

2017

Marijuana Enforcement in Nebraska (2013-2015)

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UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
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MARIJUANA ENFORCEMENT IN NEBRASKA

(2013-15)

FROM THE DIRECTOR:

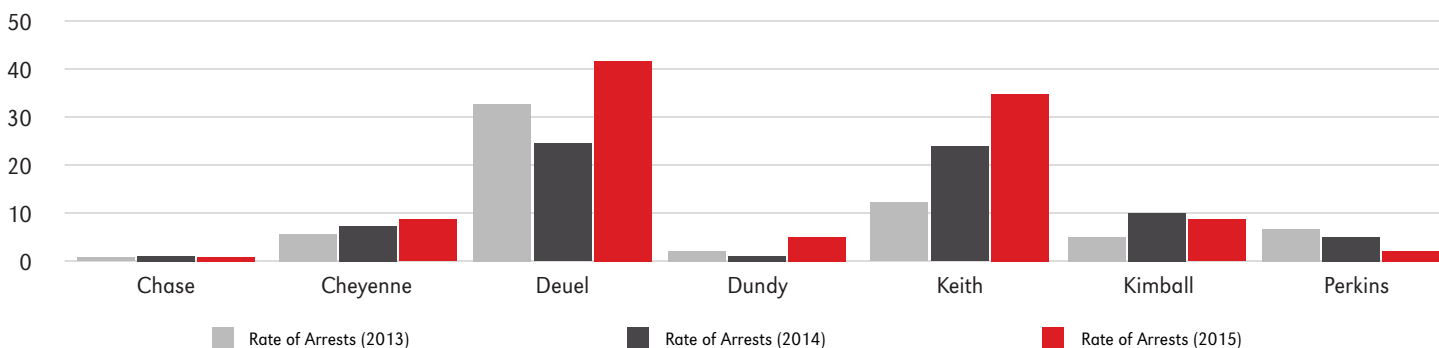
In our 2016 report, Marijuana Enforcement in Nebraska (2009-2014), the Nebraska Center for Justice Research (NCJR) examined whether marijuana-related arrests and jail admissions in Nebraska had increased significantly in the first year of recreational legalization in Colorado, by comparing counts and rates of marijuana-related criminal justice activity in 2014 as compared to 2009-2013. In that report, we found that Nebraska's marijuana arrest rate had increased by about 11% from 2013 to 2014 and that counties along the Colorado border, in the panhandle, and along Interstate 80 had the highest rates of arrest in 2014. We also found that increases in marijuana possession arrests were more substantial than increases in sale/manufacturing arrests. We also looked at marijuana-related jail admissions, finding that counties along the interstate, and to a lesser extent, counties along the Colorado border, saw the largest increases in jailings for marijuana offenses. Finally, we estimated the enforcement costs of marijuana laws in 2014 and found a \$10.2 million increase (11.6%) from 2013 and counties on the Interstate 80 corridor were responsible for most of this increase.

In the current research brief, we continue to track marijuana arrests in a more limited sense. Due to data limitations on statewide marijuana-related criminal justice activities, we reduced our focus to only those Nebraska counties that border Colorado. Examining data from 2013 to 2015, we first find that increases in marijuana arrests are not inevitable in our border counties. Some border counties saw uniform increases, others saw uniform decreases, and others displayed a U-shaped pattern. Second, we find little uniformity in rates of arrests per 1,000 residents across the border counties. Instead, arrest rates vary widely, with the highest arrest rates in 2015 (Deuel County) more than 23 times larger than the lowest rates in 2015 (Chase County). Finally, despite this extreme variation across border counties in arrest rates, Deuel County retained the highest marijuana-related arrest rates in the year before Colorado's legalization of recreational marijuana (2013), as well as the two years for which we have data since Colorado's legalization of recreational marijuana (2014 and 2015). By continuing to track arrests and compare arrests rates across border counties, NCJR hopes to continue the dialogue of how best to regulate the possession and distribution of marijuana in Nebraska.

