

IN THE NEWS

Attorney General Directs Delivery of National Sex Offender Public Registry

Committed to demonstrating the value of criminal justice programs, BJA has recently embarked on a tremendous opportunity to offer citizens critical and timely information on sex offenders nationwide: the National Sex Offender Public Registry (NSOPR). On May 20, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales announced NSOPR in his "First 100 Days" speech at the National Press Club, and directed the Office of Justice Programs' BJA to have at least 20 state public sex offender registries connected and available for use in 60 days. Via web services and the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Global Justice XML which allows systems to "speak" to each other, this national web site will provide parents and concerned citizens with a free-of-charge, reliable national portal to access already existing public state and territory sex offender registries. NSOPR will not collect or retain any control over sex offender data, and there will be no cost to the state or territory to link to the national site. For details on this high value public safety initiative contact David Lewis, BJA Senior Policy Advisor for Justice Information Sharing, at (202) 616-7829.

RESOURCES

National Drug Threat Assessment Reflects State, Local Data

The National Drug Intelligence Center produces the National Drug Threat Assessment (NDTA) in partnership with federal, state, and local agencies. To accurately depict the domestic drug situation, the report merges foreign and domestic counterdrug information on domestic drug trends, as well as the most current data from public health agencies regarding national substance abuse indicators. The 2004 report draws on information from more than 3,400 state and local law enforcement agencies and thousands of personal interviews with law enforcement and public health officials. The full NDTA can be found at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic>.

National Institute of Justice Hosts Research and Evaluation Conference

The Office of Justice Programs' National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Annual Criminal Justice Research and Evaluation Conference will be held on July 18 - 20, 2005, in Washington, D.C. This year's conference on Evidence-Based Policies and Practices will offer participants the opportunity to discover what's happening with the latest research while learning what is and isn't working in the justice arena. For details, call The Institute for Law and Justice at (703) 684-5300.

The Cost of Gangs

Designed to provide a national and regional picture of the terrible and far-reaching cost of gangs to America's communities, the [2005 National Gang Threat Assessment](#) will help policymakers and law enforcement administrators at all levels better understand the dimensions of the gang problem for future policies and resource allocation. The National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations (NAGIA) conducted the assessment in partnership with BJA and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and the National Drug Intelligence Center.

RECOGNITION

Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor

Last week, the U.S. Department of Justice called for nominations for the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor, the highest national award for exceptional acts of valor by public safety officers between June 1, 2004 and May 31, 2005. The deadline for receipt of nominations is July 31, 2005. Additional information on the Public Safety Medal of Valor, submission form, and process is available on the Office of Justice Programs' website at www.ojp.usdoj.gov.

FOCUS ON THE FIELD

The Tennessee Office of Criminal Justice Programs provided funding for the Davidson County/Nashville Mental Health Court (DCMHC), the first specialized mental health court in the state. The project provides mentally ill offenders with a trained and dedicated judge, prosecutor, defender, mental health specialist, and probation officer. On acceptance into DCMHC, forensic evaluations are ordered, with specific and detailed mental health treatment plans later developed to divert clients from incarceration. In 2003 - 2004, over 280 offenders were served by DCMHC, with a recidivism rate of nearly 6 percent. For details, email Ayisa Crowe, BJA State Policy Advisor, at Ayisa.Crowe@usdoj.gov.

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Justice Today is an e-publication of the Bureau of Justice Assistance. For comments or questions regarding this issue, contact Matthew Hanson at: Matthew.Hanson@usdoj.gov.