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AG Sunday: OAG Drug Agents had Record Month for Seized Firearms in Southwestern Pa., Increasing Dangers Posed to Law Enforcement

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NORTH HUNTINGDON — Attorney General Dave Sunday joined law enforcement partners to announce an increase in firearms seizures in January by Office of Attorney General narcotics agents in southwestern Pennsylvania, illustrating the increased risks posed to police by drug traffickers.

The Office of Attorney General's Bureau of Narcotics Investigation, assisted by federal, state, and local partners, seized 41 firearms in Pennsylvania's Region 5 last month during the course of drug trafficking investigations. Agents believe that to be a single-month high in Region 5, which includes Allegheny, Fayette, Somerset, and Westmoreland counties.

In those investigations, agents also seized more than 12 pounds of cocaine, a pound of crack cocaine, and more than 63,000 doses of fentanyl, along with quantities of heroin and marijuana.

Nine people have been arrested, so far, in connection to about 20 cases involving illegally-possessioned firearms.

"These numbers are rewarding as they show the progress our team, along with partners at all levels, are making in efforts to remove firearms from the hands of drug traffickers," Attorney General Sunday said. "They also serve as indicators of the firepower our brave officers encounter when they enter a home with a warrant, or make a traffic stop, in efforts to keep communities safe. To traffickers, we say: we are not deterred."

The total number of firearms seized in the region for the year has climbed to 48.

Most of the firearms recoveries happened outside of Pittsburgh; the two biggest seizures happened in Fayette and Somerset counties, where ongoing investigations remain regarding those guns.

Attorney General Sunday was joined at a press event Monday by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Homeland Security Investigations, Pennsylvania State Police, Fayette County District Attorney Michael Aubele, Somerset County District Attorney Tom Leiden, Westmoreland County District Attorney Nicole Zicarelli, and numerous municipal police departments.

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