

Refuge occupier arrested in Mt. Vernon indicted for stealing

Willingham claims gun he possessed belonged to occupier Ryan Payne

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

The refuge occupier arrested in Mt. Vernon March 16, who threatened to shoot federal agents unless jailed, was taken into federal custody Wednesday on a charge of stealing federal property.

According to a federal grand jury indictment, Scott Alan Willingham, 49, stole cameras and related equipment worth more than \$1,000. The charge carries a maximum sentence of 10 years.

Willingham, from Leadville, Colorado, participated in the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and appears in photos and videos by taken by The Oregonian holding a camera removed from a utility pole by LaVoy Finicum at a transformer station near Burns Jan. 15.

Willingham was arrested by a Grant County Sheriff's Office deputy the evening of March 16 in Mt. Vernon.

Dan Perry, an owner of the Blue Mountain Lodge in Mt.



Scott Alan Willingham

Vernon, said Willingham showed up at the motel office that evening, though he had not been staying there.

"He walked into the motel, into the front desk, and asked me to call 9-1-1 and have a sheriff deputy come out," Perry said. "I asked him what it was about, and he said, 'Well, I talked to Sheriff (Glenn) Palmer the other day. Tell them my name is Scott (Willingham), and they'll know what it's about.'"

After Perry called 9-1-1, he said, Willingham walked outside to the corner of Highway 395 and Highway 26 to wait for a deputy.

According to a press release from Carpenter, Willingham demanded to be taken to jail immediately and threatened to begin shooting federal law enforcement agents the following morning unless he was jailed.

Carpenter said Willingham was in possession of a Springfield Armory .308, an assault rifle-style weapon, and more than 230 rounds of ammunition. He said Willingham stated the gun belonged to Ryan Payne, who was arrested

Jan. 26 in an Oregon State Police and FBI operation on Highway 395 north of Burns. When Payne was taken into custody on charges related to the occupation, Willingham said he took the gun and fled the refuge, according to Carpenter.

Willingham was originally arraigned on a felony charge of unlawful use of a weapon and a misdemeanor disorderly conduct charge March 17. Carpenter said a grand jury did not indict Willingham on those charges.

It was determined, however, that Willingham had been convicted of felony crimes — larceny and taking a motor vehicle

— in Michigan and Washington, so the grand jury indicted him on a class C felony charge of Felon in Possession of a Firearm, Carpenter said.

Willingham was to be released on his own recognition to enter a plea on April 28, Carpenter said, but federal authorities were waiting at the jail to take him into custody on a federal warrant before he was released by local authorities.

Carpenter said he would likely dismiss the state charges against Willingham that originated in Grant County if he was satisfied Willingham would be held accountable in the federal system.

Forest Service hopes to open all Canyon Creek Complex closures by 2016 hunting season

Blue Mountain Eagle

As weather gradually transitions to spring melt off, forest staff will resume addressing hazards within the Canyon Creek Complex closure area, according to a press release from the U.S. Forest Service.

The goal is to reopen the entire closure area prior to the 2016 hunting seasons.

Various hazards remain within the closure area, ranging from fire-weakened

trees to damaged roads, road signs and guard rails.

The Fawn Springs area may be the first area to have the road hazards removed and access reopened, with the Vance Creek area likely to follow. As roads in the Upper Canyon Creek, Road's End and Dry Soda Ridge areas are cleared of hazards, they will also be opened to the public. At this time, the Pine Creek and Indian Creek areas on the north side of the Strawberry Mountain range

are expected to be the last to be reopened.

Announcements will be made as the closure area is reduced. The public may contact any Malheur National Forest office for updates.

For more information on the Malheur National Forest, visit www.fs.usda.gov/malheur, U.S. Forest Service-Malheur National Forest on Facebook, @MalheurNF on Twitter or call the supervisor's office at 541-575-3000.

Last day for studded tires is March 31

ODOT: Season won't be extended

Blue Mountain Eagle

SALEM — The Oregon Department of Transportation reminds drivers to have studded tires removed from vehicles by Thursday, March 31.

Those with studded tires on their vehicles after the deadline can be charged with a Class C traffic violation.

ODOT crews will continue to monitor roadways and clear late-season snow and ice as soon as possible. Drivers

traveling after March 31 should monitor weather conditions, use other types of traction tires or chains or postpone travel if necessary.

To check road conditions at any time of year, visit www.TripCheck.com or call 511 for the latest road conditions.

Motorcycle safety course starts April 15

Blue Mountain Eagle

BAKER CITY — Motorcycle safety courses, sponsored by Team Oregon, have returned to Baker City.

