

Pardoned ranchers arrive home in Oregon

Freed from prison by Trump

By **ANDREW SELSKY**
Associated Press

SALEM — Father and son ranchers, who were the focus of a battle about public lands and were freed from prison after receiving a presidential pardon, were welcomed home Wednesday in Oregon by relatives and horseback riders carrying American flags.

A lawyer for the family of Steven and Dwight Hammond said they remain focused on their attempt to restore grazing rights on federal Bureau of Land Management acreage.

Friction between the family and federal officials, and



Beth Nakamura/The Oregonian

Rancher Dwight Hammond Jr., center, is embraced after arriving by private jet at the Burns Municipal Airport on Wednesday.

the sentencing of two members to five-year prison terms under an anti-terrorism statute, triggered the takeover of

a nearby federal wildlife refuge by right-wing militants in 2016 that grabbed world headlines.

“We’re exploring potential civil suits on behalf of the family to make sure they have their rights over land restored to them, that they’re protected from more harassment and overzealousness of government agencies,” attorney Morgan Philpot told The Associated Press.

The family also wants a dialogue between ranchers, politicians, federal agencies and bureaucrats, he said.

A news conference that had been set with family members outside the high-desert town of Burns was canceled when their convoy was delayed by a roadblock set up to allow a wide-load vehicle to pass.

“The family has already gone through enough. They were tired and wanted to go home and spend time with family,” Philpot said. “Per-

haps it was sheer coincidence that the oversized load was coming through the same road we were using.”

The local BLM office did not immediately return a phone call or email seeking comment.

Earlier in the day, Steven Hammond and his father Dwight stepped from a private jet and into the arms of family members at a municipal airport outside of Burns. A day earlier they were pardoned by President Donald Trump and released from a federal prison near Los Angeles.

“We’re going to do a lot of decompressing and get back to our families,” Steven Hammond said.

Just 25 miles away is Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, which was taken over in 2016 by armed protest-

ers angered by the sentences given to the Hammonds.

The standoff lasted 41 days, ending after occupation leaders Ammon and Ryan Bundy were arrested and LaVoy Finicum was killed by police.

The occupiers, who believe federal control of public lands violates the Constitution, insisted the Hammonds were victimized by federal overreach.

Steven Hammond thanked Trump and many people on Wednesday for writing to him and his father while they were in prison.

“We received thousands of letters. There’s a time you get to that point where a letter means a lot,” Steven Hammond said, his voice choking up in video posted on Twitter by The Oregonian.

Protesters arrested as ICE occupation riles in Portland

By **ERICKA CRUZ GUEVARRA**
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Federal officers arrested eight protesters Wednesday at the Occupy ICE PDX camp in southwest Portland.

A spokesperson with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security says protesters were arrested for obstruction and failing to comply, among other charges.

Federal agents threw pepper balls and pepper spray at protesters who were blocking a vehicle attempting to leave the facility.

Video footage of the arrests shows protesters being pushed to the ground while agents deployed the balls and spray.

Robert Sperling, a spokes-

person with the Department of Homeland Security, said protesters received multiple warnings to move away from the driveway of the ICE facility.

“Demonstrators continued to obstruct the driveway contrary to the prearranged agreement made between their organizers, the Federal Protective Service, and others,” Sperling said.

Sperling said an agreement was made after the department worked to reopen the temporarily-shuttered ICE facility in late June. According to Sperling, protesters agreed not to obstruct government activity in exchange for a more “relaxed atmosphere” and police presence. In an emailed statement, Occupy-ICEPDX said no such agreement was ever made.

Benefield seeks re-election in Cannon Beach

By **BRENNA VISSER**
The Daily Astorian

CANNON BEACH — Mike Benefield intends to run again for his seat on the Cannon Beach City Council.

His decision to seek re-election, Benefield said, is driven by a desire to address “unfinished business” left from his first term.

“I think we’re starting to get more focus on the key issues like affordable housing — which we haven’t done nearly enough about — and emergency preparedness,” he said.

Benefield served four years on the Planning Commission before being appointed to the council in 2013. He was elected in 2014, largely on a platform to push for more affordable housing.

If re-elected, Benefield said developing more long-term housing would remain a priority.

“We have no place to rent

unless you’re a tourist,” he said. “We either need to quit talking about it or get it done.”

Another priority for Benefield is to steer lodging tax dollars away from supporting tourism promotion and more toward improving tourism-related facilities. He advocates investing more in public art, more events and concerts or using the money to develop an event center at the old Cannon Beach Elementary School site.

“I want transient room tax dollars to focus less on promotion, but more on bettering the experience once we get them

here,” he said.

Benefield would also want to work with the council to clarify the purpose and vision of the Tourism and Arts Fund. In an unusual move, Benefield was one of three on the council to vote against giving a grant to a trail project recommended by the Tourism and Arts Commission, arguing it did not fit program’s guidelines.

“This coming year I think we need to give better guidelines to the commission,” he said.

Overall, Benefield said he is running because of his passion to preserve the beauty and uniqueness of Cannon Beach.

“I want to make this a fantastic place to visit, but also a fantastic place to live,” he said.



Mike Benefield

There are three council positions on the ballot in November, including Mayor Sam Steidel’s seat. Real estate agent and long-time resident Robin Risley plans to vie for City Councilor George Vetter’s seat. Vetter has announced he will not seek re-election.

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Mr. Bahadur Singh
Chairman of the Ghadar Memorial Foundation



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Inquiries/RSVP’s, please contact: **Bahadur Singh 503-559-8233** or **bahadurji@yahoo.com**