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For Immediate Release

**JOINT INVESTIGATION YIELDS FEDERAL AND STATE INDICTMENTS ON WEAPONS
AND DRUG CHARGES AGAINST TOT LOT POSSE GANG MEMBERS**

Federal, state and local law enforcement officials today announced the results of an 18-month joint investigation of criminal activity involving a gang known as the Tot Lot Posse in Cincinnati's West End community. Over twenty individuals have been named in federal and state indictments and arrest warrants for drug and weapons offenses, and teams of law enforcement authorities have spent the day taking these individuals into custody.

After a dramatic rise in violent crime in the West End in the fall of 2008, statistical analysis of 125 felonious assaults involving firearms and homicide offenses that occurred in District One showed that 20 percent of the offenses involved Tot Lot Posse members as victims or suspects. The Cincinnati Police Department worked with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Ohio Adult Parole Authority, and the Hamilton County Probation Department to identify approximately 70 members of the Tot Lot Posse. During the course of the investigation, ATF agents and Cincinnati police officers purchased or recovered 41 firearms and more than 1300 grams of crack cocaine. The investigation that began in November 2008 has become the largest criminal conspiracy prosecution case in the history of the Cincinnati Police Department.

###MORE###

The ATF and the CPD led the team of investigators that included participation from the US Attorney's Office, Southern District of Ohio; the US Marshals Service, Southern District of Ohio; the Ohio Attorney General's Office of Criminal Justice Services; the Ohio Adult Parole Authority; the Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office; and the Hamilton County Probation Department.

Members of the Hamilton County Probation Department, the Ohio Adult Parole Authority, and the Cincinnati Police Vortex Unit are currently conducting home visits with probationers and parolees to inform them of opportunities, options and assistance in making positive changes in their lives. Today's arrests represent delivery on the promise of the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence: When a member of a group or gang engages in violence, the full resources of law enforcement will be brought to prosecute the entire gang to the maximum extent of the law.

Assistant Police Chief James L. Whalen said, "Today the entire law enforcement community stands united in fulfilling our CIRV promise with the members of the Tot Lot Posse. It is our hope that the West End community will see this as an opportunity to reclaim their neighborhood."

"This is a great example of ATF and CPD working together and removing violent criminals from the streets of Cincinnati. ATF is committed to continuing our support of CIRV," said Brandt Schenken, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, ATF Columbus Field Division.

"Today's arrests continue to show that the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence is working," Mayor Mark Mallory said. "We are going to do what is necessary to keep this community safe."

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