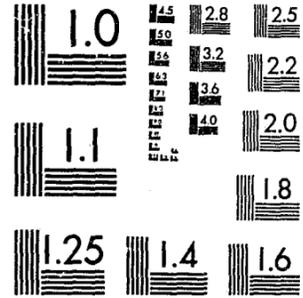


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RURAL YOUTH VANDALISM  
IN FOUR  
MINNESOTA COUNTIES



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RURAL YOUTH VANDALISM  
IN FOUR  
MINNESOTA COUNTIES

BY

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and  
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December, 1981

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ACQUISITIONS

PREFACE

This report presents the findings of a youth vandalism survey conducted in four rural Minnesota counties in February, 1981. The four counties were: Kittson, McLeod, Swift, and Yellow Medicine. The study was carried out principally to support a Minnesota Rural Crime Prevention Project already underway. This report is intended for use by individuals and organizations in these counties and elsewhere in the state in formulating new rural youth vandalism prevention programs.

The authors of this report and the individuals responsible for it's content are Marlys McPherson and John Carpenter of the Minnesota Crime Prevention Center, Inc. Additional valuable support was provided by Earl Lewis, Cathy Scott, Dave Frey, Mike Peterson, and Lynn Abramson, as well as resident staff members in the four counties surveyed. These staff members include Kathryn Rynning (Kittson County), Karen Brekke (McLeod County), Nancy Carlson (Swift County), and Elaine Moe (Yellow Medicine County). Finally, the authors would like to thank the school boards and sheriffs' offices in each of these counties for their enthusiastic support and assistance in making this important survey possible.

Copies of the executive summary and detailed report are available from: The Minnesota Crime Prevention Center, Inc., 121 East Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Vandalism is a serious and growing problem in Minnesota. By its very nature, it often leaves a profound impact on both property owners and the community as a whole. There are economic consequences as seen in broken windows, defaced property and inoperable machinery, but also many indirect consequences as reflected in increased levels of personal anxiety and fear, and reduced community confidence and cooperation.

What is included in the term vandalism? Using the definition set out by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and uniformly adopted by federal, state and local agencies, vandalism is the ". . . willful and malicious destruction, injury, disfigurement or defacement of any public or private property, real or personal, without the consent of the owner or person having custody or control by cutting, tearing, breaking, marking, painting, drawing, covering with filth or any other such means as may be specified by law." Indeed, it is the aspect of malicious intent, and the apparent irrationality and senselessness of the crime, that makes vandalism so disturbing to the general public.

Sixteen percent of all reported crimes in Minnesota in 1980 were acts of vandalism.<sup>1</sup> As shown in Table 1, the 62 thousand acts of vandalism reported in 1980 were more than double the number reported just seven years earlier. Over this period 1973 to 1980, vandalism increased at an average rate nearly twice that for all reported crimes in the state.

<sup>1</sup>Reported crime statistics must be interpreted with care since some crimes are more apt to be reported than are others. In general, the more serious the criminal act, measured in terms of personal injury or damaged or lost property, the more likely it will be reported.

Table 1: Reported Vandalism in Minnesota: Urban and Rural Comparisons by Selected Years

	Number of Reported Crimes by Year*				Average Percent Change 1973-1980
	1973	1976	1979	1980	
All Reported Crimes in Minnesota	225,796	293,984	341,743	384,412	+ 7.9%
Reported Incidences of Vandalism	25,823	39,394	54,463	62,761	+ 13.5%
. Urban Vandalism	21,546	30,865	42,011	48,867	+ 12.4%
. Rural Vandalism	4,277	8,515	12,433	13,880	+ 18.3%

\*Excludes State Highway Patrol figures

Source: Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Criminal Justice Information Section, Minnesota Crime Information, 1973, 1976, 1979 and 1980.

Youth Vandalism

One factor making vandalism a matter of increasing public concern is the large proportion of acts committed by youth, many in their pre-teens and early-teen years. As shown in Table 2, two-thirds of all arrests for vandalism in Minnesota in 1980 involved youths 18 years old or under. Thirty-four percent of these young people were age 15 or under and 11 percent were 12 years or under.

Vandalism is also becoming much more difficult to control. In 1973, more than 3,500 arrests were made in the state from 25,800 reported cases of vandalism . . . an arrest rate of 13.7 percent. In 1980, more than 5,100 arrests were made from 62,700 reported vandalism cases . . . an arrest rate of 8.2 percent. As Table 2 indicates, one of the effects of strained law enforcement resources has been a decreasing emphasis on arrests of pre-teenagers and greater emphasis on arrests of high school age

youth. High school age vandalism arrests in Minnesota have increased at an average rate of 7.5 percent a year since 1973, while the number of arrests of youth 14 years and under has declined.

Table 2: Arrests for Vandalism in Minnesota by Age Group, Selected Years

Age Groups	Number of Vandalism Arrests by Year*				Average Percent Change 1973-1980
	1973	1976	1979	1980	
10 Years of Age & Under	311	255	255	221	- 5.0%
11-12 Years	474	407	406	352	- 4.3%
13-14 Years	869	906	717	737	- 2.4%
15 Years	407	541	542	449	+ 1.4%
16 Years	419	473	619	619	+ 5.7%
17 Years	300	573	680	601	+ 10.4%
18 Years	158	327	387	457	+ 16.4%
Total 18 Years of Age and Under	2,938	3,482	3,606	3,436	+ 2.2%
Total Vandalism Arrests (All ages)	3,546	4,469	5,232	5,173	+ 5.5%

\*Excludes State Highway Patrol figures

Source: Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Criminal Justice Information Section, Minnesota Crime Information, 1973, 1976, 1979 and 1980.

#### Rural Vandalism

Most people that have looked at the vandalism problem have seen it principally as an urban crime. In fact, 80 percent of the reported acts of

vandalism in Minnesota in 1980 did take place in urbanized areas. (See Table 1 for urban/rural comparison.) For reasons such as this, much of the research conducted over the past decade has centered on vandalism in urban core areas.

Increasingly, however, statistical data are showing a rapid growth in rural vandalism. Between 1973 and 1980, reported acts of rural vandalism in Minnesota increased at a 50 percent higher rate than its urban counterpart. These acts are directed towards residences, businesses and other public and private property in small towns, in the rural countryside and on farm property.

In rural Minnesota, vandalism is second only to larceny in reported offenses. As indicated in Table 3, one in every five reported cases of rural crime in 1980 was an act of vandalism. It is also the fastest growing rural crime, increasing at a 50 percent higher rate than most other types of rural crimes.

#### Description of the Study

In light of these data, a study of rural youth vandalism was initiated by the Minnesota Crime Prevention Center, Inc., building upon a Rural Crime Prevention Demonstration Project already underway in four Minnesota counties. The study involved a detailed survey of 1,050 high school sophomores in these four counties. It was instituted for the purposes of generating detailed information on the actual incidence of rural youth vandalism taking place in these counties, the characteristics and affiliations of those youth committing acts of vandalism, and the factors possibly contributing to the rise in reported vandalism in rural Minnesota.

Table 3: Comparison of Selected Types of Crime in Rural Minnesota, by Year

Type of Crime	Number of Reported Rural Crimes by Year*				Average Annual Percent Change 1973-1980
	1973	1976	1979	1980	
Larceny	8,546	12,652	15,315	18,193	+ 11.4%
Vandalism	4,277	8,515	12,433	13,880	+ 18.3%
Burglary	6,674	8,394	9,091	9,916	+ 5.8%
Fraud	2,246	2,700	4,230	4,237	+ 9.5%
Disorderly Conduct	1,314	1,889	3,410	4,191	+ 18.0%
Driving While Under the Influence	1,619	2,414	2,631	3,612	+ 12.1%
Vehicle Theft	949	1,296	1,851	1,845	+ 10.0%
Liquor Laws	649	747	1,114	1,442	+ 12.1%
All Reported Rural Offenses	32,243	47,567	60,980	69,317	+ 11.6%

\*Excludes State Highway Patrol figures

Source: Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Criminal Justice Information Section, Minnesota Crime Information, 1973, 1976, 1979 and 1980

Hopefully, this information will serve as a base for new crime prevention programs in these and other counties throughout the state to counter the observed increases in rural youth vandalism. Assessed in conjunction with other comparable studies of rural youth vandalism conducted elsewhere in the upper midwest, this study will help further clarify the trends in rural vandalism occurring not only here but throughout the country.

### Methodology

The survey was administered in February of 1981 to all tenth grade students in four rural Minnesota counties. The students were in attendance at the 19 high schools (public and parochial) in Kittson, McLeod, Swift and Yellow Medicine counties. A total of 1,050 students participated in the survey.

At the time of the survey these four counties were all demonstration sites in the Minnesota Rural Crime Prevention Project. Their selection as participants in the project was based in part on their being representative of a variety of rural Minnesota settings. McLeod, the largest of the four counties with a 1980 population of 29,657 persons, is located immediately to the west of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Between 1970 and 1980, McLeod recorded a population increase of 7.2 percent.<sup>2</sup> It is a county typical in size and location to the 47 other growing non-metropolitan counties in the state. The tenth grade students from McLeod County constitute about half of the total survey population. The other three counties -- Kittson (6,672 population 1980), Swift (12,920 population 1980), and Yellow Medicine (13,653 population 1980) -- experienced declines in population of two to six percent over the decade 1970 to 1980. These counties are typical of the 29 rural Minnesota counties with declining populations in terms of location, size and population trends.

