



## U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney  
Eastern District of Wisconsin*

517 East Wisconsin Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

TTY

414 / 297-1700  
414 / 297-1088

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### **NEWS SUMMARY: LOCAL OFFICIALS TEAM UP WITH NATIONAL LEADERSHIP TO REDUCE GUN CRIME IN OUR COMMUNITY**

The national Project Safe Neighborhoods conference convenes this weekend in Philadelphia and will include a ten-person delegation from the Eastern District of Wisconsin. The conference theme is "America's Network Against Gun Violence," and it brings together over 1,300 law enforcement and community leaders to coordinate efforts to reduce and prosecute gun violence in neighborhoods across the nation.

"Preventing gun crimes is one of the most important priorities for this Administration, and this conference brings together all the federal, state, and local law enforcement officials that work together every day to take violent criminals off the streets and reclaim their communities," said Attorney General Ashcroft.

"I am pleased that the Eastern District of Wisconsin was able to send a delegation to the PSN conference, we are always looking for new and innovative ways to reduce gun violence in our community," said U.S. Attorney Steven M. Biskupic. The delegation included representatives from the U.S. Attorney's Office, Milwaukee District Attorney's Office, Milwaukee Police Department, Racine Police Department, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, Firearm Injury Center, Wisconsin Department of Corrections, CEASEFIRE, and a community member.

**A Record of Increased Prosecutions.** Since this Administration implemented Project Safe Neighborhoods, federal gun crime prosecutions have increased by 32 percent. In 2002, more than 10,600 defendants were charged for violating federal firearms statutes, and 93 percent received prison sentences. Seventy-one percent of those sentenced will spend three or more years in prison. As two-thirds of all firearms crimes are committed by repeat offenders, the increased investigation and prosecution of gun crimes will make our communities more safe by ensuring that those who abuse guns are not free to prey on our citizens.

**New Funding to Combat Gun Violence Across the Nation.** This year, PSN awarded more than \$117 million through five grant programs to hire new law enforcement officers, researchers and community outreach staff in states and counties across the nation. The grants will be implemented by the U.S. Attorneys in 94 federal judicial districts.

**A Comprehensive Approach to Reducing Gun Violence.** Project Safe Neighborhoods is an unprecedented partnership between all levels of government to implement a national strategy to attack gun violence with focus and intensity. While national in scope, each community's PSN task force is working to design and implement a local approach to combat the unique criminal circumstances that the area faces.

Project Safe Neighborhoods relies on a seamless network of law enforcement professionals who utilize a strategy of cooperation and coordination to prevent illegal gun use, as well as to punish violators and put criminals who use guns behind bars. Prosecutors pursue the strongest possible punishment for those who violate firearms statutes. Community partners aggressively educate their constituents, such as youths in at-risk areas, about the consequence of illegal gun violence through services and resources provided by PSN. Since this program began, more than 10,000 people across the nation have received training from PSN to assist in the fight against illegal gun use.

At the conference, local team members were addressed by several senior federal government officials, including Attorney General Ashcroft, Deputy Attorney General Larry Thompson, and the Acting Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, Bradley Buckles. PSN conference training topics ranged from enforcement strategies to get gun violators off the streets, to school programs to prevent violence, as well as community partnership building to share ideas and resources.

The conference is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice in partnership with the International Association of Chiefs of Police, National District Attorneys Association and the National Crime Prevention Council. To find out about more about PSN and its local programs, visit the PSN website at [www.psn.gov](http://www.psn.gov).

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For more information contact:  
United States Attorney Steven M. Biskupic  
Media Liaison Francia A. Wendelborn

