



Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office

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MEDIA ADVISORY FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sheriff's Office Moves Fourth Street Encampment

(CHARLOTTE, NC) – Mecklenburg County Sheriff Garry L. McFadden announced this morning that at approximately 7:30 A.M. a team of Sheriff's Deputies, acting in coordination with and with the assistance of CMPD Officers, moved the individuals encamped on Fourth Street at the corner of the entrance to the County Courthouse Plaza and across the street from the Magistrate and Arrest Processing entrance to Detention Center-Central. For several weeks these individuals and others at the encampment, under the guise of what they claimed to be "Jail Support," had been harassing and intimidating citizens with legitimate business in the adjacent city and county offices, the Detention Center, and the Mecklenburg County Courthouse. Individuals affiliated with the "Jail Support" operation would also, routinely, target law enforcement officers with verbal vitriol, obstruct both pedestrian and vehicular traffic on Fourth Street, leave litter including human feces in public accessways, and on at least two occasions commit sex crimes including Crimes Against Nature on public property. Last week, one of the individuals from the "Jail Support" encampment, while holding a brick in his hand, yelled obscenities at two uniformed MCSO Detention Officers and chased them into the Government Center. The threatening individual threw the brick at the Government Center cracking a window, then picked up another brick and threw it at the Government Center shattering the window, before fleeing the scene on foot.

Today's operation was undertaken not only with the cooperation of CMPD, but also after extensive communication with City and County leadership and consultation with District

Attorney Spencer Merriweather and members of his staff. In the course of the operation, after refusing to leave the encampment when asked by law enforcement to do so, five individuals were arrested and charged with Criminal Trespass. MCSO collected the personal property left behind by those who could not take their property with them, with the assurance that the property would be returned to those to whom it belonged at their convenience.

Sheriff McFadden reiterated his position on “Jail Support” again this morning: “I have always been a champion of the residents of our Detention Centers as they re-enter society. Many of these citizens need and deserve assistance to secure even the very basics – food and shelter – let alone job placement, physical and mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and the list goes on. I remain eager to work with anyone or any organization that shares in my passion for providing these resources for our neighbors. If this is – as it *should be* – what defines “Jail Support,” then I am all for it. But this fine *concept* of “Jail Support” was sadly hijacked by a number of the individuals who became “regulars” at the encampment on Fourth Street – and who had a different agenda: to be disruptive, belligerent, threatening, harassing, and obstructionist not just to the hard working men and women on my staff and other local law enforcement personnel, but also to civilian public servants and private citizens trying to access the resources in our City and County buildings. It is my hope that the removal of the encampment will allow those with the good intentions of “Jail Support” a fresh start, and I would welcome a meeting with anyone in leadership of that effort so that we might discuss working together in furtherance of our common goals.”

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