



# ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives  
St. Paul Field Division

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## **ATF'S EFFORTS TO COMBAT ARMED VIOLENCE IN NORTH DAKOTA**

FARGO, N.D. – 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 armed violence throughout the region and nation.

In North Dakota during 2006, ATF working in partnership with law enforcement throughout the state was able to combat firearms violence in our communities. Following are just a couple examples of the cases that were worked throughout the state:

- ATF, the West Fargo Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) worked a multi-defendant case involving the Mexican Mafia DTO gang. As a result of a two-year intensive investigation, 26 people were found guilty of a variety of charges, including continuing criminal enterprise, federal firearms and narcotics violations. All 26 have been sentenced - - with two receiving life sentences, two receiving sentences of more than 300 months and two receiving sentences exceeding 200 months. As a result of this investigation, seven firearms, more than \$8,500 in cash, 446 rounds of ammunition and more than 15 kilos of methamphetamine were seized.
- In October 2006, one person was sentenced to life imprisonment for methamphetamine distribution and 25 years to run consecutively for utilizing a firearm during a drug trafficking crime. This investigation resulted in the seizure of four firearms, one pound of methamphetamine, one ounce of cocaine, more than \$15,000 in cash and approximately 300 rounds of ammunition.
- ATF and the North Dakota State Patrol worked cooperatively on a case involving four people resulting in the seizure of five guns, three ounces of methamphetamine and 250 rounds of ammunition. In December 2006, one of the people involved in the case was sentenced to 15 years incarceration and five years of supervised release.

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In addition to those listed above, in calendar year 2006 the U.S. Attorney's Office prosecuted 36 other firearms-related cases involving 39 defendants and 124 firearms.

"The law enforcement and prosecutorial relationships in North Dakota add to the safety of all citizens" Zapor said. "We recognize the role that firearms play in violent crimes and share our investigative techniques with all agencies.

"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."

Fargo ATF Resident Agent in Charge Tom Fahy stated "ATF values our partnerships with other federal, tribal, state, and local law enforcement, and this is evident in these successful investigations putting armed violent offenders in jail, and making our streets safer."

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.

"Felons, drug traffickers and other violent offenders who illegally carry firearms pose a grave threat to public safety," said United States Attorney Drew Wrigley. "Each one of these prosecutions helps to insure that North Dakota remains the safest state in the Union."

More information on ATF and its programs to reduce violent crime can be found at [www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov)

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