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FORMER EASTERN OREGON POLICE OFFICER INDICTED ON CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES

June 23, 2010

Mark Benton Ashcraft, a former Athena police officer, faces seven child pornography counts

Oregon Attorney General John Kroger today announced the arraignment of a former Athena police officer on multiple counts of violating Oregon child pornography laws.

"The Department of Justice will aggressively pursue child pornography charges," said Deputy Attorney General Mary Williams.

Mark Benton Ashcraft (DOB: 11/04/72) of Athena was arraigned today in Umatilla County Circuit Court on 4 counts of Encouraging Child Sexual Abuse in the First Degree and 3 counts of Encouraging Child Sexual Abuse in the Second Degree. Ashcraft entered a plea of not guilty. Bail was set at \$200,000.

Last year, Ashcraft was charged with one count of Sexual Abuse in the Second Degree, one count of Sodomy in the Third Degree, three counts of Sexual Abuse in the Third Degree and one count of Online Sexual Corruption of a Child in the First Degree. Evidence of child pornography was discovered during a subsequent investigation that resulted in Tuesday's indictment by a Umatilla Grand Jury.

A criminal indictment is merely an allegation. Every criminal defendant is considered innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Senior Assistant Attorneys General Stephanie Tuttle and Michael Slauson are prosecuting the case for the Oregon Department of Justice.

Attorney General John Kroger leads the Oregon Department of Justice. The Department's mission is to fight crime and fraud, protect the environment, improve child welfare, promote a positive business climate, and defend the rights of all Oregonians.

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