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## Child sex sting nets 20 arrests

Three of the suspects are from northeastern Indiana.

From The Associated Press

VALPARAISO — An undercover federal investigation targeting child sex predators over the Internet has resulted in more than 20 arrests, most of them men from Indiana. A Fort Wayne man, a Decatur man and a Leo-Cedarville man were arrested in the sting.

Justin Reichart, 22, of Fort Wayne, and Travis Springer, 21, of Decatur, are charged with trying to coerce a minor into sex. James McManus, 46, of Leo-Cedarville, is charged with the transfer of obscene materials.

Reichart and Springer were arrested separately after alleged online chats with law enforcement officials who posed as 13-year-old girls turned sexual. McManus is accused of sending naked pictures of himself over the Internet to who he thought was a 15-year-old girl, but in fact was law enforcement officials.

Eleven of the men arranged meetings with undercover officers and agents posing as underage girls in chat rooms and traveled to meet them, prosecutors announced Tuesday.

"My office has zero tolerance for sexual predators as these takedowns demonstrate, and will seek punishment to the full extent of the law," said Joseph S. Van Bokkelen, the U.S. attorney for northern Indiana.

The sting operation was set up in Porter, St. Joseph and Tippecanoe counties.

Fourteen of the men appeared in U.S. District Court in Hammond on Monday on charges of attempting to induce, entice and coerce for sex undercover federal agents who were posing as 13-year-old girls. They were expected to have detention hearings this week to determine whether they should remain in custody pending the outcomes of their cases.

Two of those arrested were from Ohio, and one was from Michigan. The rest were from Indiana.

— Reporter Jeff Wiehe contributed to this report.

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