

A White Paper On Auto Theft In Albuquerque



**Prepared For:
The City Of Albuquerque
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Background

This white paper on auto theft is part of a larger study commissioned by the City Of Albuquerque to better understand crime in our community and identify potential causes for the recent increase in certain categories of crime, particularly auto theft.

One of the basic principles of Problem-Oriented Policing (POP) is the importance of being very crime specific when searching for solutions. “...crimes are committed for a variety of motives, by different offenders, with varying degrees of organization, knowledge and skills.” (Clarke & Eck, 2005, p.24).

Another principle of POP is to recognize the critical distinction between long-term solutions and short-term solutions. Debates about the root causes of crime are important and all of us share in the responsibility of remediating some of the social factors that contribute to crime including poverty, racism, educational deficiencies, joblessness, homelessness, and drug and alcohol addiction. It is equally important to focus on the near and immediate causes of crime because these factors can often be effectively addressed by law enforcement, the criminal justice system and all of the partners it takes to solve complex crime problems.

We focused on trying to understand some of the near and immediate causes of the steep rise in auto thefts in Albuquerque. We are very proud of the efforts taking place in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County to address the behavioral health and other social issues that affect too many of our people, and we hope the findings presented here can be part of the comprehensive solutions needed to make our community as safe as possible.

The Study

Crime is a problem, both in New Mexico and across the nation. The good news is that both violent and property crime rates have been on a decline since the 1990's. The bad news is that certain kinds of crime seem to be on the rise again. Auto theft, in particular, has spiked sharply in the last two and half-years.

We examined three major factors that may be related to the increase in auto thefts:

- The unemployment rate in Albuquerque which is a reasonable indicator of the state of the economy. The decline in the unemployment rate tracks well with 34 consecutive months of job growth, and increases in exports, median income, lodgers tax collections, and home sales.**
- The reduction in the prison population at the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) and other key changes in the criminal justice system in Albuquerque. The reduction in average MDC population is a reasonable indicator for measuring the changes brought about by the enactment of a number of criminal justice system reforms.**
- The number of officers in the Albuquerque Police Department. The number of officers is a reasonable indicator of the resources available to fight crime in the police department.**

The Findings

The analyses conducted in this study indicated four major findings:

- 1. Albuquerque's economic conditions do not appear to be related to the rise in auto thefts. In fact, throughout the period when auto thefts have been spiking, Albuquerque's economy has been improving. The unemployment rate has steadily fallen, and other economic indicators including median income, home sales, and job growth have risen. This does not mean economic factors are not related to auto theft; rather, for the purposes of this study, the other two factors seem more reasonable to examine.**
- 2. The reduction in average MDC population appears to have a very strong, direct, inverse relationship with the rise in auto thefts. As the jail population has declined sharply, the number of auto thefts has risen sharply. The correlation between the monthly population at MDC and the monthly number of auto thefts is $-.81$, which indicates a very strong statistically significant relationship. In addition, a detailed analyses of the individuals arrested for auto thefts in 2015 shows that many of them were repeatedly arrested and released for auto theft in the same year. We estimate that about 46% of the 5,179 auto thefts in 2015 can be attributed to a relatively small number of repeat offenders. These findings argue that repeat offenders are a contributing cause to the sharp increase in auto thefts in Albuquerque.**

The Findings (Continued)

3. **Currently APD and MDC do not share data about who is arrested and who is released. This makes it difficult for agencies to collaborate and ensure that the intended goals of the criminal justice reform initiatives are met and unintended consequences are kept to a minimum. We strongly recommend that APD and MDC develop a data-sharing agreement which will strengthen our ability to develop a fair and effective criminal justice system.**
4. **The number of officers appears to have weak, indirect, inverse relationship with the rise in auto thefts. Our analysis suggests that while the number of officers is important, it is more useful to look at arrests rates, calls for service and traffic stops. The data indicate that officers have continued to make about the same number of arrests for major kinds of crime (including auto theft) over the last five years. The data also show that arrests for DUI, narcotics and “all other violations,” and traffic stops have declined over the last five years. The correlation between the monthly number of traffic stops and the monthly number of auto thefts is $-.41$, which indicates a moderate statistically significant relationship. The fact that traffic stops (and some kinds of arrests) have been declining since 2010 does not help explain why auto thefts suddenly spiked in 2013. These findings do indicate, however, that having enough police officers is especially critical now given the rise in both property crime rates and violent crime rates.**

The Conclusions

We started this set of analyses by asking the question, “What Has Changed That Might Account For The Sharp Rise In Auto Thefts Since 2013?” Our analyses suggest that the strongest, most direct relationship to the rise in auto thefts is the number of repeat offenders who are arrested and released multiple times. We estimated that repeat offenders account for about 46% of the increase in auto thefts in 2015. The reduction in the number of police officers also appears to be a contributing factor. Clearly, other long-term and short-term factors, including a national rise in crime, are involved as well.

The data and analyses in this report suggest two immediate steps we can take to reduce auto theft:

- 1. We refine and monitor the important criminal justice reforms to ensure that they achieve their goals without the unintended consequence of increasing auto theft. In particular, we need to better address the issue of repeat offenders.**
- 2. We help the Albuquerque Police Department recruit and retain enough officers and we ensure that those officers have the resources and support they need to do the difficult jobs we need them to do.**

We recognize that other factors including juvenile involvement in auto thefts, drug addiction, and the use of stolen vehicles in the commission of other crimes should be examined more closely as well. We look forward to working on those studies with our partners in other law enforcement agencies, social services, and across the criminal justice system.

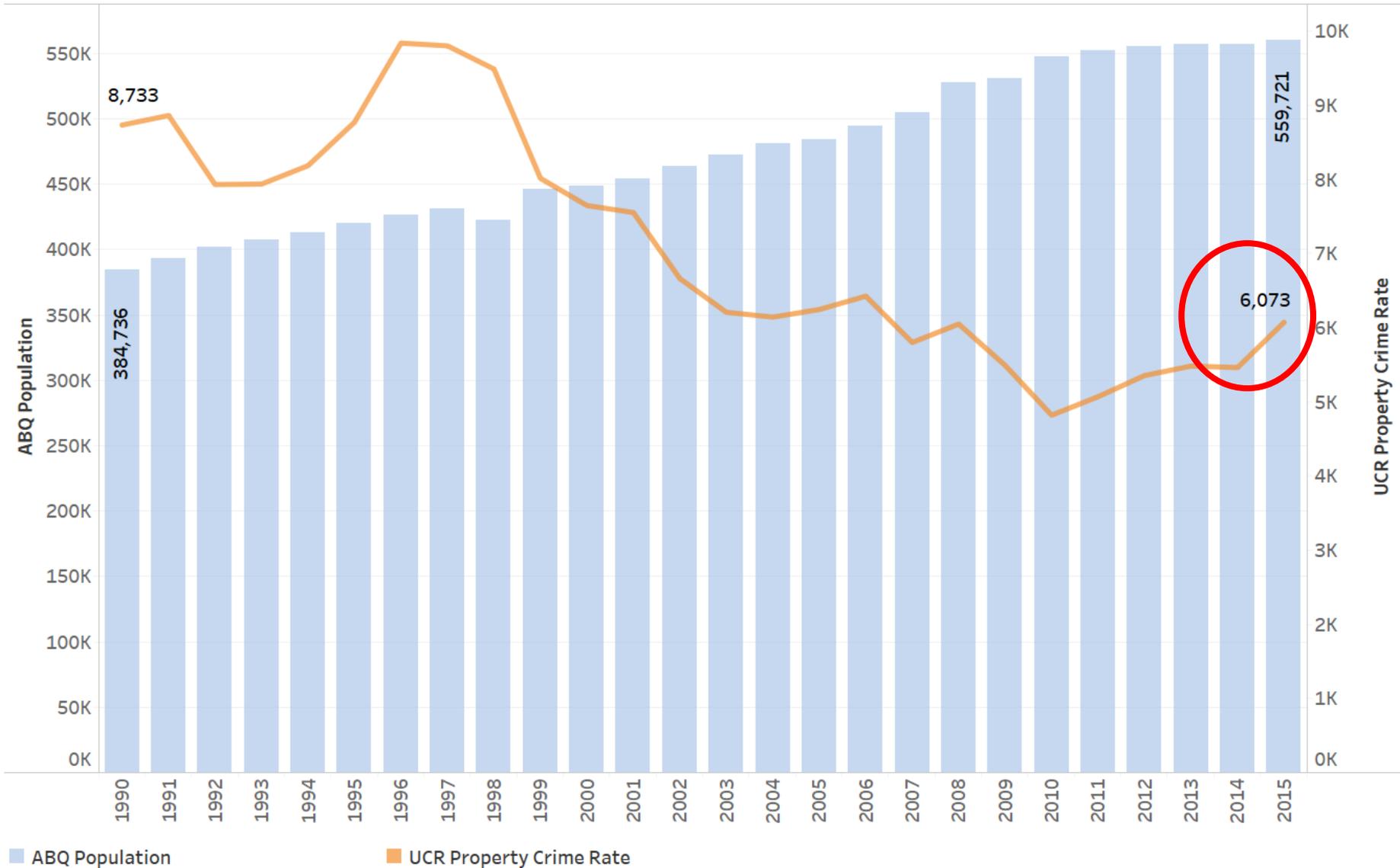
The Data

The data presented in this report come primarily from three sources:

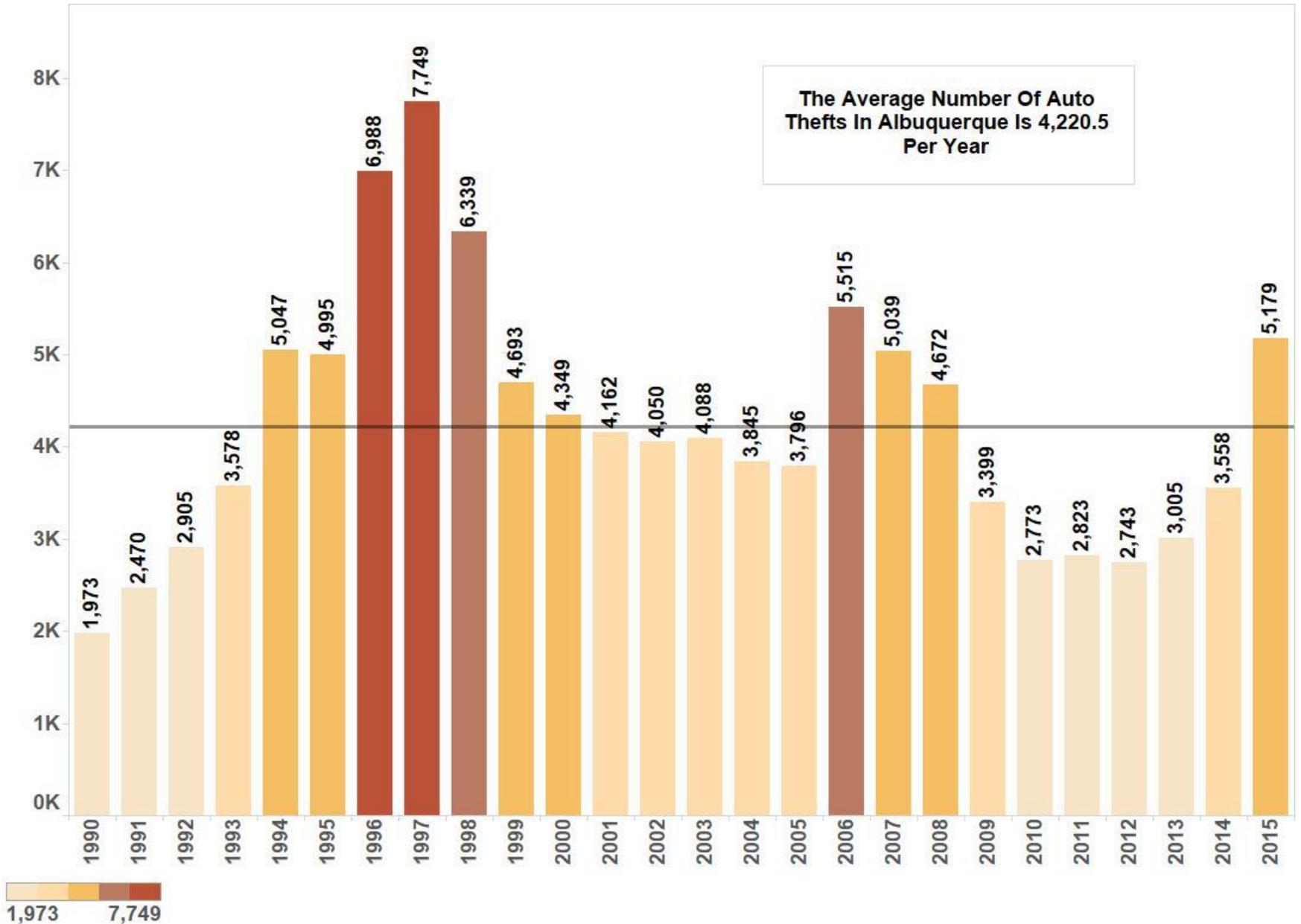
1. **The FBI Uniform Crime Report (UCR).** These data are gathered and reported on an annual and semi-annual basis. The UCR reports focus on Part 1 Violent Crimes (homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) and Part 1 Property Crimes (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson).
2. **The Albuquerque Police Department's Record Management System (RMS).** Once a crime incident happens and shows up on a 911 call or other system, it is reviewed by APD and classified in a final form that is the source for the FBI UCR data. These RMS data also provide a rich source for examining crime incidents in more detail.
3. **The Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office data** were used to help complete the analysis of auto theft by beats and Zip Codes because they and the Albuquerque Police Department work together to cover much of our community.

Please note that the databases used from crime analyses are appropriately updated and revised on a regular basis. Because many of the analyses in this report were conducted over the last few months, more recent data may vary slightly as it is updated.

Albuquerque's Property Crime Rate Has Decreased While Albuquerque's Population Has Increased: 1990 To 2015. But The Trend Is Changing.

