



NEWS RELEASE



EUREKA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Date: July 11, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Subject: UPDATE – Suspect Identified during Investigation into Hate Propaganda Flyers

From: Chief Steve Watson

Contact: PIO Brittany Powell (707) 441-4388

With the assistance of family, the Eureka Police Department has identified the individual responsible for the hate-based propaganda fliers recently found in our community. This person is a multiracial, 16-year old male who relocated to Humboldt County recently. Due to his age, EPD cannot publicly release the youth's identity. No arrests have been made or criminal charges filed at this time. However, this is an open investigation and this status may change. EPD regularly works with our local, state and federal law enforcement partners and has been in contact with the FBI during this investigation. The youth was interviewed this morning by EPD detectives and a Special Agent with the FBI's local satellite office. A second interview was also later conducted with an 18-year-old friend of the teen who was here visiting from out-of-state.

The youth admitted to placing the propaganda flyer in Henderson Center and to his personal involvement with the group (via the internet and social media) which he described as originally being more "anti-establishment" in nature. (He also claimed to not agree with all of the group's current ideology including those advocating violence.)

Based on information obtained during the interviews, investigators currently believe the youth likely acted alone (which he maintained) and is not part of a larger like-minded, connected hate group currently residing and operating inside Humboldt County. There is no indication this individual or group poses a major or growing threat (of violent action) in this area at this time. However, situational awareness and reporting of suspicious activity is always advised and encouraged. The effort to recruit youth to their cause remains deeply concerning. EPD and our law enforcement partners will continue to monitor the group and to follow-up with the youth and his family.



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EPD encourages parents to take this opportunity to speak with their children about hate and bias. Parents should also closely monitor where and with whom their children are spending their time, not only in person, but also virtually online.

Because this individual is a minor, EPD is working with the family to refer him to appropriate community services and anti-bias intervention resources.

White supremacists, hate crime, or anyone targeting others because of race, color, religion or national origin will not be tolerated by law enforcement in our community. Actions that constitute a crime generally include:

- Use of force or the threat of force or conspiracy to use or threaten force
- Targeting of the victim because of race, color, religion or national origin
- Additional motive to injure, intimidate or interfere with some specific federally protected activity or right

It is law enforcement's duty to ensure the safety of our communities and nation while upholding the civil rights guaranteed by the Constitution (including the exercise of the First Amendment) to every citizen. We remain committed to protecting those rights for all Americans while also taking a stand against racism and hate.

Generally, individuals who commit criminal activity in furtherance of their extremist ideology are prosecuted, rather than groups. Membership in an organization that promotes extremist ideology or racism alone (though deeply disturbing) is not illegal nor is it a sufficient basis for prosecution.

EPD wants to thank the community for alerting authorities to this inflammatory language being posted in our community. We encourage people to report potential hate crimes and/or threatening behavior to law enforcement. The community is our most vital resource to combat hate. While those who promote hateful sentiment in our community have free speech rights, the community also has the First Amendment right to say that hate is not welcome here.

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On Wednesday, July 10, 2019, the Eureka Police Department was made aware of a propaganda flyer reportedly found in the Henderson Center area of Eureka yesterday. The flyer was from a group which appears to be attempting to recruit young people to their white supremacist cause through such fliers and social media.



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The Eureka Police Department is working with our allied law enforcement agencies in Humboldt County to assess any potential direct threats to our community posed by this group. EPD has also assigned a detective to investigate the local source of this disturbing hate propaganda. Additionally, EPD has reached out to the FBI's satellite office (resident agency) in Eureka/Fortuna along with our local Terrorism Liaison Officer (TLO) Coordinator for information and assistance.

"The racism, hate and violence espoused by this contemptible group has no place in our community and will not be tolerated. Crimes motivated by racism and hate will be aggressively investigated and we will work with the Humboldt County District Attorney's Office to see them prosecuted to the full extent of the law." ~EPD Chief Steve Watson

EPD asks that anyone with information concerning the source of these fliers contact Detective-Sergeant Shawn Sopoaga at (707) 441-5108 or ssopoaga@ci.eureka.ca.gov.

Note: The Eureka Police Department joins with another Eureka-based news publication in choosing not to publicly name this despicable hate group at this time or share links to their social media accounts so as not to further promote their racist ideology or recruitment efforts.

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