

PUBLIC SAFETY INSTITUTE SPRING 2020

A photograph of the Memphis skyline with the large 'MEMPHIS' sign in the foreground. The sign is white with blue and green accents. The skyline includes the Raymond James building and the Old Federal Building. The foreground is a grassy field.

MEMPHIS

‘FED-UP’

MEDIA CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS

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Public Safety Institute



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Public Safety Institute (PSI) at the University of Memphis is an interdisciplinary part of the University community committed to applied research which helps identify and advance best practices to improve public safety.

In 2016, the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission spearheaded development of a five-year community-wide Safe Community Plan (the third such plan). In an agreement between the Crime Commission and the University, the PSI is charged with assessing and evaluating various parts of the plan as they are implemented, both in terms of processes and outcomes.

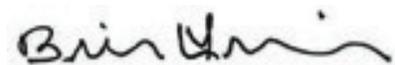
A key objective of the plan is a reduction in gun crimes by (1) enacting tougher state penalties for illegal possession of guns, (2) enforcing federal and state gun laws effectively and (3) communicating the consequences of engaging in gun crimes.

In 2017, the Crime Commission pushed successfully for enactment by the Tennessee General Assembly of tougher state penalties for illegal possession of guns. Also in 2017, the U.S. Attorney's Office announced that federal prosecution of gun crimes would be one of its priorities, and the number of gun cases taken federally began to increase, with guilty defendants facing significant federal sentences with no parole.

Trust Marketing was retained to develop a communications campaign to convey the consequences under both state and federal law of engaging in gun crimes. (Trust Marketing has handled previous anti-crime communications campaigns in the community, including the No Deals, Gun Crime is Jail Time and Blue C.R.U.S.H initiatives.)

The purpose of this analysis is to determine awareness of the Fed-Up message, in particular among ex-offenders on probation or parole and whether it had an effect on reported incidents involving firearms.

I thank James "Max" Helms, lead research assistant for the PSI, for his hard work on this analysis; Howard Robertson of Trust Marketing for making the information available to us regarding media coverage; and the U.S. Attorney's Office for arranging to have probationers and parolees participating in Cease Fire meetings surveyed on their awareness of the Fed-Up message.



Bill Gibbons, *Executive Director*
Public Safety Institute

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INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVE

The Fed-Up communications campaign began in Memphis in July 2017. The message behind the Fed-Up campaign was to focus on holding offenders accountable for gun crimes. Following a record-breaking year of homicides in Memphis, the idea behind the campaign was to convey the consequences of gun violence. Each month, law enforcement officials conduct a Cease Fire meeting with new individuals placed on state correctional supervision (probation or parole). In September 2017, the Public Safety Institute started collecting surveys from Cease Fire participants to measure their awareness of the Fed-Up campaign. The objective of this assessment is to examine (1) if the Fed-Up campaign had any effect to violent gun crimes and (2) if awareness increased as the campaign progressed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of mass media campaigns is nothing new to marketers in America. Mass media campaigns can be traced back to the early 1900s with the growth of newspaper and radio. However, over the past few decades the use of mass media campaigns has increased in order to address various health behaviors and other issues (Wakefield, Loken & Hornik, 2010). The increase of these campaigns can be associated with their ability to broadcast different, focused messages to large audiences continually, with the hope of creating some form of change within the audience. Mass media campaigns have been used to target large populations for many purposes such as health issues, politics and crime concerns.

To help distribute the message, many organizations use media consumption behaviors of the targeted audience to find the best method of dispensing the message (Abroms & Maibach, 2008). These methods include a variety of different platforms such as television, radio, billboards and social media (Facebook and Twitter). With the increased use of social media, many sites also have included the ability for marketers to broadcast their message through clickable ads on different sites.

Through using mass media campaigns (MMCs), the goal is to create a form of behavior change within that targeted population. While analysis of crime prevention and deterrence is limited, studies have



shown that MMCs directed at reducing alcohol-impaired driving and alcohol-related crashes appear to have an impact if they are carefully planned, well executed, adequately exposed to the target audience and implemented with other activities such as high-visibility enforcement. They suggest also that such campaigns are cost effective, with estimated societal benefits exceeding the costs of developing and conveying the campaign message. Several of the studies suggest that a MMC can play an “agenda setting” role by influencing public perceptions about the importance of a particular issue (Elder, Shults, Sleet, Nichols, Thompson, Rajab, 2004).

