



South Dakota West River

Human Trafficking Task Force

Overview

January – March 2018



SOUTH DAKOTA WEST RIVER HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE
OVERVIEW

South Dakota's West River Human Trafficking Task Force (SD WR HTTF) exists as a collaboration of diverse organizations and individuals connected to combat the issue of trafficking in persons, by raising awareness, providing information and education, advocating for prosecution of offenders and supporting human trafficking victims and survivors.

The SD WR HTTF is comprised of local, state, federal and non-profit agencies, and individuals. The Task Force is currently chaired by Mark Stewart, Resident Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations, Rapid City, and co-chaired by Tifanie Petro, Forensic Interviewer & Education Public Awareness Specialist with the Children's Home Society.

SD WR HTTF Chair and Co-Chair serve on a yearly basis with new chairs elected at the November quarterly meeting.



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PARTNERS

Bureau of Indian Affairs
Carol White's Personal Fitness Studio
Catholic Social Services
Children's Home Society
Community Health Center of the Black Hills
Concerned Women for America
Cornerstone Rescue Mission
DHS – Homeland Security Investigations
Department of Social Services: Child Protection
Division of Criminal Investigation
Family Heritage Alliance
For Freedom
Free the Black Hills
Freedom's Journey
Lifeways
Pennington County Health & Human Services
Pennington County Sheriff's Office
Pennington County State's Attorney's Offices
Rapid City Ministerial Association
Rapid City Police Department
Rapid City Public Library
Regional Health
South Dakota Attorney General's Office
South Dakota Highway Patrol/Unified Solutions
South Dakota Coalition Ending Domestic & Sexual Violence
South Dakota Legislature
South Dakota U.S. Attorney's Office
Todd County Schools
TotalKayoss Web & Graphic Design
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COMMITTEES

The SD WR HTTF is currently comprised of three committees which report to the Task Force through attendance at regular Task Force meetings and to Task Force partners if situations arise and a timelier response is needed. The three committees and their purpose and focus are outlined below. A fourth committee is being considered in effort to promote information sharing and joint investigations among member law enforcement agencies.

Public Awareness, Education, and Outreach: This committee is the largest committee and has two very important responsibilities. The first mission is bringing public awareness and education through PSAs, holding awareness-based events, providing education opportunities to professionals, and providing Human Trafficking materials at events in Western South Dakota. The second responsibility is to provide outreach during events such as the Sturgis Bike Rally, Hills Alive, and Lakota National Invitational. This committee is also where volunteers and concerned citizens are directed when they make requests to help the efforts of the Task Force. The events and outreach activities often require many people to help so this is where our volunteers are most needed. It should be noted that most volunteers are not committee or Task Force members so this committee is also responsible for the management of volunteers looking to help the Task Force.

Native American/Tribal Initiatives: This committee is responsible for making contact with Native American and Tribal leaders and communities to gain an understanding into to the dynamics and current issues the Tribes are seeing as it relates to human trafficking and factors which contribute to the presence of human trafficking in Tribal communities.

Law and Policy – This committee is responsible for doing research regarding human trafficking laws, changes in the laws in our state as well as other states, and to determine if legislation is needed for factors which contribute to human trafficking such as sextortion, domestic violence, child solicitation, and child sexual abuse.

Response and Investigation – This committee is currently being coordinated and would be comprised of state and federal law enforcement and representatives from the local District Attorney’s office, United States Attorney’s Office and service providers as deemed appropriate considering the sensitivities of an investigation. This committee would be responsible for promoting and implementing a multidisciplinary (MDT) approach to responding to reports of human trafficking in Western South Dakota. This committee would work directly with advocates and service providers to ensure the needs of the victims are able to be met. Greater collaboration among member law enforcement agencies will lead to more successful investigations and prosecutions.



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FY 2018 1ST QUARTER OVERVIEW

OUTREACH COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

First quarter highlights:

The committee saw some changes in the group make-up under the co-chair leadership of Nic Allen (SD Highway Patrol) and Tifanie Petro (Children's Home Child Advocacy Center). The team worked to navigate the large number of members to include a diverse group of both professionals and concerned community members.

