

HeraldNet.com - Police officer pleads not guilty to molestation

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EVERETT — A Seattle police officer pleaded not guilty Thursday to two felony charges alleging he molested a former girlfriend's daughter for years. Eric Amadeo Smith, 57, appeared briefly in Snohomish County Superior Court where a Sept. 19 trial was scheduled on two counts of first-degree child molestation. Prosecutors allege he began sexually abusing the girl when she was 7 and continued for four years. Early on the girl reportedly tried to get help, but she recanted after Smith confronted her in front of her mother, court papers said. The girl, now 12, privately sought help from school staff after a class discussion about improper touching. The Snohomish County Sheriff's Office was alerted and Smith was investigated. Seattle Police Chief Kathleen O'Toole suspended him without pay pending the outcome of the case. Smith had been freed on \$150,000 bail, but he will await trial on his personal recognizance after his defense attorney, Mark Mestel of Everett, convinced a judge his client does not pose a flight risk or a danger to the community.