Research has shown that health behavior messages can directly or indirectly affect change within the population (Wakefield, Loken, Hornik, 2010). For example, one study found a considerable body of evidence in the role of anti-tobacco use messaging, while another found extensive support of ads promoting physical activity (Bala, Strzeszynski, Tapar-Madry, Cahill, 2013; Abioye, Hajifathalian, & Danaei, 2013). Abioye, Hajifathalian and Danaei (2013) analyzed the success of MMCs on increasing physical activity in adults. They aimed to examine nine MMCs, of moderate to high-quality, ranging from 2001 to 2008 across the world. From their results, they noted that while some impacts could be seen (such as an increase in walking), it may not reduce some sedentary behaviors such as sitting down. As a potential best practice, mass media campaigns would demonstrate that this approach provides positive results in most cases (Yurtayeva, Hladkova, & Shcherbakova, 2018). Yurtayeva, Hladkova and Shcherbakova (2018) noted results from MMCs can differ each time one

is done. However, they did note that in order to be effective they must state the objective of the campaign and provide straightforward information of the consequences of the targeted activity.

The Fed-Up Campaign

Memphis faced a record year for homicides in 2016 and was on pace for the same number in the beginning of 2017. Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland recruited Trust Marketing to assist since it had previous success in anti-crime campaigns in Memphis. The Fed-Up campaign launched in Memphis in July 2017. Trust Marketing brought on Jerald Trotter as the man behind the “Don’t lose your head, use your head” message. Trotter was convicted of second-degree murder as a result of gun violence and served time in a Tennessee prison. The message behind the Fed-Up campaign was to focus on communicating (1) law enforcement’s commitment to vigorously investigate gun crimes and (2) prosecutions seeking the maximum sentencing.

Development of a Safe Community Plan (2017-21) was spearheaded by the Memphis & Shelby County Crime Commission with input from over 400 citizens. A partnership was established with the University of Memphis Public Safety Institute to assess the impact of various parts of the plan as they were implemented. The Public Safety Institute brings researchers from multiple disciplines to explore policies and strategies for improving safety. Under the Safe Community Plan, one of the key points is to strengthen law enforcement’s ability to reduce violent street crime. In order to help do this, the Fed-Up campaign was used to communicate to the street level the consequences of engaging in gun crime.

METHODS

The Public Safety Institute started survey collection in September 2017 with a focus on Cease Fire participants. Cease Fire is a program that is designed to educate participants convicted of gun chargers on the dangers, barriers and penalties they could face if they continue to unlawfully possess and use firearms. Participants within the program were given a survey that asked if they had heard any of three different mass media campaigns, with one being a non-existent control campaign. They were asked if they had heard of Blue C.R.U.S.H., Fed-Up and Shelby County Cares. Blue C.R.U.S.H. started in 2005 and is the name given to the Memphis Police Department’s data-driven strategy. It aims to reduce crime in certain areas of the city where crime

is prevalent through the use of crime hot spot analysis. Shelby County Cares does not exist and is provided as a control to determine whether respondents will indicate awareness of a fictional campaign. Respondents who indicate “awareness” of a fictional campaign may be engaging in acquiescence bias (i.e., “yea saying”) where they tend to agree with every question. The presence of this bias impacts the validity of responses related to respondents’ awareness of real campaigns.

During the course of data collection, other groups were surveyed also, including a juvenile Cease Fire group, a group of Shelby County Division of Corrections inmates and a group of Shelby County Schools ACT students. Participants were also

asked to identify where they had seen an ad and were allowed to select more than one option. This is why some of the percentages in the ‘by location’ figures will equal more than 100 percent.

Trust Marketing provided data pertaining to the dosage amount of the Fed-Up campaign, including billboard locations, air times on the radio, television commercial air times and number of clicks on various websites. This data was then compared to violent firearm offenses, which were provided by the Memphis Police Department. Violent firearm offenses are any Part One offense committed with a firearm. These Part One crimes are made up of seven offenses: homicide, burglary, robbery, rape, vehicle theft, aggravated assault and larceny.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Measuring Awareness of the Fed-Up Campaign

During the process of data collection, 15 adult Cease Fire groups, three juvenile Cease Fire groups, a Shelby County Schools ACT practice group and a group of inmates with the Shelby County Division of Corrections were surveyed on whether they had seen three different mass media campaigns. Most respondents were black (67.53%), male (68.97%) and under the age of 35 (55.82%) (Table 1). The average age was just under 35 years old.

