



# Rural Crime Prevention: A Literature Review

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## Introduction

Crime Prevention Ottawa (CPO) is interested in exploring the issue of crime prevention in the rural areas of the Ottawa region. As a first step to addressing rural crime through crime prevention, CPO chose to embark on a literature review of rural crime prevention. A literature review is a search of academic research studies that have looked at the issue of crime prevention in rural contexts. This literature covers both theoretical and experimental studies that have been conducted on rural crime prevention in Canada, the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom. It also looks at what different communities are doing to prevent rural crime at the local level. Understanding what is already known about rural crime – and how to prevent it – is an important first step to addressing the situation in the Ottawa area. Using this literature, crime prevention practitioners can identify the important steps to developing an effective rural crime prevention initiative: learning about the characteristics of the specific community and its crime problem; developing and implementing a program; and, evaluating the results. As well, this literature shows some examples of what has worked in other communities to prevent rural crime.

## What is rural crime?

Rural crime is any violent, property, or other type of crime that occurs “in the country”. This may be in agricultural areas of land, in small villages or towns, or any other areas that are outside both small and big cities. The rates of violent and property crime recorded by the police are lower in rural areas than they are in both small and big cities. For violent offences, offenders in rural areas are less likely to use a weapon than those who commit crimes in cities. However, homicides committed with firearms in rural areas are more likely to involve the use of a rifle or shotgun, whereas, in cities, the firearm of choice is a handgun. Victims of violent crime in rural areas are more likely to know the perpetrators of crimes, likely due to small populations and tight-knit communities found in rural areas. Victimization surveys in Canada have found that residents in rural areas are slightly more satisfied about their safety from crime than residents in large cities. Similar results were found for rural residents’ satisfaction with the police in their area (Francisco & Chénier, 2007).

Rural crime is different than crime that occurs in cities. In many rural areas, residents live far distances away from their neighbours. Residents may also drive into the city to go to work or go shopping during the day, and children and youth often have to travel long distances to go to school. This means that houses and other property are left unattended during the daytime and into the evening hours. There is also little police presence in many rural areas because of the large areas these officers have to patrol. All of these factors mean that crimes can be committed in rural areas fairly easily without anyone seeing (Sagarin, Donnermeyer, & Carter, 1982).

Early research into rural crime focused on vandalism and petty theft committed by “amateur” criminals (e.g., Polk, 1969). Later, researchers identified the operation of more “professional” criminals in rural areas, including in farm equipment theft, livestock theft, and burglary (Sagarin, et al., 1982). Whereas in the past, these professional criminal acts may have been difficult to pull off, modern highways and vehicles make committing these crimes much easier (Barclay & Donnermeyer, 2007b). Now it is recognized that many of the same types of crimes that occur in cities also occur in rural areas, even if there has still not been much research in the field. The following is a list of some of the types of crimes that occur in rural areas and how they differ from the same crimes committed in cities:

- **Domestic violence** occurs in rural homes like it does in homes in the city. However, victims tend to be much further away from help than they would be in the city and may lack transportation to get to shelters or counselling services in the city. Because of tight-knit rural communities, victims may be embarrassed to speak out about the abuse or fear retaliation from the abuser’s friends or family (Wendt, 2009). Guns are also a major factor in domestic violence in rural areas. In a study conducted in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, 66% of abused women who lived in households containing guns said that the guns made them more fearful for their safety and well-being. In this same group of women, 70% said that the guns had an effect on their decision to tell others about the abuse (Hornosty & Doherty, 2007).
- **Drug and alcohol abuse** were traditionally thought to be “big city” problems. However, alcohol abuse and illicit drug use are often found in rural areas at similar rates as found in urban centres (Webster, Pimentel, Harp, Clark, & Staton-Tindall, 2009). An Australian study found that people living in rural areas were slightly more likely to use alcohol and tobacco and slightly less likely to use illicit drugs than people living in big cities (Australian National Council on Drugs, 2002). Problems with drugs and alcohol can arise in rural areas as they may be the only source of entertainment and may be related to boredom, especially among youth. Among adults living in rural areas, drug and alcohol abuse can be related to stress over unemployment or insufficient income, isolation, and working long hours (Bull, 2007a). Drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs are also less accessible, available, and affordable for people living in rural areas, making it difficult for residents to get clean (Booth, Kirchner, Fortney, Ross, & Rost, 2000).
- **“Grow-Ops”** are houses or farm lands used for growing marijuana or producing synthetic drugs (e.g., methamphetamine). Growers or producers may choose to locate their operations in rural areas in order to avoid detection by police or neighbours (Weisheit, 1993). The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have identified a number of other crimes that are related to grow-ops in rural areas, including assault, homicide, and the use of dangerous booby traps as growers go to extreme lengths to protect their valuable crops (Allen, 2009).
- **Impaired driving** in rural areas is related to a high social acceptability of alcohol use. One Canadian study found that rural youth are at a higher risk than urban youth of ever having driven with an impaired (i.e., through alcohol or marijuana use) adult or peer driver (Leadbeater, Foran, & Grove-White, 2008). In a study in Alberta, impaired driving

