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Adult Offenders & Crime in Erie County

Analysis of Arrest Data from 2001-2009

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I. Executive Summary

This report illustrates comparative arrest data for Erie County and other Pennsylvania urban third-class counties, as well as select state and national figures, for the years 2001 through 2009. Urban third-class counties used in this report are consistent with those used in previous years', and include Berks, Dauphin, Erie, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, and Northampton. Adult arrests in Erie County have steadily decreased from a seven year high of 9,355 in 2005 to 7,804 in 2009. These 7,804 adult arrests in 2009 accounted for 81% of the total 9,631 arrests of that year (the remaining 19% being juvenile arrests). The proportion of adult arrests has risen slightly from the previous year. Relative to other urban third class counties in Pennsylvania, Erie County holds the fourth highest adult arrest rate.

Violent crime arrest data in Erie County fell sharply in 2009, after remaining stable from 2005 through 2008. Among the third class urban counties studied, Erie County's arrest rate per 1,000 adults 18 and over (further referred to rate per 1000) is well below both the Pennsylvania and National rates per 1,000.

Property crime in Erie County experienced a net increase of only 50 arrests over the last year, to 1,101. This is the only category in which arrests in Erie County increased. Between 2001 and 2009, Erie County's property crime arrest rate has closely followed Pennsylvania's property crime arrest rate. In 2009, Erie County's property crime arrests per 1,000 ended slightly higher than that of Pennsylvania.

Overall non-index crimes in Erie County have dropped from a high of 8,170 in 2005 to 6,549 in 2009, which is the lowest point in the measured period. While drug arrests continued their decline in 2009 for both Erie City and Erie County, weapons charges have continued to increase in Erie City and Erie County, after a sizeable drop in 2006. Among other urban third class counties, Erie County is rated in the middle regarding non-index crime arrests per 1000.

Notes: various tables include within this report include racial breakdown and comparisons of arrest rates. It should be noted that both the PA unified crime report system and the US Census does not include Hispanic as a race; rather this is categorized as ethnicity. Therefore, the tables do not include Hispanic as a subcategory, as those who identify themselves as Hispanic are also included in the Black or White categories.

It is also imperative to reaffirm that the data pertains to arrests, not actual offenses committed. The information should not be interpreted as implying a specific region is doing better or worse than others, or even compared to itself. Other variables not included in this report could be used to make a more substantive comparison. The data here only illustrates arrest data for each year.

II. Summary of 2009 Adult Arrest Data

Sections II through VI relate adult arrest data for Erie County and other Pennsylvania third-class counties identified in the Executive Summary. Data was taken from the Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Report online query system in the summer of 2010 to compile this report. Rate per 1,000 data was calculated using the previous mentioned arrest data as well as the latest population data available from the US census website, www.census.gov. 2009's adult arrests are the lowest of the nine year period studied, down from a high of 9,355 in 2005. The 7,804 adult arrests comprise 81% of the total 9,631 Erie County arrests in 2009.

Figure 1:

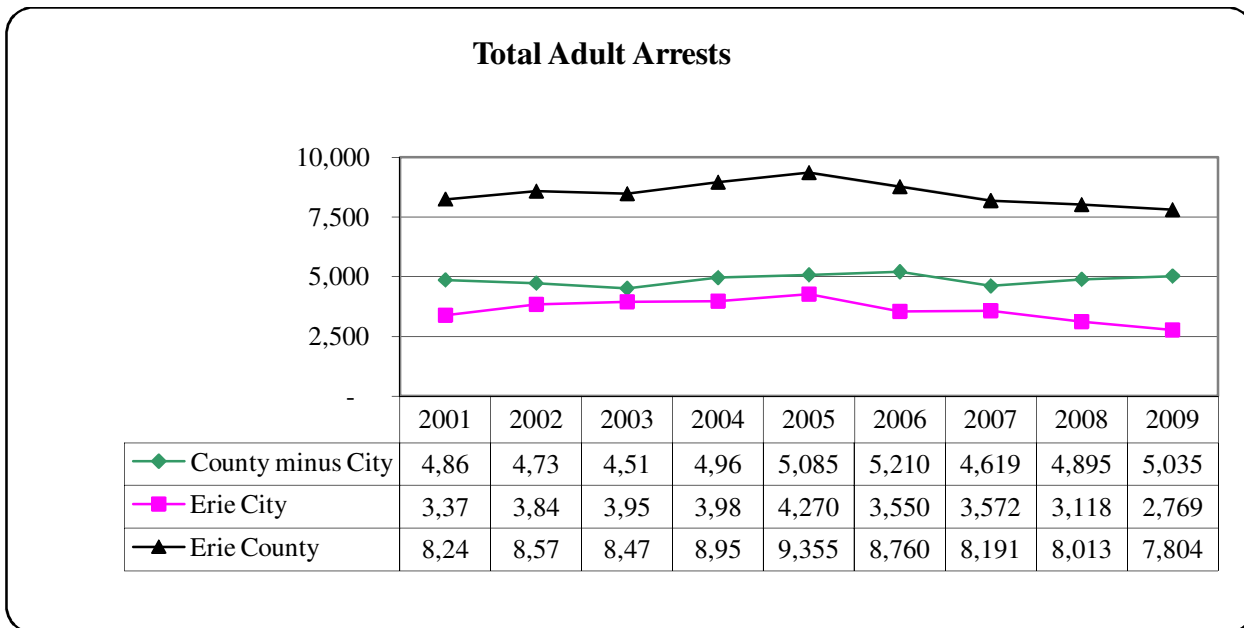


Figure 1 shows total adult arrests for Erie County, Erie City, and Erie County Only (Erie County total minus Erie City total). These areas are utilized throughout the report for comparison purposes. Erie County Only, or the Erie County Minus Erie City total, consists of those areas outside Erie city limits. The number of adult arrests in the County Only area increased slightly in 2009; however, the rate fell to its lowest point in both the Erie City and Erie County measures over the course of the time periods compared.

Figure 2:

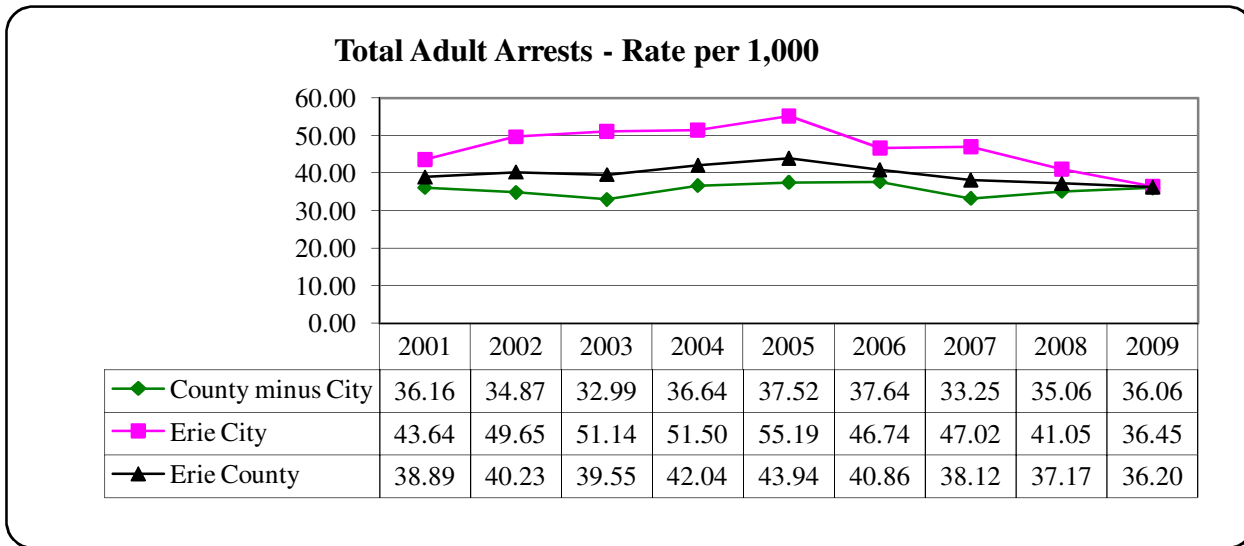
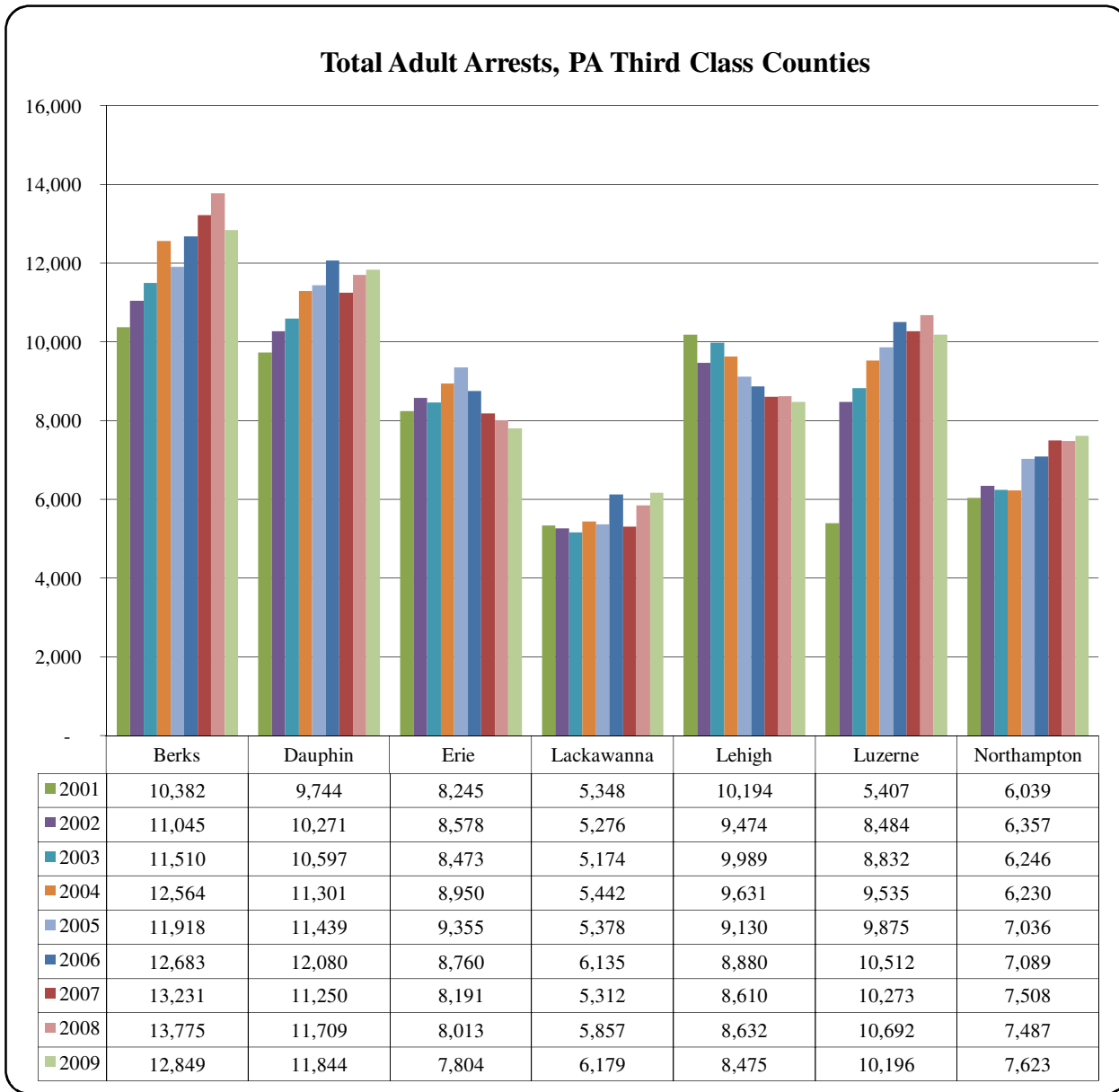


