



LEON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Walt McNeil, Sheriff

2825 Major James Morgan Jr. Way, Tallahassee, FL 32304

www.leoncountysos.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Javonni Hampton

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LCSO Releases Results of Child Sex Crime Operation

Today, the Leon County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) announced the outcomes of Operation Lifeguard, a significant undercover operation targeting perpetrators of online child exploitation.

Over the course of three days, 36 hours total, the operation resulted in 93 contacts with adults who continued conversations with undercover law enforcement officers after being informed that the individuals they were communicating with were under the age of 18.

Of those 93 contacts, 15 individuals traveled to meet or solicited a minor for sexual favors. This represents nearly 16% of the contacts from the operation, resulting in felony-level arrests. Two arrestees had child pornography on their cell phones.

Of the 15 individuals arrested in Operation Lifeguard:

- A suspect who was identified in two separate CyberTips from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has been charged with possession of child pornography.
- A suspect who was a student advisor at a local university communicated online with an undercover officer posing as a minor and was charged with aggravated possession of child pornography.
- A suspect who solicited a 15-year-old child of a family friend was arrested after traveling to meet the minor.
- A suspect communicated with the same undercover officer during both Operation Lifeguard and Operation Spring Cleaning, which was conducted earlier this year.
- A suspect who drove from Panama City to meet the undercover officer posing as a minor had cocaine found in his possession.
- A suspect, an undocumented immigrant, solicited a child using an electronic device and is currently in the custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"These arrests reflect our commitment to protecting children from online predators," said Sheriff Walt McNeil. "We will continue to work tirelessly with our partners to ensure that those who exploit children face justice."

These results are the culmination of the strategic efforts of LCSO and partnering agencies, including the Tallahassee Police Department, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Florida State Attorney's Office, Homeland Security Investigations, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Attorney's Office, Gulf Breeze Police department, and the Bay County Sheriff's Office.

Javonni Hampton, Public Information Officer
Office (850) 296-5260

hamptonj@leoncountyfl.gov

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