- As a result of the Office of Victims of Crime training in August of 2017, the team worked to create cohesive training to unify the message being provided to community members at both small and large trainings. This was so that the team could guarantee a message that was in support of the position of the task force. In the upcoming months the team will continue to solidify group specific training information so that targeted outreach can be achieved.
- The team has continued to look at volunteer management. Those who are not in a professional capacity will be routed through the outreach committee. It will become necessary for training and volunteer assessments to ensure that as they are assisting in outreach efforts they are providing quality services to the community at large.
- Spreading the word- in addition to physical trainings and awareness activities there have been a few changes to the Facebook page and Website. The Outreach committee worked with our partners from TotalKayoss Web & Graphic Design to create a clean and cohesive online message. Make sure to "Like Us" at http://rallyforthechallenge.com/wp-content/uploads/IMG_8137.jpg We have seen a growth in our audience and use the platforms to share the latest news across the state, education and awareness material, and events!
- Goals for this committee will continue to be a cohesive message through trainings, PSA's, and personalized trainings for areas such as the hospitality industry.

Events:

Through the task force, members of this committee and volunteers, we have educated and brought awareness to hundreds of individuals in Western South Dakota in the last quarter.

- March 19-23, 2018—**SAY SOMETHING**—equipping youth to recognize and fight injustice and exploitation through an Interactive 3D school assembly!



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The success of this program started well before this quarter with numerous members and volunteers putting in lots of hours and effort to get the assemblies here to the Rapid City area. Special thanks to Christina Fuhr of Free the Black Hills, Tess Franzen of Freedom's Journey, Carol White with Carol White's Personal Fitness Studio, Hollie Strand with ICAC and numerous other volunteers. These assemblies were provided to Rapid City High School, Southwest Middle School, East Middle School, and South Middle School, all in the Rapid City Area. In addition, Lead/Deadwood Middle and High School, Spearfish Middle School, Belle High School, and Sturgis Middle School received this training. The staff and students both received trainings on these important matters and were inspired to speak up and make a difference!



- February 22, 2018 – **END IT** - We participated in this virtual awareness campaign by several members changing their Facebook photos and sharing education and information through our Facebook page.
- January 23, 2018- Task Force Members Hollie Strand and Lara Roetzel were not only featured in Black Hills Women's Magazine but they also presented to over 50 members at a Leadership Rapid City meeting at the Dahl Arts Center.



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- January 11, 2018 – **Wear Blue for Human Trafficking Awareness Day** – We participated in this virtual awareness campaign by several members changing their Facebook photos and sharing education and information through our Facebook page. We even had page members send in photos.



- January 6, 2018- **Free the Bird Poetry Night**



This was an event that was put on by Task Force Member Lily Mendoza at her Bookstore. This allowed local artists to share their talents and bring awareness to the issue of Human Trafficking.



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INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTIONS
UPDATES OF INTEREST

- On January 19, 2018, Alexandros Thymaras was sentenced in the District of South Dakota to 30 months imprisonment and 1 year supervised release for violations of 18 USC 1590(a) and 1594(a), *trafficking with respect to peonage, slavery, involuntary servitude or forced labor*. Thymaras was arrested on August 5, 2014 after being identified as an individual soliciting sex from minors during the 2014 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally's (SMR) Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) operation.

- On January 23, 2018, Levi Drussell was sentenced to 71 months incarceration and 10 years of supervised release after he pled guilty to a violation of 18 USC 2252A(a) and (b)(1), *attempted receipt of child pornography*. Drussell was arrested on September 1, 2016, after he was identified during the 2016 SMR attempting to entice a 14-year old female for sex and was arrested for violations 18 USC 2422, *coercion or enticement of a minor for prostitution*, and 18 USC 2252(A)(2), *knowingly receiving or distributing depiction of minors engaged in sex*.

