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Press Release

DA Morrissey and Chief O'Leary meet on retail crime with Patriot Place merchants



Norfolk District Attorney Michael Morrissey, left, with Patriots Place General Manager Brian J. Earley.

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Norfolk DA Michael Morrissey's message to the merchants and security personnel at Patriot Place was simple last week: You get us better evidence faster, and we can get you better results in shoplifting and other retail crime cases -- and get them faster.

"We see hundreds of these cases a year, not just from the Patriot Place but from malls and retail outlets all across the county," Morrissey said. "The better the coordination between the staff at the victim establishments and law enforcement, the more we can do to make the price of doing honest business go down in Norfolk County, and the price of doing criminal business go up."

Patriot Place was the second of several seminars for merchants and store loss prevention personnel that Morrissey has planned at major retail areas in Norfolk County. Foxborough Police Chief Ed O'Leary, Detective Sgt. John Hannon and Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Rowe participated in the 2 p.m. November 3 meeting. The seminar drew about two dozen store management and security personnel, including Patriot Place General Manager Brian J. Earley and security director John Teiner

Det. Sgt. Hannon underscored the importance of stores taking these kinds of crimes seriously -- because developing a reputation as a soft target can have far-reaching consequences: "Once word gets out, it doesn't take long," Sgt. Hannon said. "And then you are bringing in more (thieves.)"

The District Attorney provided and discussed restitution forms, impact statement procedures and a simple set of instructions on what prosecutors need from them in the days after a crime has occurred to make the cases move quickly and successfully. ADA Rowe outlined the use of the bail statute in appropriate cases and the utility of letters of disinvite in curtailing repeat nuisances. District Attorney Morrissey discussed his office's forensic video capability to enhance store surveillance footage and improve the quality of that evidence.

"A retail manager is not supposed to be well versed in the Massachusetts Rules of Evidence. That is not their job, but it is our job, and we can help them through the process and make these prosecutions move, and move in the right directions," District Attorney Morrissey said.

Industry groups estimate that \$13 Billion worth of goods are shoplifted from American retail stores every year -- equivalent to \$35 million a day. "Every dollar that is lost to shoplifting becomes a dollar that comes out of the honest consumer's pocket," District Attorney Morrissey said.

"Retail crime is a serious cost of doing business and burdens Massachusetts with over \$34 million in lost tax revenue each year. Patriot Place, as a super-regional retail and entertainment destination in New England is on the forefront of combating retail crime at all levels," said facility General Manager Brian J. Earley. "Partnering with the District Attorney's Office to provide critical information to our stores and restaurants is an important aspect of ensuring that Patriot Place is a fun and safe environment for our millions of guests and our valued employees."

"Major retail areas locate near highways to give easy access to customers, but that also provides easy access to criminals who want to target and run. We see substantial shoplifting cases out of these areas and the defendants have home addresses as far away as New York City, suggesting that these are target areas for organized, coordinated shoplifting rings," District Attorney Morrissey said. "We want an organized and coordinated system in place to combat that."

Morrissey credited Chief O'Leary and the Town of Foxborough for their coordinated effort to reduce crime at Patriot Place and be responsive to the merchants located there. "Foxborough officials work assiduously to assure public safety at Patriot Place, and not just on game days. We are pleased to be able to work with them in that cause," Morrissey said.

District Attorney Morrissey plans to hold a similar presentation for merchants at the Wrentham Village Premium Outlets on December 7 and other large retail complexes in the county in 2012.