



\*\*\* For Immediate Release \*\*\*

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Government and Media Relations

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**Second "Operation Human Freight" Leads to the Arrest of Suspects for Promoting Prostitution**

**Lewis County** – Washington State Patrol (WSP), in partnership with the Lewis County Sheriff's Office, arrested ten people during "Operation Human Freight. This is the second WSP law enforcement operation this year. During the one day operation, undercover detectives rescued people caught up in human trafficking and prostitution.

"This is a positive collaborative effort to end the vicious cycle of human trafficking," says WSP Chief John R. Batiste. "This operation not only helps protect the victims of human trafficking but also safeguards our communities from criminal activity."

"This successful operation to impact human trafficking in our community is an example of the great working partnerships among law enforcement in our area," said Lewis County Sheriff Rob Snaza. "This operation allowed us the ability to reach out and offer support and resources to victims, and hold those who facilitate these crimes accountable for their actions."

During the afternoon of April 17th, detectives set-up at a Lewis County Truck Stop, located along Interstate 5. The location was chosen because it's a high-traffic area. Officers were searching for both suspects promoting prostitution and victims of human trafficking. Within six hours, officers found five women who appeared to be victims of prostitution and probable victims of human trafficking.

The goal of the operation was to rescue young girls caught up in the cycle of prostitution and human trafficking. Advocates from the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) were on-scene to provide food, water, services, and contact information for all victims.

Detectives will continue their investigations into these crimes which could result in additional arrests and criminal charges.

During the six hour operation, detectives arrested individuals for the following crimes:

- Promoting prostitution 2<sup>nd</sup> degree
- Local warrants for arrest
- Uniform possession of a controlled substance (UPCS), Methamphetamine

The operation was the second of its kind in the state. It involved a collaborative effort between agencies including:

- Lewis County Sheriff's Office
- Lewis County Prosecutor's Office



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- Centralia Police Department
- Joint Narcotics Enforcement Team (JNET)
- The Lakewood Police Department
- Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI)
- Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)
- Washington State Patrol, Field Operation Bureau District 5
- Washington State Patrol, Commercial Vehicle Division

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