From 30 to 45 percent of the population in each of the four counties resides outside of organized cities, and only McLeod County has a city

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population and Housing - Minnesota: Advance Reports, PHC80-25, Issued March, 1981.

within its borders of more than 4,000 population. In the case of McLeod County, its largest city is Hutchinson, with a 1980 population of just over 9,200 people. Agriculture is the predominant industry in each county. In total, the four counties encompass a population in 1980 of 62,902 persons, or about five percent of the rural population in the state.

With some revisions and modifications, this study is a replication of surveys conducted in Ohio in 1976 and Indiana in 1979.<sup>3</sup> The Ohio and Indiana surveys may be considered the pre-tests for the Minnesota study. The survey instrument was initially developed by a task force made up of rural sociologists from Ohio State University, extension agents from the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service, high school principals and civics teachers from rural Ohio schools, and clergymen representing community churches. In Minnesota, the survey was reviewed by rural sociologists, educators, parents and clergymen. Full cooperation and support was received from each of the counties and schools in which the survey was administered.

The survey was administered by staff members of the Minnesota Crime Prevention Center, Inc. In three of the counties these were the crime prevention field staff (residents of the county), and in the fourth county the project director administered the survey. With the prior consent of

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<sup>3</sup>We greatly appreciate the cooperation of the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC), and particularly Professor G. Howard Phillips, in permitting us to use, with modifications, the survey instrument from the Ohio vandalism study. The report summarizing this study is entitled "Vandals and Vandalism in Rural Ohio" (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, 1976). The Indiana study was conducted as a replication of the Ohio study. A comparison of the results of the Indiana and Ohio studies is contained in a paper entitled "The Nature of Vandalism Among Rural Youth," by Joseph F. Donnermeyer and G. Howard Phillips. Professor Randy Cantrell of the Department of Rural Sociology, University of Minnesota, kindly assisted in revising the questionnaire for use in Minnesota.

the school administrators, students completed the questionnaires during school hours in large classrooms or lunch rooms. Students were guaranteed complete confidentiality. Upon completion, the individual surveys were sealed in envelopes and mailed directly to the administrative offices of the Minnesota Crime Prevention Center, Inc. in Minneapolis. A copy of the survey questionnaire is found in the appendix to this report.

#### Contents of the Report

This report summarizes the findings of the Minnesota survey. In succeeding sections of this report, we will attempt to describe the magnitude of the youth vandalism problem, identify the attributes of most rural vandals, isolate the key factors in understanding the character and causes of youth vandalism, and offer a number of potential avenues for addressing the rural youth vandalism problem.

CHAPTER II

THE MAGNITUDE OF THE YOUTH VANDALISM PROBLEM

This section begins the summary of findings from the Minnesota rural youth vandalism survey. As indicated in the previous section, the survey was directed towards tenth graders in both public and parochial schools. These 15 and 16 year olds are at the peak of their adolescent years and are establishing patterns of behavior that will carry them through their high school years and possibly on into adulthood. Given the statistics on vandalism arrests (presented in Section I), this is also the age group when, in recent years, the largest increase in arrests has been occurring.

The Incidence of Youth Vandalism

Vandalism is not an isolated youth activity. As shown in Table 4, more than 60 percent of the students surveyed admitted they had participated in one or more acts of vandalism in their lifetime. For the vast majority of these students (80 percent), their involvement has been limited

Table 4: Participation by High School Sophomores at Any Time in Acts of Vandalism

Extent of Participation	Number	Percent
Have Participated in Acts of Vandalism	632	60.2%
Have Not Participated in Acts of Vandalism	395	37.6%
No Answer	23	2.2%
TOTAL	1,050	100.0%

to acts involving "slight damage or marking up of someone else's (or public) property." These are "childhood pranks" that may take the form of painting initials on the town's water tower, overturning mailboxes, changing the direction of road signs, or soaping windows. These are not so much examples of malicious defiance as they are adolescent games.

As Table 5 indicates, a core of about 20 percent of those admitting to acts of vandalism (or almost 12 percent of the total sample) reported having at some point "seriously damaged or destroyed someone else's (or public) property." These more malicious acts were directed typically towards school property, motor vehicles, road signs, private residences and farms, mailboxes, and parks and playgrounds.

Table 5: Participation in Prankish and Serious Acts of Vandalism

Level of Participation	Number	Percent
Participated Only in "Slight" or Prankish Acts of Vandalism	508	80.4%
Participated in Both "Slight" & "Serious" Acts of Vandalism	108	17.1%
Participated Only in "Serious" Acts of Vandalism	16	2.5%
TOTAL	632	100.0%

For most students, acts of vandalism cannot be characterized as one-time mistakes. As shown in Table 6, more than half of those individuals

involved in vandalism have engaged in three or more acts. In addition, 13 percent of the pranksters and 15 percent of the serious vandals admitted to more than ten acts of vandalism during their lifetimes.

Table 6: Youth Committing Repeated Acts of Vandalism

Number of Acts of Vandalism	Pranksters		Serious Vandals		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1 or 2 Acts	237	47.8%	63	50.8%	300	48.4%
3 or 4 Acts	115	23.2%	20	16.1%	135	21.8%
5 to 10 Acts	80	16.1%	22	17.8%	102	16.5%
More than 10 Acts	64	12.9%	19	15.3%	83	13.4%
Total	496	100.0%	124	100.0%	620	100.0%*

\*Does not total to 100.0 percent due to rounding.

Of more immediate importance is the recent involvement of these young people in vandalism. As indicated in Table 7, nearly half (48.3 percent) of those youth admitting to acts of vandalism were involved in at least one act sometime over the previous year (February 1980 to February 1981). Forty-four percent of those youth involved in prankish acts of vandalism at some point in their lives said they were involved in vandalism during the last year. The incidence is even higher among those admitting to serious acts of vandalism in their lifetime. Of this core group, almost two-thirds (65.9 percent) were engaged over the last year in one or more acts of vandalism. These 81 students make up 7.7 percent of the total surveyed.

Table 7: Youth Involvement in Acts of Vandalism Within the Last Year (February 1980 - February 1981)

Involved in Vandalism Within the Last Year?	Pranksters		Serious Vandals		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	222	44.0%	81	65.9%	303	48.3%
No	282	56.0%	42	34.1%	324	51.7%
Total	504	100.0%	123	100.0%	627	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 17.96338$       Significance = .0000

#### The Price of Rural Youth Vandalism

How serious a problem is rural youth vandalism? Both the prankish and malicious kinds of vandalism exact a price from the community. There are direct costs where property must be replaced or repaired. These costs include not only the cost of the property but also the time and wages of those individuals required to repair or replace the property vandalized. In addition, there are also less tangible, indirect costs associated with vandalism. This occurs where public awareness of these acts leads to increased levels of personal and community anxiety, a reduced sense of confidence in the future stability of the community or its young people, diminished property values or the physical appearance of deterioration, or even possibly increased population migration out of the community.

While the indirect costs of vandalism are very difficult to quantify, it is possible to roughly gauge the magnitude of direct costs associated with youth vandalism over the last year in the four counties studied. The

assumptions and computations involved in this cost estimate are indicated in Table 8. It should be emphasized that it is impossible to produce a precise cost associated with youth vandalism; rather the purpose here is to suggest an "order of magnitude" estimate. Based on the factors used in the estimate, the impact figure is probably a conservative one.

Table 8: Cost Impacts of Youth Vandalism in Four Rural Minnesota Counties

I. Number of Sophomores Admitting to Acts of Vandalism February 1980 - February 1981 (Table 7)	303
II. Youth Involved in "Prankish" and "Serious" Acts of Vandalism (Table 7)	
Prankish Acts	222
Serious Vandalism	81
III. Estimate of Average Replacement or Fix-Up Costs Associated with Vandalism	
Prankish Damage	\$25/act/individual involved
Serious Damage	\$250/act/individual involved
IV. Computation of Financial Impact from Sophomore Acts:	
Prankish Damage	222 x \$25 = \$ 5,550
Serious Damage	81 x \$250 = 20,250
Financial Impact (Sophomores)	\$25,800
V. Weighting Factor for Estimating Total Costs of All Youth Vandalism (age 18 and under)	
- Estimate from vandalism arrest data (Table 3) based on ratio of all youth vandalism arrests to 15 year old arrests	6.7
VI. Computation of Replacement and Fix-Up Costs Associated with All Youth Vandalism in Four-County Study Area Over the Last Year: \$25,800 x 6.7 = \$173,000	
Total Four-County Costs	\$173,000

From this analysis, it is estimated that between February, 1980 and February, 1981, the four rural Minnesota counties surveyed experienced

direct replacement and fix-up costs resulting from acts of vandalism by youth, age 18 and under, on the order of \$173,000. Given a 1980 population of 62,902 in these four counties, in one year youth vandalism cost, on the average, more than \$2.75 for each man, woman and child residing in the study area. Moreover, if the costs associated with county sheriff and local police departments' responding to vandalism reports were included, the total direct cost estimate could very easily be two or three times the base total.

Finally, assuming a representative \$2.75 per capita cost associated with rural youth vandalism and a 1980 rural population of 1.3 million people, the total replacement and fix-up costs due to youth vandalism in rural Minnesota could total \$3.6 million annually.

In order to provide an understanding of the nature of the problem, the next section of the report shifts to a description of those students in the survey admitting to acts of vandalism.

CHAPTER III

WHO ARE THE VANDALS?

