Crime guide calls La. ‘Most Dangerous State’

By The Associated Press

Louisiana is the country’s “Most Dangerous State,” according to a ranking of states based on key crime statistics compiled by a Kansas publishing company.

Vermont is the safest of the 50 states, according to “Crime State Rankings 1994,” a 450-page book published this weekend by Morgan Quinno Corp. of Lawrence, Kan.

“I realize that this distinction is not a flattering one for the beautiful Bayou State,” said Scott Morgan, president of the publishing firm.

“Certainly, you will find pockets of safe and dangerous areas in any state,” Morgan said. “However, when taken as a whole, the facts speak for themselves.

“Louisiana has the highest murder rate in the country and ranks high in violent crime and overall crime in general.”

Morgan said the rankings are based on 16 factors, including overall state crime rates, juvenile crime statistics, crime clearances, police protection and expenditures, and the change in crime rates over the past five years.

Louisiana ranked No. 1 in two of the 16 categories: its murder rate of 17.4 per 100,000 residents, and its prisoner incarceration rate. The state had 478 people in state prison per 100,000 residents, compared with the national average of 308 per 100,000.

Louisiana was second in one category, fifth in three, seventh in one, eighth in three, 12th in two, 15th in one, and 22nd, 26th and 33rd in the other three.

Maryland was ranked the second most dangerous state, followed by Texas, Illinois and Florida. Rounding out the top 10 were California, Nevada, New York, Arizona and South Carolina.

Maine followed Vermont as the state considered safest. Next came Iowa, North Dakota, West Virginia, New Hampshire, Nebraska, South Dakota, Kentucky, Montana and Wyoming.

Morgan said his company goes beyond the FBI’s annual crime reports in compiling its statistics.

Dangerous

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On the overall crime rate, Louisiana ranked fifth with 6,546.5 crimes per 100,000 residents in 1992.

Florida was first, with 8,358.2, followed by Texas, Arizona and California. In violent crime, Florida was again leader, followed by New York, California, Maryland and Louisiana.

Louisiana’s murder rate of 17.4 per 100,000 was well above the 12.7 per 100,000 for second-place New York and 12.7 for both California and Texas.

New York had the highest robbery rate in 1992, 596.9 per 100,000 residents, with Maryland second at 429 per 100,000. Louisiana ranked eighth in this category, with 271.4 per 100,000.

Florida was the leader in aggravated assaults, 777.2 per 100,000, followed by New Mexico, South Carolina, Alabama and Louisiana.

The “Crime State Rankings” book is the latest in a series of annual reference guides which Morgan’s company began publishing in 1990.

For the last three years, the company has used other statistics to come up with a “most livable state” award. The most recent livability ranking, released last April, ranked Louisiana dead last.

Morgan said he considers Louisiana a great state with a lot of attractions.

“It’s hard for me to say Kansas is a more exciting place than Louisiana, because it isn’t,” Morgan said. “But I choose to live in Kansas. I’m not saying Louisiana’s not a lot of fun.”

Morgan admitted that selecting the top 16 categories used to compile the crime rankings was subjective.

“But when you look at it, I think it’s fairly telling,” he said. “You can quibble about whether Louisiana is first or fourth, but it is definitely among the top states in the problem of crime.”