



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE PINAL COUNTY ATTORNEY

Contact: Tiffany Davila

Public Information Officer

520.866.6573

tiffany.davila@pinalcountyz.gov

PINAL COUNTY ATTORNEY LANDO VOYLES TO HOST TRUCKERS AGAINST TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE

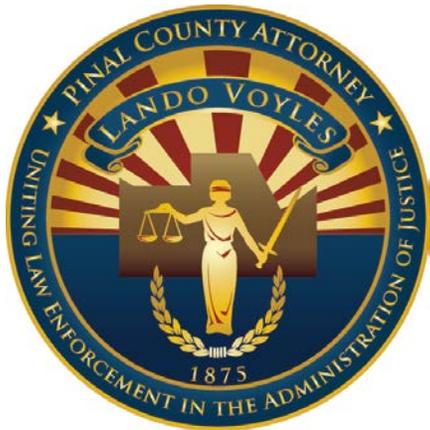
FLORENCE, AZ (1/5/15) – It's a multi-million dollar criminal enterprise and it threatens lives across the globe. Human trafficking happens every second, every minute of every hour. Traffickers tempt victims with a better life and money, but in reality, they are threatened, drugged, even beaten, then 'sold' or held captive for labor or sex, sometimes both.

To help take back our streets, the Pinal County Attorney's Office joins forces with the Pinal County Sheriff's Office and Truckers against Trafficking or the TAT organization to put the brakes on human trafficking.

"Some aspect of trafficking occurs every day within Pinal County. These heinous crimes happen all around us, infiltrating our communities, our neighborhoods, and streets. In the past four years, online juvenile trafficking increased almost 15-hundred percent across the nation. Rescuing and restoring victims of trafficking remains a top priority in this office," said Pinal County Attorney Lando Voyles.

On Thursday, January 8th, PCAO and TAT will sponsor a trafficking conference at the Pinal County Sheriff's Office. The one-day event includes PCSO, local police agencies, trucking carriers and truck stop managers and is designed to help educate truck drivers and truck stop employees about trafficking. At the conference, truckers will be provided with the tools they need to spot the warning signs, so they can effectively work with law enforcement to fight these crimes. The event also features different speakers, including a trafficking survivor and various law enforcement representatives on a panel, led by Pinal County Attorney Lando Voyles. The Freedom Drivers Project, a 48-foot mobile exhibit designed to educate the public about trafficking, will be available for tours as well.

In 2009, Truckers against Trafficking was created as a way to bring education, awareness and empowerment to truck drivers across the nation. According to TAT, traffickers push their "wares" at different, nationwide locations frequented by truckers. So, through webinars, trainings and presentations truckers are taught the signs of human trafficking as they can be a second pair of eyes and ears to law enforcement while on the road.



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“Bringing law enforcement and key industry stakeholders together to close loopholes to traffickers is what TAT is all about. We’re very excited to be in Pinal County so close to the National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, and believe this meeting will have exponential effects,” said TAT Executive Director, Kendis Paris.

“It’s hard to believe that in 2015 children are being bought and sold for sex like modern day slaves. Arizona Trucking Association members are trying to do their part to end these horrific crimes through our partnership with Truckers against Trafficking. Trainings like the one Pinal County is hosting are crucial to train and educate people how to identify human trafficking victims and how to report suspicious activity to law enforcement,” said Tony Bradley, President and CEO of the Arizona Trucking Association.

“Much focus has been put on sex trafficking since Arizona is hosting the Superbowl this year, but human and sex trafficking exist as a problem all year. In fact, Pinal County remains one of the most active counties in the United States for human and drug trafficking. We hope to create a significant impact in combatting human and sex trafficking by training-up an industry believed to unknowingly come across victims of trafficking every day,” said Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu.

PCAO’s event is tied in to National Human Trafficking Awareness Day on Sunday, January 11th, and is being funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grant #90ZV0119-01. In August, the Pinal County Attorney’s Office Family Advocacy Center was awarded a \$90,000 grant to rescue and restore foreign victims of human trafficking. This conference is just one of many public awareness campaigns PCAO is working on, with the help of the grant, to make sure Pinal County is saturated with the knowledge and power to do something about these despicable crimes.

The Pinal County Attorney’s Office in conjunction with the Pinal County Sheriff’s Office will be holding a joint press conference before the trafficking seminar on Thursday, January 8th at 9:00 am outside PCSO.

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