Sixty percent of the tenth graders surveyed admitted to acts of vandalism in their lifetime. One clear finding from the survey is that there are significant differences between non-vandals; "pranksters," those committing slight acts of vandalism; and the "malicious vandals," those committing willful and destructive acts of vandalism. There are statistically significant differences among these three groups in terms of their sex, living arrangements, memberships in organizations, church attendance, and attitudes toward their parents. By knowing more about the characteristics of youth vandals, and the differences between pranksters and malicious vandals, new opportunities may be identified to target crime prevention programs within particular organizations, institutions and school grade levels.

Sex

Most acts of rural youth vandalism are committed by males. As indicated in Table 9, fifty-seven percent of those youth admitting to prankish acts of vandalism were males. The proportion increases with the severity of the vandalism to the point where nearly 73 percent of the tenth graders involved in serious acts of vandalism were males. Further, of those admitting to at least three instances of serious vandalism, males accounted for 81 percent of the total.

Nearly two-thirds of the students not involved in vandalism were females. In comparison with the substantial involvement of males in both prankish and serious acts of vandalism, most of the involvement of female students had been on the prankish side. Females accounted for 42 percent

of those youth involved in prankish acts and 27 percent of those involved in serious vandalism. While nine percent of the male students admitted to three or more acts of serious vandalism, only two percent of the female students had been involved in three or more acts of serious vandalism.

Table 9: Youth Involvement in Vandalism, by Sex

Sex	Non-Vandals		Pranksters		Serious Vandals		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	135	34.3%	290	57.3%	88	72.7%	513	50.2%
Female	259	65.7%	216	42.7%	33	27.3%	508	49.8%
Total	394	100.0%	506	100.0%	121	100.0%	1,021	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 74.82482$       Significance = .0000

Place and Length of Residency

Half of all sophomores admitting to acts of vandalism, involving either slight or serious damage to property, lived in organized towns and cities. As indicated in Table 10, the survey supports the notion that youth living in towns or non-farm homes in the country are more prone to acts of vandalism than are rural farm youth. This may reflect the fact that farm youth traditionally have had more demands on their free time and, consequently, fewer opportunities to commit acts of vandalism. It may also suggest a stronger set of conservative or family-oriented values among farm youth.

Table 10: Youth Involvement in Vandalism  
by Location of Residence

Location of Residence	Non-Vandals		Pranksters		Serious Vandals		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Living in Town	165	42.9%	253	50.7%	64	53.3%	482	48.0%
Living in the Country but Not on a Farm	47	12.2%	64	12.8%	18	15.0%	129	12.8%
Living on a Farm	173	44.9%	182	36.5%	38	31.7%	393	39.1%
Total	385	100.0%*	499	100.0%	120	100.0%	1,004	100.0%*

$\chi^2 = 10.06815$  Significance = .0393  
\*Does not total to 100.0 percent due to rounding.

Table 11 shows the involvement of sophomores in acts of vandalism as measured against the length of time they had lived in their respective counties. In general, there is little evidence that vandalism is related to the length of time a youth has lived in the area. The only pattern emerging from the table is that new residents (less than five years in the county) had a marginally higher involvement in prankish and serious vandalism than their numbers in the population would have predicted. This difference, however, was not statistically significant. Overall, a majority of the students surveyed, and hence a majority of the students involved in vandalism, were lifelong residents.

Table 11: Youth Involvement in Vandalism  
by Length of Residency in the Area

Length of Residency	Non-Vandals		Pranksters		Serious Vandals		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Less than 5 Years	35	9.1%	54	10.8%	14	12.0%	103	10.3%
5-9 Years	56	14.6%	58	11.6%	15	12.8%	129	12.9%
10 Years or More But Not Lifelong	66	17.2%	96	19.3%	21	17.9%	183	18.3%
Lifelong Resident	227	59.1%	290	58.2%	67	57.3%	584	58.5%
Total	384	100.0%	498	100.0%*	117	100.0%	999	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 3.01757$  Significance = .8066  
\*Does not total to 100.0 percent due to rounding.

#### Parental Characteristics and Youth Attitudes

Parental living arrangement -- whether the young person lives with one or both natural parents or in some other family or institutional setting -- is not a predictor of prankish vandals, but it does distinguish the serious vandals. The proportions of youth living with both parents versus some other living arrangements are very similar for non-vandals and the pranksters. The serious vandals, however, are twice as likely to be living in one-parent households than their numbers in the population would indicate. These results are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Youth Involvement in Vandalism by Parental Structure

Parental Structure	Non-Vandals		Pranksters		Serious Vandals		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Living with Both Natural Parents	333	85.2%	441	87.3%	94	79.0%	868	85.5%
Living with One Parent Only	28	7.2%	31	6.2%	18	15.1%	77	7.6%
Other*	30	7.7%	33	6.5%	7	5.9%	70	6.9%
Total	391	100.0%**	505	100.0%	119	100.0%	1,015	100.0%

$X^2 = 11.81208$  Significance = .0188

\*Includes living with stepparents, foster parents, other relatives or in a group home or institution.

\*\*Does not total to 100.0 percent due to rounding.

The survey also looked at the age of parents as a potential factor characterizing youth vandals. The findings, presented in Table 13, are somewhat difficult to interpret. Students with parents who were between 40 and 50 years of age were somewhat more likely to be involved in acts of vandalism than was the case for students with either older or younger parents. These findings suggest that age of parents is not directly related to youth involvement in vandalism, even though there are weak statistical differences among the categories.

In one question, students were asked to describe their present attitude towards their parents. They were allowed to select from six categories ranging from the extremes of "very strong attachment" to "very strong

Table 13: Youth Involvement in Vandalism by Age of Parent

Age of Parent	Non-Vandals		Pranksters		Serious Vandals		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
20-40 Yrs	167	42.8%	180	35.6%	49	40.5%	396	39.0%
41-50 Yrs	163	41.8%	253	50.1%	63	52.1%	479	47.1%
51 or Older	60	15.4%	72	14.3%	9	7.4%	141	13.9%
Total	390	100.0%	505	100.0%	121	100.0%	1,016	100.0%

$X^2 = 11.21984$  Significance = .0242

hostility". Looking at the results from this question (Table 14) we see that about 10 percent of all students reported at least a mild feeling of hostility towards their parents. The comparisons between non-vandals, pranksters and serious vandals show distinct differences between these

Table 14: Youth Involvement in Vandalism by Attitude Towards Parents

Attitude Towards Parents	Non-Vandals		Pranksters		Serious Vandals		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Hostility	27	6.9%	52	10.3%	29	23.8%	108	10.6%
Attachment	364	93.1%	453	89.7%	93	76.2%	910	89.4%
Total	391	100.0%	505	100.0%	122	100.0%	1,018	100.0%

$X^2 = 28.34155$  Significance = .0000

three groups. There is a strong and significant relationship between students' attitudes toward their parents and the extent of their involvement in vandalism. Students admitting to serious acts of vandalism were more than three times as likely to harbor feelings of hostility toward their parents than were non-vandals.

Age When Vandalism Begins

Table 15 shows the age at which those admitting to vandalism committed their first acts. For the majority of both the pranksters and mildly serious vandals (fewer than three acts), their first acts occurred during their teen adolescent years. For those admitting to repeated acts of serious vandalism, their first acts generally occurred at a much younger age. Of those students admitting to three or more acts of serious vandalism, a third had gotten their start by age 10 and 62 percent by age 12. This tends to support the belief that there is a core group of serious

Table 15: Youth Involvement in Vandalism by Age of First Act of Vandalism

Age at First Act of Vandalism	Pranksters		Serious Vandals (1 or 2 Acts)		Repeating Serious Vandals (3 or More Acts)		All Vandals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
10 Yrs Old or Under	93	19.3%	10	16.1%	20	33.9%	123	20.4%
11-12 Yrs Old	124	25.7%	16	25.8%	17	28.8%	157	26.0%
13 Yrs Old or Over	265	55.0%	36	58.1%	22	37.3%	323	53.6%
Total	482	100.0%	62	100.0%	59	100.0%	603	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 9.5451$  Significance = .05

vandals whose behaviors result from deep-seated problems, emerging well before other prankish kinds of youth behavior.

Memberships in School and Non-School Organizations

As Table 16 indicates, the sophomores surveyed in this study participated on the average in over two organizations during the last year. These break down to just over one school organization and one non-school organization.

The data indicate that students engaged in prankish acts of vandalism differ little from non-vandals in their level of membership in organizations. Indeed, their level of organizational membership is slightly higher than for non-vandals. When considering those engaging in more serious and malicious acts of vandalism, the level of participation in various organizations drops off significantly. Of those individuals admitting to serious acts of vandalism, memberships were more apt to be in out-of-school organizations than in school-based activities, a pattern opposite to the pranksters and non-vandals.

