

Wisconsin Department of Justice: AG Schimel continues 72-county tour to discuss public safety in Barron and Douglas counties

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MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Brad Schimel continued his 72-county statewide tour to meet with local law enforcement and elected officials this week with stops in Barron and Douglas Counties on Wednesday, June 21.

“Counties in northwest Wisconsin have been particularly hard hit with the opiate and meth epidemics ravishing our state,” said Attorney General Schimel. “These local meetings are valuable in hearing how health and human services staff and law enforcement are working together, and how the state can be another partner in the fight to make our communities safer and stronger. Local sheriffs and police have become the first stop for many who are having a mental health crisis or struggling with addiction so a successful partnership between law enforcement and health services is critical to the fighting the drug epidemic.”

“Local law enforcement wants to thank AG Schimel for the meeting and for the discussion on ways we can work together to prevent and slow down the meth issue in the county,” said Barron County Sheriff Chris Fitzgerald. “It was clear that this will be a top priority in the coming months for the AG and DCI, and by working together we hope to work towards a solution to help our county.”

Attorney General Schimel and the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) leadership team is meeting with law enforcement and local officials in every county to discuss public safety concerns specific to each county. The challenges faced by law enforcement leaders and the criminal justice system differ from county to county,

even in neighboring communities, making it critical for DOJ to be responsive to public safety needs at the local level. DOJ is local communities' partner in safety, and these meetings aim to discover what resources and efforts DOJ can provide to make Wisconsin safer and stronger.

DOJ financially supports a number of programs to help public safety officials keep the counties safe. In Barron County this year, DOJ has provided nearly \$27,000 to the county drug and alcohol court program, enabling participants to seek support during recovery for substance abuse. DOJ has also provided more than \$44,000 to Barron County to fight heroin and methamphetamine, to be used from later 2015 to late 2018.

Douglas County is part of the Northwest Area Crime Unit Task, along with six other counties (Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Iron, Sawyer, and Washburn). Together, these counties received more than nearly \$183,000 to fight heroin, methamphetamine, and drug distribution.

In attendance at the Barron County roundtable meeting was Judge James Babler, Barron County District Attorney Angela Beranek, Barron County Sheriff Chris Fitzgerald, Mayor of Barron David Vruwink, Cameron Police Chief Michael Lynch, Chetek Police Chief Ron Ambrozaitis, Four Corners Police Chief R.J. Severude, Rice Lake Police Chief Steve Rock, and Turtle Lake Police Chief Alan Gabe.

In attendance at the Douglas County roundtable meeting was Douglas County Sheriff Tom Dalbec and other local government officials.

To see what other counties the Attorney General has visited, and where he will going next, go to: <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/ag-roundtable-map>