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U.S. Attorney's
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Northern District of
Indiana

5400 Federal Plaza
Suite 1500
Hammond, IN 46320
219.937.5500

David Capp
Acting U.S. Attorney

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POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Anti-Gang Bill Passes U.S. Senate

09/21/2007 Washington, DC | Sweeping national anti-gang legislation breezed unanimously through the U.S. Senate on Friday in a move that could significantly help Los Angeles' efforts to quell rising violence. The Gang Abatement Act, which underwent nearly a decade of setbacks and negotiations before it passed, would pour \$1 billion into new gang intervention and enforcement programs. For the first time, it also would define criminal street gangs under federal law and make recruitment a felony.

"For more than a decade, I have worked to address the problem of gang violence that cripples so many neighborhoods in our nation," said California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the bill's author and prime sponsor. "With Senate passage of this balanced and comprehensive bill, we move one step closer to providing a federal hand of assistance to those on the front lines."

Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Pasadena, is carrying similar legislation in the House of Representatives, but its fate there remains uncertain. If the House approves a significantly different version, the House and Senate will have to hammer out differences before getting a bill to the president's desk.



Still, the bill's overwhelming approval in the Senate was an enormous victory for supporters. For years it had been under siege, most recently from liberal groups that said the language swept innocent teens up with hardened gang members and failed to adequately fund prevention and intervention programs.

Feinstein made a number of changes to accommodate opponents, including tightening the definition of a street gang to at least five members - each of whom has committed at least one crime over a period of five years. "It strikes a balance. It's taken a while to find that balance, but I think it finally does," said Scott Gerber, a spokesman for Feinstein.

Among the provisions in Feinstein's bill, \$411.5 million would go toward intervention programs. About \$187 million will go to support task forces in neighborhoods determined to be "high-intensity gang areas." About \$175 million will fund intervention grants for states and counties and the rest will fund mentoring and after-school programs.

Full Story: http://www.dailynews.com/news/ci_6966057

Indiana Leader of the Latin Dragons Fatally Shot by DEA

Article published in the Times

09/26/2007 Merrillville, IN | A man fatally shot by a DEA TFO in Merrillville on Monday was identified by authorities Tuesday as an alleged gang member facing state and federal drug charges. Rosalio Rincon, 28, of Chicago, and three others were named in a federal indictment unsealed Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Hammond. The indictment alleges Rincon, Ronald L. Johnson Jr., Joe Ann Johnson and Maria Olimpo conspired to distribute 500 grams or more of cocaine between 2006 and this month.



Rincon was shot by a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration TFO Monday after appearing in Lake Criminal Court that morning on a state cocaine charge carrying a maximum penalty of 50 years in prison. DEA officers said they were attempting to arrest Rincon on Monday afternoon when he tried to hit a DEA TFO with his car near the Southlake mall area off U.S. 30. Fearing for his life, the agent fired one round at Rincon, the DEA said. Rincon was later pronounced dead of a gunshot wound to the chest at Methodist Hospitals Southlake Campus, the Lake County coroner's office said.

Police said it was not the first time Rincon attacked a law enforcement officer. The state charge stems from an Aug. 31 arrest, when Rincon allegedly fled from Highland police Officer Jose Rivas, who said he saw Rincon drive away with a black duffel bag from a residence in the 3500 block of Jewett Street reportedly known for drug activity. After Rivas stopped Rincon and ordered him to park his car, Rincon tried to strike Rivas with the car, according to Rivas' statement. Rivas then fired two shots into the car's rear passenger tire, deflating it.

While chasing him, Rivas said he saw Rincon toss a black duffel from his car, before he finally stopped the car. After searching the car, Rivas found small bags full of 17.4 grams of cocaine and \$952. Police said Rincon later admitted to police to being a member of the Latin Dragon street gang, but he refused to tell police his drug source.

