



Department of Justice

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(919) 856-4337

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AWARDS NORTH CAROLINA AND MASSACHUSETTS LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS FOR COLLABORATIVE WORK COMBATING CHILD EXPLOITATION

Attorney General Eric Holder today honored several North Carolina and Massachusetts law enforcement officials for their leadership protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation at the 2011 National Strategy Conference on Combating Child Exploitation in San Jose, Calif.

Nominated by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of North Carolina, E. Michael Smith Jr., Special Agent for the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation; Gregory D. Squire, Special Agent for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Boston; and Joe Exum Jr., Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina, were honored for their extraordinary work in an "Outstanding Multi-Agency Operation," which led to the rescue of a six-year-old child exploitation victim and successful prosecution of the sex offender.

Attorney General Eric Holder has made one of the department's four key priorities the protection of those most vulnerable – children, the elderly, and victims of hate crimes, human trafficking and exploitation.

"Through their work in urban, rural and tribal communities – and through cutting-edge online efforts – these individuals are advancing bold, innovative and collaborative solutions to keep our children safe from all forms of exploitation and abuse," said Attorney General Holder. "By focusing on prevention and intervention, as well as proven enforcement and prosecution strategies, these award recipients are strengthening our ability to protect children in need and at risk, and to bring offenders to justice."

"Through the quick response and coordination of the agents, a young child was saved from further abusive conduct. Through the hard work and perseverance of AUSA Jay Exum, the defendant was sent to prison for a long time," said U.S. Attorney George E.B. Holding of the Eastern District of North Carolina. "It is rewarding to see professionals, such as these gentlemen, perform in such an outstanding manner and I am proud to work with each of them."

"We have worked with Agent Squire for several years on numerous child exploitation investigations in Massachusetts," said U.S. Attorney Carmen M. Ortiz from the District of Massachusetts. "His work is always exceptional, and he is very well regarded among his colleagues here in this district. We congratulate him on this honor."

“Special thanks to Special Agent Mike Smith for his dedication to investigating child predators and pornographers and his efforts to work with other agencies to put these criminals behind bars. This award for protecting our children is well deserved,” said SBI Director Greg McLeod. “I’m proud of the work all of our agents are doing to go after child predators and make our communities safer.”

"ICE prioritizes child exploitation cases with a firm commitment to provide the highest level of investigative support necessary to successfully prosecute them," stated Bruce M. Foucart, Special Agent in Charge, ICE HSI - Boston. "The relentless effort of Special Agent Squire exemplifies the unwavering determination of my office to bring these cases to justice."

In collaboration with state, local and federal authorities, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of North Carolina prosecuted and convicted a sex offender for exploitation of a six-year-old child, obtaining the maximum sentence of 50 years in prison. While the sentence is significant, the most compelling aspect of the case is the apparent seamlessness with which a federal agent in Boston, coordinated with a state law enforcement agent in North Carolina, who in turn worked with state, federal and local law enforcement and prosecutors to follow through on the lead. This group exhibited exceptional cooperation and a swift response so that a child in rural North Carolina could be rescued quickly.

Focused on protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation, the conference in San Jose is bringing together more than 1,000 investigators, agents and prosecutors from all levels of government to receive state-of-the-art instruction in investigative techniques, court room advocacy, digital forensics, behavioral profiling, victim advocacy and community outreach.

The conference is sponsored by the department’s Project Safe Childhood Initiative and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program.

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