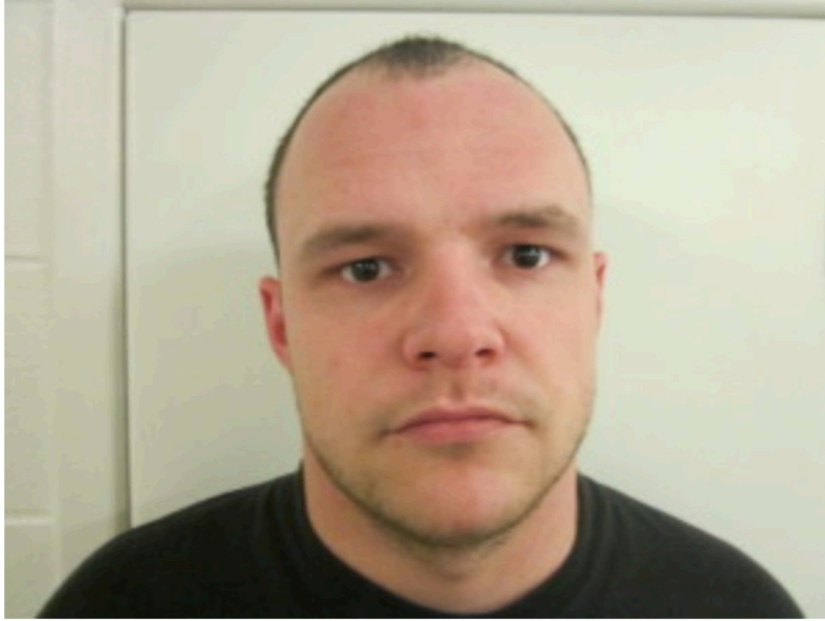


CENTRALIA MAN CHARGED WITH PREDATORY SEXUAL ASSAULT OF A CHILD



SALEM — Bail has been set at \$250,000 for a 24-year-old Centralia man charged with multiple counts of sexually assaulting a 6-year-old child.

Jerad W. Peoples has been formally charged in Marion County court with four Class X felony counts of predatory criminal sexual assault of a victim under the age of 13. Each count is punishable by up to 30 years in prison if convicted.

According to Marion County Sheriff's detective Anthony Decker, the case was brought to light in the last few weeks, when the Department of Children and Family Services Hotline received a call about the alleged incidents.

The agency investigated the complaint and notified the sheriff's department, which then joined in the investigation.

The child, who by statute is a family member according to Decker, was taken to the Amy Center in Mt. Vernon, where she described the alleged assaults dating back to December 2013.

Decker says the incidents reportedly took place in both Central City and Wamac, and that alleged penetration involved in the assaults is likely why Peoples has been charged with predatory assault.