Related Story: Man Killed by Agent was Gang Leader – DEA (The Hammond Times)

The man shot and killed by a drug agent last week during a brief police pursuit was the highest-ranking member of the Northwest Indiana branch of a south Chicago street gang, federal authorities say.

http://www.nwi.com/articles/2007/10/02/news/top_news/docdfd553224f81cd99862573680002c9a1.txt



Schools Fear Reputed Gangster's Funeral

Article published by the Times

09/28/2007 Munster, IN | Whether or not Rosalio Rincon earned his reputation among police as a gang-affiliated drug dealer, his wake and funeral are inspiring fear in Munster. St. Thomas More School canceled classes Monday because of Rincon's funeral next door at Burns-Kish Funeral Home, 8415 Calumet Ave. A letter sent home to parents Thursday called the situation "potentially very dangerous," and warned of "threats of violence."

The School Town of Munster sent a phone message to parents and staff members Thursday warning of a "heavy police presence" near the home. The school system did not alter its schedule, which includes an early dismissal today. St. Thomas More also canceled a slate of extra curricular activities that coincide with the Chicago man's wake today and Saturday. "You can always reschedule a program," said the Rev. Michael Yadron, of St. Thomas More. "You can't reschedule a person's life."

Rincon's mother, Hammond resident Sara Rincon, is angry. She said police and church officials are spreading fear about a man they didn't know, and that her son was a "good person." "There is no reason to fear," she said. "We are not animals." Munster police know of funeral and wake plans, Sgt. Steven Kovacic said. He would not say if Munster police or other officers would increase patrols. But nearby businesses said police visited them to warn of extra officers around the funeral home. And the letter from St. Thomas More says federal agents will "be stationed within the area to protect our citizenry."

Full Story: http://www.nwitimes.com/articles/2007/09/28/news/top_news/doc7b94498f9343b0e38625736400113b1b.txt

Demolition in Chicago May Affect Tippecanoe

Article published in the Exponent

09/07/2007 Lafayette, IN | Two major government-subsidized housing units in the Chicago area have been demolished and Tippecanoe County could be seeing the effects. Officials say the migration of low-income people to the area could put strain on area school systems and on police efforts. It could also mean an influx of gangs.

Although arrests of gang members in Tippecanoe County are on the rise this year, it doesn't necessarily mean there is an increase in gang activity.



One Lafayette Police official calls it a false positive. "That increase could be based upon our proactiveness," said Deputy Chief John Dennis. "We are seeing (gang) graffiti; we have instances where people are reporting it was a gang-based issue." But Dennis said violent crimes linked to gang members are not on the rise. "The numbers aren't there to say, oh my, this is a real issue."

During the past year, West Lafayette has also identified more gang members involved in crimes. According to Lt. Scott Fohr of the criminal investigations division, gang-related graffiti isn't. He says local law enforcement agencies communicate with each other to identify suspected gang members – most of whom are arrested on drug-related charges.

Fohr says the issue could be linked to the lack of government-subsidized housing options in northern Indiana and Illinois. "The situation is Chicago has cleared out a lot of its housing," he said. Although not all gang members live in low-income areas, "The majority of the (gang) members we have identified are from Chicago, the Gary area and Indianapolis."

But a lack of housing options may only be part of the issue. It's possible fliers and advertisements are actually drawing low-income families to Lafayette and surrounding communities. "People were told to come here," said Lafayette mayor Tony Roswarski. "The unfortunate part is some of those folks are coming here for the right reasons to do the right things, but sometimes that's not the case." Roswarski says the city is continuing to work with government-subsidized complexes, some of which are not well maintained.

Full Story: http://www.purdueexponent.org/index.php/module/Section/section_id/17?module=article&story_id=6918



Alleged 'Code Red' Gangbangers Nabbed

Article published by the Indianapolis Star

09/27/2007 Cumberland, IN | Police arrested 14 people after a break-in at an apartment in eastern Marion County. "There were three carloads of them" in the Wednesday night incident, most of whom are juveniles, said Cumberland Police Chief Mike Crooke. The attackers, alleged to be members of a group called Code Red, assaulted a man, entered his apartment in a converted farmhouse on North Starter Street and took cash and other items, Crooke said.

Investigators from the Cumberland and Indianapolis police departments continued to question suspects Thursday about the incident and about other unsolved crimes in the area. The suspects' names have not been released. Crooke said most of those arrested are students at Warren Central High School. He said he has heard of the group, and "Code Red" was spray painted on the side of a Cumberland house that had been burglarized in the summer.

