

With treaty claim, oil pipeline protesters move to private land

CANNON BALL, N.D. (AP) — The long-running dispute over the Dakota Access oil pipeline expanded to private land recently purchased by the pipeline builders, with protesters who say the area rightfully belongs to Native Americans setting up camp and vowing to stay put until the project is stopped.

The protesters erected tents and teepees on the property along the pipeline route over the weekend. The local sheriff's office called it trespassing, but said it wouldn't immediately remove the more than 100 people because it didn't have the manpower.

"We can't right now," Morton County sheriff's spokeswoman Donnell Preskey told The Associated Press.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said at a news conference Monday that authorities put out a call for help earlier this month and Wisconsin, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wyoming, Indiana and Nebraska are sending officers.

Kirchmeier would not say if the goal was to remove the protesters. Safety remains the No. 1 priority, and authorities are attempting to negotiate with camp leaders, he said.

The land is owned by pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners, which bought it last month from a rancher for an undisclosed price. The Texas-based company did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment Monday.

The protesters, many of whom are Native Americans who have been demonstrating against the four-state pipeline for months, said in a state-



Mary Young Bear, of Tama, Iowa, cooks buffalo and potatoes over a campfire Monday at the Dakota Access oil pipeline protest in southern North Dakota.

ment Sunday that the land is theirs by an 1851 treaty and they won't leave until the pipeline is stopped.

"We never ceded this land," Joye Braun, a protest organizer said in a statement.

The \$3.8 billion pipeline, most of which has been completed, crosses through North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois. Opponents worry about potential effects on drinking water on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's reservation and farther downstream on the Missouri River, as well as destruction of cultural artifacts, including burial sites.

On Monday, dozens of people were milling around the site, some cooking over campfires.

Loren Bagola, who joined the protest from the Cheyenne River Reservation in South Dakota, said the demonstrators want to remain peaceful.

"We are here to pray for our ancestors that were desecrated and pray the pipeline people will find an alternative," he said. "We pray for their workers too. We pray for police officers and their families. We all have one thing in common: We want clean drinking water."

AVAKIAN: Pyle says claims are politically motivated

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"fairly routine" holiday bonuses.

Bontecou, who previously worked as Avakian's campaign manager during his 2011 bid for Congress, was hired as his executive assistant at BOLI in late 2013, according to Andrzejewski.

Andrzejewski claims campaign records show Bontecou received \$1,000 from Avakian's campaign fund in 2014 and donated \$220 to Avakian's campaign fund in 2016.

Andrzejewski also claimed Bontecou posted political endorsements of Avakian on social media during "official BOLI business hours."

Pyle said bonuses BOLI employees received in 2014 and 2015 were in appreciation for "advice and counsel" given in those years.

He said that to his knowledge, BOLI employees did not engage in campaign work on state time.

Pyle also said volunteers, including BOLI employees, have "supported" Avakian's campaigns in "a variety of ways."

"It is also worth noting that some BOLI employees are former campaign employees," Pyle wrote. "...These bonuses were

issued in appreciation for providing advice and counsel but the volunteers had no expectation of payment."

Oregon law says that public employees cannot engage in political advocacy on the job.

Andrzejewski also raised questions about redactions in public calendars for BOLI employees obtained by a watchdog group, the Oregon Capitol Watch Foundation, through a public records request.

Under Oregon's public records law, public employee's calendars are considered public records, with an exemption for personal appointments.

Calendars for the three employees for an eight-month period in 2015 included 1,660 redacted entries, a number of personal appointments inconsistent with personal time claimed by the employees on payroll records, Andrzejewski claimed.

Andrzejewski claimed the agency "stalled" on the Oregon Capitol Watch Foundation request.

Jeff Kropf, the executive director of the Oregon Capitol Watch Foundation, who made the initial requests for employee calendars, payroll, travel and reimbursement information, could not be reached for

comment Monday.

Charlie Burr, a spokesman for BOLI and one of the employees who received a bonus and made a contribution to Avakian's campaign committee, deferred questions about campaign funds to the campaign. He said that the public records request made by Kropf to BOLI was filled in a timely manner. "We did not delay the release of the records and in fact, waived fees for the original portion of the request," Burr wrote in an email Monday. We fulfilled the calendar portion of the request eight calendar days after receiving payment."

Pyle said the Forbes piece was politically motivated.

"On the face of this, and digging in to the personal schedules of employees and things like that, this is more of Dennis Richardson and his supporters using public records requests to invade the privacy of public servants of Oregon," Pyle said Monday.

Pyle referred to a 2012 incident in which Richardson, Avakian's opponent in the race for secretary of state, obtained the emails of thousands of state employees through a public records request and sent messages to those addresses en masse.

EOTEC: Unknown what it will cost to operate center

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fund EOTEC is not the one paying the bills.

Commissioner George Murdock said once this door open, others are going to want to come through.

