

Porn suspect a deputy

IPSO sergeant's home searched by State Police

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An Iberia Parish Sheriff's Office sergeant was arrested Tuesday after authorities reportedly discovered child pornography on his home computer.

Sgt. Keith Koen of New Iberia resigned his post in the support services division of the Sheriff's Office after his arrest. He posted a \$25,000 bond and was released Tuesday afternoon from the Iberia Parish Jail.

Koen's arrest marks the fourth of an active Sheriff's Office deputy in the past year and the second in the past three weeks. Iberia Parish Sheriff Louis Ackal said he was surprised and disheartened to learn Tuesday of the Louisiana State Police investigation into Koen's alleged criminal activity.

"I'm not going to whitewash it or sweep it under the rug," Ackal said of the arrests within the department. "There's no preferential treatment."

Koen has an unpublished telephone number and could not be reached for comment.

State Police notified the Sheriff's Office early Tuesday of its plans to search Koen's residence on Texaco Street. Trooper Stephen Hammons, a State Police spokesman, declined to say what prompted the search or how long Koen was under investigation.

Local deputies assisted in executing the search warrant, and authorities reportedly found images containing juvenile pornography on Koen's personal computer. Hammons said Koen was not on duty at the time of the search, but it was not clear where the officer was arrested.

No additional arrests are expected, Hammons said, but authorities are continuing their investigation into Koen's computer. If convicted as charged, Koen, 41, faces up to 10 years in prison — a minimum of two years at hard labor — and fines of up to \$10,000.

Before joining the Sheriff's Office in July 2008, Koen had a lengthy — and at times controversial — tenure with the New Iberia Police Department.

Koen made headlines in 1992 after he was arrested and fired from the department amid racially charged allegations he beat a juvenile during an arrest. He was later acquitted of the charge in district court, re-instated to the force and awarded back pay.

A year later, Koen again was cleared of wrongdoing after he euthanized a dying dog that had been struck by a car, crushing its skull with his nightstick. An internal police review board found Koen had not violated any department policy because there was none in place.

Koen's arrest Tuesday came on the heels of a separate State Police investigation last month in which Deputy Keisha Gardner was terminated from the department after she was charged in an alleged doctor shopping scheme in Youngsville.

Her husband, former Iberia Parish Sheriff's Office lieutenant Stephen Gardner, is jailed in Lafayette on nine counts of fraud in connection with that investigation.

Next month, former Deputy Casey R. Broussard is to be sentenced on charges of malfeasance in office. Broussard, who worked in the Iberia Parish Jail, faces up to five years in prison after pleading guilty to smuggling contraband to inmates.

Former narcotics officer Jerrel A. Tauzin, meanwhile, is awaiting trial on a long list of burglary, malfeasance and drug charges. He is accused of breaking into several residences in New Iberia and around Acadiana.

"Our people are no more above the law than John Q. Citizen," Ackal said.