



OFFICE OF
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KITSAP COUNTY SHERIFF

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For Immediate Release:
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Thursday, Oct. 7, 2004

Media Advisory:

Level III sex offender community notification

Port Orchard, Wash. -- The Kitsap County Sheriff's Office is releasing the following information pursuant to RCW 4.24.550, and a Washington State Supreme Court decision in *State v. Ward*, regarding public notification of the anticipated residency of convicted sexual offender.

The individual named in this advisory has been convicted of criminal offenses that require registration with the Sheriff's Office in the county of his residence. Further, his previous criminal history places him in a classification level that reflects the *potential* to re-offend.

Name: John Paul Cozzie, white male, age 24.

Residence location: Cozzie is scheduled to relocate to Kitsap County on Oct. 8. He has an approved residence in the 1300 block of Whitney Avenue, Bremerton.

Description: 6'01" ht., 145 lbs. wt., brown-colored hair and brown-colored eyes.

Criminal history: The Kitsap County Sheriff's Office was notified today, by the Washington State Department of Corrections, that Cozzie is being released from prison.

Cozzie has been deemed to be a dangerous mentally ill offender and a high risk to re-offend sexually. His risk for violence is estimated as high. As such, he has been categorized as a Level III Sex Offender.

Cozzie has two previous sex-related convictions where both victims were acquaintances:

- (1) In January 1999, Cozzie was convicted of assault, 2nd degree, with sexual motivation. He was released from custody for that offense on Aug. 30, 2000.
- (2) On Sept. 9, 2000, Cozzie was arrested for rape, 3rd degree, and subsequently convicted. It is this offense for which Cozzie is presently incarcerated and is due to be released.

Cozzie was involved in several major infractions while in prison, including sexual acts with other inmates.

Last month, Cozzie was referred to Superior Court for a civil commitment as a sexually violent predator under provisions of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW 71.09); however the court determined that Cozzie was to be released back into the community.

Note: RCW 71.09 allows individuals convicted of crimes of sexual violence to be confined in a secure facility if they suffer from a mental abnormality or personality disorder which makes them likely to engage in predatory acts of sexual violence, unless they are confined in a secure facility.

Community meeting: A community notification meeting, concerning the residency of Cozzie, is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 13, in the West Park Community Center, 76 Russell Road, Bremerton.

Cozzie has served the sentence imposed on him by the courts. As a convicted sex offender he is required by state law to register with the Sheriff's Office having jurisdiction in a county. He has advised the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office that he will be living in the City of Bremerton, within Kitsap County. Cozzie is not wanted by law enforcement at this time. This notification is not intended to increase fear; rather, an informed public is a safer public.

The Sheriff's Office has no legal authority to direct where a registered sex offender may or may not reside. Unless court-ordered restrictions exist, an offender is constitutionally free to live wherever he or she chooses.

Sexual offenders have always lived within our communities. It wasn't until the passage of legislation entitled the "Community Protection Act of 1990," which mandates sex offender registration, that law enforcement even knew where they were living.

Abuse of information provided through the sex offender notification process, in order to intimidate, harass or threaten a registered offender, will result in an investigation and the filing of criminal charges against the perpetrators. Such abuse could potentially end law enforcement's ability to conduct community notifications. The only person who 'wins,' if community notification is halted, is the registered offender, as sexual offenders derive their power through secrecy.

As of Oct. 7, there are 18,382 sex offenders who have registered as required and are living in Washington State. Of this number 616 are registered with the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office and living at county addresses; 199 are registered to addresses within the limits of incorporated cities within the county, and 52 are in jail or prison.

The Sheriff's Community Resource Officer, Deputy Pete Ball, is available to assist communities in establishing block or neighborhood watch programs and to provide the public with information on personal safety. He may be contacted at (360) 337-7074.

For further information on registered sex offenders within Kitsap County, contact Detective Steve Duckworth at (360) 337-5669.

For information concerning John P. Cozzie, contact Officer Karen Pierson, Bremerton Police Department, at (360) 473-5231.

Concerned residents are urged to attend the community notification meeting listed above. Bremerton Police officers and detectives will be available to answer questions.

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