

AG Schimel: Concludes 72-county tour to discuss public safety in Waukesha County

Posted on Monday, Aug 27, 2018

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MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Brad Schimel concluded his 72-county statewide tour to meet with local law enforcement and elected officials last week with a stop in Waukesha County on Friday, August 24.

“Even after serving as a prosecutor and the District Attorney in Waukesha County and working with many law enforcement agencies for decades, my conversations with local law enforcement are never ending as the issues our communities are facing are constantly evolving,” said Attorney General Schimel. “These roundtables have given our team at the Department of Justice some incredible insights into public safety challenges communities face.”

Attorney General Schimel and the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) leadership team have met 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 a public safety partner for local communities, and these meetings helped discover what resources and efforts DOJ can provide to make Wisconsin safer and stronger.

A direct result of attorney general’s law enforcement roundtable tour has been DOJ’s increased support in northern and western Wisconsin to fight the methamphetamine or “meth” epidemic, which in some counties has surpassed public safety challenges posed by the opioid epidemic. To help battle the meth epidemic, Attorney General Schimel has:

- Placed three assistant attorneys general (AAGs) in Wausau, Eau Claire and Appleton to assist local district attorneys and law enforcement in the investigation and prosecution of methamphetamine-related cases. The AAG placed in Eau Claire recently successfully tried two offenders for a drug-related homicide in Iron County.
- Hired an analyst at the Wisconsin Statewide Information Center (WSIC) and purchased equipment for investigating meth labs.
- Is providing training and financial support for the efforts of local law enforcement agencies and multi-jurisdictional drug task forces through a \$1.5 million Methamphetamine Initiative Grant from the United States Department of Justice (U.S. DOJ).
- Hired four additional criminal investigation agents who are focused on drug trafficking.
- Increased spending on treatment alternative and diversion courts (TADs) in 51 counties and two tribes, with more than \$6 million provided annually to support these local programs.
- Successfully defended Wisconsin's Unborn Child Protection Act, or 1997 Wisconsin Act 292, which gives county health services agencies the legal authority to assist substance-addicted, pregnant women with their addiction, thus protecting both the mothers and their unborn children. In 2017, Attorney General Schimel persuaded the Supreme Court of the United States to stay a lower court order striking down the law, and has since prevailed in the 7th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in Chicago, which ruled that the law is constitutional earlier this summer.
- Launched the statewide KNOW METH public awareness campaign in collaboration with Marshfield Clinic Health System, the Northwoods Coalition, and the Alliance of Wisconsin Youth with more than \$225,000 in funding. The campaign is aimed at preventing people from using methamphetamine and encouraging those who are addicted to seek treatment.
- Worked with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to place six methamphetamine chemical storage containers across northern and western Wisconsin to assist local law enforcement with meth lab clean up. These special containers will save local law enforcement time, money, and increase the safety and security during a clandestine meth lab response. It is estimated these containers will, on average, help reduce cleanup costs by approximately 90 percent.

"I'd like to thank Attorney General Brad Schimel for taking the time to meet with

law enforcement, judiciary, and elected officials today to discuss important issues affecting Waukesha County,” said Waukesha County Sheriff Eric Severson. “I found the discussion and suggestions to be very helpful to identify solutions to the problems we face. I appreciate the Attorney General’s leadership in holding these round table sessions.”

DOJ financially supports a number of programs to help public safety officials keep Waukesha County safe. This year Waukesha County received \$139,680 to enhance the counties’ alcohol and drug courts, which provide an alternative to incarceration for those struggling with addiction.

DOJ also financially supports Waukesha County crime victim services organizations, ensuring that crime victims are given guidance and counseling as they participate in the criminal justice system. Since 2015, through U.S. DOJ Victims of Crime Act grants, DOJ has distributed more than \$1.03 million to Waukesha County agencies which provide direct victim services.

To see where attorney general visited on the 72-county roundtable tour, go to: <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/ag-roundtable-map>