IMPD Lt. Jeff Duhamell said the IMPD Gang Task Force isn't so sure Code Red is a gang but they know little about the group. "We are trying to find out if they're a legitimate criminal gang. We haven't ruled it out, but it could be one or two individuals who (use the term)." This would affect a potential "criminal gang activity" charge, he said. Crooke said some suspects have admitted to committing acts of vandalism, theft and another robbery similar to those reported Wednesday night. "We're not sure of what all the outcome is going to be," Crooke said, "but it will be pretty sizable as far as charges."

Full Story: <http://www.indystar.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070927/LOCAL/70927041>

East Chicago Murder Witness Gunned Down

Article published by the Times

09/28/2007 Hammond, IN | A key witness in this summer's murder trial of a self-described street gang member was himself gunned down on Wednesday night. Luis Joel Ortiz, 22, was shot once in the upper right chest at 11:30 p.m. outside his apartment in the 1200 block of 150th Street and declared dead at St. Margaret Mercy Healthcare Centers an hour later.

Neighbors described Ortiz as a "nice guy" who had lived in the one-story building on the southeast corner of Columbia Avenue since July.

Residents said Ortiz regularly drank beer with other young men in his small apartment, but late Wednesday there was a loud argument, which ended with a man shouting, "No, no," followed by three gunshots. Hammond Police Chief Brian Miller said there were no suspects or a motive for the killing as of Thursday afternoon.

Ortiz was called to Crown Point for testimony in the July murder trial of Steven Ray Santana, who was charged with firing multiple shots into a 15-year-old boy riding his bicycle a block south of East Chicago Central High School on the city's north side in the summer of 2006. He told jurors that he saw Santana, then 20 years old, creep out from between parked cars in the 4200 block of Northcote Avenue with a handgun and fire several shots into the back of Rudolf Swisher as the boy rode past.

Santana testified that he was a member of the Imperial Gangsters organization, and that he had been threatened by Ortiz, who he said was a member of the Latin Kings, a rival gang. Santana denied shooting Swisher, an honor student who was not known to belong to any street gang, but the jury thought otherwise and found him guilty of murder, for which he was sentenced to 62 years in prison.

Full Story: http://www.nwi.com/articles/2007/09/28/news/lake_county/doce1468acc6360f36b8625736400011e8d.txt

Regional 

Teen Gang Member Arrested in School Bus Shooting

Article published by the Battle Creek Enquirer

09/15/2007 Battle Creek, MI | 16-year-old Battle Creek teenager is in custody today, arrested in connection with the Wednesday shooting of a school bus.

Cmdr. Jackie Hampton of the Battle Creek Police Department said the teenager, whose name was not being released Friday, was identified as the person who allegedly fired five shots at the Battle Creek Public Schools bus near Garfield Avenue and West Street. The bus was making a regular run to drop off students from South Hill Academy.

About 5 p.m. Friday, the boy and his mother came to the Battle Creek Police Department and he was arrested. He was interviewed by investigators, and Cmdr. James Saylor said he will be charged with assault with intent to murder, one count for each person on the bus.

Four shots from a .25-caliber semi-automatic handgun struck the side of the bus, but none of the estimated 30 students or the driver was hurt. While police have not determined a motive, Hampton said the suspect "is known to be part of and affiliated with gang activity."

Word said the community should not be surprised there are setbacks in the progress to curtail gang violence. "Once you get over the initial shock, it comes back that we are dealing with humans," he said, "and the community will continue to be tested."

Full Story: <http://www.battlecreekenquirer.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070915/NEWS01/709150324/-1/PHOTOGALLERIES>



FBI: 350 Arrested for Drugs, Gang Crimes in Alabama Raids

Article published by the Associated Press

09/07/2007 DeKalb County, AL | A three-day sweep targeting drug dealing and gang activity in northeast Alabama resulted in the arrest of more than 350 people in what authorities described Friday as the largest such U.S. operation in more than a year. The project, called 'Operation Clean Sweep,' was largely in response to allegations about methamphetamine dealing and Latin American gangs operating in a rural section of DeKalb County, authorities said. More than 40 law enforcement agencies were involved in the raids, which took place in five counties.

Only one verified gang member was arrested and the overwhelming majority of people in custody were U.S. natives. But officers said the mass arrests were the start of a larger investigation that could result in more cases. 'It's not over. There will be a number of leads and a number of investigations that result from this,' said Jim Phillips, an assistant federal prosecutor from Birmingham, located about 90 miles to the southwest.

