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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES FIRST TWO JURISDICTIONS TO IMPLEMENT SEX OFFENDER REGISTRATION AND NOTIFICATION ACT

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Department of Justice announced today that Ohio and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation are the first two jurisdictions to substantially implement the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA), Title I of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006.

"We are pleased to announce the first two jurisdictions to substantially implement this important legislation," said Attorney General Eric Holder. "We are committed to working with the remaining states, tribes and territories with their implementation efforts."

The State of Ohio and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (located in the state of Oregon) have been working diligently with the Office of Justice Programs' Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking (SMART) to achieve this milestone, according to officials from the SMART Office.

"This marks an important achievement for Ohio's families and children," said Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray. "Effective tracking and monitoring of sex offenders equips parents with the information they need to keep their children safe. Taking deliberate steps to provide a common foundation for all the registration systems throughout the United States allows our families to make the most effective use of the information those systems provide."

While most states have had sex offender registry systems in place for more than a decade, the tribal communities only became registration jurisdictions after the passage of the Adam Walsh Act. The Umatilla Indian Reservation has made significant strides in substantially implementing the registration and notification systems in a relatively short time frame.

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"We understand the importance of working together to protect our communities by creating a national system of sexual offender registries. We are pleased that the Department of Justice has deemed our sex offender registration and notification program to be in substantial compliance with the Adam Walsh Act and I am proud of the work our staff has done to get us to this point," said Antone Minthorn, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. "We applaud the efforts of Ohio and the Umatilla Tribes, and we also would like to recognize the significant on-going effort of the other jurisdictions who are actively working to implement SORNA to improve the safety of their communities," said Linda Baldwin, Director of the SMART Office. "These jurisdictions are the first of many whose efforts will create the seamless web of public sex offender databases and law enforcement information sharing envisioned by SORNA."

Additional information can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov/smart>.

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"The Office of Justice Programs, headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has five component bureaus: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office for Victims of Crime. Additionally, OJP has two program offices: the Community Capacity Development Office, which incorporates the Weed and Seed strategy, and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART). More information can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>.

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<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/newsroom/pressreleases/2009/SMART09154.htm>