

6/15/09 District Attorney Moore, Sheriff Gautreaux, Chief Leduff, Chief Knaps, and Chief Herty announced the ROPES program (Repeat Offender Prosecution and Enhancement system) to identify, track and enhance the prosecution of repeat offenders.

The District Attorney, Sheriff, and the Chiefs of Police announced a program to identify, track and enhance the prosecution of repeat offenders. This program, ROPES (Repeat Offender Prosecution and Enhancement system), has been developed during the past six months with the participation of local law enforcement agencies including Probation and Parole and Juvenile Services.

The concept of “repeat offenders” is based on the Pareto principle, sometimes called the 80-20 rule, and on criminal studies that have confirmed that the majority of crime is committed by a minority of criminals. If we can identify these “repeat offenders” and pay special attention to their prosecution from the time of their arrest through trial, we can significantly reduce crime. To date, our multi-agency workgroup has identified 288 repeat offenders, those criminals who already have 2 or more felony convictions or have 6 or more arrests for violent or enhanceable crimes (drugs, thefts, prostitution). We have two investigative officers maintaining this “repeat offender” database. These investigators go to the prison everyday to check on every arrest and then provide the repeat offender data to the prosecutor, the courts, and other law enforcement personnel. The defendants are then tracked from arrest through prosecution and conviction. The ROPES Investigators meet regularly to determine whether additional work is required to obtain a conviction.

Our results are only preliminary but they are encouraging. Because of this effort, criminals who might not see more than a few years in prison are getting 15 and 25 years sentences. This means that the police and public will not have to deal with them again for a very long time. Also as part of this effort, we have developed electronic communication systems between our agencies. When a “repeat offender” is arrested, an email is sent from the arresting officer to prosecutors in the DA’s office so that judges can be timely notified of the offender’s criminal history and a proper bond can be set. The judges and prosecutors also receive a letter for their files noting the offender’s extensive criminal history. And, we are working with a private company to provide the repeat offender list to every patrol officer’s car laptop, so that when the uniform officer runs the offender’s name, that officer knows he is dealing with a “repeat offender.” The officer can now take additional

precautions for his own safety as well as take precautions to try and make the best prosecutable case possible so we can get a conviction and a lengthy sentence.