Assistant FBI Director Kenneth Kaiser said the arrests were part of a national fight against gangs, particularly violent groups that have spread from Latin America to the United States amid a wave of Hispanic immigration. 'This week's searches and arrests represent one of the largest combined law enforcement operations to remove narcotics distributors, gang members and violent offenders from our streets in recent history,' Kaiser said. The arrests were conducted Tuesday through Thursday in Marshall, DeKalb, Etowah, St. Clair and Blount counties.



Rob Lasky, unit chief for the FBI's gang and criminal enterprise section in Washington, said 213 people were arrested on felony charges _ mainly for drug offenses _ and 142 more were arrested on misdemeanor charges. Troopers gave out more than 920 tickets during roadblocks conducted during the operation.

While only one of the suspects was a known gang member based on a past federal prison record, Lasky said others were believed to be involved with Latin American gangs that have left buildings, roads and parking lots covered with graffiti. District Attorney Mike O'Dell said the sweep resulted partly from suspicions that methamphetamine made in Mexico was being smuggled into Alabama and sold in the Kilpatrick community, an isolated area where hundreds of immigrants live in dozens of mobile homes off dirt roads.

Authorities said they seized almost 30 guns, including several assault rifles and sawed-off shotguns, along with illegal drugs such as cocaine and crystal meth. Among those arrested were two previously deported illegal immigrants and a convicted sex offender.

Full Story: <http://www.topix.net/content/ap/2007/09/fbi-350-arrested-for-drugs-gang-crimes-in-alabama-raids-2>



Immigration Officials Lead Raid Netting 65 Arrests

Article published by KOTV.com

09/04/2007 Oklahoma City, OK | Federal immigration agents rounded up 65 people, mostly illegal aliens, during a weeklong anti-gang operation. The enforcement action, which ended Sunday, targeted Hispanic gangs in Oklahoma City.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokesman Carl Rusnok said Tuesday that 62 of those arrested will be returned to their native countries, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Iraq and Mexico.

These arrests are part of an immigration program that has resulted in the arrest of 5,000 gang members since February 2005.

Oklahoma County Sheriff John Whetsel said some of those arrested were among Oklahoma County's most dangerous gang members.

Source: KOTV Tulsa

Massive Drug Houses Linked to Asian Gangs

Article published by the San Bernardino County Sun

09/24/2007 San Bernardino County, CA | When authorities began finding marijuana grow houses in Southern California this year, they were shocked by their sophistication and by the complex Asian crime syndicates believed responsible for their establishment. But after months of examining their history and movement, investigators say the appearance of the crime syndicates in the region was practically inevitable.



An organization similar to the purported network of marijuana grow houses established by Asian criminal organizations in the Inland Valley was first discovered nearly a decade ago in British Columbia, authorities say. A combination of factors fueled its move south: Canadian police focused more attention on its activity, and competing Canadian gangs began to set up their own grow houses, saturating the market.

What's more, the large size of the customer base for marijuana in Southern California made the southward move smart from an economic standpoint. But ultimately, the rise in marijuana grow houses - in the Inland Valley and elsewhere - is driven by the high value of the potent, THC-rich "B.C. bud" strain of the drug that can be grown only in controlled indoor environments.

The value per pound of the drug - as high as \$6,000 - is on par with the value of methamphetamine, cocaine and heroin, making the production of marijuana a significant cash generator for criminal organizations. And operating a grow house is relatively low risk. A person with no criminal record who is convicted of marijuana cultivation might be sentenced to only probation. Those found producing equivalent amounts of harder drugs such as cocaine or heroin could face up to 25 years in prison, said Michael Abacherli, a San Bernardino County district attorney.

Full Story: http://www.sbsun.com/news/ci_6980446



Police Target S. Florida's Haitian Gangs

Article published by the Miami Herald

09/26/2007 Miami, FL | Automatic weapons. Rule by committee. Power-bestowing amulets. And extreme violence. These are some of the features that police say distinguish Haitian gangs from other criminal groups in South Florida's tide of youth violence.

