

Keeping weapons off the streets

Guns ground to bits at buy back event

By SHELBY ASHLINE

Recorder Staff

GREENFIELD — Within minutes, all but one of the 273 guns collected during the second Valley Gun Buy Back had been ground up into a small heap of largely unrecognizable twisted gray pipes and debris.

The guns were collected on June 11 at the Greenfield and Northampton police departments in exchange for \$50 VISA gift cards and logged into evidence. All were confirmed not to be stolen. Roughly a dozen guns were sent to the National Armory in Springfield, where a gun specialist determined only one, a Japanese rifle, was an antique. The rifle was saved from the grinder and will become part of the Armory's special collection.

At around 10 a.m. Wednesday, Gun Buy Back Coordinator Chris Geffin, as well as representatives from the Greenfield and Northampton police departments and the Northwestern District Attorney's Office, gathered at wTe Corp., a recycling plant in Greenfield, to witness the procedure.

Police officers took the guns from their vehicles and placed them into four rusty metal bins. Each bin was transported to the end of the grinder, where a Liebherr crane hoisted them into the roaring grinder. Dust billowed out from the grinder as the guns were turned into bits.

The hot bits poured like a waterfall from a conveyor belt near the other end of wTe's lot, clinking and clanking like wind chimes as they settled in a heap on the ground. Once the bits had cooled, Geffin and the others collected some of the more recognizable pieces, mainly cylinders, for souvenirs.

Mary Carey, communications director at the Northwestern District Attorney's Office, said the office is considering producing an inventory of the guns that were collected. "A lot of people were very interested in the types of guns," she said.

As 301 guns were collected at the first Gun Buy Back in October 2013, the second event turned out to be just as successful.

"We didn't expect the second one to be as big as the first," Carey said. She added that the office decided to hold the event for a second time after receiving numerous requests from the public.

"It's eye opening, because we see that there's a real desire for this," she said.

Northwestern District Attorney David Sullivan said that if enough people donate to the fund for VISA gift cards, another Gun Buy Back should be held again in two or three years.



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Bits and pieces of rifles and handguns, still hot from the grinding process, lay in a pile to be recycled.

RECORDER STAFF/PAUL FRANZ



Above, just some of the rifles and handguns brought to wTe Recycling in Greenfield to be destroyed. Below, debris lay in a pile to be recycled.

RECORDER STAFF/PAUL FRANZ PHOTOS



273 guns destroyed in Greenfield

The guns were loaded into metal bins, lifted by a crane, and dropped into the plant's automatic shredder.



By [Mike Masciadrelli](#) Published: June 29, 2016, 6:17 pm

GREENFIELD, Mass. (WWLP) – Wednesday marked the end of Western Massachusetts' most recent gun buyback program.

Northampton Police, Greenfield Police, and the Northwestern District Attorney's office all came out to WTE Recycling in Greenfield to witness the destruction of 273 firearms. Some of the guns destroyed include a nine millimeter semi automatic , 38 special, long guns, pistols. rifles, and shot guns.

The guns were loaded into metal bins, lifted by a crane, and dropped into the plant's automatic shredder. WTE recycling normally grinds up automobiles. Their machine made quick work of all those guns.

Chris Pichette, Plant Manager, WTE Recycling said, "The shredding itself goes pretty quickly but it takes a while to go down the line and for the cleaning process to remove the debris and get just the steel that comes out on the end".

The wood and plastic were separated, with the metal pieces coming out the final belt. The guns were shredded in about five minutes. Northwestern District Attorney, David Sullivan, told 22News the gun buyback program makes everyone safer.

"It's kind of a fun part of the gun buyback program", said Sullivan. "It's good to get it out of circulation and if we save one child's life from not playing with a gun it was well worth it".

This was the second time WTE recycling destroyed firearms from a gun buyback program. 301 weapons were destroyed in 2013. Of the 273 guns destroyed Wednesday, 178 were collected in Northampton and 95 in Greenfield.

Officials destroy over 250 guns collected during buyback program

Posted: Jun 29, 2016 4:02 PM EDT Updated: Jun 29, 2016 4:04 PM EDT

By Jennifer Martinez

By Ryan Trowbridge, Web Content Manager

GREENFIELD, MA (WGGB/WSHM) -

More than 250 guns were destroyed in Greenfield on Wednesday.

Officials took the guns given to them through the Valley Gun Buyback program and crushed them into pieces.

A couple of weeks ago, the unwanted guns were collected from people across the area who wanted to get rid of them in exchange for a \$50 gift card.

Today, those weapons were crushed at WTE Recycling in Greenfield.

"Trying to get those guns that are unwanted that people have in their homes or have inherited or cleaning up the basement in their parents place," said Greenfield Police Chief Robert Haigh.

The purpose of the gun buyback program is to prevent the guns from getting into the wrong hands.

"You never want guns on the streets, but you also don't want unsecured guns in the home that can end up on the street as well," Haigh added.

With the guns off the streets and out of homes, the program can help prevent unwanted and accidental deaths or suicides.

The guns are placed into four metal containers, then carried by a crane and placed into a mill. Within minutes, the shotguns and handguns were turned into scrap metal.