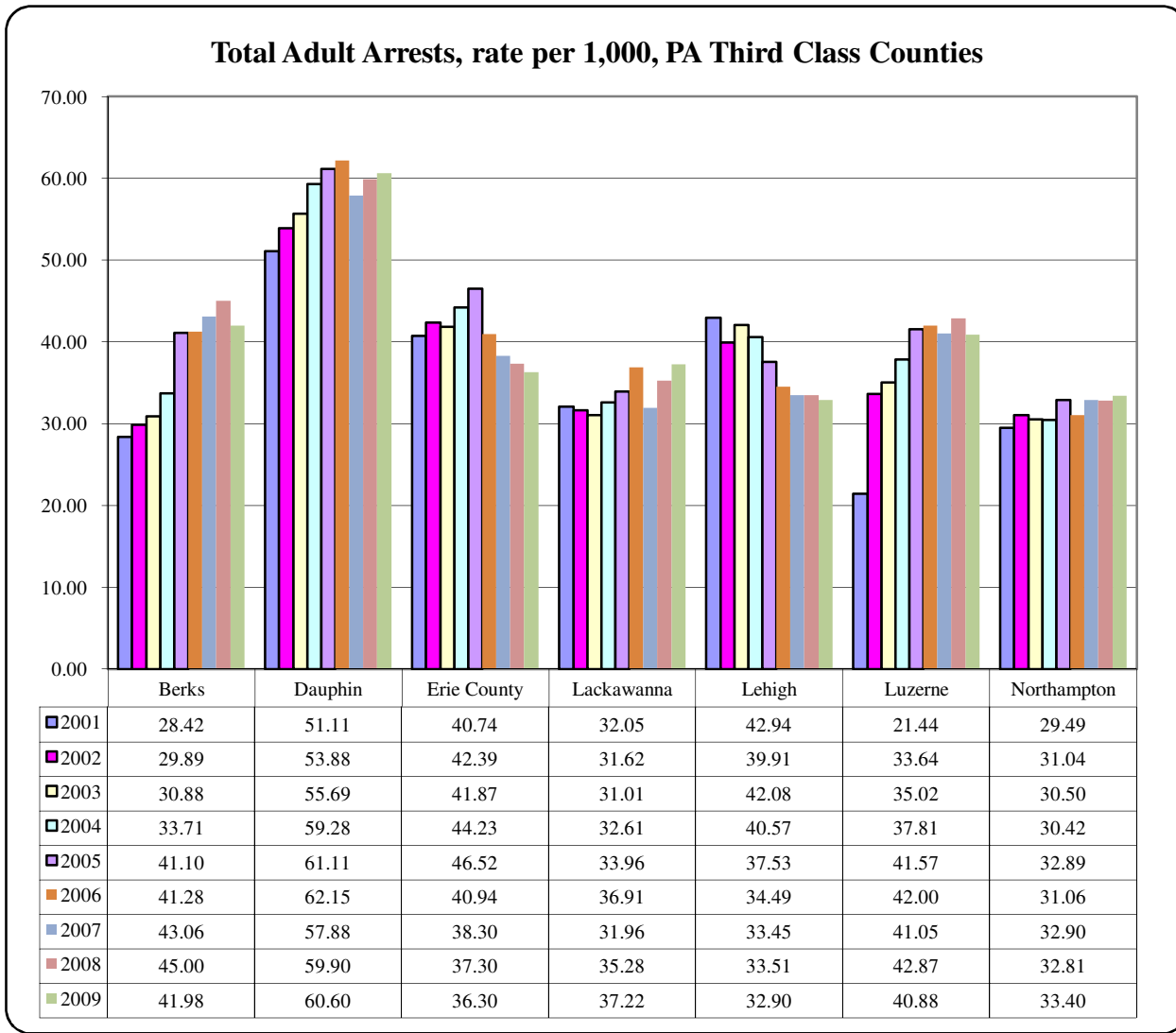
Figure 2 shows total adult arrests as a rate per 1,000. In 2009, the rates of Erie County, Erie City, and County minus City areas converged near 36 arrests per 1,000. 2009's arrest rate for both Erie County and Erie City reached its lowest point in 2009.

Figure 3:



The state of Pennsylvania classifies Erie County as a third class urban county. Figure 3 illustrates total adult arrests in the seven urban third class counties. Erie, Lehigh, Luzerne, and Berks Counties all saw decreases in adult arrests from 2008 to 2009. Erie County's rank among the measured counties fell to third in terms of total arrests in 2009, with Lackawanna and Northampton Counties reporting lower numbers of arrests.

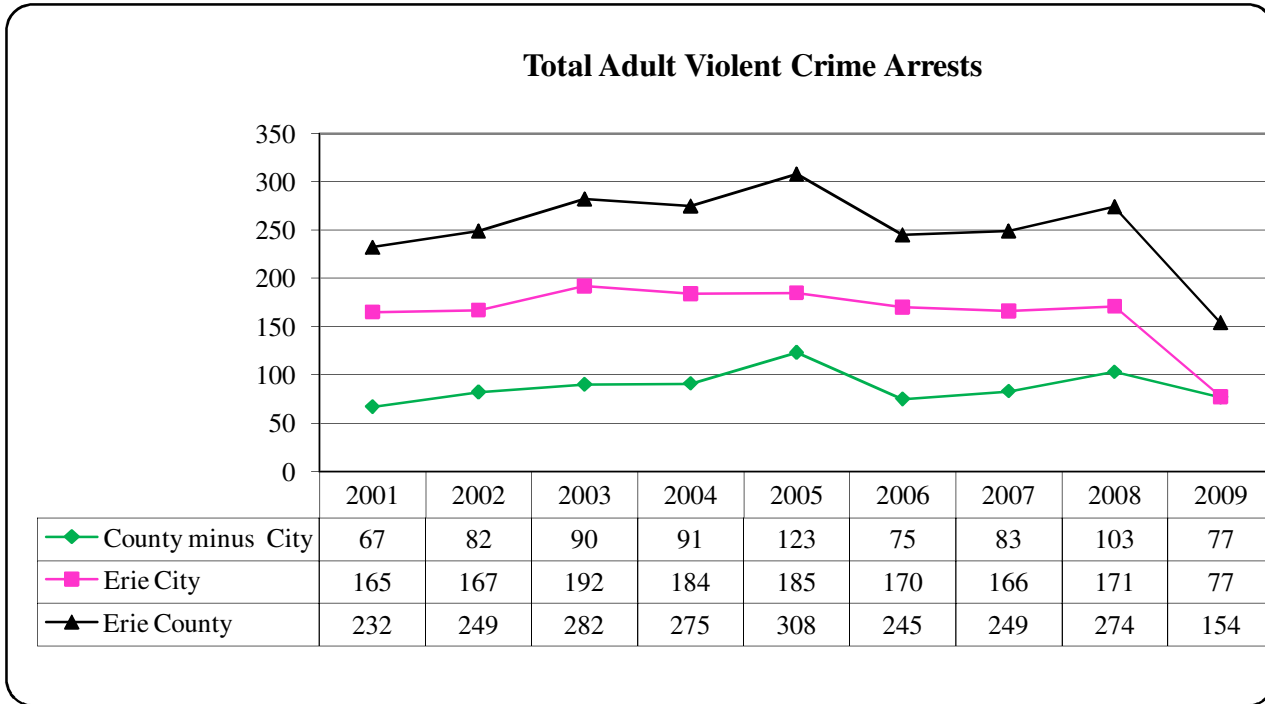
Figure 4:



Erie County’s adult arrest rate per 1,000 continued to decline in 2009 to its lowest point, 36.3, from a high in 2005 of 46.52, as shown in Figure 4. Similar declines occurred in Berks, Lehigh, and Luzerne counties. Dauphin retained the highest rate of compared counties at 60.6 arrests per 1,000, and Lehigh’s 2009 rate (32.9) claimed the lowest rate among the third class counties compared in the analysis. Erie County’s position in this category fell to third lowest among the measured counties.

III. Summary of Adult Violent Crime Data

Figure 5:



Violent crimes are classified as homicide, robbery, rape, or aggravated assault. As shown in Figure 5, arrests for Violent Crimes throughout Erie County and Erie City fell drastically in 2009, over 40%. Erie City accounted for exactly half of the 154 violent crimes committed in 2009. Violent Crime arrests in both Erie City and Erie County fell to their lowest point in the nine-year study period, largely due to the 53% drop in violent crime arrests in Erie City.