Table 16: Youth Involvement in Vandalism by Average Memberships in School and Non-School Organizations

Memberships in:	Non-Vandals		Pranksters		Serious Vandals		Total	
	No.	Avg Per Student	No.	Avg Per Student	No.	Avg Per Student	No.	Avg Per Student
School Organizations	485	1.16	625	1.23	80	0.65	1,190	1.13
Out-of-School Organizations	474	1.13	574	1.13	115	0.93	1,163	1.11
Total	959	2.29	1,199	2.36	195	1.58	2,353	2.24

School Activities. School sports was the dominant school activity, with more than half (54 percent) of those surveyed indicating participation in this type of activity over the last year. As indicated in Table 17, participation in sports was at twice the level of either school music or career exploration activities. Among those students admitting to serious acts of vandalism, sports was also predominant although participation was at a lower level. In fact, the level of participation by serious vandals

Table 17: Youth Involvement in Vandalism by Memberships in School-Based Organizations

Type of School Activity	Non-Vandals		Pranksters		Serious Vandals		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
School Sports	213	51.0%	310	61.0%	48	38.7%	571	54.4%
School Music	111	26.6%	119	23.4%	5	4.0%	235	22.4%
Student Gov't or Leadership Development Org.	17	4.1%	21	4.1%	1	0.8%	39	3.7%
Career Exploration*	104	24.9%	136	26.8%	21	16.9%	261	24.9%
Declam., Debate, Drama, etc.	28	6.7%	32	6.3%	4	3.2%	64	6.1%
Journalism, School Paper, Annual Staff, etc.	12	2.9%	7	1.4%	1	0.8%	20	1.9%
Base Population**	418	--	508	--	124	--	1,050	--

\*Future Farmer, Future Homemaker, DECA, Library Club, etc.  
 \*\*Sample population totals on which percentages are based.

was consistently lower for all types of school activities. Additionally, the data indicate that participants in school music activities, student government, and journalism activities are unlikely to be involved in serious acts of vandalism. Relatively few students, however, are participants in these kinds of activities.

Non-School Organizations. Involvement in church youth groups is the predominant out-of-school organization of the high school students surveyed. As shown in Table 18, nearly half of all sophomores questioned (46 percent) reported participating in this type of organization within the past year.

Table 18: Youth Involvement in Vandalism by Memberships in Out-of-School Organizations

Type of Out-of-School Organization	Non-Vandals		Pranksters		Serious Vandals		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
4-H Club	107	25.6%	96	18.9%	14	11.3%	217	20.7%
Scouts	43	10.3%	50	9.8%	17	13.7%	110	10.5%
Athletic Team Not Associated w/ School	71	17.0%	136	26.8%	18	14.5%	225	21.4%
Church Youth Group	207	49.5%	243	47.8%	37	29.8%	487	46.4%
Others Not Specified	46	11.0%	49	9.6%	29	23.4%	124	11.8%
Base Population*	418	--	508	--	124	--	1,050	--

\*Sample population totals on which percentages are based.

The next most common organizations were non-school athletic teams (21 percent), 4-H clubs (21 percent), and scouting (10 percent).

Of those students admitting to serious acts of vandalism, 30 percent were current members of a church youth group. While the survey gives no indication of how active those individuals were, it does appear that youth groups of this type may be important avenues for reaching youth involved in acts of vandalism.

A comparative ranking of organizations -- both school and non-school -- based on the relative proportion of tenth graders in these organizations who, (A) said they had never participated in vandalism, and (B) those admitting to serious acts of vandalism is provided in Table 19. A comparison of the two columns again illustrates how organizational memberships differ between non-vandals and students who participated in serious vandalism. On the average, serious vandals accounted for more than 23 percent of the sophomore membership in "other," non-school kinds of youth organizations. These are more likely to be less traditional than the others listed by name.

In terms of the identified organizations, the team or group participatory activities registered a higher proportion of vandals than was the case for the more creative and individualized activities such as music, student government, journalism and declamation, which have the highest rankings in terms of membership proportions who are non-vandals. As will be seen in the next section, the "team" or "group" orientation is a common characteristic of most acts of youth vandalism.

Table 19: Ranking of Organizations by the Proportion of Sophomore Members Who are Non-Vandals and Serious Vandals\*

A. Non-Vandals	B. Serious Vandals
1. Journalism, etc. (60.0%)	1. Other Organizations (Out-of-School), Unspecified (23.4%)
2. Student Government or Leadership Development (58.6%)	2. Scouts (15.5%)
3. 4-H Club (49.3%)	3. School Sports (8.4%)
4. School Music (47.2%)	4. Non-School Athletics (8.0%)
5. Declamation, Debate, Drama (43.8%)	5. Career Exploration (8.0%)
6. Church Youth Groups (42.5%)	6. Church Youth Groups (7.6%)
7. Career Exploration (39.8%)	7. 4-H Club (6.5%)
8. Scouts (39.1%)	8. Declamation, Debate, Drama (6.2%)
9. School Sports (37.3%)	9. Journalism, etc. (5.0%)
10. Other Organizations (Out-of-School), Unspecified (37.1%)	10. Student Government or Leadership Development (2.6%)
11. Non-School Athletics (31.6%)	11. School Music (2.1%)

\*Numbers in parentheses are the percent of the total respondents indicating membership in the group who also said they had never participated in vandalism (left-hand column), and who admitted to serious acts of vandalism (right-hand column).

Church Membership and Attendance

Church membership was very high among the sophomores surveyed in this study. Table 20 indicates that more than 96 percent of those students surveyed belonged to a church. There is a significant difference between vandals and non-vandals, however, in terms of church membership, with non-vandals more likely to be church members. The pranksters are more like the non-vandals than the serious vandals. Only two percent of pranksters and non-vandals were not church members, compared to ten percent for serious vandals.

Table 20: Youth Involvement in Vandalism by Church Membership

Belong to a Church?	Non-Vandals		Pranksters		Serious Vandals		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	382	97.4%	494	97.6%	108	90.0%	984	96.7%
No	10	2.6%	12	2.4%	12	10.0%	34	3.3%
Total	392	100.0%	506	200.0%	120	100.0%	1,018	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 18.71328$  Significance = .0001

Church attendance, as shown in Table 21, was also high. Of those students surveyed, 69 percent indicated they attended church at least once a week. Again, non-vandals are more likely to be regular church goers than are the vandals. Yet, the church remains a good avenue for reaching youth

Table 21: Youth Involvement in Vandalism by Church Attendance

Church Attendance	Non-Vandals		Pranksters		Serious Vandals		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
At Least Once a Week	278	76.2%	318	66.0%	56	54.9%	652	68.7%
Once or Twice a Month	59	16.2%	110	22.8%	23	22.5%	192	20.2%
Seldom or Never	28	7.7%	54	11.2%	23	22.5%	105	11.1%
Total	365	100.0%*	482	100.0%	102	100.0%*	949	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 26.302$  Significance = .0000

\*Does not total to 100.0 percent due to rounding.

vandals, since 88 percent of those committing prankish acts of vandalism and 77 percent committing acts of serious vandalism say they attend church on a somewhat regular basis (once a month or more). Within this group of regular church attenders, nine percent admitted having seriously damaged or destroyed someone else's property and four percent admitted to committing these acts on at least three occasions.

Summary

When attempting to describe the rural youth vandal, it is important to make distinctions between "pranksters" and "serious vandals". These groups differ markedly in many ways.

1. Male youth commit the majority of both prankish and serious acts of vandalism. The proportion of male students increases with the seriousness of the act. Of those youth admitting to serious vandalism, nearly 73 percent were male. Furthermore, males accounted for 81 percent of those youth involved in repeated (three or more) acts of vandalism.
2. Two-thirds of the non-vandals are female. When involved in acts of vandalism, most females engage in prankish acts. Only two percent of the females surveyed could be considered repeating serious vandals.
3. More than half of all sophomores admitting to either prankish or serious vandalism lived in organized towns and cities. The survey findings suggest that youth living in towns or in non-farm homes in the country are more likely to commit acts of vandalism than are rural farm youth.
4. There is little evidence that vandalism is in any way related to the length of time a youth has lived in the area. The only possible pattern emerging from the survey is that new residents (less than five years in the county) had a marginally higher involvement in prankish and serious vandalism than their numbers in the population would have predicted. Overall, a majority of the students surveyed and hence a majority of the students involved in vandalism, were lifelong residents.
5. A substantial majority (85 percent) of the students surveyed live with both parents. The serious vandals, however, as twice as likely to be living in one-parent households than their numbers in the population would indicate.

6. There is a weak relationship between vandalism and age of parents. Students with parents who were between 40 and 50 years of age were somewhat more likely to be involved in acts of vandalism than was the case for students with either older or younger parents. Even though there are weak statistical differences between categories, the results are not clearly interpretable.
7. There is a significant relationship between students' attitudes toward their parents and the extent of their involvement in vandalism. Feelings of hostility towards parents is more pronounced among youth admitting to prankish and serious acts of vandalism. In fact, students admitting to serious vandalism were more than three times as likely to feel hostile towards their parents.
8. Forty-six percent of the youth admitting to acts of vandalism reported having gotten started in their pre-teen years. Of those involved in repeated acts of serious vandalism, a third got their start by age 10 and 62 percent by age 12. This is significantly different from the pranksters and those youth involved in one or two acts of serious vandalism. Most of these youth got started in their teen years.
9. Youth admitting to serious acts of vandalism are much less likely to belong to school organizations than are non-vandals or pranksters. Where serious vandals do belong to an organization, it is more apt to be related to sports or to be a non-school activity characterized by team or group participation.
10. More than 96 percent of the sophomores surveyed belong to a church. Vandals, however, are less likely to attend church on a regular basis than are non-vandals. Of those youth admitting to serious acts of vandalism, less than 55 percent attend church once a week. This compares to over 76 percent of the non-vandals.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL YOUTH VANDALISM

The previous section described the youth involved in vandalism. This section looks at the nature of the act itself. It focuses on the group aspects of vandalism, the associated use of alcohol and drugs, the primary motivations behind the act, and various other factors contributing to the growth in rural youth vandalism. From this base of information, the analysis in the next section will identify possible avenues by which local groups and institutions can begin combatting the vandalism problem.