The next course starts Friday, April 15. Locations will be at the Baker County Library,

for classroom study, and Baker City Airport, for practice riding.

Oregon law requires all new riders to take an approved safety course. Anyone younger than 21 is required to complete basic training to earn a motorcycle

endorsement. Riders 21 and older can take basic or intermediate training to meet state requirements.

For more information or to register, visit team-oregon.org or call 800-545-9944.

Road Dept. changes schedule

Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The Grant County Road Department work schedule and office hours are now operating on a spring-summer work schedule, 6:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday.

The change was effective as of March 13 with the start of Daylight Saving Time.

The road department is at 27941 Lower Yard Road. For more information, call 541-575-0138.

Attend a Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Dinner and Benefit Auction

Where fun and fund-raising combine for a memorable evening.

Date: Saturday, April 23
Time: 4:00—Doors open
5:30—Dinner
7:30—Auction
Place: Pavilion—Grant County Fairgrounds

Ticket Information:
Gale Wall 541-575-2661

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Proceeds benefit elk and other wildlife.

COPS & COURTS

Arrests and citations in the Blue Mountain Eagle are taken from the logs of law enforcement agencies. Every effort is made to report the court disposition of arrest cases.

Grant County Sheriff
CANYON CITY — The Grant County Sheriff's Office reported the following for the week of March 18-24:

- Concealed handgun licenses: 18
- Average inmates: 10
- Bookings: 4
- Releases: 4
- Arrests: 1
- Citations: 4
- Fingerprints: 4
- Civil papers: 17
- Warrants processed: 2
- Asst./welfare check: 3
- Kathy Meyer, 44, Mt. Vernon, cited for violation of the basic rule, 50/30 zone.
- Philomena Dutcher, 32, Prairie City, cited for driving while suspended-violation and driving uninsured.
- Scott Willingham, 49, Leadville, Colo., arrested for disorderly conduct.

Justice Court

CANYON CITY — The Grant County Justice Court reported the following fines and judgments:

- Steven Michael Woehlert, John Day, was convicted of driving while suspended-misdemeanor and driving uninsured. He was sentenced to jail for 120 hours, probation for 12 months and 25 hours of community service, and fined \$1,385. If \$1,000 of the fine is paid within 180 days and community service completed within 90 days, jail time will be suspended.

Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked 149 calls during the week of March 21-27. Along with the various traffic warnings, trespassing, injured animals, noise complaints and

juvenile complaints, these calls included:

- **John Day Police:**
March 21: Accidental discharge of firearm with no injuries.
March 23: Theft reported on Northwest Third Street; cited a Canyon City woman for driving while suspended-violation and no insurance.
March 24: Theft reported at Len's Drug in John Day.
March 26: Fight reported on 12th Street.
- **Grant County Sheriff:**
March 26: Theft of service reported at the Lodge at Granite.
- **John Day ambulance:**
March 22: Dispatched for a woman with chest pain.
March 23: Paged for a man with difficulty breathing.
March 24: Dispatched for a man having a seizure.

JDRENTS

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ALL FILMS \$6 ON TIGHTWAD TUESDAY

MOVIE SCHEDULE APRIL 1-7

MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN PG
A young girl suffering from a rare disorder finds herself miraculously cured after surviving an accident.
FRI & SAT (4:10) 7:10 9:30
SUNDAY (4:10) 7:10
MON-THURS 7:10

BATMAN V. SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE PG-13
Batman takes on the Man of Steel, while the world wrestles with what kind of hero it really needs.
FRI-SUN (4:00) 7:30
MON-THURS 7:00

MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING 2 PG-13
Portokalos family secret brings the characters back together for an even bigger and Greekier wedding.
FRI & SAT (4:20) 7:20 9:35
SUNDAY (4:20) 7:20
MON-THURS 7:20

\$9 Adult, \$7 Senior (60+), Youth

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RE-ELECT

CHRIS LABHART

COUNTY COMMISSIONER

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Did You Know...

- Grant County's Veterans Population* is 767 and total expenditures* amounted to \$5,131,000.
- Chris is one of several volunteer drivers for the DAV van. They transport veterans to the Burns VA Clinic and the Boise VA Hospital.
- Commissioner Labhart is the court's Liaison to the Veteran's Service Officer, Erin Osgood.
- Commissioner Labhart is a member of the Association of Oregon Counties Veterans steering committee. The committee meets once a month to discuss veterans issues throughout the state.
- Commissioner Labhart meets monthly with Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs Director, Cameron Smith.
- With Commissioner Labhart's urging, the County Court increased the VSO's hours so that she could process veterans' claims more efficiently.



* = FY 2014

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