THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# NEWS RELEASE

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## INTERNET CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN TASK FORCE SPECIAL OPERATION

(San Diego) The San Diego Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force conducted a two-day probation and 4th (amendment) waiver sweep. ICAC targeted six men who were identified and arrested when they traveled from San Diego to Long Beach to have sexual contact with minors in September 2006. During this sting operation, which was conducted by Long Beach Police Department, NBC videotaped the men and created a show called "To Catch a Predator." The six men demonstrated deviant interest in sexual contact with minors.

As a result of last year's sting all six men plead guilty to felony crimes, received a felony strike on their records and gave up their 4th amendment rights. Based upon the felony convictions, all of the targets consented to being searched by law enforcement. Generally, these individuals can be searched by law enforcement officers at any time to ensure they are in compliance with their probation status, or for any other legitimate law enforcement purpose.

ICAC's two-day operation (June 19 – 20) was a follow-up to the original sting operation in Long Beach. The suspects' homes and computers were searched in an effort to determine if they were in possession of child pornography or were again engaged in deviant sexual behavior.

Of the six targets only one had suspected child pornography on his computer. The computer was impounded at the Regional Computer Forensics Lab (RCFL) for a forensic exam. The other five had no child pornography on their computers.

The law enforcement message is clear: if you have a deviant sexual interest in minors and live in San Diego County, we are watching and ready to protect children from sexual predators. Law enforcement agencies in San Diego are closely monitoring individuals who have previously attempted to victimize children sexually in other areas. During the past two days six such individuals were contacted by law enforcement to ensure that they were not continuing to be involved in activity that would victimize children.

Experts have found that social norms act as a barrier preventing adults from actively seeking sexual contact with minors. Those experts agree that there is typically a process through which an adult travels on the road to seeking sexual contact with a minor in violation of social norms and the law. That process typically involves sexual fantasies with minors and child pornography. ICAC attempts to identify and intercept individuals prior to actual sexual contact. All of the individuals involved in this sweep demonstrated a willingness to travel to have sexual contact with a minor and had violated the norms (and laws) that would prevent that type of contact. Thus, it remains important to ensure that the targets no longer have access to child pornography in order to protect the community.

ICAC is a regional task force made up of the following agencies: SD Police Department, SD District Attorney, SD Sheriff's Department, the FBI, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), US Postal Inspection Service, US Attorney's Office, Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS).

Assisting in the special operation were members of SD County Probation, Escondido Police Department and Regional Computer Forensics Lab (RCFL), California Department of Justice.

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