



ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
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ATF'S EFFORTS TO COMBAT GANG VIOLENCE IN MINNESOTA

ST. PAUL, Minn. – Special Agent in Charge Bernard Zapor of the St. Paul Field Division, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), announced today the 2006 results and ongoing ATF efforts toward combating gang violence in Minnesota.

During 2006, ATF, working in partnership with law enforcement throughout the state, was able to combat gang violence in communities. Following are some examples of the cases being worked throughout the state:

- ATF and the St. Paul Police Department have created a task force to combat firearms-related crime. Approximately 75 percent of the crimes investigated by the task force are gang related. ATF is working proactively to remove weapons from convicted felons, documented gang members and drug dealers.
- ATF and the Lake Superior Drug Task Force have been working in the Duluth area and achieving long-term success. There have been more than 100 prosecutions of drug and gun-related defendants. The Lake Superior Drug Task Force was created by ATF and local law enforcement to combat the influx of drugs, guns and violence from street gangs in Chicago and Detroit.
- In Minneapolis, ATF, the Minneapolis Police Department, the FBI and other law enforcement and prosecutor partners are working as part of a national program known as Violent Crime Impact Teams (VCIT). VCIT uses innovative technology, analytical investigative resources and an integrated federal, state and local law enforcement strategy to identify, disrupt, arrest and prosecute the most violent criminals in 25 U.S. cities. In Minneapolis, the program is known as the Violent Offender Task Force (VOTF). Statistics for VOTF's efforts in Minneapolis in 2006 show:
 - 241 arrests, 91 federal indictments, 46 state charges
 - 130 guns recovered

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During 2006 there were a number of successful prosecutions of gang members. Some of the most notable are:

- Detroit Boyz - One member pleaded guilty in October to possession of one kilogram of cocaine and possession of a handgun.
- Shotgun Crips - Ten federal indictments resulted in more than \$1 million in seizures and the slowing of the historical murder trend with the rival Vice Lords gang. Members were sentenced to prison terms exceeding 10 years, including one who was sentenced to 13 years in May for kidnapping and torture, and another who was sentenced in April to 10 years in federal prison for his role in a drug conspiracy and seven years in state prison for manslaughter.
- Vice Lords –Ten federal indictments. Members sentenced to prison terms exceeding 10 years.
- Gangster Disciples – Eleven federal indictments, including one member who pleaded guilty in November to possession of 10 kilos of cocaine and one who pleaded guilty in June to possession of one kilogram of crack cocaine and two firearms.
- Murder Mob - Two members pleaded guilty to their involvement in a double homicide. One was sentenced in September to 10 years in prison and one pleaded guilty in October and is awaiting sentencing.

“ATF’s mission is to prevent terrorism, reduce violent crime and protect our nation. This is accomplished by working directly and through partnerships with other federal, tribal, state, local and foreign law enforcement agencies,” Zapor said. “We recognize the role that firearms play in violent crimes and we are the only federal agency with the ability to attack the firearms portion of the problem with both a law enforcement and a regulatory strategy.”

“Our law enforcement strategy focuses on armed violent offenders and career criminals. Our regulatory strategy seeks to curb the illegal purchase and use of firearms and strives to insure that federally licensed firearms dealers are in compliance with the federal laws.”

ATF recognizes that enforcement efforts need to be combined with prevention in order to successfully combat the problems of gangs in our communities. ATF has supported the G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) Program since 1992. G.R.E.A.T. is a structured school-based program aimed at reducing violence and gang activity.

More information on ATF can be found at www.atf.gov

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