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U.S. ATTORNEY EXPANDS
CEASEFIRE COVERAGE IN SAVANNAH

SAVANNAH, GA: Lisa Godbey Wood, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, announced today that in response to the recent incidents of violent crime in Savannah, the U.S. Attorney's Office will expand its Project Ceasefire coverage in Chatham County. Project Ceasefire is an initiative begun in Savannah by the U.S. Attorney's office in 2000 to reduce gun violence. The project has been expanded district-wide over the years. According to Wood, the Project is an extremely effective tool for prosecuting gun crime and decreasing violent crime. To date, more than 400 individuals have been prosecuted under Project Ceasefire and the conviction rate is 98%. Of those convicted, 99% are sentenced to jail time, and the average jail sentence is just over seven years in federal prison. Because Ceasefire cases are prosecuted in federal court, there is no parole possibility for those sentenced to jail time. "There is little mystery to what jail time you will actually serve in the federal system. If you are sentenced to seven years in federal prison, you can expect to spend seven years in federal prison," Wood explained.

"We would like to have the resources to prosecute every single federal gun crime committed in each of the 43 counties in South Georgia. Obviously, we do not have the resources to pursue every case. However, in response to the recent wave of violent crime in Savannah, our office has agreed to examine for prosecution every case involving a violation of the federal firearms statute in Chatham County," said Wood. "In 2005, our office had one of the busiest years in its history and indicted the highest number of cases ever, but we all have to work even harder to do what we can to combat violent crime," stated Wood. "Fortunately, we have an effective tool in Project Ceasefire and dedicated partners in the ATF, the Chatham District Attorney, the Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department, the Chatham County Sheriff's Office, and the Georgia Parole and Probation Offices willing to use it to the extent appropriate," said Wood.

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