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NEWS RELEASE



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FBI Honors 14 Members of Ventura County Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force



VENTURA, Calif. – The Los Angeles Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation formally recognized 14 members of the Ventura County Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force for their outstanding investigative work protecting children and holding offenders accountable. The ceremony was held at the Ventura County District Attorney's Office on January 6, 2026. The honorees included investigators, detectives, and computer forensic examiners from the Ventura County District Attorney's Office and the Ventura County Sheriff's Office.

The task force was created in December 2022 through agreements with the FBI and the Ventura County District Attorney's Office and the Ventura County Sheriff's Office. The collaboration was established in response to the significant increase in children being exposed to online predators and sexual exploitation.

The task force provides a proactive, coordinated response to crimes involving the sexual victimization of children. Since its formation, the task force has achieved early and significant

successes, including multiple felony arrests involving the possession and distribution of child sexual abuse material and the attempted procurement of children for sexual exploitation. These cases resulted in substantial jail and prison sentences, including a 35-years-to-life sentence imposed in 2025 for a defendant who sexually assaulted a minor and sold images of the abuse online.

The FBI recognition highlighted the work of investigators, detectives, and computer forensic examiners involved in Operation Enduring Justice, a two-week nationwide FBI operation conducted in August. The operation was the culmination of months of investigative work and led to the arrest of six individuals for felony possession and attempted distribution of child sexual abuse material. Five of the defendants resided in Ventura County, and one was from Santa Barbara County. Five cases are being prosecuted by the Ventura County District Attorney's Office, while one was charged federally.

District Attorney Erik Nasarenko expressed appreciation to the FBI for formally recognizing the dedication and professionalism of the investigators and forensic examiners involved, noting that while there is much more work to be done, their efforts continue to make a meaningful difference for the community's most vulnerable victims.

"The value of this task force cannot be overstated," said District Attorney Nasarenko. "This team of dedicated professionals increased our ability to identify, investigate, and prosecute crimes against children and reach beyond Ventura County to apprehend online predators."

The certificates were presented by Assistant Special Agent in Charge John Kent of the FBI Los Angeles Field Office and Supervisory Senior Resident Agent Edwin Nam of the FBI Ventura Office.