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CEASEFIRE Aims to Reduce KC Gun-related Crimes

KANSAS CITY, MO (April 12, 2001) -Felons with guns are the target of a new public awareness campaign designed to reduce gun-related crimes in Kansas City. The Kansas City Metropolitan Crime Commission along with local, state and federal law enforcement communities announced the launch of CEASEFIRE, an initiative that utilizes TV, radio, outdoor and transit advertising to warn felons of the penalties of carrying guns.

The message of these ads is that felons who carry guns go to federal prison for five years. New print advertising created by Valentine Radford, Inc. shows a burned outline of a gun that reminds felons that "One will get you five." TV and radio ads feature famous defense attorney Johnnie Cochran explaining that even he can't get felons off if they are caught carrying a gun.

Through CEASEFIRE advertising, the law enforcement community aspires to reduce gun-related violent crimes by felons in the Kansas City area by 10 percent.

"Our goal is to deter felons from carrying guns, therein creating a safer environment for local residents," said Rick Cook, Director of the Crime Commission. "If felons are not in possession of a gun, they are less likely to commit violent crimes."

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A program to prevent gun crimes by felons

CEASEFIRE



Programs similar to CEASEFIRE have successfully reduced crime in other cities in the United States, including Milwaukee, Wis.; Richmond, Va.; and Buffalo, N.Y. In Richmond, homicides dropped from 160 in 1994 to 94 in 1998, one year after a similar program launched.

"The ATF's enforcement success in these programs has been achieved through cooperation with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. The Kansas City CEASEFIRE program builds upon these partnerships to deter felons from possessing firearms," said Bradley Buckles, Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

CEASEFIRE marks the first time a coalition of businesses, foundations, neighborhood organizations and the faith community in two states have joined law enforcement and prosecutors to mount a major campaign against gun crimes by felons. Area businesses and organizations have provided in-kind or financial donations to cover the expenses of running the CEASEFIRE campaign. Plans call for CEASEFIRE advertising to continue for three years.

U.S. Attorneys for Kansas and Western Missouri have been actively charging felons caught with guns for more than a year. To date, the program has produced almost 200 prosecutions, The cases also represent at least one-quarter of the criminal docket in federal court.

"We believe that CEASEFIRE has the elements," said Jackie Williams, U.S. Attorney for Kansas, "to make it one of the most successful law enforcement programs in the country ..

"Our ultimate objective with CEASEFIRE is more prevention and less prosecution," said Marietta Parker, interim U.S. Attorney for Western Missouri. "Felons who have paid their debts to society can avoid return trips to court by following CEASEFIRE's simple message to keep guns out of their lives."

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