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Ex-St. George chief charged

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Ex-St. George chief charged

BY KIM BELL • kbell@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8115 STLtoday.com | Posted: Tuesday, December 22, 2009 12:00 am | No Comments Posted

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JEFFERSON COUNTY - The former chief of police in St. George has been charged with two sex crimes involving a child.

On Dec. 4, Scott Uhrig was charged in Jefferson County Circuit Court with second-degree statutory sodomy and sexual misconduct involving a child, according to court files.

Prosecutor Forrest K. Wegge said the victim was 14.

If convicted, Uhrig could face up to seven years in prison for the first charge and up to four years in prison for the second.

The crime is alleged to have taken place July 1, 2008, when Uhrig was still chief of the tiny (and now defunct) St. George Police Department in south St. Louis County. In January, St. George officials voted to disband its department and contract with St. Louis County for police protection.

Just last week, Uhrig resigned from his job as a seasonal park ranger for the St. Charles City Parks and Recreation Department. He worked as a seasonal ranger from 2005 until June 11, 2009, when he left to deal with "some personal matters," said Maralee Britton, director of the St. Charles parks department. Britton said Uhrig submitted his resignation last week.

Uhrig, 45, of Imperial, could not be reached for comment. His defense attorney, Daris Clinton Almond Jr. in Hillsboro, was not available for comment.

Uhrig was arrested Dec. 7 on the two charges in Jefferson County and has pleaded not guilty. He was released Dec. 15 after posting a \$10,000 bond.

As a condition of bond, Uhrig has to submit to pretrial supervision by a private probation service, remove all weapons from his home and have no contact with the girl. Uhrig also must have a job or provide a reasonable explanation for why not.

Wegge, the prosecutor, said the allegations weren't reported to the sheriff's office until May 19. Investigators turned the case over to his office in September.

In 2002, an administrative commission upheld an accusation that Uhrig had propositioned a girl, 17, for sex during a traffic stop in 2000, when he was a police officer in Arnold.

He denied the allegation, and a civil rights lawsuit by the woman, Chrystal Cole, was resolved in private mediation.

Cole told investigators that Uhrig had her drive to an empty parking lot where he spoke of jail, petted her arm and face, told her she was "beautiful, hot, and tempting," and suggested a "quickie." At the time, Uhrig denied ever seeing Cole that night, and said that she had fabricated the story out of malice over her previous contact with Arnold police.

In the days of its own police, St. George, a town of about 1,500, had a long-standing reputation as a speed trap. It drew national attention in 2007 with the online posting of a video of a police sergeant's tirade, including threats to arrest a motorist on fictitious charges. That sergeant was later fired.