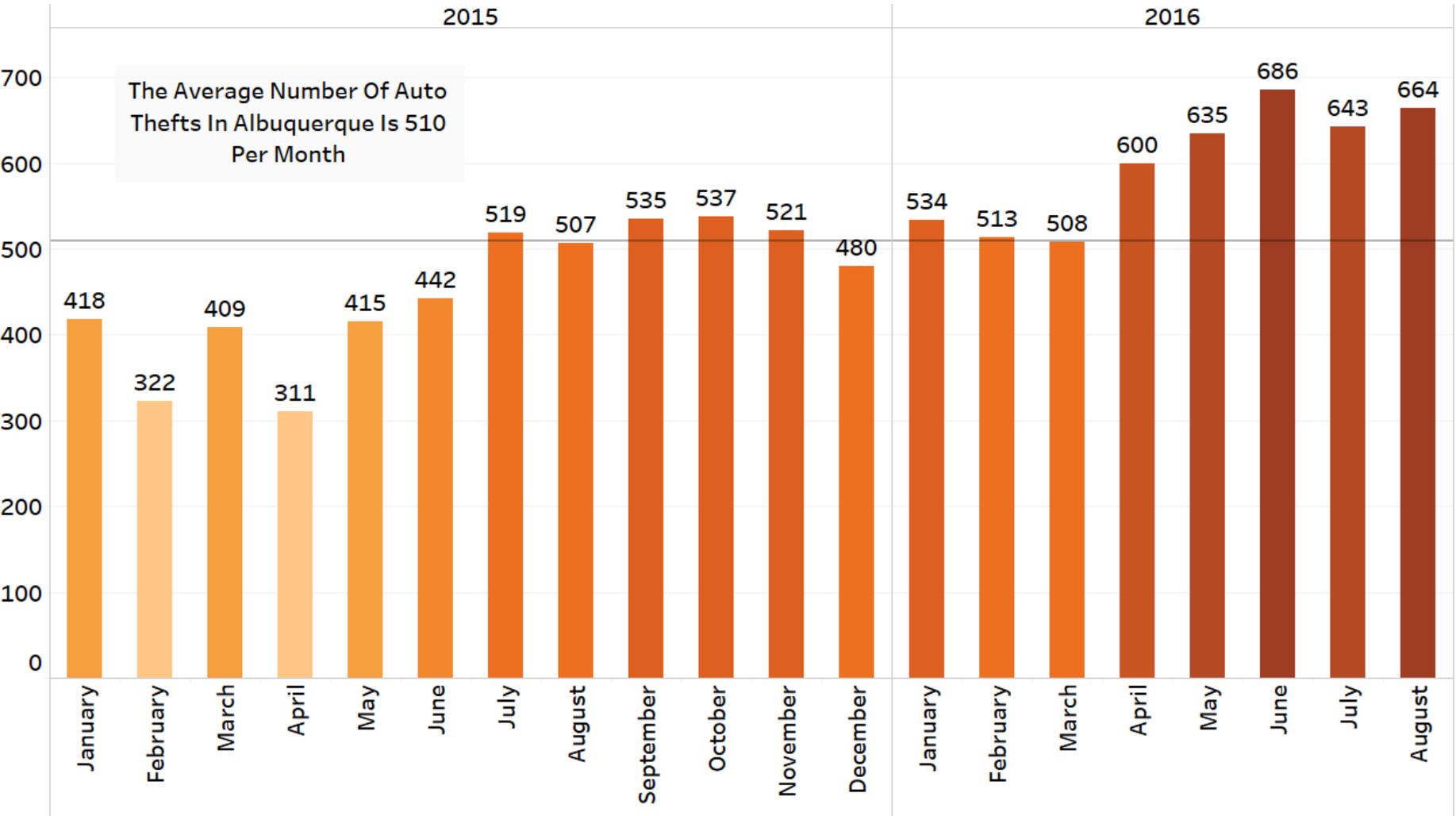


The Number Of Auto Thefts In Albuquerque Rose Sharply From 2013 To 2015



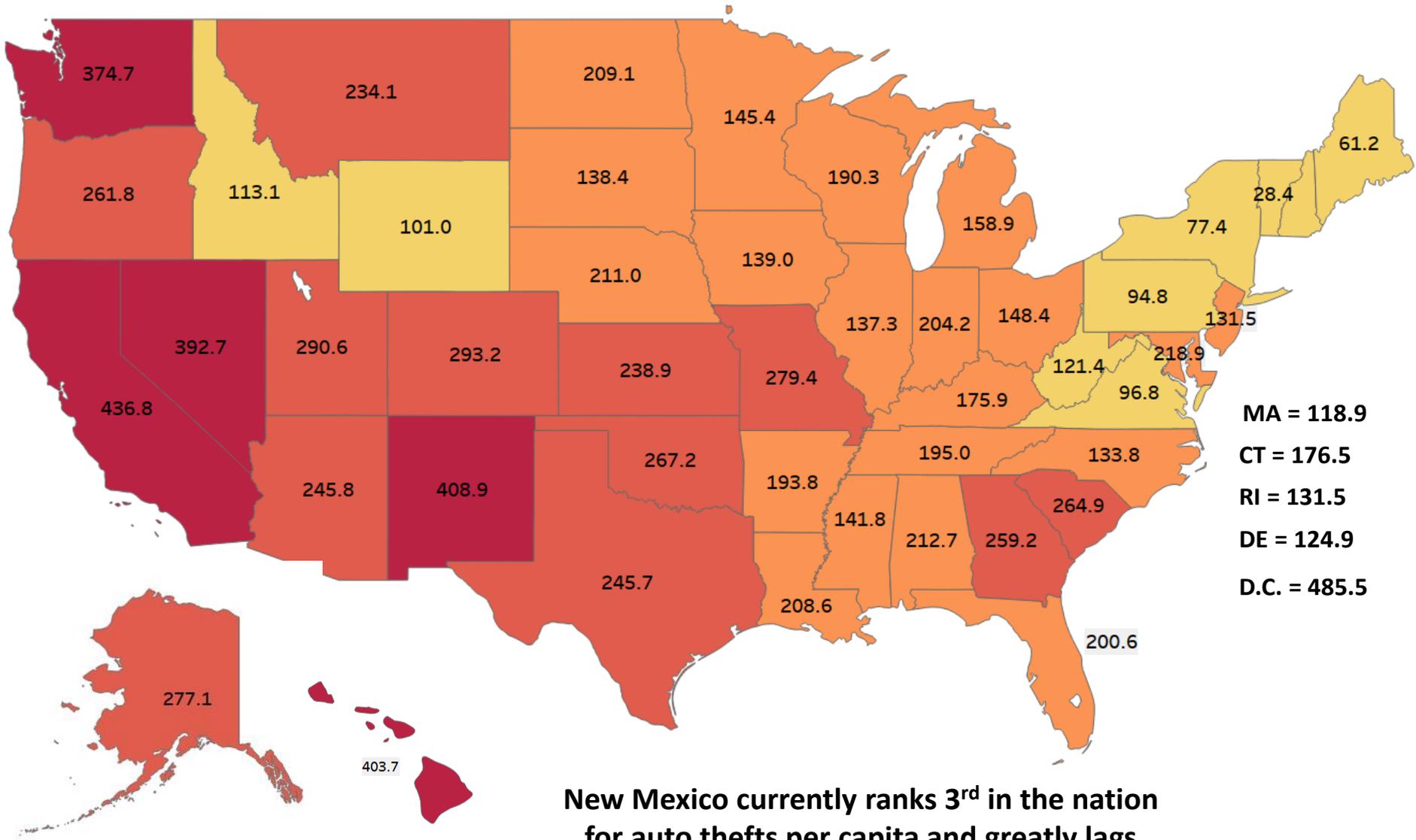
Source: Albuquerque Police Department

Auto Theft Increased The Last Half Of 2015 And Continued In 2016



Source: Albuquerque Police Department Real Time Crime Center

The Rate Of Motor Vehicle Theft By 100,000 People By State For 2015

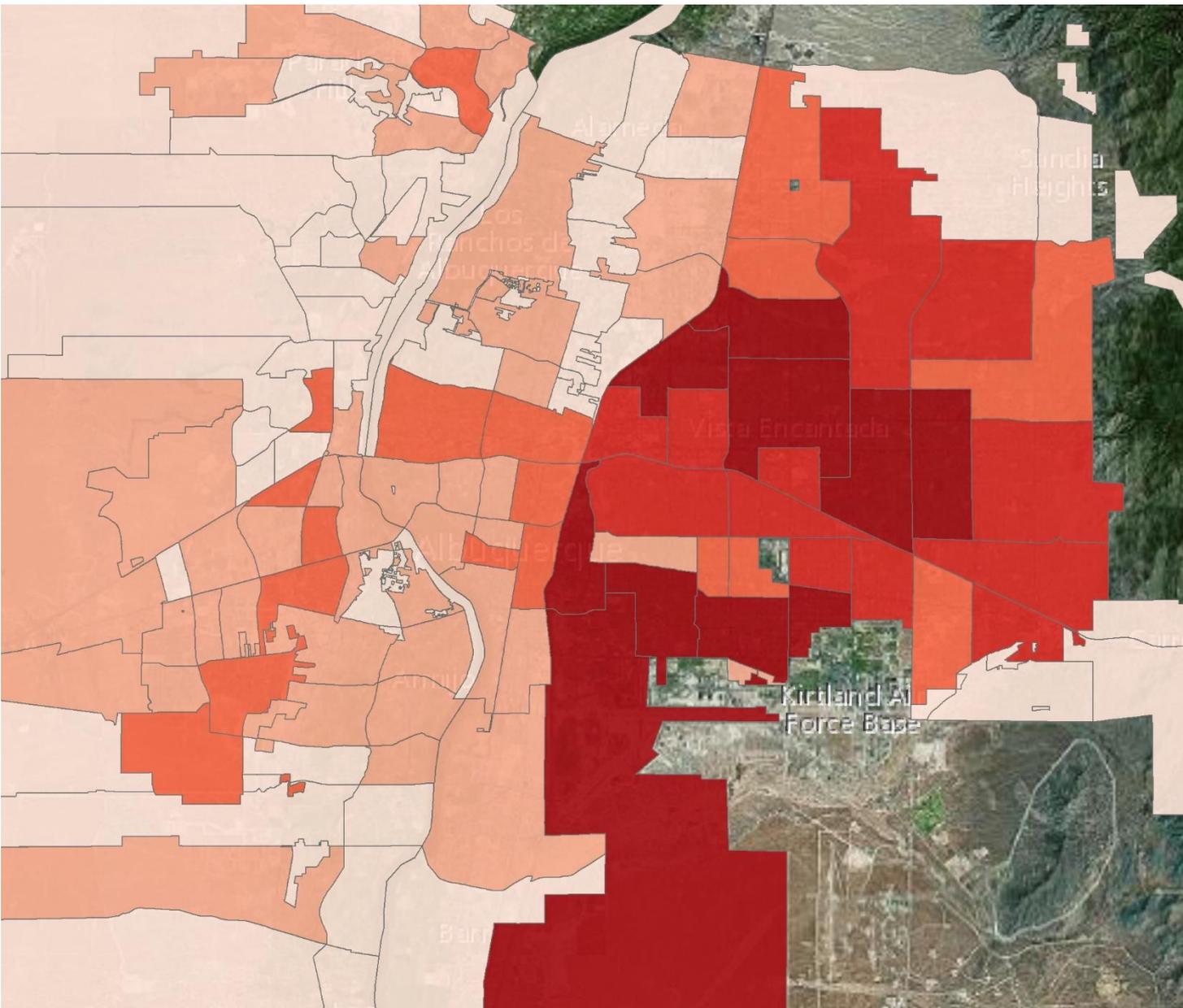
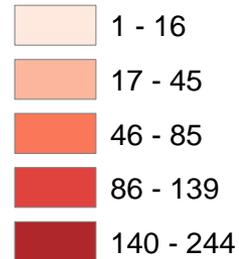


New Mexico currently ranks 3rd in the nation for auto thefts per capita and greatly lags behind our neighboring border states in the Southwest.

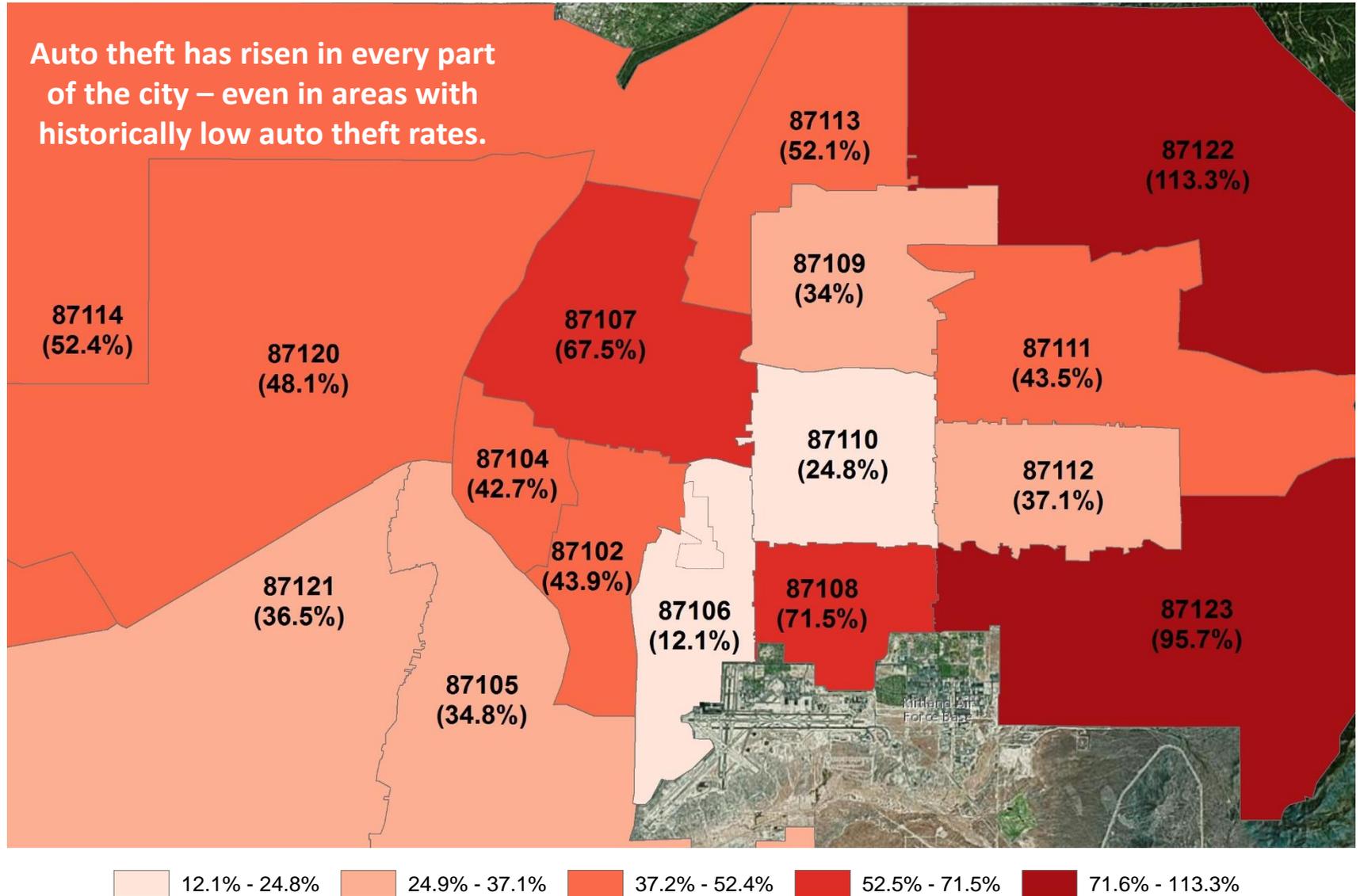
**MA = 118.9
 CT = 176.5
 RI = 131.5
 DE = 124.9
 D.C. = 485.5**

Albuquerque Auto Thefts In 2015 By Beat

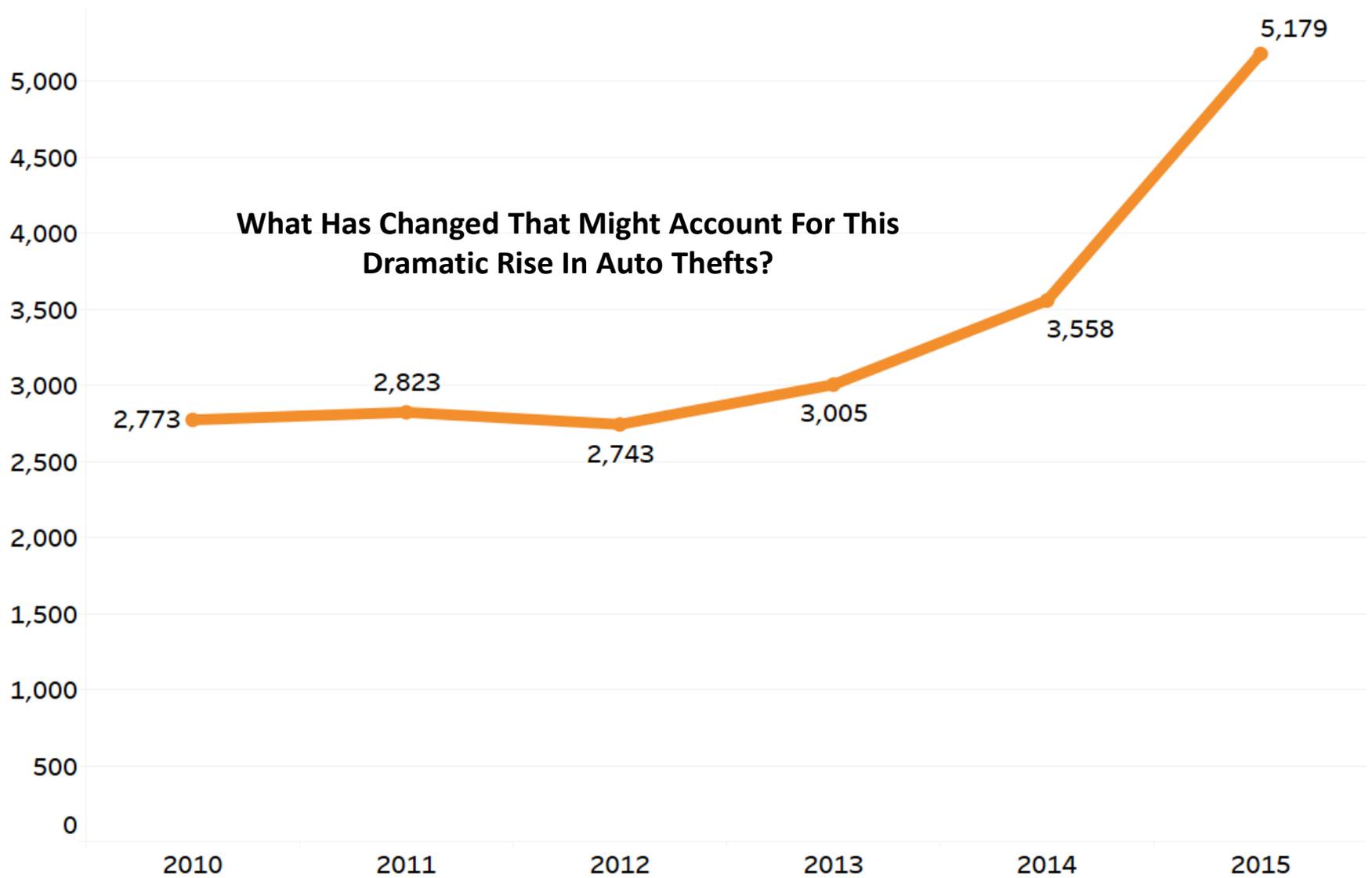
2015 Auto Thefts



Percent Change In Auto Thefts From The First 8 Months of 2015 To The First 8 Months Of 2016 By Zip Code

