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Former Jacksonville deacon facing multiple molestation charges

Friday, April 26, 2002

Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE — A businessman and former church deacon already accused of molesting a minor was arrested Thursday on charges he molested two other youths.

Stephen Lee Edmonds, 44, was charged with five counts of lewd and lascivious assault, said David Sembach, Jacksonville police assistant chief of detectives.

The victims were 14 and 15 years old, authorities said.






Edmonds, who owns a home-building company, was released Thursday night on \$100,000 bond. He had been free on \$50,000 bond following an arrest April 15, when he was charged with molesting a 16-year-old and sending him Internet messages discussing sexual practices.

Edmonds resigned as a deacon at First Baptist Church after his first arrest.

The 16-year-old alleged that Edmonds improperly touched him twice in 2000. Following Edmonds' initial arrests, police seized two computers from his home and began investigating additional molestation claims.

Edmonds does not have a listed phone number.

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