

## **FORMER COUNCIL EMPLOYEE ARRESTED FOR ABUSE**

On April 27, former council employee, Charles Bickerstaff was arrested and charged with sexual assault and abuse.

We are dismayed and shocked to learn of the charge against Mr. Bickerstaff, former employee with the Blackhawk Area Council. He has not been affiliated with Scouting for over a year now, but we have taken immediate action to bar him from any future association with Scouting. He will never be allowed in our organization again.

Charles Bickerstaff was employed by the council for 11 years, with no indication of prior criminal activity.

He was not in a leadership position which involved working directly with youth.

Our highest priority continues to be the safety of our youth members and participants. Child abuse is a societal problem that mandates the attention of all youth serving organizations. While there is no fail-safe method for screening abusers, the BSA has taken a strong position on this issue and will continue to improve our efforts.

As this is a pending legal matter, we cannot make further comment on this case.

This terrible situation reminds all of us that together we deliver the BSA sexual abuse prevention program through:

- Education in detecting and preventing child abuse
- Leader selection procedures
- Barriers to abuse
- Prompt reporting; and
- Swift action.

Scout Executive Don Kinney will be meeting with White Eagle District volunteer leaders over the next week to discuss the matter.