

For Immediate Release
August 3, 2006

PROVINCIAL STRATEGY LAUNCHED TO FIGHT INTERNET CRIMES AGAINST KIDS

Helping Child Victims Of Internet Sexual Abuse And Exploitation Across Ontario

TORONTO — The McGuinty government is implementing a comprehensive, five-part, multi-million dollar strategy to combat Internet child pornography and luring, Attorney General Michael Bryant and Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services Monte Kwinter announced today.

“We need to use all tools at our disposal to help keep our kids safe. We are providing our team with the most advanced technology and techniques to conduct investigations and prosecutions,” said Bryant. “Together with the Ontario Provincial Police and Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, our government is working to stop the offenders, protect our kids and help victims to recover.”

For the first time, a unified provincial team of municipal, regional and OPP police officers, Crown attorneys and victim service providers is being brought together.

“Once children’s pictures are posted on a pornographic website, they may suffer for the rest of their lives,” said Kwinter. “We are providing the tools to enable offenders to be apprehended quickly in order to reduce the number of children who are victimized.”

The \$5-million strategy includes:

- A dedicated child-victim tip line and referral service, set up through the established Crime Stoppers program, to support victims and prevent re-victimization.
- An online undercover team of municipal police officers to conduct on-line child-luring investigations by monitoring chat rooms and newsgroups to identify suspects and victims, and prevent further victimization.
- Dedicated support for child victims and families to offer emotional support, referral to appropriate community services and practical assistance.
- Coordination, training and support for dedicated Crown prosecutors to ensure a uniform level of excellence with respect to victim support and prosecution of Internet child exploitation offences throughout the province.
- Increased liaison work with other agencies and jurisdictions, including other law enforcement agencies and agencies such as Child Find Ontario, that will help to apprehend offenders and support victims.

“I want to congratulate the police and the Attorney General for establishing this team to combat online child abuse,” said Maria Jones, mother of Holly Jones. “I believe this will make a difference in protecting helpless children and will offer support to victims.”

“This strategy will help us to apprehend the offenders and put them out of business,” said Terry McLaren, President of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and Chief of Peterborough Lakefield Community Police. “By increasing our ability to locate the offenders and offer aid to victims, we will be in a better position to prevent future crimes.”

“The OPP is pleased to play a leading role in this important strategy,” said OPP Commissioner Gwen Boniface. “We are confident that this partnership of police, Crown attorneys and victim support services will be effective in working together to help protect our children and keep them safe from sexual predators on the Internet.”

Protecting children from sexual exploitation on the Internet through this strategy is just one of the ways the government is supporting Ontario families by improving public safety and combating crime. Other initiatives include:

- Introducing CYBERCOPS software for Grade 7 and Grade 8 students in Ontario schools, which helps cyber-proof children against cyber-stalking, Internet luring, ID theft and cyber-bullying.
- Developing support materials, including an Internet luring training package for police and Crown attorneys, through the Attorney General’s Task Force on Internet Crimes Against Kids.
- Calling on the federal government to amend the Criminal Code to abolish conditional sentences for child pornography crimes. When federal Bill C-2 was passed, and came into force on November 1, 2005, it created minimum sentences for sexual offences involving children, which had the effect of making conditional sentences unavailable.

- 30 -

Contacts:

Greg Crone
Ministry of the Attorney General
Minister’s Office
(416) 326-1785

Valerie Hopper
Ministry of the Attorney General
Communications Branch
(416) 326-2202

Annette Phillips
Ministry of Community Safety
and Correctional Services
Minister’s Office
(416) 326-8265
(647) 205-6598 (cellular)

Tony Brown
Ministry of Community Safety
and Correctional Services
Communications Branch
(416) 314-7772

Disponible en français