

City Attorney Releases Public Service Announcement *Video warns of dangerous trend ahead of July 4th celebrations*

COLUMBUS, OH—As Columbus and the rest of the country prepare to celebrate the Fourth of July, City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. released his annual public service announcement warning against a continuing trend that has authorities concerned.

Celebratory gunfire, or indiscriminately shooting a firearm into the air in an act of “celebration,” is a crime under [Section 2323.30](#) of the Columbus City Code. It is also an avoidable phenomenon that tragically has claimed the lives of several individuals throughout the United States in the last several years.

The City Attorney’s office is hoping to be proactive in raising awareness of illegally discharging a firearm into the air in Columbus by delivering a simple, common sense message that “what goes up, most come down.”

“Our office is always looking for new ways to enhance public safety,” said City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. “We are hoping that our video will help bring more awareness to this issue and perhaps avoid an unnecessary tragedy.”

According to reports, on January 1, 2015 a 43-year-old Texas man was struck on top of his head by a bullet while watching fireworks with his family.¹ On July 4, 2013 a seven-year-old boy in Virginia was struck on top of the head and killed by a falling bullet while walking with his father to watch a fireworks display.² On July 4, 2012 a 34-year-old doctoral student in Michigan was struck and killed by a falling bullet while watching fireworks.³

Twenty-eight individuals were charged with illegally discharging weapons in Columbus last year. So far in 2015, 15 charges have been filed.

Spearheading the City Attorney’s PSA program is Chief of Staff and First Assistant City Prosecutor Bill R. Hedrick, who is featured in the video.

“While we are under no illusions that individuals foolish enough to shoot guns into the air will listen to reason, we still feel strongly about trying to educate the overall public about this issue,” said First Assistant City Prosecutor Bill R. Hedrick.

Hedrick received a City of Columbus Award of Excellence in 2013 for his “creative use of technology, resources, and community partnerships to improve services” and last year was nominated for a Professional Innovation Award by the Office for Victims of Crime, a division of the United States Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs.

The PSA may be viewed online on the City Attorney’s [website](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/02/us-usa-texas-death-idUSKBN0KB1B420150102>

² http://www.richmond.com/news/local/chesterfield/boy-shot-in-head-at-chesterfield-fireworks-celebration/article_95a28426-e549-11e2-a881-001a4bcf6878.html

³ http://statenews.com/index.php/article/2012/07/student_shot_at_fireworks_show_died_next_morning