault</b>	<b>+0.33%</b>

For the five year period from 2008 to 2012, the violent crime rate overall was down 15.6% as shown in Table 3 below, with all categories at a decrease. Murder was down 13.0%, rape was down 9.7%, robbery was down 22.6%, and aggravated assault was down 12.7%.

**TABLE 3: PERCENT CHANGE IN VIOLENT CRIME RATE – FIVE YEAR PERIOD**

<b>CRIME CATEGORY</b>	<b>2008-2012</b>
<b>Violent Crime</b>	<b>-15.6%</b>
<b>Murder</b>	<b>-13.0%</b>
<b>Rape</b>	<b>-9.7%</b>
<b>Robbery</b>	<b>-22.6%</b>
<b>Aggravated Assault</b>	<b>-12.7%</b>

## **CRIME DETAILS AND TRENDS**

Aggravated assault accounted for 62.6% of the violent crimes in 2012. Robbery accounted for 29.2%, forcible rape accounted for 6.9%, and murder accounted for 1.2% of the violent crimes in 2012, as shown in Chart 2. These percentages are consistent with previous years.



**CHART 2: VIOLENT CRIME BY OFFENSE**

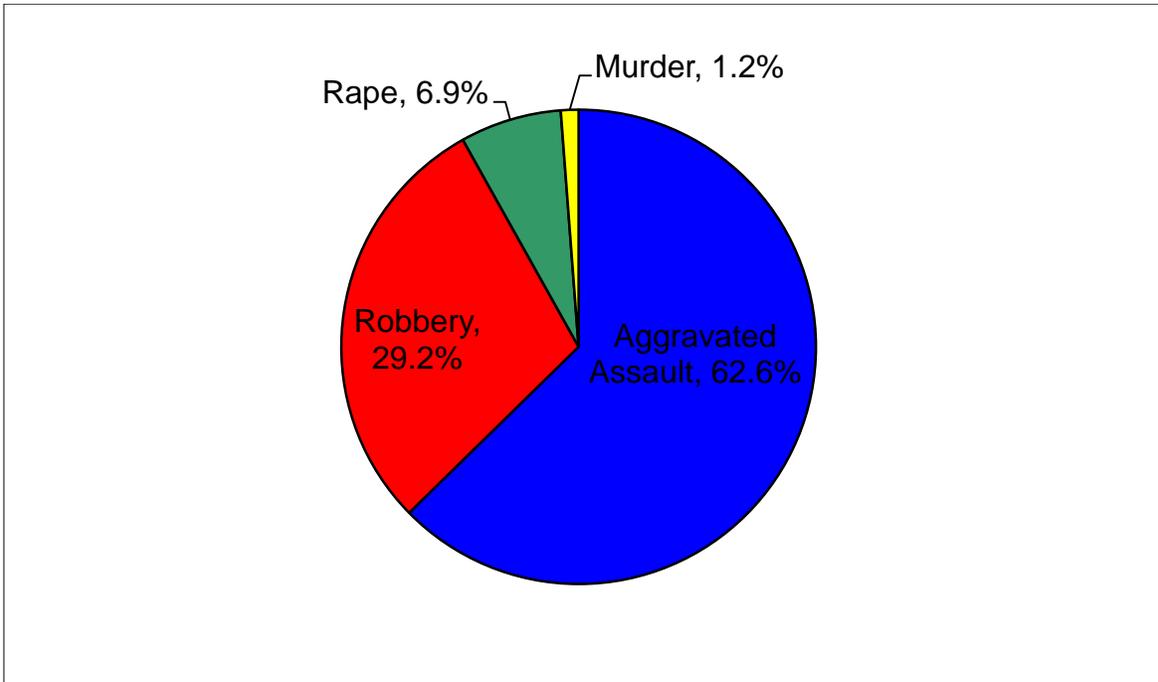
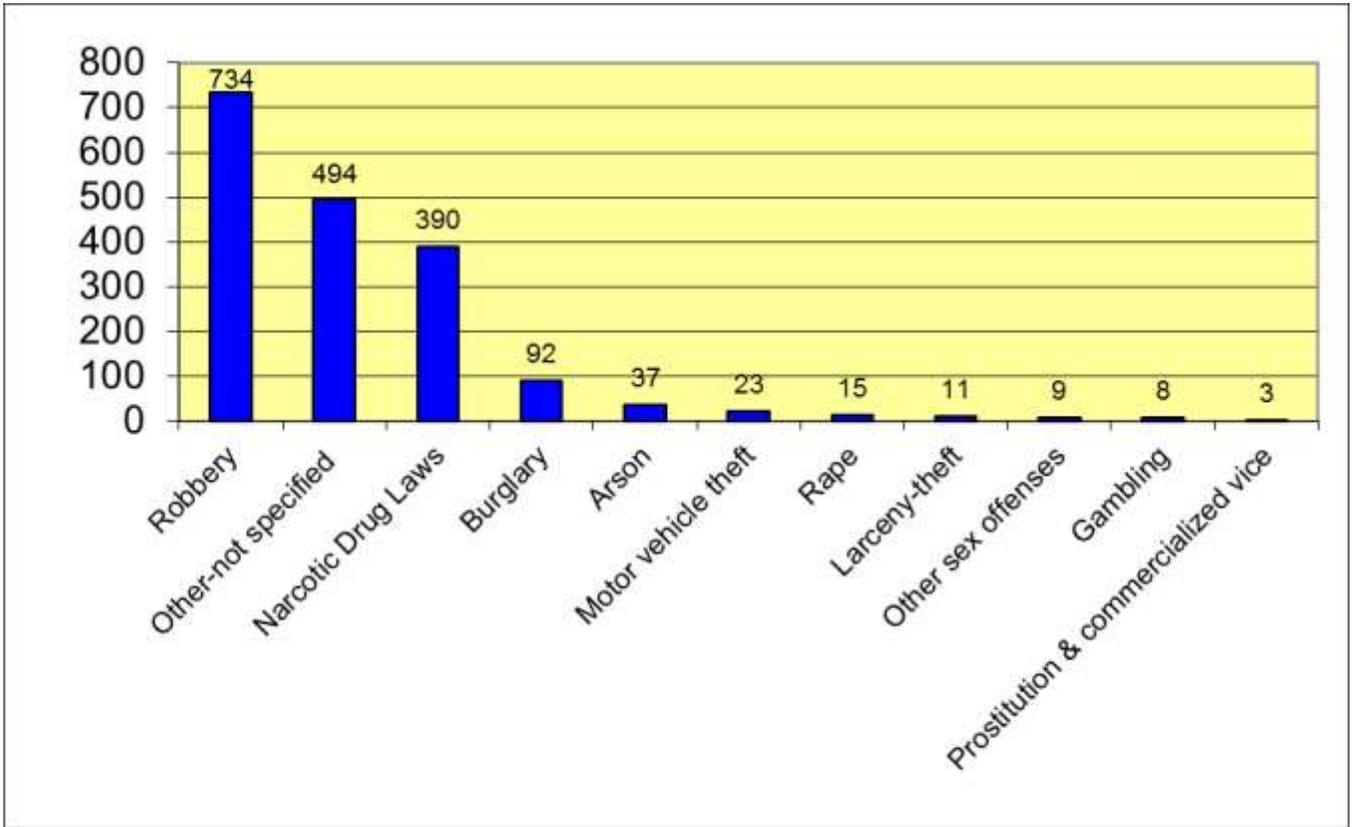


Chart 3 shows the breakdown of murders that occurred during the commission of other felonies. Of all felony murders, the most frequent, at 652, were robbery related. That number is lower than statistics over the years. In 2011, 754 were robbery related.

