



Center for Public
Safety Initiatives

*A joint project of
The City of Rochester
The Rochester Police Department
Rochester Institute of Technology*

**Crime Guns Taken Into Custody
By The Rochester Police Department
2004-2006
Working paper # 2007-01**

**Center for Public Safety Initiatives
Rochester Institute of Technology
April, 2007**

This report presents an examination of a data file on guns taken into custody by the Rochester Police Department from 2004 through 2006. Most of the analysis deals with “crime guns” which includes guns taken as a result of illegal possession or use in another crime. Guns held for safekeeping or turned over for destruction are not examined.

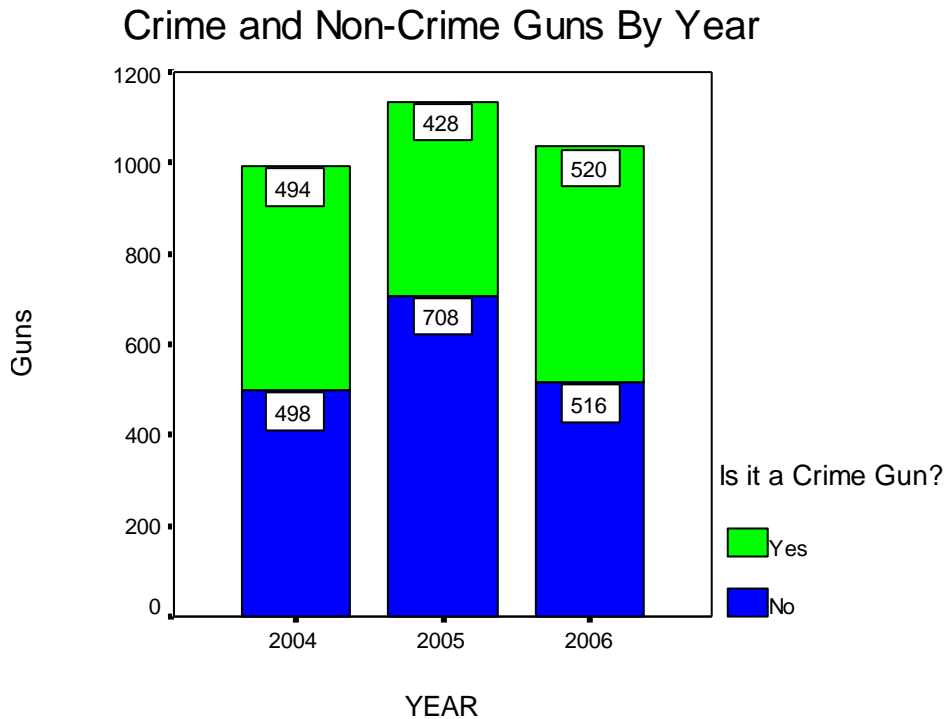
We are grateful to Officer Tom Bryce of the Rochester Police Department for making the data file available and for the high quality condition in which he has maintained the gun database. Data on guns received in other jurisdictions and comparative crime data were made available through the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services.

If you have questions or comments contact:

John Klofas, Ph.D.
475-2423
john.klofas@rit.edu

1. How many guns does RPD take possession of annually?

In each of the past three years RPD has taken in approximately 1000 guns for a total of 3164. Forty-seven percent of those guns, or 1442 of them, have been “crime guns.” That is, they have been possessed illegally or used in another crime.



2. What are the common reasons for taking possession of the guns?

The following 13 categories include 95% of RPD crime guns.

Most Common Reasons Crime Guns are Held by RPD

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1. CPW	663	46.0	46.0
2. CPCS	191	13.2	59.2
3. SEARCH WARRANT	99	6.9	66.1
4. UNKNOWN INVEST	56	3.9	70.0
5. ROBBERY	54	3.7	73.7
6. MENACING	48	3.3	77.0
7. ASSAULT	47	3.3	80.3
8. UPM	39	2.7	83.0
9. RECKLESS ENDANG	36	2.5	85.5
10. MURDER	32	2.2	87.7
11. PROHIBITED USE	32	2.2	89.9
12. BURGLARY	25	1.7	93.9
13. FTF INVESTIGATION	21	1.5	95.4

