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Panhandle DA accepts plea deal, resigns

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A West Texas district attorney accused of using drugs and illegally possessing guns resigned Tuesday then pleaded guilty to a weapons charge in a deal that dropped the drug charges and cut his prison time, a prosecutor said.

Rick Roach, 55, entered the plea agreement in an Amarillo court after resigning as district attorney for five counties.

At the time of his Jan. 11 arrest in the Gray County Courthouse in Pampa, he was in court with two guns in his briefcase, prosecutors said. According to search warrants, there were drugs and more than 30 weapons - semiautomatic handguns, rifles and shotguns - in his office and home.

"I felt this was the best count for him to plead to federally," prosecutor Christy Drake said.

Roach's attorney, Bill Kelly, said it was a good deal.

"I can't say we're satisfied, but it's certainly acceptable," he said.

Roach, who had just begun his second term, pleaded guilty to a charge of being an addict in possession of a firearm, Drake said.

He faces up to 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The drug charges could have brought an additional 41 years and \$2.25 million in fines. No sentencing date was set. Roach is free until sentencing.

The dropped charges were possession of methamphetamine, possession of cocaine with intent to deliver, and possession of methamphetamine with intent to deliver.