Figure 6:

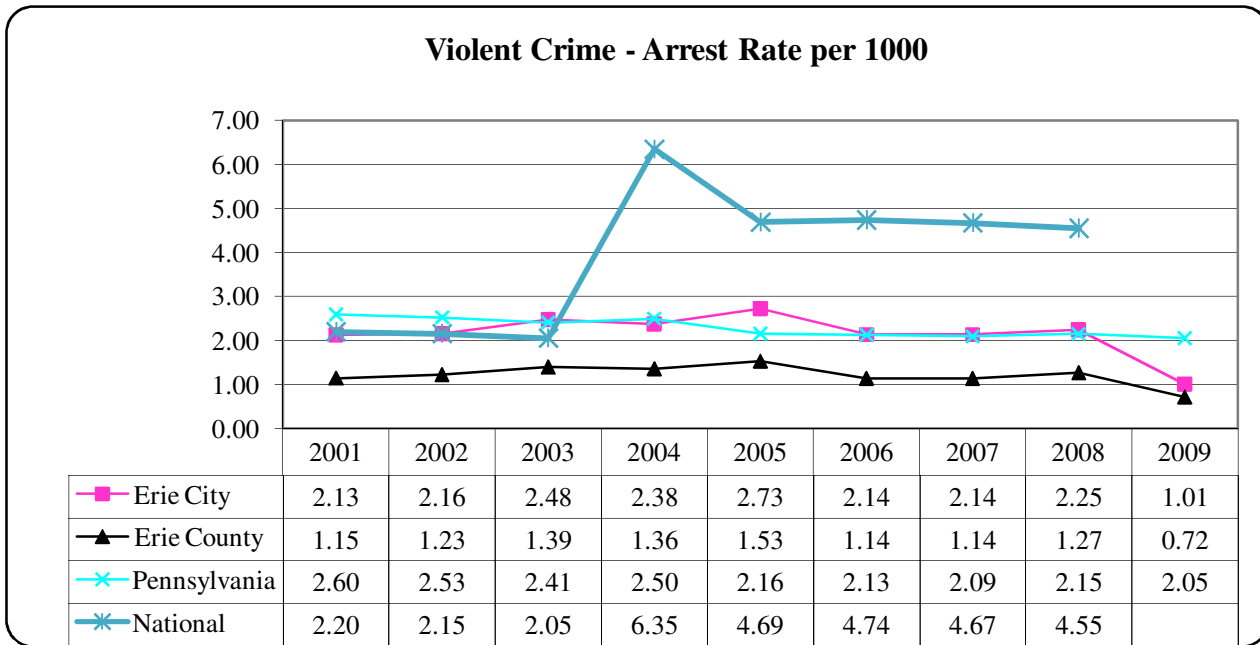
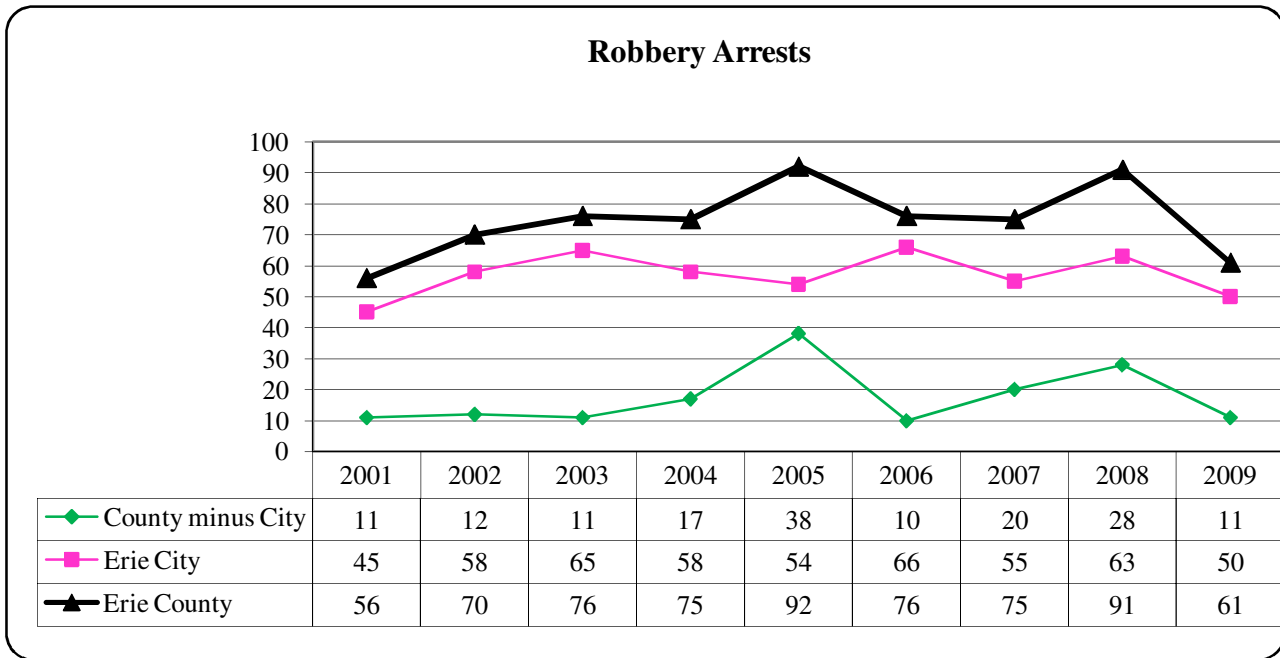


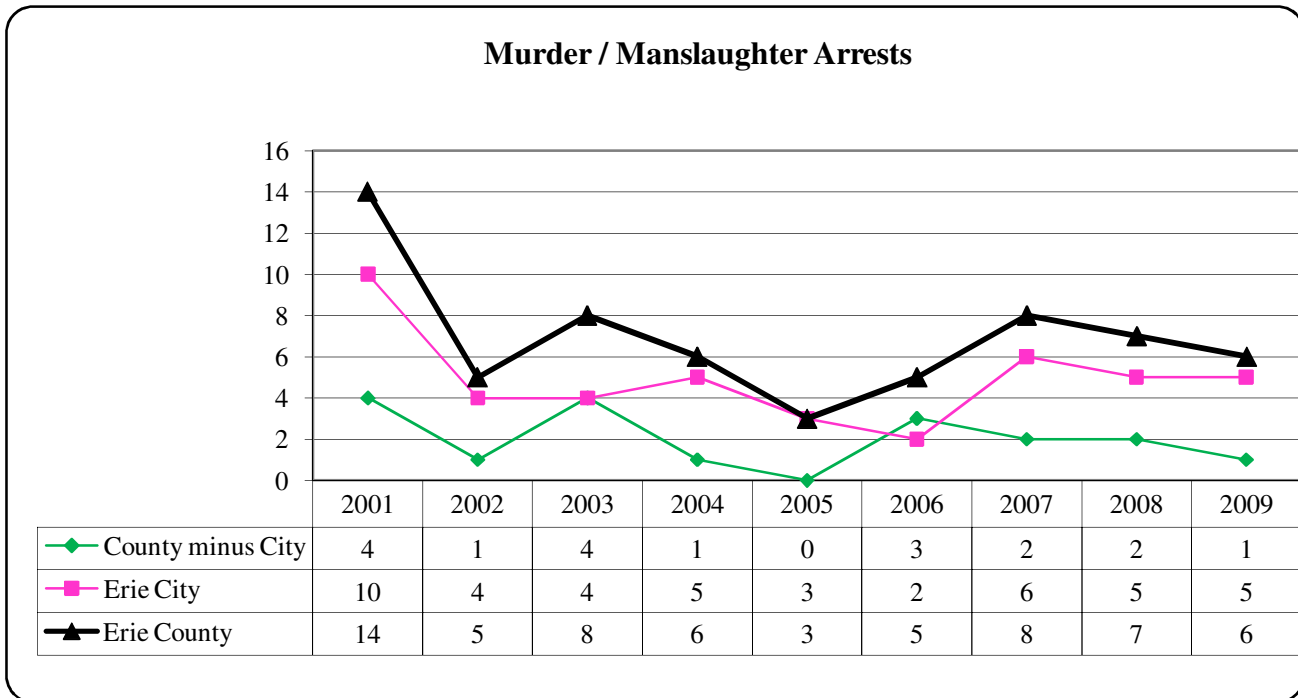
Figure 6 shows that Erie County’s violent crime rate is consistently lower than national and state averages, and has remained stable except for a spike from 2003 to 2005. Erie County’s 2006 violent crime rate per 1,000 dropped to 1.14, where it remained through 2007. After a slight increase in 2008, 2009’s violent crime rate fell to its lowest point in the nine year period (.72). Erie City’s violent crime rate follows a similar pattern. The rate increased greatly from 2003, to 2005, where it peaked at 2.73, before dropping to just 1.01 in 2009 (less than half of the previous low 2001’s rate of 2.13). National violent crime rate data was unavailable for 2009 at time of publication.

Figure 7:



Robbery Arrests throughout Erie County fell in 2009, with the most significant drop occurring in the County minus City measure. 2009 held the second lowest number of arrests for Robbery, only slightly higher than 2001's 56 arrests. Refer to Figure 7 for a detailed graph.

Figure 8:



After dropping from a nine year high of 14 in 2001, the number of murder/manslaughter arrests has remained relatively stable. There were 6 murder/manslaughter arrests in Erie County in 2009, 5 of which occurred within Erie City. While the number of murder/manslaughter arrests has fallen since 2007, 2009's arrests remain near the nine year average of 6.9.

Figure 9: Violent Crime Arrests, Erie County (Male vs. Female, by age)

	18-20		21-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
2000	# 14	77	9	71	7	59	4	21	4	8	0	2
	% 5%	28%	3%	26%	3%	21%	1%	8%	1%	3%	0%	1%
2001	7	54	10	82	6	42	4	18	0	6	0	3
	3%	23%	5%	35%	3%	18%	2%	8%	0%	3%	0%	1%
2002	2	59	14	84	8	41	2	27	1	4	0	7
	1%	24%	6%	34%	3%	16%	1%	11%	0%	2%	0%	3%
2003	7	42	15	88	19	50	11	37	2	5	1	5
	2%	15%	5%	31%	7%	18%	4%	13%	1%	2%	0%	2%
2004	9	64	17	72	17	38	5	36	2	13	0	2
	3%	23%	6%	26%	6%	14%	2%	13%	1%	5%	0%	1%
2005	16	62	13	97	10	47	6	44	1	9	0	3
	5%	20%	4%	31%	3%	15%	2%	14%	0%	3%	0%	1%
2006	5	52	16	72	7	50	6	29	0	8	0	0
	2%	21%	7%	29%	3%	20%	2%	12%	0%	3%	0%	0%
2007	13	46	10	53	10	39	6	35	0	8	0	5
	5%	18%	4%	21%	4%	16%	2%	14%	0%	3%	0%	2%
2008	6	88	15	91	6	58	7	34	2	7	0	2
	2%	32%	5%	33%	2%	21%	3%	12%	1%	3%	0%	1%
2009	1	29	13	55	3	31	4	11	0	2	0	2
	1%	19%	8%	36%	2%	20%	3%	7%	0%	1%	0%	1%

Figure 9 illustrates violent crime arrests in terms of age, comparing male and female arrests. As an example, in 2009, there were 55 arrests of males aged 21-29 for violent crimes. This accounts for 36% of all violent crime arrests in 2009. Proportionally, this age group represents the highest number of violent crime arrests, and has traditionally done so throughout all reporting periods in this report.

Figure 10: Violent Crimes, Erie County (Male vs. Female, by race)

	White		Black		Native		Pacific		
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	
2000	#	26	144	12	93	0	0	0	1
	%	9%	52%	4%	34%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2001		11	107	16	98	0	0	0	0
		5%	46%	7%	42%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2002		17	127	10	94	0	0	0	1
		7%	51%	4%	38%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2003		31	139	23	88	0	0	1	0
		11%	49%	8%	31%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2004		26	142	24	83	0	0	0	0
		9%	52%	9%	30%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2005		25	150	21	111	0	0	0	1
		8%	49%	7%	36%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2006		18	137	16	69	0	0	0	5
		7%	56%	7%	28%	0%	0%	0%	2%
2007		25	118	13	91	0	1	1	0
		10%	47%	5%	37%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2008		23	142	14	95	0	0	0	0
		8%	52%	5%	35%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2009		13	87	8	46	0	0	0	0
		8%	56%	5%	30%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 10 illustrates violent crime arrests broken down by sex and race. Latino-descent populations are recorded in the US Census as either white or black, so it is not known what rates apply to this population.