3. What are the most common types of crime guns and who manufactures them?

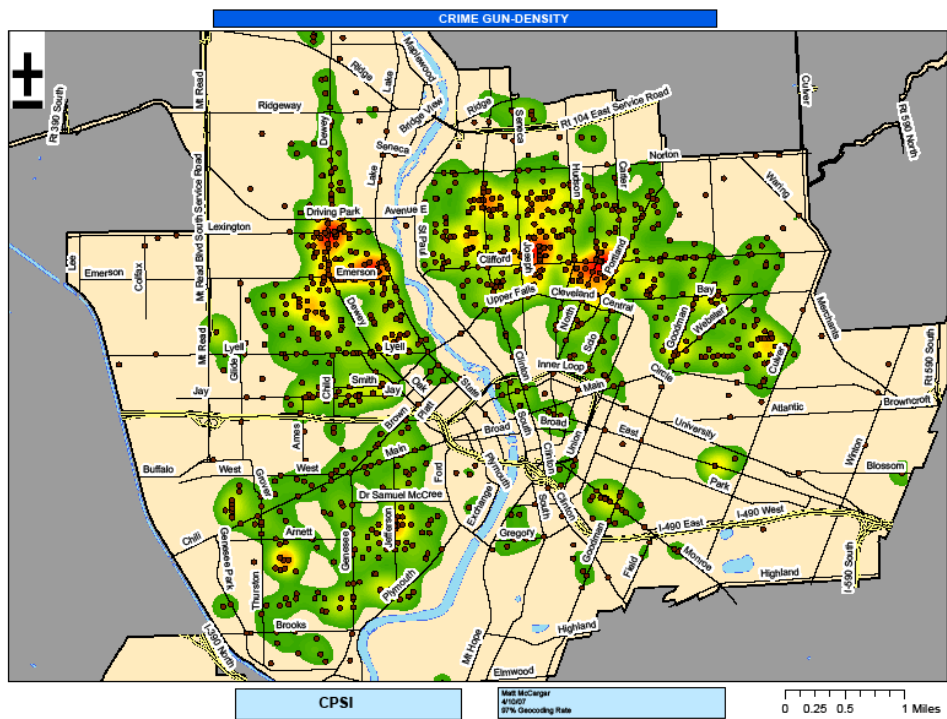
Kind of Crime Gun

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
SEMIAUTO PISTOL	556	38.6	38.6
REVOLVER	333	23.1	61.7
PUMP SHOTGUN	194	13.5	75.1
SEMIAUTO RIFLE	185	12.8	87.9

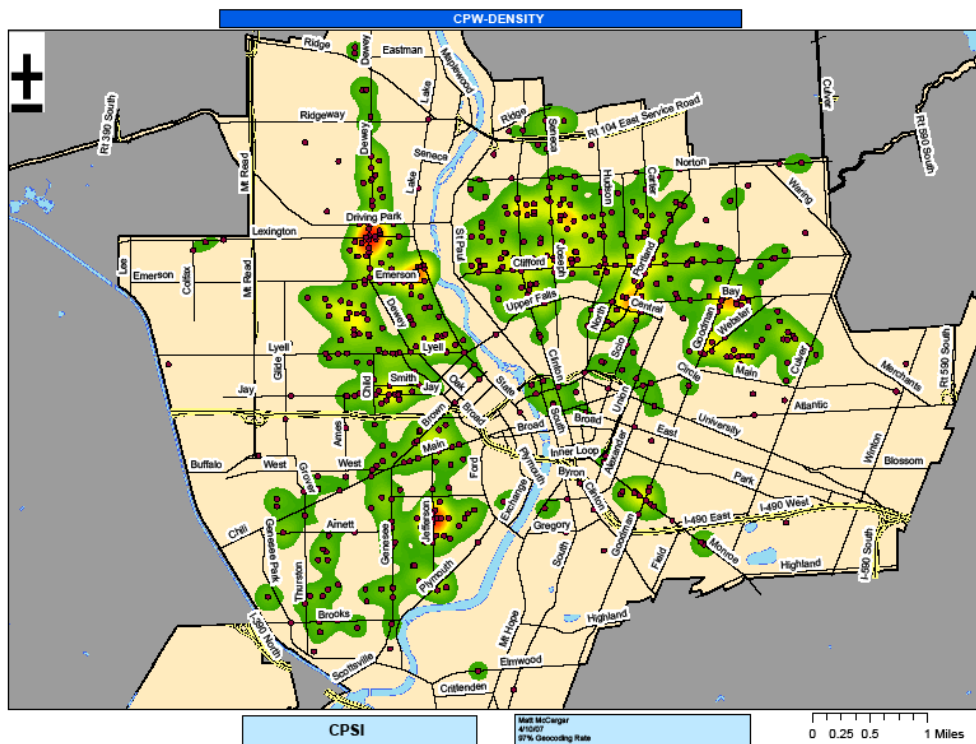
Most Common Manufacturer of RPD Crime Guns

