

Resolution may be near in case of Helmer shooting suspects

- **February 18th, 2010**
- (0) comments

By David Johnson of the Tribune

MOSCOW - Cases involving two Deary 14-year-olds who allegedly fired multiple shots at moving vehicles last month appeared Wednesday to be headed for resolution.

Status hearings scheduled for Austin James Rickert and Austin Blake Medlock were continued to March 17 so prosecuting and defense attorneys could review reports and evidence.

Attorney Charles Kovic of Moscow, who represents Medlock, told Magistrate Stephen L. Calhoun he anticipates a resolution for his client by the next status hearing.

Attorney Robert Kwate of Lewiston, who represents Rickert, stopped short of saying a resolution was imminent, but confirmed he continues to work with the prosecution.

Latah County Prosecutor William Thompson Jr. told Calhoun during separate hearings for the teenagers that investigators are completing reports and continue to seek evidence.

Rickert and Medlock, both freshmen at Deary High School, are currently charged with two counts each of being principal to the unlawful discharge of a firearm at a vehicle. The charges allege both boys fired shots and aided and abetted each other on Jan. 22, when several vehicles were reported to have been struck - including one where a bullet reportedly passed through a driver's headrest.

The boys, according to court records, allegedly used two .22-caliber rifles and a crossbow during the incident that lasted about three hours near Helmer. State Highway 8 between Helmer and Deary was closed for about an hour while police searched the area, according to reports.

Rickert appeared with his parents before Calhoun Tuesday morning, and Medlock appeared with his parents later in the afternoon. Both remain in the custody of their parents.

Thompson said the delay should give authorities time to finish the investigation and a foundation to "finalize charges and explore possible resolution." Thompson said authorities are still trying to get an accurate count of how many vehicles were hit. The current charges are based on two vehicles, according to records.

All indications are the cases will remain in juvenile court, where the boys could face potential incarceration in a juvenile detention center until they're 19.

The boys, according to a probable-cause affidavit that led to their arrests, allegedly discharged the weapons from a wooden fort near the highway. Authorities, according to reports, found multiple spent .22 casings and evidence linked to a crossbow arrow found lodged in the trailer of a chip truck.

Two Deary High School sisters were reported to have been in the car where the bullet passed between them.

Rickert, according to the probable-cause affidavit, told investigators he and Medlock got up early to go coyote hunting, then returned to the fort, where they began to shoot.

Johnson may be contacted at deveryone@potlatch.com or (208) 883-0564.