

## Grays Harbor Suicide and Homicidal Deaths On The Rise

### Local News

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MONTESANO, Wash. - Grays Harbor County saw a dramatic increase in suicide and homicidal deaths in 2012, that's according to the Coroner's Office 2012 Annual Report. County Coroner Dan Burns reports there were **621** deaths within the County reported in 2012. The majority of these deaths were expected or explained by circumstances and required no further investigation. Burns said 20 of which were suicides, that's almost twice the prior 5-year average, adding that the last time we had that many was in 1997. With 5 homicidal deaths in 2012 we almost tripled our 5 year average of 1.4. Burns also reported 22 Accidental deaths - 14 of which involved drugs or alcohol, and 7 Traffic deaths - 6 of those had alcohol or drugs present in their system at the time of their death.

There were **22 Accidental** deaths in 2012. This is one less than the prior 5 year average (2007 - 2011) of 23 accidental deaths per year. Of the 22 accidental deaths, 14 were due to alcohol and/or drug intoxication. There were **7 Traffic** deaths within our jurisdiction in 2012. Technically these are accidental deaths, but are reported separately. Of significance, 6 of the 7 traffic deaths, or 86% had alcohol or drugs present in their system at the time of their death. As a comparison, over the past 8 years about 2 out of 3, or 66 % had alcohol or drugs in their system at the time of their death. This comparison applies to all traffic related deaths regardless of whether they were the driver, a passenger or a pedestrian. We had a very dramatic increase in suicide deaths in 2012. There were **20 Suicides** for the year. This is almost twice the number of the prior 5 year average (2007 &ndash; 2011) of 10.2 deaths per year. The last time we had 20 suicides in a year was in 1997. Generally speaking we have been seeing an overall decline in suicide deaths the past 15 years. As a comparison in the 5 year period from 1997 - 2001 we averaged 14.8 suicide deaths per year. In the years 2002 - 2006 we averaged 12 suicide deaths per year. Finally we had **5 Homicide** deaths in 2012. This is even more of a dramatic increase over the prior 5 year average (2007 &ndash; 2011) of 1.4 homicide deaths per year. The last year we had 5 homicides was in 2002 and prior to that in 2000. Our homicide rate on average had been decreasing the past 15 years. As a comparison we averaged 3.6 deaths per year from 1997- 2001 and 2.0 deaths per year from 2002 -2006. This large number of homicides in 2012 will impact our yearly average homicide rate for at least a few more years.