

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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