

Michelle J. Courier
Boone County State's Attorney

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Michelle Courier, (815)547-8199

Boone County State's Attorney Courier Takes Further Action against Gangs

Boone County State's Attorney Michelle Courier announced today further efforts to combat gang activity. On September 14, 2009, Courier's office successfully prosecuted a known gang member for the crime of Unlawful Contact with Streetgang Members. This prosecution marked the first of its kind in Boone County.

Daniel Ambriz, 19, of Belvidere was charged with Unlawful Contact with Streetgang Members for violating a probation order to stay away from gang members on 12 separate occasions. He was sentenced to 120 days in the Boone County Jail and placed on one year probation with the condition that he again stay away from known street gang members.

"It is imperative that gang members are held accountable and that they know that there are consequences to the choices they make. My office intends to continue to aggressively prosecute gang activity through whatever means the legislature has given us," remarked Courier.

A person commits the crime of Unlawful Contact with Streetgang Members when he has been ordered by the Court or as a condition of parole to have no contact with a streetgang member and he knowingly violates that order. The legislation creating this crime was enacted in 1998 and is punishable up to 365 days in jail and \$2500 in fines.

Back in July, State's Attorney Courier filed a civil lawsuit against the Latin Kings, another first for Boone County. One of the remedies sought in the lawsuit is an order prohibiting the defendants from associating with known gang members. "Once the civil order is in place, my office will prosecute violations of that order, which could include more charges of Unlawful Contact with Streetgang Members," Courier commented.

Courier is pleased with the impact that the lawsuit has had and the progress of the case. "Since I filed the lawsuit, I have been very encouraged by the support and the feedback I have received in our community and in other jurisdictions. The lawsuit sent the message that gangs are simply not welcome here," Courier added.

The complaint named more than 30 known gang members in the Belvidere and Boone County area. Since its filing, Courier has personally met with a number of gang members who admitted

the allegations in the complaint, and agreed orders were entered. Other defendants failed to appear or answer the complaint, and default orders were entered. Currently, there are only 13 defendants remaining.

The lawsuit alleges that in Belvidere and Boone County, since 2004, members of the Latin Kings streetgang engaged in, among other criminal activities, unlawful possession and use of weapons, criminal defacement of property, aggravated battery, and unlawful delivery of controlled substances.

In addition to an order prohibiting gang members from associating with each other, Courier is seeking an order prohibiting these defendants from possessing or discharging any firearms; using, possessing, delivering or manufacturing any illegal or controlled substances; directing or participating in any assaults or batteries; and applying any gang graffiti to public or private property. Courier is further requesting that the Latin Kings be prohibited from being present in several local parks that have been frequented by the street gang. Courier is also seeking monetary damages from the Latin Kings to help offset the costs incurred by law enforcement in combating gang activity.