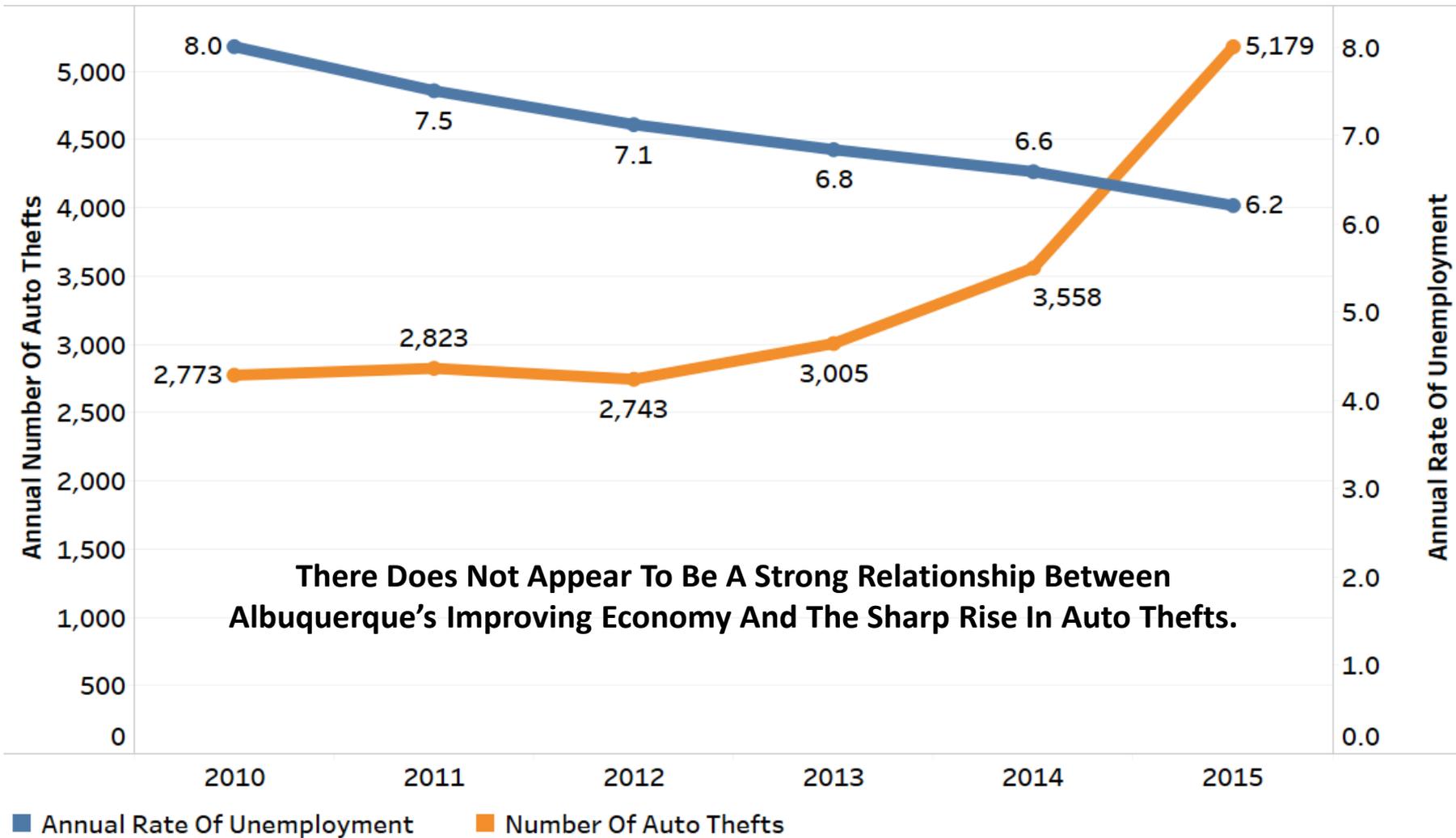


Auto Thefts Have Risen Sharply Since 2013



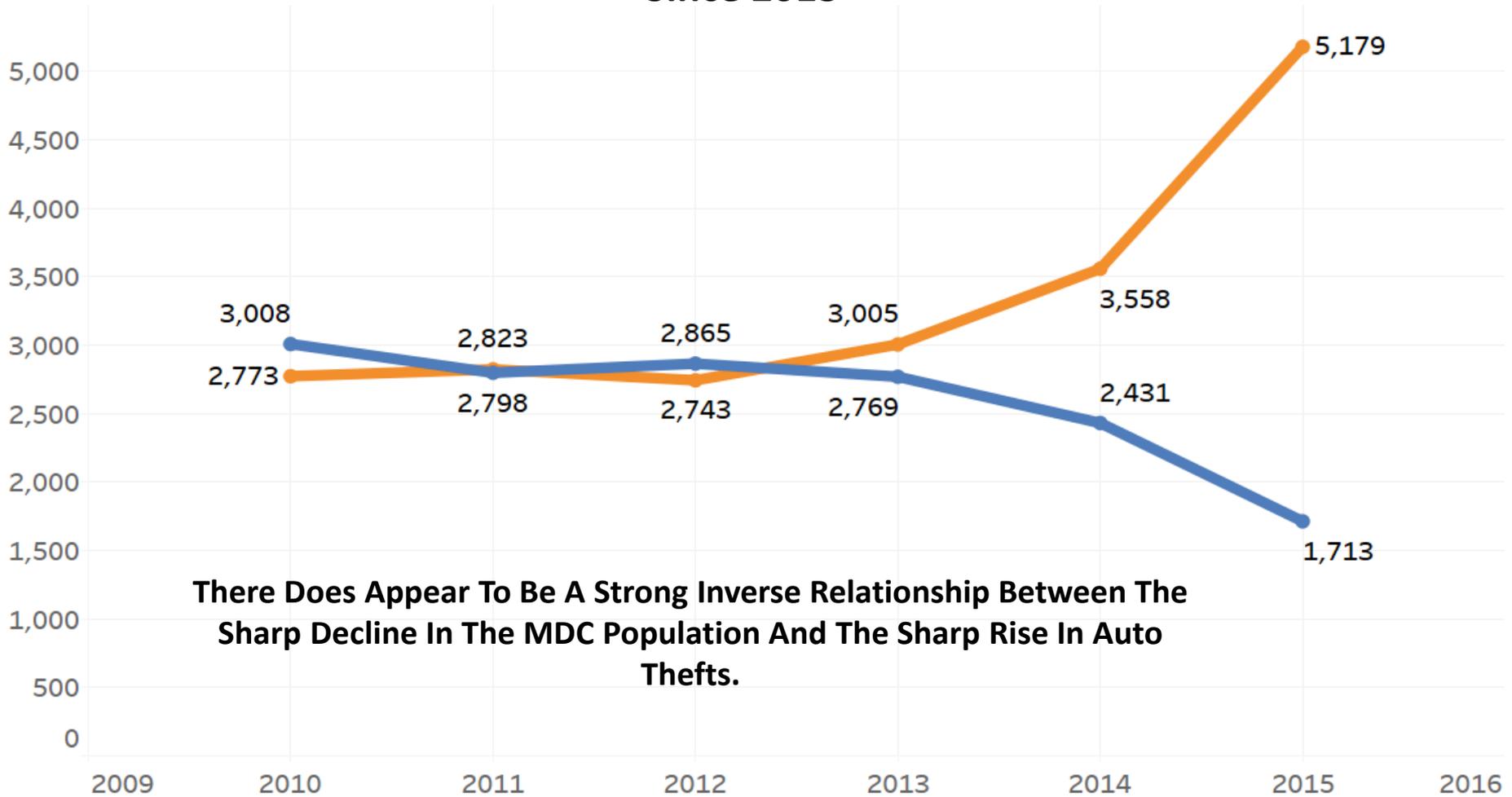
Sources: Albuquerque Police Department; FBI UCR

Albuquerque's Unemployment Rate Has Steadily Improved Over Time



Sources: Albuquerque Police Department; FBI UCR; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Metropolitan Detention Center Population Has Dropped Sharply Since 2013



There Does Appear To Be A Strong Inverse Relationship Between The Sharp Decline In The MDC Population And The Sharp Rise In Auto Thefts.

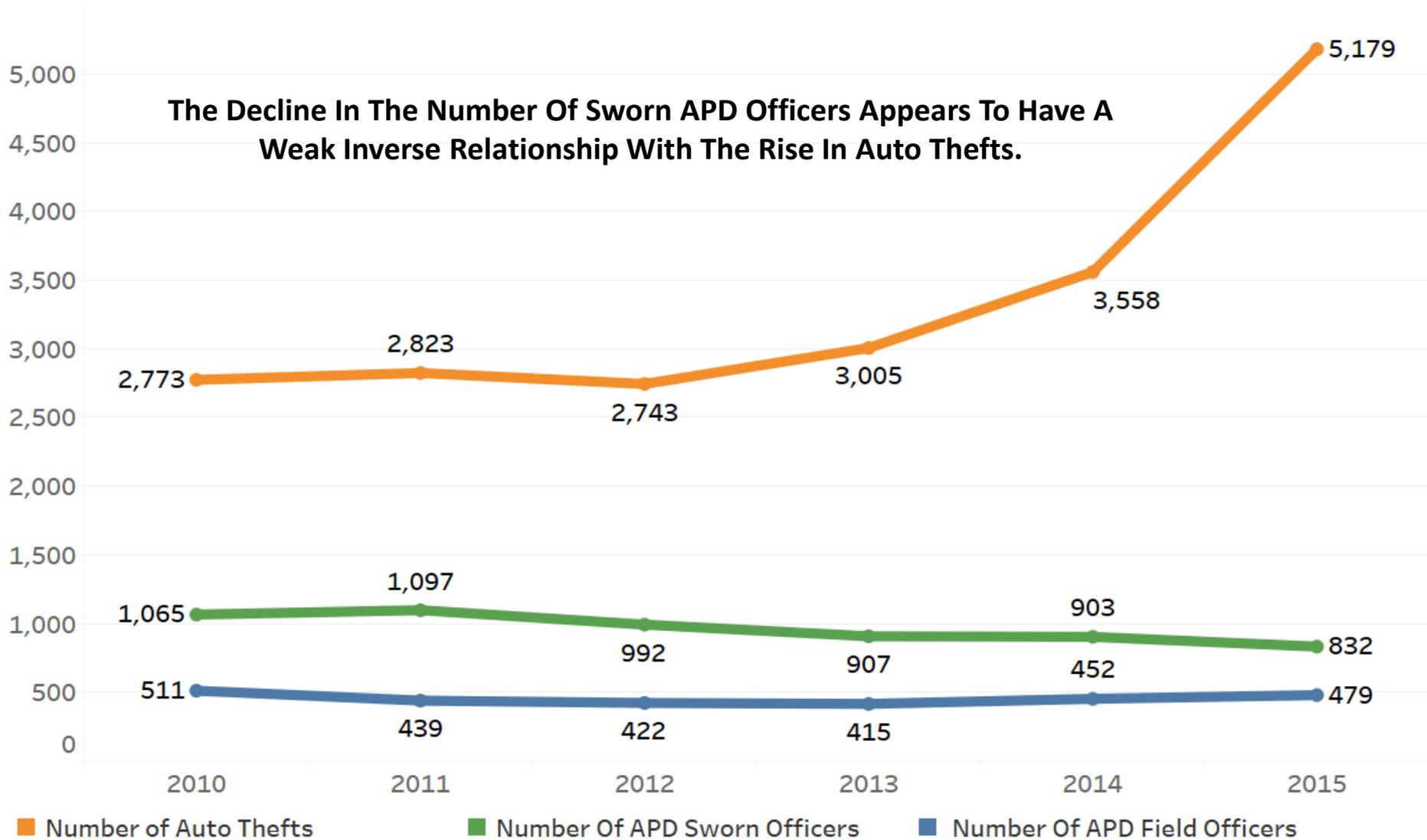
Legend

■ Average MDC Population

■ Number Of Auto Thefts

The Number Of APD Sworn Officers Has Declined Over Time

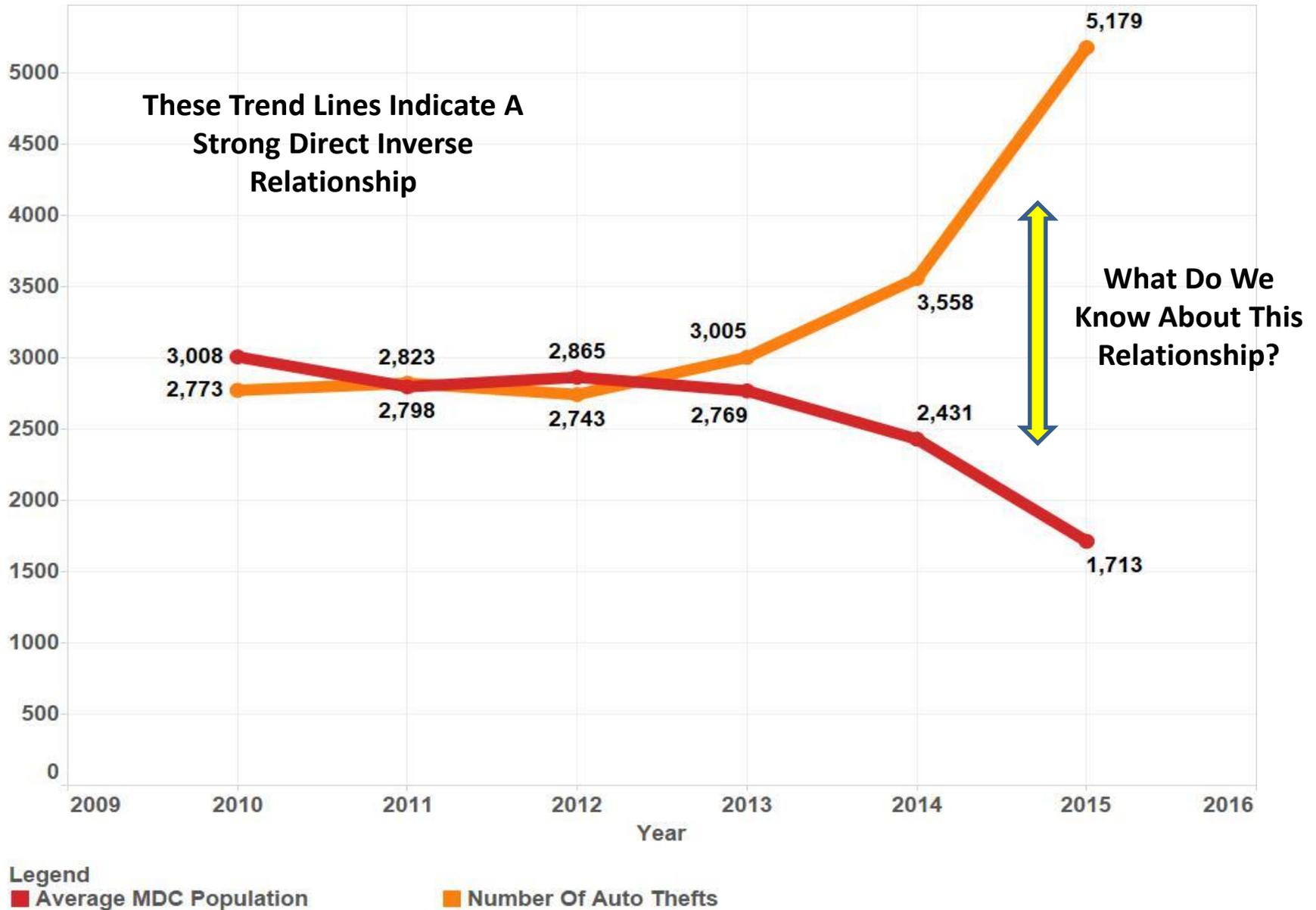
The Decline In The Number Of Sworn APD Officers Appears To Have A Weak Inverse Relationship With The Rise In Auto Thefts.



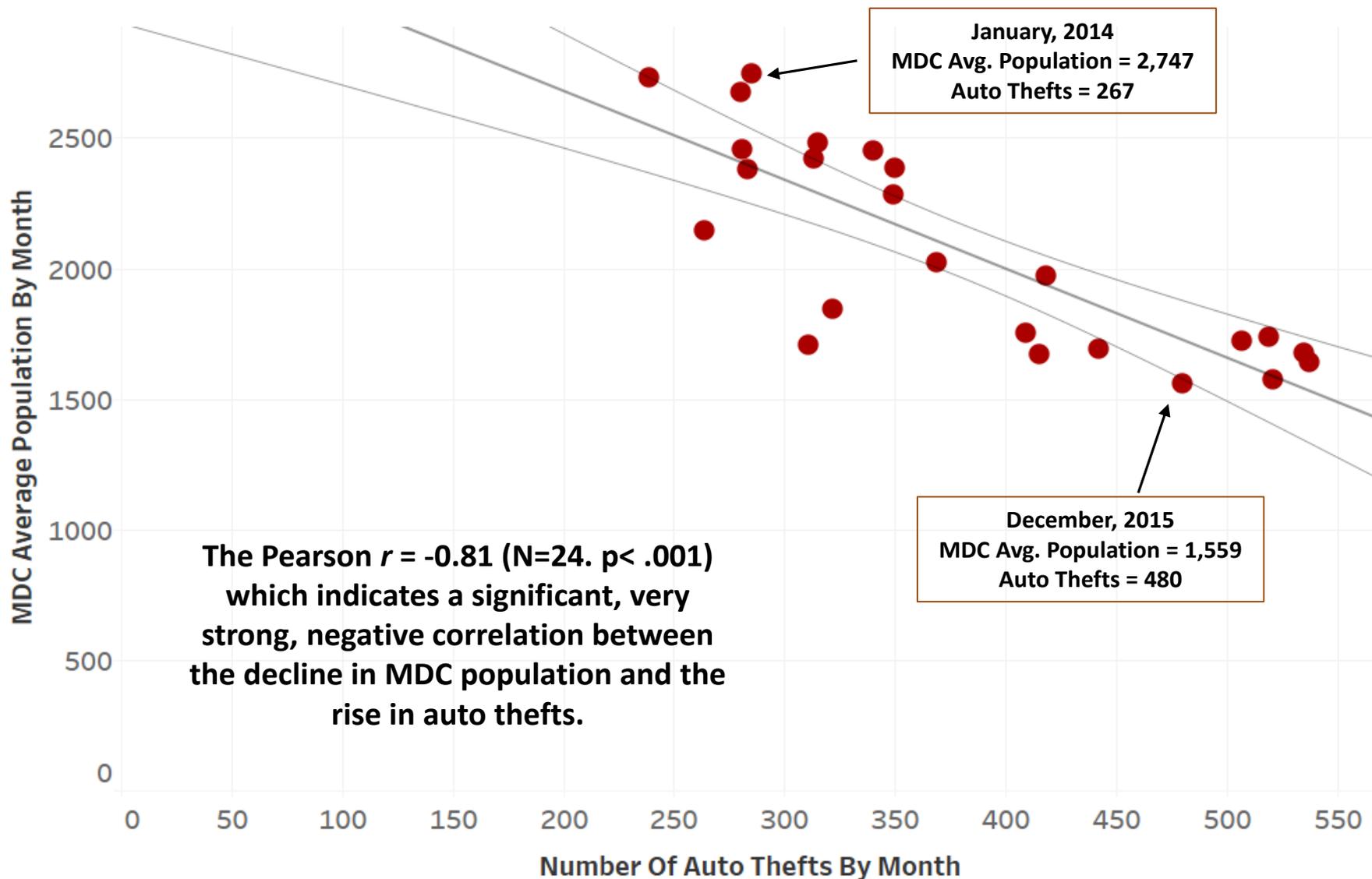
Based On These Initial Analyses, We Chose To Examine The Relationship Between The MDC Population And Auto Theft, And The Relationship Between The Number Of APD Offices And Auto Theft In More Detail

Examining The Relationship Between The MDC Population And The Rise In Auto Thefts

The Rise In Auto Thefts Compared To The Annual MDC Population



A Closer Examination Of The Correlation Between The Average MDC Population And The Number Of Auto Thefts From January 2014 To December 2015



The Reduction In The MDC Population Is Being Driven By A Number Of Initiatives In The Criminal Justice System

Jail population plunges

By Dan McKay / Journal Staff Writer
Sunday, March 15th, 2015 at 12:02am



Some cells now sit empty in the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Detention Center, a jail that was once so crowded many inmates had to sleep on cots. (Dean Hanson/Albuquerque Journal)

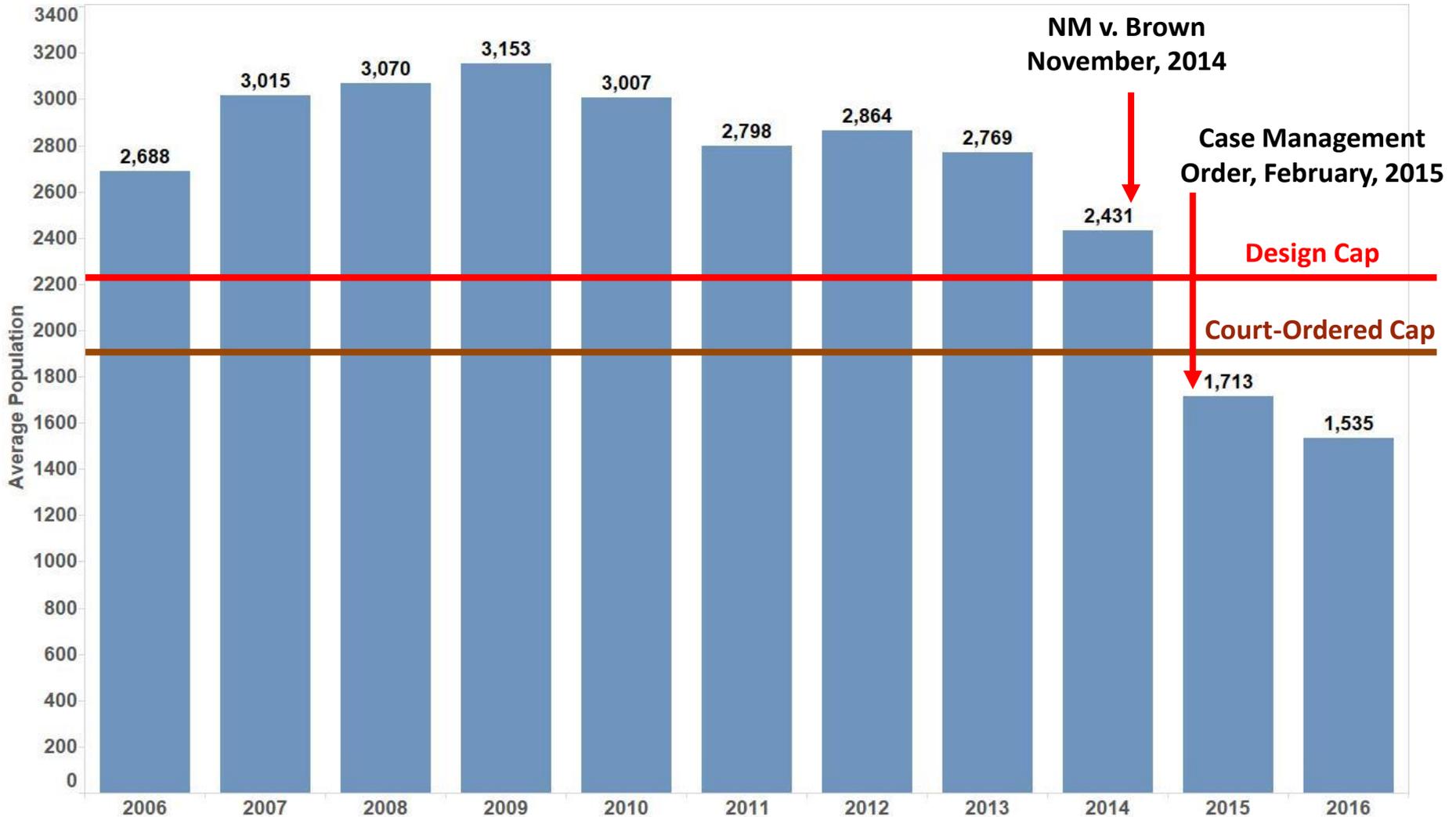
Copyright © 2015 Albuquerque Journal

“Credit for the reduced population, officials say, lies in a variety of initiatives aimed at speeding up the handling of cases in the court system and better cooperation among criminal-justice agencies.” Dan McKay

