50TH DISTRICT COURT
EFFECT OF OAKLAND COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT ON 2011 CASELOAD

2011 NEW CRIMINAL CASES	June	July	August	September	October
Felony	48	66	88	92	91
Misdemeanor	162	150	272	197	188
2011 NEW TRAFFIC CASES	June	July	August	September	October
Misdemeanor, Civil Infractions & Drunk Driving	463	694	1452	2308	1562
	BEFORE		**AFTER TAKEOVER**		

Comparison of 2010 Felony Cases - All Oakland County District Courts		
Court	# of Judges	New Felony Cases
D43 Ferndale	3	525
D44 Royal Oak	2	166
D45A Berkley	1	36
D45B Oak Park	2	266
D46 Southfield	3	618
D47 Farmington	2	352
D48 Bloomfield	3	276
D50 PONTIAC	**4**	**837**
D51 Waterford	2	331
D52-1 Novi	3	475
D52-2 Clarkston	2	317
D52-3 Rochester	3	577
D52-4 Troy	3	311

Freep.com Detroit Free Press 11/27/11

Pontiac finding new hope after police changeover

The call came in a few minutes after midnight.

"There's a woman screaming," the dispatcher told Oakland County Sheriff's Deputy Ian Ramsey as he cruised through Pontiac's neighborhoods in his patrol car.

The woman reported that her boyfriend was beating her. "She said if we don't get there soon, she's going to take matters into her own hands," the dispatcher said.

Two minutes later, Ramsey pulled up to the small ranch house. The woman, her mouth bloodied, stood crying on the porch. Her boyfriend had taken off. Ramsey relayed the man's description on the radio, and 90 seconds later, a second patrol unit arrested him at a Sunoco station a few blocks away.

That incident, which took place earlier this month, might seem a routine police call, but quick response times and arrests are a new and welcome change for Pontiac's 66,000 residents -- thanks to the Oakland County Sheriff's Office, which took over policing the troubled city nearly four months ago.

With 74 deputies on the streets -- a third more than before the merger -- new technology and streamlined management, Pontiac has seen a whopping 400% increase in arrests since Aug. 1.

Citizens used to wait sometimes hours and even days for police to arrive and take a report, but the new force has whittled the average response time to 10 minutes, from the time a call is made to the time a patrol car shows up on the scene.

It's a dramatic improvement for the small, impoverished city, considered one of the m ost dangerous in the nation. Pontiac had 3,853 violent and property crimes reported last year -- or 13.16 crimes committed per 100,000 people – putting it in the eighth percentile in safety when compared with other U.S. cities.

Riddled with issues

Pontiac once had one of the larger police departments in Oakland County -- with 170 officers, a full detective bureau and a city jail as recently as 2008.

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But then the financially struggling city began laying off employees. By January, only 50 officers were left, and sometimes only four patrol units were cruising the city at night.

The department was saddled with old equipment and housed in a building that hadn't been painted in years. The patrol cars didn't have such standard equipment as radar. And lower-level employees didn't have basic tools such as e-mail.

An emergency manager, appointed by Gov. Rick Snyder, turned to the county for help, asking for a consolidation that would save the cash-strapped city $2.2 million a year. The city now pays Oakland County $10.2 million for police services.

The plan initially was resisted by the department and its union, as police officers worried they would lose their sense of autonomy and identity. But the Sheriff's Office – which hired all 50 Pontiac officers, plus 13 others who had been laid off – took steps to reassure the staff.

On Aug. 1, the Sheriff's Office officially took over.

Pontiac joins a dozen other communities now contracting with the Sheriff's Office, i ncluding the townships of Oxford, Orion, Springfield, Oakland, Brandon, Lyon, Commerce, Highland, Independence, Royal Oak and Addison, as well as the City of Rochester Hills.

'An undeveloped gem'

The newly deputized officers got new equipment and e-mail. They underwent training on county protocol. The headquarters on Pike Street, now a county substation, is being painted by inmates.

Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard sent exercise equipment over from the c ounty and created a gym in the basement.

"We wanted to make sure there was a positive work environment," Bouchard said. "And we wanted them to know that we care about them as individuals. I am very proud of how the people we hired were absorbed into our department."

