

Rodrigo Sierra Remarks
Crime Stoppers Media Event
December 2, 2006

Thank you all for braving the cold this morning and banding together for a good cause.

A little over one year ago, Peoples Gas employee Juan Marrero went to a home on this very street to install a gas meter.

What should have been a routine service call on an ordinary day turned into a nightmare for him.

An unknown offender entered the basement, put a gun to Juan's head, and demanded his wallet.

A struggle ensued, and Juan was shot in the stomach. Fortunately, he survived and is able to stand here with us today. But the perpetrator has never been found.

Utility workers can face difficult situations when providing services in the community.

In the last 10 years, there have been more than 300 attacks against Peoples Gas workers. In fact, three of our workers have been murdered on the job.

We need the community to help us stop these attacks by speaking out against such violence.

Progress was made earlier this year when the Illinois House passed a bill to toughen penalties against offenders who attack utility workers. We thank Representative Cynthia Soto for sponsoring this important legislation.

In the Senate, we are grateful that Senator Martin Sandoval sponsored the bill. Unfortunately, the bill has been stalled in the Senate Rules committee. But we're hopeful that it will be called to a vote before this general assembly session ends. We encourage each of you to let your state senators know how important this issue is to you.

No one should have to go to work and worry about being attacked, robbed or killed as they do their job.

Crime Stoppers is offering a \$1,000 cash reward and Peoples Energy is offering an additional \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of Juan Marrero's offender.

I'd like to thank everyone who came out today to find the person who committed this act of violence against Juan Marrero.

Thank you to George McDade and the Cook County Crime Stoppers. Thank you to Jim Gennet and John Groenwald, leaders of gas workers union local 18007 and their members. And thank you to the Chicago police officers, who each day bravely do their part to keep Chicago a safe place to live and work.

Most of all, Peoples Energy applauds Juan for the tremendous courage he has shown since this terrible incident took place.

Please help us find Juan's attacker and bring him to justice.

Thank you.