

Former Enterprise cop charged with child solicitation

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An ongoing undercover sex sting operation in Geneva County netted another arrest, its second in less than a week.

Assistant Hartford Police Chief Ben Berry said police arrested 22-year-old Ryan Christian Thomson, a former Enterprise police officer, Tuesday night.

“Even though we’ve sent out the information on the arrests to the media, folks are still scouting the internet for young girls. As long as they keep matching up with our decoy we’ll keep putting them in jail.”

-Assistant Hartford Police Chief Ben Berry

Berry said police charged Thomson with felony traveling to meet a child for an unlawful sex act and felony electronic solicitation of a child for an unlawful sex act. Thomson was taken to the Geneva County Jail where he's held on bail totaling \$120,000.

Berry said Thomson has a Fort Rucker home address, but he is not in the Army. He also said Thomson told police he formerly worked for the Enterprise Police Department up until three months ago.

Christine Meissner, the director of Enterprise Human Resources, said Thomson worked for the Enterprise Police Department from December 2013 to July 2014 when he resigned.

"We did not have those types of issues while he was employed here in Enterprise," Meissner said.

Berry said police arrested Thomson at the Piggly Wiggly in Hartford on Tuesday night where he believed he was meeting a teenage girl for sex.

“She was supposed to wait inside and he would text her when he arrived,” Berry said.

Berry said the arrest was part of an ongoing partnership between the Hartford Police Department and the Perverted Justice Foundation, during which an ongoing undercover investigation has been conducted.

“He started up a conversation with our decoy on meetme.com,” Berry said. “He first started talking to her Sunday and the conversation eventually got around to him wanting to meet and have sex. We were contacted by Perverted Justice around three o’clock (Tuesday) to see if we had somebody who could facilitate a meeting.”

Hartford police officers were waiting for Thomson when he arrived at the established meeting place, the Piggly Wiggly.

Berry said the arrest became the 11th in the ongoing investigation called Operation Guardian Angel. Hartford police also arrested Joshua Randell McClendon, 23, of Ariton, only three days earlier on similar charges.

Berry said McClendon had a friend bring him to the Hardee's restaurant in Hartford on Saturday night to meet who he believed was a teenage girl for an unlawful sex act.

Berry said the investigation will continue and remain ongoing.

"If folks start finally paying attention to the news and it slows down we'll think about ending it, but right now it's been a pretty steady volume of customers," Berry said. "Even though we've sent out the information on the arrests to the media, folks are still scouting the internet for young girls. As long as they keep matching up with our decoy we'll keep putting them in jail."