

## Staff Report

**TO:** Public Safety Subcommittee                      **DATE:** May 13, 2008  
**COPIES TO:** City Council                                      **VIA:** Gary Jackson, City Manager  
**FROM:** Chief William Hogan                              **PREPARED BY:** Capt. Tim Splain  
**SUBJECT:** Child Pornography / Internet Predator Investigations

**SUMMARY STATEMENT:** Updated information pertaining to child pornography and internet predator investigations and initiatives by the Asheville Police Department.

**CURRENT INITIATIVES:** The Asheville Police Department has entered into memorandum(s) of understanding with the FBI and NC State Bureau of Investigation to assist in various computer crimes related investigations. Detective Johnson is currently working with the following task forces:

- Joined the FBI High-Tech Computer Crimes Task Force (HTCCTF) which investigates cases of child pornography. One Asheville-based case has already been referred to Detective Johnson.

- Joined the NCSBI Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force. This group works to identify, target, apprehend, and prosecute sexual predators whose purpose is to exploit children or engage in sexual activity with children through the use of computers and the internet.

- Joined the FBI Cyber Crime Task Force which investigates criminal cases and national security threats when: computers and high technologies are the target of the crime, computers and high technologies are the principal instrument of the crime, or computers or high technologies are used to facilitate violations of criminal laws or breaches of national security.

As a result of this work, Detective Johnson has indicted two individuals in federal court on child pornography charges. Neither of these cases has been adjudicated, and we cannot publicly discuss them until prosecution is complete and a press release is issued by the federal press office. In one case, there were more than 5,000 images screened and 118 of these images have already been identified (victims) and prosecutions pursued. Detective Johnson will also be requesting prosecution by the federal government on a third case where a cellular telephone salesperson at the Asheville Mall was using a cellular phone to take pornographic photographs of minors. This person was also furnishing alcohol and illegal drugs to minors that he could convince to come to his home. Detective Johnson continues to assist the NCSBI and BCSD with investigations targeting internet predators and individuals possessing and trafficking in child pornography.

On April 11, 2008 Detective Johnson completed the Seized Computer Evidence Recovery Specialist (SCERS) training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

**FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:** Detective Johnson was also scheduled to attend the NC State Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) training on May 5-9, 2008. We had a preliminary position in this training, but have since been notified that Detective Johnson was not seated in the class. Detective Johnson cannot fully participate in the NC ICAC Taskforce until he completes this training. We have sought this training for over one year and may possibly retain a training position in a June 9-12 ICAC class that is being hosted in Asheville.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** On February 21, 2008 Melissa Williams and Capt. Splain met with Mr. Grier Weeks of PROTECT – National Association to Protect Children. Mr. Weeks was concerned that APD was not actively engaged in internet predator investigations. It was explained to Mr. Weeks how we were participating in Federal child pornography investigations, but that we had not yet received training from the NC ICAC and could not fully participate in that taskforce until Detective Johnson had received ICAC training. APD is also a full-service police department and Detective Johnson's expertise is utilized in internet fraud / scam investigations, white-collar crime investigations, and most other investigations where digital media is used in the commission of a crime. With only one trained investigator, we cannot solely conduct child pornography / internet predator investigations and ignore all others. Mr. Weeks was very understanding and has offered some other training and contacts within the ICAC specialty for Detective Johnson to take advantage of.

On April 5, 2008, the Asheville Police Department co-sponsored and participated in the Leadership Asheville (CyberBusters Team) Internet Safety Symposium. This symposium was held to inform parents, educators, and concerned citizens about the dangers of the internet and issues such as Cyber-Bullying. The program introduced the I-SAFE curriculum which assists parents and educators with protecting children who use the internet. Approximately 150 adults attended the program at A/B Tech's Ferguson Auditorium.

As of May 9, 2008 Detective Johnson is assisting other APD Detectives with three new cases that involve child pornography and other sexual predator offenses. He is using his specialized training to mirror seized hard drives and extract digital information pertaining to these cases. Detective Johnson then creates reports for the prosecution of these individuals.