A Miami-Dade grand jury recently indicted two members of the Terrorist Boys gang. Authorities blame them for a dozen murders and scores of shootings in a bloody rampage that rocked the northern part of the county in 2002-03. Police say they dismantled the gang in a complicated investigation that locked up 15 members on various murder, attempted murder and gun charges.



Observers say Haitian gangs surfaced in South Florida in 1992, months after a military regime seized control of Haiti and set off an exodus of a few thousand. Within a few years, the Zoe Pound gang emerged as a brutal force in Little Haiti, waging street-level fights against black Americans. These feuds still exist. Last year, Haitian-American and African-American youths squared off in a turf war in Deerfield Beach, prompting BSO to launch Operation Cease Fire.

Haitian gangs quietly rose to power because they eluded the public eye by not assuming the conventional signs of gangs, such as red and blue colors and hand signs, police say. "If it's not traditional, you don't see it," said Jodi Schuster, a North Miami Beach police detective who has investigated street gangs for 15 years and was involved in the Terrorist Boys case.

Most Haitian gangs fight among themselves, moving along Interstate 95 to peddle drugs and do their battles. Automatic rifles known as "choppers" are their weapon of choice. Unlike other gangs, Haitian gangs rule by committee rather than with a leader, so the group doesn't suffer a setback if the leader gets taken out. Such a structure means everybody's the fall guy. "Three people get into the car," said Alex Morales, a detective with the

North Miami Beach police department. "They're all told they've got to empty the gun... You look at scenes and there are 50 casings on the ground. It takes only one bullet to kill somebody."

Police say gangs do this so nobody gets off. It also lends a sense of credibility. "It shows you're fully committed," said Carter Hickman, a crime intelligence analyst for the Florida Department of Corrections. "Everybody has to participate in the crime in order to be a member in good standing."

Morales said gang members -- mostly teenagers and men in their 20s -- keep an eye on him as he does undercover work. "They do counter-surveillance on us," Morales said. In their quest for taking over drug corners, Haitian gangs employ aspects of Vodou to stay strong. Morales said he has stopped gang members carrying amulets and crosses. One time, he stopped a gang member carrying a \$2 bill folded seven times -- a signal to keep the money coming. Inside was a black square, which is supposed to render gang members invincible.

Full Story: http://www.miamiherald.com/news/breaking_dade/story/251555.html



Albuquerque City Council Approves Online Gang Registry

Article published by the Albuquerque Tribune

09/06/2007 Albuquerque, NM | Gang members are on their way to joining sex offenders and drunken drivers with their own gallery of public shame. The City Council on Wednesday unanimously passed a pair of ordinances setting up a partially public, online database of gang members convicted of violent crimes.

The registry was proposed in May, two weeks after The Tribune exposed a years-long gang rivalry that has claimed at least 11 lives, including two children. City Councilor Ken Sanchez, who introduced the bills, listed some of these killings as he advocated for the registry. Mayor Martin Chavez, who must sign the bills to make them law, has supported the registry. But not everyone is sold on the idea. Several critics raised concerns about the registry, saying it could glorify gang activity, stigmatize those who are trying to reform and lead to increased gang and vigilante violence.



"I don't have a problem with this being used by law enforcement, but it doesn't belong out in the public," said Albino Garcia, executive director of La Plazita Institute, a South Valley nonprofit that works on gang mediation and counseling. "This is going to explode." Peter Simonson, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of New Mexico, said he would review the bill. "Being on this registry is going to make it very difficult for someone to find work," he said. "It stigmatizes them. It pushes them more into the shadows."

Police say several changes to the registry should allay concerns. People on the registry who complete a counseling and gang intervention program can be removed from the Web site. Simonson said this provision allowing people to be removed from the registry if they complete counseling is an "immensely positive change."

The registry will include pictures and names but no addresses, as was planned under the original version of the bill. Prosecutors will have to prove at trial that a person committed a violent crime in the furtherance of gang activity for that person to be included on the registry. Those required to register will have to re-register each year, and failure to register could lead to fines or jail time. People required to register will remain in the database for two years, down from an original ten years. Juveniles will not be included. "We're not going after the wannabes or people who want to straighten themselves out," said Lt. Rob Smith, the commander of the Albuquerque Police Department's gang unit. "We're going after the hard-core."