Bouchard said he hopes to work with businesses, schools and neighborhoods to help the city rise again.

"We think of it as an undeveloped gem that has been challenged over the years, but is being rediscovered," he said.

For the police officers who are now deputies, the transition brought a sense of relief.

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"I would go to work every day and wonder if I had a job," said Raymond Wiggins, who spent 12 years on the Pontiac Police Department before becoming a deputy. "Now, I just come to work and do what I want to do -- police work, the best job in the world."

The change also frees up deputies from the time-consuming chores of processing arrests, keeping more officers on the streets. Before, an arrest required two hours of paper work and booking procedures. Now, deputies in Pontiac drop the newly arrested off at the Oakland County Jail, where staff do the booking.

'Proactive, not reactive'

The transition has had other effects -- including a marked increase in arrests for drunken driving and domestic violence.

Wiggins, on afternoon patrol earlier this month, said a drunken-driving arrest before meant three hours off the road to obtain breath tests, search warrants and blood work at local hospitals. Now, deputies call the sheriff's Alcohol Enforcement Team, which arrives on the scene and frees up deputies to get back on the road.

Before Aug. 1, domestic violence calls, which require fast intervention, were often backed up for hours. Witnesses would disappear or victims would change their minds about pressing charges.

"We're back to being proactive, not reactive," Wiggins said.

Although the county had anticipated some jail overcrowding as a result of the Pontiac changeover, it has been minimal, records show, because many of those arrested bond out.

However, the consolidation has had a rippling effect on other county government. The Oakland County Prosecutor's Office is grappling with a 300% to 400% increase in warrant requests, Prosecutor Jessica Cooper estimated.

"When I took office, we became very much aware of the gangs, the drug houses, the crime," Cooper said. "It got to the point that what the Pontiac Police Department was essentially doing was triage."

Cooper has now assigned all of the attorneys in her office to write warrants. That job was once in the hands of a few.

"Everybody is carrying water around here, including me," she said.

On the scene quicker

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At Three Sisters Market on Huron Street, a Pontiac mainstay since 1913, the current owners say they had grown weary and frustrated with break-ins, robberies and vandalism at their business. It would take hours for police to arrive and take a report -- if they did at all, the owners say.

At 4:40 a.m. Oct. 29, two men pried open the door to the small store, setting off an alarm. Surveillance cameras show the men rushing through the store in three minutes and then escaping shortly before the first Oakland County deputies arrive. The deputies' response time was four and a half minutes.

"That never happened before," said Bradley Seiba, whose family has owned the store since 1997. "It would have been hours and hours."

Oakland County investigators, armed with pictures of the two men taken from the store's cameras, have now identified them from the neighborhood and say they expect to make arrests soon.

"These people who do these things, they are like mice who eat our food," Seiba said. "Now we have someone who can scare the mice away."

Making a difference

Although it's still too early to measure crime reduction in hard numbers, the mere presence of the 10 or 12 black Impalas with the sheriff's logo cruising each shift has made a difference, residents say.

Ron Tolbert, 21, who has lived in Pontiac since 2005, said his neighborhood, the Stonegate Pointe subdivision off Elizabeth Lake Road, had been plagued by transients who trespassed and slept under people's decks.

"We never saw police," he said. "Now, they're there all the time. You see them driving through the neighborhood."

The transient problem has ended with the kicked-up police presence, he said.

It gives people hope about their city.

"I've seen good times and bad times in Pontiac," said Phyliss Williams, 50, who has lived in the city for 30 years, "I think the good times will come again."

