



For Immediate Release

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Treasury Releases Report On 1999 Crime Gun Traces

The Treasury Department today announced the third annual results of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms' (ATF) Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative (YCGII), which last year traced more than 64,000 crime guns recovered in 38 cities, advanced investigations leading to the arrests of firearms violators and traffickers, and provided law enforcement officials the best picture to date of the crime gun problem.

In 1996, President Clinton issued a directive establishing the YCGII, a collaborative program between ATF, state and local law enforcement and prosecutors, to identify and reduce the illegal supply of firearms to youth and juveniles. YCGII was developed in response to the tripling of the juvenile firearms homicide rate from 1985-1994. This year's findings are published in one national report (covering 32 cities with populations greater than 250,000) and individual reports specific to each city involved in the program.

"Investments in crime gun tracing by law enforcement are clearly paying off," said Secretary Lawrence H. Summers. "Firearms tracing has proven itself to be a powerful enforcement tool that leads ATF agents, inspectors and police nationwide directly to criminals, gun traffickers, and violent felons."

The reports are a tool for law enforcement and prosecutors to identify local, regional, and national crime gun trends, and develop enforcement strategies tailored to the needs of specific areas. They are also useful to federally licensed firearms dealers who can use the information in the reports to develop sounder and safer business practices. The reports' findings also inform the public about the crime gun problem and the enforcement activities addressing it.

ATF Director Bradley A. Buckles said, "Technology has opened a new era in attacking the criminal misuse of firearms. Crime gun and ballistics information gives ATF and our partners powerful new tools to solve and prevent violent crime."

Findings of this year's reports include:

- Approximately 43 percent of crime guns traced were recovered from individuals under 25 years old. Of those traced guns, approximately 9 percent were recovered from juveniles (ages 17 and under), and 34 percent from youth (ages 18-24).
- Approximately 11 percent of traced guns were recovered from possessors who had purchased those firearms from Federal firearms licensees. About 89 percent of traced crime guns changed

hands at least once before recovery by law enforcement. Such transactions may be lawful or unlawful.

- Handguns sold by licensed gun dealers during transactions involving the transfer of more than one firearm accounted for 22 percent of guns traced in 1999.
- Newer guns, those manufactured in the U.S. from 1993-1999, account for more than half of all crime guns traced in YCGII.
- Semiautomatic pistols are used more frequently in crime than other types of firearms, and account for 50 percent of all traced guns.
- Law enforcement recovered approximately 62 percent of all traced guns in the state where the firearms were originally purchased from a licensed firearms dealer.
- Nationally, there are two major "south to north" trafficking patterns. The first is on the East Coast, and flows from the South to Washington (DC), Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York. The second pattern flows from South to Memphis, St. Louis, and Chicago.
- Ten firearms, by manufacturer, caliber, and type, accounted for 24 percent of all trace requests, while over 1,500 firearms and 87 calibers accounted for the remaining crime guns.

The 38 cities included in the 2000 ATF Crime Gun Reports are Atlanta, Baltimore, Birmingham, Boston, Bridgeport (CT), Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver-Aurora, Detroit, Gary, Houston, Jersey City, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Louisville, Memphis, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New Orleans, New York, Oakland (CA), Omaha, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Portland, Richmond, Salinas, San Antonio, San Jose, St. Louis, Seattle, Tampa, Tucson and Washington, D.C.

Next year, the YCGII will include trace data from 50 localities. It is anticipated that the program will include the following new cities: Albuquerque; Austin (TX); Baton Rouge; a triad of Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and High Point (NC); Indianapolis; Jacksonville (FL); a triad of Long Beach, Anaheim and Santa Ana (CA); Nashville; Newark; Oklahoma City; Pittsburgh; and Stockton (CA).

The crime gun trace reports are available through ATF's Public Information Division, (202) 927-8500, or on the Internet at <http://www.atf.treas.gov>.

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