Figure 11:

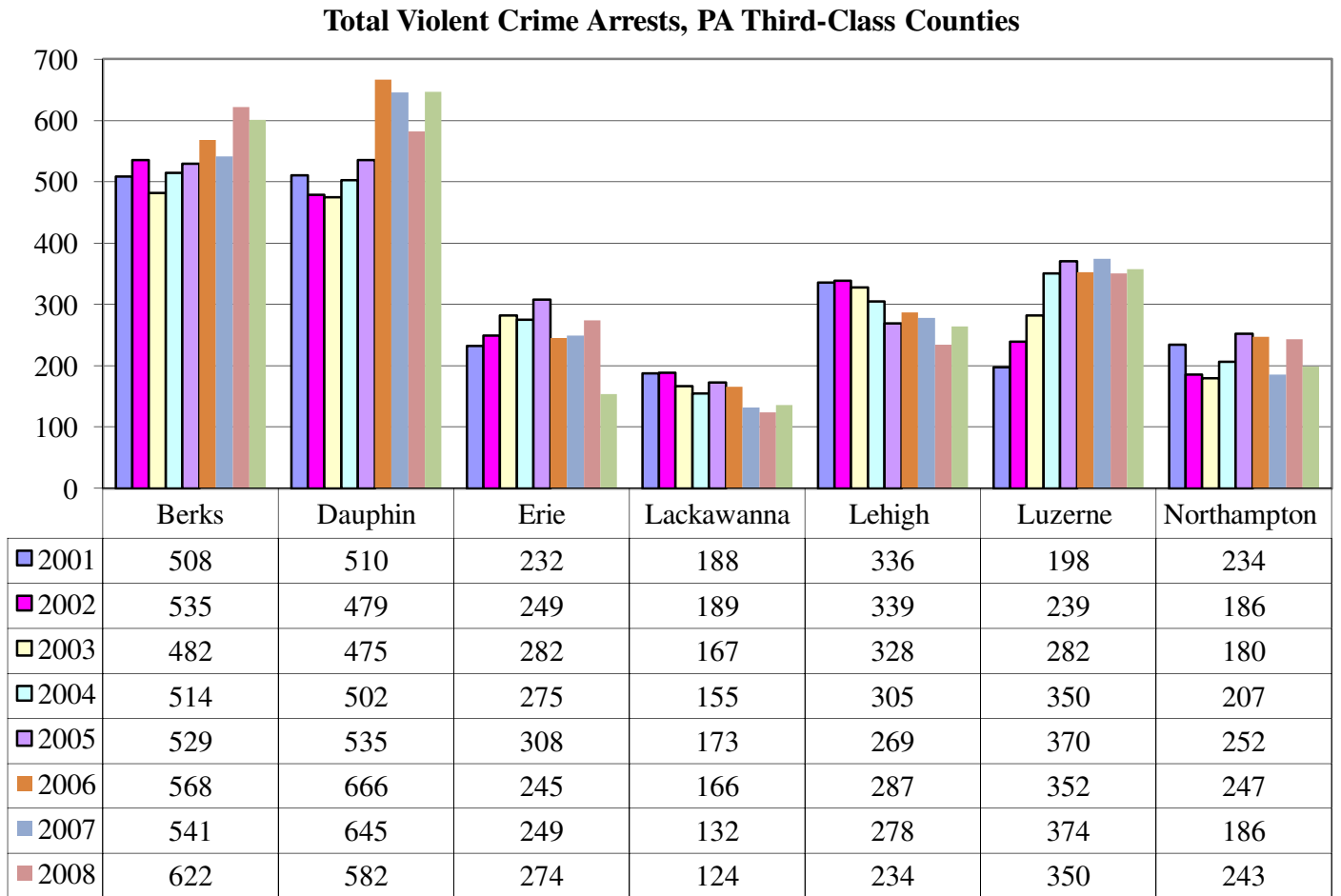
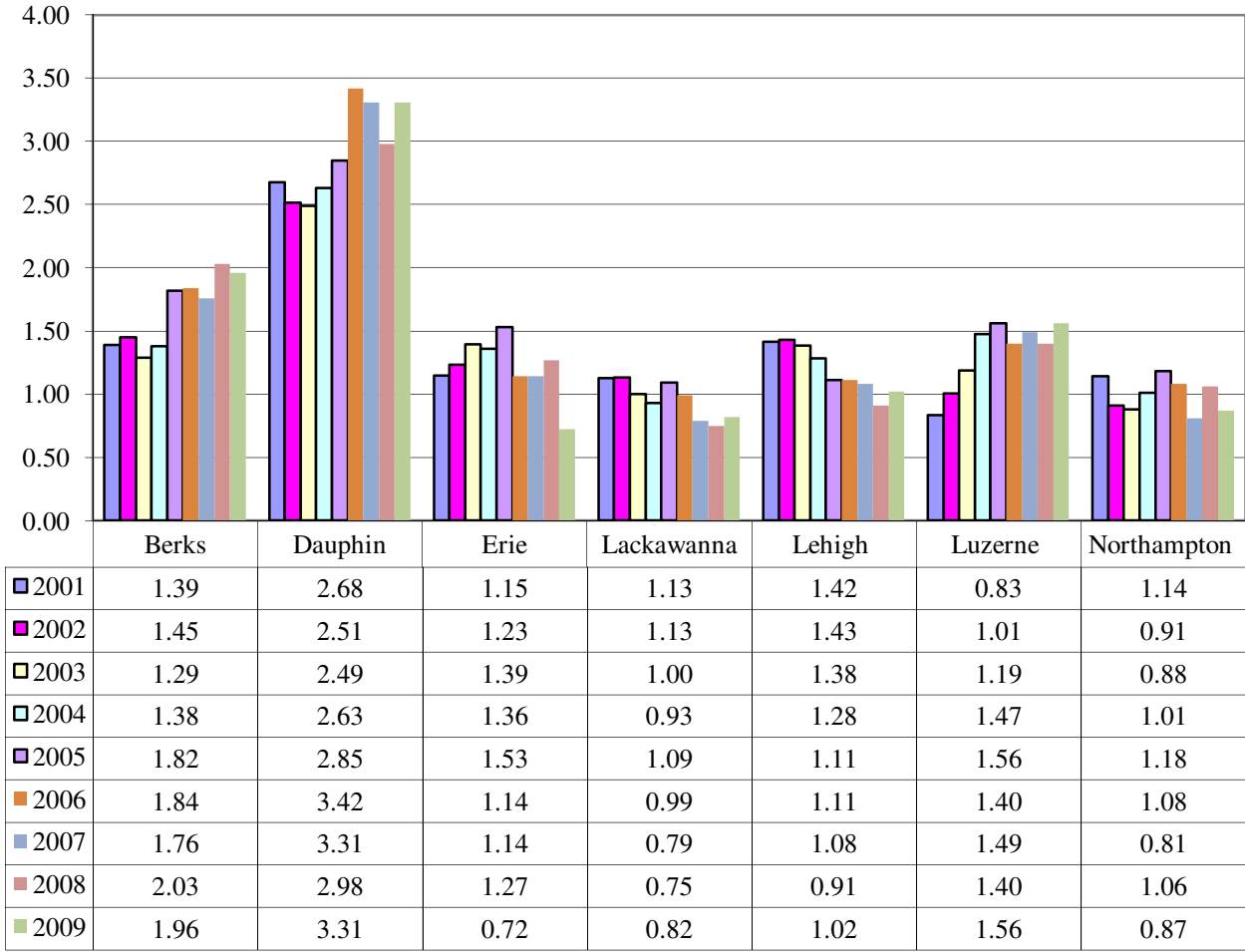


Figure 11 shows the number of violent crime arrests reported for urban third class counties. Arrests in Erie County fell 44%, while 2009 arrests in other urban third class counties remained stable or increased. Only Lackawanna County had a lower number of violent crime arrests in 2009.

Figure 12:

Violent Crime Arrests - Rate per 1000, PA Third Class Counties



In 2009, as shown in Figure 12, Erie County's arrest rate fell to the lowest position among the urban third class counties studied, about half of its highest rate in 2005.

IV. Summary of Adult Property Crimes

Figure 13:

