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City Attorney Chief of Staff Wins Award for Developing Warrant Program

COLUMBUS, OH— Thousands of arrest warrants are issued in Franklin County each year, adding to a growing list of over 100,000 that are currently outstanding. Bill R. Hedrick—who serves a dual role as Assistant City Prosecutor and Chief of Staff for Columbus City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer Jr.—has developed a comprehensive and multifaceted system to educate the public about the criminal justice system, bring offenders to justice, and reduce the amount of active warrants on the books.

In recognition of these efforts, Hedrick received the Mayor’s Award of Excellence for his “creative use of technology, resources, and community partnerships to improve services” during this morning’s City of Columbus Employee Recognition and Awards Ceremony held at the James G. Jackson Police Training Academy.

“I’m humbled and honored to receive this award,” said Chief of Staff Bill R. Hedrick. “I want to thank Mayor Coleman for his recognition and also thank all our staff and community partners who work every day to improve the quality of life in Columbus.”

Hedrick initially refashioned the City Attorney’s website to include an outstanding warrants section where “wanted posters” for an array of offenders are displayed and updated. Providing information in this format has proven to be a safe and efficient way to help save resources and work hours, as the “public shame factor” has led to several offenders turning themselves in, which reduces the need to send law enforcement to execute the warrants.

He expanded the warrant program in 2011 by establishing the “Fugitive of the Week” initiative, which uses social media channels to communicate and obtain information from the public to help apprehend alleged wrongdoers and alert the public about the potential danger of individuals who violate the law. Since being launched, the “Fugitive of the Week” program has more than a 75% success rate in bringing offenders to justice.

Last year, Hedrick continued to expand the multimedia reach of the warrant program by working with C-TV to produce a new television show called “Fugitive Files.” Based on a format similar to “America’s Most Wanted,” Hedrick hosts episodes that feature profiles on select individuals with outstanding warrants, such as the serial thief episode that shined the light on offenders with 10 or more prior theft convictions who continue to steal from area retailers. He usually comes in on his own time on weekends to research the cases and compiles the information used by the production team.

Hedrick works routinely with local media outlets to raise awareness about the plight of victims and to warn the public about particular crimes that appear to be trending in Central Ohio. An example in

the past year was his efforts to help expose a Dyson vacuum cleaner theft ring, which garnered national attention.

“I commend Bill for dedicating himself to educating the public about why arrest warrants are issued and how they can be avoided, bringing fugitives to justice, and building a community network to help combat crime,” said City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr.

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