Vandalism is a Group Activity

Most youth vandals are not loners. Vandalism can be described best as a group social event. As shown in Table 22, of the sophomores admitting to

Table 22: Number of Persons Present When Most Recent Act of Vandalism was Committed

Number of Persons Present	Pranksters		Serious Vandals (1 or 2 Acts)		Repeating Serious Vandals (3 or More Acts)		All Vandals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Acted Alone	28	6.7%	8	13.3%	4	7.5%	40	7.5%
2 Persons, Including Respondent	142	33.8%	20	33.3%	23	43.4%	185	34.7%
3 Persons, Including Respondent	89	21.2%	14	23.3%	9	17.0%	112	21.0%
4 Persons, Including Respondent	74	17.6%	5	8.3%	5	9.4%	84	15.8%
5 Persons, Including Respondent	87	20.7%	13	21.7%	12	22.6%	112	21.0%
Total	420	100.0%	60	100.0%*	53	100.0%*	533	100.0%

\*Does not total to 100.0 percent due to rounding.

vandalism, only seven percent acted alone in committing their most recent act. More than half of the student vandals acted in groups of two or three persons. Students admitting to serious and repeated acts of vandalism, however, were more likely to be involved in smaller groups (one, two or three persons) than was the case for pranksters.

It is Accompanied by High Alcohol and Drug Usage

Table 23 shows the consumption of alcoholic beverages and the use of drugs by group members at the time the admitted acts of vandalism were committed. Of those sophomores involved in acts of vandalism, 31 percent indicated that alcoholic beverages were being consumed at the time of the act; thirteen percent reported the use of drugs.

Table 23: Alcohol and Drug Usage in Most Recent Act of Vandalism

Alcohol and Drug Usage	Pranksters		Serious Vandals (1 or 2 Acts)		Repeating Serious Vandals (3 or More Acts)		All Vandals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Alcoholic Beverages Consumed at Time of Act	138	27.2%	22	34.9%	39	63.9%	199	31.5%
Drugs in Use at Time of Act	44	8.7%	9	14.3%	31	50.8%	84	13.3%
Base Population*	508	--	63	--	61	--	632	--

\*This table is based upon answers to two separate questions ("Were alcoholic beverages consumed at time of act?" and "Were drugs in use at time of act?"). Hence, the same students could have responded "yes" to both questions. The percentage figures were calculated using the total number of students admitting to each level of seriousness of vandalism as the denominator.

Of even more significance is the finding that alcohol and drug usage increases substantially with the seriousness of the vandalism. Of those sophomores admitting to one or two serious acts of vandalism, nearly 35 percent had been consuming alcohol and almost 15 percent indicated that drugs were being used by members of the group at the time of the act. Looking at the repeat offenders, those having been involved in three or more acts of serious vandalism, 54 percent reported the consumption of alcoholic beverages at the time of their most recent acts and 50 percent admitted to the use of drugs at that time.

For those groups consuming alcohol, 50 percent were drinking beer and another third were drinking both beer and hard liquor. Of those indicating the use of drugs, over 70 percent said that marijuana was the drug being used.

Vandalism Usually Takes Place Under Cover of Night and During Occasions of Opportunity or Boredom

For 72 percent of those students saying they have been involved in vandalism, their most recent acts were committed during evening and nighttime hours (6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.). Table 24 shows that the slight or prankish kinds of vandalism were somewhat more likely to occur during the early evening hours. With the more serious, malicious acts, they were more likely to occur well into the nighttime hours.

Most acts of vandalism took place during the weekend, probably reflecting the fact that during these days more youth are permitted by parents to stay out later at night. As indicated in Table 25, sixty percent of those admitting to prankish acts of vandalism committed their most recent act on either a Friday, Saturday or Sunday. This percentage increases to 73 percent among those youth admitting to repeated acts of vandalism.

Table 24: Time of the Day When Most Recent Act of Vandalism Occurred

Time of Day When Act Occurred	Pranksters		Serious Vandals (1 or 2 Acts)		Repeating Serious Vandals (3 or More Acts)		All Vandals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Morning Hours (6 AM - Noon)	21	5.5%	4	7.7%	3	6.2%	28	5.8%
Afternoon Hours (Noon - 6 PM)	85	22.2%	12	23.1%	9	18.8%	106	21.9%
Evening Hours (6 PM - 10 PM)	144	37.6%	18	34.6%	10	20.8%	172	35.6%
Night Hours (10 PM - 6 AM)	133	34.7%	18	34.6%	26	54.2%	177	36.6%
Total	383	100.0%	52	100.0%	48	100.0%	483	100.0%*

\*Does not total to 100.0 percent due to rounding.

Table 25: Day of the Week When Most Recent Act of Vandalism Occurred

Day of the Week When Act Occurred	Pranksters		Serious Vandals (1 or 2 Acts)		Repeating Serious Vandals (3 or More Acts)		All Vandals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Monday through Friday	188	39.7%	22	37.3%	15	26.8%	225	38.3%
Friday through Sunday	285	60.3%	37	62.7%	41	73.2%	363	61.7%
Total	473	100.0%	59	100.0%	56	100.0%	588	100.0%

As seen in Table 26, October is the month with the greatest number of most-recent prankish acts of vandalism. Much of this is very likely associated with Halloween. In addition, the summer months of July and August, times when students are out of school, were also high.

Table 26: Month in Which Most Recent Act of Vandalism Occurred

Month When Most Recent Act Occurred	Pranksters		Serious Vandals (1 or 2 Acts)		Repeating Serious Vandals (3 or More Acts)		All Vandals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
January	17	6%	11	26%	10	25%	38	10%
February	34	12%	7	17%	10	25%	51	14%
March	8	3%	0	0	2	5%	10	3%
April	7	2%	0	0	1	2%	8	2%
May	6	2%	1	2%	0	0	7	2%
June	14	5%	1	2%	1	2%	16	4%
July	35	12%	6	15%	2	5%	43	11%
August	28	10%	5	12%	1	2%	34	9%
September	12	4%	2	5%	2	5%	16	4%
October	92	31%	6	14%	5	13%	103	28%
November	15	5%	2	5%	1	2%	18	5%
December	24	8%	1	2%	5	13%	30	8%
Total	292	100%	42	100%	40	100%	374	100%

In the case of the more serious vandals, the most recent acts were committed in January and February, which is just prior to the time the survey was taken. Half of all those students admitting to repeated acts of

vandalism said their most recent act was committed within the previous two months. These responses tend to underscore how frequently many of the serious vandals commit acts, and are less an indication of when most vandalism occurs.

The Targets of Vandalism are Varied. The Major Criterion Would Seem to be Accessibility

As shown in Table 27, eighty percent of the targets of youth vandalism were reached by car or by foot. Other forms of transportation, such as motorcycles and snowmobiles, were not prominent . . . at least not among the 15 and 16 year olds surveyed. This emphasis on walking probably reflects the fact that these sophomores are only now approaching legal driving age. Knowing that many youth vandals are on foot, however, is

Table 27: Means of Getting to Place Where Most Recent Act of Vandalism Occurred

Means of Transportation	Pranksters		Serious Vandals (1 or 2 Acts)		Repeating Serious Vandals (3 or More Acts)		All Vandals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Walked	203	43.2%	27	46.6%	21	37.5%	251	43.0%
Car or Truck	175	37.2%	22	37.9%	22	39.3%	219	37.5%
Bicycle	34	7.2%	6	10.3%	3	5.4%	43	7.4%
Motorcycle	14	3.0%	2	3.4%	2	3.6%	18	3.1%
Snowmobile	6	1.3%	0	0	1	1.8%	7	1.2%
Other	38	8.1%	1	1.7%	7	12.5%	46	7.9%
Total	470	100.0%	58	100.0%*	56	100.0%*	584	100.0%*

\*Does not total to 100.0 percent due to rounding.

important in assessing how property owners can protect against youth vandalism. This point is further developed in Chapter V.

Table 28 shows the distance from home those committing vandalism were during their most recent acts. About two-thirds of the students involved in vandalism were within five miles of their home and 35 percent were within a mile of home when these acts were committed. From the data in this survey, there is no apparent relationship between distance from home and the seriousness of the vandalism.

Table 28: Distance from Home to Site of Most Recent Act of Vandalism

Distance from Home	Pranksters		Serious Vandals (1 or 2 Acts)		Repeating Serious Vandals (3 or More Acts)		All Vandals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Less than 1 Mile	163	34.8%	18	30.5%	22	40.0%	203	34.8%
1-4 Miles	131	27.9%	28	47.5%	13	23.6%	172	29.5%
5-9 Miles	87	18.6%	5	8.5%	9	16.4%	101	17.3%
10 Miles or More	88	18.8%	8	13.6%	11	20.0%	107	18.4%
Total	469	100.0%*	59	100.0%*	55	100.0%	583	100.0%

\*Does not total to 100.0 percent due to rounding.

In describing their most recent acts, slightly more than half (54.7 percent) of those admitting to vandalism said it involved damage to personal property belonging to a private individual or business. Table 29 lists the major kinds of private property vandalized. As indicated, the most common targets were motor vehicles, residences in cities and towns, mailboxes, lawns and unoccupied residences and buildings. These are all targets easily accessed along streets and highways by passing motorists or youth on foot.

