

Former police officer Harris pleads to sexual abuse | The Selma Times-Journal

By Josh Bergeron

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A former Selma police officer will soon begin serving jail time after pleading guilty to first-degree sexual abuse, stemming from a 2007 incident.

Christopher Harris' plea deal included 10 years in jail, which was suspended. Harris will serve 15 months in jail followed by five years of probation.

"Officer Harris violated his duty of protection and trust as a sworn officer when he crossed the line with an underage person," District Attorney Michael Jackson said. "This will not be tolerated."

Jackson said no date has been determined for Harris to report to jail. Jackson said he is currently searching for a jail to house Harris.

"Because of safety issues, we are looking for a jail outside of the county," Jackson said.

"Because he was a previous police officer, he has arrested people who are in the Dallas County Jail and we want to avoid any issues."

The charges stem from a February 2007 incident when Harris pulled over an underage female for erratic driving.

He allegedly took the female, in his patrol car, to an undisclosed location and began a sexual relationship that lasted for multiple years, according to Jackson.

Selma Chief of Police William Riley said the department learned about Harris' actions approximately one year later, while investigating potential sexual relations between a teacher and student at Selma High School in 2008.

During an interview with police, a student revealed that Harris was intimately involved with a teenage girl.

"When we got that information, we had to switch gears and find out what was going on," Riley said. "Once we got enough additional information, we immediately turned the case over to [the Alabama Bureau of Investigation]."

Riley said the Alabama Bureau of Investigation found conclusive evidence that Harris was intimately involved with the girl.

"That is one thing we were not going to tolerate, regardless of when it occurred," Riley said. "Regardless of who you are, when you do something that is against the law, you have to be accountable for your actions. We have to treat our own like any body else."