More than six in 10 adult and juvenile Cease Fire respondents reported seeing a Fed-Up ad, and just over half reported seeing a Blue C.R.U.S.H. ad (Figure 1), whereas nearly seven in 10 ACT and SCDC inmate respondents reported seeing a Fed-Up ad and over seven in 10 reported seeing a Blue C.R.U.S.H. ad (Figure 2). However, 29% of Cease Fire respondents and 21% of ACT/SCDC inmate respondents also reported seeing a fictional Shelby County Cares ad. This calls into question the validity of all responses provided by these 29% and 21%

Demographics of Sample (N = 1,734)		
	N	%
Age (Average)	34.66	
Under 18	60	3.46%
18 - 24	316	18.22%
25 - 34	592	34.14%
35 - 44	400	23.07%
45 & Above	346	19.95%
Missing	20	1.15%
Race		
Black	1,171	67.53%
Hispanic	26	1.50%
White	255	14.71%
Other	54	3.11%
Missing	228	13.15%
Sex		
Female	464	26.76%
Male	1,196	68.97%
Missing	74	4.27%

Table 1: All Respondents’ Demographics

of respondents due to acquiescence bias, which contributes to respondents' tendencies to agree or say "yes" to survey questions.

The primary sources of ads reported by both adult and juvenile Cease Fire respondents and the ACT/SCDC inmate respondents were television and billboards (Figures 3 & 4). Television was the primary source for Fed-Up ads in both groups, while nearly half of the Cease Fire respondents reported billboards as their primary source for Blue C.R.U.S.H. ads. Interestingly, about 43% of Cease Fire respondents who indicated they saw a Shelby County Cares ad say they saw it on a billboard, whereas TV (9.39%) was the highest for the ACT/SCDC group. Greater percentages of the Cease Fire group reported they saw both Blue C.R.U.S.H. and Shelby County Cares ads on billboards than Fed-Up ads. This was also true of those who reported seeing ads on bus stops and on social media; greater percentages

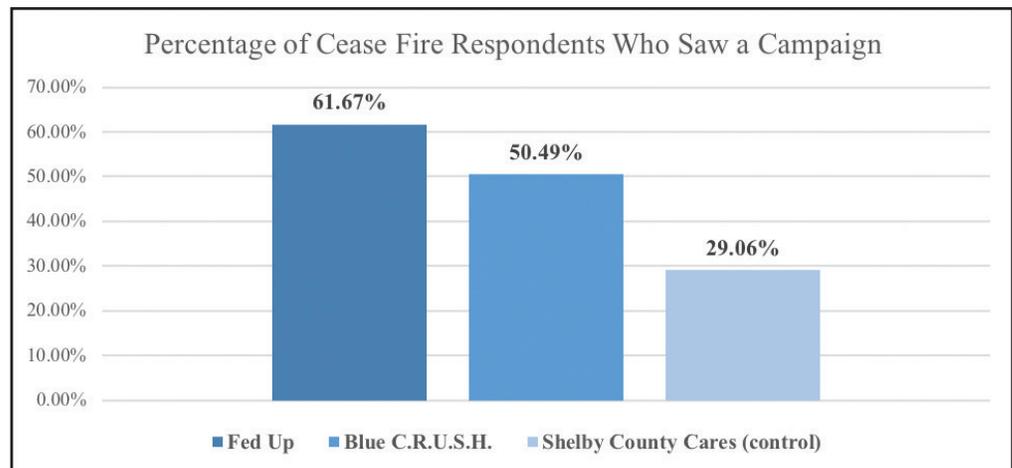


Figure 1: Percentage of adult and juvenile Cease Fire respondents indicating awareness of each campaign.

