



News Release



For Immediate Release

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FIFTY-FIVE INDIVIDUALS CHARGED; UNDERCOVER OPERATION TAKES GUNS AND DRUGS OFF THE STREETS OF OMAHA

New ATF, Omaha Police Department Task Force is a Major Success in Combating Violent Crime

Omaha, Neb. – The United States’ Attorney’s Office, the Douglas County Attorney’s Office, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Omaha Police Department announced today that 55 defendants have been charged with federal and state crimes including illegal firearm possession, drug trafficking and other offenses.

Over 100 law enforcement officers and agents executed arrest warrants early this morning marking the culmination of a seven-month undercover investigation targeting violent crime in Omaha. The operation focused on convicted felons and other dangerous criminals who traffic guns and drugs in Omaha.

The investigation is the result of a newly formed firearms task force between ATF and the Omaha Police Department. The partnership is focused on reducing violent crime in the greater Omaha area. Omaha Police Department detectives have been deputized as ATF Task Force Officers as a result of the formation of the task force.

The 55 defendants have a total of 2,637 previous contacts with law enforcement, 255 arrests, 52 felony convictions and 151 misdemeanor convictions. The investigation resulted in the seizure of more than 70 firearms and illegal drugs with a street value of over \$50,000. Some of the drugs seized include PCP, methamphetamine, crack cocaine, marijuana and prescription narcotics.

U.S. Attorney Deborah R. Gilg said, “Today marks a significant step in ridding our community of felons, firearms and drugs but there is still much work to do. The joint federal/local taskforce members are to be commended for their outstanding work.”

“These arrests are the result of the hard work and dedication of ATF Agents and the Omaha Police Department,” said ATF Special Agent in Charge Michael P. Gleysteen. “Those who choose crime as a way of life should note that ATF will use every resource to find those who peddle in drugs and violence and remove them from the streets.”

A significant number of the federal and state defendants were arrested during today's early morning operations. The defendants not currently in custody are considered fugitives and are being sought by members of the task force. ATF's Special Response Team (SRT), Omaha Police Department's Emergency Response Unit (ERU), and the Metro Fugitive Task Force participated in the arrests.

"The Omaha Police Department is devoted to keeping the streets of Omaha safe. This new task force is evidence of what can be accomplished by combining local and federal resources," said Omaha Police Department Chief Alex Hayes.

Douglas County Attorney Doug Kleine said, "We are pleased to be a part of this cooperative effort and appreciate the joint work by all of the participating agencies."

Many of the defendants face mandatory-minimum prison terms ranging from 3 to 10 years, depending on the quantities of narcotics alleged and individual criminal histories, and maximum penalties of 20 years to life imprisonment. Most of the federal defendants arrested will make initial appearances in U.S. District Court in Omaha throughout the week. The defendants indicted in Douglas County will make appearances in state court later this week.

The federal defendants will be prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office. The Douglas County Attorney will prosecute defendants charged by the state.

An indictment contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove a defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

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