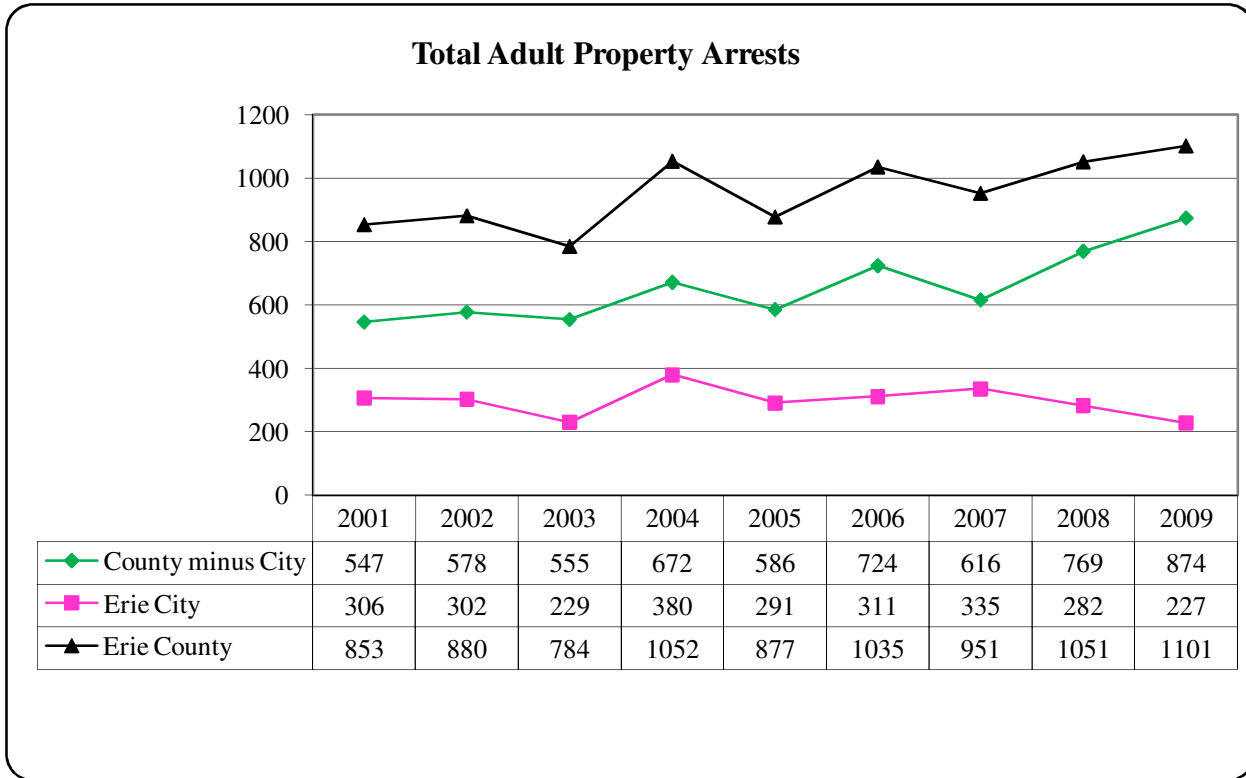
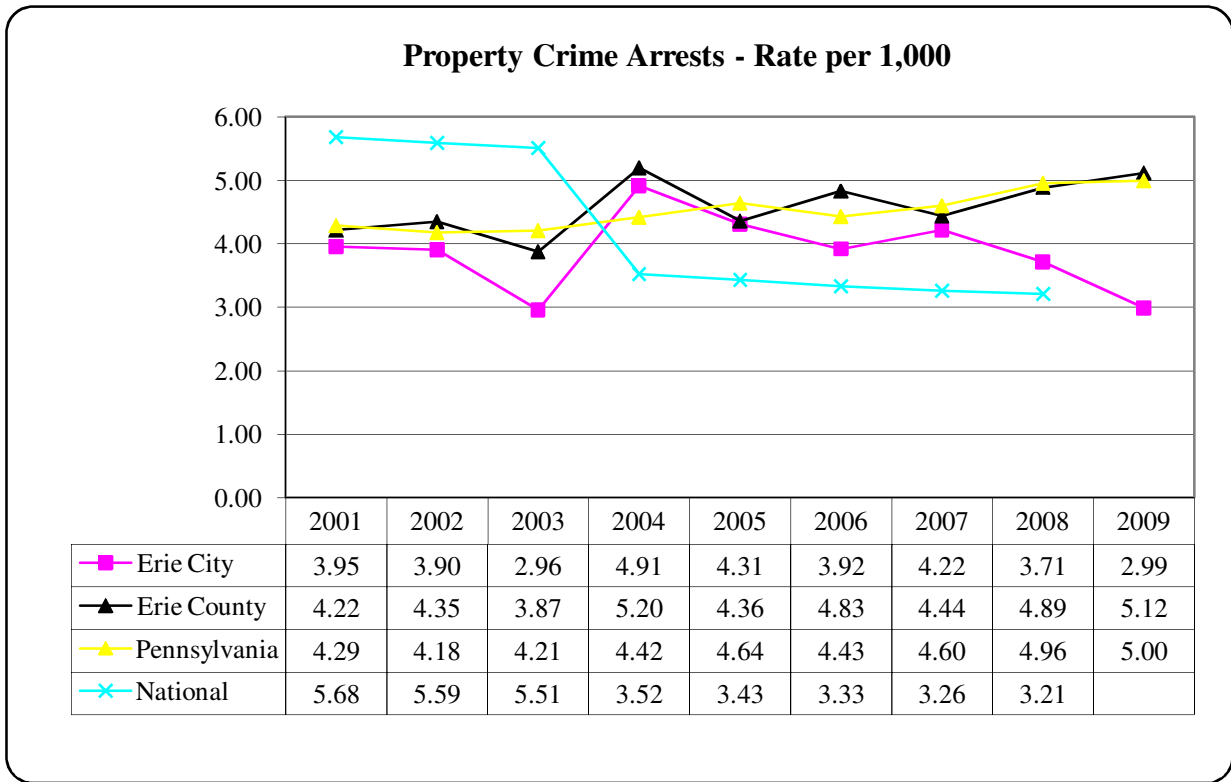


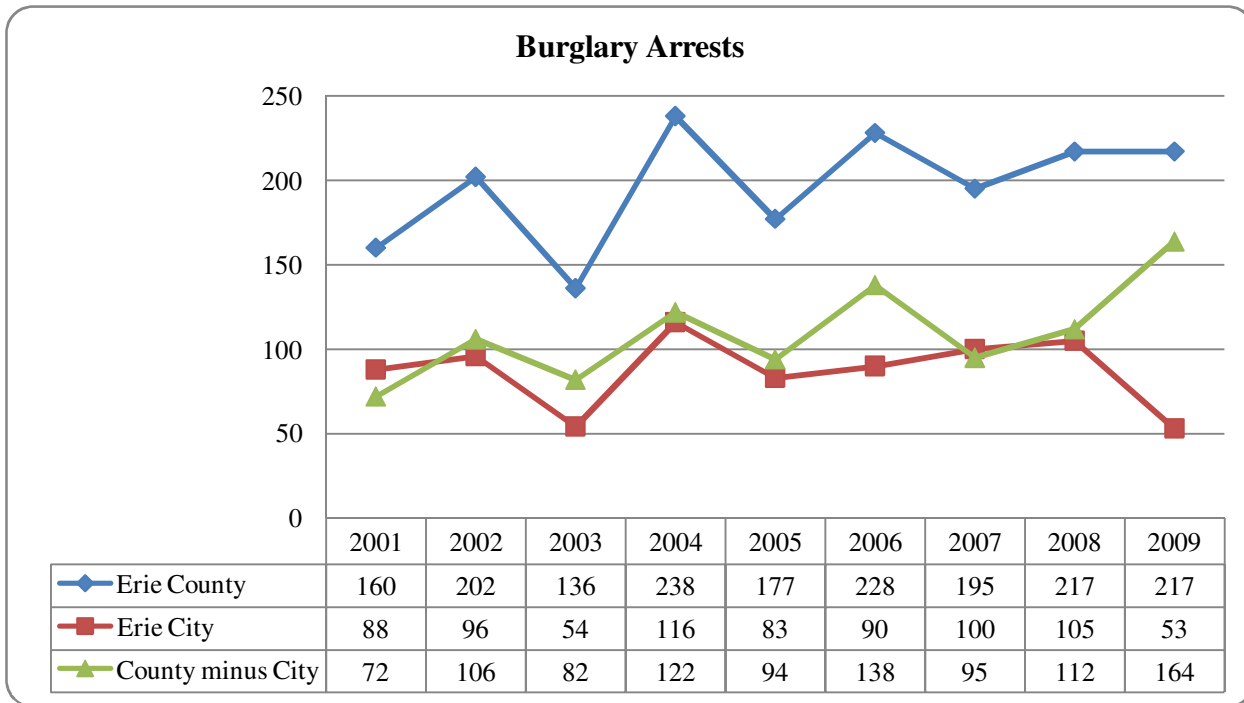
Figure 13 illustrates that property crimes (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, or arson) remained mostly stable between 2001 and 2007, with the exception of spikes in 2004 and 2006. After 2007, however, adult property crime arrests in both Erie County and County minus City rose to their highest levels of the nine year period, while property crime arrests in Erie City neared their lowest point.

Figure 14:



Historically, the property crime rates of Erie City, Erie County, and Pennsylvania have followed similar trends. Notably, Erie City’s property crime rate has fallen 29% since 2007, placing it well below both Pennsylvania’s and Erie County’s rate. Since 2007, Erie County’s rate has been similar to Pennsylvania’s. The arrest rates for property crimes in Erie City, Erie County, and Pennsylvania have remained higher than the national average, as shown in Figure 14. 2009 National arrest rates were not available at time of publication.

Figure 15:



In 2009, burglary arrests in Erie County remained unchanged from 2008, as shown in Figure 15. Though the number of arrests throughout Erie County was stable, burglaries in Erie City fell by 50%, while burglary arrests in non city areas rose by 46%.

Figure 16: Property Crime Arrests, Erie County (Male vs. Female, by age)

	18-20		21-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
2001	# 74	211	77	209	54	110	19	59	18	18	2	2
	% 9%	25%	9%	25%	6%	13%	2%	7%	2%	2%	0%	0%
2002	58	303	69	188	43	96	25	68	9	13	2	6
	7%	34%	8%	21%	5%	11%	3%	8%	1%	1%	0%	1%
2003	65	219	80	170	44	89	28	51	12	16	4	6
	8%	28%	10%	22%	6%	11%	4%	7%	2%	2%	1%	1%
2004	106	312	96	190	61	102	44	80	8	34	10	9
	10%	30%	9%	18%	6%	10%	4%	8%	1%	3%	1%	1%
2005	77	204	83	187	55	96	31	93	12	28	7	4
	9%	23%	9%	21%	6%	11%	4%	11%	1%	3%	1%	0%
2006	55	166	98	218	82	114	48	92	13	35	2	12
	5%	16%	9%	21%	8%	11%	5%	9%	1%	3%	0%	1%
2007	75	182	91	214	50	138	34	101	16	40	3	7
	8%	19%	10%	23%	5%	15%	4%	11%	2%	4%	0%	1%
2008	106	243	117	265	58	112	40	59	11	25	8	7
	10%	23%	11%	25%	6%	11%	4%	6%	1%	2%	1%	1%
2009	86	216	192	263	62	112	41	73	18	29	7	6
	8%	20%	17%	24%	6%	10%	4%	7%	2%	3%	1%	1%

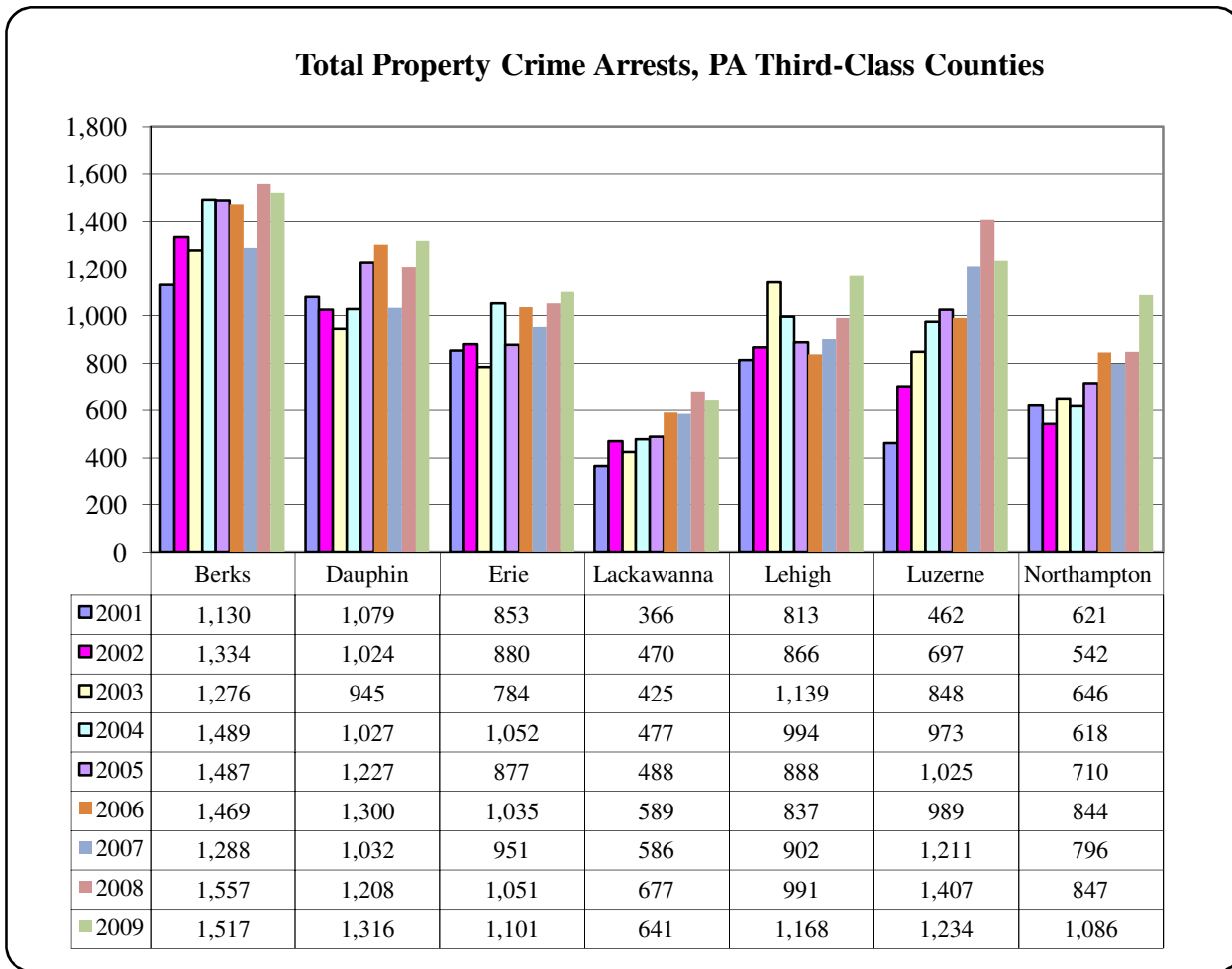
Figure 17: Property Crime Arrests, Erie County (Male vs. Female, by race)

