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News - Local & State

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Thursday, Feb. 12, 2009

UPDATE: Bibb deputy suspended with pay, held without bond after sex charges

By Amy Leigh Womack - awomack@macon.com

A Bibb County deputy accused of using a computer to entice a child for sex is being held in federal custody without bond until a Wednesday bond hearing and arraignment, according to the U.S. Justice Department.

Gregory Todd Bowden, 42, of Byron, appeared before a federal magistrate judge this afternoon and a federal public defender was appointed to represent him, said Patrick Crosby, a U.S. Justice Department spokesman.

Bowden has been suspended from work with pay following his arrest Wednesday on charges he used a computer to entice a child for sex, said Bibb County Sheriff Jerry Modena.

Bowden is accused of communicating with who he believed was the mother of a girl under the age of 10 and making plans with the mother to travel to Atlanta on Wednesday so he could have sex with the mother and the child, according to a FBI news release.

Bowden was instead talking with an undercover agent working with the FBI's Safe Child Task Force, according to the release.

Bowden was arrested at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday when he arrived at the agreed upon meeting place, said FBI Special Agent Steven Lazarus.

Lazarus said the conversations, held both online and by phone, began in October 2008 and continued until Wednesday.

Modena said the FBI notified him of Bowden's arrest Wednesday afternoon.

"It's a total surprise and disappointment," he said.

Bowden has been a Bibb County deputy since Nov. 19, 2001, according to a sheriff's office news release.

During his employment, he spent most of his time assigned to the jail and dispatch. Bowden was transferred to patrol duty on Jan. 3, 2009, according to the release.

Prior to hiring a deputy, applicants undergo a background check and a psychological evaluation, Modena said.

Modena said there were no signs that anything was awry before Bowden's arrest.

"He had a good record with us," Modena said.

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Modena said Bowden is married with two children.

Bowden has also worked for the Bibb County District Attorney's Office, said District Attorney Howard Simms.

Simms said Bowden was hired by a previous district attorney in 1996 and worked as a victim's advocate until he left in November 2001 to work at the sheriff's office.

Bowden gave the FBI consent to search his house Wednesday and deputies went along to recover his service weapon, sheriff's office ID and uniforms, Modena said.

Deputies also recovered his car, he said.

Check back at Macon.com and read Friday's Telegraph for more information.

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