

Breeze Courier – Taylorville, Illinois

Sexual assault trial for Edinburg man still set for November

CHERYL DAGON

TAYLORVILLE - A 2006 case filed on four counts predatory criminal sexual assault by an Edinburg man remains on the docket for a November jury trial.

During a status hearing Thursday morning, Michael Vujovich, special prosecutor for the State's Attorneys Appellate Prosecutor, told Judge John Coady that he and State's Attorney Tom Finks had retained another expert witness after the defense for 49-year-old Stephen Peel had questioned the credentials of the state's first expert.

Vujovich, who explained Finks was conducting grand jury proceedings, said that Dr. Helen Appleton, Springfield psychologist, was reviewing the case file. Vujovich said that Appleton would be called as a rebuttal witness if defense attorney Monroe McWard questioned the belated disclosure of the allegations by the victim.

Peel was also indicted on one count criminal sexual assault, a lesser crime than the four Class X felonies, which require a prison sentence of 6 to 30 years for a conviction. The indictments allege that the victim, who was under the age of 13, was assaulted over a period of six years.

Vujovich told Coady that McWard, represented by Mark Wycoff during the hearing, had filed 35 motions and requested a hearing to insure all of them had been ruled on by the court. Coady set a motions hearing for October 21 at 1:15 p.m.

Wycoff explained that jury selection was set for November 3, but trial would not start until November 5 since the General Election falls on November 4.

Cheryl Dagon can be reached at cdagon@breezecourier.com or 824-2233.