Burglaries on the rise in New Iberia

By Lisa Hurt
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NEW IBERIA — If your home or business was burglarized last year, you weren’t alone. Some 430 people in New Iberia reported burglaries in 1995, a 41.9 percent increase over the previous year, according to Police Chief Steve Davis.

Although only 67 people were arrested in connection with those burglaries, that doesn’t mean that only 67 of the 430 cases were solved, Capt. Robert Feller said.

“I can tell you one guy was charged with nine (burglaries), others were charged with four or five counts (of burglary),” Feller said. “So, more than 67 were solved, but, we don’t classify them that way, we classify them by the number of people we arrest.”

According to Davis, 15.6 percent of New Iberia’s burglaries were solved last year. Nationally, the average for solving burglaries in 1995 was 14.9 percent, he said.

Although there were 127 more burglaries reported last year than in 1994, there were 92 fewer break-ins than two years ago, according to police statistics.

In 1993, there were 522 burglaries reported.

“We saw a huge decrease of 42 percent in burglaries from 1993 to 1994, and they’re back up by nearly the same percent this year,” Davis said. “Burglaries generally run in cycles but we usually have from 300 to 500 (annually).”

According to FBI statistics, the 1994 average number of burglaries in U.S. cities with populations of 25,000-45,999 was 308.

“We’re always above the national average,” Davis said.

And, so is the rest of the state, according to the FBI Uniform Crime Report.

Louisiana was ranked eighth in the country in 1993 and 1994 for burglaries committed per capita, the report shows.

The District of Columbia led the country in burglaries, followed by Florida, Texas, North Carolina, Georgia, California, South Carolina, and then Louisiana.

Although New Iberia’s burglaries are not generally classified by the areas in which they occur, there were more than 100 burglaries reported in the downtown, police said.

The rash of burglaries in the Main, St. Peter, and Jane streets areas were believed to be connected, according to police.

Increased police patrol in the areas, as well as more stake-outs of businesses, has led to the decrease of burglaries in that area, Davis said.

According to Davis, there were two murders in 1993 compared to four in 1994. Both murders were solved, he said.

The number of rapes reported were down 81.8 percent last year and robberies were down 40.1 percent, according to the chief.

All violent crimes, including aggravated assault were down, he said.

Property crimes were up slightly due to the increase in burglaries, according to Davis.