

http://www.thenewsenterprise.com/news/local/crime-data-study-names-vine-grove-safest-city-in-state/article_92cc35f1-7d74-56dd-aa6d-98f2bbad0d73.html

Crime-data study names Vine Grove safest city in state

JEFF D'ALESSIO The News-Enterprise Apr 17, 2019 Updated 19 hrs ago



Photos by JEFF D'ALESSIO/The News-Enterprise Vine Grove has been ranked as the safest city in Kentucky based on crime data by Safewise.com. The city of more than 6,000 people hasn't had a homicide since 2015.

As the city of Vine Grove continues to grow — with a population that now surpasses 6,000 — some of the problems typically associated with growth haven't followed.

Vine Grove, with its train track, resurgent downtown, festivals and quiet streets, is regarded as the safest city in Kentucky by Safewise.com, according to data released earlier this month.

Crime data from the FBI is used as the “backbone” of the report, according to the website.

“It’s just an ongoing effort to keep it safe,” Vine Grove Police Chief Kenny Mattingly said of the ranking.

Data was collected from 2017 and used categories such as violent crime rate – including homicides, rape, assaults and robberies – as well as property crime rate. According to the report, 2017 was the most recent completed study available at the time of the ranking.

There have been no homicides in Vine Grove since May 31, 2015, when Timothy George Cruz stabbed Jason Scott to death at a residence on Crume Road.

The city had a property crime rate, such as burglaries, arson and vehicle break-ins, of 5.62 per 1,000 residents, in 2017.

Mayor Pam Ogden credited the ranking to an attentive police department, former Mayor Blake Proffitt and Vine Grove residents.

“Anything that appears different or unusual, our citizens are calling about it,” Ogden said. “Our community really looks out for each other if they see anything unusual going on. It’s awesome to have that small-town feeling.”

She said Proffitt, who served two four-year terms as mayor and left office in 2018, played a key role in backing the police department and making the city safer as it continued to grow.

“We don’t have many police officers, but they’re pretty awesome,” Ogden said.

Prospect, a suburb of Louisville, was second and Lakeside-Crestview Hills in northern Kentucky was third in the rankings. None had any violent crime reported and all have fewer than 6,200 residents. The difference was Vine Grove had a lower property crime rate.

“It’s a great recognition,” Ogden said.

Elizabethtown was ranked 60th and Radcliff, 78th.

Vine Grove Police Department is in the process of adding a K-9 unit as well as more officers following a recent occupational tax increase. Mattingly has said police recently have been receiving more dangerous calls.

“We’re moving forward with the K-9 and doing things to help keep (the city) safe,” he said.

Jeff D’Alessio can be reached at 270-505-1757 or jdalessio@thenewsenterprise.com.