The McClendon lawsuit mandated a cap on the number of inmates who could be incarcerated in MDC. In addition, The Bernalillo County Criminal Justice Review Commission’s 2015 Report To The Legislative Finance Committee includes information on a number of initiatives and reforms aimed at reducing the prison population including:

- **The Case Management Order (The 10 Day Rule)**
- **State v. Brown- New Mexico Supreme Court Bond Decision**
- **Pretrial Release Risk Assessments**
- **Expanded Preliminary Hearings**
- **Expanded Early Plea Programs**
- **Reduction of Length Of Stays**

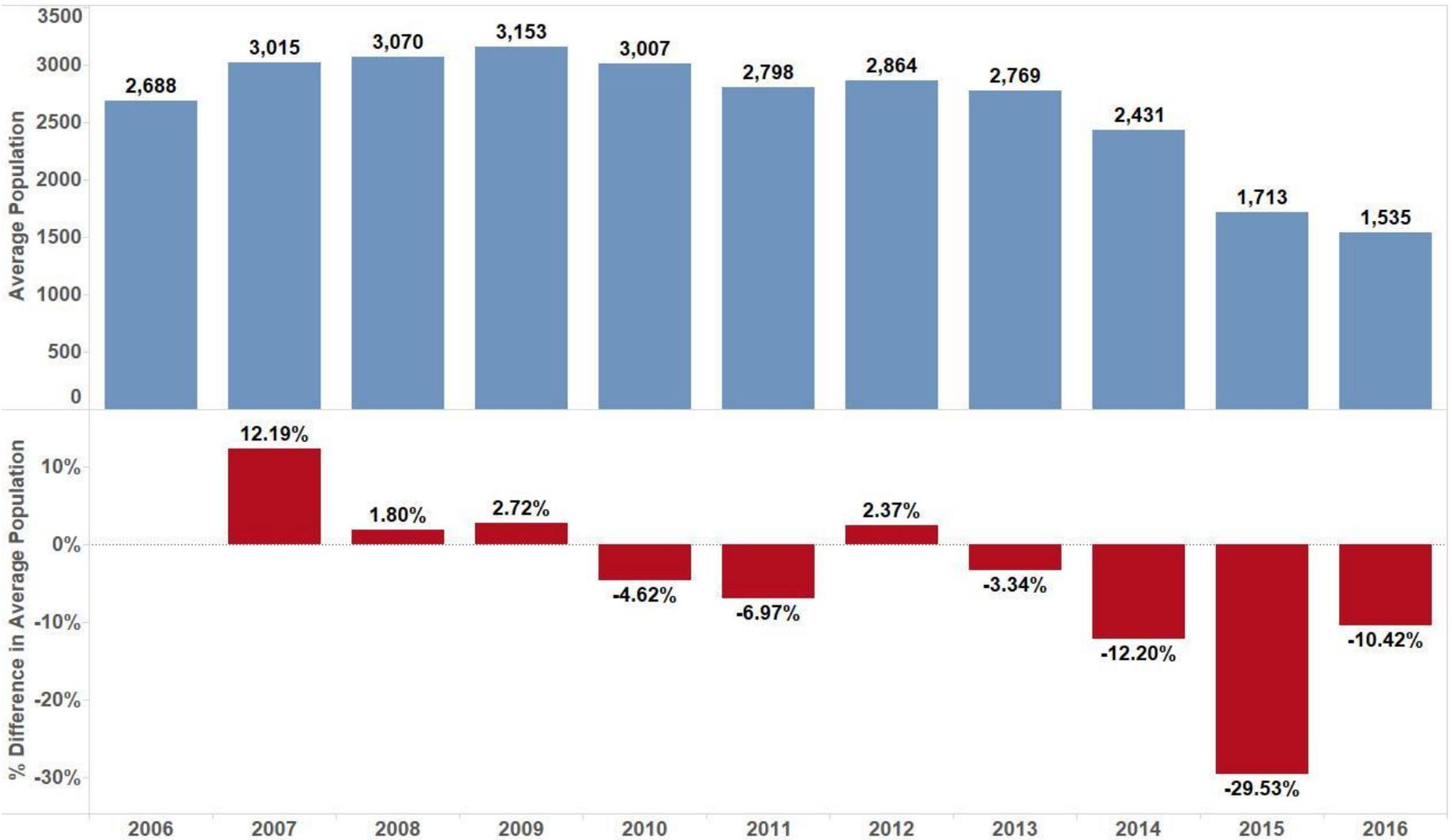
Metropolitan Detention Center Average Population Over Time



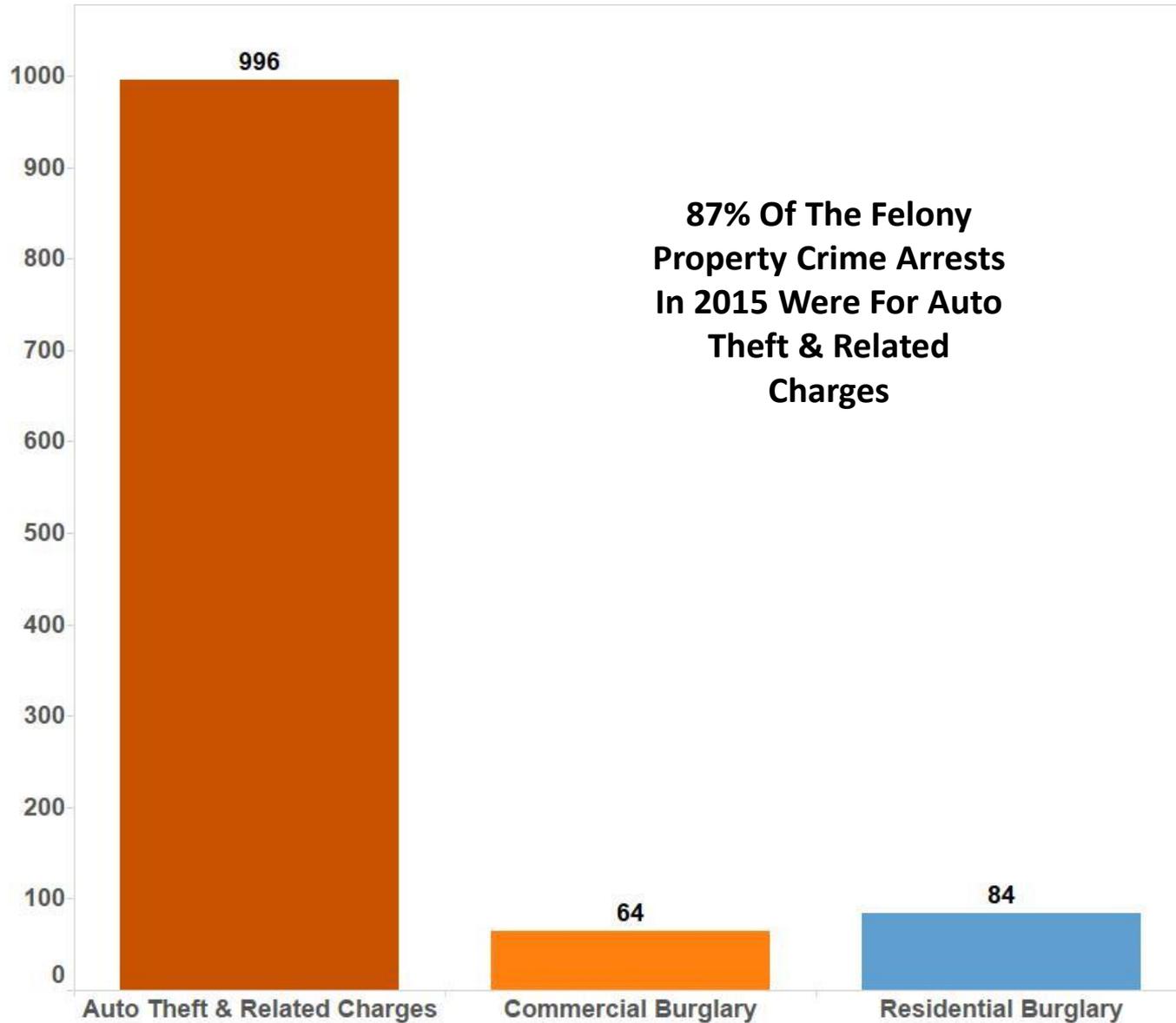
MDC Has A Design Capacity Of 2,236 And A Court-Ordered Capacity Of 1,950.

Sources: Metropolitan Detention Center; NM New Mexico Courts; Legislative Corrections, and Justice Committee

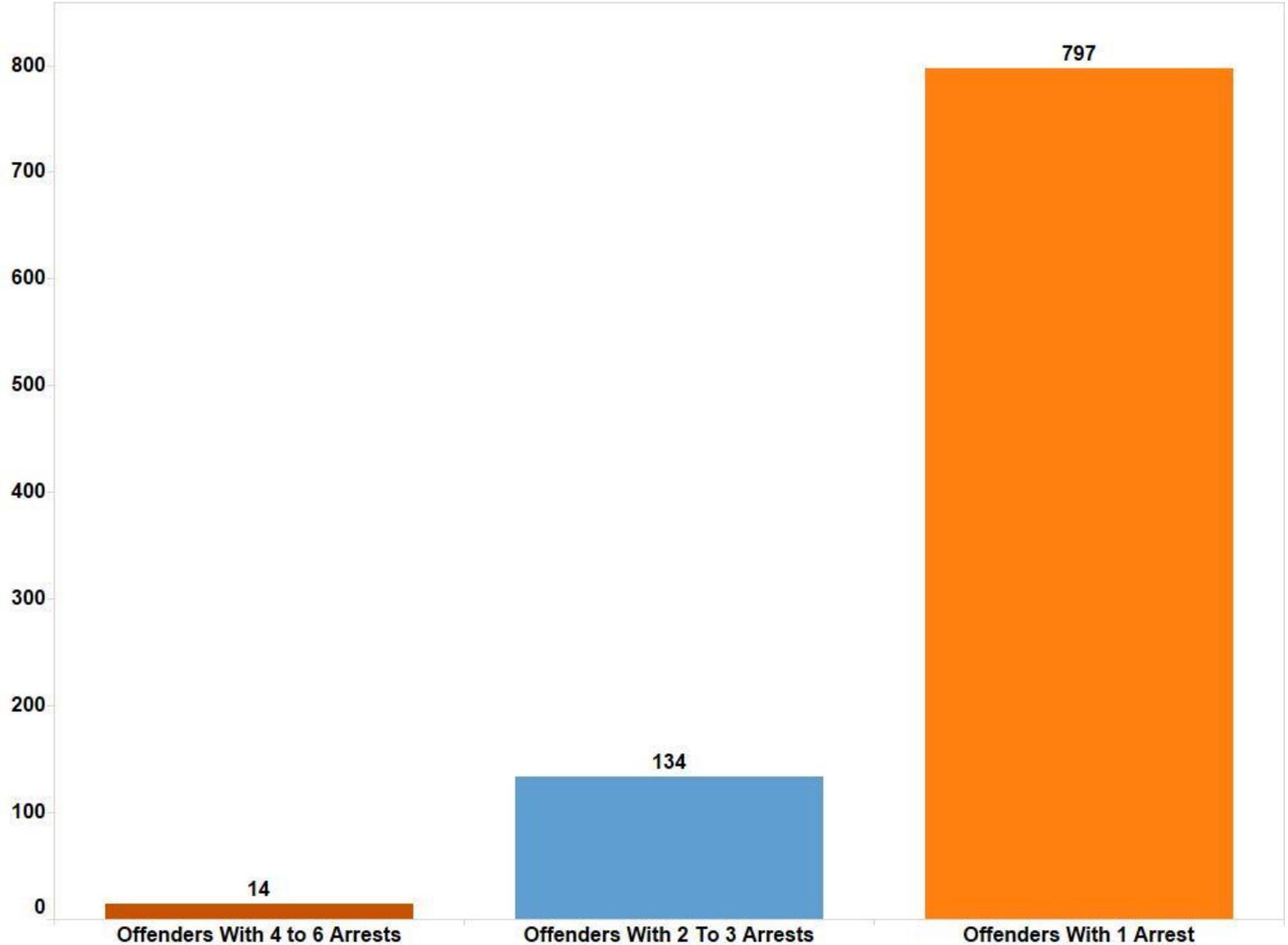
Metropolitan Detention Center Average Population Over Time By Number And By Percent Difference From Previous Year



There Were 1,144 Arrests For Felony Property Crime In 2015

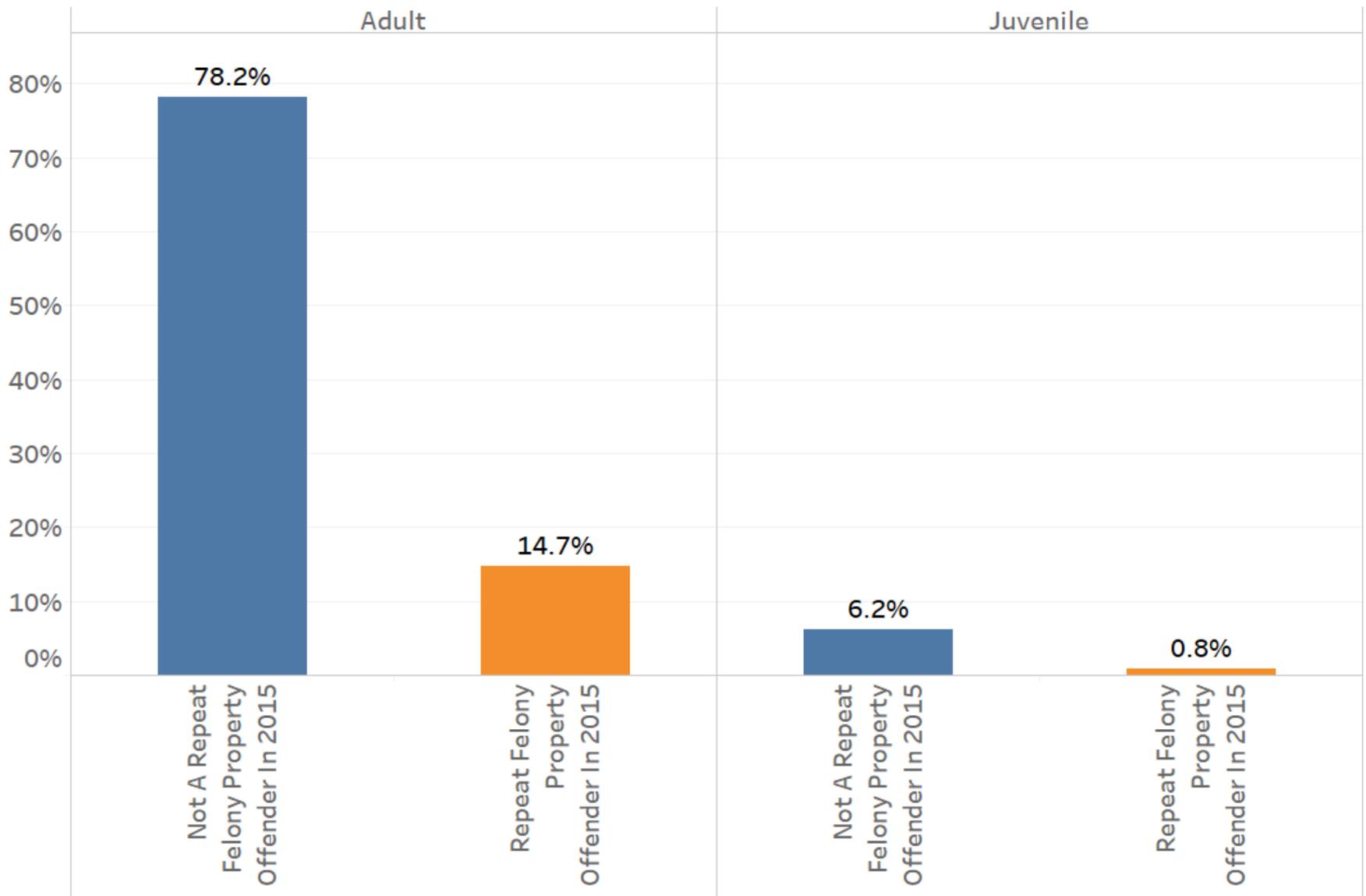


Approximately 16% Of These 945 Offenders Had 2 Or More Arrests For Felony Property Arrests During 2015

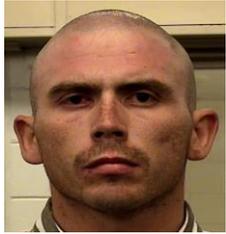


Source: Albuquerque Police Department Real Time Crime Center

What Percentage Of These 945 Individuals Were Juveniles?