**CHART 3: FELONY MURDER CIRCUMSTANCES**

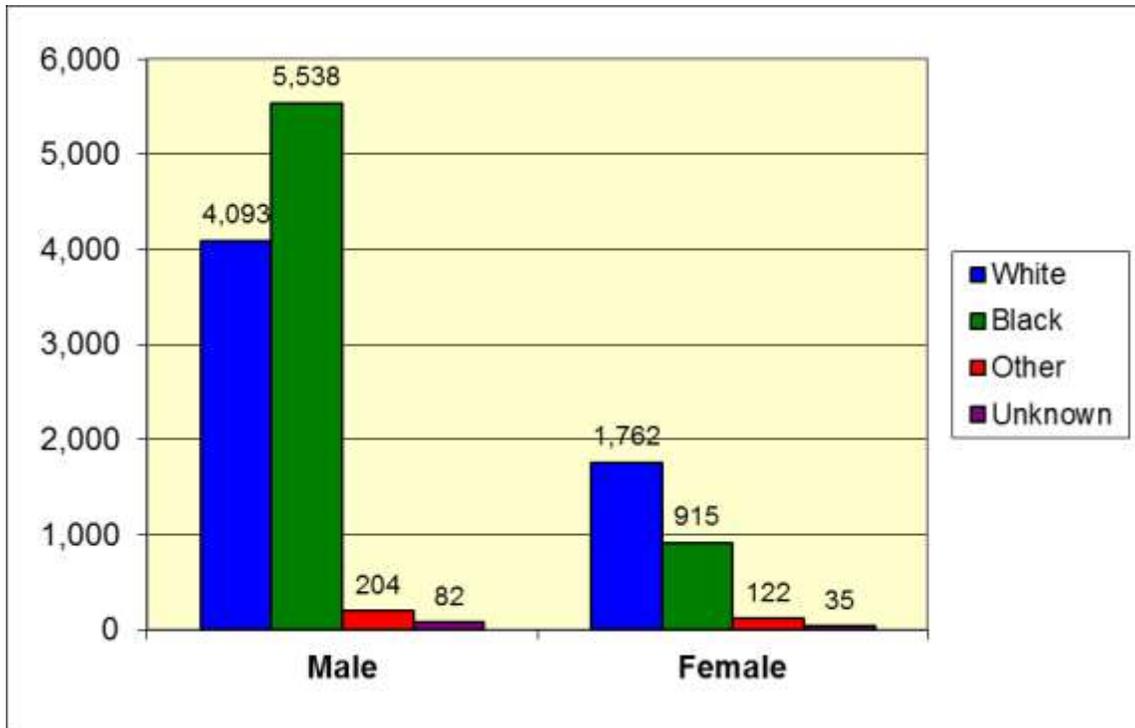




Murder victims were killed with firearms 69.3% of the time in 2012, an increase from 67.7% in 2011. Chart 4 shows murder victims by race and sex. In 2012, 77.7% of known murder victims were male. Murder victims, for whom race was known, were 45.9% white, 50.6% black, and the remaining victims were from other or unknown races.

**CHART 4: MURDER VICTIMS BY RACE AND SEX**





In 2012, 45.1% of the perpetrators were unknown, a slight increase from 44.1% in 2011. When the relationships of murder victims and offenders were known, 21.3% were killed by an acquaintance, 12.5% of victims were slain by family members, and 12.2% were murdered by strangers. These numbers are consistent with the previous year.

Chart 5 depicts the 5-year trend in the number of murders. In 2012, the number of reported murders was an estimated 14,827, down 9.9% from 2008.



