



**STEPHEN B. RUSSELL**  
*Office of the State Attorney*  
*20th Judicial Circuit*

**Serving Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 15, 2006**

**PLAY BALL!**

Mark your calendar for April 1, and bring your enthusiasm and support to the State Attorney's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Softball Tournament.

Cheer on your favorite team as law enforcement officers from all five Southwest Florida counties gather to "play ball" at the Lee County Sports Complex on Six Mile Cypress Parkway. Starting at 8 AM, it is a **free day** of fun for the family and one of camaraderie for the officers. Watch agencies square off and compete against each other in an Upper and Lower Division. Last year the Hendry County Sheriff's Office, Glades County Sheriff's Office and Clewiston Police won the championship for the Lower Division. The Collier County Sheriff's Office won the championship for the Upper Division. The competition was pretty tough and this year, with new agencies joining the lineup, the tournament is expected to be even more exciting for the fans.

Local businesses sponsor each agency, and the proceeds, after expenses, go to Crime Stoppers. This year, area merchants committed \$14,000 to Crime Stoppers, four thousand more than last year. This gives the public and the teams a day of fun under the sun at no cost. "We are overwhelmed by the support from the business community," says State Attorney Steve Russell. "It not only sends a strong message of appreciation for law enforcement and Crime Stoppers, but also this support demonstrates a commitment to keep our communities safe." Each team will play a minimum of two games using all four fields. The games will conclude at dusk.

Russell started the tournament his first year in office to show appreciation to the law enforcement officers who dedicate their lives to protecting the citizens of Southwest Florida. In 2003, there were fewer than 200 participants. This year, there are close to 400 law enforcement officers "playing ball."

***To view the softball tournament Public Service Announcement, go to the State Attorney's Office Home Page [www.sao.cjis20.org](http://www.sao.cjis20.org) and click on the LEO Tournament tab.***

For more information, contact Chere Avery at 533-1125.