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**PHILADELPHIA COURTS ANNOUNCE ADDITION OF NEW FIELD VEHICLES TO
STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PRESENCE OF PROBATION AND PAROLE OFFICERS**

PHILADELPHIA (December 26, 2007) – The First Judicial District of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia Courts) today announced the deployment of six new field vehicles for the Adult Probation and Parole Department. These vehicles will be used by the elite Gun Court Unit for enhanced field work. The Gun Court Unit intensely supervises offenders who are charged with a gun offense as their most serious crime, and who are serving a probation and parole sentence.

The First Judicial District will deploy "marked" vehicles to demonstrate to offenders that probation officers are accessible "out in the field," and want to help them successfully complete their conditions of probation and reintegrate into the community. The vehicles also serve as a reminder that probation officers are part of the community and play a critical role in promoting and enforcing public safety.

"This affords our probation and parole officers the opportunity to be a visible and more available force in the supervision of offenders in the community and demonstrates that public safety is our first priority," commented Robert Malvestuto, Chief of the Adult Probation and Parole Department. "Our administrators have worked tirelessly to make this happen in our continuing effort to reduce gun violence in Philadelphia."

Added Administrative Judge D. Webster Keogh of the Common Pleas Trial Division, "In addition to increased visibility, this also signals an important first step in achieving a risk-based supervision model that focuses on targeting resources to assist high risk offenders and maximizing our impact on public safety through our intensive supervision units."

Presently, about 300 probation officers supervise about 52,000 adult offenders. The First Judicial District looks forward to working with the new City administration to find ways to increase the presence of probation officers in Philadelphia's neighborhoods in a cost effective manner and improve the quality of service to offenders, the community and the courts.

Funding for Gun Court is specifically provided by the General Assembly through appropriations and fees via the Civil Fee Bill. Funding for the Probation Department is provided by the General Assembly and the City of Philadelphia.

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