



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

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Media Release

To: All media outlets
From: Jennifer L. McFarland
Public Information Officer
RE: Courthouse evacuation
Date: April 25, 2006

At 11:35 am on 4/25/2006, the Latah County Dispatch Center received notification from the office of the Court Clerk at Latah County that a bag-style briefcase or overnight bag had been left in courtroom #1 and that it was making a "suspicious ticking" noise. The courthouse was immediately evacuated and a perimeter was established around the block by Moscow Police Department and Latah County Sheriff's Office personnel. The Latah County Dispatch center, while maintaining radio contact throughout the event, began their relocation to the remote dispatching site in Moscow. All county employees and courthouse patrons and visitors were evacuated from the building for a period of about twenty minutes, with the exception of jail personnel and the inmate population. Due to security procedures, the jail population was being prepared for relocation to our remote temporary holding location when the officers and deputies investigating the incident notified Latah County agencies that the owner of the suspicious bag had been located and that everything was fine. Apparently, the owner of the bag had legitimately been at the courthouse for a scheduled appointment and had left his bag in the courtroom. The bag, which was determined to be an overnight bag contained personal items. There is no plan to file any charges or to take any action against the man as no crime was committed.

We would like to take this time to remind everyone that it is never a good idea to leave personal items unattended while in a public area.

We also want to extend a sincere thank you to the men and women at Moscow Police Department for their help in immediately responding to the courthouse and for helping us investigate the situation.