- On January 26, 2018, Abdurrahman Keskin, a Turkish national, pled guilty to a violation of 18 USC 2252A, *attempted receipt of child pornography* and is currently pending sentencing. Keskin was arrested on August 8, 2017 after he was identified during the 2017 ICAC SMR operation attempting to entice a 15-year old female for sex and originally charged with 18 USC 2422(b), *attempted enticement of a minor using the internet*.

- On February 5, 2018, Nathan Juhala was sentenced to 120 months imprisonment and 5 years supervised release after he pled guilty to a violation of 18 USC 2422(b), *attempted enticement of a minor using the internet*.

- On February 9, 2018, Nicholaus Tripp was sentenced to 120 months incarceration for violations of 18 USC 2422(b) and 2427, *attempted enticement of a minor using the internet*. Tripp was arrested on December 30, 2016 after he was identified by ICAC investigators attempting to entice a juvenile for sex.

- On March 2, 2018, Cody Twolance was sentenced to 21 months' incarceration and 3 years supervised release after pleading guilty to a violation of 18 USC 1470, *attempted*



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transfer of obscene material to a minor. Twolance, who was arrested on August 10, 2016 after being identified during the 2016 ICAC SMR operation, attempted to entice who he thought was a 15-year old boy for sex.

- On March 9, 2018, Duane Hosek was sentenced to five years' incarceration after pleading guilty to a violation of 18 USC 2252A, *attempted receipt of child pornography.* Hosek, who was arrested on August 9, 2016 for a violation of 18 USC 2422, *coercion or enticement of a minor for prostitution,* was identified during the 2016 ICAC SMR operation after he attempted to entice who he thought was a 15-year old boy for sex.

- On March 9, 2018, Marsha BROWN was sentenced to 8 years federal custody for violation of 18 U.S.C. 2252A(a)(2)(A) & 2252A(b)(1), *receipt or distribution of child pornography.* BROWN was arrested after being identified during the 2016 SMR attempting to solicit a 15-year-old male for sex.



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LAW AND POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

The Law and Policy Committee is currently Chaired by Tess Franzen of Freedom’s Journey.

SOUTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE SESSION 2018

LAW AND POLICY UPDATES

- **HB1110** “increase the penalty for certain subsequent convictions of hiring for sexual activity or promoting prostitution.”
 - ✓ **HB1110** was signed by the Governor on March 9, 2018

- **SB67** “permit a victim of child sex trafficking or exploitation to expunge any criminal or delinquency record obtained as a result of the victimization.”
 - ✓ **SB67** was signed by the Governor on February 8th.

- **HB1138** “revise certain provisions regarding prostitution.” This Bill was to decriminalize the prostituted minors aged 16 and 17.
 - ✓ **HB1138** didn’t make it out of the House Judiciary Committee.

- **SB64** “revise certain provisions related to attempted human trafficking in the first degree and to provide a penalty therefor.” “Notwithstanding the provisions of § 22-4-1, any attempt to commit a violation of this section against a victim who is a minor is punishable in the same manner as the completed violation.”
 - ✓ **SB64** It was signed by the Governor on February 27, 2018.

Now that the 2018 Legislative Session is behind us, we will begin to consider possible legislative initiatives for the next Session.



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U.S. FEDERAL LAW AND POLICY UPDATES

- “**H.R. 1865**, the Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2017, is designed to combat online sex trafficking by providing new tools to law enforcement through a new federal criminal statute and by making it easier for states to prosecute criminal actor websites...

“The bill amends the federal criminal code to add a new section that imposes penalties—a fine, a prison term of up to 10 years, or both—on a person who, using a facility or means of interstate or foreign commerce, owns, manages, or operates an interactive computer service (or attempts or conspires to do so) to promote or facilitate the prostitution of another person.”

The expansion of the internet has brought about numerous online classified advertising websites, which are now popular forums for buying and selling goods and services to a broad audience. Some of these websites have become primary platforms for sex trafficking, and they have raised substantial funds profiting from this illegal activity.

If signed into law, H.R. 1865 makes it possible for these online classified websites to be held accountable for profiting from the sex trafficking being facilitated on their platforms.