In 2015, Christopher Dominguez Was Arrested 6 Times For Auto Theft



3/31/15
Arrested for
Unlawful Taking
of MV

5/27/15
Arrested for
Recv/Trans a
Stolen MV

6/10/15
Arrested for
Recv/Trans a
Stolen MV

7/2/15
Arrested for
Unlawful
Taking of
MV/Possession
of Burg. Tools

8/29/15
Arrested for
Unlawful
Taking of MV

9/28/15
Arrested for
Unlawful
Taking of MV

11/05/15
Arrested on
Felony
Warrants

4/2/15
ROR

6/1/15-6/4/15
Ordered
Released/Nolle
Pros

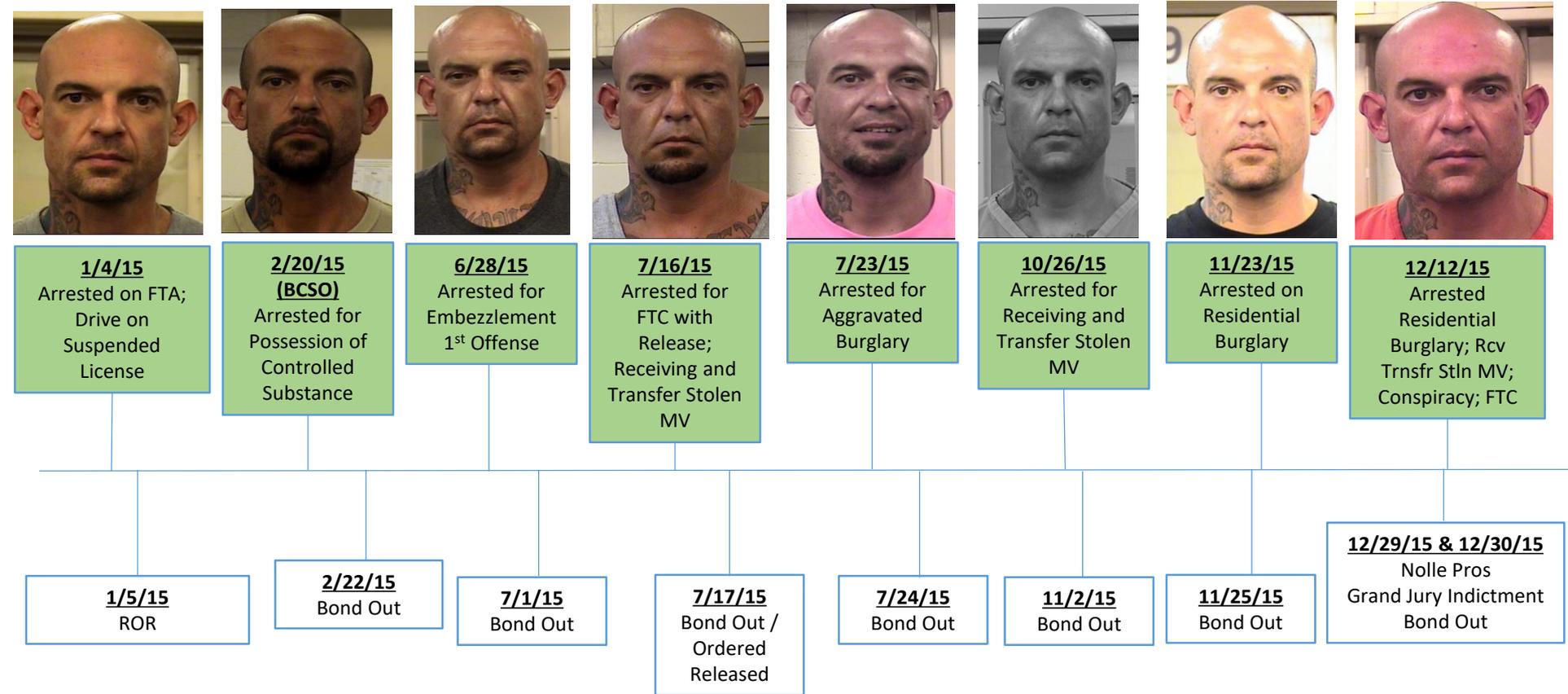
6/22/15
Nolle Pros

7/2/15
Ordered
Released

9/15-9/21
GJI/ROR

10-14-10/27
GJI/Release
to 3rd Party

In 2015, Eric Arellano Was Arrested 5 Times For Property Crime



In 2015, David Romero Was Arrested 5 Times For Property Crimes



2/20/15
 Arrested for Possession of Burglary Tools; Rcv Trnsfr Stln MV; Tamper with Evidence

3/7/15 & 3/8/15
 Arrested for Rcv Trnsfr Stln MV; Conspiracy; FTC warrant

5/31/15
 Arrested for Possession of Burglary Tools; Rcv Trnsfr Stln MV; Conspiracy

6/12/15
 Arrested on Poss of Burglary Tools; Robbery w/ Deadly weapon; Auto Burg (2 cases); FTC warrant

8/31/15
 Arrested for Auto Burglary; Unlawful Taking MV; Tamper with evidence

9/2/15
 Failure to appear pre-trial services warrant

2/22/15
 Bond Out

3/21/15
 Nolle Pros

6/7/15
 Bond Out

6/23/15 & 7/1/15
 Nolle Pros / ROR

9/2/15
 Nolle Pros OR \$75000 by 2/15/2016

9/2/15
 Nolle Pros OR \$75000 by 2/15/2016

In 2015, James Dotts Had 3 Property Crime Arrests. By August 31, 2016, He Had 4 More Arrests For Property Crimes



5/24/16

Arrested for Auto
Burglary,
Possession of
Burglary tools,
Possession of
Meth



6/2/16

Arrested for
Aggravated
Burglary, Escape
Custody/Peace
Officer,
Conspiracy



6/28/16

Arrested for Recv/Trans a
Stolen MV, Unlawful
Taking of MV,
Aggravated Eluding,
Felony Warrant



**7/6/16 &
7/14/2016**

Served Felony
Warrant while
in custody and
re-booked

5/26/16

Bonded Out

6/6/16

Nolle Pros

6/12/16

Bonded Out

7/7/16 & 7/15/16

Bonded Out

7/15/16

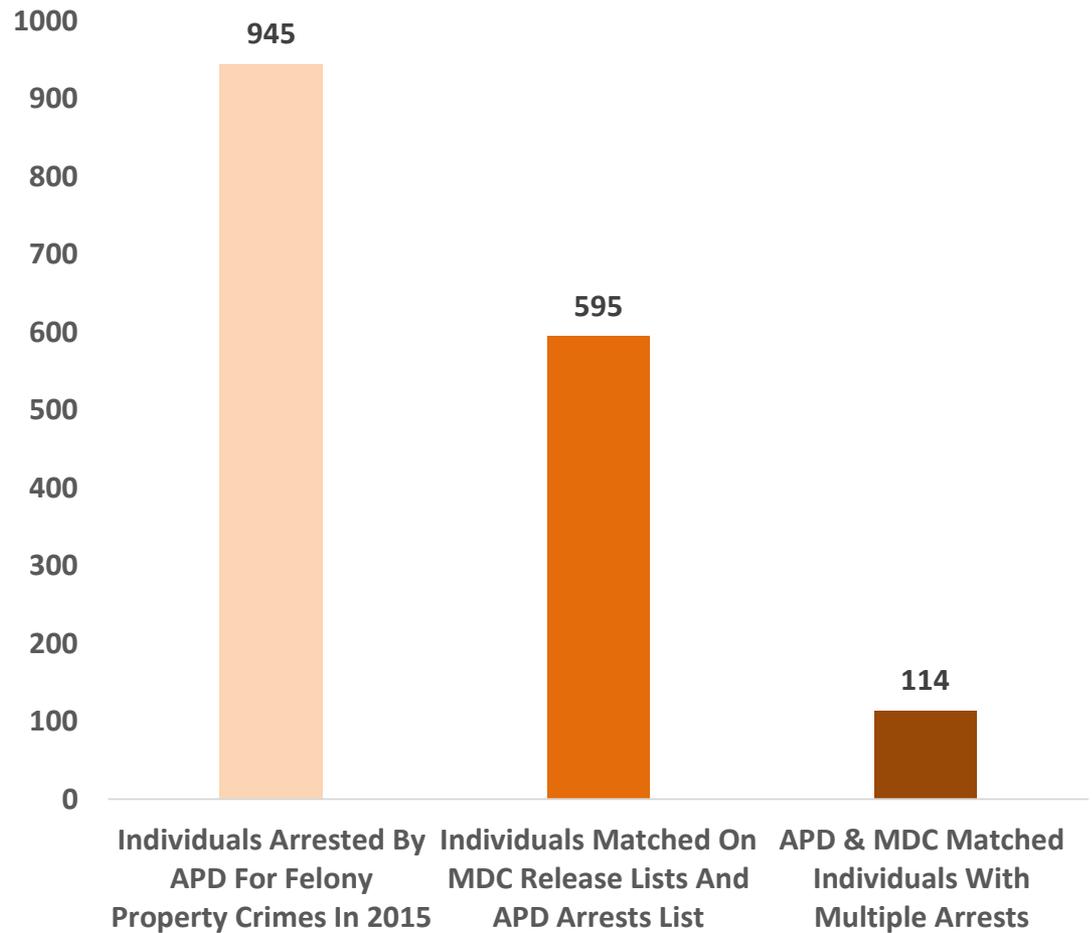
Nolle Pros

7/22/16

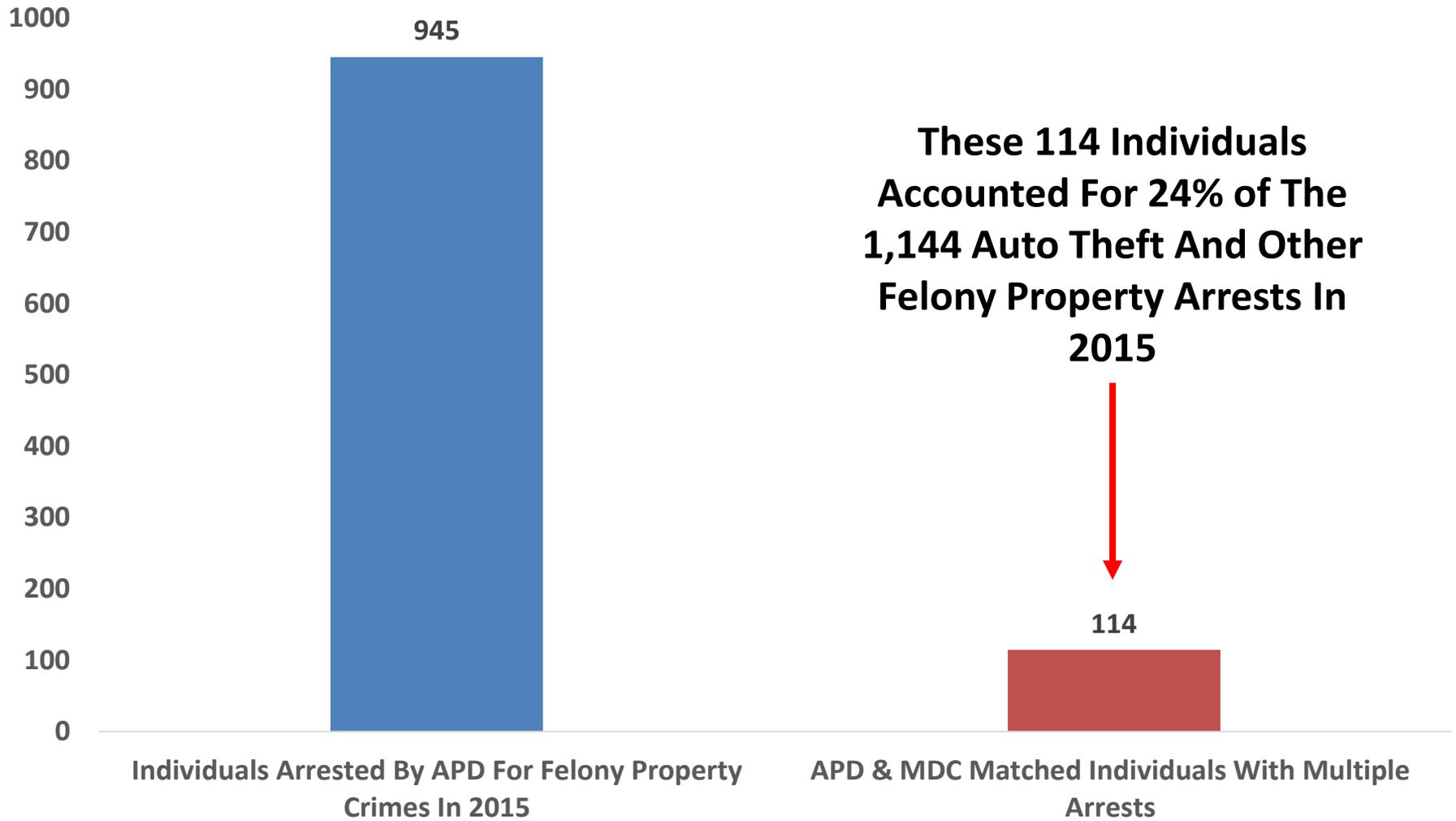
ROR

How Many Of These Felony Property Offenders Had Been Arrested And Released Multiple Times?

This is a very important question. Unfortunately, it is difficult to answer because MDC and APD do not share data about who is arrested and who is released. An exploratory study matching names and birthdays of individuals released from MDC to individuals arrested by APD found 595 individuals on both lists. One hundred fourteen (114) of those individuals had been arrested and released multiple times in 2015. This kind of analysis needs to be conducted with full data sharing between APD and MDC.



**APD Arrested 945 Individuals For Felony Property Crime In 2015.
We Know That At Least 114 Of Them Were Arrested By APD And Released
By MDC Multiple Times**



What Is The Impact Of The Offenders Who Have Been Arrested And Released Multiple Times On The 5,179 Auto Thefts In 2015?

Here are two ways we can estimate the impact of repeat offenders on auto thefts in Albuquerque:

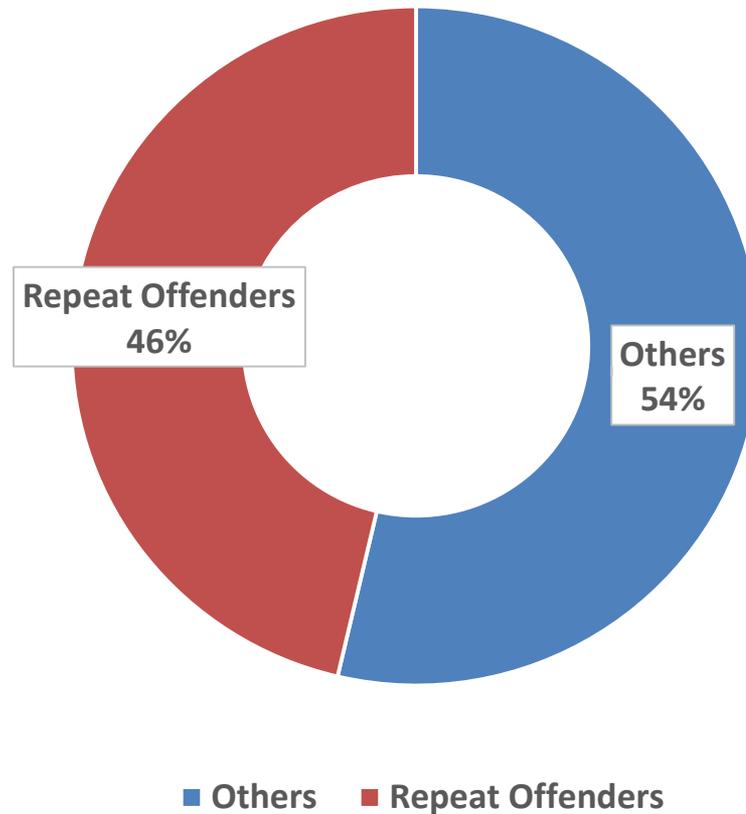
Method 1: The APD officers who deal with auto theft estimate that serious repeat offenders steal between 5 and 10 cars a week. MDC indicates that the average Length Of Stay (LOS) was 30 days in 2015. If we calculate the number of days that 14 serious repeat offenders (arrested between 4 and 6 times) were in not in MDC and conservatively use 5 thefts a week, it appears that these individuals were responsible for about 2,355 auto thefts.

Method 2: The APD 2015 clearance rate on auto theft was 9% (the rate in similar cities was 8% and the national average was 13%). This means that there was about 1 arrest for 10 cars stolen. If we assume that individuals may steal 9 cars for every one they are arrested for, it appears that repeat offenders (arrested between 2 and 6 times) were responsible for about 2,421 auto thefts.

It appears that about 2,400 of the 5,179 of auto thefts or 46% can be attributed to individuals who have been arrested and released multiple times in 2015. Interestingly, APD officers who deal with auto theft also think about half are of them can be linked to repeat offenders.

One Major Reason Auto Thefts Are On The Rise Is Repeat Offenders Who Are Being Arrested By APD And Released From MDC Multiple Times

We Estimate That About 46% Of Albuquerque's 5,179 Auto Thefts Were Committed By Repeat Offenders

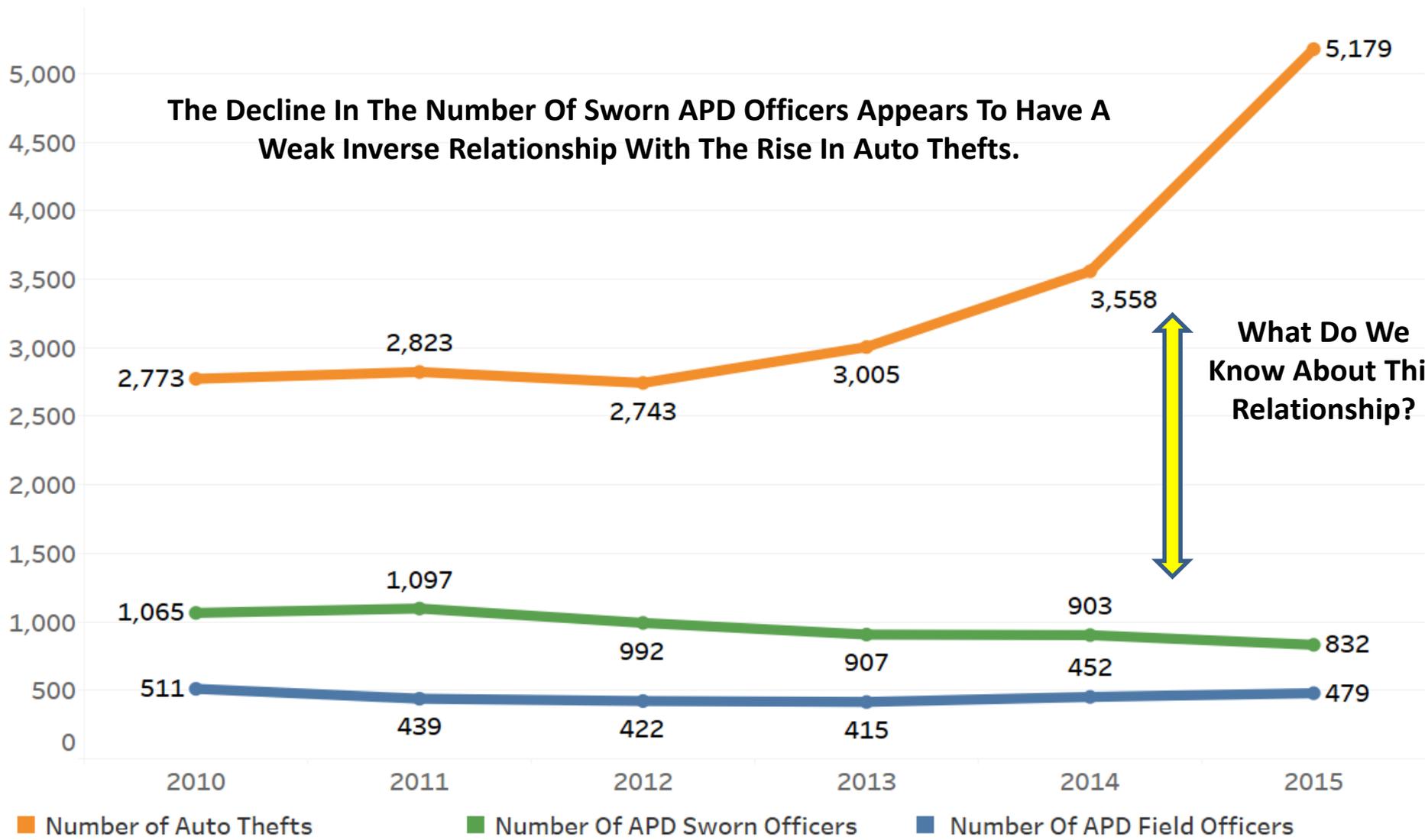


Examining The Relationship Between The Number Of Police Officers And The Rise In Auto Thefts

