



## Pierce County

### Office of the Prosecuting Attorney

930 Tacoma Avenue South, Room 946  
Tacoma, Washington 98402-2171  
Administration: (253) 798-7792  
FAX: (253) 798-2968

**MARK LINDQUIST**  
Prosecuting Attorney

Main Office: (253) 798-7400  
1-800-992-2456  
Valid only within Washington State

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 5, 2011

### **PROSECUTION OF HILLTOP CRIPS A "VICTORY FOR COMMUNITY"**

Just over a year after the arrest and prosecution of 36 members and associates of the Hilltop Crips, 34 of the defendants have been convicted and sent to prison for a variety of crimes, including Conspiracy, Attempted Murder, Robbery, and Drive-by Shooting. This was the first time in Washington the Conspiracy statute was used to prosecute a street gang.

"I can now say our gang sweep was a major victory for the community," Pierce County Prosecutor Mark Lindquist announced at a press conference in the Pierce County courthouse. "We accomplished our two main goals. First, we convicted 34 gang members and associates who are serving a total of 326 years in prison. Second, even more importantly, we've dramatically reduced gang violence in our community."

Representatives from several law enforcement agencies stood with Prosecutor Lindquist. "This tremendous success is due to the collaborative efforts of members of the Prosecutor's Office, the Tacoma Police Department, the FBI, the South Sound Violent Crimes Task Force, the Department of Corrections, the Lakewood Police Department, and the Pierce County Jail," Prosecutor Lindquist said. "I also want to acknowledge Safe Streets and Congressman Norm Dicks who helped finance the Gang Unit in the Prosecutor's Office through a grant."

Prosecutor Lindquist used charts that illustrated the results of the prosecution. Of the three dozen defendants originally charged, one was referred to the U.S. Attorney's Office, one was dismissed on a deputy prosecutor's motion based on a ruling by a state judge, and the remaining 34 defendants were either convicted at trial or pleaded guilty. The defendants who went to trial received an average sentence of more than 22 years in prison.

"We didn't lose a single trial," Prosecutor Lindquist noted. "This is a testament to the thoroughness of the investigations, the strength of our cases, and the quality of our prosecution."

Prosecutor Lindquist formed the Gang Unit in 2009 to respond to a rise in gang violence. After the highly publicized sweep of the Hilltop Crips in February 2010, the number of gang related crimes dramatically dropped. In 2008, the Prosecutor's Office charged 531 gang related crimes. By the end of 2010, that number declined to 260, a reduction of more than fifty percent, and gang related crimes are still declining in 2011. "We're continuing our vigorous and creative prosecution of violent street gangs," he said. "This is not a good time to be in a gang in Pierce County."

Four deputy prosecutors from the Gang Unit attended the press conference, including Assistant Chief Criminal Deputy Phil Sorensen, lead Deputy Prosecutor Greg Greer, and Deputy Prosecutors Jared Ausserer and Jason Ruyf. Two legal assistants and a victim advocate also serve in the Gang Unit.

For additional information, contact Rebecca Stover at (253)798-4910 or [rstover@co.pierce.wa.us](mailto:rstover@co.pierce.wa.us).