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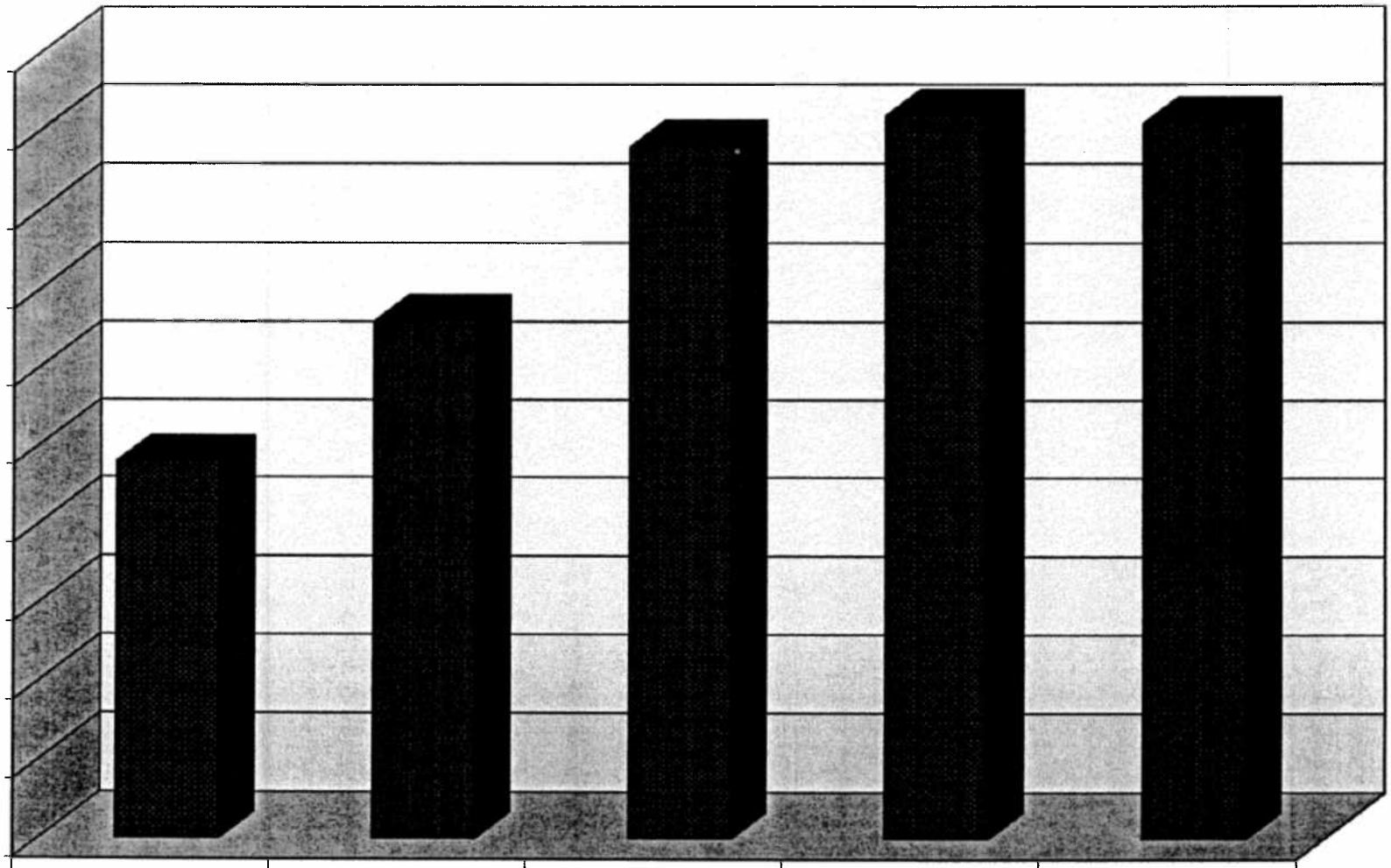
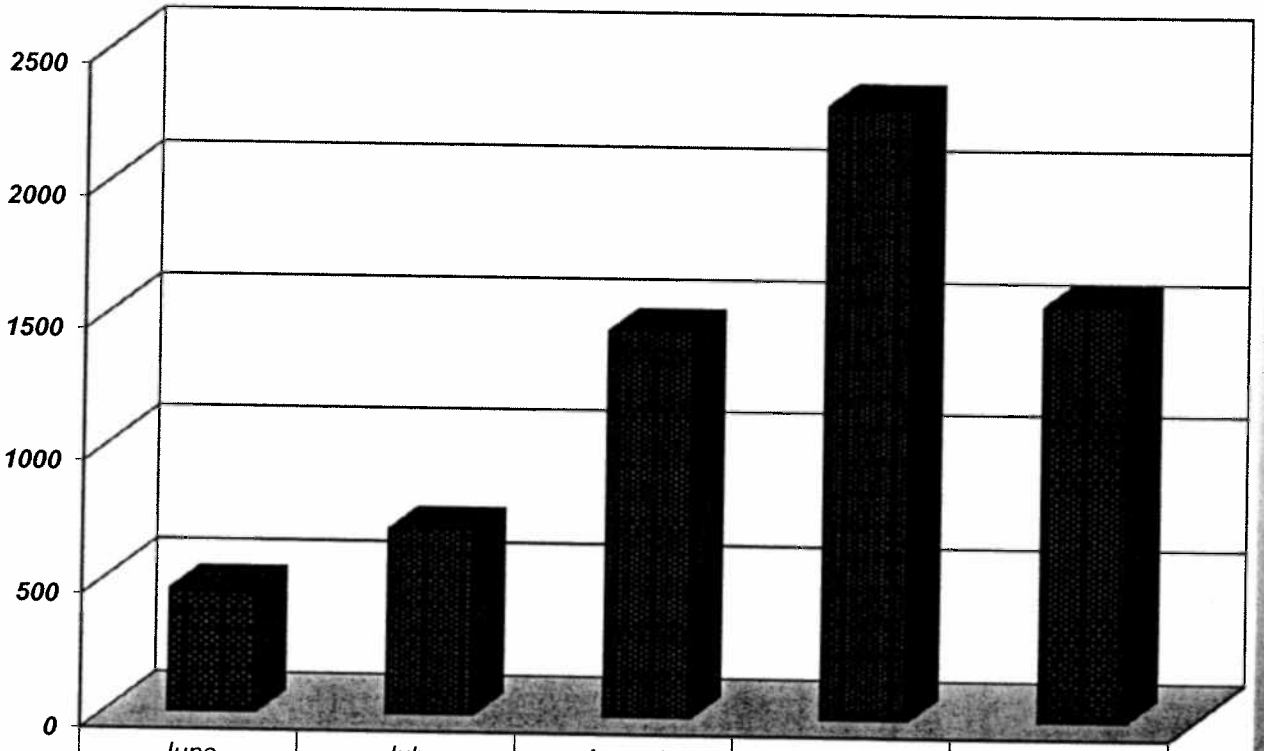
50th District Court Caseload After Oakland County Sheriff Dept. Takeover August 1, 2011
NEW FELONY CASE FILINGS BY MONTH



