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MADISON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 4, 2012

Media Advisory

WHO: State's Attorney Tom Gibbons hosting kick-off meeting for next phase in **Project DrugSMART**

WHEN: Wednesday, October 10, 2012, at 10:30 a.m.

WHERE: Madison County Board Room, 2nd-3rd floors, 157 N. Main St., Edwardsville, IL

SIGNIFICANCE: State's Attorney Gibbons, in conjunction with Coroner Steve Nonn, Sheriff Bob Hertz and Regional Superintendent of Schools Bob Daiber, have invited school officials, students, law enforcement, and drug education and treatment providers for a 2012 kick-off meeting of the Madison County **Project DrugSMART** Coalition. The meeting will be an opportunity for all partners to talk about the issues facing Madison County and to discuss possible plans and videos to be used as teaching tools for students, parents and the public.

In 2011, the County officials, along with U.S. Attorney Steve Wigginton, worked closely with the Edwardsville School District in creating the first **Project DrugSMART** drug abuse prevention campaign in Madison County. The goal of **Project DrugSMART** is to create a safe and drug-free environment in schools through student support, deterrence, education and awareness. Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville's (SIUE) Department of Communications helped develop videos showing the devastating effects of drug use. SIUE will again be involved in this next phase with Director of the Alumni Association, Steve Jankowski, assisting on the videos.

"We are hoping to build on the success of 2011 campaign by creating a series of short videos on a range of topics affecting students and school," said Gibbons. "We are reaching out to student leaders for their input to ensure that the videos will be written in a way that speaks directly to their peers."

Gibbons is hopeful that the expansion of the **Project DrugSMART** campaign to the entire Madison County area will be another tool in preventing drug abuse. He sees comprehensive community action as the best way to achieve success. "The key to the extension of this program is leveraging our collective resources and expertise in the areas of education, enforcement and treatment, and student peer influence. By working together, we can achieve the maximum impact on the lives of our students and our community at large."

Sheriff Hertz agrees that bringing these various groups together is imperative in the success of the next phase of **Project DrugSMART**. "Communities that support law enforcement efforts are vital in the fight against heroin and other drugs. We must keep up the pressure in order to prevent drug dealers from coming into our schools."

More information on Edwardsville's **Project DrugSMART**, including the videos, can be found at <http://www.ecusd7.org/drugSMART/index.asp#videos>.

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