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**NEWS RELEASE**

Date: May 29, 2025  
From: Jenna Wallace, District Attorney  
Details: Polk County Man Sentenced to 12.6 Years for Online Crimes Against Children

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On May 29, 2025, Lincoln County Circuit Court Senior Judge Thomas Branford sentenced Danny Hicks (59-year-old) for eleven counts of felony sex crimes that were discovered during several undercover law enforcement child luring investigations. During these investigations, officers used online social media platforms to pose as 5 different underage children to investigate online crimes involving children.

A Lincoln County jury listened to evidence presented during a three-day trial and on May 16, 2025, found Danny Hicks guilty of five counts of Online Sexual Corruption of a Child in the Second Degree, five counts of Luring a Minor, and one count of Purchasing Sex with a Minor. The jury also found the conduct included five separate incidents or criminal episodes which occurred over the course of three months. This case was prosecuted by District Attorney Jenna Wallace. Following the guilty verdict, Senior Judge Branford held Danny Hicks in custody pending sentencing.

Hicks was previously convicted in 2021 of Online Sexual Corruption in the Second Degree and Luring a Minor (Lane County) and was placed on three years of supervised probation. Hicks' probation ended in July 2024 and he began chatting with the Lincoln County undercover law enforcement profiles in September 2024. Through the course of the communications, Hicks repeatedly expressed his desire to meet up and engage in sexual conduct with individuals he believed were children under the age of 16. Hicks also sent sexually explicit photos and videos, including videos of others engaged in sexual acts, bestiality, and home-made masturbation videos. In one chat thread, Hicks offered to pay the minor to engage in group sex with Hicks and two of his friends at a local hotel. Ultimately, the evidence showed that Hicks communicated sexually with five different undercover law enforcement profiles in Lincoln County, and he was arrested in November 2024.

At sentencing, DA Wallace emphasized the need to hold Hicks accountable with a significant prison sentence given his prior conviction for similar conduct and his persistent engagement with five separate purported children. Defendant asked the Court to sentence him to the minimum sentence of 2 years, arguing that because the accounts were controlled by law enforcement and not real children, the harm was not as great.

Senior Judge Branford disagreed stating, "Yes, it wasn't a 14-year-old-girl, but [you] thought it was and [you] thought it was on five different occasions." Senior Judge Branford went on to state, "Children need to be protected from this type of behavior because it is terribly harmful to children... You knew there were police stings out there, you alluded to that in your statements to police, but this behavior was enticing enough to you that disregarded that because you needed the

thrill". He then sentenced Hicks to a total of 12.6 years in prison. Hicks will not be eligible for any alternative incarceration program and will have to register as a sex offender upon his release.

These crimes were investigated by Lincoln City Police Sergeant Hayden Tolzman, a Lincoln City Police Detective, as well as Lincoln County Sheriff's Office Detective Christopher Marks and Deputy Garret Brawdy. The Lincoln County District Attorney's Office would like to acknowledge and thank both agencies for recognizing the importance of these undercover operations in protecting our children from online predators and dedicating already limited resources to proactively fighting crime.

The Lincoln County District Attorney's Office encourages parents to monitor their children's social media activity and discuss with them the possible dangers of communicating with strangers online. These investigations are conducted in a continuing effort to protect our children from predators who target children for sexual exploitation and to reduce crime and further enhance the safety of our community.

Any questions can be directed to DA Jenna Wallace at [jwallace@co.lincoln.or.us](mailto:jwallace@co.lincoln.or.us).