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Springfield, Mass. Sees 60 Percent Decrease in New Year's Eve Celebratory Gunfire According to ShotSpotter Data

ShotSpotter Technology Helps Cities Reduce Gunfire on Busiest Night of the Year

NEWARK, CA -- (Marketwired) -- 12/16/15 -- Springfield, Mass. topped the nation with the largest reduction in New Year's Eve celebratory gunfire, down 60 percent from 2013 to 2014, according to ShotSpotter data. Thanks to a proactive policing plan and the implementation of ShotSpotter Flex, the leading gunfire detection, location, alerting and analysis solution, Springfield dropped from 15 gunfire incidents to six (a 60% reduction). New Year's Eve is the busiest night of the year for illegal "celebratory" gunfire, according to ShotSpotter data, with many wounded or killed on this day in the U.S. due to celebratory shooting.

Other top cities using ShotSpotter and with significant reductions in celebratory gunfire on New Year's Eve include: Stockton, Calif., with 38.2 percent decline (from 136 to 84 incidents); Miami Gardens, Fla., with 37.5 percent decline (from 48 to 30 incidents); and Rocky Mount, NC, with a 19.3 percent decline (from 57 to 46 incidents).

New Year's Eve (SST defines the New Year's Eve period as 24 hours prior to and 48 hours after New Year's Eve) is the busiest night of the year for illegal celebratory gunfire. In Q4 2014 there were 16,597 incidents in ShotSpotter coverage areas, and of those, 3,556 (or 21.4%) took place during ***the New Year's Eve period***.

To help communities and law enforcement curb celebratory gunfire, ShotSpotter today launched an online celebratory gunfire prevention resource center http://www.shotspotter.com/celebratorygunfire with information and strategies to help combat illegal urban gunfire on New Year's Eve, along with a video, entitled *Celebratory Gunfire Reduction Strategies*, available here: http://www.shotspotter.com/system/content-uploads/Celebratory_Gunfire_Reduction_Strategies_2015_v2.mp4

Experts from ShotSpotter offer these five ***tips*** for law enforcement officials to help reduce celebratory gunfire on New Year's Eve:

1. ***Plan ahead*** - Do research weeks in advance to identify hot spot areas and address where celebratory gunfire was detected last year.
2. ***Engage agency personnel early -*** Communicate with your personnel along with probation/parole officers, and gang enforcement units.
3. ***Knock on doors*** - Assign uniformed agency personnel to visit each address on the hot spot list and talk with residents weeks before New Year's Eve. Take the time to explain the dangers of celebratory gunfire and tell of first-hand tragedies the local agency might have experienced.

4. ***Enforce consequences of celebratory gunfire*** - Remind residents of the criminal consequences of celebratory gunfire. (SST recommends publicizing and enforcing a strict "no tolerance" policy on this activity and aggressive prosecution of the case).
5. ***Assign special police units -***During New Year's Eve period assign special police units, or overtime cars, to hot spot areas for quick response to gunfire alerts.

In addition to the five tips listed above, ShotSpotter advocates strong community engagement, including:

- ***Broadly announce your agency's*** New Year's Eve proactive policing plan, using a combination of community meetings, notices, and social media.
- ***Engage community and community leaders*** - Make them aware of the dangers of celebratory gunfire and encourage them to report all incidents.
- ***Encourage media to report about the dangers of celebratory gunfire***- Educate readers that law enforcement will take an active role to catch and prosecute celebratory gunfire offenders.

"We attribute the reported decline in celebratory gunfire to our analysis of ShotSpotter alerts, crime data and criminal intelligence which enables accurate deployment of sworn personnel to hot spot areas," said Captain Trent Hufnagel of the Springfield Police Department. "Additionally we enacted strict policies mandating an aggressive response to ensure prompt officer arrival. For every ShotSpotter activation we dispatch four units, of which, two are a supervisor and at least one detective to provide sufficient personnel to deal with any ongoing public safety threats and to promptly and properly investigate all activations."

ShotSpotter has found that when law enforcement agencies implement steps to curtail celebratory gunfire they have been effective in reducing incidents. On New Year's Eve 2014, the Rocky Mount Police Department only had two incidents at previous identified locations from the 2012 and 2013 data. From these, they were able to get a confession and seized the firearm used during the incident.

"We used a collaborative effort approach and had a solid plan in place to help combat celebratory gunfire in advance of last year's New Year's Eve," said Lieutenant Ryan Hepler of the Rocky Mount Police Department. "An essential component to our success was having our patrol officers hand-deliver informational letters to residents of addresses that had gunfire alert(s) the previous New Year's Eve. We encouraged residents to come forward with any information early on."

"As a firearms expert I know that bullets never stray, they are shot. Firing a gun in the air to celebrate the New Year is reckless and illegal. Nearly 15 percent of illegal gunfire happens around the holidays and we have to stop putting our neighbors and especially their children in harm's way," said David H. Chipman, Senior Vice President of Public Safety at SST/ShotSpotter. "New Year's Eve is a foolish time to fire a gun in your driveway -- especially if you live in a city whose police rely on ShotSpotter to locate and alert the precise location of illegal gunfire. We want to serve communities by helping law enforcement educate gun owners on how to honor public safety, celebrate responsibly and avoid making a grave mistake."

According to Stockton Police Chief, Eric Jones, "The Police Department was very pleased with a 38 percent reduction of celebratory gunfire in Stockton last New Year's Eve.

Unfortunately though, all of us have heard of tragedies occurring during the holidays because of someone firing a gun up in the air. That is why we constantly engage our community to discourage celebratory gunfire because we want everyone to be safe and enjoy the holidays with family and friends."

About SST, Inc.

SST, Inc. is the global leader in gunfire detection and location technology providing the most trusted, scalable and reliable gunfire alert and analysis solutions available today. SST's ShotSpotter Flex™ is the leading gunfire alert and analysis solution for detecting gunshots and providing critical intelligence to give law enforcement agencies the detailed real-time data needed to investigate, analyze and prosecute gun related crimes. SST's ShotSpotter SiteSecure provides critical indoor/outdoor infrastructure protection against active shooter attacks. The company's deep domain experience, intellectual property including 33 issued patents, along with cumulative agency best practice experience, enables measurable outcomes that contribute to reducing gun violence. SST is a proven solution provider with more than 90 installations across the United States and the world. Privately held, the company holds numerous patents resulting from nearly two decades of innovation in the area of acoustic gunshot location technology. Details can be found at www.ShotSpotter.com. Details about our US and foreign patents can be found at http://www.ShotSpotter.com/patents.

Media Contact:
Liz Einbinder
+1 (510) 794-3147
Email: Email Contact

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