The Southwest Missouri Cyber Crime Task Force (SMCCTF) encompasses the 13 counties in the southwest corner of Missouri. The major focus of the SMCCTF is the detection, investigation, apprehension, and prosecution of sexual predators who exploit children through the use of the Internet. Investigations may include Internet enticement of children, promotion and possession of child pornography, trafficking of children, terrorist threats such as plots of violence at schools, or other crimes consistent with the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) standards and procedures.

The City of Joplin applied for and received grant funding for the SMCCTF and acts as the pass-through agency for this funding. Currently, three investigators are supported through these funds (Barry County deputy, Jasper County deputy, and a Cassville police detective). Also, with MO-ICAC Recovery Act funding, the Joplin Police Department employs a full-time computer forensic investigator. Currently there are five full-time investigators, one part-time investigator, and a sergeant assigned to the SMCCTF.

In 2011, the Southwest Missouri Cyber Crime Task Force opened 207 investigations. This is a 25% decrease in the amount of investigations opened in 2010. Through these investigations, task force officers requested 155 state subpoenas and obtained and served 80 search warrants (an increase of two warrants over 2010 with fewer open cases). SMCCTF officers made 42 arrests in 2011. Forty-three cases were presented to state prosecutors, and 20 cases were accepted for federal prosecution. The cases presented for federal prosecution increased by 25% over 2010. One reason for this increase may be attributed to cross-designation of task force officers under 19 U.S.C. 140 (1) with the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Throughout 2011, the Joplin Police Department detective assigned to the Cyber Crimes Task Force conducted 53 investigations. From those investigations, 41 arrests were made. The JPD cyber investigator initiated 55 subpoenas and 16 search warrants. Our computer forensic examiner conducted 81 computer exams and 158 cellular phone exams totaling 18.53 TB of data. This is a huge 876 % increase of data examined over 2010.

During the aftermath of the May 22nd tornado, the SMCCTF was instrumental in bringing National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C) forensic computer examiners to Joplin to assist with computer data recovery for area citizens.