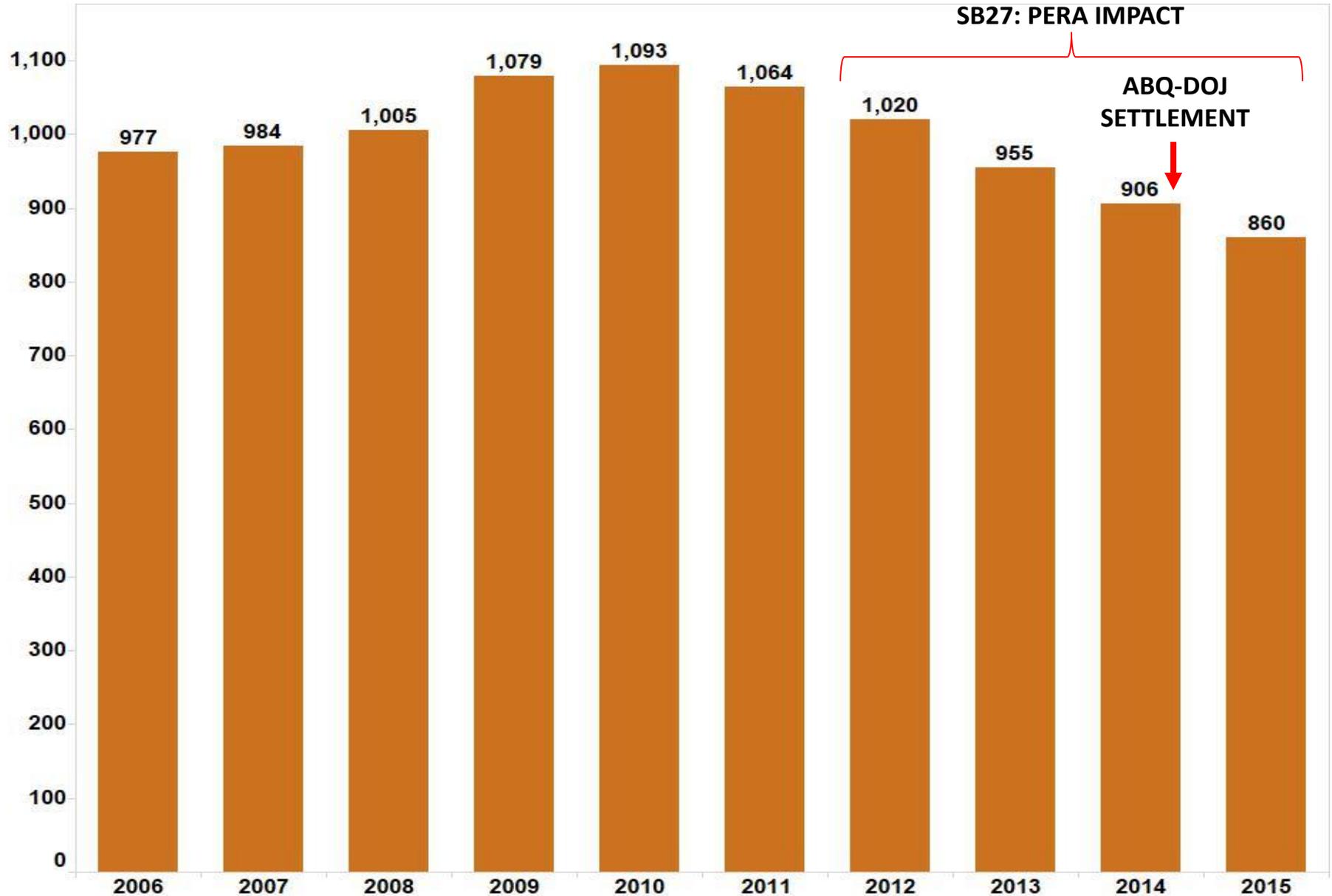
The Number Of APD Sworn Officers Has Declined Over Time

The Decline In The Number Of Sworn APD Officers Appears To Have A Weak Inverse Relationship With The Rise In Auto Thefts.

What Do We Know About This Relationship?



Number of APD Sworn Officers Over Time



Source: Albuquerque Police Department Staffing Study (6.11.16)

Albuquerque Police Department Staffing Plan (6.11.16)

“The decline of APD sworn officer staffing has mirrored national trends. Agencies nationwide have reported staffing deficiencies of 20-30% on average. Further compounding this general trend has been the alteration of local retirement benefits for Public Employee Retirement Association (PERA) members that encourages near-retirement employees to retire or face reduced pensions in the future. Add in a challenging recruiting environment for suitable cadet candidates and an overall lack of desire by young people to choose law enforcement as their profession, this practical “perfect storm” has resulted in drastic reductions in the APD workforce.

APD expects to avoid this trend by utilizing superior recruiting methods, enhancing incentives for prospective candidates, getting return to work legislation passed, and developing robust lateral classes”.

(Pp. 7-8 APD Staffing Plan)

Recruiting And Retaining Police Officers Is Both A National And Local Challenge

Police Recruitment and Retention for the New Millennium

The State of Knowledge

Jeremy M. Wilson, Erin Dalton, Charles Scheer,
Clifford A. Grammich

Supported by the U.S. Department of Justice's
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services



Maintaining the police workforce level is one of the most salient challenges facing law enforcement today. In the long run, both the supply of and demand for qualified officers are changing in a time of increasing attrition, expanding law-enforcement responsibilities, and decreasing resources. These contribute to the difficulties that many agencies report in creating a workforce that represents the demographics of their communities, that is committed to providing its employees the opportunity for long-term police careers, and that effectively implements community policing.

The screenshot shows the Albuquerque Journal website with a headline "Cities nationwide face police shortages" by Ryan Boetel. Below the headline is a photograph of police cadets in black uniforms running on a track at the Roger A. Hoisington, Jr. Training Academy. The article text below the photo discusses the nationwide shortage of police officers, mentioning that in some cities, the number of applicants has dropped by more than 90 percent.

The screenshot shows an ABC News article titled "Police Face Severe Shortage of Recruits" by Oliver Yates Libaw, dated July 10. The article text states that with the number of applicants down more than 90 percent in some cities, police departments may soon be posting more signs that say "Help Wanted" instead of "Most Wanted." It also notes that from the nation's largest police force in New York City to tiny departments with only five officers, far fewer people are looking to join the force than in years past, and departments of all sizes are being forced to rethink how they fill their ranks.

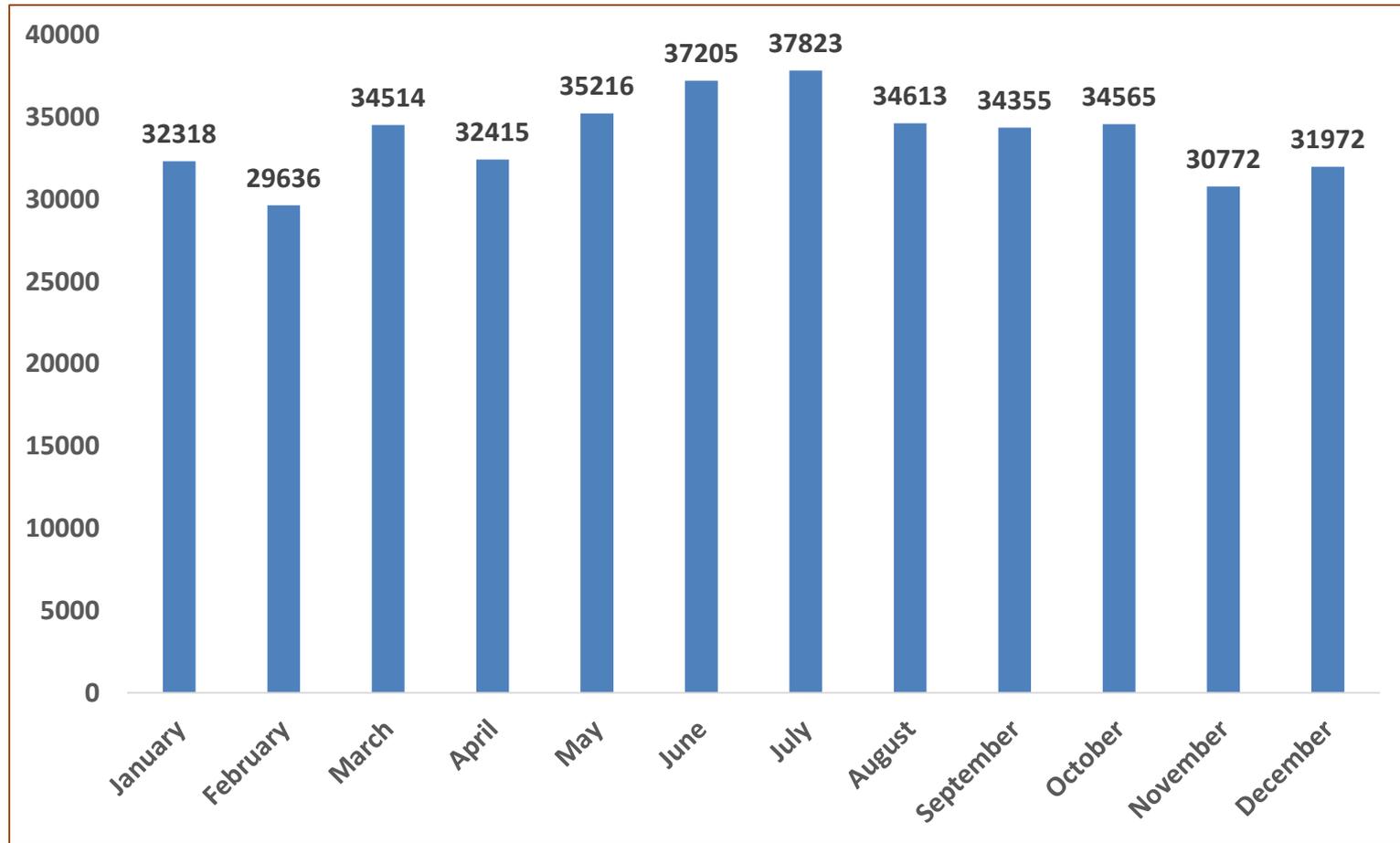
What Is The Relationship Between The Number Of Police Officers And The Rise In Auto Thefts?

- There were 21% fewer total Sworn Officers in 2015 than in 2010. There were 8% fewer field officers (including lieutenants and sergeants) in that same time period.
- One way to examine the impact of police staffing levels on crime is by looking at numbers of arrests, number of traffic stops and workload data.
- A detailed analysis indicates that:
 - Arrests for violent crime, property crime and family offences remained consistent from 2010 to 2015.
 - Arrests for DUI, narcotics and “All Other Violations” declined from 2010 to 2015, with the largest decline (43%) in the “All Other Violations” category.
 - The category “All Other Violations” category refers to all violations of state or local laws not specifically identified as Part 1 or Part 2 offenses, except traffic violations.
 - Analysis of the “All Other Violations” arrests shows the decline is primarily in misdemeanor warrants and felony warrants.
 - The number of traffic stops went from 111,956 in 2010 to 37,094 in 2015; a decline of about 67%.

What Is The Relationship Between The Number Of Police Officers And The Rise In Auto Thefts?

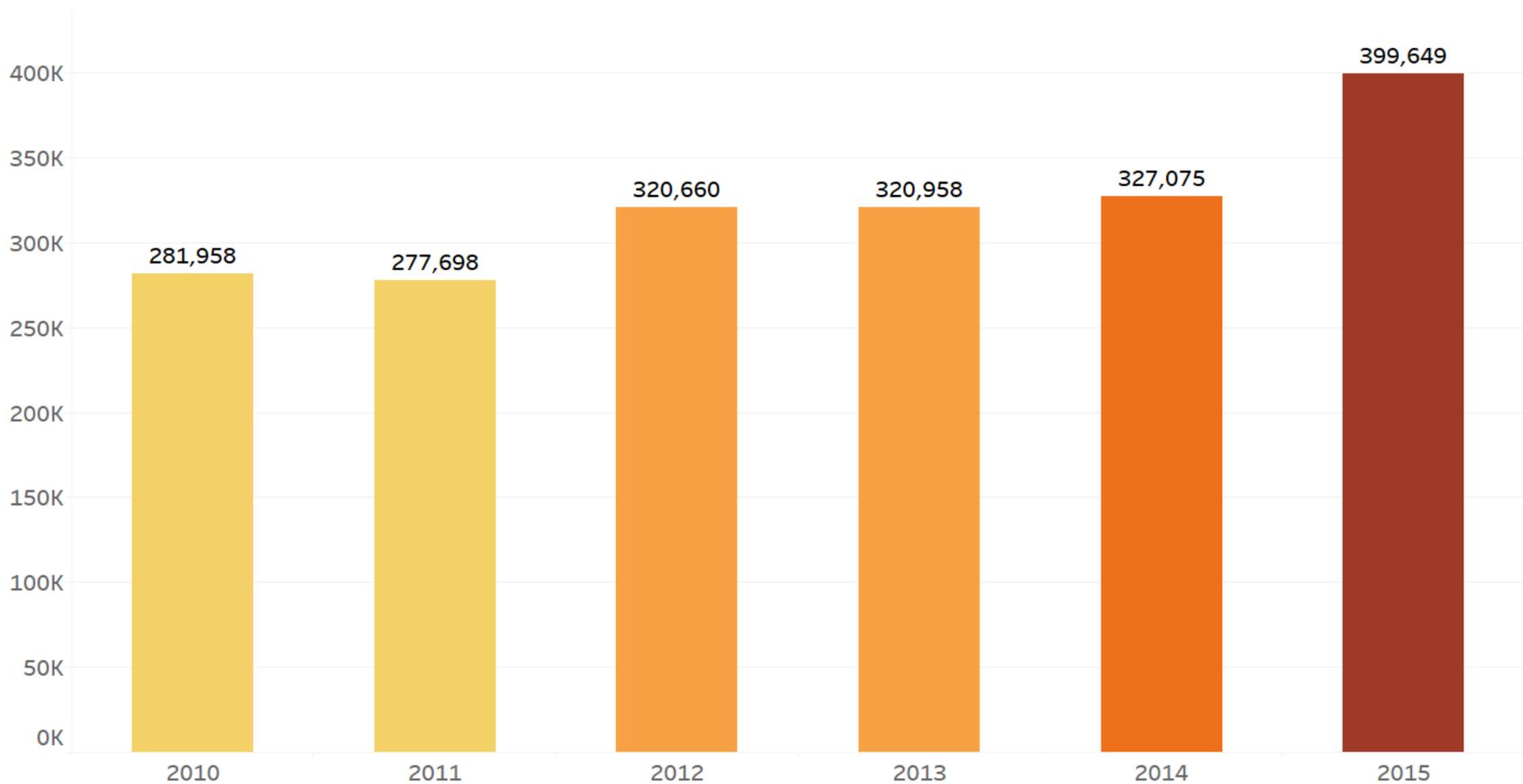
- **The data on workload related to calls for service, the different trend lines for types of arrests, and the decline in traffic stops indicate that APD officers are spending their time on responding to immediate calls for service, conducting arrests for more serious crimes and spending less discretionary time serving warrants and making traffic stops. Conversations with APD police officers who have reviewed these data attribute the trends to a much heavier workload (including additional training and reporting requirements) and a more cautious use of their discretionary time because of increased scrutiny and uncertainty about whether their actions will be supported.**
- **The difference in the trend lines for total officers and officers in the field may indicate that reducing crime depends both on officers in the field serving as crime deterrents and officers in specialized units doing the follow-up investigations, building additional cases, and making additional arrests.**

The APD Staffing Study Found That Officers Handled 383,158 Calls For Service Between March 1, 2014 And February 28, 2015

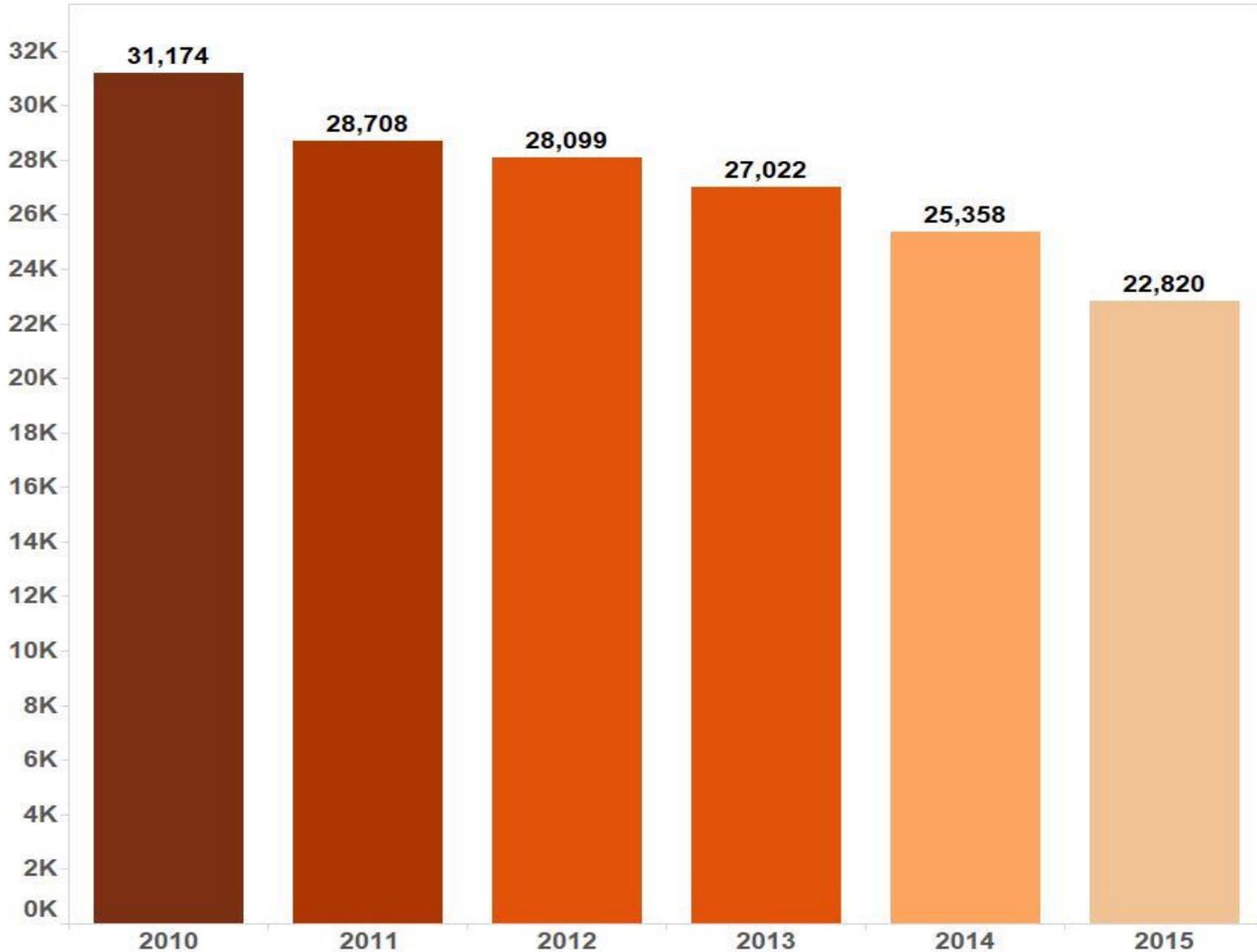


“To provide some sense of the magnitude of call demand, consider that 383,158 calls equate to about 1000 CFS per day or the equivalent of 42 calls per hour.” p. 13. APD Comprehensive Staffing And Resource Study, 2015

