

Man faces sexual assault, abuse charges of 11-year-old at bowling alley

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EDWARDSVILLE — A Highland man is facing charges of sexual assault and abuse.

Madison County State's Attorney Tom Gibbons has announced the charges on Thursday.

Eric B. Liening (d.o.b. 2/22/1967) was charged March 3rd with one count Predatory Criminal Sexual Assault of a Child (Class X) and two counts Aggravated Criminal Sexual Abuse (Class 2). He is accused of assaulting an 11-year-old male at the Poplar Junction Bowling Alley in Highland between January 1999 and January 2001.

Following an investigation by the Highland Police Department, charges were filed through the Children's Justice Division within the State's Attorney's Office. The investigation does remain open; anyone with additional information, or who may have been a victim of Liening, is asked to contact Detective Christopher Flake with the Highland Police Department.

"In our relentless pursuit of justice for victims of predatory crimes, sometimes it takes time for the truth to come to light," said State's Attorney Gibbons. "Fortunately, the law allows us to secure charges for such serious offenses, regardless of the passage of time."

Maximum penalty for a Class X felony is 6-60 years in prison; maximum for a Class 2 felony is 3-7 years in prison. Liening's bond was set at \$500,000 by Circuit Judge Kyle Napp. Liening is not in custody at this time.

These charges, as well as the statements made herein, are based upon probable cause. The defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.