



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY McMASTER
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

For Immediate Release
December 8, 2006

Contact: Mark Plowden
803-734-3670
mplowden@ag.state.sc.us

Registered Sex Offender Arrested In Internet Predator Sting

Large Quantity of Cocaine Seized

Columbia - Attorney General Henry McMaster announced today that Joseph George Heyward, 40, of 32 N. Enston Avenue in Charleston, was arrested on December 7, 2006, in an undercover Internet sting conducted by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED).

SLED is a member of the Attorney General's Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force.

Heyward was arrested on one (1) count of Criminal Solicitation of a Minor (§ 16-15-342), a felony offense punishable to ten (10) years imprisonment.

Heyward is listed on the state's sex offender registry after a 1997 conviction for Lewd Act on a Minor.

Arrest warrants allege that Heyward began soliciting sex on July 12, 2006, from a person he believed to be a fourteen (14) year old girl. In reality, he was communicating with an undercover SLED agent.

A search warrant was executed at Heyward's residence on December 7 with the assistance of the City of Charleston Police Department, also a member of the ICAC Task Force. The search resulted in the seizure of a computer, computer-related equipment, and at least one hundred eighty-three (183) grams of cocaine.

A bond hearing for Heyward is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. today at the Lexington County Detention Center.

Any and all drug charges that may arise from the case will be presented by the City of Charleston Police Department.

This is the forty-ninth (49th) arrest since the Internet Predator law was passed in April 2004.

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.

###