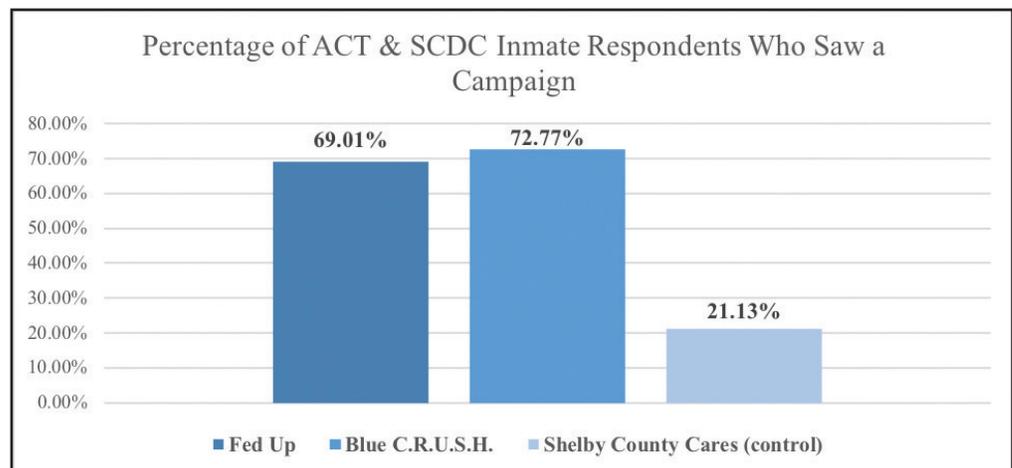


Figure 2: Percentage of ACT & SCDC inmate respondents indicating awareness of each campaign.

of respondents say they saw Blue C.R.U.S.H. and Shelby County Cares ads than Fed-Up ads on these sources. Nearly twice the percentage of respondents say they saw a non-existent ad at bus stops and on social media than say they saw the real Fed-Up ad.

In addition to measuring awareness of the campaign, the effectiveness of the Fed-

Up campaign was also measured by determining how that awareness changed over time as well as awareness of the control ad. Figure 5 shows the change over time to which both adult and juvenile Cease Fire respondents stated that they saw a Fed-Up or Shelby County Cares advertisement. It should be noted that not every month has a

percentage since Cease Fire does not meet every month (November and December are normally skipped). Awareness of the Fed-Up campaign increased significantly after the initial start of the survey collection and then began to decline as fewer advertisements were being aired. While Shelby County Cares did not have any large increases during the

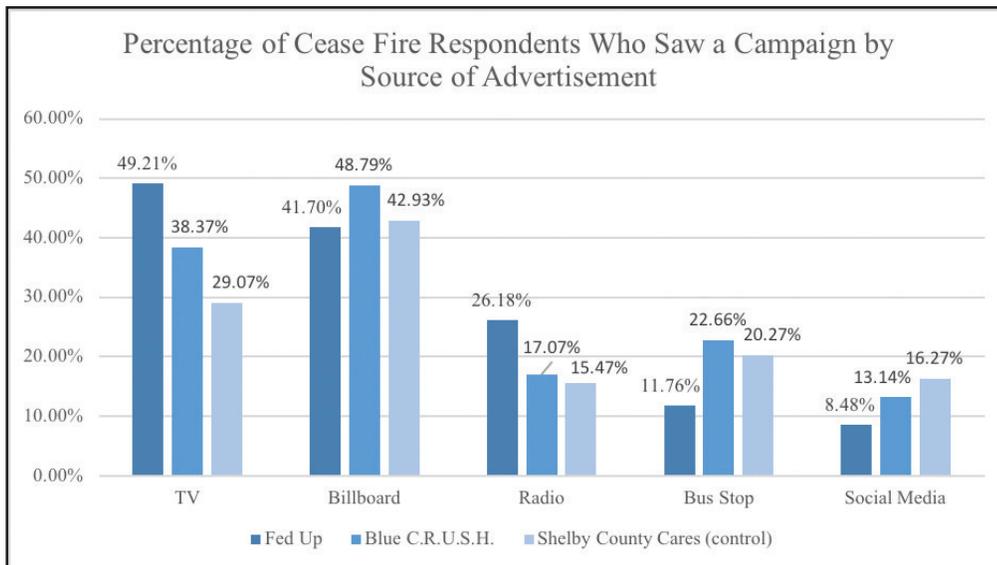


Figure 3: Percentage of adult and juvenile Cease Fire respondents' awareness by source of advertisement.