rates and fatalities were also more common in rural areas (Kmet, Brasher, Macarthur, 2003).

- **Youth issues** are very different in rural areas than they are in cities. While the causes of youth crime may be similar, many risk factors for youth crime are worse in rural areas. For example, school attendance, graduation rates, and youth employment tend to be lower the more remote the area. There are also fewer recreational options for youth in rural areas (e.g., shopping malls, cinemas, sport facilities, etc.) and a lack of public transportation to get to these activities in urban areas. Youth suicide rates also tend to be higher in rural areas (Barclay, Hogg, & Scott, 2007).

## Who is affected by rural crime?

Rural crime affects the individuals who live in rural, remote, or isolated areas. As of 2001, 13% of Ontario's population lived in rural areas, the smallest proportion of all provinces and territories in Canada. This is a drop from 15.8% in 1991. Rural populations are declining due to outward migration, particularly among young people. The people most likely to live in rural areas are seniors, who may actually migrate into rural areas from the city when they retire, and children, who live with their parents until they are grown, but then may decide to migrate to the city (Canada's Rural Partnership, 2005).

The City of Ottawa is experiencing an increasing urbanization of many of its formerly rural areas. In 2001, when the former Region of Ottawa-Carleton and the surrounding municipalities amalgamated, Ottawa's rural area expanded to cover 2,230 km<sup>2</sup>, or 4/5 of the total land area. Today, the City of Ottawa is comprised of the rural townships of West Carleton, Rideau, Osgoode, and Goulbourn, as well as rural portions of the former cities of Kanata, Nepean, Cumberland, and Gloucester (City of Ottawa, 2005).

Residents who live in rural areas tend to live in bigger households, with 31.8% of households having four or more people. Ninety-five percent of homes in rural areas are single-detached houses (City of Ottawa, 2005). Few ethnic minorities choose to live in rural areas, making many rural communities ethnically homogeneous (Canada's Rural Partnership, 2005).<sup>1</sup>

Rural crime occurs within a unique culture. Rural culture is characterized by traditional belief systems and ways of doing things, community attitudes about how to deal with crime, and strong attachments to privacy, as well as friendship and family ties (Wendt, 2009). The existence of these factors means that residents may be less likely to report crimes to the police because they do not want their neighbours, friends, or family members to be arrested or because they are afraid of retaliation from known perpetrators. People living in rural communities may also prefer

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<sup>1</sup> This literature review does not cover crime prevention on Aboriginal reserves, which are also generally located in rural, remote, and/or isolated areas and where there are significant, and unique, crime problems. The reason for their exclusion in this report is because there are no Aboriginal reserves located directly within the Ottawa region.

to handle conflicts on their own, rather than resort to urban-style “law and order” interventions (Barclay & Donnermeyer, 2007a).

Added to this is the reality that many rural communities are very remote or isolated from urban centres. This means that even if residents would like criminal justice or social institutions to be involved in dispute resolution or responding to crimes, access to and availability of these services are limited. In Ontario, some jurisdictions are covered by municipal police forces, while others by the OPP. Police officers working in rural areas are often mandated to engage in “community-based policing”, but this can produce some tensions when police officers are a part of the community.