**CHART 5: NUMBER OF MURDERS 2008-2012**

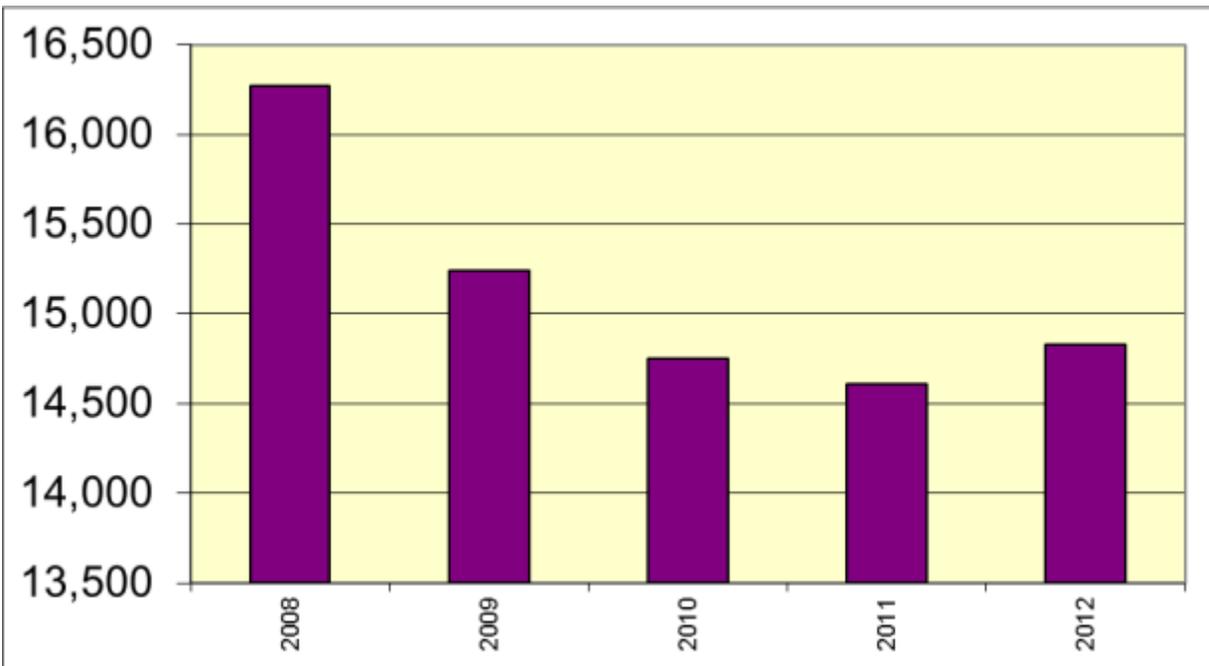
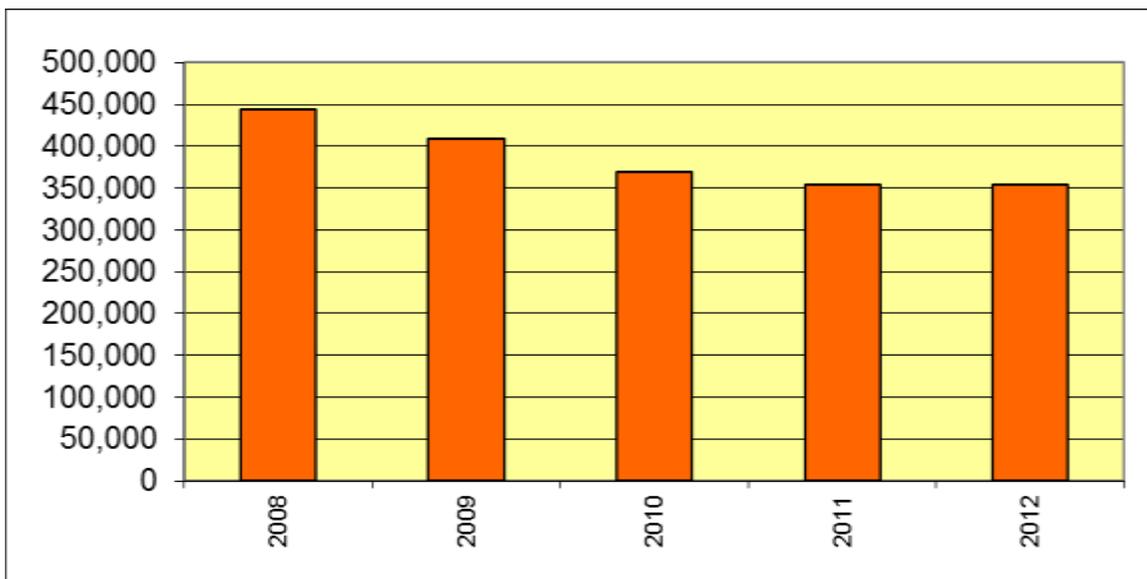


Chart 6 shows the 5-year trend for robbery. Robberies were 20.7% lower in 2012 than they were in 2008.

