



PRESS RELEASE

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Attorney General Names Tampa One of 15 Cities to Receive a New Federal Initiative Aimed at Reducing Crime

Tampa, FL – Paul I. Perez, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Florida, Ralph C. Ostrowski, Special Agent in Charge of the Tampa office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and Tampa Police Chief Stephen Hogue announced today that Tampa is one of 15 communities in the United States that will be the focus of a new federal initiative aimed at targeting violent crime that was announced earlier today by Attorney General John Ashcroft and ATF Director Carl J. Truscott. The goal of the initiative, called VCIT, or Violent Crime Impact Team is to have ATF led teams consisting of Tampa Police, DEA, FBI, US Marshals, State and Federal Probation and Parole Investigators work in conjunction with the US Attorney's Office and the State's Attorney's Office to identify and arrest the most violent offenders in the city of Tampa.

“This initiative has the full support of the U.S. Attorney's Office and the federal prosecutors in Tampa shall vigorously and aggressively use our powerful federal gun laws to prosecute and convict these violent offenders who carry guns on the streets of Tampa,” stated Perez.

Tampa was selected as one of the 15 communities based on a variety of factors including the homicide rate, the violent crime rate and the belief that these teams could make a positive impact on the safety of our citizens. This program builds on the largely successful program, Project Safe Neighborhood (PSN) initiated by President Bush in early 2000.

Project Safe Neighborhoods linked together local, state and federal law enforcement officials, prosecutors and community leaders to implement a multi-faceted strategy to decrease gun crimes. Where Project Safe Neighborhoods is largely reactive, the Violent Crime Impact Team Initiative places emphasis on being proactive; aggressively using state of the art technology,

intelligence resources and traditional enforcement strategies in developing and determining the worst offenders and the areas in which they live and operate.

"ATF, along with our partners in law enforcement, vow to reduce the proliferation of gun violence and drug trafficking and the profit gained from such illegal activities by pooling our manpower and resources, and incarcerating these criminals " commented Ralph Ostrowski, Special Agent in Charge of ATF's Tampa Field Division.

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