



ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Nashville Field Division

FY-08-025

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For Immediate Release

www.atf.gov

April 21, 2008

GUN HOTLINE ANNOUNCED IN HAMILTON COUNTY, TENN.

Joint effort focuses on school safety, promoting a violence free learning environment

CHATTANOGA, Tenn. — Today, gun free school zone posters with the theme “Be Cool...Don’t Let Guns Rule,” will appear in all public schools in Hamilton County, Tenn. The new initiative will aid in keeping guns out of schools, thus allowing students and teachers to focus on learning. As students walk their school hallways, they will see new posters on bulletin boards warning against bringing firearms onto school campuses.

The poster highlights ATF, the Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office, Crime Stoppers and Hamilton County Schools’ emphasis to keep guns out of schools and fully investigate any reported incidents. The Be Cool...Don’t Let Guns Rule campaign allows anonymous callers to report what they see or hear. Students are encouraged to report firearms they see or hear about to Crime Stoppers at (423) 698-3333 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

ATF Special Agent in Charge James Cavanaugh said that, “The time period between preventing an act of violence and having one erupt is a matter of seconds. This program is a simple, yet effective tool in helping keep schools safe. Our partnership aims at a quick response to any reported information, a thorough investigation and ultimately getting the school day back to normal.”

“This is a great partnership to keep our kids safe,” said Dr. Jim Scales, superintendent of the Hamilton County Public Schools. “In our strategic plan, one of our goals is to engage kids in order to keep campuses safe. This puts us a step closer.”

Callers to Crime Stoppers can remain anonymous and qualify for a \$500 reward if their information leads to the recovery of a firearm from a school campus or an arrest. Besides the hotline, illegal guns on any public school campus in Hamilton County can always be reported to any school resource officer or other school official. The hotline is also expected to help authorities identify and investigate other criminal activity within and beyond the scope of the immediate classroom.

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“This is another effort through communication and cooperation with other agencies to accomplish a common goal,” stated Hamilton County Sheriff Allen Branum. “This initiative, however, should not be viewed as a complete solution, but it certainly can be effective in reducing crime. The issue of guns in schools is a community problem and should be a community concern as well.”

The poster, which was designed by ATF, strongly warns that bringing a firearm onto any school campus, including after hours school-related events (i.e., football games, plays, etc.), is a violation of both state and federal law. It is also a violation of both state and federal law to provide a firearm to anyone who then brings the gun to a school campus. The Be Cool...Don't Let Guns Rule program successfully operates in three counties in the Nashville area.

To further complement the program, an additional asset will also be available to help identify the presence of firearms in area schools. ATF Explosives Detection Canines is another tool capable of locating firearms, ammunition and explosives in a variety of settings and situations.

For more information on ATF visit and its programs visit www.atf.gov.

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