	June	July	August	September	October
Felony	48	66	88	92	91

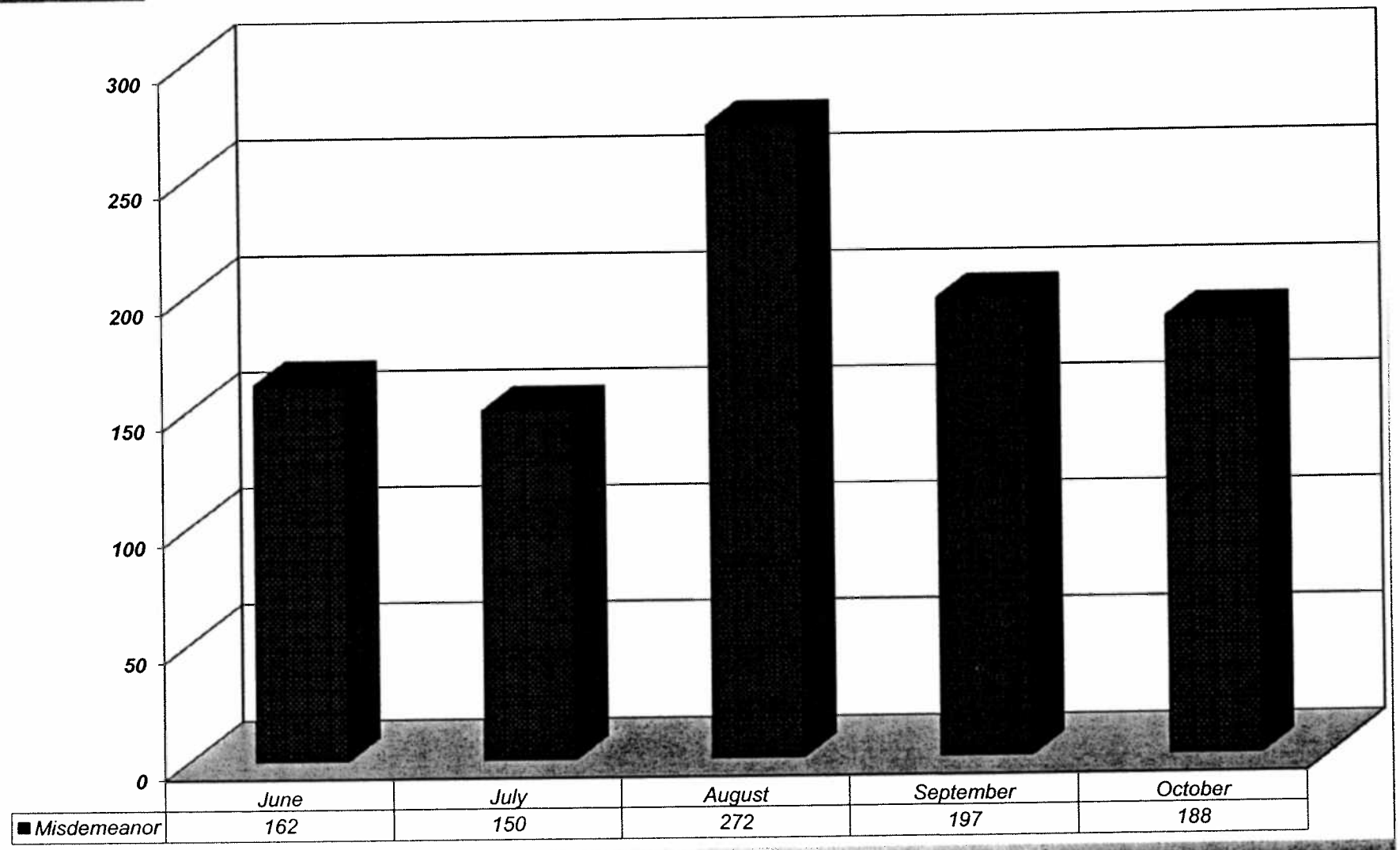
50th District Court Caseload After Oakland County Sheriff Dept. Takeover August 1, 2011

TRAFFIC MISDEMEANOR, CIVIL INFRACTION AND DRUNK DRIVING NEW CASE FILINGS BY MONTH



	June	July	August	September	October
New Filings	463	694	1452	2308	1562

50th District Court Caseload After Oakland County Sheriff Dept. Takeover August 1, 2011
NON-TRAFFIC MISDEMEANORS - NEW CASE FILINGS BY MONTH