Many young people today who have grown up in rural areas desire to move “to the big city” to get an education, find jobs, or increase their social status. With access to popular culture through television and the internet, rural youth are at risk to many new types of crimes: cyber-bullying, internet child-luring, and violent and pornographic imagery, for example (Allen, 2009). In addition, parents may be unable to pass on attributes of rural culture to their children because of these outside influences (Arber & Attias-Donfut, 2000). As a result, young people are exposed to different types of crimes than their parents were and may not subscribe to the same beliefs about how to resolve conflicts or deal with crime as their parents. This can lead to a “generational conflict” between the younger and older generations.

## Can rural crime be prevented?

Researchers are beginning to look at how rural crime can be prevented, though rigorous evaluations of rural crime prevention programs are rare. It is important that rural crime prevention programs and approaches stem from a sound theoretical base. This means that crime prevention practitioners need to have knowledge about the population of a given community and the nature of the crime problem in that community before implementing any prevention initiatives. Programs that work in one community cannot be automatically applied to another community – differences in community characteristics, levels and types of crime, and implementation strategies need to be assessed (O’Block, Wurschmidt, & Donnermeyer, 1982).

There are several factors that need to be considered when designing a rural crime prevention program, including:

- Relative isolation of rural homes;
- Increasing accessibility of country areas;
- Limited or minimal police protection and longer police response times;
- Need by farmers to maintain extensive equipment inventories;
- Remoteness of recreational facilities;
- Belief on the part of the public that rural areas do not have urban crime problems;
- Differences, if any, between crimes reported and crimes committed; and,

- The public's attitude toward rural law enforcement (O'Block, et al., 1982; Phillips, Wurschmidt, & Donnermeyer, 1980).

Taking into account these considerations, crime prevention practitioners can complete a "needs assessment" for a given community. A needs assessment is the first step toward implementing a crime prevention program and determines what type of programs would be most relevant and effective in a given community.

In addition to the above factors, crime prevention practitioners also need to determine if there are any patterns or variations in the commission of rural crimes (O'Block, et al., 1982). Because many crimes committed in rural areas are not reported to the police, police data on crime rates must be used cautiously. It is important to understand that police data only account for crimes reported to the police, and do not represent the actual level of crime experienced by residents. Victimization surveys at the community-level need to be conducted to gain a broader sense of the number of crimes occurring in a given community. These surveys can be initiated by any community-based organization dedicated to improving rural life (e.g., volunteer fire departments, church groups, 4-H clubs, etc.), though volunteers may wish to get advice from or work in partnership with crime prevention researchers<sup>2</sup> (McCauley, 1982).

Once the crime problem for a given community has been assessed, that community then has to determine what resources they have available to implement a crime prevention program (e.g., money, people, equipment, etc.) (McCauley, 1982). Crime prevention strategies should be chosen based on a balance between the needs of the community, the available resources, and evidence-based practices that have been shown to work in preventing rural crime (see below). Every crime prevention program should also include an on-going evaluation component by which the effectiveness of the program can be measured. This should include a replication of the initial needs assessment to determine if crime levels have decreased, increased, or stayed the same.

There are a number of different approaches to crime prevention that can be applied in rural areas:

- **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)** focuses on the planning and infrastructure of communities to prevent crime. Examples in the rural context might include installing motion sensor lighting on barns to illuminate potential offenders or designing farm equipment storage areas in view of the house.
- **Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD)** involves a number of different strategies, including community development, school-based prevention, public education campaigns, and developmental prevention (e.g., early childhood interventions).
- **Situational Prevention** involves increasing the risks and reducing the rewards of committing specific crimes. Examples in the rural context might include marking farm

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Crime Prevention Ottawa at <http://www.crimepreventionottawa.ca> or the Institute for the Prevention of Crime at the University of Ottawa, <http://www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/ipc/eng/index.asp>

equipment with an identification number so it cannot be easily sold or maintaining rigorous inventory lists to quickly identify if anything has been stolen (Bull, 2007b).

Most approaches to rural crime prevention have stemmed from the situational prevention approach, though there are some promising practices in other areas. However, very few rural crime prevention programs have been evaluated.

