Gang roundup yields arrests, drugs, weapons

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CINCINNATI - An 18-month investigation has resulted in over two dozen people being charged in connection a gang in Cincinnati's West End called the "Tot Lot Posse".

Federal, state and local law enforcement officials announced the indictment of 27 people for drug and weapons offenses.

Authorities have spent Tuesday taking those individuals into custody.

Officials say a rise in violent crime in the West End since the fall of 2008, including 125 felonious assaults involving firearms and homicides showed that 20 percent of the offenses involved Tot Lot Posse members as victims or suspects.

Cincinnati police worked together with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Ohio Adult Parole Authority and the Hamilton County Probation Department to identify about 70 members of the gang.

During the investigation, ATF agents and Cincinnati police officers purchased or recovered 41 firearms and more than 1,300 grams of crack cocaine.

The investigation, which began in November 2008, has become the largest criminal conspiracy prosecution case in the history of the Cincinnati Police Department.

"Today's arrests continue to show that the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence is working," Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory said. "We are going to do what is necessary to keep this community safe."

"Today the entire law enforcement community stands united in fulfilling our CIRV promise with the members of the Tot Lot Posse. It is our hope that the West End community will see this as an opportunity to reclaim their neighborhood," said Assistant Police Chief James L. Whalen.

"This is a great example of ATF and CPD working together and removing violent criminals from the streets of Cincinnati. ATF is committed to continuing our support of CIRV, said Brandt Schenken, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, ATF Columbus Field Division.

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"im all for law abiding citizens having guns, i think that group should have even more guns. but this black market trade is crazy. high powered rifles on the table would sweep a sidewalk in a few seconds."

"%u201CWe are going to do what is necessary to keep this community safe.%u201D... a little late aren't you?"