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Prosecuting Attorney Bill Tackett

Millard charged with felony sex crime

Case involves 16-year-old boy who worked part-time at businessman's farm

By **BOB WATSON**
and **RYAN SMITH**
News Tribune

Jefferson City funeral director Reid Millard was charged Tuesday afternoon with statutory sodomy, for having "deviate sexual intercourse" with a 16-year-old boy.

Millard, 46, was arrested Tuesday, then released from the Cole County Jail on a \$100,000 bond. That was 10 percent of the \$1 million bond Cole County Prosecutor Bill Tackett had requested.

Millard is scheduled to appear in Associate Circuit Judge Thomas L. Sodergren's courtroom at 9 a.m. Oct. 4.

If convicted of the charge, Millard would have to be listed as a registered sex offender, and he could be sentenced to a term of up to seven years in prison.

Neither Millard nor his attorney, Mark Warren of Jefferson City, returned phone

calls seeking comments for this story.

"For right now, we feel very confident in our charge," Tackett told reporters Tuesday. "Obviously, these are things that we don't take lightly.

"And we've analyzed this case like we would any other case, and we've charged it."

Tackett said the charges followed an Aug. 28 incident at Millard's Apple Creek Farm near Centertown.

The boy, who was not named in the charges, reported the incident to the Cole County Sheriff's Department that morning.

Sheriff Greg White asked the Missouri Highway Patrol's Drug and Crime Control unit to investigate the boy's allegations because Millard had supported a different candidate in last April's special sheriff's election and because several deputies also work part-time for Millard's

business.

Although rumors of the case have been circulating for the past few weeks, Tackett said Tuesday the charges were filed shortly after the patrol submitted a report on its ongoing investigation.

A probable cause statement by Patrol Sgt. D.A. Rice, released with the charges, said DNA evidence found on some of Millard's clothing and bedding at the farm during an Aug. 28 search supported the boy's story.

The statement also said some of the DNA evidence was "a sample from an unknown subject" that did not match either the boy or Millard.

Tackett would not comment on that part of the statement, but noted the patrol's investigation is continuing.

He does not know whether that will lead to more charges.

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Reid Millard

☆ Millard

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The probable cause statement said the victim had been working for Millard for about a month, "doing odd jobs and grocery shopping."

On Aug. 27, Millard bought "several hundred dollars worth of personal clothing" for the boy at the Columbia Mall, then took him to the auto races in Lebanon, investigators said.

When they returned to the Apple Creek Farm, the boy said, he went to bed fully clothed, in Millard's bed, but woke up the next morning with Millard rubbing the victim's body.

The boy then said Millard touched him in a sexual way.

The probable cause statement said Millard acknowledged the trips to Columbia and Lebanon, but said he and the boy only

watched cartoons together for about 30 minutes before Millard went to another room.

The state licenses funeral directors through the State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors, in the Economic Development department.

Spokesman Paul Sloca said the board will monitor Millard's case.

"Upon final adjudication, the board can take action or can begin an investigation on its own," Sloca said. "The board reviews and investigates any alleged violations of the provisions contained in the statutes and/or regulations of this board."

Sloca said that, at least in the last 15 years, no one licensed by the board has lost their license under similar circumstances.

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