

## Gun buyback most successful so far

The Southwest Gun Buyback last Saturday took 243 guns off Rochester's streets, making it the city's most successful buyback to date.

The event – a partnership among the New York Attorney General's office, the Rochester Police Department and the Southwest Gun Buyback Committee – was the first of a series of buybacks around the state, according to Assistant Attorney General Debra Martin.

In Rochester, residents came to 342 Arnett Blvd. to anonymously drop off their working and non-working guns in exchange for money. The Attorney General's office issued debit cards: \$25 for broken guns or antiques, \$50 for long guns, \$75 for handguns, and \$100 for assault weapons, paying out a total of \$16,000 by the end of the day.

Additional \$25 Tops grocery store gift cards were provided by the committee, which raised money to support the effort, said Southwest Gun Buyback Committee Member Susan Morehouse.

Martin emphasized that the buyback was successful primarily because "Rochester got behind the event" by posting flyers and spreading the word around their neighborhoods. Now, Morehouse said the committee will be using their leftover funds to produce a video aimed at encouraging reduced gun violence among youths.

Since part of the offer was to have no questions asked, all of the guns will be melted down without being tested, according to Rochester Police Chief James Sheppard.

Though that means potential evidence could be lost forever, Sheppard said it was worth the trade-off.

"Of the 150 handguns recovered, only 10 had legal permits," he said. "If we didn't have this buyback, we may never have seen these guns."

The next state-sponsored buyback will take place in Utica on Oct. 19, but Morehouse proposed a friendly challenge to keep the momentum going in Rochester: "Northeast side, can you beat our number next spring?"

