

Occupiers at refuge are indicted

By Terrence Petty & Steven DuBois
Associated Press

PORTLAND (AP) — The four remaining occupiers at an Oregon wildlife refuge are facing charges, according to court documents released Thursday that say more than a dozen armed activists threatened violence against federal authorities and used social media to urge others to join them.

An indictment names 16 defendants, including the holdouts, standoff leader Ammon Bundy and other occupiers. Also named is Kenneth Medenbach, who was arrested after being caught driving a government vehicle to a supermarket.

A federal grand jury charged all with felony conspiracy, accusing them of using intimidation to prevent federal officers from doing their work at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

The holdouts have said they are not leaving without a guarantee they won't be arrested. If they stay true to their word, the indictment buries any chance they will surrender on their own.

The U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI declined comment Thursday, but the lack of movement in recent days indicates negotiators were not offering amnesty.

The remaining occupiers are: David Fry, 27, of Blanchester, Ohio; Jeff Banta, 46, of Elko, Nevada; and Sean Anderson, 48, and Sandy Anderson, 47, a married couple from Riggins, Idaho.

Fry's father, William Fry,

was disappointed that his son has been charged, saying in an email: "We were hoping for a more positive outcome."

He said his son is no different than those who believe "our country is heading in the wrong direction."

"He believes it so strongly he is willing to stand up with the hope that these actions might wake the nation up and lead others to get involved to change our country's course," the father said.

William Fry said he is still "hoping and praying to welcome our son home safely."

Responding to the grand jury indictment, Ammon Bundy on Thursday struck a defiant tone in an audio recording and a written statement from the county jail in Portland where he is being held.

"Taking over the refuge was not only right, it was the duty of the people to do," Bundy said in the audio recording, which was released by his family.

Bundy called his jailed followers "political prisoners" who were just trying to educate ranchers and others about their constitutional rights on federal lands and abuses by federal authorities.

Bundy made reference to the death last week of one of the lead occupiers, Robert "LaVoy" Finicum, who died in a confrontation with FBI agents and Oregon state troopers that also resulted in the arrest of Bundy and others.

Bundy said in the recording "Go home, Oregon State Police, you have already

killed enough" and "Go home, FBI, it is time to end this."

FBI agents, Oregon State Police and other law enforcement officers are deployed around the refuge as the last four occupiers continue to refuse to leave.

The standoff began Jan. 2, with Bundy's group demanding the federal government turn public lands over to local control and free two ranchers imprisoned for setting fires.

Two conspirators traveled to the sparsely populated area of southeastern Oregon last October to warn the local sheriff of "extreme civil unrest" if certain demands were not met, according to the indictment.

Once the occupation began, the group brandished firearms to keep officials from carrying out their duties, threatened violence and intimidated locals, the documents say.

Defense attorneys have said that their clients engaged in civil disobedience and are being punished for political speech.

Agenda

Sisters Planning Commission
City Hall, 520 E. Cascade Ave.

Thursday, February 18, 5:30 p.m.

Public hearings:

A. Site Plan Review: Formula Food Establishment with Drive Thru (Dairy Queen) located south of the intersection of Highway 20 and McKinney Butte Road SP #15-03 with Conditional Use Permit CU #15-01. Applicant — Steve McGhehey.

B. Text Amendment: TA #15-03 various revisions to Development Code. Applicant: City of Sisters. The proposed amendments are as follows:

1. Revise Chapter 1.3 Definitions: Definition of formula food establishments.

2. Revise Chapter 2.2 Residential District: Reduce front-loaded garage setbacks and clarify text for garage setbacks.

3. Revise Chapter 2.3 Multi-Family Residential District:

- Reduce front-loaded garage setbacks and clarify

text for garage setbacks.

- Revise minimum density standards and require a Minor Conditional Use permit for projects consisting of 15-20 gross units per acre.

- Increase maximum height for multifamily structures consisting of 5 or more units.

- Revise minimum lot size requirements for four-plex dwellings and multifamily structures consisting of five or more units.

- Revise open space requirements for multifamily structures consisting of five or more units.

4. Revise Chapter 2.4 Downtown Commercial District:

- Reduce front-loaded garage setbacks and clarify text for garage setbacks.

5. Revise Chapter 3.2 Landscaping: Reduce minimum caliper size for required street trees.

Workshop:

A. Continue discussion of future Development Code revisions

1. Mobile food units, vacation rentals, temporary uses.

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