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County Expands Efforts to Stop Internet Crimes Against Children

This morning, Franklin County Commissioners and the Sheriff entered into an agreement to accept a Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) in the amount of \$70,000 to expand efforts already in place to stop internet crimes against children (ICAC). The ICAC taskforce is a multi-agency task force dedicated to the fight against computer facilitated crimes against children. This grant award allows for the expansion of the program to include two additional communities – Grove City and Whitehall.

“Collaboration is so important when it comes to keeping our kids safe on-line,” said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. “I welcome the addition of these communities which will strengthen our partnership with regional first responders, local governments and parents making it certain that online predators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”

A recent study conducted by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children showed that 77 million kids use the internet daily. With so many youth online and vulnerable to predators, it is extremely important for parents, law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and victim service providers to know as much as possible about Internet crimes against children so they can prevent victimization and prosecute offenders.

“I have been proud, since 2006, to give law enforcement the financial support they need to protect our children. We have now grown this task force partnership with Sheriff Karnes, to protect even more kids from the guile and cunning of internet predators,” said Commissioner Paula Brooks. “Parents have the challenge of fighting back, too, by monitoring their children as they use the internet.”

In 2009, the Franklin County ICAC Taskforce made 64 arrests resulting from cases generated by the taskforce. In 2010, taskforce arrests rose to ninety-eight.

Communities already participating in the program include the City of Columbus, Upper Arlington and Westerville.

“The Internet is an exciting place, especially as social networking sites grow in popularity,” said Commissioner John O’Grady. “And while these sites are great ways to stay connected with friends and family, they can also pose serious risks for our youth. Parents throughout Franklin County are encouraged to educate their children about the potential dangers and report any concerns.”

In Franklin County, computer facilitated crimes against children can be reported to the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force by calling 614-525-3318.