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**MAYOR LANDRIEU AND CHIEF SERPAS ANNOUNCE PROJECT SAFE
NEIGHBORHOODS ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVE**

New Orleans, LA -- In keeping with Mayor Landrieu's commitment to reduce crime, the Mayor and Chief Ronal Serpas announced the dramatic expansion of resources dedicated to the federally-led, multi-part strategy, Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) to combat gun violence in New Orleans.

"Since taking office we have dedicated our efforts to improving the quality of life for the people of New Orleans," said Landrieu. "Making our streets safe is key to achieving that objective and this new focused strategy is another step in our mission to reduce crime in this city."

PSN, a collaborative project between federal, state and local law enforcement, has been used in cities across the United States, including New Orleans, to reduce violent crime, specifically those involving guns. The new plan, announced today, includes a key part of a narrowly focused enforcement strategy targeted at pursuing violent crime offenders and holding them accountable for their crimes.

"I am really excited about the revitalization of Project Safe Neighborhoods. We have never had this many Detectives dedicated to the PSN concept as their primary duty of targeting convicted felons in possession of a firearm. This is a great example of how joining efforts of law enforcement agencies will produce positive results," said Superintendent Serpas.

Since June 10, the NOPD has assigned one new detective to each of the eight police districts and one in the Special Operations Division, dedicated to evaluating and following up on every firearm arrest in the city. The local ATF, in partnership with

NOPD, has also agreed to liaison one agent to each police district to collaborate with the detectives as they target felons in gun possession cases.

“Our goal is to work hand in hand with our other law enforcement partners to reduce violent crime in our communities. We will aggressively focus on removing firearms from the hands of violent offenders. ATF will provide innovative technology, analytical investigative resources, and additional ATF agents as part of this PSN strategy. We will focus on one neighborhood at a time, one perpetrator at a time, one illegal gun at a time, one gang at a time, and one hot-spot at a time. Only a team effort can succeed, and we are in it for the long haul. We hope the citizens of New Orleans will join our PSN team to make our communities safer places to live,” said ATF Special Agent in Charge Phillip Durham.

Additionally, weekly meetings are held with PSN detectives, ATF liaisons and representatives from the US Attorney and the city’s District Attorney offices to collectively screen each case and determine the best possible avenue for prosecution or how to further their prosecution potential.

US Attorney Jim Letten stated, “Just this week, here in New Orleans, the Attorney General of the United States Eric Holder announced newly focused goals of the successful decade-old strategy. Those goals include, as part of a comprehensive approach, renewed efforts at aggressive enforcement, as well as prevention and reentry for offenders to reduce recidivism. I look forward to forging ahead with our partners, Mayor Landrieu and Chief Serpas, as we build a more effective team than ever before.”

“Illegal weapons are the common denominator in almost every violent crime, and getting those weapons off our streets is a top priority of this district attorney's office. I commend Mayor Landrieu and Chief Serpas for their work with Project Safe Neighborhoods. We have assigned a special prosecutor to the task force because any real solution to the crime problem must be a coordinated effort. Since Chief Serpas took over the NOPD, the relationship between the department and the DA's office has grown stronger than ever. I look forward to the results this relationship will produce,” said District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro.

Another partner in the collaborative is the FBI. “The FBI is committed to investigating violent crime and targeting for investigation the most violent criminals in the city and region. A national priority of the FBI is to support state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies in their efforts to combat violent crime! FBI New Orleans takes this responsibility seriously and has committed to working with Chief Serpas and his staff in their Project Safe Neighborhood program,” said FBI Special Agent in Charge David Welker.

Since its inception the program, which uses a research based model built from the components of several case studies to reduce gun violence through enforcement, deterrence, and prevention, has proven success.

In-depth studies performed in nine cities by the National Institute of Justice found implementation of PSN produced a significant decline in gun related violence, especially compared to those cities that did not implement the program.

An important part of PSN is the ability to adapt to the differences among U.S. communities including the diverse city of New Orleans. Over 17,000 members of the law Enforcement community and related agencies have received training in the program and outreach and accountability are essential components of the initiative.

The National Institute of Justice-funded program utilizes several key ideas to facilitate change across communities. Cross agency buy-in is one of the most important factors incorporated in the success of PSN. "Forming partnerships across department lines is a crucial part of the restoration of trust between our community and members of law enforcement," said Landrieu.

For more information on Project Safe Neighborhoods, please visit www.psn.org.

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