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MADIGAN, I-SORT PARTNERS ANNOUNCE RESULTS OF METRO EAST SEX OFFENDER COMPLIANCE CHECKS

Chicago - Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that investigators from her office along with partners from the Illinois Sex Offender Registry Team (I-SORT) conducted compliance checks Tuesday and Wednesday of this week in Alton, Belleville and unincorporated areas of St. Clair and Madison counties to ensure that sex offenders are living at the locations where they are registered and not evading detection by law enforcement officials.

Officers from the Alton Police Department, Belleville Police, St. Clair County and Madison County Sheriffs' Departments, U.S. Marshals Fugitive Task Force and the Illinois State Police joined Madigan's office in targeting more than 300 convicted sex offenders to verify their compliance with Illinois' sex offender registration laws.

"Our sex offender registration laws only work if we enforce them and make sure that police know the whereabouts of sex offenders registered in Illinois communities," Madigan said. "As part of our ongoing community protection work, we partner with law enforcement agencies to verify that sex offenders in our towns and cities are where they say they are."

On Tuesday, August 19, teams of investigators worked with Alton Police to check the status of 97 sex offenders in that city. Ninety of the offenders were in compliance with the law and seven offenders were determined to be non-compliant, two of whom were arrested and additional investigative work is ongoing to determine if charges will be brought against the other five.

Also on Tuesday, investigators checked on 57 registered sex offenders in Belleville and confirmed that 49 were compliant. Investigators left I-SORT notices for another eight offenders instructing them to call the I-SORT hotline within 24 hours. An offender's failure to respond to the notice can result in their being deemed non-compliant with the requirements of the Illinois Sex Offender Registration Act and may result in the issuance of a warrant or other enforcement action.

"We are pleased to partner with the Illinois Attorney General's office, U.S. Marshals Service and the St. Clair County Sheriff's Department in compliance checks of area registered sex offenders," Belleville Police Chief William G. Clay said. "The Belleville Police Department makes regular checks of all registered sex offenders residing in the city which may account for the full compliance status of all offenders currently registered. Our department has a

zero tolerance policy for violators and will work with any agency to maintain the safety of our citizens.”

Also on Tuesday, Madigan’s office and I-SORT investigators checked in on 97 registered sex offenders in unincorporated areas of St. Clair County. The investigators found that 84 of the offenders were in compliance with the law. They deemed six offenders non-compliant and left notices for seven additional offenders to contact the I-SORT hotline immediately.

“We always welcome the opportunity to work with Attorney General Madigan’s office,” St. Clair County Sheriff Mearl Justus said. “Combining efforts to enforce sex offender laws and registration is a great way to effectively ensure that offenders are doing what they are supposed to do.”

Madigan said that when offenders are determined as non-compliant, her office and the participating I-SORT members work to ensure that they come into compliance and that their address is accurate.

On Wednesday, August 20, I-SORT teams were back in the field throughout unincorporated areas in Madison County to check the registration status of another 118 sex offenders. Of that number, 84 were determined to be in compliance, three were found to be non-compliant and 31 additional offenders were not at home and the investigators left notices for the offenders to check in with law enforcement authorities immediately.

“I thank Attorney General Lisa Madigan and her staff for their assistance and I am committed to the citizens of Madison County and the importance of letting sex offenders know that the law will be strictly enforced,” said Madison County Sheriff Robert Hertz.

“Our support of these operations is a direct result of the U.S. Marshals Service being named as the lead agency in the Adam Walsh Act, the federal’s government’s initiative to both locate and apprehend violators of sex offender laws, said U.S. Marshal Don Slazinik of the Southern District of Illinois.

Madigan created I-SORT in December 2003 to ensure greater compliance with the state’s sex offender registry. Since then, I-SORT has undertaken comprehensive and ongoing efforts to improve the registration process and solve problems with the system. I-SORT members have conducted targeted raids and used tips from the sex offender hotline to locate non-compliant offenders, worked to improve the accuracy of the information on the sex offender Web site and launched a public awareness campaign to publicize the importance of the Web site as a tool to protect families.

“Knowing the location of sex offenders within our communities is critical to the safety of the citizens of Illinois,” said Illinois State Police Director Larry Trent. “Periodic compliance checks provide an important tool in maintaining public safety and serve to keep sex offenders on notice that the sex offender registry laws are being enforced.”

As of July 31, 2008, Illinois State Police records list 19,998 registered sex offenders and compliance with Illinois’ sex offender registration requirements now stands at 92.7 percent. Madigan said that when I-SORT was formed in 2003, only 86 percent of Illinois’ sex offenders were compliant with the registration requirements. Madigan noted that while I-SORT members are

pleased with this increase in compliance, they are continuing their extensive and aggressive efforts to improve the accuracy and usefulness of the information on the registry.

Interested individuals can access the Illinois Sex Offender Registry at www.isp.state.il.us and the Attorney General's I-SORT Hotline at 1-888-41-ISORT.

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