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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DA'S OFFICE CREATES NEW COMMUNITY PROSECUTION UNIT TO FOCUS ON POTTSTOWN

NORRISTOWN, Pa.--Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele and Pottstown Police Chief F. Richard Drumheller joined with Pottstown leaders to announce today the creation of a new Community Prosecution Unit that will focus on Pottstown, becoming a liaison and resource for both local law enforcement and the local community by bringing more efforts to bear on improving crime in the borough.

"The new Community Prosecution Unit grew out of the success of 2014-2015's 'Operation War Ready' efforts in Pottstown that brought down two gangs and helped reduce the overall level of violence and crime in Pottstown," said Steele. "But the work is not finished. This is phase two."

Three prosecutors will make up the Community Prosecution Unit: Captain and Assistant District Attorney Brianna Ringwood, ADA Richard Bradbury and ADA Heather Hines. Together, they have extensive experience in prosecuting thousands of cases involving all criminal activity, including murder, violent crimes, assault, firearms offenses, domestic violence crimes, sex crimes, kidnapping and child abuse cases.

Ringwood and her team have already become involved in the Pottstown community. As a base of backgrounding, they have met with dozens of borough leaders and community leaders, listening to residents' concerns about crime and suggestions for improvement. The Community Prosecution Unit will also work closely with the Pottstown Police Department, both proactively and on current cases, by advising local police officers on investigative legalities, personally prosecuting the criminal cases that happen in Pottstown and bringing necessary resources to major crime and violent crime investigations.

While the Community Prosecution Unit model has proven successful in other communities across the country, this is the first unit in Montgomery County. The goals are to provide a long-term, integrated prosecutorial effort within a community that reduces violent crime, works to prevent crime, systemically prosecutes violent and repeat offenders, improves the quality of life in a community through ongoing efforts.

“Operation War Ready’ began in response to a mother’s statement at one of the Pottstown community meetings I attended. She stood up and said she couldn’t let her child sleep in a bedroom with windows because of all the shootings. She was afraid of a stray bullet coming into that room,” said Steele. “That really hit home as a parent. We joined with the Pottstown Police to go after the gangs that were responsible for the violence. Taking those violent criminals off the streets made the entire community safer. Through the Community Prosecution Unit, we will work to continue to make a significant impact in reducing violence in Pottstown.”

The Community Prosecution team has established an office in the Pottstown Police Department and will be staffing out of it every Wednesday and other times as needed throughout the week. Pottstown residents are invited to share crime tips or concerns about criminal activity with the Community Prosecution Unit. A direct email and phone number are being established and will be released. In addition, the three prosecutors will be participating in the upcoming “Stop the Drugs, Stop the Violence” event on July 23 and at Pottstown’s National Night Out on August 2.

The Community Prosecution Unit becomes the eighth prosecutorial unit in the Trials Division of the DA’s Office. The others are Economic Crimes, Domestic Violence, Firearms, Major Crimes, Narcotics, Sex Crimes and Grand Jury.

Approved for release:

Kevin R. Steele