	White		Black		Native		Pacific	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
2001	# 188	463	52	144	0	0	4	2
	% 22%	54%	6%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2002	142	583	63	89	0	0	1	2
	16%	66%	7%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2003	192	441	40	109	1	0	0	1
	24%	56%	5%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2004	226	569	99	154	0	1	0	3
	21%	54%	9%	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2005	200	492	65	119	0	0	0	1
	23%	56%	7%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2006	245	502	61	133	1	0	1	2
	24%	49%	6%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2007	203	520	66	159	0	1	0	2
	21%	55%	7%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2008	234	598	102	111	0	0	4	2
	22%	57%	10%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%

2009	307 28%	574 52%	94 9%	123 11%	0 0%	0 0%	1 0%	2 0%
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Figures 16 and 17 relate to property crimes categorized by age group and race. In Figure 16, 263 property crime arrests were attributed to males aged 21-29. This number represents 24% of all property crime arrests in 2009. Again, males in the 21-29 age group represents the largest proportion of arrests. 2006 was the first year in the study period in which the absolute number of property crime arrests was not highest in the 18-20 age group. This trend continued through 2009, when 216 arrests were attributed to males 18-20. For figure 17, Hispanics are categorized as either white or black, and so is not included in this measure.

Figure 18:



As shown in Figure 18, Erie County ranks fifth among the studied urban third-class counties in this report. This ranking has declined since 2007, when Erie County held the third highest number of property crime arrests.

Figure 19:

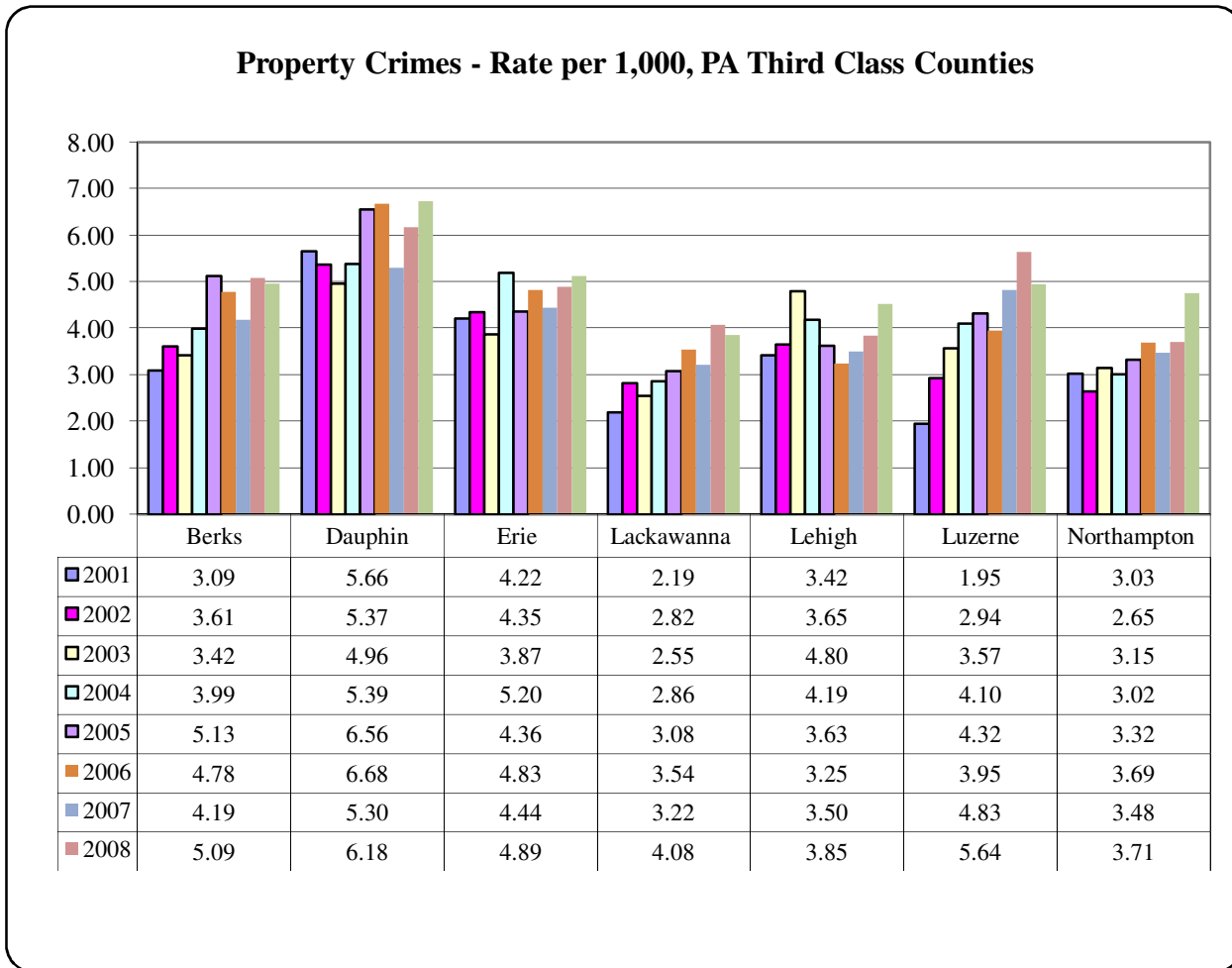
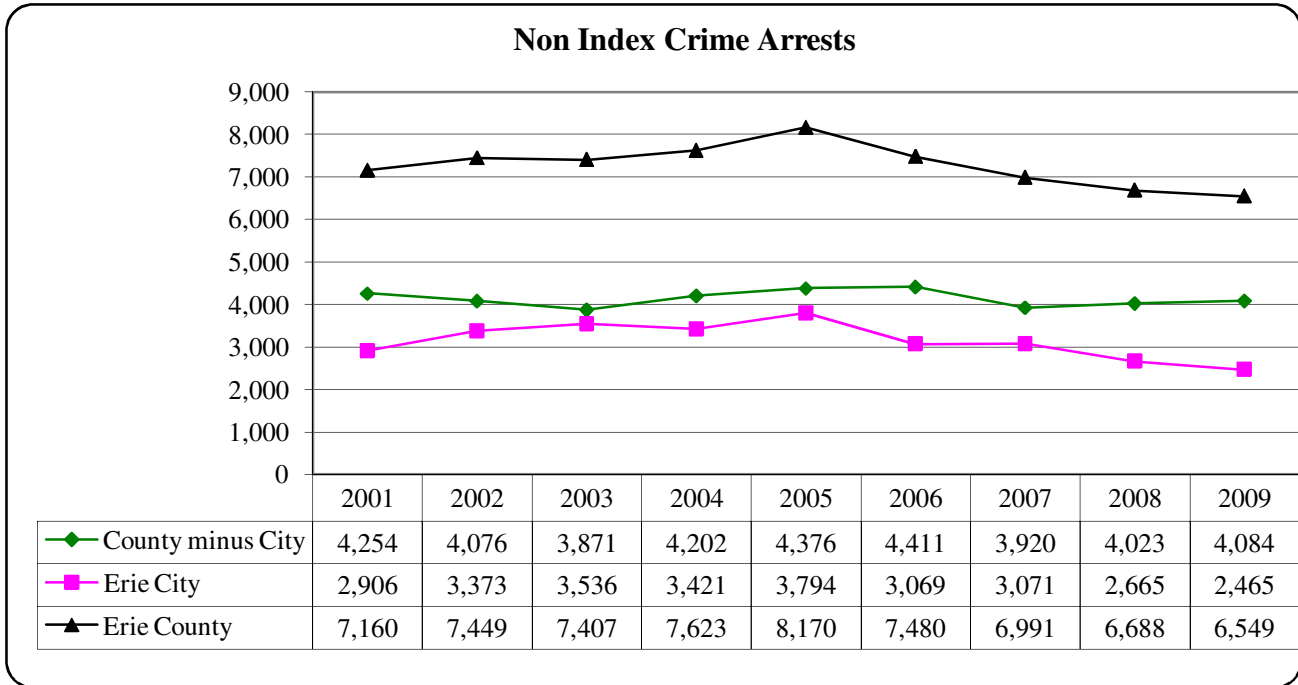


Figure 19 shows that Erie County holds the second highest property crime arrest rate of the urban third class counties studied. After increasing since 2007, Erie County’s arrest rate for property crimes is approaching 2004’s peak of 5.20. Dauphin, Lehigh, and Northampton all had similar increases, while the rates of Luzerne, Lackawanna, and Berks all declined in 2009.

