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## Beaver County preparing to stave off human trafficking

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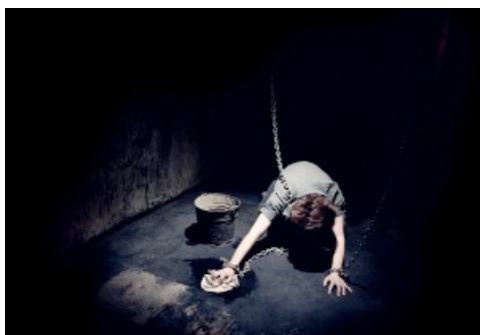


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Posted: Sunday, February 24, 2013 11:30 pm | Updated: 9:28 am, Mon Feb 25, 2013.

By Kristen Doerschner [kdoerschner@timesonline.com](mailto:kdoerschner@timesonline.com) | 4 comments

It sounds like a big-city problem. Or something that happens in other countries.

But human trafficking infiltrates small towns, hitting closer to home than one might think.

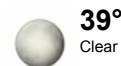
That's why Beaver County is forming an anti-human trafficking response team and coalition. The driving force behind the program to raise community awareness are the Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden.

And just because no cases of human trafficking have been identified in Beaver County, that doesn't mean it hasn't happened, noted District Attorney Anthony Berosh.

"All too often we find out too late," he said.

Beaver County Detective Lt. Kim Clements said the goal now is to build awareness of the problem and know that it may happen or can happen here.

"We have all the crime New York City has, it's just



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#### A new law

A new law requires certain types of businesses to post a flier in their establishments regarding human trafficking.

However, many business owners likely aren't even aware of the law.

The law, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline Notification Act, took effect Dec. 25. It requires a flier with the phone number for the National Human Trafficking Hotline to be posted in drinking establishments, personal service establishments, adult entertainment businesses that have live adult entertainment, airports, train stations or bus

stations, hotels or motels that have been declared a nuisance, full-service truck stops and welcome centers and rest areas on highways.

According to the law, the flier must be posted in a conspicuous place.

If required businesses do not post the flier, they will be given a warning. If the owners still do not post the flier, they can be charged with a summary offense or a misdemeanor and face fines of up to \$500.

A copy of the flier can be downloaded through the Polaris Project website at [www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org).

The complete legislation can be found at the website [legis.state.pa.us](http://legis.state.pa.us).

### Help and resources

The following is a list of hotline numbers and resources in you suspect someone is the victim of human trafficking:

- Beaver County Detective Lt. Kim Clements: (724) 773-8576
- The Polaris Project National Human Trafficking Hotline: (888) 373-7888
- DHS Human Trafficking Hotline: (866) 347-2423
- Pennsylvania State Police Terrorism/Fugitive Tip Line: (888) 292-1919
- Pennsylvania Immigration Recourse Center: (717) 600-8099
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children: (800) THE-LOST or [www.missingkids.org](http://www.missingkids.org)

### Fracking and trafficking

Beaver County could become a hotbed of human trafficking if the gas drilling boom arrives in the future.

Krista Hoffman, a criminal justice training specialist with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, warned a group of law enforcement, human service agents and citizens at a recent anti-human trafficking training seminar in Beaver County to be prepared for a problem.

Hoffman said a drilling boom means an influx of a large population of transient men. She said other areas have seen an increase in human trafficking with the increase of drilling.

Traffickers watch for areas where there will be a lot of potential business, Hoffman said. "That's a lot of money to be made," she said. "They're going to be bringing victims."

not, thank God, on such an epic scale," Clements said.

Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Popovich said Beaver County may not have as much sex trade activity as larger cities, but it is an area where labor trafficking could be more prevalent.

"We do have an immigrant population that is growing," Popovich said. Often times the people who are exploited are vulnerable because they come from a culture with a distrust for law enforcement and are often unable to speak the language.

Popovich said recognizing human trafficking on a local level requires people to change their perspective. Instead of dismissing repeat runaway teenagers as troublemakers, look at what they are running away from, she said.

There may not be a base for the sex trade in Beaver County, but that also doesn't mean that kind of activity isn't going on, Popovich said. There are websites where men can essentially order women to be delivered, and some of those advertisements are based in Pittsburgh.

Beaver County's project is modeled after the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape anti-human trafficking task force that was developed in the eastern part of the state, but Clements said the local effort will be adjusted to meet the needs of the area.

Involved in the response team will be the district attorney's office, county detectives, Beaver County Emergency Services, local police, the Beaver County Jail, adult and juvenile probation, Beaver County Children and Youth Services and the Women's Center.

The anti-human trafficking coalition will be made up of community members. The coalition will form subcommittees to address issues such as raising awareness and fundraising for the initiative. Popovich said several concerned community members already are involved.

The coalition's next meeting is at 3 p.m. March 6 at Villa St. Joseph in Baden. Any community members interested in attending should call (724) 869-2151, extension 6247, or email [jbussen@stjoseph-baden.org](mailto:jbussen@stjoseph-baden.org).

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District Attorney Anthony Berosh also noted his concern when speaking to the group.

Authorities in Beaver County are hoping to launch a preemptive strike against human trafficking before sex trafficking becomes a real problem here, Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Popovich said.

"Our job is to keep our eyes open," Berosh said.



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**4 comments:**

**Bobcat4ever** posted at 5:08 pm on Mon, Feb 25, 2013.



Posts: 375

@thisperfectday - stop making sense...

It's much easier to solve crimes that don't exist, focusing on crimes that actually exists might take some effort!

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**APod19** posted at 8:42 am on Mon, Feb 25, 2013.



Posts: 3

Aliquippa is fine, don't worry about it. Let's focus on something I saw on Law and Order

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**thisperfectday3000** posted at 7:41 am on Mon, Feb 25, 2013.



Posts: 166

"And just because no cases of human trafficking have been identified in Beaver County, that doesn't mean it hasn't happened, noted District Attorney Anthony Berosh."

Shouldn't Beaver County use its limited resources to focus on problems that we know actually exist--like drug trafficking and all of the violence related to that?

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**SkidogUSMC** posted at 4:28 am on Mon, Feb 25, 2013.



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Well, if they moved to Beaver County they would be wise to still distrust law enforcement.

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