

Southwest Ohio Violent Crimes Task Force Successful in First Year of Operation

(CINCINNATI) -- Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine, Hamilton County Sheriff Jim Neil, Cincinnati Police Chief Jeffrey Blackwell, Woodlawn Police Chief Jeffrey Witte, Lockland Police Chief Jim Toles, and the FBI announced today the success of the Southwest Ohio Violent Crimes Task Force following its first year in operation.

"The detectives assigned to this task force have been working covertly throughout the past year to investigate violent crime in northern Hamilton County," said Attorney General DeWine. "Investigators have successfully taken a number of dangerous criminals into custody over the past several months, and they will continue to aggressively pursue those who threaten those living in area communities."

The Southwest Ohio Violent Crimes Task Force, which was formed in September 2013, is part of the Ohio Attorney General's Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission (OOCIC) and is comprised of local, state, and federal authorities from the following agencies:

- Hamilton County Sheriff's Office
- Cincinnati Police Department
- Woodlawn Police Department
- Lockland Police Department
- Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation
- Federal Bureau of Investigation

Working as part of an OOCIC task force allows agencies to combine their resources and work together across jurisdictional boundaries to investigate criminal conduct.

"This task force embodies our philosophy of 'Cooperation in Operation' where we welcome opportunities to work together with other law enforcement at every level to provide the very best public safety possible for the citizens," Sheriff Neil stated. "I'm proud that extremely violent, dangerous suspects are off the streets and in jail where they belong due to the joint efforts and aggressive policing by this task force."

In its first year of operation, task force members served 197 search warrants, and their investigations have led to 119 indictments. These investigations include ten homicide cases, three of which were considered cold cases. The task force also uncovered a murder-for-hire plot that led to the suspect, Kendall Flucas, being sentenced to 20 years in prison.

While not a drug task force, the group has seized 406 grams of heroin, 10 grams of cocaine, and 31 pounds of marijuana as part of its investigations. Members also assisted many agencies with intelligence, surveillance, investigative expertise, jail access, and technology.

"Crime knows no boundaries, which is why it is essential that law enforcement agencies cooperate regionally to combat violent crime, and this task force has been very successful in doing so," said Woodlawn Police Chief Jeffrey Witte.

Lockland Police Chief Jim Toles added, "Task force members have been working diligently throughout the past year to return the security of our neighborhoods to law-abiding residents, ensuring a safe community to live, work, and enjoy."

The Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office and United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio are also involved in the task force to prosecute defendants charged as part of task force investigations.

"The U.S. Attorney's Office is pleased to be part of this cooperative effort to reduce the levels of violent crime affecting our neighborhoods," said Carter Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio. "By combining our resources and listening to the communities' needs, we can work as partners to prevent violent crime."

The Southwest Ohio Violent Crimes Task Force was recognized during the Attorney General's Ohio Law Enforcement Conference awards ceremony last month, receiving the [Distinguished Law Enforcement Group Achievement Award](#).

Established in 1986, the Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission assists local law enforcement agencies in combating organized crime and corrupt activities. The Commission is composed of members of the law enforcement community and is chaired by the Ohio Attorney General. In 2013, authorities working in OOCIC task forces across the state seized more than \$14 million worth of drugs and more than \$5 million in U.S. currency.