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News Release

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Hopkins man sentenced for possessing child pornography

A 36-year-old Hopkins man was sentenced today in federal court for possessing child pornography.

On Jan. 23 in Minneapolis, United States District Court Judge David Doty sentenced Spencer Wade Merrill to 50 months in prison and three years supervised release on one count of possession of child pornography. Merrill was indicted on Nov. 8, 2007, and pleaded guilty on Jan. 8, 2008.

According to Merrill's plea agreement, he admitted that on Dec. 3, 2002, he knowingly and intentionally possessed images of minors in sexually explicit poses.

This case was the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the St. Louis Park Police Department and Pennsylvania State Police. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard A. Newberry.

This case is part of Project Safe Childhood (PSC), a national 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 better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about PSC, visit

www.projectsafchildhood.gov.