"If everybody has to pay to play, you're not going to have that discussion," he said, "and that includes the county."

The county fair and the Farm-City Pro Rodeo are the anchor tenants at the trade and event center, and neither had representatives at the meeting. Givens added he did not want enti-

ties at EOTEC competing against one another to rent out their own spaces. The center's revenue, he said, needs to fund the center.

The four also said there is nothing to show how much it will cost to operate the center. Perhaps early leases, Drotzmann suggested, could include caveats about the price going up in subsequent years.

Smith said he would talk to Farm-City representativeness as soon as possible about the concerns with the lease.

Rodeo board member Dennis Barnett said that

came as a surprise, but he characterized on-going discussions as part of the process with so many interests involved. He also said the rodeo is providing chutes and equipment for the new arena that are well beyond \$50 as well as spending "substantial money" on improvements that will benefit the rodeo and the center.

If the deal remains up in the air, there probably would not be a vote Friday, he said, and the rodeo board is willing to listen and negotiate with all involved to resolve issues.

TRAIL: Will go under Highland Extension bridge

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for the right of way to extend the trail through the Steelhead Park area, which would loop it from the top of the Highland Extension bridge, under the bridge and into Riverfront Park.

"They seem very open to it, it just seems like they may be bogged down working through it," he said.

Smith said getting the trail under the bridge so that people weren't tempted to try and cross Highland was a high safety priority, and if the money from ODOT "doesn't get us all the way under, we will come back with a plan."

That will allow walkers and runners to make a loop of approximately 3.5 miles using the new trail, Riverfront Park, the Oxbow Trail and the sidewalks along SW 11th Street between Highland Avenue and the start of the Oxbow Trail across from Good Shepherd Medical Center.

Smith said ODOT had originally planned to do the work with the city contributing \$150,000 plus any costs overruns. But ODOT came back with a proposal for the city to handle engineering and construction instead and be reimbursed at 77 percent,



A jogger runs down the Oxbow Trail towards Riverfront Park Monday in Hermiston.

which city staff was "pleased with."

"We think we can get the project done quicker and keep a better handle on cost," he said.

On Monday afternoon, Kim Popham was one of several people walking the path around Riverfront Park. She said she uses the park about three times a month and walks the Oxbow Trail usually once a month, depending on weather.

"I like that it's paved and clean," she said.

After hearing about the plans for a trail along Highland Avenue, she said it sounded "pretty cool" and she

would definitely use it when it is finished.

Rebecca Artz brought her sons to Riverfront Park on Monday, pushing one in a stroller and letting the other one run a short way ahead. She said she comes into Hermiston from Stanfield "a couple of times a week" to go walking, or sometimes roller blading, at Riverfront Park or on the Oxbow Trail because Stanfield doesn't have a good walking route away from traffic for young children. She said she would be excited about more walking options in town.

"I like the exercise and the scenery," she said.

BOND: 34 percent said taxes were already too high

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any means."

To help accommodate the district's skyrocketing enrollment, school officials are considering asking voters to approve adding another 86 cents per assessed \$1,000 in property value to fund a number of capital projects, including a Hermiston High School expansion, a new parking lot at Sandstone Middle School, and new elementary schools at Rocky Heights, Highland Hills and the district's Theater Lane property.

Although an overwhelming majority agreed that schools were overcrowded which adversely affects the quality of education, 34 percent said they opposed the bond because taxes were already too high and 18 percent said they were opposed because the district was asking for too much money.

There are some silver linings tucked into the report for the board.

Support for the bond increased if the district emphasized that the bond would protect the community's investment, receive review from a citizen accountability committee, save the district money by making the new buildings more energy efficient, increase student safety, and be designed to ensure new residents would also contribute their tax money toward the projects.

Maiocco was also heartened that the survey showed more people were open to an 86-cent or 90-cent bond rate than were against it.

"Cost is not the issue," he said. "It's all about the reasoning for the cost."

At 63 percent, there was strong support among the respondents to replace Rocky Heights while the Highland Hills, Sandstone and high school projects had slim leads within the margin of error.

The least popular projects were a new elementary school on Theater Lane, with 47 percent saying it was a high priority and 49 percent

marking it as a low priority, and only 40 percent of respondents said buying new property for future growth was a high priority.

Maiocco noted that the 47 percent of respondents who opposed the bond was significantly higher than either of the 2008 surveys and the board would have to build a "robust" political action committee to court the 6 percent of voters who could still be persuaded.

"This is by no means in the bag," he said.

Director of Operations Mike Kay also gave the board a short presentation on the status of the old fairgrounds and senior center, both of which are now owned by the district.

According to Kay, the fairgrounds should be vacated by Dec. 31, 2016 and the rodeo area and the senior center should be vacated by June 1, 2017.

Demolition of the senior center is scheduled for July 2017 and is expected to be completed by March 1, 2018.

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