



# South Dakota West River

Human Trafficking Task Force

*Overview*

July– September 2019



SOUTH DAKOTA WEST RIVER HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE  
APRIL - JUNE 2019 OVERVIEW

South Dakota's West River Human Trafficking Task Force (SD WR HTTF) exists as a collaboration of diverse organizations and individuals connected to combat the issue of trafficking in persons, by raising awareness, providing information and education, advocating for prosecution of offenders and supporting human trafficking victims and survivors.

The SD WR HTTF is comprised of local, state, federal and non-profit agencies, and individuals. The Task Force is currently chaired by Dan Wardle, Education Specialist Children's Home Society, Rapid City, and co-chaired by Tifanie Petro, Director of Advocacy and Prevention with the Children's Home Child Advocacy Center.

SD WR HTTF Chair and Co-Chair serve on a yearly basis with new chairs elected at the October quarterly meeting.



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Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Carol White's Personal Fitness Studio  
Catholic Social Services  
Children's Home Society  
Community Health Center of the Black Hills  
Concerned Women for America  
Cornerstone Rescue Mission  
DHS – Homeland Security Investigations  
Department of Social Services: Child Protection  
Division of Criminal Investigation  
Family Heritage Alliance  
For Freedom  
Free the Black Hills  
Freedom's Journey  
Lifeways  
Pathfinder Center (Wiconi Wawokiya)  
Pennington County Health & Human Services  
Pennington County Sheriff's Office  
Pennington County State's Attorney's Offices  
Rapid City Ministerial Association  
Rapid City Police Department  
Rapid City Public Library  
Recovery Communities of South Dakota  
Regional Health  
South Dakota Attorney General's Office  
South Dakota Highway Patrol  
South Dakota Coalition Ending Domestic & Sexual Violence  
South Dakota Legislature  
South Dakota U.S. Attorney's Office  
Todd County Schools  
TotalKayoss Web & Graphic Design  
WAVI  
Winyan Wicayuonihan Oyanke (Where All Women Are Honored)



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COMMITTEES

The SD WR HTTF is currently comprised of four committees which report to the Task Force through attendance at regular Task Force meetings and to Task Force partners if situations arise and a timelier response is needed. The four committees and their purpose and focus are outlined below.

**Public Awareness, Education, and Outreach:** This committee is the largest committee and has two very important responsibilities. The first mission is bringing public awareness and education through PSAs, holding awareness-based events, providing education opportunities to professionals, and providing Human Trafficking materials at events in Western South Dakota. The second responsibility is to provide outreach during events such as the Sturgis Bike Rally, Hills Alive, and Lakota National Invitational. This committee is also where volunteers and concerned citizens are directed when they make requests to help the efforts of the Task Force. The events and outreach activities often require many people to help so this is where our volunteers are most needed. It should be noted that most volunteers are not committee or Task Force members so this committee is also responsible for the management of volunteers looking to help the Task Force.

**Native American/Tribal Initiatives:** This committee is responsible for making contact with Native American and Tribal leaders and communities to gain an understanding into to the dynamics and current issues the Tribes are seeing as it relates to human trafficking and factors which contribute to the presence of human trafficking in Tribal communities.

**Law and Policy** – This committee is responsible for doing research regarding human trafficking laws, changes in the laws in our state as well as other states, and to determine if legislation is needed for factors which contribute to human trafficking such as sextortion, domestic violence, child solicitation, and child sexual abuse.

**Response and Investigation** – This committee is comprised of state and federal law enforcement and representatives from the local District Attorney’s office, United States Attorney’s Office and service providers as deemed appropriate considering the sensitivities of an investigation. This committee is responsible for promoting and implementing a multidisciplinary (MDT) approach to responding to reports of human trafficking in Western South Dakota. This committee works directly with advocates and service providers to ensure the needs of the victims can be met. Greater collaboration among member law enforcement agencies will lead to more successful investigations and prosecutions.



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OUTREACH COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

**Second quarter highlights:**

- This committee is chaired by Lisa Gennaro of Concerned Women of America, and co-chaired by Elizabeth Verhey of Free the Black Hills/Freedom's Journey.
- Goals for this committee will continue to be a cohesive message through trainings, PSA's, and personalized trainings for areas such as the hospitality industry.

**Events:**

- In July of 2019, Tess Franzen Director of Freedom's Journey and Kelly Patterson were able to teach hundreds of medical professionals through training hosted by Regional Health.
- In July of 2019, in conjunction through Freedom's Journey, a Proclamation was signed by Governor Kristi Noem recognizing July as Human Trafficking Awareness Month in South Dakota.
- During the 2019, Lisa and Elizabeth worked together to conducted outreach and awareness to local business during the 2019 Sturgis Rally. Utilizing members from the task force and other volunteers, lip balms and educational material were shared with businesses throughout the Hills.





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NATIVE AMERICAN INITIATIVES HIGHLIGHTS

This committee is currently looking for a chair/co-chair, and is responsible for making contact with Native American and Tribal leaders and communities to gain an understanding into to the dynamics and current issues the Tribes are seeing as it relates to human trafficking and factors which contribute to the presence of human trafficking in Tribal communities.

This committee met is actively recruiting for additional subcommittee volunteers and exploring Indian country specific training to be offered.



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LAW AND POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

The Law and Policy Committee is currently Chaired by Tess Franzen of Freedom's Journey. This committee is actively pursuing new members/chair/co-chair.

This group will be looking at legislation to assist in supporting law enforcement and survivors in the upcoming sessions.



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INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTIONS  
UPDATES OF INTEREST

- Curaba, Walter of Glendale, Arizona was convicted of Attempted Receipt of Child Pornography and was sentenced on July 2, 2019. Caruba was one of five men who were arrested and federally indicted as a result of an undercover sex trafficking operation during the 2014 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. Caruba believed to be communicating with a 12 year old girl. Caruba was sentenced to 5 years in federal prison. The operation and arrest was a joint effort between South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Rapid City Police Department, and the Pennington County Sheriff's Office.
- Bender, Timothy of Rapid City, South Dakota was sentenced on July 3, 2019, to 5 years in federal prison. Bender was communicating with someone he believed to be a minor.
- Afrank, Eric of Rapid City, South Dakota was sentenced on July 2, 2019, to 5 years in federal prison. Afrank was one of nine men who were arrested and federally indicted as a result of an undercover sex trafficking operation during the 2017 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. Afrank believed to be communicating with a minor. The operation and arrest was a joint effort between South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Rapid City Police Department, and the Pennington County Sheriff's Office.
- Blacksmith, Wesley of Oglala, South Dakota was convicted of Sexual Abuse of a Minor on July 1, 2019. Blacksmith was sentenced to 17 ½ years in federal prison.
- As a result of the sex trafficking operation during the 2019 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, eleven men from Western South Dakota were arrested: Jonathan Whitney, Rapid City; Jeric Davis, Rapid City; Stanley Lumbardy, Spearfish; Kenneth Williamson, Rapid City; Sean Gertsch, Sturgis; Hugo Duque, Rapid City; Japher Rajab, Rapid City; Greydon Shangreaux, White River; Justin Westby, Wall; Brennan Hauk, Rapid City; Josef Pettit, Piedmont. The operation was a joint effort between South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Rapid City Police Department, and the Pennington County Sheriff's Office. The charges are merely accusations and all eleven defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