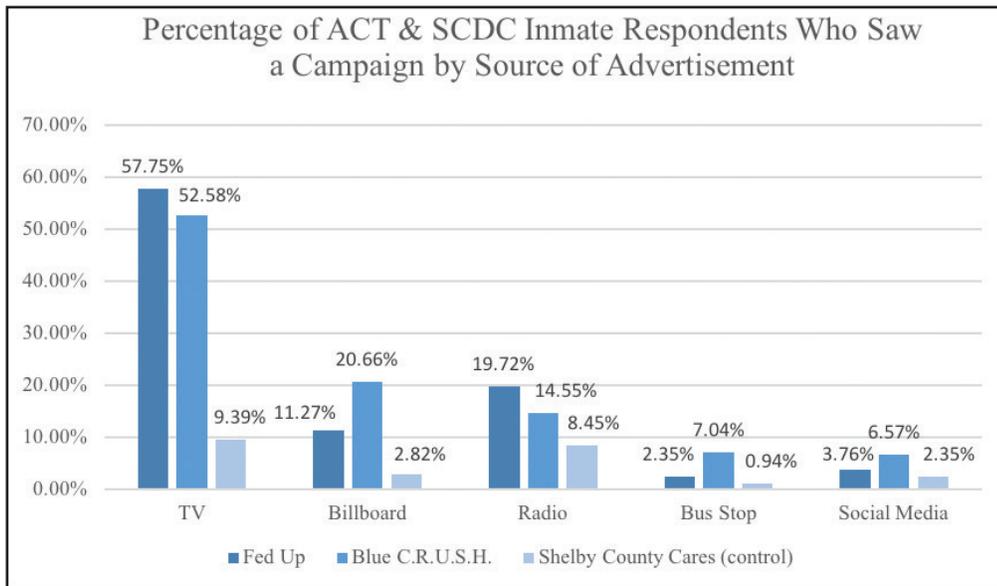


Figure 4: Percentage of ACT & SCDC inmate respondents' awareness by source of advertisement.

collection, on average 28.22% of respondents stated they had seen that advertisement during each survey collection.

One of the ways the Fed-Up campaign was advertised to members of the community was

through television commercials. Figure 6 shows the amount of times that a commercial was advertised each month starting in September 2017. There is also a set of scatter data that shows the percentage of those who

were surveyed each month stating they saw a Fed-Up ad on television. While the percentage stays fairly linear, with the exception of January 2018, it does show a decline in viewing as the campaign started to trail off. However, on

average, 22.25% of respondents reported seeing a television ad of the Fed-Up campaign after the television dosage stopped.

Correlation Between Ad Campaign and Gun Crime

When examining the relationship between the Fed-Up campaign and gun crime, it must be determined if it is through a correlation or causation relationship. Correlation is a measure of the degree which two variables are related. Causation, on the other hand, is an explanation for a change in the independent variable when followed by a change in the dependent variable. According to Cook and Campbell (2006), there are three criteria for causality. First, there must be an empirical association between the two variables. Second, the cause variable precedes the effect variable. Third, unnecessary variables are ruled out. However, due to the limited timeframe, it is nearly impossible to state definitely whether there is a correlation or causation

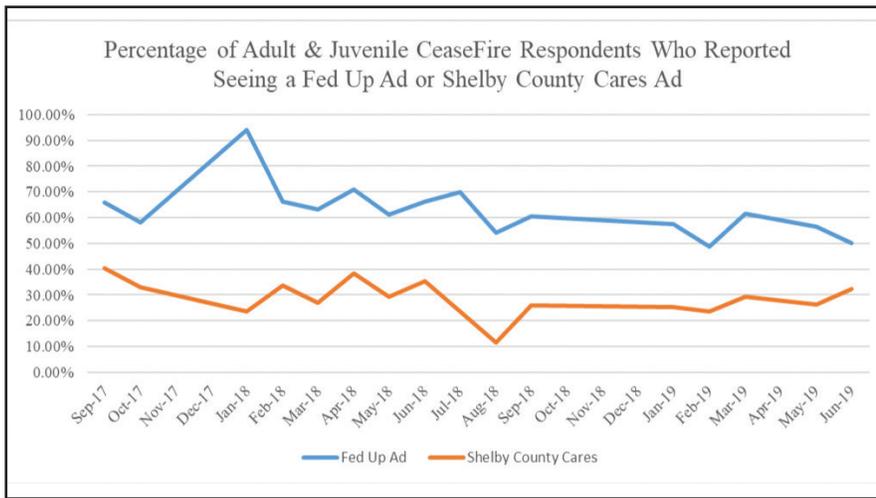


Figure 5: Percentage of adult and juvenile Cease Fire respondents who reported seeing a Fed-Up ad or Shelby County Cares ad