Table 29: Type of Private Property Vandalized

Type of Private Property Vandalized During Most Recent Act	Those Admitting To Vandalizing Private Property	
	No.	%
Motor Vehicle	108	29.3%
Residence in City or Town	96	26.1%
Mailbox	75	20.4%
Lawn	69	18.8%
Unoccupied Residence or Building	64	17.4%
Road Signs	51	13.9%
Business Place	43	11.7%
Garden	41	11.1%
Fences and Gates	39	10.6%
Trees	38	10.3%
Rural Residence	37	10.1%
Total Number of Respondents	368*	*

\*Does not equal number of responses because of possibility of multiple responses.

Of those youth describing their most recent acts of vandalism, 45 percent admitted acts directed against public property. As shown in Table 30, more than 36 percent of these acts were directed at schools and another 32 percent were directed at road signs. Other less frequent targets included parks and playgrounds, cemeteries, libraries, country clubs, government buildings, and churches.

Table 30: Type of Public Property Vandalized

Type of Public Property Vandalized During Most Recent Act	Those Admitting to Vandalizing Public Property	
	No.	%
School	112	36.7%
Road Signs	100	32.8%
Park or Playground	48	15.7%
Cemetery	25	8.2%
Government Equipment	23	7.5%
Library	18	5.9%
Country Club	14	4.6%
Government Building	12	3.9%
Township Hall	11	3.6%
Church	8	2.6%
Other	95	31.1%
Total Number of Respondents	305*	*

\*Does not equal number of responses because of possibility of multiple responses.

As was the case with private property, the specific items vandalized were diverse. Some of the major items are listed in Table 31. The majority of the acts included some damage or marking up of signs or windows. Access and opportunity again appear to be important in determining what items were vandalized.

Table 31: Major Kinds of Public Property Vandalized

Kinds of Public Property Vandalized in Most Recent Act	Those Admitting to Vandalizing Public Property	
	No.	%
Signs	104	34.1%
Windows	69	22.6%
Lawn	58	19.0%
Books and Papers	55	18.0%
Building	55	18.0%
Mailbox	54	17.7%
Equipment	45	14.8%
Motor Vehicle	42	13.8%
Total Number of Respondents	305*	*

\*Does not equal number of responses because of possibility of multiple responses.

Vandalism is Motivated and Supported by Group Ethics and is Therefore Difficult to Counter by Traditional Law Enforcement Means

Table 32 reveals the students' own assessments of their admitted acts of vandalism. Of those involved in prankish acts, 62 percent perceived their act as a game, contest or practical joke. Of those students involved in more serious acts of vandalism, the majority saw their act as either a game or an effort to get even with the owner of the property. Less than seven percent of all vandals viewed their own acts of vandalism as being in any way a crime.

Table 32: Students' Own Assessment of Their Most Recent Act of Vandalism

Perception of Act	Pranksters		Serious Vandals (1 or 2 Acts)		Repeating Serious Vandals (3 or More Acts)		All Vandals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A Game, Contest or Practical Joke	287	61.7%	25	42.4%	22	37.9%	334	57.4%
An Effort to Get Even with Property Owner	43	9.2%	8	13.6%	15	25.9%	66	11.3%
Outcome of Committing A More Serious Crime	5	1.1%	0	0	1	1.7%	6	1.0%
Attempt to Draw Attention to Some Problem or Issue	13	2.8%	2	3.4%	3	5.2%	18	3.1%
A Crime	28	6.0%	5	8.5%	6	10.3%	39	6.7%
Other	89	19.1%	19	32.2%	11	19.0%	119	20.4%
Total	465	100.0%*	59	100.0%*	58	100.0%	582	100.0%*

\*Does not total to 100.0 percent due to rounding.

When given the opportunity to offer advice to other youth who may be in the position to commit an act of vandalism, the majority of the students admitting to acts of vandalism urged these youth not to get involved in vandalism. As shown in Table 33, most pointed to the act as being against the law or something they will come to regret. Seventeen percent of the youth voiced encouragement. The pattern is much different, however, for

those students who admitted involvement in three or more serious acts of vandalism in the past. More of these students offered encouragement to potential vandals than offered discouragement. Only 21 percent of these repeated serious vandals offered the advice that vandalism is a crime or something to be regretted.

Table 33: Advice to Other Potential Youth Vandals

Advice to Other Youth	Pranksters		Serious Vandals (1 or 2 Acts)		Repeating Serious Vandals (3 or More Acts)		All Vandals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Don't Do It - It's Against the Law	174	46.0%	24	54.5%	9	20.9%	207	44.5%
Don't Do It - You Will Regret It	65	17.2%	9	20.5%	4	9.3%	78	16.8%
Don't Do It - It's Not Cool	13	3.4%	0	0	0	0	13	2.8%
Don't Do It - It's Harmful and Hurts Others	12	3.2%	0	0	1	2.3%	13	2.8%
Do It - But Don't Get Caught	24	6.3%	1	4.5%	5	11.6%	31	6.7%
Do It - If It Helps Get Even with Someone	3	0.8%	0	0	3	7.0%	6	1.3%
Do It - It's Something Fun To Do	29	7.7%	4	9.1%	10	23.3%	43	9.2%
Other	58	15.3%	5	11.4%	11	25.6%	74	15.9%
Total	378	100.0%*	44	100.0%	43	100.0%	465	100.0%

\*Does not total to 100.0 percent due to rounding

From a rural law enforcement perspective, it is essential that witnesses to vandalism report what they see to the proper authorities. The survey found that in the case of youth vandalism group ethics is a strong social barrier keeping witnesses from coming forward in incidents like these. Table 34 shows that of the sophomores surveyed, more than half reported having witnessed acts of vandalism and not reporting them to police or school authorities. Even among non-vandals, a third of these students admitted witnessing, yet not reporting, acts of vandalism. And among the serious vandals, almost three-fourths had witnessed and not reported vandalism.

Table 34: Students Witnessing But Not Reporting Acts of Vandalism

Witnessed Act and Did Not Report It	Non-Vandals		Pranksters		Serious Vandals		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	124	34.3%	333	66.3%	86	72.3%	543	55.3%
No	237	65.7%	169	33.7%	33	27.7%	439	44.7%
Total	361	100.0%	502	100.0%	119	100.0%	982	100.0%

When asked why not, the most frequent responses (Table 35) were that they did not want to get someone in trouble (56 percent), that they did not feel the act was serious enough (38 percent), and that they were afraid of reprisals or loss of friendship if they reported the incident (21 percent). Less than ten percent said the reason for not reporting the act was because they didn't realize it was a crime.

Table 35: Reasons for Not Reporting Witnessed Acts of Vandalism

Why Acts Were Not Reported	Non-Vandals		Pranksters		Serious Vandals		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Did Not Feel Was Serious Enough	47	37.9%	138	41.4%	22	25.6%	207	38.1%
Did Not Want to Get Someone in Trouble	60	48.4%	189	56.8%	53	61.6%	302	55.6%
Did Not Realize Was a Crime	19	15.3%	22	6.6%	7	8.1%	48	8.8%
Fear of Reprisal or Loss of Friendship	32	25.8%	64	19.2%	17	19.8%	113	20.8%
Thought Might Be Blamed for Act	15	12.1%	52	15.6%	12	14.0%	79	14.5%
Other Reasons	17	13.7%	31	9.3%	13	15.1%	61	11.2%
Base Population*	124	--	333	--	86	--	543	--

\*Does not equal number of responses because of possibility of multiple responses. Base population was used as the denominator in calculating percentages.

At the time of the survey a total of 31.3 percent of the sophomores admitting to acts of vandalism said they had been caught at some time for vandalism. As indicated in Table 36, this figure increases to 45.8 percent among students admitting to serious acts of vandalism, and 63.8 percent among students admitting to three or more serious acts of vandalism. Half of the students caught said they were picked up by law enforcement (sheriff

or police) officials. The data suggest that law enforcement is succeeding in making contact with a relatively large proportion of the serious youth vandals. At the same time, the comments of youth reported in this study suggest that apprehension may not be a strong deterrent to group-inspired acts of vandalism. Taken together, these findings underscore the need for new efforts in the crime prevention area.

Table 36: Apprehension Rates for Vandalism

Apprehension	Pranksters		Serious Vandals (1 or 2 Acts)		Repeating Serious Vandals (3 or More Acts)		All Vandals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Have Been Caught for Vandalism	128	25.8%	27	45.8%	37	63.8%	192	31.3%
Have Not Been Caught for Vandalism	368	74.2%	32	54.2%	21	36.2%	421	68.7%
Total	496	100.0%	59	100.0%	58	100.0%	613	100.0%

Summary

1. Most youth vandalism involves individuals acting in groups, not singly. Only seven percent of the sophomores involved in vandalism were alone at the time of their most recent acts. Most incidents involved groups of two or three youth.
2. Supporting the group aspects of vandalism is the associated high consumption of alcoholic beverages and drugs. Of those students admitting to prankish acts of vandalism, more than a quarter had been consuming alcohol and eight percent indicated that drugs were being used by members of the group at the time the act occurred. Usage is much higher among youth involved in repeated serious acts of vandalism. In this group, 64 percent reported the consumption of alcoholic beverages and 50 percent indicated that some members in the group were using drugs at the time of the act.

