



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY McMASTER  
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

For Immediate Release  
October 26, 2005

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

## **Westminster Police Department Joins Attorney General's Internet Predator Task Force**

**Columbia, S.C.** – Attorney General Henry McMaster has announced the addition of another local law enforcement agency to a state task force dedicated to catching sexual predators online before they can abduct or assault a child.

The Town of Westminster Police Department will become a partner in the Attorney General's Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force.

The Westminster Police Department joins the York County Sheriff's Department, the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Department, the City of Aiken Department of Public Safety, the Aiken Sheriff's Department and the Florence County Sheriff's Department on the statewide 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 the Westminster Police Department adds more troops to the fight and will hopefully act as a strong deterrent to would be predators."

In the partnership, the Westminster Police Department will:

- Initiate proactive and undercover Internet predator investigations to identify suspects both in and out of state. Westminster Police Department will investigate these suspects, as it deems appropriate, with assistance from SLED.
- Conduct investigations where subjects are associated with Westminster'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 Westminster Police Department through the dedicated S.C. ICAC Assistant Attorney General, including review of all court orders, subpoenas, motions and other related ICAC documents. In addition, the S.C. ICAC Assistant Attorney General, will consult with and advise any investigators and/or prosecutors working with Westminster Police 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 Westminster Police Department as appropriate.
- Assist Westminster Police Department in obtaining necessary training and equipment.

**More Information Online:**

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

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

###