The Number of 911 Calls Answered By APD Has Increased Every Year

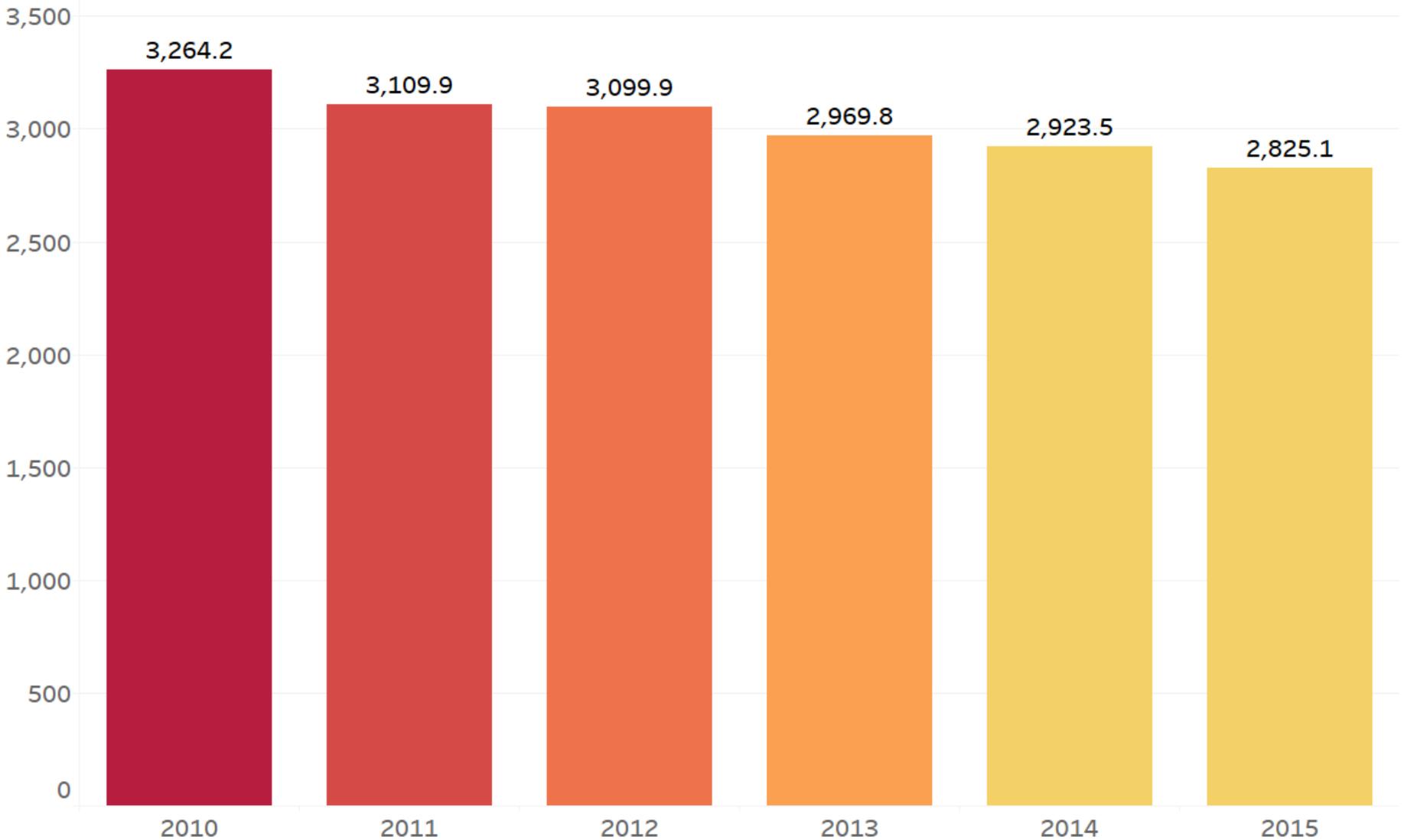


The Total Number Of Arrests By APD Declined From 2010 To 2015.



Source: Albuquerque Police Department Annual Reports 2010 - 2015

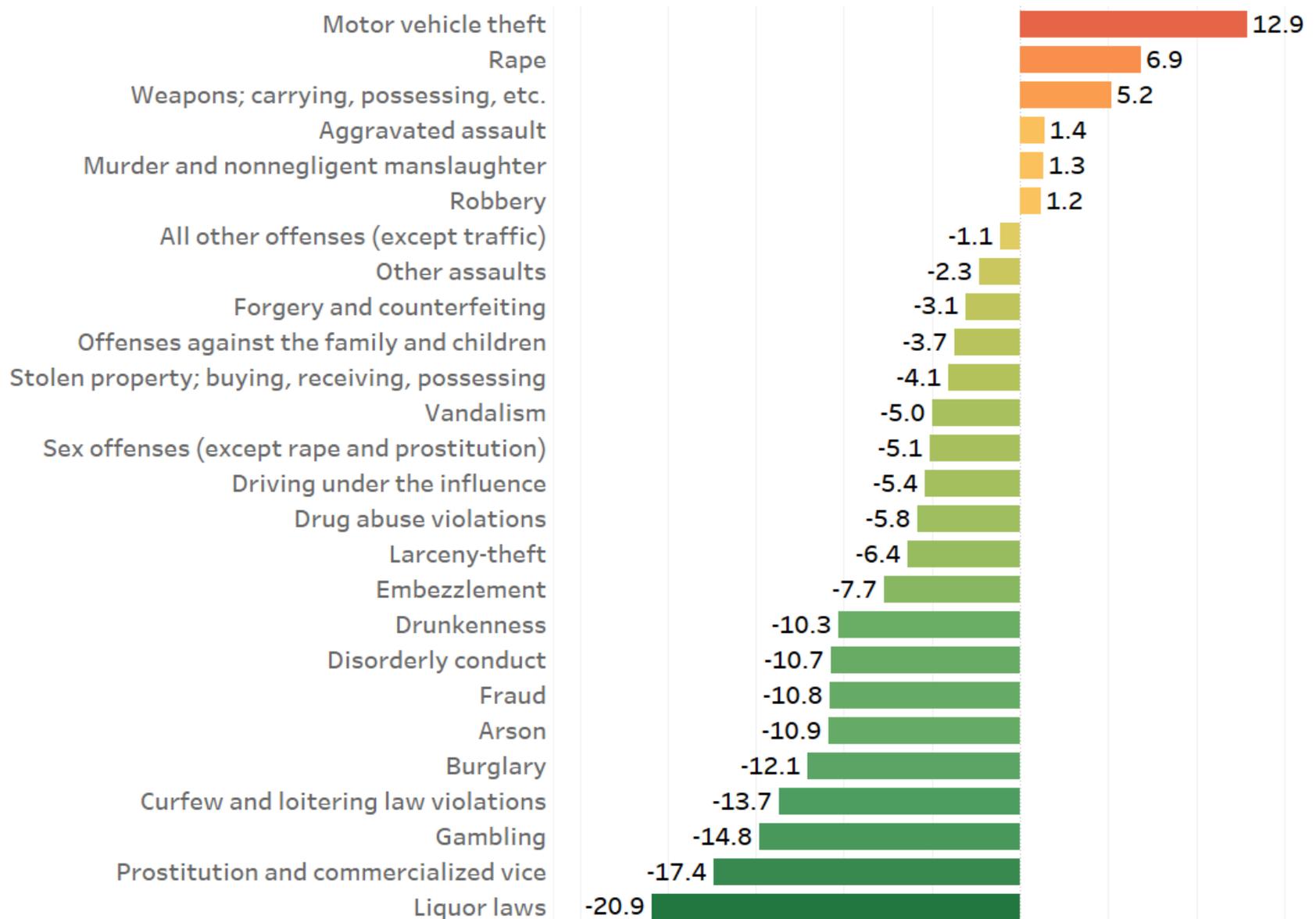
Nationally, The Rate Of Total Number Of People Arrested In Metropolitan Statistical Areas Declined From 2010 To 2015.



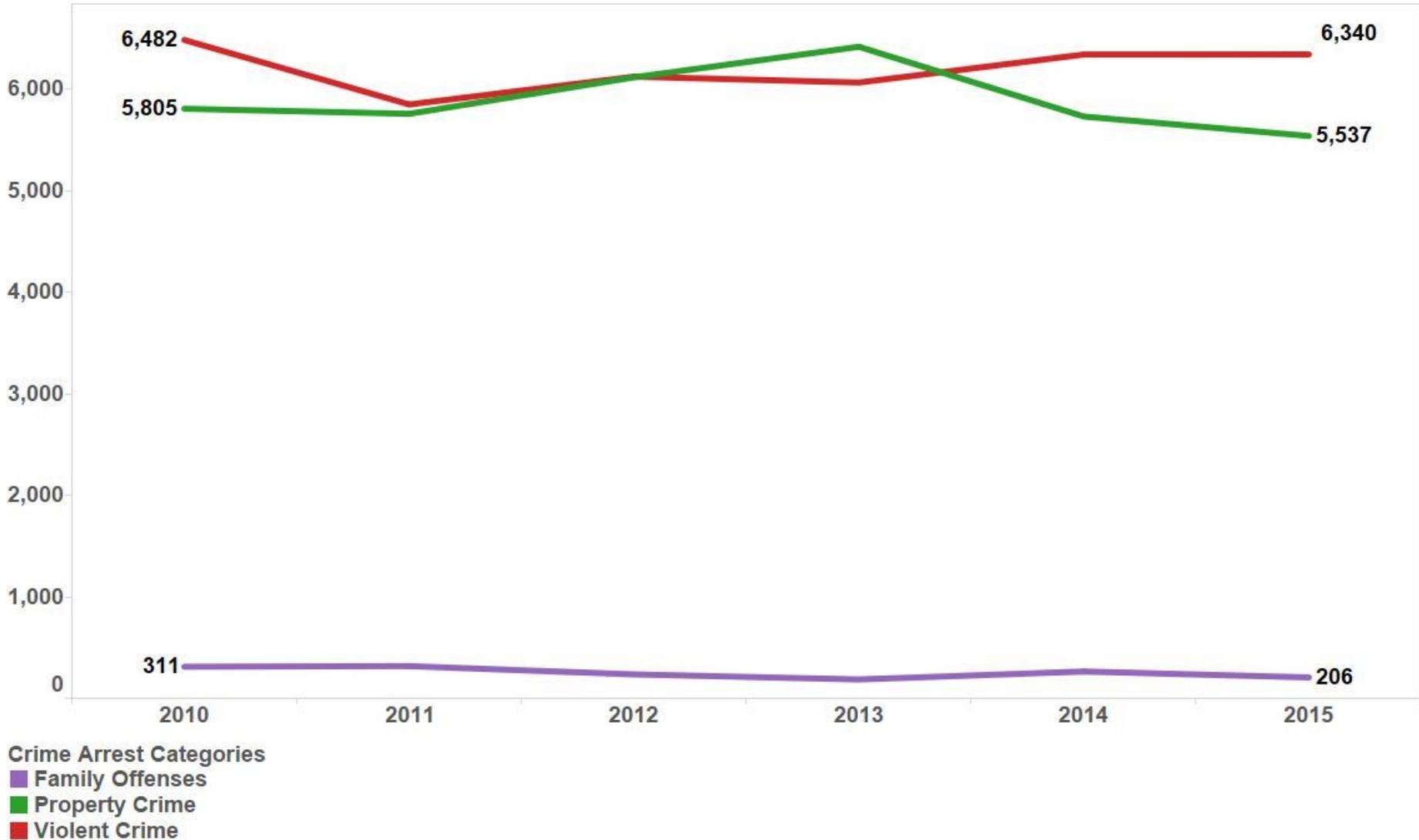
Note: Metropolitan Statistical Areas contains a principal city or urbanized area with a population of at least 50,000 inhabitants.

Source: FBI UCR Arrest Trends, 2010-2015

These Are The National Data About The Percent Changes In Arrests For Different Kinds Of Crime In Metropolitan Statistical Areas From 2014 To 2015.

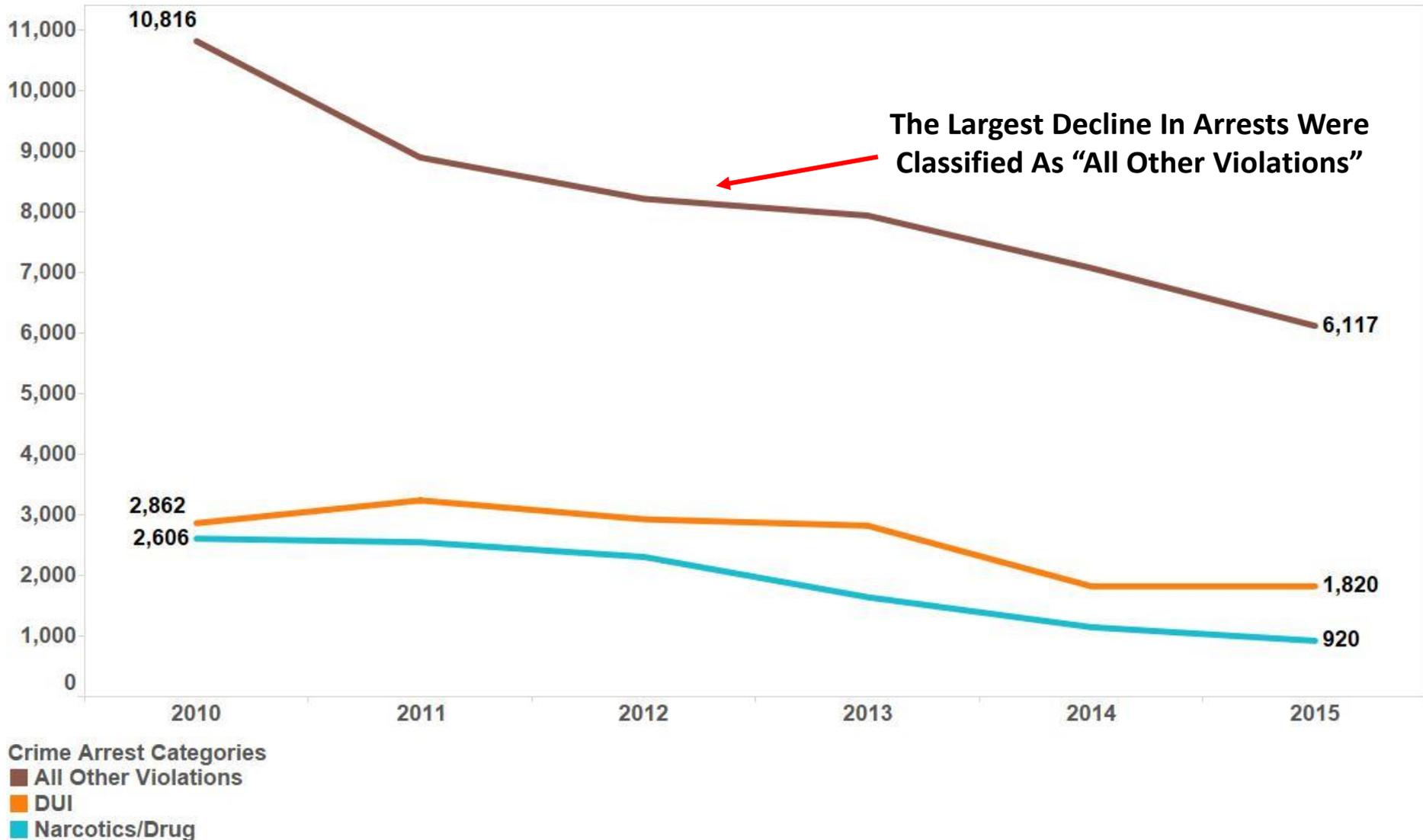


Arrests By APD For Crimes Classified As Violent Crimes, Property Crimes, Or Family Offenses Remained Relatively Consistent From 2010 To 2015



