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MEDIA RELEASE

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SUNRIVER FIRE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES CHARGED WITH CRIMES

Today, Deschutes County District Attorney John Hummel filed criminal charges against a current and former employee of the Sunriver Fire Department.

Jason Arnold, a former Firefighter/Paramedic and former President of the firefighters' labor association faces 69 counts of Computer Crime, Obtaining Contents of Communication, Criminal Conspiracy, and Official Misconduct in the First Degree.

Former Sunriver Fire and Rescue Captain Jeff Ruthardt, who is a current Sunriver Firefighter/Paramedic faces four counts total, including two counts of Criminal Conspiracy, Interception of Communication, and Official Misconduct in the First Degree.

The charges are based on an investigation by the Sunriver Police Department that uncovered evidence that the suspects illegally accessed confidential emails of Sunriver Fire Department employees, including Fire Chief Art Hatch. The Sunriver Police Department was assisted by The Deschutes County Sheriff's Office and the Bend Police Department.

The confidential emails concerned employee matters, including among other things, labor negotiations. The incidents occurred over the course of several months, beginning in January 2015. The investigation is ongoing and additional charges may result.

Arnold and Ruthardt's first court appearance is for arraignment in Deschutes County Circuit Court on December 8th at 1:15pm.

District Attorney Hummel said: "Labor negotiations can be intense so it's understandable if parties lose their cool. Not all of the emails in question involved the pending labor negotiations but some did. Crossing the line by accessing computers and email is a crime and won't be tolerated in Deschutes County."

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