Once all those guns go through the mill, they are completely demolished. All that's left is a pile of debris

"They'll be out of the circulation and not a risk to anyone," said Northwestern District Attorney David Sullivan.



Greenfield PD's Bill Gordon and Chief Haigh, Chris Geffin and the DA promote Saturday's Gun Buy Back

Gun buyback program in Northampton, Greenfield this weekend

[Northwestern District Attorney partnering with Northampton and Greenfield Police Departments](#)
By [Tamara Sacharczyk](#) Published: June 7, 2016, 6:07 pm Updated: June 7, 2016, 6:34 pm

NORTHAMPTON, Mass. (WWLP) – Getting unwanted firearms off the streets is the goal of the second **Valley Gun Buyback**, which is being held this weekend.

Every 17 minutes, someone is killed with a gun.

"It is a tremendous problem, I mean, we have a gun for just about everyone in America now," Northwestern District Attorney David Sullivan said.

Sullivan told 22News that is part of the reason he is teaming-up with the Northampton and Greenfield Police Departments to host the program Saturday, which is a chance for gun owners to surrender their unwanted firearms- no questions asked.

Sullivan said that that Valley Gun Buyback is all about saving lives. He said that whether you have children in the house, or someone who is mentally ill, the idea is to prevent someone who should not have a gun from getting their hands on one.

“Could be a grandparent or parent, you had that weapon around your entire life and really don’t think about the security of that weapon, but now there’s a grandchild. Or for a parent, that an older teenager starts looking at it- it’s about removing those weapons,” Sullivan said.

Keeping unwanted guns around the house can be dangerous for several reasons. According to the Department of Justice, more than 232,000 firearms are stolen every year- 172,000 are taken during burglaries.

“For us, these are the guns that we want to target. The ones that someone may go in, may steal, may buy somehow without going through the proper procedure- and get those off the street,” Northampton Police Chief Jody Kasper said.

The Northampton and Greenfield Police Departments managed to collect more than 300 weapons in 2013.

The drop-off locations for Saturday’s program will be:

- Northampton Police Department
29 Center St.
Northampton
- Greenfield Police Department
321 High St.
Greenfield

The program runs from 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. Anyone who turns in a gun will receive a \$50 gift card.



DAILY HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE

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NORTHAMPTON

Gun exchange for gift cards

By CHRIS LINDAHL

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NORTHAMPTON – As part of an effort to curb gun violence, Valley residents on Saturday are invited to exchange their unwanted firearms for a \$50 gift card.

The Valley Gun Buy Back program will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at the Northampton and Greenfield police stations. The effort is organized by the Northwestern District

Attorney's office and the mayor's offices and police departments in Northampton and Greenfield. It is funded through \$12,000 in private donations.

"It's really a time for the community to step back and say 'Do we really need this gun in our household?'" Northwestern District Attorney David Sullivan said at a Tuesday press briefing in Northampton.

"There's a lot of weapons that have been sitting around in drawers and in closets that present an incredible pediatric risk."

Sullivan, Northampton Mayor David J. Narkewicz and Police Chief Jody Kasper said the buyback is a safe and easy way to dispose of unwanted or unsecured weapons in order to keep them out of the wrong hands.

The weapons must be unloaded and in working order and delivered in a bag. Participants will be given a \$50 Visa gift card for each firearm they turn in. Ammunition will also be accepted.

Participation is completely anonymous. "No questions asked," Sullivan said.

"We know there are a lot of people out there who may have firearms and might not know how to get rid of them," Kasper said.

The guns will be ground up by WTE Recycling in Greenfield.

The district attorney's office held the first buyback in 2013, a total of 301 guns were collected in Greenfield – including two semiautomatic weapons, a sawed-off doublebarrel shotgun and a Davis "Saturday night special."

Narkewicz pointed out that an unneeded gun can also present a theft risk. Stolen guns in turn be sold or traded illegally, he said. Narkewicz meets with other mayors and law enforcement officials to collaborate on gun violence reduction efforts. The New England Regional Gun Violence Summit convened most recently in April, according to the mayor's office.

He's also a member of Mayors Against Illegal Guns and on Jun. 2 issued a proclamation recognizing National Gun Violence Awareness Day.

Sullivan said that having easy access to a weapon can mean grave consequences for someone who is contemplating suicide.

"I think it's really important that we as a community come together and say so much of gun violence in America is preventable," Sullivan said.

Sponsors include Baystate Health; Valley Medical Group; the sheriffs' associations of Hampshire and Franklin counties; Convenient Cards; the Committee to Elect Stan Rosenberg; the Easthampton Police Association; the Greenfield Police Association; New England Environmental; Northampton Pediatrics; Northampton Police Association; Partners Healthcare; Sasson, Turnbull, Ryan & Hoose; ServiceNet; Western Mass Chiefs of Police Association; WTE Recycling; Bruce and Ruth Hawkins; Greenfield Savings Bank; state Rep. Ellen Story; Claire L. Bateman Trust; Attorney Jeff Morneau; Clinical & Support Options; and Freedom Credit Union.

