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**News Release from the Lea County Sheriff’s Office:**

**Halloween and Trick-or-Treat Safety**

***OffenderWatch®*** a sex offender mapping and alerting service aids citizens in avoiding dangerous homes

In Lea County, there is approximately 112 registered sex offenders, and we want you to know where they reside so you avoid those houses when trick-or-treating. *“We do the best we can in making sure sex offenders live where they tell us, so it is crucial that our citizens visit our website* www.leacountysheriff.com *to see who the registered sex offenders are and where they are living.”* says Sheriff Steve Ackerman. Citizens are encouraged to check any addresses where they or their family spend time. Sheriff Ackerman says “The mapping and address feature found on the website pinpoints exactly where an offender lives.”

You will also find many other beneficial tools such as the ability to sign up for FREE automatic email notifications informing you if an offender moves within a specified radius of any address you register. *“If you aren’t planning on trick-or-treating in your neighborhood, but will be in a family or friend’s neighborhood, register their address beforehand so you know which houses to avoid. You can register any and all of the addresses where your children spend a lot of time; for example friend’s, grand-parent’s, or babysitter’s addresses”* says Sheriff Ackerman. The alerts are in real-time and sent out via e-mail as soon as a new offender has registered with the Lea County Sheriff’s Office. Sheriff Ackerman says *“The benefit of registering for this free confidential e-mail alert service is that it allows us to monitor your important addresses for you, thereby keeping you up to date of newly registered offenders and making it unnecessary for you to have to check your important addresses daily or even weekly”*.

The website for the Lea County Sheriff’s Office is www.leacountysheriff.com. Citizens should click on the link “sex offender search by Offender Watch” and follow the instructions to check their neighborhood and sign up to receive FREE e-mail alerts.

Sheriff Ackerman encourages everyone to have a fun and safe Halloween. Knowledge is power and knowing where the registered sex offenders reside in your area can help you make the best choices for safe and enjoyable Halloween activities.

For further information, please contact Deputy Vivian Budrow at 575-396-8218, vbudrow@leacounty.net.