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Missouri Bucks Trend of Fewer Executions

(AP) - Use of the death penalty declined nationally in 2013, but the punishment has seen a resurgence in Missouri.

The Death Penalty Information Center on Thursday released a report showing that 39 people were executed in the U.S. in 2013, just the second time in 19 years that fewer than 40 were put to death.

Missouri has executed two men in the past month - Joseph Paul Franklin on Nov. 29 and Allen Nicklasson on Dec. 11. The executions were the first in Missouri since 2011, and the most in a single year since five in 2005.

Meanwhile, the number of new U.S. death sentences so far this year is 80, up three from 2012 but down from 315 in 1996. Three death sentences were imposed in Missouri in 2013.

Associated Press