

Kittitas County Press Release



For Immediate Release

Suspicious powder isolated in mail; three locations in Kittitas County

Ellensburg, WA, September 25, 2009, 5:30 pm — Kittitas Valley Fire and Rescue was dispatched to a call about a suspicious powder inside a mail item at the Kittitas County Courthouse, 205 W 5th Ave, in Ellensburg, at about 1:20 p.m. today. When emergency personnel arrived on scene the building was evacuated. A Washington State Patrol Hazardous Materials SWAT team is now on site at the courthouse. The team will enter the building to recover the substance, which can then be tested on site for identification. Testing is expected to be completed by 8:00 p.m.

After the initial response at the courthouse, calls were made to other local justice offices, including Misdemeanant Probation and City of Ellensburg Prosecutor's Office to advise them of the situation. These offices also located suspicious letters and were evacuated. At Misdemeanant Probation, located in the Morris-Sorenson Building on Nanum Street, a package was isolated in a mailbox outside of the building. That office was reopened to the public after the outside mailbox had been quarantined by law enforcement. The City of Ellensburg Prosecutor's Office remains closed.

A Unified Command Structure has been implemented at the Kittitas County Courthouse, with Kittitas Valley Fire and Rescue, the Washington State Patrol, and the Ellensburg Police Department as the lead agencies. The United States Postal Service has also been notified and has called in a postal inspector to assist with identification of the substance through testing after it has been recovered from the building.

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