



SPRINGFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

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SPRINGFIELD POLICE AND ATF AUTHORITIES ANNOUNCE THE FORMATION OF SPRINGFIELD TASK FORCE TO FIGHT GUN CRIMES

Springfield, Illinois – Springfield Police Chief Ken Scarlette and the Special Agent in Charge Christopher Amon of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives of the Chicago Field Division announced the formation of a new initiative to address local gun crimes. The Springfield Firearms Task Force, a collaborative effort among federal and local law enforcement, is designed to investigate and prosecute violent firearm crimes. The Task Force is comprised of officers from the Springfield Police Department, special agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, as well as sworn federal task force officers from the Springfield Police Department. This unique partnership has been operational since fall 2024, and its efforts have already led to arrests and charges in gun cases throughout the Springfield Metro area including indictments for possession of a firearm as a felon and additional indictments for unlawful possession of a machine gun.

This collaboration will use various investigative techniques to target individuals who are actively involved in, or associated with, firearm-related violence in Springfield and surrounding counties. Individuals identified as being involved in firearm-related violence, including “straw purchasers” who buy guns on behalf of someone else, will be referred to the appropriate prosecutorial office for potential prosecution. The Task Force will also direct its resources to investigate felons who unlawfully possess firearms, drug traffickers who possess and use firearms, and individuals that possess aftermarket devices that convert semi-automatic firearms into machineguns, commonly referred to as “switches”.

The Springfield Police Department has been utilizing within their department an important tool in the investigation of gun violence, the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN), enabling the Task Force to utilize Crime Gun Intelligence to assist in firearms investigations. NIBIN, administrated nationally by ATF, is the only national network which houses interstate automated ballistic imaging. The NIBIN Program automates ballistics evaluations by comparing shell casing evidence collected from shooting scenes, enabling law enforcement to link shooting incidents within their jurisdiction, in neighboring jurisdictions, and to others across the country.

“The Springfield Police Department remains committed to utilizing all resources possible to not only reduce senseless gun violence in our community, but also ensure those responsible are held accountable,” said Chief Ken Scarlette of the Springfield Police Department. “Ongoing relationships with our federal partners of the ATF will act as a force multiplier in our commitment to keep the citizens of our community safe from these heinous crimes.”

“This unique mission, working closely with our local and state law enforcement partners in concert with Springfield Police, is vital to holding accountable those responsible for the gun violence in our communities,” said ATF Special Agent in Charge Christopher Amon, of the Chicago Field Division. “This partnership, in conjunction with the ability to utilize Crime Gun Intelligence via tracing recovered firearms and comparing ballistic evidence within NIBIN, is a game changer. It will help us pinpoint the few individuals responsible for violent crime in the community and hold them accountable.”

The mission of the Springfield Task Force is to conduct investigations utilizing unique expertise, crime gun intelligence and partnership between the Springfield Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to enhance public safety by enforcing state and federal laws as they pertain to illegal firearm possession. This effort brings together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence and strives to make neighborhoods safer by implementing a violent crime reduction strategy strengthening core principles; fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence from occurring, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities and measuring the results.

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