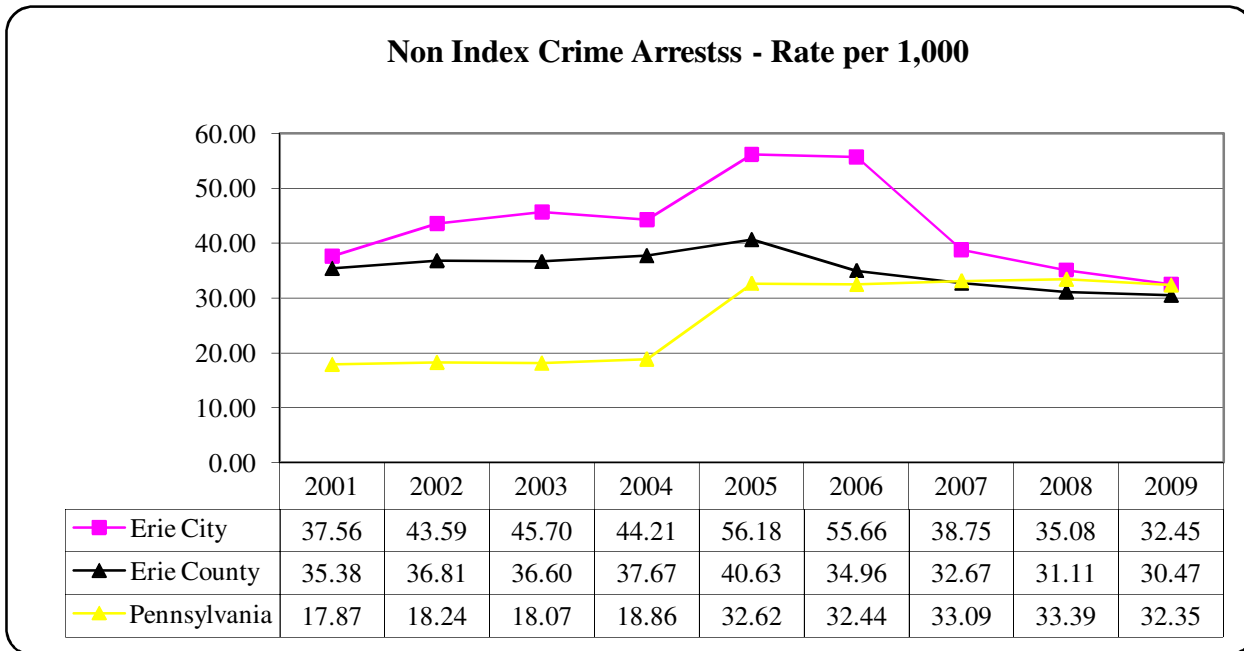
V. Non-Index Crimes

Figure 20:



Illustrated in Figure 20, non-index crime arrests (i.e. drug use, simple assault, etc.) fell in both Erie County and Erie City, and increased slightly for the second consecutive year in County minus City areas. In Erie City and Erie County, 2009 marked the nine-year low non-index arrests.

Figure 21:



After the arrest rates for non-index crimes in both Erie County and Erie City peaked in 2005, they have fallen steadily, converging on the average for all of Pennsylvania in 2009. Erie City’s rate has experienced the most dramatic decline, falling 42% between 2009 and 2005 (32.5 from 56.21), as shown in Figure 21.

Figure 22: Non-Index Crime Arrests, Erie County (Male vs. Female, by age)

	18-20		21-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
2000	# 397	1624	387	1,761	409	1,305	236	803	76	355	17	112
	% 5%	22%	5%	24%	5%	17%	3%	11%	1%	5%	0%	1%
2001	419	1380	395	1,622	383	1,394	217	835	83	291	28	113
	6%	19%	6%	23%	5%	19%	3%	12%	1%	4%	0%	2%
2002	343	1375	459	1,945	339	1,335	204	919	90	310	22	108
	5%	18%	6%	26%	5%	18%	3%	12%	1%	4%	0%	1%
2003	341	1298	504	1,967	394	1,227	243	905	86	303	18	121
	5%	18%	7%	27%	5%	17%	3%	12%	1%	4%	0%	2%
2004	383	1326	504	1,888	393	1,163	302	1,039	79	385	21	140
	5%	17%	7%	25%	5%	15%	4%	14%	1%	5%	0%	2%
2005	427	1530	528	2054	444	1222	309	1026	76	429	20	105
	5%	19%	6%	25%	5%	15%	4%	13%	1%	5%	2	1%
2006	471	1333	576	1938	416	1114	286	911	61	339	21	104
	6%	18%	8%	26%	6%	15%	4%	12%	1%	5%	0%	1%
2007	377	1045	512	1794	408	1113	264	889	85	376	23	105
	5%	15%	7%	26%	6%	16%	4%	13%	1%	5%	0%	2%
2008	344	960	419	1428	350	827	227	647	64	336	19	105
	5%	14%	6%	21%	5%	12%	3%	10%	1%	5%	0%	2%
2009	355	875	400	1355	351	729	222	729	69	352	24	85
	5%	13%	6%	21%	5%	11%	3%	11%	1%	5%	0%	1%

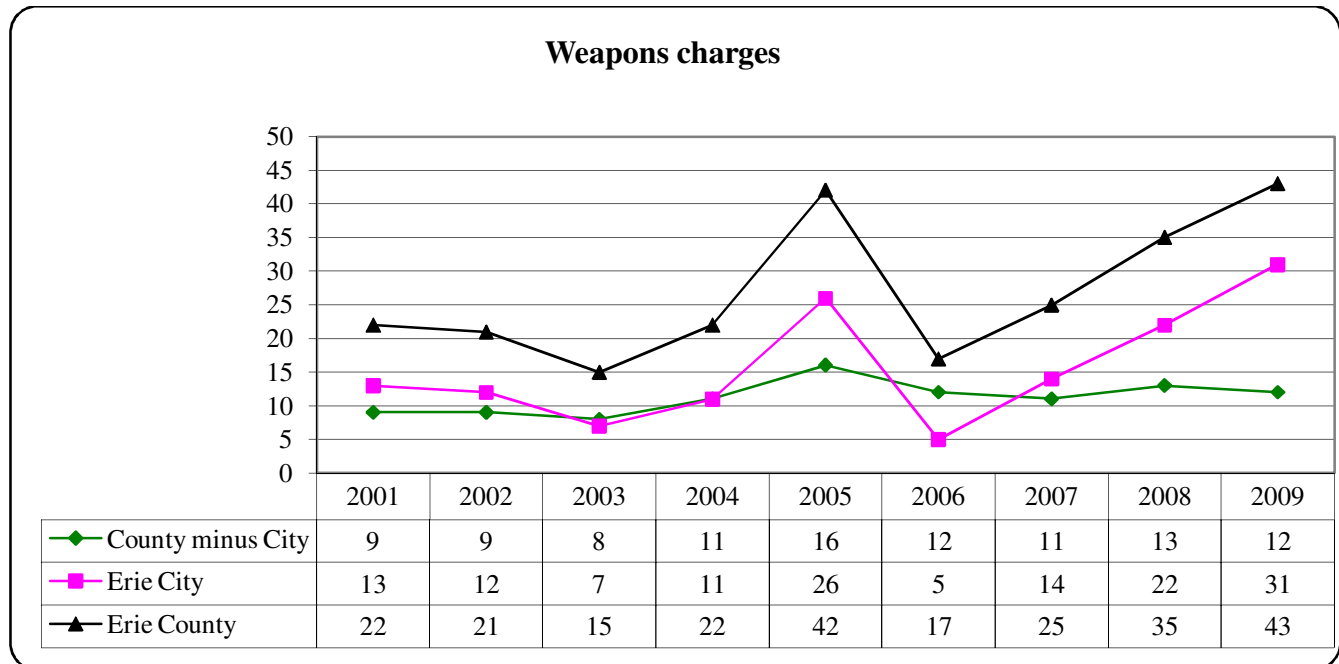
Figure 23: Non-Index Crime Arrests, Erie County (Male vs. Female, by race)

	White		Black		Native		Pacific	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
2001	# 1260	4,405	264	1,205	0	3	1	22
	% 18%	62%	4%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2002	1158	4,686	293	1,286	0	3	6	17
	16%	63%	4%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2003	1208	4,400	375	1,407	0	2	3	12
	16%	59%	5%	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2004	1320	4,601	352	1,322	0	1	10	17
	17%	60%	5%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2005	1384	4701	416	1639	1	8	3	18
	17%	58%	5%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2006	1446	4417	378	1303	3	6	4	13
	19%	59%	5%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2007	1303	4017	358	1285	3	3	5	17

	19%	57%	5%	18%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2008	1065	3325	258	966	0	1	0	10
	16%	50%	4%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2009	1116	3290	201	827	1	2	3	6
	17%	50%	3%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%

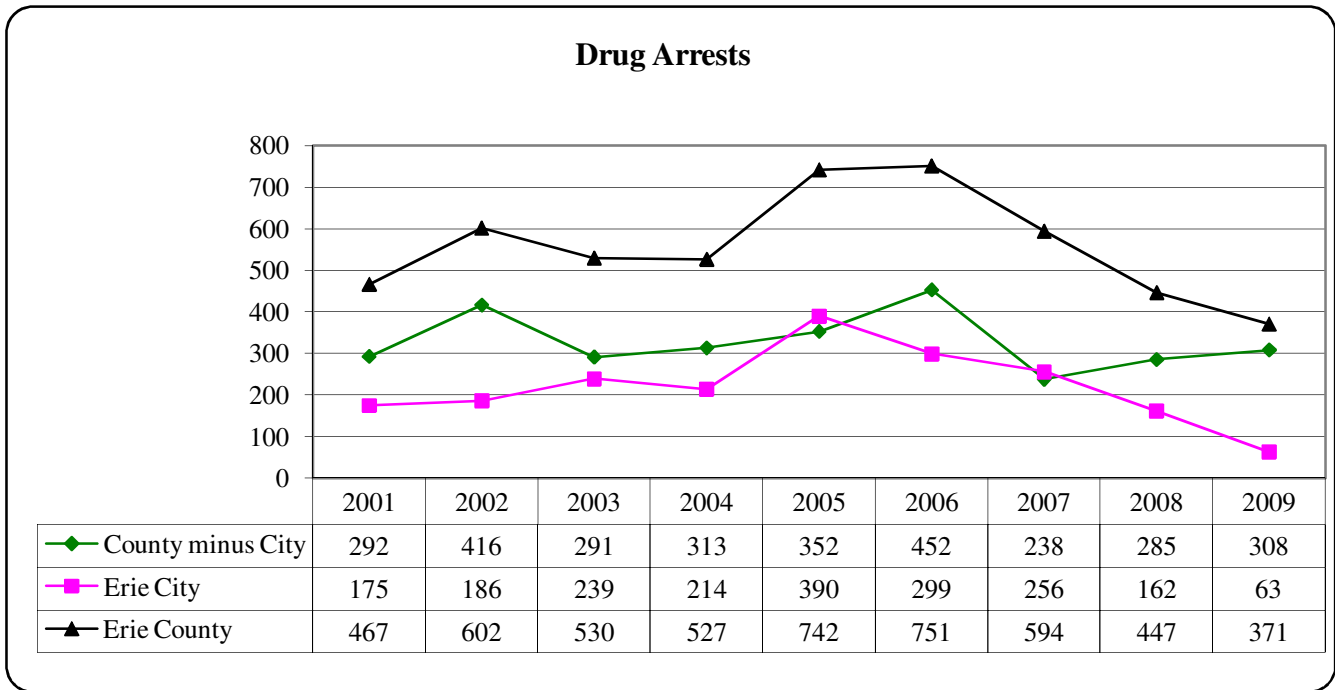
Figures 22 and 23 illustrate non-index crime arrests categorized by age and race. The tables relate both absolute numbers, and the number of arrests as a percentage of total non-index arrests. In 2009, males aged 18-20 accounted for 875 non-index arrests, representing 13% of all non-index arrests committed that year. Throughout the study period, the age group accounting for the largest number of non-index arrests in absolute terms is 21-29, for both males and females. Proportionally, the 18-20 age group accounts for the largest number of non-index arrests, as it is the smallest overall group.

