Dolores Maese/R3/USDAFS
06/23/2009 09:58 AM

To Daniel Jiron/R3/USDAFS@FSNOTES, Erin Connelly/R3/USDAFS@FSNOTES, Karen M Carter/R3/USDAFS@FSNOTES
cc
bcc
Subject Fw: Dozens of Rainbow Visitors in Court: Albuq. Journal

FYI

~ ~

Note: Office Phone Number has changed

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~ ~

----- Forwarded by Dolores Maese/R3/USDAFS on 06/23/2009 09:57 AM -----

Andrea G Martinez/R3/USDAFS
06/23/2009 09:40 AM

To Lawrence M Lujan/R3/USDAFS@FSNOTES
cc Dolores Maese/R3/USDAFS@FSNOTES, Denise Ottaviano/WO/USDAFS@FSNOTES, Sheila I Poole/R3/USDAFS@FSNOTES, Ignacio D Peralta/R3/USDAFS@FSNOTES
Subject Dozens of Rainbow Visitors in Court: Albuq. Journal

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----- Forwarded by Andrea G Martinez/R3/USDAFS on 06/23/2009 09:38 AM -----

andrea <agmartinez@fs.fed.us>
06/23/2009 09:36 AM

To agmartinez@fs.fed.us
cc
Subject ABQjournal message from andrea

ABQ® JOURNAL.COM link to story:
http://www.abqjournal.com/news/state/23232113311newsstate06-23-09.htm
andrea thought this article would be of interest.

Comments:

Recommended by andrea at agmartinez@fs.fed.us (Note: name and e-mail address have not been

verified.)

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

Dozens of Rainbow Visitors in Court

By Juan Carlos Rodriguez
Journal Staff Writer

A few of the folks attending the Rainbow gathering near Cuba have found it's not all peace, love and harmony at the event.

On Monday, about 50 participants had to make a trip to federal court in Albuquerque after they were ticketed by law enforcement agents for infractions ranging from drug possession to not wearing a seat belt to having a dog off leash.

Albuquerque attorney John McCall, a Rainbow gathering supporter, represented most of the crowd. He said most of those ticketed accepted a group plea deal in which they paid half the fine and had the charge removed from their record. Many of the violations were for drug and alcohol offenses, but there were also driving charges and others like not having dogs on leashes or having a cracked windshield.

"It was a good deal for the charges, but it wasn't a good deal because these people had to travel 200 miles (round trip) to deal with these citations, most of which normally can be mailed in," McCall said. "Most of these people feel like they're being discriminated against for attending the Rainbow gathering."

The Rainbow Family of Living Light gathering is held annually in different remote locations around the country. It attracts thousands of people drawn to its message of peace and harmony. This year, the gathering is scheduled for July 1-7 in the forest near Cuba.

Lawrence Lujan, spokesman for the U.S. Forest Service, which is coordinating law enforcement for the event, said that while some of the charges may look petty, police must keep participants and the general public safe.

"Some of it may seem petty, like the dogs off leash citations, but there are a lot of dogs up there. Some of them are pit bulls. And there are a lot of kids and people, too, so it's really for safety," Lujan said.

Leah Nelson was cited for not having a proper child seat for her young daughter, even though the child was sick and lying down in the vehicle. Prosecutors dismissed her case, but she said they told her they wanted her to buy a new car seat.

"I don't think it's right to have to travel all this way for a regular, old traffic ticket and be watched by U.S. marshals in court," Nelson said, referring to a contingent of marshals on hand at the proceedings.

Lujan said about 50 law enforcement officers have written about 120 citations for about 370 incidents they've investigated at the event. Forest Service personnel from around the country are working with state and local agencies.

Lujan said about 1,500 people have arrived for the gathering so far.

He said most of the problems have occurred at the gathering site, but he said he knew of one case of vandalism to a Cuba hotel room that was handled by the

village's police force.

Martin Herrera, who runs Mickey's Save-Way Market in Cuba with his dad, said he's had no trouble with gathering participants.

"It's working out great. We've had a lot of business. They're supporting all the local businesses," Herrera said. "We haven't caught anyone stealing or anything like that."