Albuquerque police said the database, parts of which will be available to the public, would serve both as an investigative tool and a deterrent. "We want to make it absolutely unattractive to be a gang member," Smith said. "There's nothing sexy or cool about being on this registry." Smith said he hoped the registry, modeled on one in California, would push the Legislature to pass enhanced sentences for people convicted of gang-related crimes. Attempts to pass such laws have failed in recent years. Albuquerque police Chief Ray Schultz said the city has more than 200 known gangs with about 7,800 members.

Source: *The Albuquerque Tribune*

Fighting Back: Police, Schools Work to Combat Gang Influence

Article published by the Sheboygan Press

09/09/2007 Sheboygan, WI | The battle to keep gangs from taking territory and gaining a larger foothold in Sheboygan must be two-pronged to be successful, requiring aggressive law enforcement and an active community, police say.

"There are people who still care about their neighborhood and who aren't going to be held hostage by gang activity or drug activity," said Officer Kurt Zempel of the Sheboygan Police Department's Street Crime Unit. "Are there any areas where there's more of it? Certainly, but I don't think you can write off any neighborhood in Sheboygan as a total loss."



Meanwhile, school officials say communication and discipline have been key to minimizing the impact of gangs in schools and establishing them as neutral territory.

Police say there are 42 identified gangs in the city that are responsible for about half of all crime.

On a community-wide level, police control gangs when they move beyond responding to fights and drug deals to proactive intelligence gathering, said Officer Piotr Gordziej of the unit, which primarily deals with gang activity.

"You have to be out there every day, you have to understand who's who in the zoo, who's hanging out with whom, who's staying with whose old lady," he said. "In kind of a weird way, you end up developing a professional relationship with these people. Everybody knows what their role is ... we're cops, they're gang-bangers, but that doesn't mean we can't talk."

Zempel said community members play a critical role in controlling gangs by alerting police to potential problems in their neighborhoods. The three officers in the Street Crimes Unit said they spend as much time talking to concerned citizens as they do gang members, he said.

That proactive policing and a general police presence have kept gangs largely at bay to this point, at least when the department has allocated the necessary resources, Zempel said.

"If it becomes a problem, we focus on it," he said. "Then as it sort of tapers off, then our focus has to turn elsewhere and then it kind of has a resurgence again, and so we focus on it."

In May, Sheboygan Police Chief David Kirk announced he was going to suspend the street crimes unit and community policing units to reassign the five officers to patrol duties and relieve strain on the overtime budget. The units were kept alive when the Common Council voted in July — after public outcry over the suspension — to appropriate \$175,000 to fund the overtime for patrol.

Inter-agency cooperation is also key to fighting the spread of gangs, officials say.

Last month, the county organizations that deal regularly with gangs began meeting monthly to share information and ways to attack the problem, said Correctional Officer Craig Stewart, who heads up a newly-formed gang unit in the county jail system. The meetings are attended by the Sheboygan County Multi-Jurisdictional Enforcement Group, the city street crimes unit, probation and parole representatives and school officials.

"Our hope is to stop the gangs from coming in to Sheboygan," said Stewart, whose Gang Enforcement Team tracks which gang members are arrested and who they are affiliated with. "If we actively work against this, then maybe they'll see that and decide to stay somewhere else."

The final step in the law enforcement process, the court system, can take gang involvement into account, but it does not affect which charges are leveled, Sheboygan County District Attorney Joe DeCecco.



Sheboygan County prosecutors haven't used the gang enhancer statute for eight or 10 years because it requires proving that the suspect is a gang member, committed a crime and did so on behalf of the gang, DeCecco said. However, they may mention if a crime is believed to be gang-related so the judge can take it into account for sentencing.

Source: The Sheboygan Press

From the Editors



Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter.
We are always trying to improve the quality and effectiveness of our products

If you have any comments, suggestions or articles that can be used in the "G.A.I.N." Newsletter please send them to:

L.E.C.C. Program
C/O U.S. Attorney's Office
5400 Federal Plaza, Suite 1500
Hammond, IN 46320
Phone: (219) 937-5666
Fax: (219) 937-5537
E-mail: ryan.holmes@usdoj.gov
Or
Jesse.rodgers@sbcglobal.net

