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NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
ON NOVEMBER 1, 2011**

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Coeur d'Alene Man Pleads Guilty to Possessing Hundreds of Images of Child Porn

COEUR D'ALENE – Charley Brigham Leighton II, 41, of Hayden Lake, Idaho, pled guilty yesterday in U.S. District Court to possession of sexually explicit images of minors, U.S. Attorney Wendy J. Olson announced.

According to the plea agreement, on May 8, 2010, a North Idaho Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC) investigator developed information that an Internet Protocol (IP) address registered to a Hayden Lake residence was involved in the possession of child pornography. The investigator determined the computer was using “peer-to-peer” software to download and share digital media, including images and video. The file download is achieved through a direct connection between the computer requesting the file and the computer containing the file. The ICAC investigator analyzed digital signatures of six files on the computer and was able to confirm that they contained child pornography. On June 7, 2010, investigators determined that the IP address in Hayden Lake was registered to Leighton. A federal search warrant was served on the residence on August 26, 2010, during which investigators seized a desktop computer, a laptop computer, and several thumb-drives and DVDs. Leighton was present during the search and agreed to speak to ICAC investigators. He admitted that he had been downloading child pornography for at least a year and that he had downloaded over a thousand images of children engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

A forensic review of Leighton's computers, DVDs and thumb drives by U.S. Secret Service found that the computers and many of the DVDs and thumb drives contained over 300 photos and 40 videos of real children engaged in sexually explicit conduct. The National Center

for Missing and Exploited Children determined that the images were of children from Missouri, Georgia, Connecticut, Michigan, Florida, and Washington state; and France, Germany, Brazil, Belgium, England, and the Netherlands.

The charge carries a maximum punishment of up to ten years in prison, a fine up to \$250,000, and minimum five years up to lifetime supervised release. The government is also seeking forfeiture of the computer equipment and digital media.

Sentencing is set for January 30, 2012, before U.S. District Judge Edward J. Lodge at the federal courthouse in Coeur d'Alene.

“Children are our society's most precious resource,” said Olson. “The federal, state and local law enforcement officers who make up the North Idaho Crimes Against Children Task Force work cooperatively and use every available tool to protect children from online predators.”

The case was investigated by the North Idaho Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC), a group comprised of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies in North Idaho, which includes the Coeur d'Alene Police Department, Post Falls Police Department, Shoshone County Sheriff's Office, Moscow Police Department, Bonner County Sheriff's Office, Lewiston Police Department, Idaho Attorney General's Office, Kootenai County Prosecutor's Office, the U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, U.S. Marshals Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

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