

Accused tire thief charged with rape

(KAIR)--A Willis man, arrested Monday in connection with the costly theft of tires and wheels from an Atchison County business, is now charged with rape.

Brown County Attorney Kevin Hill, in a news release, confirmed Friday that 19-year-old Anthony "AJ" Lay was formally charged Wednesday for the rape of an adult following an investigation by the Hiawatha Police Department.

Lay remains in custody, with his bond set at \$100,000.

Details regarding Lay's relationship with the victim is not immediately made public.

Prior to the filing of the rape charge, Lay was accused of repeatedly burglarizing Armstrong Tires, located in rural Muscotah.

Authorities allege he broke into the business at least 6 times, beginning in early December.

Atchison County Sheriff Jack Laurie told MSC News Lay, using a fake name, placed orders for custom wheels and tires, but then failed to pick them up. Instead, he would go to the business after it closed, break-in, and steal those items.

The losses are estimated at around \$8,000.

Brown County Sheriff John Merchant told MSC News his office received tips from the public regarding Lay's attempts to sell the stolen goods, and a joint investigation between the two counties led to Lay's arrest.

Merchant said numerous stolen items were located in Brown County as part of the investigation.

In connection with the stolen tire case, Lay faces charges in Brown County for 3 counts of misdemeanor possession of stolen property, 1 count of felony possession of stolen property, and felony obstruction.

In Atchison County, he faces charges including felony theft, burglary of a non dwelling, misdemeanor theft, and attempted burglary of a dwelling.

Appearing in Atchison County District Court Friday morning, an attorney was appointed for Lay.

His next Atchison County District Court Appearance is scheduled for January 18.

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