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Smith & Wesson	163	11.3	11.3
Mossberg	97	6.7	18.0
Ruger	88	6.1	24.1
Remington	70	4.9	29.0
Hi Point	60	4.2	33.1
Colt	57	4.0	37.1
Taurus	51	3.5	40.6
Marlin	48	3.3	44.0
Beretta	47	3.3	47.2
Harrington & Richardson	38	2.6	49.9
Winchester	35	2.4	52.3
Bryco Arms	33	2.3	54.6
Glock	33	2.3	56.9
Lorcin	33	2.3	59.2
Norinco	22	1.5	60.7
Stevens	21	1.5	62.1
Savage Arms	20	1.4	63.5
Heckler & Koch	18	1.2	64.8
Kel Tec	17	1.2	66.0
Iver Johnson	16	1.1	67.1
Ithaca	16	1.1	68.2
Unknown	16	1.1	69.3
New England Firearms	16	1.1	70.4
Charter Arms	15	1.0	71.4
Davis Industries	15	1.0	72.5
Browning Arms	13	.9	73.4
Arcadia Machine & Tool	12	.8	74.2
Maverick Arms	12	.8	75.0
Intratec	12	.8	75.9
Interarms	11	.8	76.6
Raven	11	.8	77.4
Amadeo Rossi	11	.8	78.2
High Standard	10	.7	78.8
Rohm	10	.7	79.5
Sig Sauer (W.Germany)	10	.7	80.2

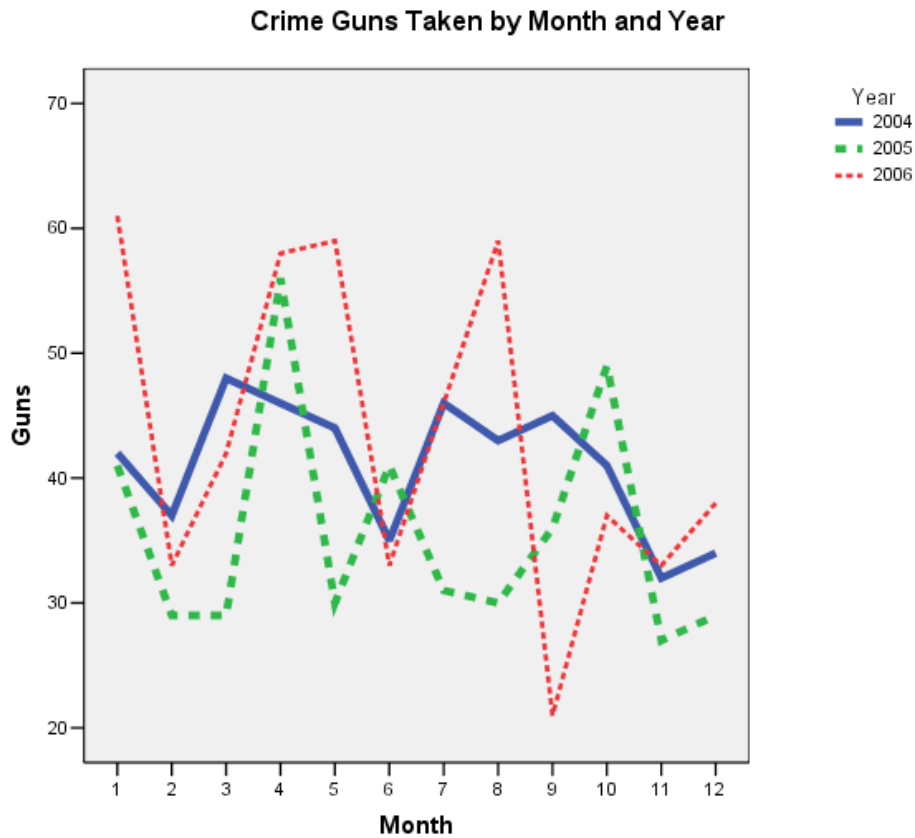
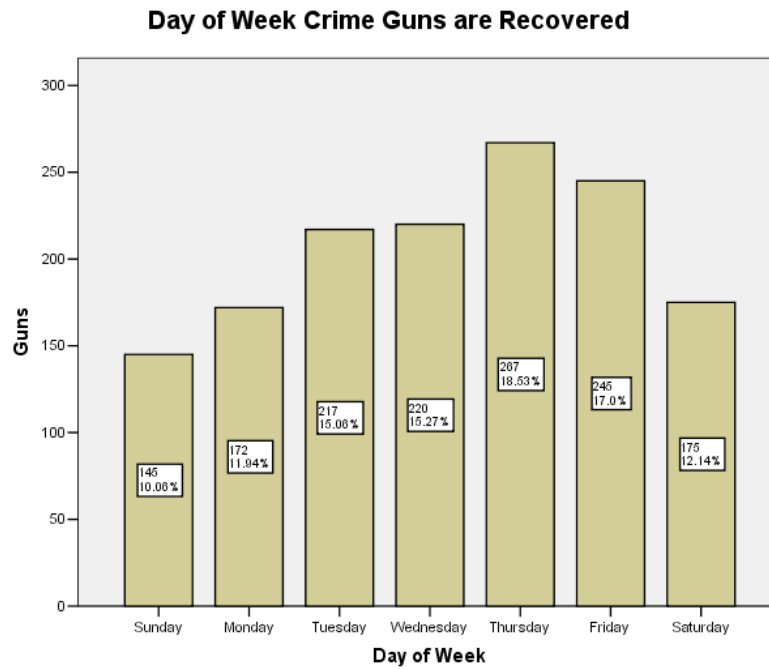
4. Where are crime guns recovered?



