

## **Craigslist Prostitute Sting by West Linn Police**

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WEST LINN - In an effort to curtail an increasing trend in prostitution solicitations from West Linn, the West Linn Police Department ran a prostitution sting operation from December 2008 to May 2009 designed to thwart prostitution and show West Linn has "zero tolerance" for online prostitution solicitations.

As part of this effort, officers of the West Linn Police Department conducted several prostitution stings using the "Exotic Services" section of the craigslist web site (<http://www.craigslist.com>). Uniformed officers would contact women and men who advertised "sex for money" proposals. Arrangements would be made to meet at a vacant house in a city park, late at night, after the park was closed.

Since December 2008, officers arrested 23 women and one man for prostitution; four men were arrested for promoting prostitution; there were four additional drug charges; one unlawful possession of a firearm; and four outstanding arrest warrants. Seven of those arrested for prostitution have already pled guilty. Prostitution is a Class "A" misdemeanor.

The goal of this operation was to dissuade prostitution in West Linn. Arrested prostitutes told the West Linn Police Department they will not come back to West Linn. Once a sting operation has been successfully conducted, prostitutes will avoid communities where there is a known chance the respondent to an online solicitation might be a police officer. It becomes well known that response to a solicitation in West Linn could lead to arrest.

"Craigslist gave posters the ability to solicit illegal services," said West Linn Police Department Chief Terry Timeus, "Prostitution is illegal – it promulgates violence against women and drug use, and West Linn does not tolerate these crimes. This sting operation gave us the chance to stop these criminal activities and discourage future activities. It is our responsibility to ensure illegal activities are discouraged in West Linn."

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