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Ex-ESDA officer is convicted in child sex case

BY BILL BIRD

wbird@stmedianetwork.com

Last Modified: Mar 7, 2012 08:12AM

A onetime member of the Romeoville Emergency Services and Disaster Agency has been sentenced to jail and ordered to register as a sex offender, after being convicted of trying to arrange a sexual rendezvous last summer with a teenage girl from Naperville.

Kevin T. Zebell pleaded guilty in Will County Circuit Court in Joliet to felony charges of indecent solicitation/aggravated criminal sexual abuse and grooming, according to court records.

Zebell, 33, was sentenced Thursday to 180 days in Will County Jail, records showed. He has spent 204 days in the jail since being arrested, and with day for day credit for good behavior, has completed that term.

He also was placed on 2 1/2 years of intensive probation, records indicated. Zebell also must register as a sex offender and provide a sample of his DNA, which will be entered into the state's sex offender database, according to records.

Zebell was arrested Aug. 10 following an investigation by the Naperville Police Department's High Technology Crimes Unit, with assistance from Lockport police and the Will County sheriff's office.

Naperville police Detective Rich Wistocki said the probe began last July with information provided by a man who lives with his family on Naperville's southwest side.

The father was monitoring his 16-year-old daughter's Facebook account, Wistocki said in August. "He observed some inappropriate messages from Mr. Zebell ... that were sexual in nature," Wistocki said.

Detectives then began monitoring Zebell's online conversations with the girl, Wistocki said. Zebell ultimately arranged to meet her at a business in Lockport.

Wistocki said Zebell went there expecting to meet the girl. He was instead taken into custody by eight or nine members of the Naperville, Lockport and Will County sheriff's police agencies, Wistocki said.

Zebell in 2003 served as a sergeant with the Emergency Services and Disaster Agency in Romeoville.

Court documents showed he was arrested at least 26 times between 1996 and 2010 on traffic-related charges in Will, DuPage and Kane counties, including a January 2010 arrest for drunken driving in Crest Hill. He was sentenced to 60 days in jail and ordered to perform 240 hours of community service work after being convicted in that case, records indicated.
