



MICHAEL F. MOLLENHAUER LaPorte County Sheriff

JAMES T. SOSINSKI
Chief Deputy

John T. Boyd
Major

809 State Street, Suite 202A
LaPorte, IN 46350
Phone: (219) 326-7700
(219) 879-3530
Fax: (219) 324-6205
Jail: (219) 362-6548
(219) 878-9132

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CONTACT: Major John Boyd
(219) 326-7700 Ext. 2406
FAX # (219) 325-9477
EMAIL: jboyd@lcsso.in.gov

LA PORTE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE URGES PARENTS TO CHECK SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY BEFORE TRICK-OR-TREATING

This Halloween season, the La Porte County Sheriff's Office is urging parents to use on-line tools to know the identity of registered sex offenders in the area where they plan to trick-or-treat. An on-line sex offender registry is available for residents of La Porte County allowing parents to conduct a search prior to trick-or-treating to prevent their children from visiting these homes during door-to-door trick-or-treating.

There are currently about one hundred ninety (185) registered sex offenders residing in La Porte County; forty-six (46) of which are Sexually Violent Predators and fifty-two (52) of which are classified as Offenders Against Children. According the United States Department of Justice, eighty percent (80%) of all addresses have at least one sex offender living within one mile. Forty-five percent (45%) of sexual assault victims are under 12, and seventy-five percent (75%) of victims know their attacker. Over half of all sexual assaults occur within one mile of the victim's home.

Major John Boyd, who oversees the Sex and Violent Offender Registry, states: "The La Porte County Sheriff's Office does an excellent job of insuring that sex offenders reside where they have registered their home addresses so it is crucial that our citizens visit our website to learn who the registered sex offenders are in our community and where they live." Major Boyd added: "A unique feature to this OffenderWatch system is the ability to enter an address of a neighborhood that you plan on visiting, before heading out for trick-or-treating, and determining the address that you plan to avoid. We urge the public to be proactive and utilize this free tool to help keep your children and family safer this Halloween season."

The La Porte County Sheriff's Office as well as all of Indiana's Sheriffs utilizes OffenderWatch Sex Offender Management System to manage and monitor the whereabouts of these convicted offenders. The site can be access through the La Porte County Sheriff's Office website, which is located at www.laportecountysheriff.com . Once at the website, information about specific offenders can be obtained by entering the offender's name or searching for potential offenders within a specified radius of any address of interest. Address radiuses of 1/4 , 1/2 , 1 or 2 miles can be checked for potential offenders.

The La Porte County Sheriff's Office is very pleased to report that since January 1, 2014, nearly 18,500 persons have visited the La Porte County Sheriff's Office OffenderWatch public website. The Sheriff's Office encourages the public to utilize this tool to help insure the safety of children this Halloween season.

Specific questions regarding the Sex and Violent Offender Registry can be directed to Major John Boyd at (219) 326-7700 or (219) 879-3530 ext. 2406 or Pamela Bergren at ext. 2320.

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* COURT OFFICES *

LAPORTE CIRCUIT COURT * LAPORTE, IN 46350 * OFFICE PHONE: (219) 326-6808
SUPERIOR COURT * MICHIGAN CITY, IN 46360 * OFFICE PHONE: (219) 872-2161