



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY MCMASTER
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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Catawba Nuclear Supervisor Pleads Guilty to Computer Crimes, Sexual Exploitation of a Minor

Columbia, S.C. – Attorney General Henry McMaster announced today that John Mark Smith, 45, of 3812 Charles Raper Jonas Highway in Stanley, North Carolina, (formerly employed by Duke Power Company at the Catawba Nuclear Station in York County) pleaded guilty on Monday, June 21, 2004 to one (1) count of Computer Crime in the Second Degree and fourteen (14) counts of Third Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor. Second Degree Computer Crime is a misdemeanor violation of §16-16-20 of the Code of Laws, punishable to one (1) year imprisonment and/or a \$10,000 fine and Third Degree Sexual Exploitation is a felony violation of §16-15-410 of the Code of Laws, punishable to five (5) years imprisonment.

Between January 3, 2003 and January 14, 2003, while working as a nuclear shift supervisor at the Catawba Station, Smith downloaded from the Internet a series of computer files depicting adults engaged in explicit sexual activity with minors and minors engaged in explicit sexual activity with other minors. The minors in the videos had ages ranging from age one (1) to age fifteen (15).

The child pornography was discovered on Smith's computer by Duke Power management, who under company workforce policy, routinely monitor company computers for prohibited and illegal activities including accessing and viewing pornography. Duke Power management turned this information over to the South Carolina Computer Crimes Center, a partnership of the State Law Enforcement Division, the United States Secret Service, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, for investigation.

Judge Lee S. Alford, presiding over the General Sessions Court of York County, sentenced Smith to one (1) year imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine on the Second Degree Computer Crime count, suspended to five (5) years probation and a \$2,000 fine. On the fourteen (14) counts of Third Degree Exploitation of a Minor, Smith was sentenced to five (5) years imprisonment, suspended upon five (5) years probation. Smith is prohibited from using the Internet during probation. All sentences are to run concurrently.

Smith is now required to register as a sex offender in the state of his residence.

McMaster noted that this plea resulted from the first case in which the State Grand Jury used its authority to investigate and indict offenses involving violations of the South Carolina Computer Crimes Act.

This case was investigated by SLED and the State Computer Crimes Center, and prosecuted by the Attorney General's Office.

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