## What is being done to prevent rural crime?

### Community Watch

“Community Watch” programs are a type of situational crime prevention aimed at increasing the risks of criminal activity. Many rural areas have community or neighbourhood associations that engage in Community Watch programs. These groups are comprised of individuals who have a vested interest in the rural community: residents, business owners, and cottage owners, for example. The objectives of these organizations are to reduce the opportunity for crime to occur by improving security practices, engaging in neighbourhood surveillance, participating in crime prevention awareness programs, and facilitating communication between residents and the police. Some examples include:

- Alberta Community Crime Prevention Association: <http://www.accpa.org>
- Alberta Rural Crime Watch: <http://www.ruralcrimewatch.ab.ca>
- The Blue Mountains Community Watch (Ontario):  
<http://www.bluemountainscommunitywatch.ca/rural-community-safety.cfm>
- California Farm Bureau Federation: <http://www.cfbf.com/ruralcrime/>
- High Country Rural Crime Watch Association (Alberta): <http://www.hcrcwa.ca>
- Rural Crime Watch Association (Canada): <http://www.ruralcrimewatch.com>

Research on neighbourhood associations has found that when community members take policing upon themselves, the individuals who are being policed become socially separated from their own community, which may not be the best approach to reducing crime (England, 2008). Indeed, evaluations of Neighbourhood Watch programs in urban areas have found that programs only using a “watch” component were ineffective at preventing crime. An effective Neighbourhood Watch program would work at multiple levels and include home security inspections, tracking devices on farm equipment, and signs indicating that equipment is being monitored. An effective program would also foster partnerships between police, local residents, and other community agencies and criminal justice services. To date, there are no rigorous evaluations of rural Community Watch programs (Muller-Cheng, 2009).

## Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), or designing and constructing buildings and public spaces with an eye to preventing crime, is a popular approach to crime prevention. For example, a rural community college in West Virginia installed a two-way communication system in all of its classrooms in an effort to prevent campus tragedies. The communication system includes an emergency paging system and the ability to broadcast campus-wide announcements. The college evaluates the communication system with practice drills involving students, employees, and community response partners to improve crisis preparedness (Gnage, Dziage, & White, 2009).

Some researchers are examining the usefulness of “Second Generation” Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) for preventing rural domestic violence against women. Second Generation CPTED goes beyond the physical environment and works to ready communities to support certain crime prevention initiatives. Researchers have looked at the case of domestic violence and theorize that Second Generation CPTED could work to change community norms, beliefs, and values that support or tolerate woman abuse. Specifically, the researchers suggest: 1) Organizing cultural events to sensitize the community to the issue of domestic violence (e.g., plays, festivals, quilting, etc.); 2) Creating safe spaces for women in rural communities and spaces for anti-violence men to build networks; and, 3) Teaching positive communication skills and conflict resolution (DeKeseredy, Donnermeyer, & Schwartz, 2009).

## Crime Prevention through Social Development

The idea of community readiness for crime prevention in rural settings is examined in an American study (Cancino, 2005) focused on community development – an important concept in Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD). This researcher looked at the concept of “social capital” – or how much residents trusted each other, worked in cooperation, and developed partnerships with law enforcement and other community and political stakeholders (e.g., churches, schools, local government, etc.). The objective of this study was to find out if social capital is connected to the ability of a rural community to engage in an effective crime prevention initiative. Building up “social capital” is considered an effective approach to crime prevention in rural areas because many communities are already tight-knit and characterized by close social or familial relationships. The researcher suggests that local agencies should take a more proactive role in engaging citizens to prevent crime in their community. Specifically, rural police should collaborate with local residents on crime prevention programs (e.g., through town hall meetings, community-based task forces, and citizen patrols) and rural residents should participate in community crime prevention programs (e.g., Community Watch and neighbourhood associations) (Cancino, 2005).

An early American study of rural residents' willingness to participate in an auxiliary policing crime prevention program found that fear of crime or victimization actually had little impact on residents' participation. Residents most likely to participate in this type of rural crime prevention initiative were young, less educated, and male (Smith & Lab, 1991).

Researchers in Florida developed "The Smart Life" program for rural African American youth aged 12 through 18 (Gary & Lopez, 1996). This program aims to foster independent and productive lifestyles through goal-oriented planning and empowerment. Seminars are held in various community locations (e.g., churches, schools, community centres, etc.), with topics including the meaning of being an African American; the history of African peoples; and, the prevention of crime and violence, early sexual experiences and pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse, and school failure. While the authors provide anecdotal evidence of the positive effect of this program on the youth participants, they do suggest that programs should include parents in the education as well as the possibility of community-based safe house for particularly at-risk youth (Gary & Lopez, 1996).

