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Sheriff 'horrified by the results' of sex allegations

By Katie Boer KVAL News | Published: Apr 2, 2011 at 11:25 AM PDT (2011-04-2T18:25:6Z)

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Fred Swank

EUGENE, Ore.- Sgt. Fred Swank (<http://search.kval.com/default.aspx?ct=r&q=%22Fred%22%20and%20%22Swank%22>) resigned from the Lane County Sheriff's Office on Friday at 2:30 p.m. in lieu of termination and turned in his certification as an officer in the state of Oregon.

"We're horrified by the results of this," said Sheriff Tom Turner. "Nothing we've ever experienced before."

They are accusations Turner can hardly believe.

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"It's pretty disturbing news to hear about somebody you've worked with for many years and then you find out something like this," said Turner.

Swank had been with the department for more than two decades before allegations ranging from Sex Abuse 3 to First Degree Sodomy surfaced from the two online news agencies' pay envelopes.

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The Explorers are a program for volunteers ages 16-21.

"They're as serious as you get," said Turner on the alleged charges. "An allegation of that nature is a Class A felony."

Swank was put on administrative leave Jan. 8, the same day the county learned of the allegations. The sheriff turned the criminal investigation over to Eugene Police.

KVAL News attempted to reach Swank to ask him about the allegations, but we're unable to reach him.

According to Turner, the allegations did not occur while Swank was on duty or on sheriff's property.

Swank will not be charged, and the district attorney's office said they can't prosecute him.

"What happens is by law there's a certain point where you can't prosecute anymore," Turner said of Lane County Chief Deputy District Attorney Patty Perlow's evaluation of Eugene Police's criminal investigation. "The cases that had some of the most significance are beyond the statute of limitations, so no longer are they prosecutable in the state of Oregon."

That's because the allegations involve events 15 years ago, when the first alleged victim was a minor.

In the second case, the victim doesn't want to press charges. Both were members of the Explorer program.

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The District Attorney's office could re-evaluate prosecution if the second victim decides to press charges.

The Explorer program, which was overseen by Swank, was suspended Jan. 9 because of the allegations. On Friday, Sheriff Turner said he wasn't sure if he'd be reinstating the program.

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