



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 23, 2012
WWW.OJP.GOV

Office of Justice Programs
Contact: Starr Stepp
(202) 307-0703

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HONORS NORTH DAKOTA INVESTIGATOR FOR RESCUING EIGHT CHILDREN FROM PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE

WASHINGTON—Deputy Attorney General James M. Cole today presented Tim Erickson, special agent with the North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation, with the Attorney General’s Special Commendation for his successful investigation of online sexual predators that led to six arrests and the rescue of eight children from physical and sexual abuse. Deputy Attorney General Cole recognized Erickson at the annual National Missing Children’s Day commemoration honoring missing children, their families, child advocates and others who protect children, held in the Justice Department’s Great Hall.

“Protecting children is one of the important jobs we have,” said Deputy Attorney General Cole. “There is no rest for a parent who has lost a child, and there should be no rest for any of us who are in a position to help. There may not be any words we could offer that would ease their pain, but we can and will offer our support – and all the tools at our disposal to help families of missing and exploited children. I am honored to recognize those who work on the front lines to rescue children and bring them home safely.”

In 2011, an Australian law enforcement agency contacted the North Dakota Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force regarding an Internet provider (IP) address originating in North Dakota, which had been discovered on the computer of an Australian couple suspected of sexually abusing their child. The Australian police found a chat log linked to an IP address leased to the Minot, N.D., public school system for use by Christian R. Webb, the Internet technologies administrator for the school district. Erickson and Department of Homeland Security investigators eventually seized electronic media containing 40 to 60 webcam videos depicting the sexual abuse of children. Prosecutors charged Webb in federal court with receipt and possession of child pornography, and Webb was convicted in federal court and sentenced to 12 years in prison.

As part of the investigation, Erickson and Assistant U.S. Attorney Gary Delorme accessed Webb’s many online accounts and identified the suspects who had sent the videos. To date, the leads Erickson generated have resulted in the rescue of eight children enduring physical and sexual abuse, as well as the arrest of six individuals in Kansas, Louisiana, Ohio, Washington, Wisconsin and Canada on charges of sexual abuse and child pornography production.

President Ronald Reagan proclaimed May 25, 1983, the first National Missing Children’s Day to remember Etan Patz, a six-year-old boy who disappeared from a New York City street corner on May 25, 1979. Missing Children’s Day honors his memory and the memories of children still missing.

More information about the event and other honorees can be found at www.ojp.gov.

###

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has six bureaus and offices: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART). More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.