3. The majority of youth surveyed engaged in acts of vandalism under cover of darkness and during weekends. October is the primary month for prankish acts of vandalism, with high levels also indicated for the summer-vacation months of July and August. Half of those youth admitting to repeated serious acts of vandalism reported involvement during January and February, the two months just prior to when the survey was administered.
4. For two-thirds of the students involved in acts of vandalism, their most recent acts were committed within five miles of their homes. A third were within a mile. Most youth reached the place where the act occurred either by foot (43 percent) or in a car or truck (37.5 percent).
5. Slightly more than half of the most recent acts of vandalism detailed by the students involved damage to private personal and business property. The most common targets were motor vehicles, residences in cities and towns, mailboxes, lawns and unoccupied residences and buildings. These were all targets easily accessed along streets and highways by passing motorists or youth on foot.
6. Forty-five percent of those youth describing their most recent acts of vandalism said they were directed towards public property. More than 36 percent of these acts were directed at schools and 32 percent at road signs. Signs and windows were the most common targets of this vandalism.
7. Reflecting again the group aspects of vandalism, most students remember their acts as a game, contest or practical joke. For the more serious acts of vandalism, the motive to "get even" is important as well as the notion of it being a game or contest. Only seven percent of all vandals saw their acts as being a crime.
8. Influenced by the group, youth that witness acts of vandalism are not likely to report them to law enforcement or school officials. More than half (55.3 percent) of all the students surveyed indicated that they had witnessed acts of vandalism and had not reported them. The proportion is substantially higher among the serious vandals. The primary reasons for not reporting vandalism were that the students did not want to get others in trouble, that they did not believe the acts warranted it, and that they feared reprisals or loss of friendship.
9. Over 30 percent of students involved in vandalism said they had been caught at some time. And more than 60 percent of those students admitting to three or more serious acts of vandalism had been caught. While traditional law enforcement does appear to be reaching the serious youth vandal, there is no evidence to suggest that apprehension is acting as a deterrent to youth vandalism. New, complementary efforts in crime prevention are needed.

## CHAPTER V

AVENUES FOR ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF RURAL YOUTH VANDALISM

There are no simple solutions to the problem of rural youth vandalism. Law enforcement is important, but limited resources and large sections of open countryside make rural vandalism a very difficult crime to control through traditional channels. New crime prevention efforts are needed at the county and community levels to supplement ongoing programs of law enforcement. To succeed, these efforts must include the involvement of individual residents along with the programs and resources of a number of community organizations.

For Property Owners

From this study, it is clear that most acts of youth vandalism are not motivated by any perceived need to "get even" with a property owner. Rather, most acts are committed by youth as part of a group-inspired game or contest. The target is selected for no other apparent reason than its accessibility. While there is no way a property owner can effectively eliminate the risk of vandalism, there are ways to reduce the risk of becoming a victim:

1. Keep property well lit or locked up at night and especially on weekends.
2. Keep cars, trucks or farm equipment out of sight from roads and highways when not in use.
3. Remove objects from sight that could be used as tools of vandalism (e.g., loose bricks, spray paint, spare lumber).
4. Fence in property as an added barrier where it is highly accessible to passersby.

It is not enough for property owners only to safeguard their property from vandalism. They also need to react quickly to acts of vandalism when they occur by reporting the incident to local law enforcement officials.

5. A recent survey of rural households in Missouri found that less than half of all acts of vandalism were reported to the authorities.<sup>4</sup> It is important to report all acts of vandalism, even where no serious damage occurred. By showing signs of being alert, property owners may discourage more destructive, repeat performances.

6. Repair broken windows and other signs of vandalism as soon as they occur. The risk of vandalism is much higher with already visibly damaged property.

#### For Parents of Teenaged Youth

As a practical matter, many parents find it difficult to sanction or control the activities of their teenage children, and particularly those prone to willful and malicious mischief. The following, however, are some ways that parents can help reduce the likelihood of their children becoming involved in acts of vandalism:

1. Set a good example. The best way to instill in youth a regard for other people's property is for parents to demonstrate this regard through their own actions and words.
2. Work towards overcoming feelings of hostility between parents and children. The survey findings suggest that youth may be often expressing hostility through malicious acts of vandalism.
3. Provide avenues for youth to vent energy and frustration at home. The first step may be just to encourage more communication.

The survey findings suggest that most of the prankish kinds of vandalism result from the need of youth to "release excess energy" and to find ways to overcome boredom. Parents can play an instrumental role in channeling youth energies into productive areas.

<sup>4</sup> Cooperative Extension Service, University of Missouri-Columbia, Rural Crime in Missouri: A Case Study of Four Missouri Counties with Suggestions for Crime Prevention Measures, UED65, 1980.

4. Encourage youth to actively and regularly participate in formal organizations and clubs. The survey found that the likelihood of vandalism is reduced for youth active in school and out-of-school organizations.

5. Discourage "cruising" and other non-directed group activities. Limit the use of cars and trucks by youth to legitimate transportation needs.

A high correlation has been observed between the use of alcohol and drugs and the commission of acts of vandalism, both prankish and destructive. While parents cannot control youth actions away from home, they can set limits that can influence behavior both at home and away.

6. Discourage the use of alcohol and drugs, or at least require that their use be limited to times when parents are present.

#### For Community Institutions and Organizations

More than 90 percent of all acts of youth vandalism -- even the malicious, destructive kinds -- are group motivated and reinforced. For this reason, it is critically important to enlist the participation of youth-oriented organizations as part of any community crime prevention effort. Drawing from the findings in this study, community organizations can take a number of alternative approaches to the problem based on their program objectives, resources, and member interests. The following are some possible avenues to consider:

Schools and churches are unique in their ability to reach and involve most youth on a regular, continuing basis. By recognizing the needs and motivations of the potential youth vandal, these institutions can play major roles in countering the growth of rural youth vandalism.

1. Schedule extracurricular and participatory activities during those times when the incidence of vandalism is traditionally high (e.g., Halloween, winter months, evenings and weekends). This gives youth an alternative to "driving around," and possibly becoming involved in vandalism.

2. Recognize that some spectator sports events may build up frustrations and anger to the point where they could be vented in the form of vandalism towards the opponent's school facility. In these cases, consider scheduling events on a weekday afternoon or early evening, when kids are less likely to commit vandalism.
3. Educate the public to the costs of school and church vandalism. Impress on parents and youth that they are the ones who ultimately will pay for repairs or added costs of security.
4. Educate youth and the general public to the characteristics of vandalism as described in this report. Expand the civics curriculum to more adequately teach the laws on vandalism and the obligations of witnesses. Begin the education process at the primary and junior high school levels when students prone to malicious vandalism generally get their start.
5. For church youth groups, give emphasis to participatory activities that offer outlets for youth energies. Seek to expand the base of active participants.
6. Seek out alternative ways for youth to vent anger and frustration through productive channels. One possibility may be to give youth a greater role in planning and deciding on programs affecting them. Communications is important. Give youth a voice in deciding how to respond to the youth vandalism problem!

For other clubs and organizations, such as 4-H, career exploration clubs, and scouting, the emphasis could be placed on nurturing increased respect for other people's property, supporting efforts to expand youth programming, or improving public education in regards to youth vandalism.

1. One way to increase respect for private and public property may be to involve youth in community fix-up and clean-up projects. Youth may be less likely to destroy property that they had a hand in fixing up. These projects could also have the benefit of countering community anxieties about youth vandalism and raising confidence in the strength and stability of the community.
2. Donate resources and personnel to community youth activity projects. Examples of these could be development of winter ice rinks, softball fields, municipal swimming pools, or community centers.
3. Organize public meetings to describe and discuss the youth vandalism problem. Involve youth, parents and the general public in open discussion with the objective of coming up with a plan of action to counter the problem.

APPENDIX

The Minnesota Rural Youth Vandalism Questionnaire

MINNESOTA RURAL CRIME QUESTIONNAIRE

General Information

Crime in Minnesota's rural areas is reported to be increasing. People in your community, in cooperation with several statewide organizations, are conducting a survey to learn more about this problem. You are one of 1,000 young Minnesotans asked to participate in this study. This is why your cooperation is so very important to the success of this project. Please help us by answering, to the best of your ability, all questions that follow.

Confidentiality

We guarantee that all of your responses will be held in strict confidence. Under no circumstances will the responses of any individuals be reported separately. Individual questionnaires will not be seen by teachers or law enforcement officials from your community.

General Instructions

1. Please read the instructions at the beginning of each section.
2. Please complete the questionnaire in private, without consultation or comment with others.
3. If you do not understand a question, turn this copy of the questionnaire face down on your desk and ask the person administering the questionnaire to help you.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF YOUR COMMUNITY?

First, we would like your opinion about what you believe the future of your community should be like. Community is defined as the town in which you attend school including the neighboring towns and rural areas within your school district.

1. In your opinion, what do you think is the best thing about the community you live in?

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2. In your opinion, what do you think is the worst or least attractive thing about the community you live in?

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3. When you get out of high school, where do you think you will settle down and live? (Check only one place or write-in a place on the line below.)

- The community you now live in
- A small community within 50 miles
- Twin Cities
- Some other part of Minnesota
- Outside of Minnesota
- Don't know yet
- Some other place (write-in your choice) \_\_\_\_\_

4. For what reasons did you say that you want to live there?

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5. What do you plan to do when you get out of high school?

Find a job  <input type="checkbox"/>	Go on for further schooling (college or Vo-Tech)  <input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure  <input type="checkbox"/>
5A If you said find a job  What kind of job or occupation were you thinking about?	5B If you said go to school  What field or major do you plan to pursue?	5C If you said not sure  What do you think you might try to do when you get out of high school?