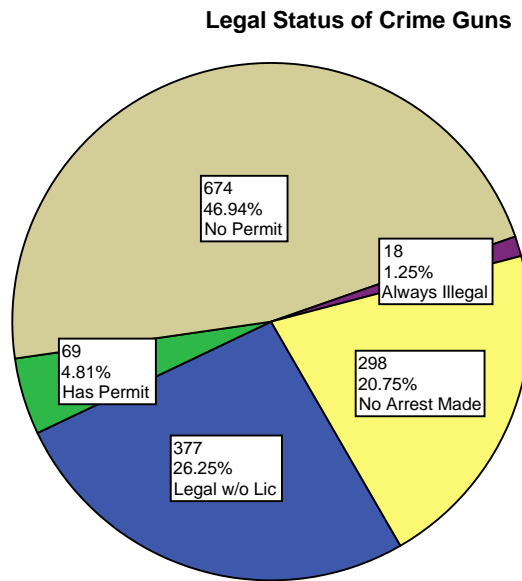
5. Where are crime guns leading to charges of CPW recovered?



6. When are crime guns recovered?



7. What is the legal status of recovered crime guns?



Was Gun reported Stolen (NYSPIN hit)?

	Frequency	Percent
No	1231	85.4
Yes	211	14.6
Total	1442	100.0

8. What is the condition of recovered crime guns?

Serial Number Defaced

	Frequency	Percent
Not Defaced	1345	93.3
Defaced Serial Number	97	6.7
Total	1442	100.0

