Internet Predator Caught By Task Force Trainee

Columbia, S.C. – Attorney General Henry McMaster announced today that John Thomas Smith, 35, of 98 Forest Lake Drive in Simpsonville was arrested on November 16, 2006, in an undercover Internet sting conducted by the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force.

Smith was arrested on one (1) count of Criminal Solicitation of a Minor (§ 16-15-342), a felony offense punishable to ten (10) years imprisonment and one (1) count of Attempted Criminal Sexual Conduct With a Minor (§ 16-3-655(B)), a felony offense punishable to twenty (20) years imprisonment.

Arrest warrants allege that Smith began online “chats” on November 16, 2006, with a person he believed to be a thirteen (13) year old “girl.” In reality, he was soliciting sex from an Oconee County Sheriff’s Deputy who was participating in ICAC training in Spartanburg. Smith further arranged to meet the “girl” for sex at a predetermined location in Spartanburg County. He was arrested upon his arrival at that location the same day by the Spartanburg County Sheriff’s Office.

The Greenville County Sheriff’s Office assisted the case by executing a search warrant at Smith’s residence on November 16. Two (2) desktop computers and computer-related items were seized.

All three (3) law enforcement agencies involved are members of the Attorney General’s Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force.

Smith’s bond was set at $75,000.

The case will be prosecuted by the Attorney General’s Office.

McMaster stressed that all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until they are proven guilty in a court of law.

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