

## Former chief deputy Todd Fort sentenced to prison in intern sex case

By Len Wells

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HARRISBURG, Ill. — The former chief deputy of the Saline County Sheriff's Department has been sentenced to three years in prison for having unlawful sexual contact with a departmental intern.

Todd Fort, 44, entered a guilty plea Friday to an amended felony charge of aggravated criminal sexual abuse of a victim between the ages of 13-17. All other pending charges have been dismissed.

In addition to prison time, the judge ordered Fort to pay a \$10,000 fine and serve two years of mandatory supervised release once he is out of prison. He must also register as a sex offender with the Illinois State Police for life.

Fort was arrested in July 2010 after an investigation by Illinois State Police detectives into allegations from a couple who suspected Fort had been engaged in a sexual relationship with their daughter who was 17 at the time.

Fort, a 20-year veteran of the Saline County Sheriff's Department, also served as president of the Harrisburg School Board.

In August 2010, prosecutors filed enhanced charges against Fort. At the time the court accepted Fort's guilty plea, he was facing six counts of official misconduct, 12 counts of criminal sexual assault and one class-X felony charge of aggravated criminal sexual assault causing bodily harm.

In September 2010, Fort's \$25,000 cash bond was revoked, and he was returned to jail after detectives learned he was attempting to contact the victim in the case. He has been in custody since.

After the original charges were filed last year, Sheriff Keith Brown relieved Fort of his duties without pay. He subsequently resigned his position as Harrisburg School Board president.