	June	July	August	September	October
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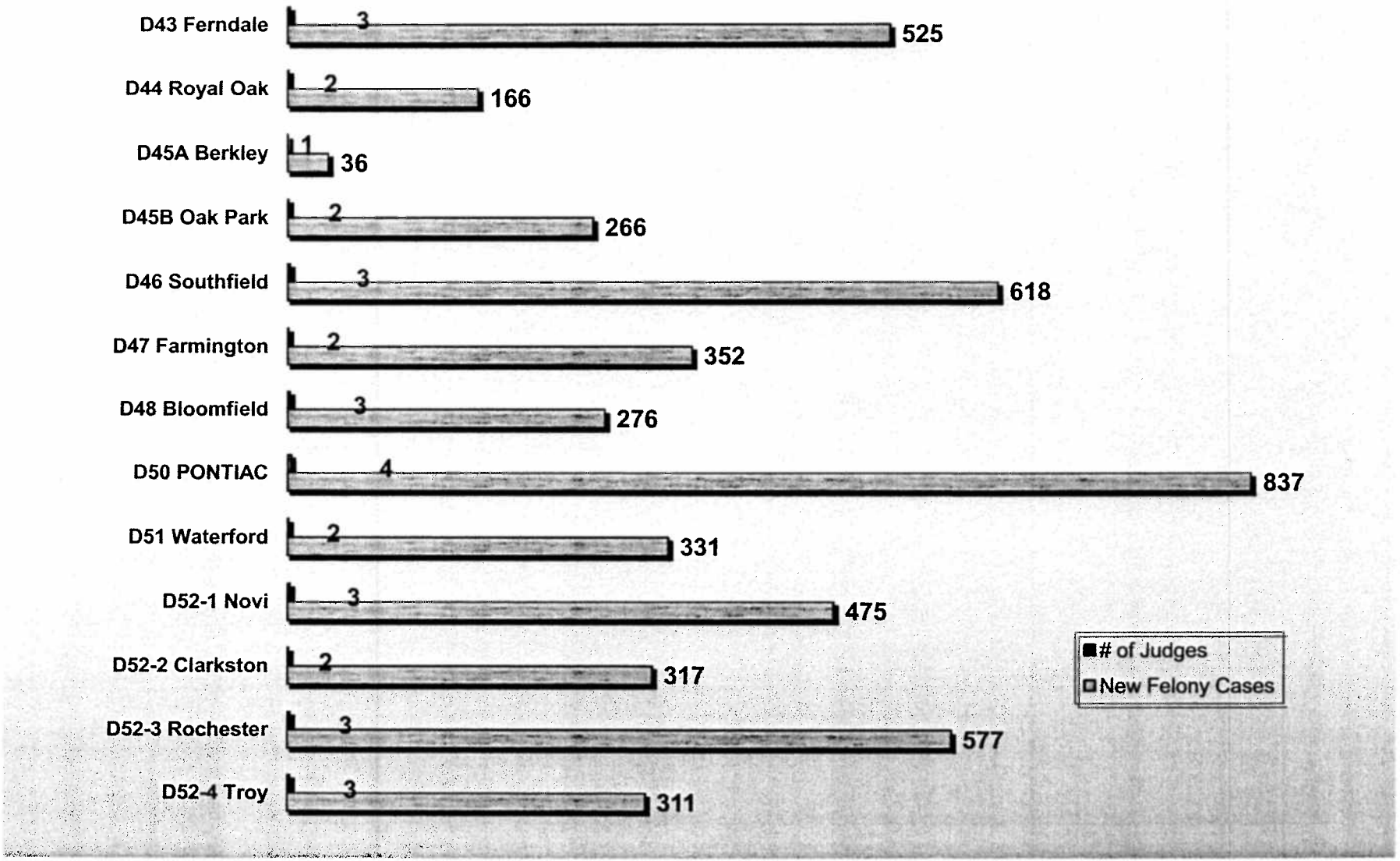
Comparison of All Oakland County District Courts - New Felony Case Filings for 2010



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Arrests reportedly up 400 percent in Pontiac under Oakland County Sheriff's Office

Published: Sunday, November 27, 2011, 1:28 PM Updated: Sunday, November 27, 2011, 3:16 PM

By **Michael Wayland | MLive.com**

Sometimes it takes time for changes to positively take effect, other times they can occur quite quickly.

The latter is true in the case of the Oakland County Sheriff's Office**taking over patrol jurisdictions** from the now extinct Pontiac Police Department.

View full size Courtesy image

Arrests are reportedly up 400 percent in Pontiac under Oakland County Sheriff's Office.

According to reports, with 74 deputies on the streets -- a third more than before the merger nearly four months ago -- arrests are up 400 percent since August.

> **Nov. 27, the Detroit Free Press:** "It's a dramatic improvement for the small, impoverished city, considered one of the most dangerous in the nation. Pontiac had 3,853 violent and property crimes reported last year -- or 13.16 crimes committed per 100,000 people -- putting it in the eighth percentile in safety when compared with other U.S. cities."

The county -- which hired 50 Pontiac officers, as well as others who had been laid off -- took over **patrolling the city on Aug. 1.**

The Sheriff's Department took over patrols in the cash-strapped city under a contract orchestrated by emergency financial manager Michael Stampfler, who had suggested Pontiac could face bankruptcy without serious spending cuts.

The merger reportedly**saves Pontiac about $2 million** a year.

Earlier this year, Stampfler **became the state's first emergency manager** to use newly-afforded powers to throw out a union contract as he worked to eliminate the Pontiac Police Department, and the contract with the county aligns with Snyder's push for local governments to cut costs by sharing resources.

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