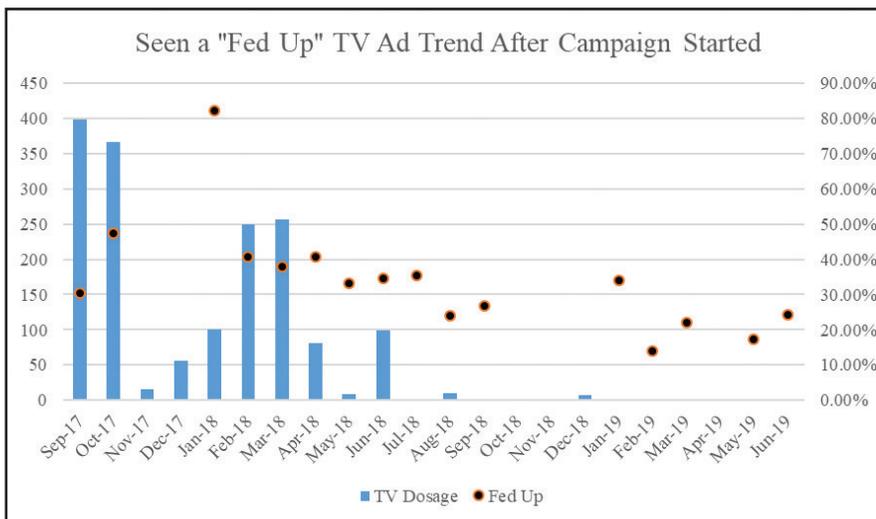


Figure 6: Seen a "Fed-Up" TV Ad Trend After Campaign Started

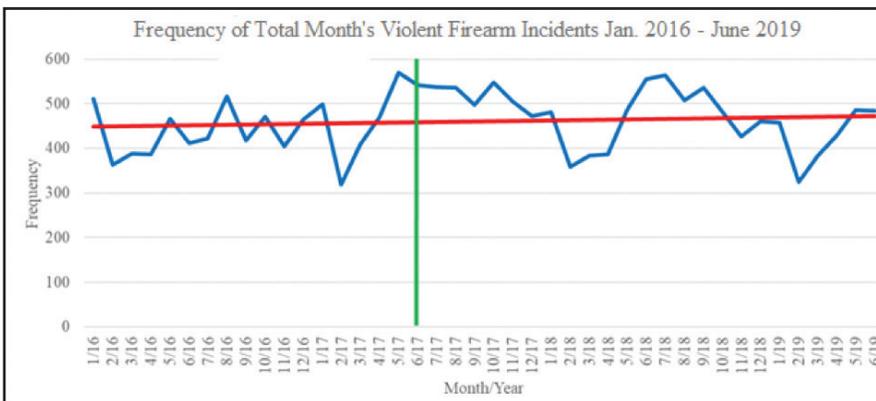


Figure 7: Frequency of Total Month's Violent Firearm Incidents Jan. 2016 – June 2019

relationship between the Fed-Up campaign and violent gun crimes.

The Fed-Up ad campaign began in June 2017. To determine whether the violent gun crime changed after the campaign began, the number of violent firearm incidents each month reported by the Memphis Police Department from January 2016 through June 2019 were plotted, as indicated by the blue line (Figure 7). The vertical green line marks the beginning of Fed-Up in June 2017. The horizontal red line is a trendline that depicts the general trend in the number of violent firearm offenses from January 2016 through June 2019.

The number of reported violent firearm incidents has fluctuated over time, with 2017 having generally higher monthly numbers than both 2016 and 2018. The general trend, as indicated by the red trendline, is a slight increase over time. Obvious seasonal patterns are observed with the lowest numbers each February, rising to higher numbers in the warmer months, then dropping through the colder months. May 2017 (the month before the ad campaign began) had the highest number of violent gun offenses during the entire 42-month period. With the exception of January and February, the months in 2017 all had significantly higher numbers of violent gun incidents than the months in 2016. February-March of 2018 (post-ad) tend to mirror February-March of 2016 (pre-ad).



Determining any pattern over time requires at least 60 months of data, so more conclusions will be possible at the end of the full program period. It is encouraging that, while higher than June 2016, the number of reported violent firearm incidents in June 2019 was lower than both June 2018 and June 2017. Importantly, reported violent firearm incidents declined in both 2018 and 2019 over the previous year.