9. How Does Rochester Compare with other NY Cities on Taking in Crime Guns?

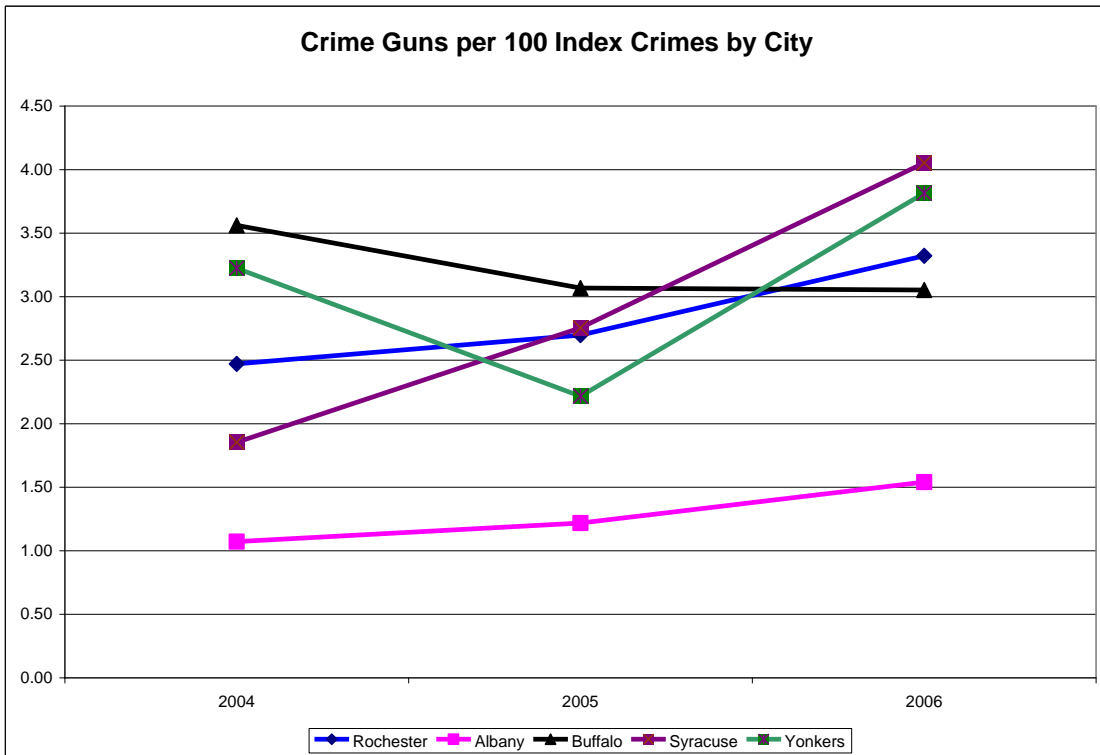
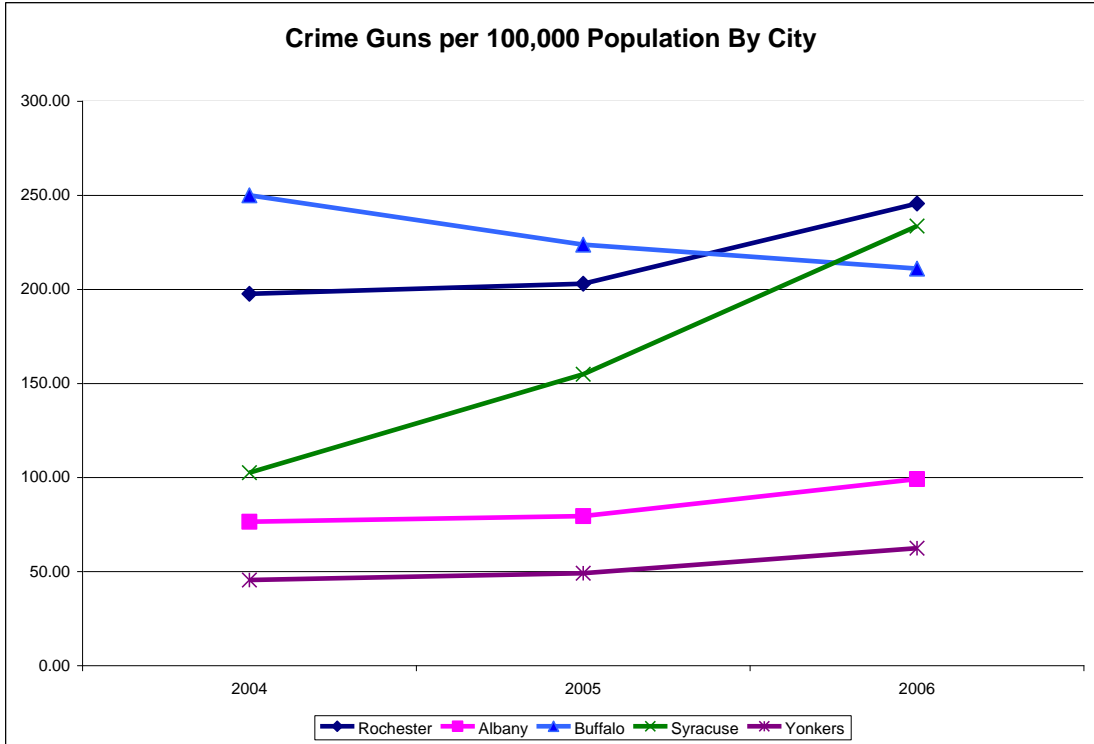
These tables show the number of crime guns collected in several New York cities. They also show that when city population is considered Rochester and Buffalo are usually in front of the other cities in taking in crime guns. When all Index crimes are considered the cities tend to cluster together at nearly equal levels with the exception of Albany which has the lowest rates.

