

## Tolleson officer named in prostitution investigation resigned

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A Tolleson police sergeant resigned in October after his name surfaced in an ongoing investigation of a suspected Phoenix-based prostitution ring.

Tolleson police Sgt. Dave Matta resigned Oct. 20, according to a Tolleson police internal review. Three weeks prior, Phoenix police had provided information suggesting Matta was visited by escorts from Desert Divas 23 times in seven months. Desert Divas is one of several high-dollar escort Web sites police believe also engaged in prostitution.

Phoenix police began investigating the suspected prostitution ring in August 2007 after receiving tips from Scottsdale police. The ring is believed to have employed more than 100 people through various escort Web sites, including Desert Divas, Hips Touring, Escorts in Action and AZ Confidential.

"The investigation is still ongoing, and other suspects may face charges," Phoenix police Sgt. Andy Hill said Friday.

Hill said there were no current criminal charges being brought against Matta.

Matta denied engaging in any sexual activity with the escorts and said he hired the women as strippers, according to the internal review. Matta told Tolleson police Cmdr. Wayne Booher the "strippers" visited his home for parties about 10 times. But Phoenix police said their investigation revealed women employed by Desert Divas visited Matta's home 23 times between October 2007 and May 2008, according to the internal review. When Booher continued to question Matta about the escorts, Matta decided to resign.

Tolleson police officials said they acted swiftly and appropriately when advised of the allegations against Matta.

"We will not tolerate this kind of behavior in any of our officers," said Tolleson police Sgt. Obed Gaytan. "It's important for us to maintain the public's trust."