



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY McMASTER  
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

For Immediate Release  
December 14, 2006

Contact: Mark Plowden  
803-734-3670  
[mplowden@ag.state.sc.us](mailto:mplowden@ag.state.sc.us)

## **McMaster Announces Midlands Expansion of the Internet Predator Task Force**

***Member Agencies have made Forty-nine Arrests***

**Columbia, S.C.** – Attorney General Henry McMaster traveled today to the Richland County Sheriff's Department to announce that law enforcement agency's addition to the Attorney General's Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force.

The Task Force now has twenty-seven (27) departments participating across the state, with more announcements expected.

"I am pleased to announce that Sheriff Lott and the Richland County Sheriff's Department are now a member of the Internet Predator Task Force," said McMaster. "This is a strong law enforcement agency, and a powerful ally in our fight against these monsters."

"This partnership further solidifies my commitment to protect our children," said Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott. "All predators need to know that we will not tolerate nor accept their behavior. The ICAC Task Force proves that law enforcement in South Carolina and the Attorney General are working together to improve the quality of life for our citizens."

Richland County joins the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office, the Greenwood County Sheriff's Office, the City of West Columbia Police Department, the City of Orangeburg Police Department, the City of Myrtle Beach Police Department, the Anderson County Sheriff's Office, the City of Anderson Police Department, 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, the Pickens County Sheriff's Office, 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 City of Charleston Police Department, the City of 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 forty-nine (49) suspected predators. (Forty (40) of those arrests were made this year.) Thirteen (13) of the men arrested on these charges have pleaded guilty. One (1) was found guilty by jury trial. Another twenty-seven (27) individuals are under indictment, and eight (8) more are pending.

"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 those seeking to harm our children."

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.

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