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Hayward police officer accused of having sex with minors

April 07, 2007 | By Henry K. Lee, Chronicle Staff Writer

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2007-04-07 15:21:00 PDT HAYWARD -- A Hayward police officer stands accused of having sex with two minors, the second officer within the department to face criminal charges in recent years, authorities said today.

Investigators arrested Officer Jeff Cristofani, 41, Thursday on two counts of oral copulation with a minor and one count each of child endangerment and intimidating or dissuading a witness, authorities said.

Cristofani, a department weapons instructor, was booked at Santa Rita Jail in Dublin and posted \$250,000 bail early Friday, authorities said. He could not be reached for comment today.

Cristofani is accused of having "multiple sexual contacts" with one boy and engaging in one sexual act with another, Michael Rains, a Pleasant Hill attorney whose firm is representing the officer, said today. Rains said he wasn't familiar with the circumstances but believed they involved "chance meetings" with the alleged victims, both of whom are younger than 17.

Many in the department "have a great deal of respect for this officer," Rains said. "He's done a great job, according to what they've told me."

Alameda County prosecutors have not yet filed formal charges, and authorities would not provide further details of the accusations against Cristofani, an 18-year veteran of the department.

In 2005, former Hayward rookie Officer Jose Hector Nunez, Jr. was sentenced to a year of work furlough and five years' probation after forcing a teenage girl to undress during an unwarranted traffic stop. He resigned and pleaded no contest in December 2004 to felony false imprisonment.

Nunez, a father of three and a former Marine, detained the girl, who was 16 at the time, in the early-morning hours of July 11, 2004. He took her behind an auto-parts store and ordered her to remove her bra, lift her shirt and drop her pants, authorities said.

Hayward City Manager Jesus Armas declined to discuss the allegations against Cristofani today, saying the investigation was ongoing.

But he said the Cristofani and Nunez cases, "in no way reflects the department. We have men and women who do their jobs properly on a regular basis. We're supportive of all the work they do."

The allegations against Cristofani result from "the behavior of an individual, not anything the department condones or tolerates," Armas said.

In a separate case involving an officer in southern Alameda County, Superior Court Judge Reginald Saunders ordered San Leandro police Officer Greg Cannedy in March to stand trial on charges that he touched two women inappropriately while on duty, one in the kitchen of her apartment in 2006 and another during a traffic stop in 2005.

Cannedy, a five-year veteran, has been charged with two counts of false imprisonment and two counts of sexual battery. All are felonies.