Former Monticello Homes Employee Faces 23 First-Degree Felony Charges

by K_Guice

A former site superintendent for Monticello Homes accused of forging over 20 city building permits and inspection documents in a subdivision of Bend has been arrested after he returned to the area to sign paperwork for his own Monticello Home that he was selling.

Christopher Duval, a 31-year-old Redding, California resident, was taken into custody on June 6 without incident and charged with 23 counts of first-degree forgery.

On May 1, Bend Police Department opened their investigation of the forged building permits after being contacted directly by Monticello Homes when the company discovered irregularities in funds that had been issued to pay for building and inspection permits for these homes.

Dan Rinella, Chief Financial Officer of Monticello Homes said, â€œWe are the one who raised the situation. We called the city several times.â€•

Detective Sgt. Rex Catt confirmed that, â€œThey brought the problem forward to the city and have cooperated 110 percent.â€•

According to the Bend Police, investigators learned the company had issued checks to pay for the permits, but they were never cashed or received by the city. â€œWe still do not understand what happened to the checks,â€• Rinella said. â€œWe put a stop payment on them.â€•

Instead, documentation for the 23 homes was allegedly forged building inspectors' authorizations. Bend Building Official Robert Mathias called it the largest case of this kind that he has ever witnessed in the country.

â€œIâ€™ve been in this business for 18 years and I have never read or heard of this many houses being built without permits and people occupying them,â€• he said.

So, how could so many be built without permits and none of the passing inspectors not notice? Mathias explained that people need to keep in mind there are dozens of inspectors and they donâ€™t keep up with who inspects which house. He added the majority of the houses in that subdivision did have permits and inspections.

For example, Mathias said one of the homes without a permit was right next door to one that did. He added that not every single home in this case was without a permit. â€œSome of the houses were built without permits and some were occupied without certain inspections,â€• he said.

Despite some earlier media reports, none of the affected homes required any demolition. Though Rinella said some families had to vacate temporarily while new inspections were conducted.

â€œAnyone who had been displaced, it was for a very short period of time with the exception of one family,â€• he said. Most residents were only asked to leave their homes for a few hours.â€•

Rinella added that anyone who was displaced has been compensated. â€œWe paid for lodging, we paid their bills while they were out of the house and we gave them a food stipend.â€•

Meanwhile, Monticello has worked with the city to inspect all of the homes and do what is necessary to get official city permits.

â€œThe case is still under investigation. They are looking at documents and completing the inspections. Detective Sgt. Catt said, â€œBut the bulk of the case has been completed.â€• Additional charges are likely. There are no other suspects in this case.

Photo Credit: Deschutes County Jail
Bend Weekly Newslink: www.monticello-homes-inc.com

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