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## ***Media Advisory***

### **Richland Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Forges New Partnerships in Tri-Cities Community**

**Richland, Wash.,** – The Richland Police Department continues to receive significant partnership agreements to enhance the continuation of the Southeast Region Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (SER-ICAC) in the Tri-Cities.

The SER-ICAC TF, led by the Richland Police Department, investigates Child Sexual Exploitation Cases (CSE) that involve the production, distribution, and possession of CSE materials. These crimes usually involve the use of computers, cell phones, tablets, and other electronic devices. As a multi-jurisdictional group, the SER-ICAC TF is dedicated to the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation by partnering with agencies from local, state, and federal law enforcement, federal and state agencies, and federal and local prosecution. The SER-ICAC TF works directly with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children investigating CyberTips, as well.

“We are honored to be serving the local community in this capacity,” said Commander for Investigations and SER-ICAC, Damon Jansen. “SER-ICAC TF’s main focus remains a priority to us – to protect those who cannot protect themselves. We could not continue this important work without the support and partnership of local and federal law enforcement and prosecutors.”

With the assistance of expertly trained detectives, the SER-ICAC TF sees much higher average sentencing ranges for these heinous crimes, which is much higher than those seen by local agencies, working alone, without the federal partnership. SER-ICAC’s experienced detectives are also Federal Task Force Officers which allows SER-ICAC members to adopt cases that meet federal prosecution criteria. SER-ICAC has the flexibility to investigate cases at the state, local and federal levels. And, with renewed and robust agency partnerships, the SER-ICAC TF can provide both proactive and reactive opportunities to education and prevention.

“The SER-ICAC is a mainstay of our community, investigating and pursuing those who use technology to exploit our children,” said United States Attorney, Vanessa Waldref. “The state and federal law enforcement officers who serve on this team dedicate their

time and considerable skill to both reactive investigations, wherein a child has already been harmed, and proactive investigations, wherein an officer utilizes undercover tools to identify dangerous individuals before a child is victimized. This approach has enabled my office to seek significant sentences for the worst offenders in our community, ensuring justice for impacted children and their families, and protecting our society at large. Together, we will continue to seek a safer world for our children.”

Education is the safeguard that the SER-ICAC TF can provide to enable children, parents, and caretakers to protect themselves. Without investing in education, the work that the task force does becomes reactive instead of proactive. In the coming months, the SER-ICAC TF team will be launching targeted messaging and resources to ensure the Tri-Cities community (and beyond) has access to timely and accurate safety tips, focused on the prevention of these types of crimes.

“One of the best tools in preventing internet crimes against children is education,” said Kennewick Police Chief, Chris Guerrero. “Educating the public through the development and delivery of public awareness and prevention programs is one of the most important initiatives of the SER-ICAC TF Program.”

The SER-ICAC TF office is one of two full-time task forces in the state of Washington and the only full-time office to serve the Eastern Washington region. The Richland Police Department currently allocates significant resources to the task force, a commander who oversees the team, a sergeant, and one detective, in addition to two detectives from partnering, local agencies -- Kennewick Police Department and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). Another resource supporting the SER-ICAC TF’s holistic approach to rehabilitation for victims is the Support, Advocacy, and Resource Center (SARC).

“We are committed to combating child exploitation through our law enforcement partnerships, using a variety of techniques to arrest individuals and take down organized groups that would prey upon the vulnerable,” said Resident Agent in Charge, Samuel Briggs. “This critical public safety mission is a central component of HSI as a shared responsibility to protect children.”

For more information on the SER-ICAC TF or how to get involved and partner today, please contact Commander Damon Jansen at [djansen@ci.richland.wa.us](mailto:djansen@ci.richland.wa.us).

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