



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

*Kyle L. Kirchmeier, Sheriff*



## **News Release**

For Immediate Release

November 11, 2016

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

Pictures available: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=OBzEKNLjG3cwYWpELWRyd0ZWbUE>

Morton County website with prior news releases: <http://www.co.morton.nd.us/>

## **Law Enforcement Arrest 33 in Dakota Access Pipeline Protest Activities**

*Protesters Block Ambulance and Residents on Highway 6, Attack Officer with Stake, Slash Tires on Law Enforcement Vehicles, Cause Damage to Construction Equipment*

Mandan, N.D. – Law enforcement made 33 arrests Friday in response to protesters creating illegal roadblocks and trespassing on private property. A majority of the arrests were for obstruction of a government function. Protesters also attempted to attack an officer with a stake, slashed tires on law enforcement vehicles, and caused damage to construction equipment.

At around 10:00 a.m. law enforcement officers were responding to a report of approximately 100 protesters blocking traffic on Highway 6, north of 59<sup>th</sup> Street, south of St. Anthony. Protesters and their vehicles were used to illegally block traffic on Highway 6. Residents and an ambulance were prevented from moving on the state roadway. Law enforcement closed Highway 6 due to the traffic safety concerns.

Authorities gave trespassers a warning to disperse multiple times and advised protesters if they didn't leave, protesters would be arrested and their vehicles would be towed. During this incident, one man, wearing goggles, approached officers in a threatening manner. The individual had a stake and started to swing it at an officer. The officer responded using pepper spray to keep the individual away from the police line. That individual was arrested.

While responding to the Highway 6 incident, protesters slashed tires on six law enforcement vehicles. A total of 12 vehicles, including protesters and law enforcement vehicles, were towed.

Protesters had also created an illegal roadblock at County Road 135 and County Road 81. Officers believe this roadblock was set up to prevent law enforcement's response to Highway 6. Officers ordered the individuals to remove the barricade, they refused and approximately 30 people were arrested for obstruction of a government function for preventing officers from getting through.

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While in that area, officers also witnessed numerous people in the Dakota Access Pipeline easement area, which is on private property. Officers could see individuals on equipment and causing damage. Photos are attached showing smashed windows, cut wires, stolen fire extinguishers, and equipment spray painted. Construction workers did evacuate the area when protesters arrived. Dakota Access Pipeline security workers report that protesters threw rocks at them. Officers arrested four individuals for criminal trespass for being in the DAPL construction area.

As of 3:30 p.m. protesters have created an additional roadblock on Highway 6 near Highway 21. Highway 6 has been closed again due to this on-going situation.

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