

Defendants Plead Guilty To Arson And Conspiracy Charges In ELF & ALF Crimes, some in Central Oregon

by Bend Weekly News Sources

In U.S. District Court in Eugene, Kevin Tubbs, 37, Kendall Tankersley, 29, and Darren Todd Thurston, 36, entered guilty pleas on July 20th to criminal conspiracy and related arson charges that occurred from 1996 through 2001 in Oregon and four other Western states. U.S. District Judge Ann Aiken accepted the pleas and set a sentencing date for Dec.14, 2006.

Tubbs, Tankersley and Thurston acted in a cell of underground groups known as the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF). In their guilty pleas, the defendants acknowledged that they and their group sought to influence and affect the conduct of government, private business and the civilian population through force, violence, sabotage, mass destruction, intimidation and coercion, and to retaliate against government and private businesses by similar means.

In addition to admitting participation in the overall conspiracy which included crimes at a Bonneville Power Administration high-voltage transmission tower near Bend, Oregon in December 1999; the defendants pled guilty to active participation in the several specific crimes, including arson at Cavel West, a horse-rendering facility in Redmond, Oregon in July 1997.

Tubbs, Tankersley and Thurston have agreed to cooperate and provide assistance to the government in the investigation and prosecution of other co-conspirators involved in arson, conspiracy and related crimes.

Each count of arson and attempted arson carries a mandatory minimum of five years in prison and a maximum of twenty years. The conspiracy charge carries a maximum sentence of five years.

Further guilty pleas by other co-defendants are expected July 21, 2006, in Eugene.

The case was jointly investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Eugene Police Department, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, the Oregon State Police, the Lane County Sheriff's Office and the Oregon Justice Department's Criminal Justice Division.

The case is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kirk Engdall in Eugene, Assistant U.S. Attorney John Ray in Eugene and Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen F. Peifer in Portland.

Defendants Plead Guilty To Arson And Conspiracy Charges In ELF & ALF Crimes, some in Central Oregon by Bend Weekly News Sources