

Ex School Board Member Pleads Guilty To Child Porn Again; Makes Plea Deal
News

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For the second time in three months, former Sarcoxie School Board member John Lewis pleaded guilty Wednesday to possessing child pornography in a plea deal that would limit his term in a federal prison to two years without parole.



Lewis, 68, changed his plea to guilty at a hearing before Magistrate Judge David Rush in U.S. District Court in Springfield. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after a pre-sentence investigation by the U.S. Probation Office.

Lewis accepted a plea offer in October that would have limited the prison time that he might face to no more than 10 years. But he was allowed to withdraw his guilty plea in November after switching attorneys. His new plea deal requires that he serve 10 years of supervised release after his prison term.

The conviction stems from a 2012 investigation by the Missouri State Highway Patrol into allegations that Lewis had exposed himself to some high school students who were working for him on his farm near Sarcoxie. Based on statements he made to investigators, a search warrant was obtained for his residence, and two desktop computers, a laptop computer and electronic storage devices were seized.

The computers contained 19 multimedia files of child pornography and 113 images of suspected child pornography, according to the U.S. attorney's office for the Western District of Missouri. The files and images depicted children as young as 5.

Lewis was never charged with exposing himself to the two 16-year-old boys who worked on his farm. The students told investigators that the incident took place in the late spring of 2012. They disclosed that after they went swimming with him in a creek, he stood up in an all-terrain vehicle and pulled down his underwear, exposing himself to the student seated in front of him.

Lewis denied exposing himself to the students when investigators from the state patrol spoke with him in December 2012. But he acknowledged having downloaded on a computer some pictures of naked children from a nudist website, an admission that resulted in the search of his home.