Another program designed for rural African American families is the promising program "Strong African American Families" (SAAF) supported by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado<sup>3</sup>. SAAF is a family-centred program designed to prevent alcohol and drug abuse among rural African American youth aged 10 through 12 and to improve the parenting practices of their caregivers. The program consists of seven weekly meetings involving youth and caregivers sharing a meal, separating into two groups to watch age-and-role-appropriate videos and engage in discussion, and then to reconvene to practice learned skills. The youth program content focuses on setting goals, learning skills to resist drug use, and developing negative attitudes toward drug and alcohol use. The caregiver content covers communication skills, limit setting, racial socialization skills, and how to establish clear expectations about alcohol and drug use. An evaluation of this program found that youth who participated in the program were less likely to start using alcohol, and those who did increased their use less over time, than youth who did not participate in the program (Brody, Murry, Kogan, Gerrard, Gibbons, Mogaard, et al., 2006).

SAAF is based on the promising "Strengthening Families Program" (SFP) for parents and youth aged 10 through 14. This program has been implemented in 33 rural schools in the American Midwest. It focuses on improving family communication and reducing risk factors for adolescent problem behaviours. Parents learn communication skills, including how to communicate expectations of children's behaviour, consistent discipline techniques, and how to manage their emotions. Youth learn peer resistance and refusal techniques, social interaction skills, and how to manage stress and their emotions. Families then come together to practice conflict resolution and communication skills. In an evaluation, this program improved parent's child management practices, increased parent-child communication, and strengthened family cohesiveness. Youth who participated in the program had lower rates of alcohol use than youth who had not participated in the program (Spoth, Redmond, Lepper, 1999; Spoth, Redmond, & Shin, 1998).

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/index.html>

Another promising program is the school-based “Project Northland” designed to reduce adolescent alcohol use. This program has been implemented in rural communities and targets youth in grades seven to nine and then again in grades eleven and twelve. Each school year is based on a specific theme: child-parent communication; alcohol resistance skills; active citizenship; alcohol-related peer pressure; and, changing alcohol-related social norms. An evaluation after three years of the program found that youth who participated were less likely to drink alcohol, when they did drank less alcohol, and had better communication with their parents about the consequences of drinking than those who did not participate (Perry, Williams, Veblen-Mortenson, Toomey, Komro, Anstine, McGovern, et al., 1996). A longitudinal evaluation of “Project Northland” found that youth who had participated in the six years of the program were less likely to increase their use of alcohol and parents had stricter rules regarding teen alcohol use than individuals who did not participate (Perry, Williams, Komro, Veblen-Mortenson, Stigler, et al., 2002).

## **Policing**

Policing in rural areas usually involves some form of community policing. A study in Australia found that many officers found policing in rural communities to be an “impossible job” (Jobes, 2003). Difficulties officers had with policing rural communities stemmed from residents’ rationalization of certain crimes (e.g., drunk or young people just “having a good time”) and their lack of cooperation with the police. The most effective police officers in this rural area utilized traditional community policing: police officers integrated themselves into the community and exercised their judgement when it came to community standards of behaviour (Jobes, 2003).

In Western Australia, another approach to rural policing, derived from the Rural Crime Prevention Strategy of the Office of Crime Prevention<sup>4</sup>, is a multi-agency approach. This multi-agency approach engages police officers, different government departments, community-based agencies, private agencies, and volunteers to police rural communities. In one study of this approach, the researcher found that multi-agency policing has the potential to be a more inclusive form of policing, though it is still mainly driven by government (Yarwood, 2007).

In the United States, rural policing of illicit drug production has expanded in some jurisdictions to include community members as well as the police in a multi-agency approach. New anti-drug legislation at the state level has called on residents, pharmacists, retail clerks, natural resource officers, and others in rural areas to police the purchasing and use of cold medicine, batteries, and drain cleaner – chemicals all used in the production of methamphetamine (Garriott, 2010). It is not clear how effective this legislation actually is in reducing the number of “meth lab” incidents. Since this type of legislation went into effect, meth lab incidents went from a total of 18,091 in 2004 to a low of 6,095 in 2007. However, incidents have since increased again, with 11,239 occurring in 2010 (DEA, 2010).

