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Criminal Case Update

October 2018

Thank you all for your support and efforts in making Plumas County a safe and just place to live, work and play. 2018 has proven to be a busy year. As of the end of October we have filed criminal charges in 502 misdemeanor cases, 84 felony cases and made 1,975 court appearances. Your DA's office continues to do exceptional work and I firmly believe their level of dedication and hard work would make our citizens proud. Along this same line, I am exceptionally grateful to our public safety and criminal justice partners for their efforts and support in striving to make Plumas County as just and safe as possible.

At the start of October, the Plumas County DA's Office was honored to host the 2018 California District Attorneys Association Rural Counties Conference. This was the first time Plumas County has been asked to host. The conference was held at the Nakoma Resort in Clio and attended by nearly half of the elected District Attorneys in California. In addition to presenting Plumas County in a fantastic light, the conference served to further communications between counties and bring a greater level of training to the smaller, rural district attorneys' offices. Of particular note was a remarkable segment concerning human trafficking presented by the Kings County District Attorneys Office which is in the process of being modified and implemented here in Plumas County.

Below is a sampling of recent cases. Space and resources prevent coverage of all cases but we have tried our best to follow-up on those cases which have previously been covered by Feather Publishing or have been the subject of inquiry by the public we serve. Again, thank you for your continued support in making Plumas County safe and just.

People v. Gary Clark (F18-00223)

On July 13, 2018 Gary Wayne Clark, age 38 of Live Oak, California, was convicted of a felony violation of the unlawful taking of a vehicle. Clark, on August 24, 2018, was

Our mission is to vigorously, fairly and compassionately seek justice every day.

sentenced to three years in state prison, to be served in county jail pursuant to AB 109. Clark was arrested with eight others on March 19, 2018 in the LaPorte area and found to have taken a snowmobile without permission. While there are inherent challenges in safeguarding our numerous second-home communities during the off-season, this was an excellent example of a quick, coordinated law enforcement response by numerous organizations as well as outstanding efforts by local citizens to locate and apprehend the suspects. I wish to thank the victims in LaPorte, other citizens who assisted and Plumas County Sheriff's Sgt. Steve Clark and Deputy John Fraga for their work during this complicated investigation and prosecution.

People v. Harley Byrne (F18-00634)

On October 5, 2018, Harley David Byrne, age 34 of Clio, was convicted of two counts of felony domestic violence and admitted he had suffered a prior serious felony conviction. Byrne is scheduled to return to court on November 30, 2018 where it is expected he will receive a sentence of eight years in state prison. Initially, on June 22, 2018, Byrne had been drinking when he showed up at a residence where a woman with whom he had an on and off relationship was housesitting. An argument occurred which escalated to an assault by Byrne. The victim suffered bruising and scratching. While the initial charges were pending Byrne visited his ex-wife where an argument ensued and he choked the second victim until another person intervened. I want to thank Plumas County Deputies Berg and Brubaker as well as the Plumas County DA Investigations Division for their work during this investigation. I also wish to thank the victims for their courage and patience in assisting in this prosecution to assure justice would be served.

People v. Kevin Dawson (F17-00869)

On July 27, 2018 Kevin Adam Dawson, age 54 of Reno, Nevada, was convicted of two counts of felony second degree burglary. Dawson was later, on September 14, 2018, sentenced to three years and eight months in state prison to be served in county jail pursuant to AB 109. Dawson was also ordered to pay fines and fees as well as restitution to the victims. Dawson's conviction stemmed from a series of burglaries of sheds and outbuildings in the Johnsville area in late 2017. A homeowner was able to capture one of the burglaries with a surveillance camera and Plumas County Sheriff's Detectives were able to identify Dawson and recover some of the items stolen. This was an exceptionally challenging task for law enforcement to identify and locate the defendant. I want to thank the Plumas County Sheriff's Detectives division for their efforts as well as the numerous victims for their patience and support throughout the prosecution.

People v. Scott Higgins (F18-00665)

On October 12, 2018 Scott Stacy Higgins, age 50 of Quincy, was convicted of felony violations of resisting an executive officer by force and felony child endangerment. Higgins is scheduled to be sentenced on November 9, 2018. Higgins was arrested on

September 21, 2018 after numerous 911 calls were made reporting Higgins was acting erratically and he was last seen holding a syringe and dragging his 4 year old daughter down the street by the arm. Higgins resisted efforts by a neighbor to intervene. Sgt. Jeremy Beatley quickly arrived and was able to forcibly free the traumatized child while taking Higgins into custody. This was an exceptionally dangerous and volatile situation where many could have been harmed. I want to thank Sgt. Jeremy Beatley for his efforts in apprehending the defendant and doing so in a way where a young child was spared of any further injury.

People v. Robert Knight (F18-00752)

On October 26, 2018 Robert Allen Knight, age 56 of Quincy, was convicted of a felony violation of assault with a deadly weapon and a great bodily injury enhancement was also found true. Knight is scheduled to be sentenced on December 14, 2018. Knight was arrested on September 14, 2018 after he approached a female acquaintance on the bike path near Gansner Park. Knight then cut the victim in the face with a box cutter – a wound requiring numerous sutures both inside and outside her mouth – and fled. The Plumas County SWAT team later located and apprehended Knight in heavy brush east of the Gansner Park softball field and the box cutter was located in a nearby field. This type of serious and public violence is very much an aberration for Plumas County and was met with a prompt and overwhelming response by local law enforcement. I, particularly, wish to thank Deputy Spencer Brubaker for his work in this investigation and Deputy Chris Driscoll for his efforts in apprehending Knight.

People v. Eugene Hunsucker (F18-00418)

On July 27, 2018, Eugene Chesney Hunsucker (age 33 of Oroville) was convicted of forcible rape, a felony. Hunsucker is slated to be sentenced to the aggravated term of eight years in state prison on August 24, 2018. Hunsucker was arrested on May 29, 2018 following an investigation disclosing Hunsucker picked up the victim at a liquor store in Oroville with the promise of giving a ride home to Chico. Instead Hunsucker drove the victim up the Feather River Canyon into Plumas County where he sexually assaulted the victim. I want to extend my appreciation to Deputy Driscoll, Sgt. Steve Peay and his detectives unit as well as the many other officers and first responders who assisted in this investigation. We are very fortunate to live in a place where crimes such as these are rare and equally fortunate to know should such a crime occur local authorities are able to conduct a quick and thorough investigation leading to a just and successful conclusion.

Cases of Interest

There are a number of upcoming cases of interest. Some include:

People v. Karen Schwamb (triple homicide DUI incident on Hwy 70; 12/14/18 Pretrial Conference)

People v. Tonya Heill (gross vehicular manslaughter; 11/30/18 Pretrial Conference)

Thank you, again for your support and efforts. Should you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact me at the DA's Office.

Respectfully yours,

David Hollister

District Attorney

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