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MADISON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Media Advisory

WHO: Madison County Assistant State's Attorney speaking to students about the dangers involved in "sexting"

WHEN: Friday, April 11, 2014; multiple presentations beginning at 9:30 a.m.

WHERE: Alton High School, 4200 Humbert Road, Alton, IL 62002; 618.474.2700

SIGNIFICANCE: Assistant State's Attorney Lauren Heischmidt will be speaking to students at Alton High School on the dangers of sexting. The presentation will provide students with statistics on teens and sexting and those criminal statutes and penalties associated with sexting and child pornography. Additionally, high-profile cases will be discussed with the students in order to provide them with real-life examples.

State's Attorney Tom Gibbons hopes that if students are appraised of the possible consequences of sexting, they will be equipped to make better decisions. "Most students don't realize that if they send an explicit photo via text or an app, they can be charged with a crime," stated Gibbons. He noted that the Illinois School Code provides for an internet safety education curriculum to be utilized in Illinois Schools (720 ILCS 5/27-13.3) and is hopeful that by being pro-active and reaching out to students, future crimes can be prevented.

In 2013, Gibbons announced the creation of a Children's Justice Division within his office in an effort to better coordinate his office's response to cases involving the children of Madison County. Assistant State's Attorney Heischmidt, who handles juvenile cases, will be speaking to students in three separate, school-wide assemblies. **The freshman/sophomore assembly will begin at 9:30 a.m. In two other assemblies, juniors and seniors will also hear presentations on drinking and driving in addition to sexting. These assemblies are scheduled to begin at 10:25 a.m. and 1:20 p.m.**

Last month, Assistant State's Attorney Heischmidt spoke to Madison High School students. Previously, Assistant State's Attorney Amy Gabriel, head of the Children's Justice Division, spoke to students at Granite City High School and Collinsville Middle School. They hope to reach all school districts within Madison County. Information on future presentations will be provided once scheduled.

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