

For Immediate Release
August 14, 2006

**MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES SECOND
MAJOR CRIME COURT**
Ensuring Courts Are Equipped To Handle Gang Prosecutions

TORONTO — The McGuinty government will open Ontario's second major crime court in north Toronto, Attorney General Michael Bryant announced today.

“The new major crime court will ensure we are prepared as major prosecutions make their way through the court system,” said Bryant. “This courtroom, like the one we announced in May in downtown Toronto, will be equipped to meet the extraordinary needs of these complex trials that involve multiple accused.”

The province's second major crime court will be located in the 2201 Finch Avenue West Courthouse. The courtroom will be enhanced with additional security measures and will be designed with prisoner boxes and holding cells that can accommodate multiple accused, additional counsel tables, larger jury boxes, a separate entrance for witnesses and specialized systems to allow for the presentation of large volumes of evidence.

While the courtroom will be designed specifically to meet the requirements of large, complex trials, many of the enhancements will be portable so they can be used in trials at other locations across the province. The courtroom at 2201 Finch will be used for other criminal trials when major-scale prosecutions are not before the courts.

“This is the latest in a series of measures our government has taken to fight guns and gangs,” said Bryant. “Now we are upgrading courtrooms to increase the justice system's ability to accommodate these cases as they make their way to trial.”

The construction will be done in phases with the first phase beginning immediately. It is expected the courtroom will be ready in fall 2007.

The province's first major crime court at the 361 University Avenue Courthouse, which was announced in May, is under construction and is expected to be ready by fall 2006.

Establishing major crime courts is one component of Ontario's Organized Justice Strategy, which was designed to fight all types of organized crime, including gang and gun violence. The Attorney General is in St. John's, Newfoundland today speaking to the Canadian Corporate Counsel Association about Ontario's plan to combat organized crime on all fronts.

The McGuinty government is on the side of Ontario families concerned about crime and safety. That is why the government is implementing a \$51-million package of initiatives to fight gun crimes. The package includes:

- Expanding the number of Crown prosecutors working on the Guns and Gangs Task Force to 64, including dedicated Crown prosecutors working in every region of the province
- Establishing a state-of-the-art provincial operations centre to allow for highly coordinated investigations and prosecutions of guns and gang-related offences. The centre will include the newly expanded Guns and Gangs Task Force which includes the Toronto Police Service, Ontario Provincial Police, a team of specialized Crown prosecutors, support staff, probation and parole officers and a victims unit.
- Fast-tracking the hiring of 1,000 additional police officers so that they can be on the streets by the end of 2006.

- 30 -

Contacts:
Greg Crone
Minister's Office
(416) 326-1785

Brendan Crawley
Communications Branch
(416) 326-2210

Disponible en français

www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca