



# Child Support NEWS

*A Joint Effort of the Lexington County Sheriff's Department and the Lexington County Clerk of Court*

## Sheriff and Clerk of Court Team Up to Track Down Child Support

*Sherriff James Metts & Clerk of Court Beth Carrigg Going After Money Owed to Lexington County's Children*

Lexington County Sheriff James R. Metts and Lexington County Clerk of Court Beth Carrigg are conducting Operation Stocking Stuffer V, which is a joint effort by the Lexington County Sheriff's Department and Lexington County Clerk of Court's Office to conduct enhanced enforcement of court orders concerning unpaid child support. The enhanced enforcement operation will end on December 21.

Fugitive investigators with the Sheriff's Department Warrant Division will seek to arrest more

than 200 persons who are wanted on family court bench warrants that were issued after the persons did not make court-ordered child support payments in Lexington County, Metts and Carrigg said.

As a result of Operation Stocking Stuffer IV, fugitive investigators in November and December 2009 arrested 131 persons who were wanted on family court bench warrants that were issued after the persons did not make a combined total of more than \$1.6 million in court-ordered child support payments in Lexington County, Metts and

Carrigg said. The persons whom investigators arrested included 61 habitual offenders who each owed more than \$10,000 in court-ordered child support payments.

Metts and Carrigg implemented Operation Stocking Stuffer to try to ensure that custodial parents receive child support money that they need to provide holiday presents for their children. Custodial parents who do not receive court-ordered child support payments find it difficult to properly care for their children, and they also find it difficult to provide a proper holiday

celebration for their children.

Non-custodial parents who owe court-ordered child support payments in Lexington County can make arrangements to resolve family court bench warrants that have been issued for their arrests by calling the Clerk of Court's Office at (803) 785-1196, Carrigg said.

Non-custodial parents who are wanted on family court bench warrants also can surrender at the Lexington County James R. Metts Law Enforcement Complex, 521 Gibson Road, Lexington, Metts said.

### A Personal Message from SHERIFF JAMES R. METTS

The enhanced enforcement of court orders in child support cases reflects the mission of the Lexington County Sheriff's Department, which is committed to provide professional law enforcement services that enhance the quality of life for all people in Lexington County. The failure of non-custodial parents to financially support their children creates serious quality of life issues for children.

Enforcement of court orders in child support cases is more vital during the Christmas holiday season. I urge non-custodial parents to do the right thing and make the arrangements to pay child support that they owe in order to financially support their children. Children should not suffer because of their parents' misdeeds.

I work with Clerk of Court Beth Carrigg to identify habitual offenders who have eluded law enforcement and repeatedly refused to make court-ordered child support payments. I assigned a team of fugitive investigators to search for and arrest deadbeat parents who do not comply with family court orders to financially support their children.

So far this year, fugitive investigators have arrested 50 habitual offenders who have not made a combined total of more than \$1.4 million in court-ordered child support payments in Lexington County.

In 2009, fugitive investigators arrested 194 habitual offenders on family court bench warrants. The 194 habitual offenders owed a combined total of more than \$3.2 million in court-ordered child support payments in Lexington County.

Dead-beat parents need to understand that we will utilize all legal means available to ensure that they make court-ordered child support payments.



### A Personal Message from BETH CARRIGG, CLERK OF COURT

The holiday season is again upon us. This is the time of year when people need to dig deep and help those who are less fortunate. When children live without even basic things, such as food and shelter, it creates a never-ending cycle of poverty and despair.

The Lexington County Clerk of Court's Office is committed to provide services that enhance the quality of life for citizens in Lexington County. I am committed to work with Lexington County Sheriff James R. Metts to improve the lives of custodial parents and their children.

I worked in partnership with Sheriff Metts to create Operation Stocking Stuffer, which will provide essential financial support during the holiday season for children and parents who have custody of children. The goal of the operation is to identify and apprehend habitual offenders who owe court-ordered child support payments in Lexington County.

Sheriff Metts and I believe that Operation Stocking Stuffer V will be the most successful event to date, as we are more dedicated than ever in today's tough economic times to obtain financial support for children and parents who have custody of children. In 2009, Operation Stocking Stuffer IV resulted in arrests of non-custodial parents who owed a combined total of \$3.2 million in court-ordered child support payments in Lexington County.

I urge all persons who owe outstanding court-ordered child support payments in Lexington County to contact my office or the Sheriff's Department to resolve their child support cases. Dead-beat parents will not be tolerated in Lexington County, and we will use every legal means available to provide children and parents who have custody of children with the financial support that they deserve and need.

