



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY McMASTER  
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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## **Lexington Co. Sheriff Joins McMaster's Internet Predator Task Force**

*Eleven Law Enforcement Agencies Now Members In Statewide Online Sting Effort*

**Columbia, S.C.** - Attorney General Henry McMaster has announced the addition of the Lexington County Sheriff's Department to a state task force dedicated to catching sexual predators online before they can abduct or assault a child. Eleven law enforcement agencies are now participating in the statewide task force designed to locate and arrest online predators.

At a news conference held at the Lexington County Sheriff's Department, McMaster announced that the agency is now a partner in the Attorney General's Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force.

Lexington County Sheriff James R. Metts, and Eleventh Circuit Solicitor Donald V. Myers spoke in support of the expanding effort to protect the state's children from sexual predators on the Internet.

Lexington County joins 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.

"Using the new Internet predator law, our undercover stings have been very successful in targeting these monsters before they can target our children," said McMaster. "The addition of the Lexington County Sheriff's Department adds more troops to the fight and should act as a strong deterrent to would be predators. In South Carolina, these predators have become the prey."

Lexington County Sheriff James R. Metts said the Sheriff's Department is pleased to work in partnership with Attorney General Henry McMaster and 11th Circuit Solicitor Donald V. Myers to catch sexual predators.

“We know from recent cases that our agency has investigated that sexual predators who prey on children live in Lexington County,” Metts said. “We want to place predators on notice that investigators with our agency now will be surfing the Internet and posing as children to identify predators who intend to harm children in Lexington County.”

“Our participation in the task force marks a significant step forward in protecting children in Lexington County from sexual predators who search for their prey on the Internet,” Metts added.

The South Carolina Task Force is part of a federal Department of Justice ICAC network dedicated to assisting state and local law enforcement agencies’ efforts to combat child cyber enticement and child exploitation. Locally, it is operated by the Attorney General’s Office in partnership with the State Law Enforcement Division and the South Carolina Computer Crimes Center.

Using the Internet predator law he pushed through the General Assembly in 2004, McMaster and the ICAC Task Force have aggressively investigated and prosecuted child cyber enticement cases. The law makes it a crime to stalk, lure or entice a child for abduction or sexual assault.

McMaster is now expanding the ICAC task force partnership to include local law enforcement agencies, with the Attorney General’s Office providing assistance with federal ICAC funding, training and resources. In return, local law enforcement agencies will conduct proactive undercover Internet predator sting operations. As part of the agreement, the Attorney General’s Office will prosecute the Internet predator cases with the local Solicitor prosecuting other child exploitation crimes.

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