



For Immediate Release

Captain Deion Glover
Government and Media Relations

Nov. 12, 2024

Contact: Sergeant Jermaine Walker – GMR Public Information Officer
Phone: (253) 312-8880
Email: jermaine.walker@wsp.wa.gov

Skagit County Child Exploitation Operation leads to 14 arrests

Mount Vernon, Wash. – Fourteen individuals were taken into custody in Skagit County this weekend as part of a multi-agency operation identifying those allegedly involved in the sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

The multi-day operation involved the Washington State Patrol (WSP), local Skagit County law enforcement agencies, and several partner agencies. The Skagit County Prosecuting Attorney's Office will review the cases to determine which potential criminal charges will be filed.

“On behalf of the citizens of Skagit County I would like to thank state, federal and local law enforcement for their work in the successful apprehension of a number of individuals who were attempting to take advantage of our most vulnerable—the children of Skagit County. I am hopeful that this operation will send a message and deter others from trying to use social media for their own deviant activities,” said Skagit County Prosecutor Rich Weyrich. “We will be aggressively prosecuting these people and holding them accountable for their actions. We will remain vigilant in attempting to identify and bring to justice others who would engage in these activities.”

Dubbed “Child Exploitation Operation,” this is the 23rd operation spearheaded by the WSP’s Missing and Exploited Children Task Force (MECTF), an Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) affiliate. Since the first operation in August 2015, MECTF has netted a total of 348 arrests and removed numerous children from danger across the state because of police intervention.

“Every day, members of the Mount Vernon Police Department strive to make our city safe and livable for everyone, especially those who are the most vulnerable. Efforts like the Child Exploitation Operation are remarkable because it intercepts adults who target children for sexual gratification,” said Mount Vernon Police Chief Daniel Christman. “I am very proud of the members of the Mount Vernon Police Department, Washington State Patrol, and our local law enforcement partners who all helped to identify, arrest, and build strong cases against sexual predators who use the internet to exploit and abuse our children.

MECTF's primary mission during the operation is to proactively target those persons involved in child abuse and child exploitation via the Internet.

"Our children are our communities most innocent and vulnerable people," said WSP Chief John Batiste. "It warms my heart that when the call to protect and safeguard these precious lives goes out, so many federal, state, county and local agencies answered to offer their assistance."

Primary crimes investigated are:

- RCW 9A.44.073 – Rape of a child in the first-degree – attempt
- RCW 9A.44.076 – Rape of a child in the second degree – attempt
- RCW 9.68A.090 – Communication with a minor for immoral purposes
- RCW 9.68A.040 – Sexual Exploitation of a minor

The names of the individuals taken into custody during the operation were:

- EATON, Anthony, 35, Seattle, WA
- HARDY, Gregory, 36, Burlington, WA
- JONES, Dylan, 33, Puyallup, WA
- KAY, Christopher, 40, Sedro Wolley, WA
- LOPEZ FLORES, Domingo, 34, Lake Stevens, WA
- LUKENS, Luke, 44, Mount Vernon, WA
- MEDELLIN, Peter, 39, Sedro Wolley, WA
- MITCHELL, Cody, 37, Ferndale, WA
- NOBRIGA, Almar, 62, Everett, WA
- RAMOS, Abrahn, 31, Tulalip, WA
- ROMERO RAMOS, Ronald, 25, Bellingham, WA
- SCHALESKY, Steffon, 34, Burlington, WA
- STRAUSS, Taylor, 34, Edmonds, WA
- THOMPSON, Ruben, 50, Renton, WA

Anyone with information related to the suspects listed, or information leading to the identity of victims potentially involved in these cases, please contact METCF at mectf@wsp.wa.gov.

The collaborative effort involving more than 60 dedicated law enforcement officers, agents, and staff led to the success of this operation. Those agencies involved include:

- Anacortes Police Department
- Bellingham Police Department
- Burlington Police Department
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Homeland Security Investigations
- Kittitas County Sheriff's Office
- Mount Vernon Police Department
- Oak Harbor Police Department
- Othello Police Department
- Puyallup Police Department
- Redmond Police Department
- Renton Police Department
- Seattle Police Department
- Sedro Wolley Police Department
- Skagit County Prosecutor's Office
- Skagit County Sheriff's Office
- Spokane Police Department
- Tacoma Police Department
- Washington State Patrol

###

MECTF is a state law enforcement agency governed by RCW 13.60.110, and not designated as a 501(c)(3) charity. All donations made to MECTF go directly to MECTF and are used explicitly in the identification and safe recovery of exploited children, the investigation of those exploiting children, and successful apprehension and the prosecution thereof. Please consult with your tax professional or the Internal Revenue Service to determine if your donation is tax exempt. To donate and support MECTF, please visit <https://www.wsp.wa.gov/crime/mectf/>.