Major crimes fall nationwide, in Minneapolis

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Federal authorities reported Monday that many significant crimes, including murder, declined in the first six months of 2008 in the United States, when compared with the same time period a year earlier.

As for the Twin Cities, the report said Minneapolis saw across-the-board drops in murder, rape, robbery and other crimes. For St. Paul, the FBI-gathered numbers were mixed.

In Minneapolis, murders from January to June 2008 totaled 17. That's down from 26 in the same period of 2007. Also down were forcible rapes (186 vs. 212), robberies (947 vs. 1,181), burglary (2,320 vs. 2,800) and auto theft (1,282 vs. 1,509).

And for St. Paul: Murder (9 vs. 11), forcible rape (73 vs. 78), robbery (358 vs. 334), larceny theft (3,066 vs. 2,915) and auto theft (868 vs. 996).

Nationwide, violent crime fell 3.5 percent and property crime 2.5 percent during the first six months of the year. The full 2008 report will be available in the fall.

Violent crimes nationally in all population groups declined: Murder by 4.4 percent, aggravated assault by 4.1 percent, forcible rape by 3.3 percent, and robbery by 2.2 percent.

On a regional basis, law-enforcement officials in all four parts of the country reported a drop in violent crimes: 6 percent in the Midwest, 5 percent in the West, 2.9 percent in the Northeast and 1.5 percent in the South.

The report is based on information from law-enforcement agencies that contributed three to six common months of data to the FBI from January through June of both 2007 and 2008. A total of 11,515 law-enforcement agencies met the criteria for inclusion in the report.

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