Figure 24:



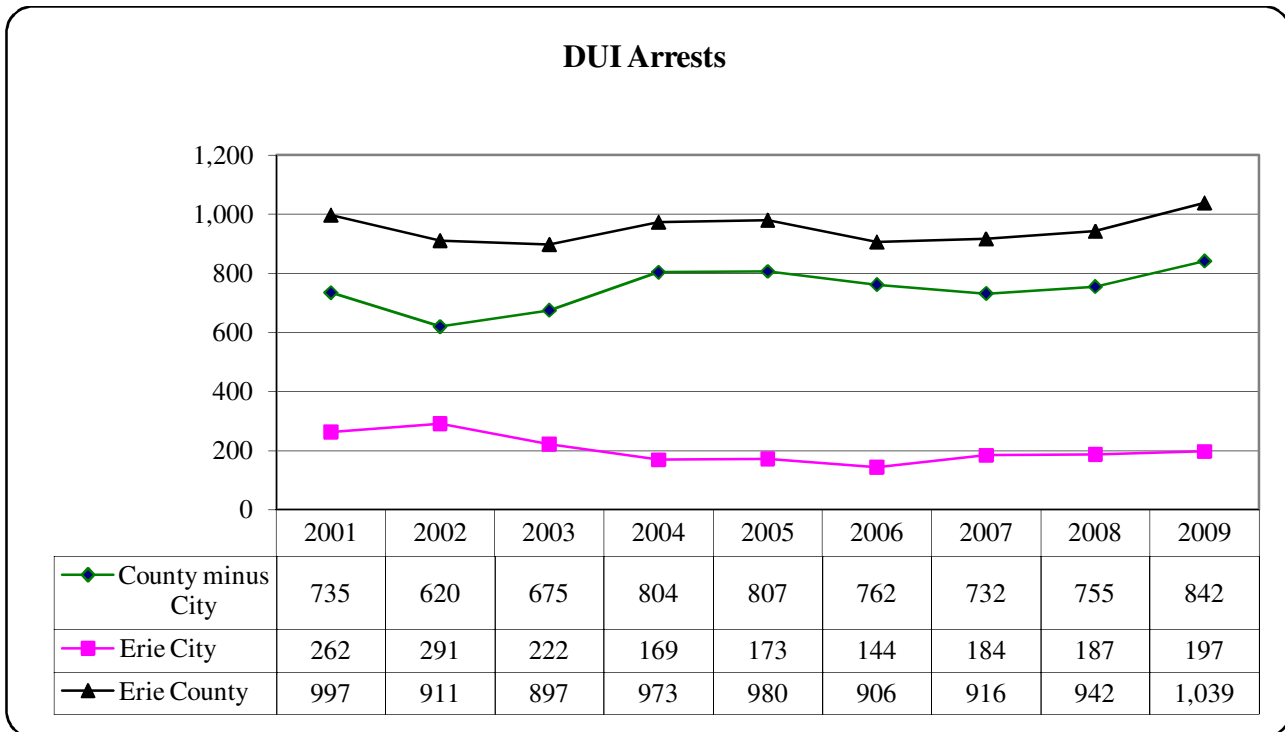
Weapons charges in Erie County and Erie City continued to increase in 2009, rising 23% and 41%, respectively to their highest points in the compared nine year period. Weapons charges in the County minus City category have remained steady since their peak in 2005, as shown in Figure 24.

Figure 25:



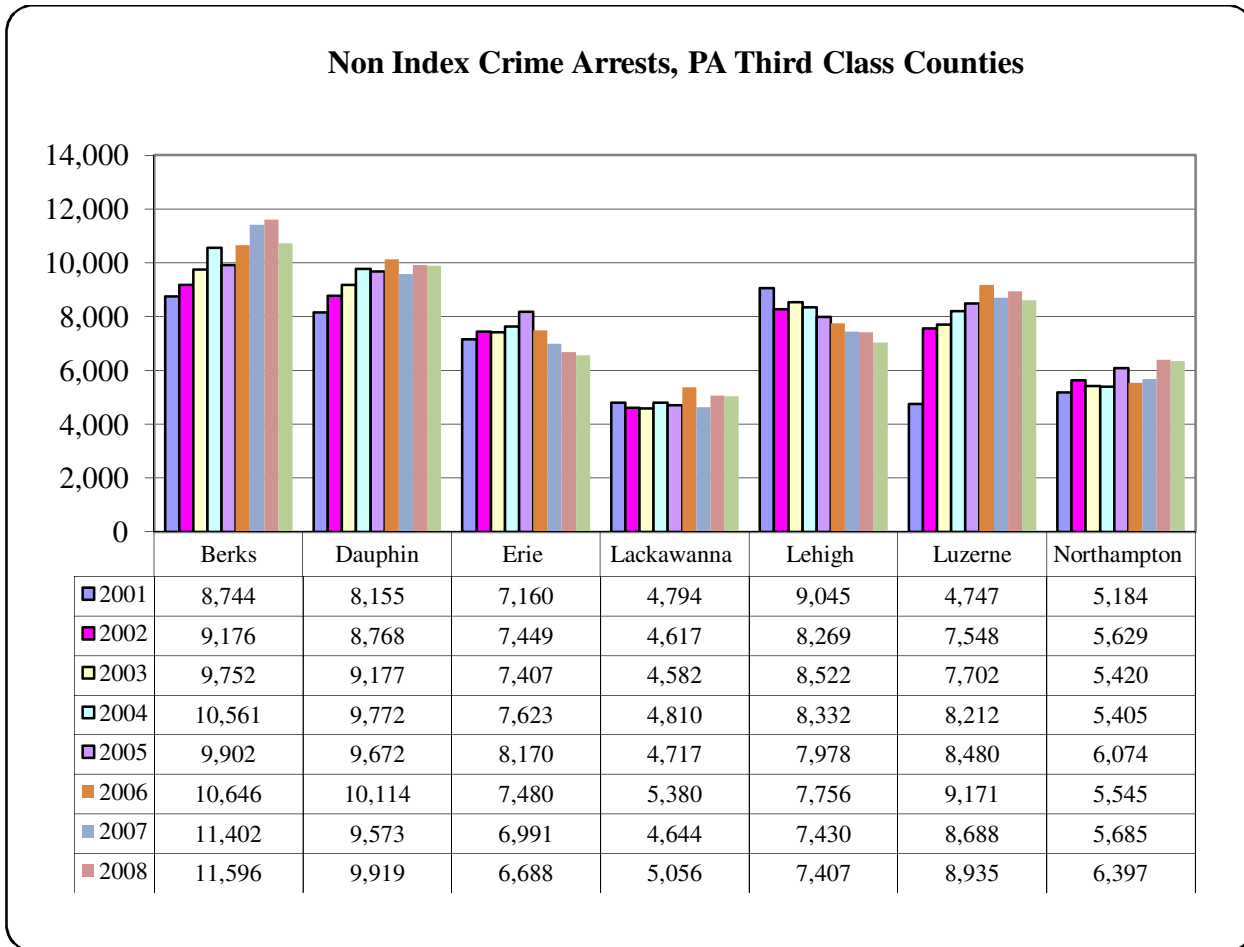
Drug arrests in Erie County continued to decrease in 2009 to their lowest point of 371, from 2006’s high of 751. The sharpest decrease came in Erie City, which fell 61% from 2008 to 2009. This data is shown in Figure 25.

Figure 26:



As shown in Figure 26, DUI arrests have been steady in Erie County during the first seven years of the study period, but increased to their highest point in 2009. Most of these recent arrests occurred outside of Erie City, where DUI arrests have remained stable since 2007, and increased only slightly in 2009.

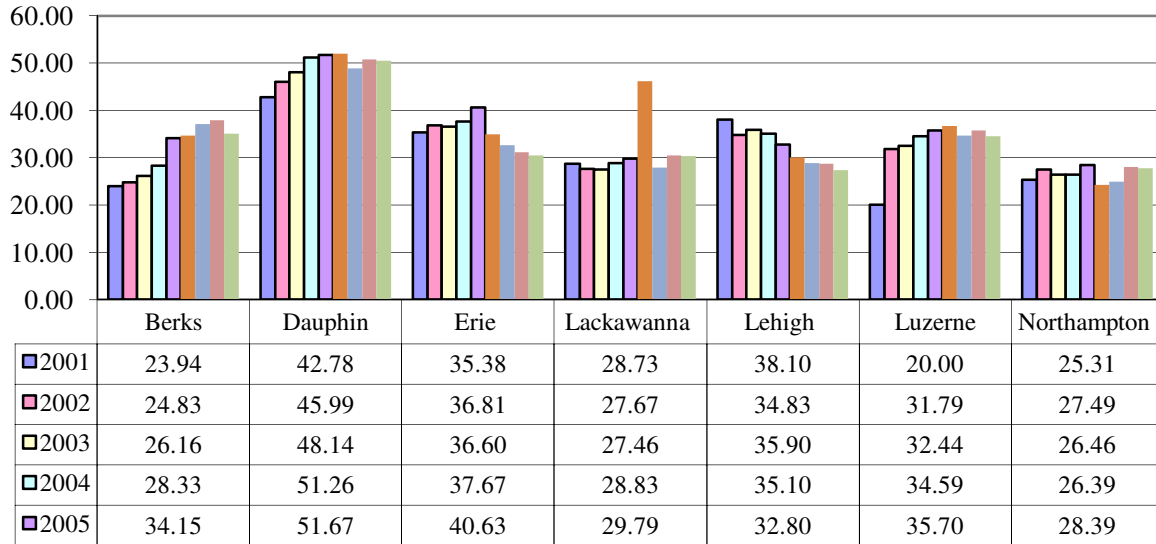
Figure 27:



Erie County ranked fifth in overall Non-index arrests in 2009, with 6,549. Erie County falls behind Berks, Dauphin, Lehigh, and Luzerne counties in non-index crime arrests. These totals fell slightly in every county studied in 2009, with the largest drop in Berks County (7.5%), who also had the highest overall number of non-index crimes, as shown in Figure 27.

Figure 28:

Non Index Crime Arrests - Rate per 1,000, PA Third Class Counties



Of the seven counties studied in 2009, Erie ranked in the middle, shown in Figure 28. Erie County currently rates behind Berks, Dauphin, and Luzerne Counties. Every county compared saw decreases in non-index crime arrest rates in 2009, the largest occurring in Berks County (7.5%). The highest overall non-index crime rate occurs consistently in Dauphin County. Dauphin County's rate in 2009 was 50.57. Lehigh had the lowest rate in 2009, with 27.34.

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