6. In what ways do you think the community you live in will have to change for it to be the kind of place where you would want to live?

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7. Are there things about the community you live in that you like and would not want to see changed?

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8. Life in and around the community you live in (please check one box to describe how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements).

a. The best thing that can happen around here in the future is that it stays exactly as it is now.

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Don't know  Agree  Agree strongly

b. There is a strong need for the improvement of the services and facilities around here.

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Don't know  Agree  Agree strongly

c. This area has many changes that need to be made before a person can live a really satisfying life here.

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Don't know  Agree  Agree strongly

d. This area is very close to being the kind of place I would hate to leave.

Strongly disagree  Disagree  Don't know  Agree  Agree strongly

9. If you had the power to "wave a magic wand" to improve a big problem in this community, what would it be?

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10. What grade are you in now?  7  8  9  10  11  12

11. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

12. What is your sex?  Male  Female

13. Who do you live with now?

Both parents  Mother and stepfather  Foster parents  
 Mother only  Father and stepmother  Group home or institution  
 Father only  Other relatives  Other \_\_\_\_\_

14. What is the approximate age of your parents?

- 20-30    40-50  
 30-40    50-60    over 60

15. Where do you live now?

- On a farm    In the country, but not on a farm    In a town

16. How long have you lived in this community? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Were you born in this area?    Yes    No

18. What clubs and organizations do you currently belong to or have you belonged to during the past year?

Out of school

- 4-H  
 Girl Scouts  
 Explorer or Boy Scouts  
 Athletic team not associated with school  
 Church youth group  
 Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

In school

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
6. \_\_\_\_\_

19. Do you belong to a church?    Yes    No

a. If yes, what denomination? \_\_\_\_\_

b. If yes, how often do you attend religious services? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. What are your primary reasons for attending or not attending church?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

20. Describe your present attitude toward your parents. Is it one of (check the most appropriate box):

- Very strong attachment  
 Considerable attachment  
 Mild attachment  
 Mild hostility  
 Considerable hostility  
 Very strong hostility

**VANDALISM**

Almost everybody, young and old, breaks some laws, rules and regulations during their lifetime. Some of us break them more frequently, others less often.

The following questions are asked, in confidence, to help us better understand vandalism and how people become involved in committing acts of vandalism. The definition of the term "vandalism" used in this questionnaire is:

"...the willful or malicious destruction, injury, disfigurement or defacement of any public or private property, real or personal, without consent of the owner or person having custody or control, by cutting, tearing, breaking, marking, painting, drawing, covering with filth, or any other such means as may be specified by local law."

Please continue and answer each question to the best of your ability.

21. Have you ever slightly damaged or marked up someone else's (or public) property (for example, spray painting over a road sign)?

- Yes    No

If yes, how many times have you committed things like this?

- 1  2  3  4  5  6-10  More than 10

22. Have you ever seriously damaged or even destroyed property — like breaking all the windows in somebody's house?

Yes  No

If yes, how many times have you committed things like this?

1  2  3  4  5  6-10  More than 10

23. If you have been involved in vandalism, how many different property owner's properties were vandalized?

1  2  3  4  5 or more  Don't know

24. Have you participated in committing any acts of vandalism during the last year?

Yes  No

25. Approximately how old were you when you can first remember committing an act of vandalism?

Under age 10  15  
 11  16  
 12  17  
 13  18  
 14

Would you describe, as you remember, the most recent act of vandalism in which you participated?

26. In what year did it happen? \_\_\_\_\_

27. In what month did it happen?

September  December  March  June  Don't remember  
 October  January  April  July  
 November  February  May  August

28. On what day of the week did it happen?

Monday  Tuesday  Wednesday  Thursday  
 Friday  Saturday  Sunday

If you are not certain, was it?

On the weekend  During the week

29. At what time of the day did it happen?

Morning (6 am - Noon)  Afternoon (Noon - 6 pm)  
 Evening (6 pm - 10 pm)  Night (10 pm - 6 am)  
 Don't remember the time

30. How many people were present?

Self, only  Four persons, including self  
 Two persons, including self  Five persons or more, including self  
 Three persons, including self  Don't know how many were present

31. How many males were present?

0  1  2  3  4  5 or more  Don't know

32. How many females were present?

0  1  2  3  4  5 or more  Don't know

33. Were any of those present in the group relatives of yours?

Yes  No

If yes, specify their relationship to you \_\_\_\_\_

34. Had anyone in the group been drinking alcoholic beverages?

Yes  No  Don't know

If yes, was the alcohol:

Beer  Wine  Hard liquor  Some combination

Don't know the type of alcohol  Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

35. Had anyone in the group been using drugs?

Yes  No  Don't know

If yes, was the drug:

Marijuana  Uppers  Downers  Heroin or other narcotic

Some combination of above  Don't know type of drug

Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

36. Where did this act of vandalism take place? Was it (check the appropriate box):

At a residence in a rural area

At a farm building, such as a barn

At a rural business place

On public property in a rural area

At a residence in a town or city

At a business place in a town or city

On public property in a town or city

Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

37. Describe the place where this act of vandalism occurred. (Check all appropriate boxes.)

In sight of other residences  Out-of-doors

On a well traveled road  Inside a building

Near paved highway  Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

In an isolated area \_\_\_\_\_

38. Could the damage be seen from the road?

Yes  No  Don't know

39. Was private property vandalized?

Yes  (If yes, go to Question 40) No  (If no, go to Question 42)

40. If private property was destroyed or defaced, did you or any member of the group know the owner?

Yes  No  Don't know

If yes, was the owner (check all appropriate boxes):

A neighbor  Someone known by sight, but not a friend

A family friend  Someone with whom there had been a disagreement

A relative  Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

41. Specifically, what kind of private property was vandalized? (Check all appropriate boxes.)

Residence in city or town  Farm buildings

Unoccupied residence or building  Farm equipment

Rural residence  Yard and garden equipment

Mobile home  Farm crops

Business place  Farm animals

Lawn  Farm tractor

Shrubbery  Mail box

Trees  Garden

Fences and gates  Road signs

Motor vehicle  Pets

Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

42. Was public property vandalized?

Yes (If yes, go to Question 43)  No (If no go to Question 45)

43. If public property was vandalized, identify the type of property (check all appropriate boxes).

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cemetery             | <input type="checkbox"/> Church              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Country club         | <input type="checkbox"/> Government building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Road signs          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library              | <input type="checkbox"/> Township hall       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Park or playground   | <input type="checkbox"/> School              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify _____ |  |

44. What public property was vandalized? (Check all appropriate boxes.)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Books and papers                | <input type="checkbox"/> Motor vehicle        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Shrubbery            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cemetery markers and tombstones | <input type="checkbox"/> Signs                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Trees                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fences and gates                | <input type="checkbox"/> Windows              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawn                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mail box                        |   |

45. How close to where you live did this act of vandalism take place?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Within 500 yards       | <input type="checkbox"/> Five miles to ten miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 500 yards to one mile  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ten miles to 30 miles   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One mile to five miles | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 30 miles           |

46. How did you get to the place or places where the act of vandalism was committed? (Check all appropriate boxes.)

- |                                     |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walked     | <input type="checkbox"/> Car        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle    | <input type="checkbox"/> Truck      | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle | <input type="checkbox"/> Snowmobile | _____   |

47. How do you view your participation in committing this act? Was it:

- A game or a contest
- A practical joke
- Getting even with the property owner or the person responsible for the property
- The result of committing a more serious crime
- An attempt to draw attention to some problem or issue
- A crime
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

48. What suggestions or comments do you have for others who may be in a position to enter or not enter into committing an act of vandalism?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

49. What suggestions do you have for property owners to prevent or discourage vandalism?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

50. Have you ever committed other acts which you think might be against the law? (Please check all that apply.)

- |   | Yes                      | No                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Hit and shoved somebody around a few times without injury?                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Taken little things (worth less than \$2.00) that did not belong to you?           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Soaped up windows, or spread toilet paper on someone's lawn, trees, or bushes?     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Taken things of medium value (worth \$2.00 to \$50.00) that did not belong to you? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- e. Taken things worth more than \$50.00 that did not belong to you?
- f. Beat somebody up?
- g. Used a false ID or one that belonged to someone else?
- h. Damaged or destroyed property, either private or public?
- i. Illegally purchased alcohol?
- j. Illegally driven a car?
- k. Broken into a home or business?

51. Have you ever witnessed an act of vandalism and not reported it to law enforcement or school authorities?

Yes  No

52. If you answered yes to Question 51, why did you choose to not report it? (Check all appropriate boxes.)

- Did not feel it was serious enough
- Did not want to get someone in trouble
- Did not realize it was a crime
- Afraid of reprisal or loss of friendship
- Thought I might be blamed for vandalism
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

53. Have you ever been caught for committing an act of vandalism?

Yes  No

54. If you answered yes to Question 53, was it by:

- Law enforcement (sheriff or police)
- School personnel (teacher, principal, janitor, etc.)
- Your parents
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

55. If you were caught for committing an act of vandalism, what was the final outcome?

- Counseled or reprimanded but no charges were made
- Charged and ordered to appear in court
- Released to the custody of your parent or guardian
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

You have completed the questionnaire

Your contribution of time and effort are sincerely appreciated

Thank you for your cooperation

**END**