



Department of Justice

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MAGALIA MAN ACCUSED OF POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown announced today that a federal grand jury indicted THOMAS HART, 48, of Magalia, for possession of child pornography.

This case is the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Butte County District Attorney's Office.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Jill Thomas, who is prosecuting the case, HART pleaded guilty on July 18, 2007 to California state charges of penetration with a foreign object of an individual under 16 years of age and sexual intercourse with a minor following a Butte County District Attorney's Office investigation.

After the Butte County District Attorney's Office seized HART's computer, they requested that the FBI examine the computer forensically for potential images of child pornography. Today's federal indictment charges that the defendant possessed visual depictions of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

The maximum statutory penalty for the charge is 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. However, the actual sentence will be dictated by the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of factors, and will be imposed at the discretion of the court.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood (PSC), a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, PSC marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information, visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov or call the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California and ask to speak with the PSC coordinator.

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