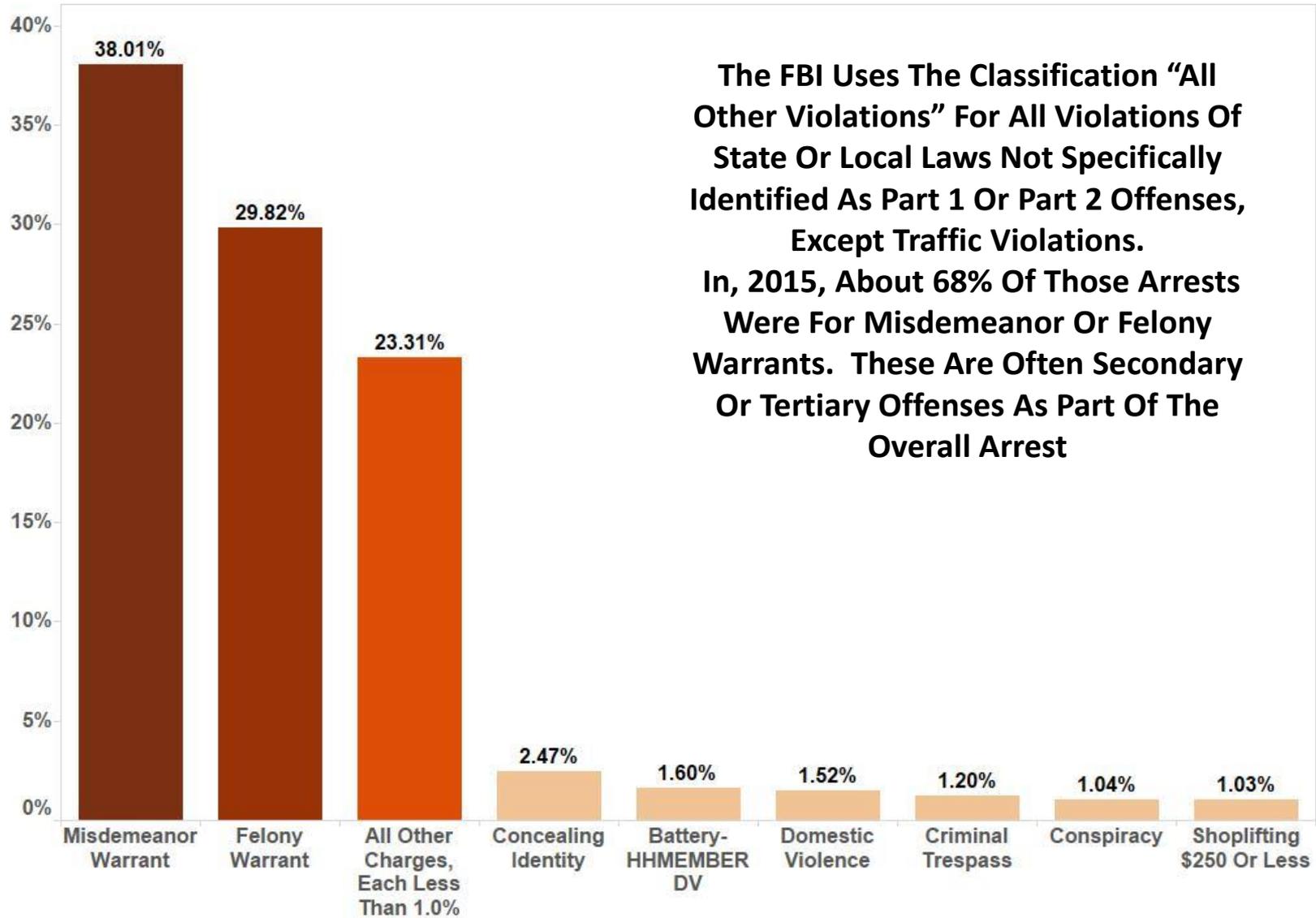
Source: Albuquerque Police Department Annual Reports 2010 - 2015

Arrests By APD For Crimes Classified As All Other Violations, Narcotics/Drugs, and DUI Declined From 2010 To 2015

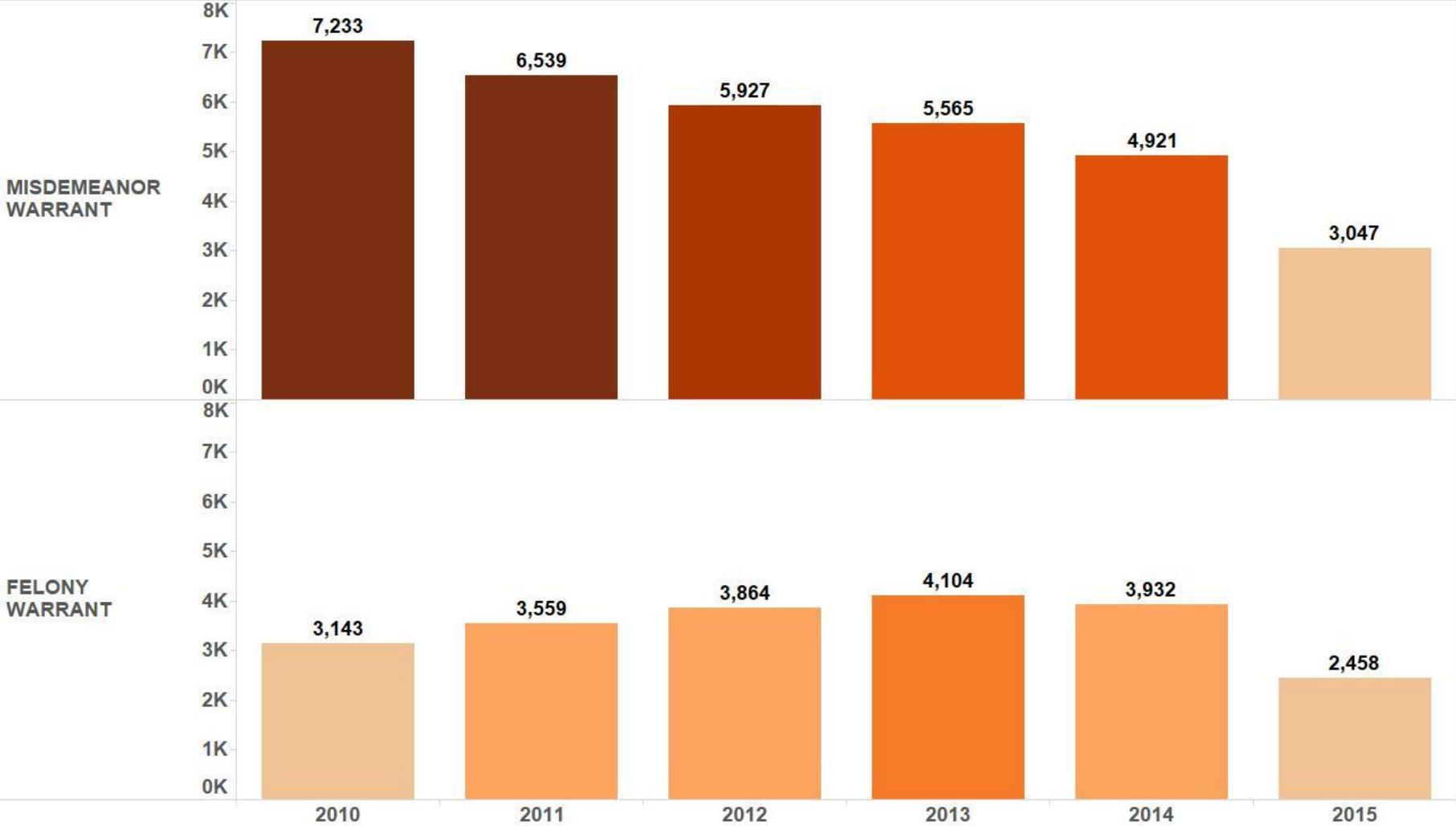


Source: Albuquerque Police Department Annual Reports 2010 - 2015

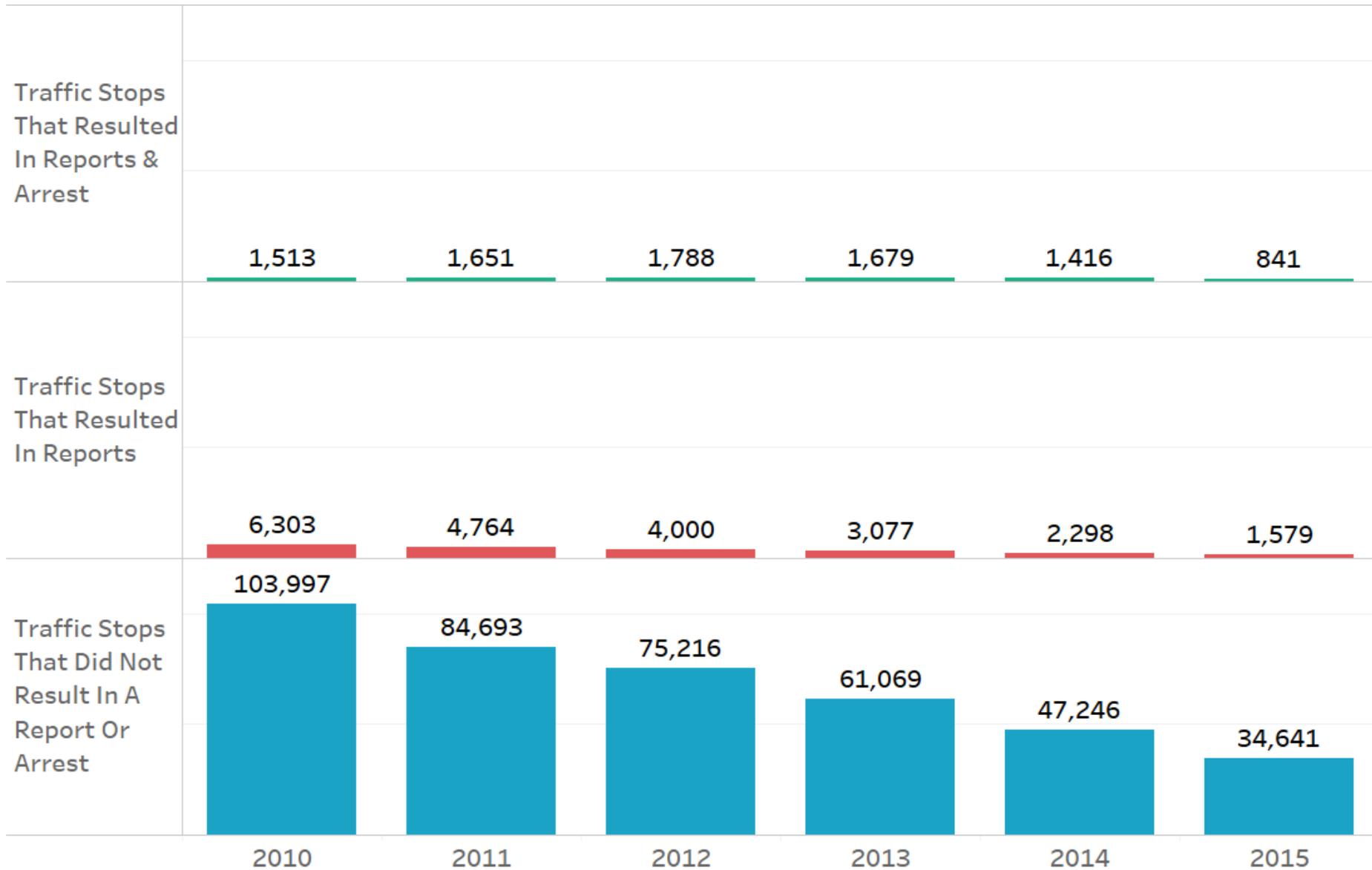
In 2015, Over 6,900 Arrests Were Classified As “All Other Violations”



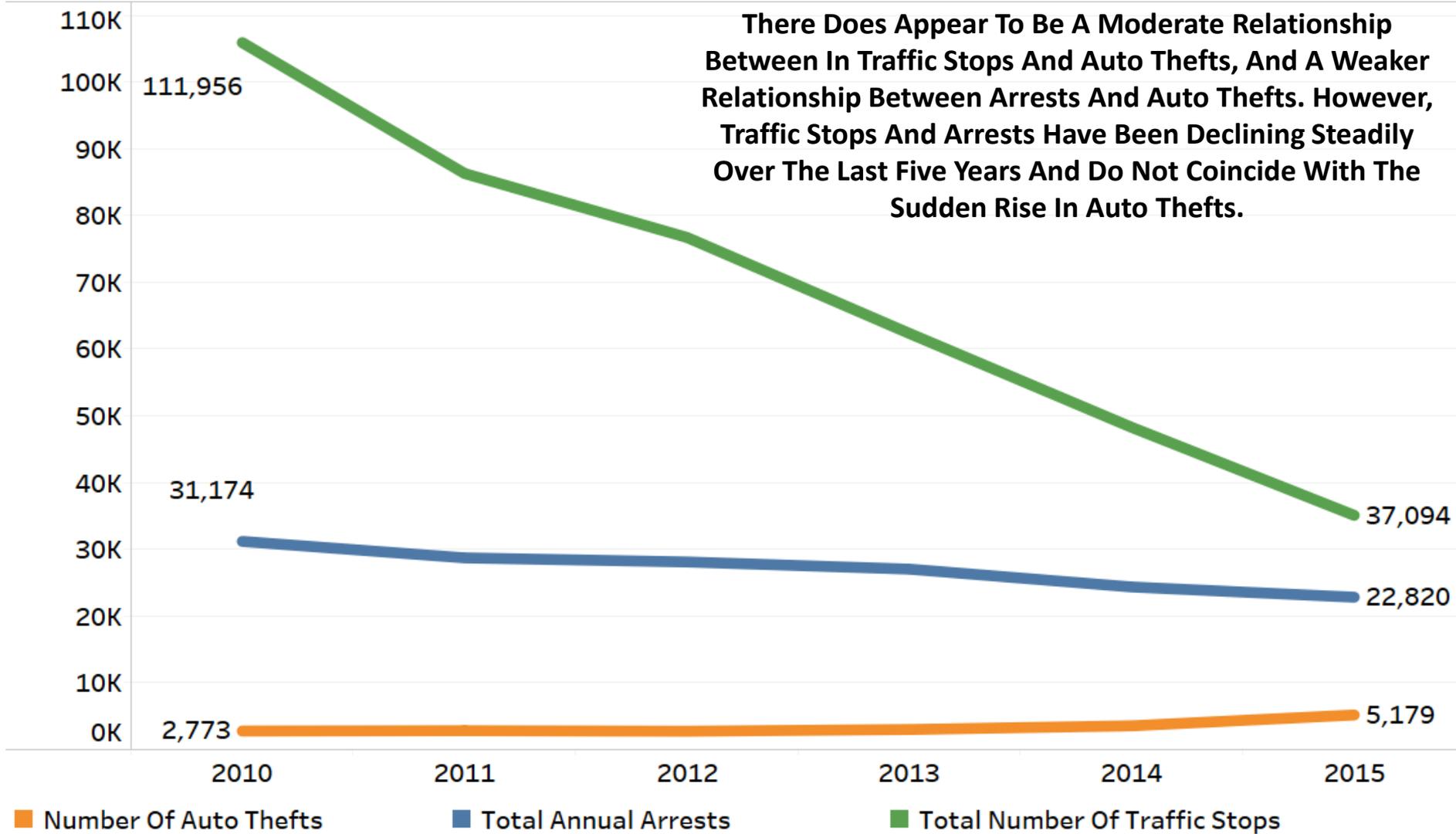
The Decline In “All Other Violations” Arrests For Misdemeanor And Felony Warrants From 2010 To 2015



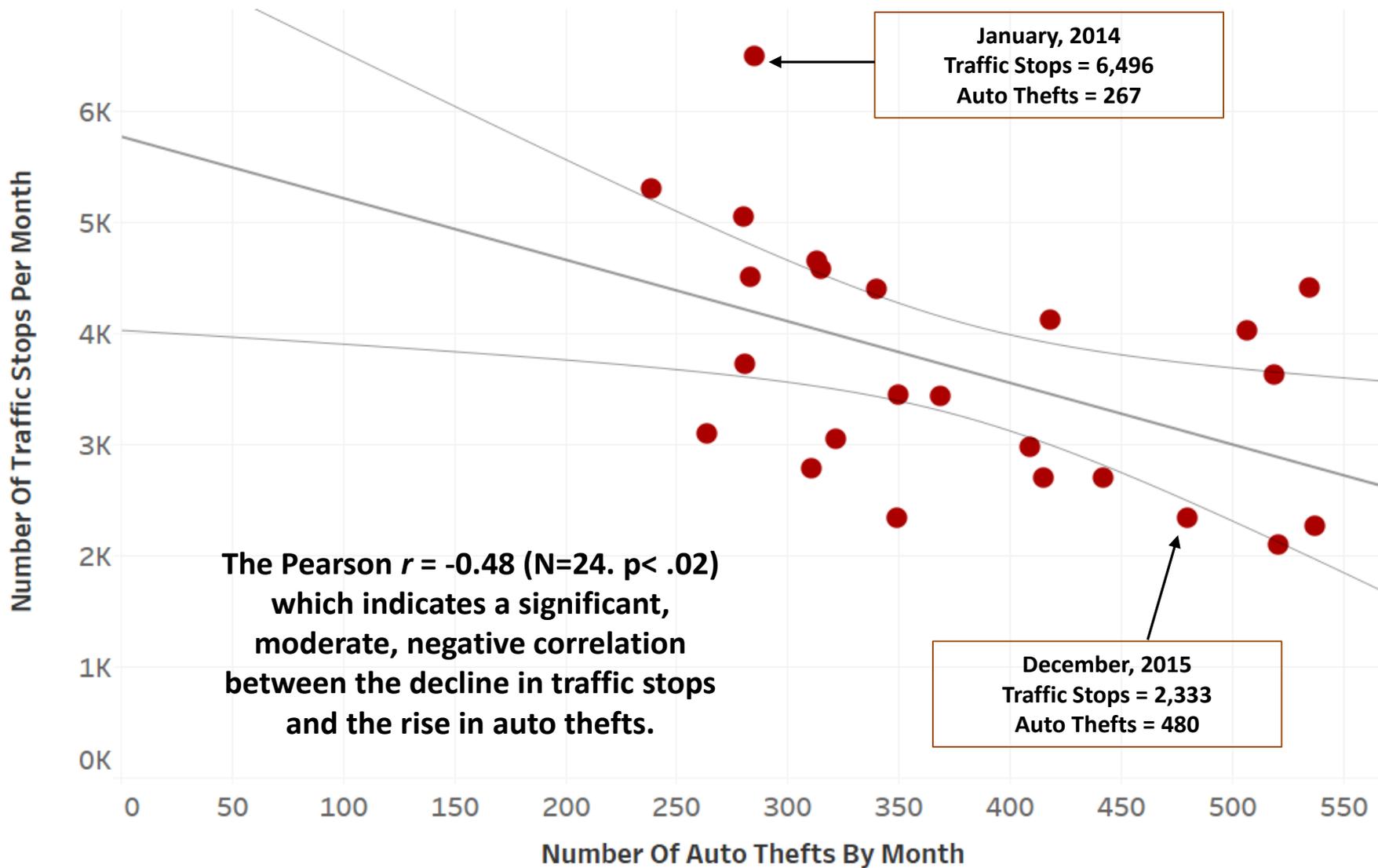
The Decline In Traffic Stops From 2010 To 2015



The Trend Lines For Traffic Stops, Arrests, And Auto Theft Over Time



A Closer Examination Of The Correlation Between The Number Of Traffic Stops And The Number Of Auto Thefts From January 2014 To December 2015



What Can We Do About The Rise In Auto Theft?

We started this set of analyses by asking the question, “What Has Changed That Might Account For The Sharp Rise In Auto Thefts Since 2013?” We examined the relationships among the rise in auto thefts, economic conditions, the jail population at MDC, the number and workload data of APD Officers. Our analyses suggest that the strongest, most direct relationship is the number of repeat offenders who are arrested and released multiple times. We estimated that repeat offenders account for about 46% of the increase in auto thefts in 2015. The reduction in the numbers of police officers is also a contributing factor. Clearly, other long-term and short-term factors, including a national rise in crime, are involved as well.

The data and analyses in this working report suggest two immediate steps we can take to reduce auto theft:

- 1. We refine and monitor the important prison and other criminal justice reforms to ensure that they achieve their goals without the unintended consequence of increasing auto theft. In particular, we need to better address the issue of repeat offenders.**
- 2. We help the Albuquerque Police Department recruit and retain enough officers and we ensure that those officers have the resources and support they need to do the difficult jobs we need them to do.**

Neither of these steps are easy and they will take all of us working together to get them accomplished. But of those of us who call Albuquerque home, there is no other choice.