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New Orleans Crime Coalition Announces 3rd Survey Results of Citizen Perception of NOPD

(New Orleans, March 16, 2011) – The New Orleans Crime Coalition (NOCC) announces the results (posted on www.crimecoalitionnola.org) of its third survey measuring public perception of the New Orleans Police Department's performance in ensuring the safety of its citizenry. NOCC initiates and reports this survey in the strong conviction that a regular public spotlight on how citizens perceive their police department is a powerful ongoing catalyst to make New Orleans streets safer.

In August, 2009, NOCC first hired Wilson Research Strategies (WRS), a nationally recognized survey-research firm, to carry out a series of measurements of citizen satisfaction with the NOPD and reported those results to the public. The second survey was conducted in August, 2010, and the third was conducted in February 21-22, 2011.

In comparison with the 2009 results, overall citizen satisfaction is greatly improving. In 2009, only 1 in 3 (33%) were satisfied with the NOPD. In September 2010, satisfaction rose to 50%. And in the February 2011 survey, the satisfaction rate rose to 60%. This is a strong improvement, but high performing police departments in other cities typically score no lower than the 70% range on this measure.

In each of the 8 precincts and in each category (violent crime, property crime, drugs off streets, enforcing traffic laws, cooperating with public, honesty/integrity, professionalism, attitude/behaviors, overall competence), the survey revealed increased public confidence in the NOPD.

The greatest gain was seen in cooperation with the public, with a 15 point increase over September 2010 wherein 50% of survey respondents were satisfied with how NOPD cooperated with the public to address their concerns. In the current poll, 65% are satisfied with that cooperation. The second highest increase was found in attitudes/behaviors of NOPD employees, with a 13 point increase over 45% to 58% in the September 2010 poll. This is a dramatic increase in a mere six months and testifies to the strength of the administration under the leadership of Superintendent Ronal Serpas.

"One of our main objectives," stated Superintendent Serpas, "is to have officers become more integral figures in the communities they serve. The partnership between the police force and the people of New Orleans is critical in the fight against crime. And this survey shows that our efforts to build and solidify such a partnership are working."

The NOCC attributes the increase in citizen satisfaction with NOPD to the current administration's enacting specific police department reforms. Superintendent Serpas has moved quickly to implement reforms, most notably by assigning a sergeant in each police district to see

that bridges are built and maintained between the police and those who live and work in each district.

Michael Cowan, Chair of the NOCC, stated, "The results of the crime coalition's third survey of public perceptions of NOPD indicate clearly that the police department is moving in the right direction. We applaud Superintendent Serpas' commitment to use these results to seek ongoing improvement of the NOPD."

"I want to thank the New Orleans Crime Coalition, and it's Chair, Dr. Cowan, for having this very important work done on behalf of the citizens of New Orleans and the NOPD," stated Superintendent Serpas. "We use these survey findings to educate, direct and hold accountable our department and its leaders to making the transformational changes necessary to ensure we have community trust, faith and confidence in our service."

Research on public safety reveals that when police collaborate with neighborhood residents and business owners to see that violent crime is prevented, it is. Conversely, when citizens and police fail to cooperate effectively, violent crime takes neighborhoods captive and makes whole cities vulnerable. Public safety will not be achieved in New Orleans until neighborhood residents and the police assigned to serve and protect them learn to solve crime problems together. Community Policing based in neighborhoods has been successfully implemented across the United States and around the world, but only sporadically and unevenly in New Orleans. Putting full-scale community policing in place throughout our city is one critical element in making it a safe place for all. NOCC understands that the NOPD cannot do effective community policing by themselves. Neighborhood residents and business owners must do their part, too, and the NOCC will encourage and challenge neighborhood partners to hold up their end of this essential public-safety partnership.

Superintendent Serpas added, "This survey also shows that the old, tarnished reputation of NOPD is on its way out, and we know we still have work to do."

Violent crime poses the most immediate threat to the future of New Orleans. Without safe streets, the quality of life of our residents and visitors will remain unacceptable, no matter how much good work goes on in other areas. For that reason, organized citizens and public officials must focus relentlessly on improving our local criminal-justice system's capacity to do all within their power to reduce violent crime. Those agencies include the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD), the District Attorney, Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff's Office, Orleans Public Defenders Office, Magistrate, and Criminal Court. Success requires new forms and levels of collaboration among those agencies, and this will require the establishment by the Mayor of a local criminal justice coordinating council answerable to him for joint planning and budgeting. NOCC will continue to monitor and support that cooperation.

Research Design and Statement of Methodology - WRS conducted a research study of adults across the city of New Orleans. WRS obtained a list of residents and selected a random sample equally distributed across New Orleans' 8 police districts. Respondents were contacted by phone via a live telephone interview February 21-22, 2011. The study has a sample size of n=607 adults. The margin of error is equal to +/- 4.0% in 95 out of 100 cases. Chris Wilson, CEO of Wilson Research Strategies, and Ryan Steusloff, Account Executive, were lead researchers on this project. Daniel Narvaiz and Connor Walsh provided project management and analytical support

About the New Orleans Crime Coalition

The New Orleans Crime Coalition (NOCC) includes nearly twenty community organizations working together to reform our local criminal justice system for the benefit of all. The member organizations are listed below. Since its founding in 2007, the NOCC has played a key role in obtaining an additional \$5.7 million for local criminal justice agencies, and monitoring the expenditure of those funds; urging improved cooperation between the District Attorney's office and NOPD; supporting the creation of an independent NOPD monitor; obtaining city funding for the Orleans Public Defenders Office for the first time; and creating one integrated computer-based information management system for the local criminal justice system.

The New Orleans Crime Coalition (NOCC) include more than twenty community organizations working together to reform our local criminal justice system for the benefit of all. The coalition works to address violent crime in New Orleans, by working with the local criminal justice system as a whole. It does so by identifying best practices and holding those responsible accountable for implementing focused, strategic plans that will result in an improved justice system leading to the conviction and incarceration of violent criminals. The organizational members of the New Orleans Crime Coalition include the Business Council, Common Good, Citizens For 1 Greater New Orleans, Urban League of Greater New Orleans, Crimestoppers, Metropolitan Crime Commission, New Orleans Police and Justice Foundation, Court Watch NOLA, Bridge House, New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau, Puentes New Orleans, Young Leadership Council, Beacon of Hope, Afterschool Partnership for Greater New Orleans, Living Witness Ministries, St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church, Touro Synagogue, the Youth Empowerment Project, the Family Justice Center, and EngageNOLA.

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