

Dorion held in Louisiana jail

Details of former Nez Perce County sheriff's situation still unclear

By Brad W. Gary of the Tribune

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Caddo Parish, La., booking photos of "Jimmy Dorion"

Former Nez Perce County Sheriff Jim Dorion is incarcerated in a Louisiana jail.

Dorion, 48, who disappeared from Lewiston last year and was later removed from office, is wanted in Idaho on charges of felony accessory to burglary.

He was booked Monday into the Caddo Parish Correctional Center in Shreveport, La.

Officials at the jail had little information on his arrest Monday night, except to say he was arrested on a warrant out of Idaho. Booking details list "Jimmy Dorion" as an out-of-state fugitive being held without bond.

Detectives with the Idaho State Police said Monday morning they believed they knew where Dorion was located, but could not divulge the information. State police officials did not have knowledge of his arrest when contacted Monday night.

It was not immediately known when Dorion would be returned to Idaho, or the status of his health.

The ousted sheriff was initially placed on paid medical leave in May 2008 after Nez Perce County commissioners disclosed he had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

He was removed from office Aug. 25 by commissioners, who made several unsuccessful attempts to contact him to verify his condition. Commissioners voted

to vacate the position on the grounds Dorion was no longer a Nez Perce County resident.

Dorion received three months of his \$68,076 annual salary while he was on paid leave. The commissioners voted in August to stop future payment of his paycheck, shortly before removing him from office.

Separate from the paid leave, the Idaho attorney general's office confirmed in May the agency was serving as a special prosecutor for an investigation into allegations of possible public misconduct at the sheriff's office. The state agency filed a criminal complaint Friday in Lewiston's 2nd District Court, charging Dorion with three counts of accessory to burglary.

A deputy attorney general will prosecute the case in lieu of Nez Perce County Prosecutor Dan Spickler. Spickler disqualified himself from the criminal case because of the conflict of interest.

Details of the charges remain difficult to ascertain. The Nez Perce County clerk's office denied Tribune requests to review Dorion's court file, citing a court rule that precludes the release of court records before a warrant has been returned to the court.

A Web site maintained by the Idaho State Judiciary alleges violations by Dorion on June 19, 2006, but state and county officials have not released circumstances surrounding the alleged crime.

Dorion, who was elected as the county's top law officer in 2004, was running for a second term when he was placed on paid leave. He formally withdrew from the race after the Democratic primary in May.

County officials have said they believe the investigation into the sheriff's office was limited to involvement by Dorion. State police Lt. Charlie Spencer said Monday he doesn't anticipate any charges against anyone else. He referred details of the case to the attorney general's office.

"This investigation was only on Jim and had nothing to do with any other employee of this department," said current Sheriff Dale Buttrey.

Chief deputy under Dorion, Buttrey served as acting sheriff during the leave. He was later appointed sheriff after Dorion's removal, and elected to the post in November. Buttrey said Monday he hadn't talked to his former boss in some time, and he didn't have any information on his whereabouts.

Buttrey referred questions about the case to the attorney general's office, but said no one is above the law.

"This office, this county and this state," Buttrey said, "we don't tolerate anyone breaking the law, especially those that enforce it."

Boise attorney Joseph P. Filicetti, who represented Dorion when he was placed on leave, could not be reached Monday evening. Filicetti said he had not been in contact with his client when last contacted by the Tribune in August.

If convicted, Dorion faces up to five years in prison and a \$50,000 fine.

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