This two-year downturn could be attributable to a number of combined factors. These include (1) stepped-up law enforcement efforts through data-driven policing and resulting deployment of

more resources into crime hotspots; (2) stepped-up prosecution of gun crimes, as reflected in part by a dramatic increase in the number of gun charges and guilty defendants in federal gun cases brought by the U.S. Attorney's Office; and (3) conveying the consequences of strong law enforcement and prosecution through the Fed-Up campaign. (Clearly, the Fed-Up campaign without strong law enforcement and prosecution would amount to "a bark with no bite.")

CONCLUSIONS

1. When Cease Fire participants indicated where they had seen or heard the Fed-Up campaign, the top three responses were by TV, billboard and radio. This does show that the avenues that Trust Marketing focused on the most were the ones through which most people were exposed to this message.
2. Recognition of the Fed-Up campaign increased during the heaviest media dosage months and began trailing off as the campaign declined. The level of awareness appears to be related to the level of advertising.
3. There remains a residual awareness of Blue C.R.U.S.H. even though it is no longer publicized as much as previously.
4. Reported violent firearm incidents declined in both 2018 and 2019 compared to the previous year. This may be attributable to a combination of factors working together to change behavior, including strong data-driven law enforcement efforts, heightened efforts at strong prosecution of gun cases and conveying the consequences of engaging in gun crime through the Fed-Up campaign.
5. The Fed-Up campaign will need to run for a longer period of time in order to clearly determine whether there is a measurable correlation between the level of gun crimes and exposure to the Fed-Up message.

LIMITATIONS

This interim assessment has significant limitations that restrict the ability to correlate any changes in violent firearm offending with the Fed-Up campaign. One limitation is that the majority of these data came from Cease Fire participants who already have committed at least one gun offense. If analyses could determine whether the Fed-Up campaign had any deterrent effect, one would have to track those who indicated campaign awareness and compare any future firearm offenses to those who did not indicate campaign awareness. Analyses and the drawing of conclusions also are limited by

the varying sizes of the Cease Fire groups. Percentages of awareness from one month may be based on a group of 134 people, whereas percentages of awareness from another month is based on only 17 people. Also, the percentages each month only represent that month's respondents and do not represent the population of all Cease Fire offenders since some did not complete the survey. And, obviously, Cease Fire participants do not include all gun crime offenders or all potential gun crime offenders.

The most significant limitation is that any observed changes in

violent firearm offending cannot be attributed solely to the Fed-Up campaign because other factors were not controlled, and the campaign has not existed long enough. Several things could impact violent firearm offending, including several existing programs currently being operated by law enforcement. Moreover, seasonal fluctuations in violent firearm offending were apparent. Finally, any changes in violent firearm offending should be considered within the context of changes in violent crime and changes in overall crime.

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SURVEY OF CEASE FIRE PARTICIPANTS

Today's date: _____

(DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS SURVEY)

Indicate Yes or No for the following questions:

Before coming to tonight's meeting, have you seen a BLUE C.R.U.S.H. billboard, ad at a bus stop, social media message, or TV spot or heard a BLUE C.R.U.S.H. radio spot?

- No Yes, on a bus billboard Yes, at a bus stop Yes, a social media message
 Yes, on TV Yes, on radio

Before coming to tonight's meeting, have you seen a SHELBY COUNTY CARES billboard, ad at a bus stop, social media message, or TV spot or heard a Shelby County CARES radio spot?

- No Yes, on a bus billboard Yes, at a bus stop Yes, a social media message
 Yes, on TV Yes, on radio

Before coming to tonight's meeting, have you seen a FED-UP. GUN CRIME. MAX TIME billboard, ad at a bus stop, social media message, or TV spot or heard a FED-UP. GUN CRIME. MAX TIME radio spot?

- No Yes, on a bus billboard Yes, at a bus stop Yes, a social media message
 Yes, on TV Yes, on radio

Before coming to tonight's meeting, have you seen a GUN CRIME IS JAIL TIME billboard, ad at a bus stop, social media message, or TV spot or heard a GUN CRIME IS JAIL TIME radio spot?

- No Yes, on a bus billboard Yes, at a bus stop Yes, a social media message
 Yes, on TV Yes, on radio

Please tell us a little about yourself:

Age _____

Circle the answer that describes you.

Gender: Male Female

Race: White Black Hispanic Other

Are you on Probation or Parole because of a conviction: (please circle whichever is, correct)

PROBATION

PAROLE

Which RADIO STATION do you listen to the most? _____

Survey 1: Survey given to adult cease fire respondents between September 2017 and June 2019



Public Safety Institute