



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY MCMASTER  
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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## **Greenville Police Arrest Pelzer Pastor in Internet Predator Sting**

**Columbia** - Attorney General Henry McMaster announced today that John David Helmuth, 44, of 9 Beattie Street in Pelzer, South Carolina, was arrested on September 22, 2009, in an Internet Predator sting conducted by the City of Greenville Police Department.

The City of Greenville Police Department is a member of the Attorney General's Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force.

Helmuth was arrested on ten (10) counts of Criminal Solicitation of a Minor (§16-15-342), a felony offense punishable to ten (10) years imprisonment on each count, and one (1) count of Attempted Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor (§16-15-342), a felony punishable to twenty (20) years imprisonment.

Arrest warrants allege that beginning on June 23, 2009, Helmuth solicited sex on the Internet from an individual he believed to be a thirteen (13) year old girl. In reality, he was soliciting sex from an undercover Greenville Police officer. Helmuth further arranged to meet the "girl" for sex and a predetermined location in Greenville. He was arrested upon his arrival at that location.

Helmuth was assigned a bond of \$100,000. A booking photo is available through the Greenville County Detention Center.

Search warrants executed on Helmuth's residence and church office resulted in the seizure of two (2) computers. The Greenville County Sheriff's Office (also a Task Force member) assisted in the case.

This is the one hundred seventy-second (172<sup>nd</sup>) arrest for the Task Force.

The case will be prosecuted by the Attorney General's Office.

McMaster stressed that all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until they are proven guilty in a court of law.

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