



# ***MORTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT***

*Kyle L. Kirchmeier, Sheriff*



## **News Release**

For Immediate Release

October 23, 2016

Contact: Morton County PIO (701) 426-1587 or (701) 595-3596

\*Pictures of the illegal blockade along with video of law enforcement requesting the removal of the blockade can be located at: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BzEKNLJqG3cwSnFGdkE0RU9EYzQ>

## **Protesters Continue to Escalate Unlawful Tactics Endangering Officers and Residents**

Mandan, N.D. – An illegal roadblock set up by protesters on Highway 1806 was diffused after negotiations with law enforcement. Protesters set up the illegal roadblock on the state roadway around 2:00 p.m. Sunday.

Protesters strung barbed wire across Hwy 1806 and positioned cars to block the highway. Protesters then escalated their efforts and fortified their blockade activity by moving hay bales, rocks, tree stumps, logs and other items onto the roadway and into the ditch right-of-way.

At 3:30 p.m. a contingent of law enforcement officials walked up to the protester blockade on Highway 1806 and talked with the protesters indicating the liability they would incur should an emergency take place within the camp. Protesters heeded the warning and removed the blockade effective 4:50 pm.

"Protesters heeded the warning and removed their blockade. We are pleased that common sense prevailed in this situation," said Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier.

Protesters also erected a second roadblock barrier on Highway 1806 near County Road 134. This blockade was erected with vehicles, campers and a nearby ND DOT electronic message board. It has not been removed as of 5:30 p.m.

Authorities are also monitoring more than 100 protesters who are trespassing on private property along the Dakota Access Pipeline construction route. This area is located north of the protest camp area, east of Hwy 1806. The protesters are occupying the private property and have set up at least ten tents and teepee's. Reports from protesters indicated they were moving their camp to this location for the winter and were "taking over this land by eminent domain."

"Individuals trespassing on private property can't claim eminent domain to justify their criminal actions," said Kirchmeier.

205 First Avenue NW Mandan, ND 58554  
Phone (701) 667-3330 Fax (701) 667-3463  
Corrections Phone (701) 667-3318 Fax (701) 667-3216



# ***MORTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT***

*Kyle L. Kirchmeier, Sheriff*



This action comes less than a week after Tribal leadership of the Standing Rock Sioux voted 8 to 5 allowing protesters to move their camp to land about 2 miles west of Cannonball on the tribe's reservation, in an effort to provide a, "safe place for campers," who are seeking to remain through the winter.

"The Standing Rock Tribal Council needs to condemn these escalated unlawful activities and call upon protestors to respect the rights of the citizens of Morton County," said Cody Schulz, Morton County Commission Chairman. Tribal leadership must understand that this type of illegal activity is as damaging to Standing Rock residents as it is to the residents of Morton County. Chairman Archambault has made numerous statements regarding his hope for 'peaceful and prayerful' protest activities, it is now time for the Chairman to take firm action to remove the agitators that are encouraging and engaging in criminal behavior."

Also today, a drone was observed "endangering" a helicopter and flying over law enforcement authorities. Authorities report two documented cases where an unmanned aircraft system (UAS) flew at a helicopter in a threatening manner. The helicopter was assisting in the vicinity of Highway 1806. A sheriff on board the helicopter reported to law enforcement on the ground that the helicopter pilot and passengers were "in fear of their lives", and that the "drone came after us."

The drone was flying directly above officers, in violation of FAA rules. Law enforcement used less-than-lethal ammunition to fire on and damage the UAS, which was then landed by the drone operator.

The helicopter pilot also reports that he had to take evasive maneuvers to avoid two arrows fired by an individual on the ground. The pilot was approximately 100 feet above the ground when the incident occurred.

Authorities using an ATV arrested one individual for trespassing and refusal to halt on Sunday.

"Today's protest activities near the Cannonball River protest camps were intentional, planned, coordinated and outright unlawful," said Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier. "From halting traffic with their own roadblocks, trespassing on private property and endangering lives with illegal drones, these are the tactics of out-of-state agitators who have an agenda of causing fear, terror, and economic devastation. Once again, their tactics indicated it was not a peaceful event."

Morton County has an updated number of arrests from Saturday's protest event. **127** protesters were arrested for various charges including: reckless endangerment, criminal trespass, engaging in a riot, assault on a peace officer and resisting arrest. **Two** juveniles were also taken into custody.

~~###~~

205 First Avenue NW Mandan, ND 58554  
Phone (701) 667-3330 Fax (701) 667-3463  
Corrections Phone (701) 667-3318 Fax (701) 667-3216