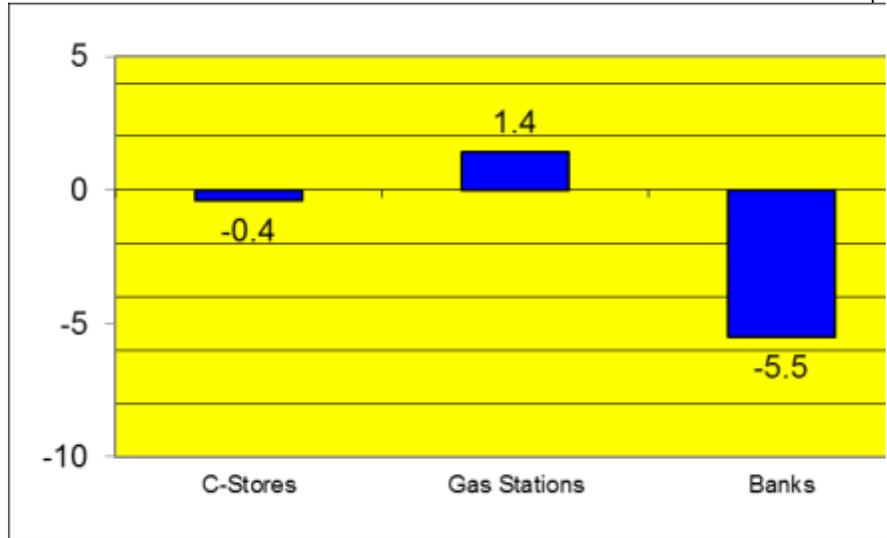
**CHART 6: NUMBER OF ROBBERIES 2008-2012**



Charts 7, 8 and 9 present the robbery data for convenience stores, gas stations and banks. In evaluating the results, note that the distinction between gas stations and convenience stores is not always clear, and it is based on the law enforcement designation at the scene.

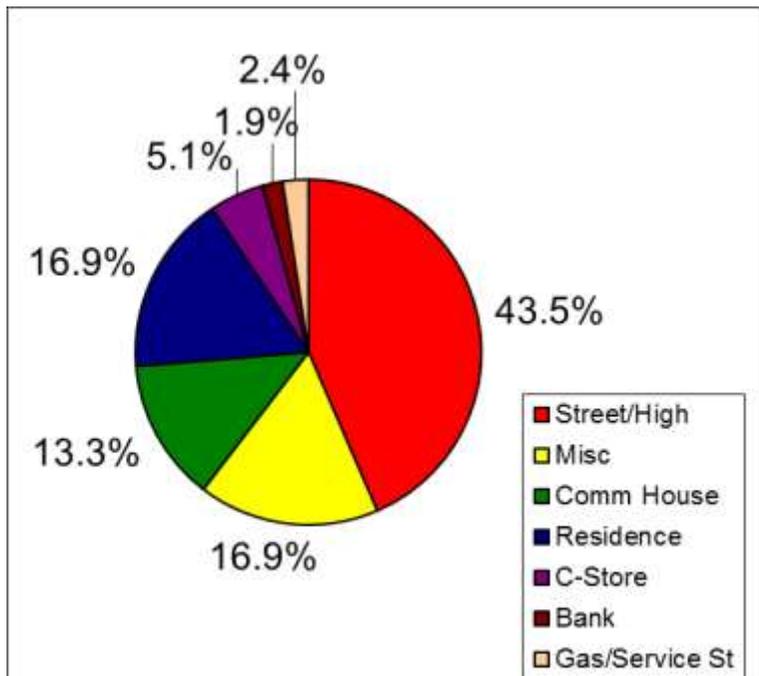
- Convenience store robbery volume was down 0.4% from 2011 to 2012.
- Gas station robbery volume was up 1.4% from 2011 to 2012.
- Bank robbery volume was down 5.5% from 2011 to 2012.

