

Registered sex offender busted trying to meet minor

Written by George Browning

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A Washington County teen had the wherewithal to tell her parents when a volunteer in her youth group obtained her cell number and allegedly tried to engage in sexual conduct.

Brian S. Morris, 30, Pekin, allegedly met the teen while working as a chaperon at a local church's youth event.

After event, Morris allegedly obtained the minor's cell number from another child and contacted her about meeting him.

This case began after the parent of the 14-year-old girl contacted a detective with the Indiana State Police Post at Sellersburg describing to him what she deemed as inappropriate contact by an adult.

When investigators found this out they began directing and supervising text message conversations as Morris allegedly continued to text message what he thought was the 14-year old girl.

A press release from the Indiana State Police said that Morris wanted to meet the 14-year-old girl in person and made arrangements to meet at a high school in Washington County.

The plans were made and when Morris showed up at the determined location, he was greeted by Indiana State Police Detectives and deputies from the Washington County Sheriff's Department.

Washington County Sheriff Claude Combs said the arrest played out much like the Dateline NBC special "To Catch A Predator."

"That's how it went down," Combs said. "We had four or five officers waiting for him to show up."

Morris, who is a registered child sex offender on the Indiana Sexual Offender Registry until Sept. 30, 2014, has been charged with Attempted Child Solicitation, D Felony.

Combs said one of the main positives in this case was the arrest happened before the damage occurred.

"I am real happy with it because the arrest was not after the fact, it was before the fact," Combs said. "That's the great thing. You can't undo the damage that someone does to somebody like that. When you are able to catch them before they do it. It's a really good thing."

Combs didn't know if the church had performed a background check on Morris before he was allowed to help with the youth, but said he wanted local churches to know his office will assist in any way they can.

"We will help (churches) 100 percent when they come in here and ask for that information," he said. "Any time you are going to have people working with children, you need to know the character of those people. We can only give them a criminal history if we have knowledge, but I think you also need to get references or people you can talk to find out what kind of person it actually is."

Morris is incarcerated in the Washington County Jail and bond has been set at \$10,000 full cash.

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