



Department of Justice

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LOCAL PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS TEAM RETURNS FROM NATIONAL CONFERENCE WITH NEW TRAINING & RESOURCES TO FIGHT GUN CRIMES

Jacksonville, Florida – U. S. Attorney Paul I. Perez of the Middle District of Florida, along with thirteen members of the federal, state, and local Project Safe Neighborhoods team, returned from the Justice Department conference in Philadelphia this weekend. More than 1,300 prosecutors, law enforcement officials, and community leaders attended the national conference to coordinate local strategies to prevent gun violence and take criminals who use guns off our nation's streets.

At the conference, local team members were addressed by several senior federal government officials, including Attorney General John Ashcroft, Deputy Attorney General Larry Thompson and the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Bradley Buckles.

“This conference was an important tool in bringing together all those who work to eliminate illegal gun use and make our streets more safe,” said Attorney General John Ashcroft, who spoke at the conference. “The team of community, state and federal leaders and law enforcement officials will ensure that offenders face hard time in prison.”

“We have already put a number of violent gun offenders behind bars and as our team effort continues to gain strength we believe our communities will become even safer,” added U.S. Attorney Paul I. Perez, who headed the delegation of local, state and federal members from the Middle District of Florida.

The following local grants were presented to local agencies at the conference:

- “Media Outreach and Community Engagement” - Florida Regional Community Policing Institute at St. Petersburg College (\$170,000 over 2 years)
- “Research Partner/Crime Analyst” - Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) (\$150, 000 over 3 years)

The Project Safe Neighborhoods conference provided training on topics from enforcement strategies to get gun violators off the streets, to school programs to prevent violence, to community partnership building initiatives. The conference continues Project Safe Neighborhoods' unprecedented coordination between all levels of government to implement a national strategy to prevent gun violence on a local level, and pursue the strongest possible punishment for those who violate firearms laws.

The national PSN conference was 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.

For more information and a list of local PSN participants, please visit the PSN website at www.psn.gov.

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Note: Attached is a picture of the delegation from the Middle District of Florida. U.S. Attorney Paul I. Perez is on Mr. Ashcroft's right side and First Assistant James Klindt is on Mr. Ashcroft's left side.