Crime Guns Submissions to DCJS by City

	Rochester	Albany	Buffalo	Syracuse	Yonkers
Crime Guns 04	426	72	714	148	90
Crime Guns 05	432	75	634	222	97
Crime Guns 06	520	93	592	332	123

Crime Guns By City (Normed)

	Rochester	Albany	Buffalo	Syracuse	Yonkers
04 guns per 100,000 pop	197.67	76.51	250.02	102.58	45.51
04 guns per 100 index crimes	2.47	1.07	3.56	1.85	3.22
04 guns per 100 violent crimes	23.91	6.37	18.76	11.20	31.47
05 guns per 100,000 pop	203.02	79.48	223.82	154.91	49.14
05 guns per 100 index crimes	2.70	1.22	3.07	2.75	2.22
05 guns per 100 violent crimes	19.74	5.88	16.10	14.14	10.00
06 guns per 100,000 pop	245.68	99.18	211.06	233.70	62.45
06 guns per 100 index crimes	3.32	1.54	3.05	4.05	3.82
06 guns per 100 violent crimes	19.50	7.64	14.96	21.91	28.94



Conclusion: Implications for Policy and Practice.

RPD takes a significant number of crime guns off the street annually. In many cases the only charge associated with this activity is CPW. The characteristics of the guns themselves are largely as expected: semi-automatic handguns dominate, they are rarely legally owned; their possessors often do not have permits if they are needed. The guns are sometimes reported stolen and sometimes their serial numbers are defaced. The guns are often taken in high crime neighborhoods.

National survey data suggest that there is between 30,000 and 40,000 guns in the City of Rochester. At any time only a small portion of those guns will be linked to crime. Strategies that seek to remove guns from the street without discriminating between crime and non-crime guns, therefore, have a low probability of affecting violence. On the other hand, it seems likely that violence reduction can occur by removing illegal guns taken from known offenders or other prohibited persons, or those guns linked to illegal activity such as drug sales, or those guns present on or near the street in high crime areas. This view is supported by the fact that illegal guns are a distinct commodity among criminals and carry a cost premium above the cost of comparable legal weapons.

Given the characteristics of the crime guns described in this research it seems reasonable to conclude that the crime guns taken are or certainly could be associated with violent crime in Rochester. The crime guns are not equivalent to the large number of guns owned for legitimate purposes. Although additional study is needed to confirm this, it seems very likely that removal of these guns from the street can and probably does have a significant impact on violence particularly in lowering gun crime.

There also seems to be no reason to believe that the number of seized crime guns represents most or even many of the available crime guns. This suggests that there are potential benefits to be had by increasing the number of crime guns removed from the street. That is, there may be value in increasing the activity most likely to lead to seizure of crime guns. Specifically increased use of search warrants and increased street enforcement activity that produces CPW arrests would appear to be useful.

Furthermore, it can be expected that increases in the seizure of crime guns, if accompanied by significant criminal penalties, can increase the deterrent effect of enforcement and reduce the probability that some offenders will chose to carry illegal weapons. That is, there is potential that the overall effect on violence can go beyond the direct effect of getting the crime guns off the street.

Finally, this analysis suggests that the following questions are worthy of consideration and review: Can operational initiatives be designed to increase removal of crime guns from the street? Will those strategic initiatives increase the number of crime guns seized? Is it appropriate to set targets for crime gun seizures? How will increases in crime gun seizures be responded to across the criminal justice system? Do increases in crime gun seizure actually have the anticipated impact on the amount of violent crime?

Addendum: Additional gun studies underway

The following analyses of gun crime issues are currently being undertaken by the Center for Public Safety Initiatives:

1. Crime reports for all CPW cases which yielded a crime gun are being examined to identify the circumstances around getting crime guns when the only charge will be CPW. These will include time, location and type of approach that most often yield guns (other than search warrants). The analysis will also identify officers who are particularly successful at taking guns off the street. Those officers will be interviewed to identify the methods and techniques they use most.
2. Data are being collected on CPW cases to identify what sanctions are being received for this offense. We will also examine recidivism for CPW offenses with particular attention to recidivism for CPW offenders who receive sentences of probation and Youthful Offender status.