



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY McMASTER  
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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## **McMaster Expands Internet Predator Task Force** ***Spartanburg Sheriff's Department First to Join Effort***

**Columbia, S.C.** – Attorney General Henry McMaster today expanded the state's ability to pursue Internet Predators by adding a new local law enforcement partner to the state task force and is encouraging additional law enforcement agencies to join by year's end.

At a press conference held in Spartanburg with Sheriff Chuck Wright and Seventh Circuit Solicitor Trey Gowdy, McMaster announced that the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Department would become a partner in the Attorney General's Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force.

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 last year, 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.

"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 Spartanburg Sheriff's Deputies adds more troops to the fight and will hopefully act as a strong deterrent to would be predators."

"I am looking forward to working side-by-side with Attorney General McMaster to protect the children of Spartanburg County," said Sheriff Wright. "The Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force partnership brings nothing but benefits to our county and our state."



Said Solicitor Gowdy, "The resources available through the ICAC Task Force are a blessing for prosecuting complex Internet-driven cases. Thanks to the strong new Internet solicitation law in this state, authorities can protect children even better from online predators who want to harm them."

In the partnership, the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Department will:

- Initiate proactive and undercover Internet predator investigations to identify suspects both in and out of state. Spartanburg County Sheriff's Department will investigate these suspects, as it deems appropriate, with assistance from SLED.
- Conduct investigations where subjects are associated with Spartanburg's jurisdiction, including investigations of child pornography, cybertip referrals from National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), Internet service providers, law enforcement referrals and other ICAC-related investigations.
- Conduct education and prevention programs to foster awareness and provide practical, relevant guidance to children, parents, educators, librarians, the business and law enforcement communities, and other individuals concerned about Internet child safety issues.

The Attorney General's Office will:

- Prosecute Internet predator cases with the local Solicitor prosecuting other child exploitation crimes.
- Provide legal assistance to Spartanburg County Sheriff's Department through the dedicated SC ICAC Assistant Attorney General, including review of all court orders, subpoenas, motions and other related ICAC documents. In addition, the SC ICAC Assistant Attorney General, will consult with and advise any investigators and/or prosecutors working with Spartanburg County Sheriff's Department on all related legal issues as they arise during the course of investigation and prosecution.
- Review investigative reports and make independent prosecutorial decisions when appropriate.
- Perform any administrative tasks regarding the receipt and renewal of the federal grant. The Attorney General's Office will communicate necessary information regarding the national ICAC program to Spartanburg County Sheriff's Department as appropriate.
- Assist Spartanburg County Sheriff's Department in obtaining necessary training and equipment.

**More Information Online:**

[www.scattorneygeneral.com](http://www.scattorneygeneral.com)

[www.sckidsonline.com](http://www.sckidsonline.com)

[www.spartanburgso.org](http://www.spartanburgso.org)

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