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.crimeprevention.wa.gov.au/index.php>

Individual police departments offer a number of property crime prevention tips for rural residents that can be found on their websites<sup>5</sup>. These tips include:

- Checking – and using the locks on – doors and windows;
- Keeping outside areas well-lit;
- Keeping fences in good repair;
- Posting “No Trespassing” signs;
- Marking identification numbers on equipment and tools;
- Tattooing livestock;
- Keeping guns and small equipment in a secure place;
- Storing large equipment in a barn or shed overnight;
- Storing harvested crops in locked locations;
- Keeping a rigorous inventory of supplies;
- Making cottages appear occupied at all times with timers and motion sensor lights; and,
- Reporting anything suspicious to law enforcement.

Other police departments have developed dedicated rural safety or rural crime prevention strategies. In the United Kingdom, the Rural Safety Strategy engages rural community members to solve crime problems at a local level<sup>6</sup>. Central to this initiative is the creation of Rural Safety Groups comprised of community stakeholders. These groups collect data about the local crime problem and then determine the best crime prevention techniques to solve the problem. The objective of this strategy is to encourage community members to deal with community and “nuisance” problems (e.g., lack of activities for youth, lack of transportation, etc.), rather than rely on police for non-criminal matters. Through this approach, specific community problems have been dealt with, including reducing the number of youth “hanging around”, organizing the community to pick up litter, and reducing vandalism through better lighting and pruned hedges.

## **Situational Prevention**

Situational prevention programs in the rural context are based on reducing the opportunities for crime to occur (Mears, Scott, & Bhati, 2007). In an American study of farm theft, the researchers theorized that more attractive targets will be stolen more often, crime victimization will be more likely when farm operations are in close proximity to potential offenders, as well as more exposed and less guarded. The researchers found that items that are easily transportable were most likely to be stolen. They also found that farms on flat terrains and with a large acreage experienced more crime victimization. Finally, farms that did not utilize security measures (e.g., locking or hiding equipment), used traditional protective measures (e.g., owning a dog), or where owners were less able to see or monitor their property were more likely to experience

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<sup>5</sup> For example, the Government of Alberta’s Safety Tips for Rural Residents at [https://www.solgps.alberta.ca/safe\\_communities/community\\_awareness/safety\\_tips/Pages/rural\\_residents.aspx](https://www.solgps.alberta.ca/safe_communities/community_awareness/safety_tips/Pages/rural_residents.aspx) or the Ontario Provincial Police’s Tip Sheet for Rural Crime Prevention at <http://www.opp.ca/ecms/files/250362800.2.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.popcenter.org/library/awards/tilley/2002/02-64.pdf>

victimization. Recommendations for prevention include increasing the security of farm buildings and equipment, creating a centralized database of identification numbers for farm equipment, and rural “hot spot” policing where vulnerable areas receive proactive policing and crime prevention initiatives (Mears, et al., 2007).

However, in one Australian study of property crime on rural farms, farm security practices had no impact on victimization rates. What did make a difference was the proximity of the farm to urban centres, whether or not farm buildings were visible from the farm residence, and the condition of the terrain to access the farm (Barclay & Donnermeyer, 2002).

## Conclusion

Clearly crime is a significant problem for rural communities and is not confined to big cities. There are many ways in which crime committed in rural areas is different from crime committed in cities: different targets for burglary and theft (e.g., farm equipment, livestock, etc.); isolation from helping agencies for victims of domestic violence or individuals with drug or alcohol abuse problems; lack of police presence for individuals in the drug cultivation or production trade; and, lack of opportunities for youth. These factors combine to make crime prevention in rural areas a unique challenge. Unfortunately, few rigorous evaluations exist of crime prevention programs implemented in rural areas (e.g., “Strong African American Families”, “Strengthening Families Program”, and “Project Northland” are a few exceptions). However, rural residents and local police departments are taking steps to protect their communities with situational crime prevention programs, like “Community Watch”, and other measures to increase the risks of crime. It is important for future research on rural crime prevention to prioritize gaining knowledge about specific community characteristics and local crime problems before implementing preventive initiatives. As well, communities should make sure to evaluate the planning and implementation of crime prevention programs to determine their effectiveness. By outlining the context of rural crime prevention, this literature review represents an important first step for Crime Prevention Ottawa in addressing the problem of rural crime in the Ottawa area.

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