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ANCHORAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT TASK FORCE MAKES PROGRESS TOWARDS SAFER ANCHORAGE

Since the beginning of February, the Anchorage Police Department implemented a Task Force to address an increase in violent crime in Anchorage in the month of January. The APD Task Force is comprised of officers from the APD Community Action Policing Team, the Vice Unit and the Special Assignment Unit. These units are working in conjunction with a variety of other agencies including the FBI, the U.S. Marshals, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the District Attorney's Office, the Anchorage Municipal Prosecutor's Office, Alaska State Troopers, DEA, ATF, Alaska Fusion Center, and State and Federal Probations. Their mission is to suppress violent street crime and arrest those who are responsible for committing these acts.

In just the first week of operation, the Task Force was able to assist APD's Homicide Unit with making arrests in two of the three homicide cases. Of the seven homicide cases in Anchorage this year, there have been arrests made in six of those cases.

As of last Thursday, APD has made 26 arrests and seized 40 guns (either illegal guns or felons in possession) as a result of the Task Force's work. Arrests have been made of citizens with outstanding felony warrants and of those who are engaged in violent crime and activity. Many of the arrests made in shooting incidents have been found to be drug related. For example, on March 6, APD arrested a subject with three outstanding felony warrants – the subject was apprehended by police and found with two ounces of meth. The collaboration of the Task Force has led to the seizure of considerable amounts of illegal drugs, primarily marijuana, and \$35,000 in cash associated with illicit crimes.

In addition, information from the public has been flooding in to Anchorage Crime Stoppers, an anonymous crime tipping program. Since February, Anchorage Crime Stoppers has received 17 tips for drug related cases, 7 tips on homicide cases and 15 tips on assault cases (those include shootings). This information has been extremely helpful for officers in generating case leads and making arrests.

The Task Force will continue to work on suppressing violent street crime in the coming weeks. Community involvement is extremely important in the success of overall public safety. APD asks citizens to contact police for any suspicious activity they witness and to report any crime in progress. It is very beneficial to provide as much detailed information as possible including suspect descriptions, clothing descriptions, license plate numbers and direction of travel. Citizens can also provide completely anonymous crime tipping information through Anchorage Crime Stoppers either online at www.anchoragecrimestoppers.com or by calling 561-STOP.

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