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**QUEENS DISTRICT ATTORNEY RICHARD A. BROWN GIVES PUBLIC SAFETY BRIEFING TO ELECTED OFFICIALS AT ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST**

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today briefed City, State and Federal elected officials from Queens at the District Attorney's twentieth annual legislative breakfast held at his Kew Gardens offices. The public safety briefing highlighted key accomplishments and major initiatives of the past year, and a discussion of future expectations.

The District Attorney began on a personal note by sharing how 2011, an election year, marked a major milestone: He was elected to a sixth term as District Attorney and became, undeniably, the longest serving District Attorney in the history of Queens County.

District Attorney Brown went on to explain how the office has dramatically changed since he was first appointed district attorney by the first Governor Cuomo. "When we took over this office on June 1, 1991, we were still very much in the dark ages. Our assistants in most cases saw the case file for the first time when they were about to pick a jury. They rarely showed up at crime scenes. They had no computers – nor had they heard of Blackberries, emails or voicemails. We had no training component. Our assistants literally prosecuted their cases by the seat of their pants. All of that has changed," he said.

"We now have some 300 ADAs – 57% of whom are women. We have an NYPD Detective Squad, a seven member State Police Unit and some fifty detectives of our own. With our secretaries, paralegals and other support staff, we today number over 600 employees who together are representative of the extraordinary diversity of our county," the District Attorney said.

"We are an office that is completely computerized and linked together by a modern voicemail and Blackberry system – and by our 24 hour, 7 day a week NYPD manned Command Center that keeps us apprised of everything that is happening in our county at all hours of the day and night – and dispatches our assistants to crime scenes or makes them available to answer questions or to assist in case processing," he added.

The District Attorney noted that the office works closely with its federal, state and local law enforcement partners – sharing information and jointly investigating criminal activity. "In view of the fact that our county is home to two of our nation's busiest airports, we maintain an Airport Investigations Unit which investigates and prosecutes criminal activity at JFK and LaGuardia. Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, we added a Counter Terrorism Unit which,

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among other things, shares on a daily basis vital information with our law enforcement colleagues and lends support in coordinating our efforts. In addition, we have a permanent seat on the Joint Terrorist Task Force and assist in gathering intelligence by conducting debriefings of arrestees from countries that sponsor terrorism.

The District Attorney added, “We give particular attention to investigating and prosecuting specific precursor crimes to terrorism, including identity theft, money laundering, counterfeit trademarking and the forgery or illegal procurement of identification documents. As a result, we have been able to provide valuable information to both the NYPD’s Intelligence Division and to the Joint Terrorist Task Force and to work with them on significant classified investigations.”

The District Attorney also told the elected officials that the office has an extensive “riding” program which puts ADAs at all sorts of crime scenes at all hours of the day and night to work alongside of police officers. In addition, members of the office are in the police precincts and the hospitals and in the homes of victims at all hours of the day and night.

As part of his briefing, the District Attorney pointed out that the Central Booking Interview Program – which takes videotaped statements from individuals awaiting arraignment on felony charges – has proven to be a great success. The program began in July 2007 and has done some 9,200 interviews to date. It, among other things, helps us to make certain that those whom we accuse are being properly charged.

The District Attorney added, that, last year the office drafted close to 1,000 search warrants and ADAs attended and supervised some 357 lineups in police precincts across the county. He noted that it is the only office that has an assistant at every lineup. Furthermore, it continues to be a national leader in the number of wiretaps that it conducts - and, significantly, in almost twenty-one years – with one exception which is now under appeal – none of its wires has been controverted.

The District Attorney said that last year there were some 73,500 arrests handled by his office – up over 73% since 1993. The cases are handled expeditiously, with the best arrest to arraignment time in the City and the highest percentage of cases arraigned within 24 hours. Furthermore, the office has the lowest felony complaint dismissal rate and the lowest indictment dismissal rate in the City. It has the highest felony conviction rate in the City.

Over the past year, the District Attorney said, his Investigations Division has conducted many significant long term investigations into criminal enterprises throughout the County – criminal enterprises that prey upon the local neighborhoods. They have brought major cases dismantling violent gun and drug gangs and rescuing young women from underage prostitution and sex trafficking rings. And they have successfully taken down white collar enterprises involved in identity theft, credit card fraud, mortgage fraud, auto theft and insurance fraud and illegal gambling.

The Appeals Bureau, the District Attorney said, has successfully defended the office’s convictions on direct appeal and from collateral attack in state and federal court and works closely with the ADAs as they litigate important new legal issues.

The District Attorney also noted that his Special Prosecutions Division runs a host of crime prevention, school based and community outreach programs – and attends precinct council and

community board meetings and reports back to him so that he personally knows what is going on across the county. The division also provides speakers for schools, community groups and town hall meetings, and it coordinates the activities of many advisory councils.

The District Attorney also told the elected officials about the wide array of alternative sentencing programs that are available for qualified defendants, including felony and misdemeanor Drug Treatment Courts, DWI Treatment Court, Mental Health Court and a court which responds to the needs of returning veterans. A Supreme Court Youth Part and a Youth Diversion Program that specifically target young people who get themselves into trouble and which provides alternatives to incarceration in appropriate felony cases and which supplements the Second Chance Program for first time misdemeanor offenders.

In conclusion, the District Attorney reminded his guests that his is a busy metropolitan prosecutor's office committed to the highest level of professionalism. "We are an office that I believe is among the best in the State – indeed the best in the country – an office that I think it fair to say has the respect of our law enforcement colleagues and the confidence of the 2.3 million residents of Queens County whom we represent."

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**Note to Editors:** Press release e-version and photo posted at [www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org).  
Text of District Attorney Brown's remarks also posted at [www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org)  
in "Latest Opening Arguments"