



Brad D. Schimel
Wisconsin Attorney General

P.O. Box 7857
Madison, WI 53707-7857

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AG Schimel Continues 72-County Tour to Discuss Public Safety
in Pierce and St. Croix Counties**

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Brad Schimel continued his 72-county statewide tour to meet with local law enforcement and elected officials with stops in Pierce and St. Croix Counties on Friday, January 12.

“Multi-disciplinary meetings, like the ones that took place in Pierce and St. Croix counties today, are incredibly beneficial for public safety, public health, and local leaders to establish goals and priorities, improve services, and find efficiencies,” said Attorney General Schimel. “We are deeply invested in ensuring positive outcomes for folks in northwestern Wisconsin, and our partnership in and support of key programs like alcohol and drug treatment courts here make Wisconsin communities safer and stronger.”

“This was a great opportunity for Pierce County stakeholders to collaboratively discuss mental health and drug dependency issues that impact us locally,” said Pierce County Sheriff Nancy Hove.

“This was a well-attended round table that generated some good discussion,” said St. Croix Sheriff Scott Knudson. “We appreciate the involvement of Attorney General Schimel, and his interest in those topics that each community is struggling with. The drug crisis and mental health issues that each county handles has stretched resources like never before, and it will take a number of community partnerships to work through this.”

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 a public safety partner for local communities, and these meetings aim to discover what resources and efforts DOJ can provide to make Wisconsin safer and stronger.

DOJ financially supports a number of programs to help public safety officials keep their counties safe.

This year, St. Croix County will receive more than \$146,000 and Pierce County will receive more than \$205,000 from DOJ to enhance the counties' alcohol and drug courts, which provide an alternative to incarceration for those struggling with addiction.

Also this year, the St. Croix Valley Drug Task Force, which includes Pierce and St. Croix counties' law enforcement, will receive more than \$56,000 to help investigate drug distribution crimes in the area. This drug task force has also received more than \$154,000 since 2015 to fight heroin and methamphetamine. These funds will be available through 2018.

DOJ also financially supports Pierce and St. Croix counties' crime victim service organizations, ensuring that crime victims are given guidance and counseling as they navigate the criminal justice system. Since 2015, DOJ has provided organizations in the counties more than \$178,000 to provide services to victims of domestic and sexual violence in the region.

In 2017, DOJ announced that Pierce, St. Croix, and Polk counties will together serve as a pilot site and grant recipient to strengthen and improve the county's response to sexual assault. These counties will receive extensive cross training for multiple involved disciplines; assistance in developing local policies and protocols for SART teams; and guidance through the creation of a continual sexual assault case review process.

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>