ARRESTS AND RATES OF ARRESTS (ROA) FOR COUNTIES BORDERING COLORADO: 2013-15

County	Arrests (2013)	ROA (2013)	Arrests (2014)	ROA (2014)	Arrests (2015)	ROA (2015)	Diff. in Rate (2013-15)
Chase	6	1.5	8	2.01	7	1.8	0.3
Cheyenne	61	6.04	74	7.29	88	8.73	2.69
Deuel	63	32.52	47	24.23	80	41.11	5.59
Dundy	3	1.51	1	0.53	11	5.46	3.95
Keith	96	11.81	195	24.01	290	35.6	23.79
Kimball	23	6.21	36	9.7	34	9.14	2.93
Perkins	20	6.85	16	5.53	6	2.05	-4.8

RATE OF MARIJUANA ARRESTS PER 1000 RESIDENTS (2013-15)



RATE OF MARIJUANA ARRESTS PER 1000 RESIDENTS (2013-15) CONTINUED

Highest Rate	County	Number	Rate
2013	Deuel	63	32.52
2014	Deuel	47	24.23
2015	Deuel	80	41.11

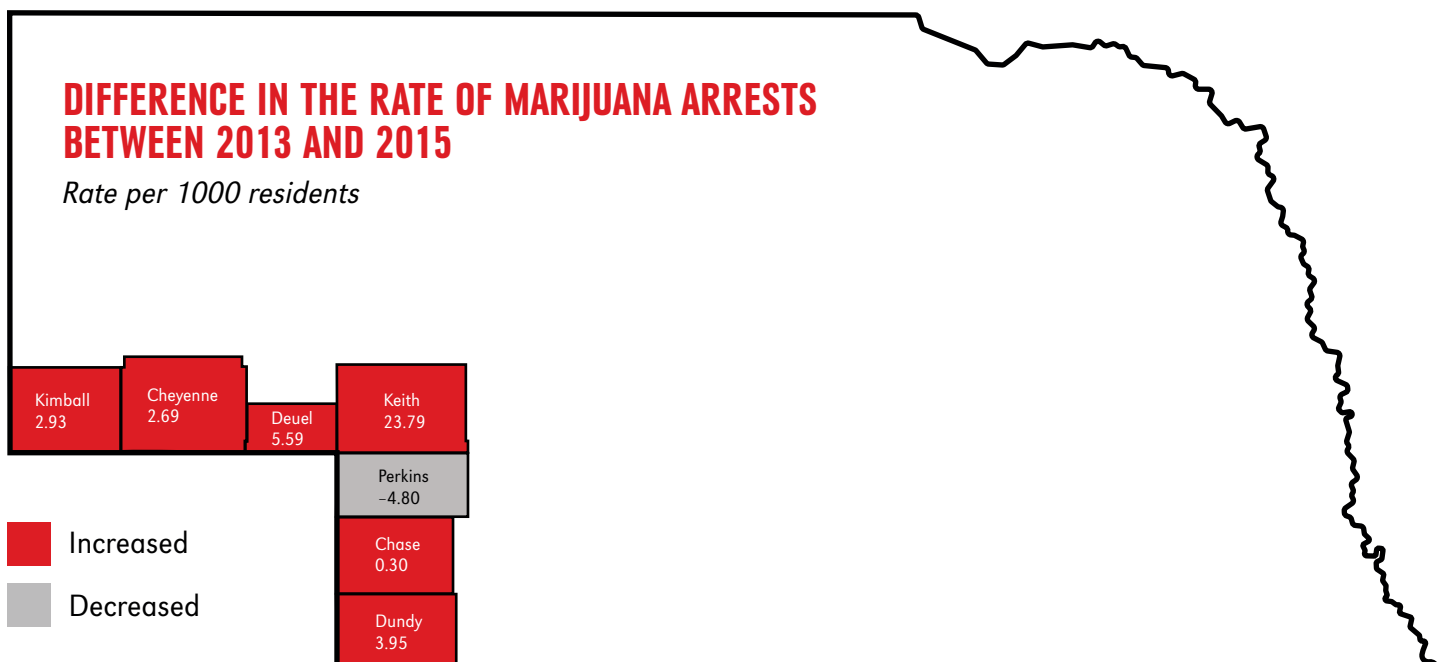
Change in Rate (2013 vs. 2014)	Arrests (2013)	ROA (2013)
Largest Increase	Keith	12.2
Largest Decrease	Deuel	-8.3

Change in Rate (2014 vs. 2015)	Arrests (2013)	ROA (2013)
Largest Increase	Deuel	16.88
Largest Decrease	Perkins	-3.48

Change in Rate (2013 vs. 2015)	Arrests (2013)	ROA (2013)
Largest Increase	Keith	23.79
Largest Decrease	Perkins	-4.8

MAIN FINDINGS

1. The rate of marijuana arrests in three (3) border counties decreased (42.9%) and increased in four (4) border counties (57.1%)
2. Deuel County had the highest rate of marijuana arrests in three consecutive years (2013, 2014, and 2015)
3. Deuel County had the largest increase in the rate of marijuana arrests in 2015 relative to 2014, while Perkins County had the largest decrease





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