**CHART 7: PERCENT CHANGE IN ROBBERY VOLUME FROM PREVIOUS YEAR – 2011-2012**



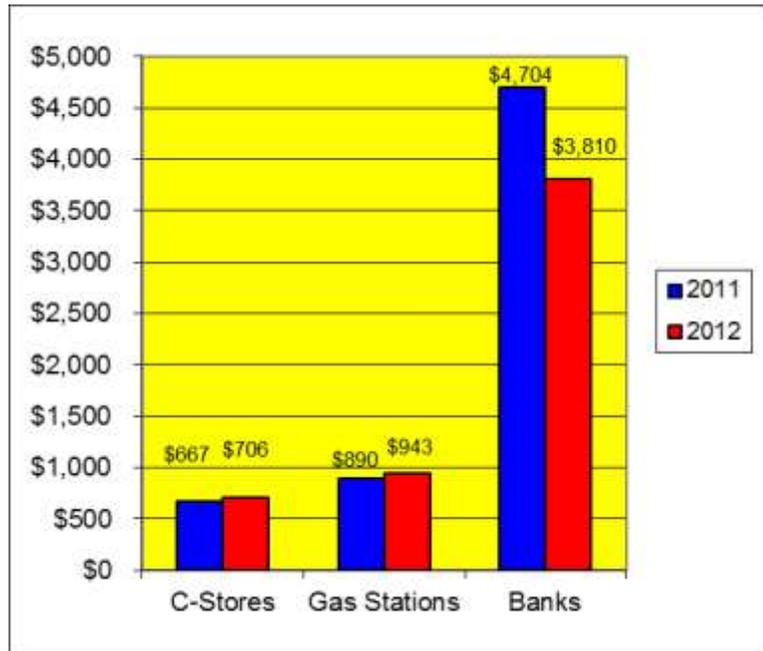
- Convenience store robbery made up 5.1% of the total robberies in 2012, the same as the previous year.
- Gas station robbery made up 2.4% of the total robberies in 2012, the same as the previous year.
- Bank robberies made up 1.9%, 0.1% less than the previous year.

**CHART 8: PERCENT DISTRIBUTION ROBBERY VOLUME – 2012**



- ❖ In 2012, convenience stores had an average dollar loss of \$706, up from \$667 in the previous year.
- ❖ Gas station average dollar loss in 2009 was \$943, up from \$890 the year before.
- ❖ Banks had by far the highest average dollar loss at \$3,810, a decrease from \$4,704 in 2011.

**CHART 9: AVERAGE LOSS PER ROBBERY**



*Authors' Note: These are not just register losses, but include safe and merchandise losses.*

## HISTORICAL CRIME DATA

According to Table 1 of the 2009 UCR report, the *violent crime rate* in this country peaked in 1991 and then began to decrease every year until 2005 and 2006 when it increased two years in a row. The 2012 data, though very similar to the 2011 data, show it at its lowest point since 1991. The violent crime rate was 758.2 in 1991 and was 386.9 in 2012.<sup>4</sup>

The *murder rate* in the US peaked in 1991 at 9.8. The murder rate was substantially lower in 2000, at 5.5. In 2011, it reached its lowest rate since 1991. The 4.7 rate in 2011 and 2012 were the lowest murder rates since the peak of 9.8 in 1991, when it was over double what it is now.

The *rape rate* peaked a year later than murder or robbery. It peaked in 1992 at 42.8 and was at 26.9 in 2012, the lowest rape rate since 1992.

The *robbery rate* peaked in 1991 and began decreasing each year until 2001, when it increased again. Then it reached a low again in 2004 at 136.7. It began increasing again for two years before beginning another decline. It was 112.9 in 2012.

<sup>4</sup> This differs from the 2011 UCR, because changes were made to the 2011 violent crime rate since publication.



The *aggravated assault rate* also peaked in 1992, (as rape did), at a rate of 441.9. In 2011, the aggravated assault rate was 241.5, the lowest of any year since 1992. The rate was 242.3 in 2012.

#### **AUTHORS' CONCLUSIONS:**

All categories of violent crime were down slightly in volume in 2011. We had predicted that crime would increase in the mid-2000s and decrease by 2010, based on the demographics of the number of young people (18-24) declining as a percentage of the total population. We also caution against complacency, however, and recommend that employers stay focused on the crime prevention strategy that has been in place for nearly three decades in certain retail settings, particularly convenience stores. It incorporates the validated crime-reducing measures of good cash control; limiting escape routes; maintaining good visibility throughout the store; adequate lighting inside and outside stores; and training employees in safety and anti-violence measures.

