



Tigard Police Department

Media Release

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Prostitution Crackdown in Tigard

On March 22, the Tigard Police Commercial Crimes Unit conducted an operation to target and arrest prostitution customers or “johns.” As a result, four adult males were taken into custody and charged with Commercial Sexual Solicitation. The arrested included: Richard Imel, 45, of Milwaukie; Roman Lara-Jacome, 43, of Tigard; Cordell Lee, 27, of Beaverton and Benjamin Wagner, 32, of Portland. During the course of the operation, detectives received over 70 contacts drawn from various ads placed by investigators that which led to the four arrests. Tigard Police was assisted by the Lake Oswego Police Department, the Washington County Sheriff’s Office and the Washington County District Attorney.

The operation took place throughout the day at a Tigard hotel where several Tigard Police detectives set-up. Frequently, police are contacted by businesses expressing frustration and concerns about suspected prostitution operating out of their business outlet. In response to their needs, Tigard Police began to place focus on the crimes of prostitution that now operates significantly through use of technology, along with many other criminal ventures.

The criminal acts of prostitution are mostly arranged beforehand using telephone, websites and social media. In the past, Tigard investigators have conducted probes into such advertising, which resulted in numerous arrests. Another key driving force behind the operation is reinforcing the fact that prostitution is not a victimless crime. The numbers are staggering regarding victims compelled into prostitution; now more likely to be connected to human trafficking. Maintaining a zero tolerance policy in Tigard is one way to help draw attention to this criminal venture and possibly prevent the vulnerable from entering into this enterprise.

A previous operation conducted last winter with the express intent for education yielded 40 contacts. Although detectives had sufficient probable cause to arrest the suspects –all were provided a verbal warning with notice of a likely arrest in the event they were again identified in a future operation connected to commercial sexual solicitation. Tigard Police plan to continue similar missions during the year.