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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 16, 2012

Media Advisory

WHAT: Press conference to discuss successful implementation of Line in the Sand and Community Prosecution efforts in Alton, Illinois

WHEN: Friday, May 18th, 2012 at 2:30 p.m.

WHERE: Alton Law Enforcement Center, 1700 East Broadway, Alton, IL 62002

SIGNIFICANCE: State's Attorney Tom Gibbons, U.S. Attorney Stephen Wigginton, Alton Mayor Tom Hoechst, Alton Police Chief David Hayes, Alton City Attorney Allan L. Napp and other officials will hold a press conference on Friday, May 18th, at the Alton Law Enforcement Center to discuss the positive impact of Line in the Sand, a community prosecution effort that aims to remove repeat offenders from the streets.

“This is a perfect example of the cooperative efforts of city, county, and federal agencies responding directly to citizens and neighborhood concerns to take dangerous criminals off the streets. This program is a common sense approach that uses no additional taxpayer funds, yet yields extraordinary results,” stated State's Attorney Gibbons. The original community prosecution project, Weed and Seed, began in 2002 using federal funds as seed money for various local projects designed to weed out crime in three targeted areas of Alton—Hunterstown, Middletown and Mexico. Crimes addressed included gun violence, prostitution and drug trafficking. In addition, housing issues were addressed with the development of a Nuisance Abatement Task Force, which is still active today.

Line in the Sand is a volunteer project between Alton city officials and local law enforcement leaders that began when federal funding ended for the Weed and Seed program. Police, city officials, federal and state prosecutors and federal and state probation and parole officers make up the Line in the Sand Committee, a volunteer group that meets regularly to discuss pending cases of some of the more serious defendants plaguing the city of Alton. Defendants facing state charges are discussed and a course of action is developed to get them off the streets. Where appropriate, cases are referred to U.S. Attorney's Office where a longer prison sentence is a possibility. The goal of the committee is to remove repeat offenders from the streets of Alton so they will not be able to wreak havoc in the neighborhoods and communities of Alton, thus improving the quality of life for residents.

The press conference will offer the opportunity to discuss the success of the program and its impact on Alton. Specific cases, both federal and state, will be discussed.

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