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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AG Schimel Continues 72-County Tour to Discuss Public Safety in
Chippewa and Washburn**

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 Chippewa and Washburn Counties on Tuesday, June 20.

“As Attorney General, I must be responsive to the public safety concerns at the local level,” said Attorney General Schimel. “In Chippewa and Washburn County, I heard loud and clear that they are struggling with drug abuse in their counties, and need support when it comes to prevention.”

“Attorney General Schimel continues to be a tireless advocate for prosecutors and law enforcement,” said Chippewa County District Attorney Wade Newell. “The law enforcement roundtable provided Chippewa County a forum to discuss ongoing criminal justice issues facing our communities. Attorney General Schimel was attentive to the needs of Chippewa County, and the discussion was productive in coming up with real solutions.”

“This round table discussion planned by Attorney General Brad Schimel and his staff only goes to show the caring and passion that Brad has for understanding the needs of public safety officials across the entire state. Prevention is probably the key in addressing the ever growing drug problems which differ somewhat from county to county. We appreciate the fact that Brad understands this fact and willing to help us in our prevention efforts. We in the North Country appreciate Brad’s efforts and will support him any way we can,” said Washburn County Sheriff Terry Dryden.

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.

In Chippewa County, DOJ financially supports a number of programs to help public safety officials keep the county safe. Chippewa County is part of the West Central Drug Task Force, a six-county drug task force that also serves Eau Claire, Dunn, Pepin, Buffalo, and Clark counties. From 2015 to late 2018, this six-county area will receive more than \$242,000 in grant funds from DOJ to fight heroin, methamphetamine, and drug distribution. In 2017, DOJ also provided more than \$115,000 to support the county's drug court, moving offenders into treatment programs, instead of incarceration in the hopes of reducing recidivism and increasing public safety in the county.

In Washburn County, DOJ provided more than \$115,000 in 2017 to fund the Washburn and Burnett counties' shared drug court. Washburn County is also a member of the Northwest Area Crime Unit, which includes Douglas, Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Iron, and Sawyer counties. From 2015 to late 2018, the Northwest Area Crime Unit will be provided over \$180,000 by DOJ to fight heroin, methamphetamine, and drug distribution in the area. The county also received more than \$12,000 to fund electronic systems that will ensure a more efficient, accurate and timely filing of police referrals by law enforcement for charging and improve arrest tracking throughout the criminal justice process.

In attendance at the Chippewa County roundtable meeting was Senator Terry Moulton, Representatives Kathy Bernier and Rob Sommerfield, Judge Steven Gibbs, Chippewa County District Attorney Wade Newell, Chippewa County Sheriff James Kowalczyk, Bloomer Police Chief Jared Zwiefelhofer, Boyd & Cadott Police Chief Louis Eslinger, Chippewa Falls Police Chief Matt Kelm, Lake Hallie Police Chief Cal Smokowicz, and Stanley Police Chief Lance Weiland.

In attendance at the Washburn County roundtable meeting was State Representative Romaine Quinn, Washburn County Sheriff Terry Dryden, Washburn County District Attorney Angeline Winton, Birchwood Police Chief Adam Brunclik, Minong Police Chief Dennis Stuart, and Shell Lake Police Chief David Wilson.

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