



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY McMASTER
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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McMaster Announces Major Expansion Of The Internet Predator Task Force *Member Agencies have made Thirty-three Arrests*

Columbia, S.C. – Attorney General Henry McMaster traveled today to the City of Westminster Police Department to announce the addition of seven (7) upstate law enforcement agencies to the Attorney General’s Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force. The Task Force now has nineteen (19) departments participating across the state, with more announcements expected in the coming weeks.

The law enforcement agencies announced are the Town of Central Police Department, the City of Clemson Police Department, the City of Greenville Police Department, the Greenville County Sheriff’s Office, the City of Liberty Police Department, the Oconee County Sheriff’s Office, and the Pickens County Sheriff’s Office.

Westminster Police Chief Scott Bannister, Greenville Police Chief Willie Johnson, Oconee County Sheriff James E. Singleton, and Pickens County Sheriff David Stone attended the announcement, and spoke in support of the Internet Predator Task Force.

“This is an impressive group of law enforcement agencies, and we are fortunate to have their expertise and dedication working on the Internet Predator Task Force,” said McMaster. “We are constantly building this team and adding to the number of officers who are on the Internet in search of these monsters.”

The seven (7) agencies will join the Kershaw County Sheriff’s Department, the Lexington County Sheriff’s Department, the Laurens County Sheriff’s Office, the City of Clinton Department of Public Safety, the Charleston City Police Department, the Westminster Police Department, the York County Sheriff’s Department, the Spartanburg County Sheriff’s Department, the City of Aiken Department of Public Safety, the Aiken County Sheriff’s Department, the Florence County Sheriff’s Department, and the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) on the statewide task force.

McMaster explained that the Task Force has made outstanding progress since the Internet Predator Law was enacted in April 2004, arresting thirty-three (33) suspected predators. (Twenty-four of those arrests

were made this year.) Five (5) of the men arrested on these charges have pleaded guilty. Another seventeen (17) individuals are under indictment, and eleven (11) more are pending.

Entering the summer of 2005, the Task Force had one (1) law enforcement agency in the state, the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED), conducting Internet stings operations. In June 2005, McMaster expanded the scope of the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force to include local law enforcement agencies, and invited those interested to join.

During the news conference, Attorney General McMaster presented an award to Westminster Investigator Mark Patterson in recognition of his “outstanding dedication and service” to the ICAC Task Force. Since joining the Task Force in 2005, Patterson alone has made ten (10) of the Task Force’s thirty-three (33) arrests.

“Thanks to the dedication and commitment of Mark Patterson and other officers across the state, our Internet Predator Task Force is making a difference for the children of South Carolina,” said McMaster.

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