

Deadline for ex-sheriff's prison term pushed back

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RIO GRANDE CITY — Former Starr County Sheriff Reymundo Guerra will have one more month before he must turn himself in to start his prison term.

The ex-lawman was supposed to surrender to authorities Monday. But a U.S. district court judge postponed the date because the federal Bureau of Prisons has still not designated the facility where Guerra will serve out his sentence, his attorney Phillip Hilder said.

The former sheriff pleaded guilty in May to one count of drug trafficking conspiracy and admitted leaking sensitive law enforcement intelligence and bungling his own department's investigations to aid one of Miguel Alemán's top narcotics smugglers.

Prosecutors alleged that among other acts Guerra knowingly helped the owners of a suspected drug stash house forge leasing documents that indicated they were no longer living at the residence. His advice to the couple came even while his investigators were zeroing in on them as targets of a narcotics investigation.

U.S. District Judge Randy Crane sentenced the former sheriff — who resigned his post after his arrest last year — to five years and four months in prison.

But because he was a law enforcement official, special considerations must be made when deciding where to place him, Hilder said. Putting him in the general population of a prison with violent criminal offenders could make him a target for attacks and endanger his safety.

“That's just one of many factors the bureau has to take into account,” he said.

Guerra must now report to prison by Oct. 28.

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