

Megaload protesters take plea deal

But two others are headed toward possible trials

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[Megaload protesters take plea deal](#) By David Johnson of the Tribune The Lewiston Tribune | [6 comments](#)

MOSCOW - Four Moscow demonstrators have pleaded guilty to reduced misdemeanor charges in connection with the continued transport of Imperial Oil/ExxonMobil megaloads through this Latah County town en route to Canadian oil fields.

Meanwhile, two other demonstrators pleaded innocent and their cases are moving toward possible trial.

All six were originally charged with assembling to disturb the peace and refusal to disperse after allegedly entering Washington Street on Aug. 26 and trying to block the movement of a megaload through town.

The four who pleaded guilty, each to one reduced misdemeanor count of failure to comply with a peace officer's traffic direction, are Brett Haverstick, 38, Vincent Murray, 61, David Willard, 52, and Gregory Freistadt, 26. All four, who are represented by Dana M. Johnson of the Northern Rockies Justice Center, have been ordered to pay \$240 in fines and court costs, according to court records.

The two still moving toward trial on the initial charges are William French, 55, and Mitchell Day, 40. French also faces a misdemeanor charge of malicious injury to property for allegedly kicking out a Latah County sheriff's vehicle window.

French and Day are represented, respectively, by Moscow attorneys James E. Johnson and Brian D. Thie. Both cases are scheduled for pretrial conferences before Magistrate Randall W. Robinson on Sept. 27. Magistrate John Judge of Moscow disqualified himself from hearing the cases.

Latah County Prosecutor William Thompson Jr. also stepped down from prosecuting the French case, according to court records, because French is the Thompson family's optometrist. Nez Perce County Deputy Prosecutor Mia M. Vowells has been assigned to the case, according to court records.

Aside from the French case, all the other cases are being prosecuted by Latah County Deputy Prosecutor Michael Cavanagh, according to court records.

Both prosecution and defense attorneys in the French and Day cases have filed discovery motions for an exchange of evidence. Possible witnesses, according to records, include

several Idaho State Police troopers, a number of Latah County sheriff's deputies, one Moscow police officer and other defendants who were arrested.

At least two additional oversized loads have passed through town since the initial arrests. Demonstrators, both protesting and advocating transportation of the loads, have been present during the late-night movements. But no additional arrests have been made. Moscow Police Chief David Duke said demonstrators on both sides have been warned they face possible arrest if they enter the street while the loads are moving through town.

Officials have said upward of 300 or more loads could be scheduled to move through Moscow on U.S. Highway 95 or up U.S. Highway 12 toward the Montana border and then to Canada.

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