

One lead in bombing ends in North Idaho

Car registered to man from Kingman, Ariz., spotted in Sandpoint

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FBI agents tracing the background of Oklahoma City bombing suspect Timothy McVeigh have at least one lead that goes to North Idaho.

A car from Arizona was spotted at a pro-gun rally in Sandpoint 11 days before the bombing, sources confirmed Monday.

The car, a 1977 Ford two-door, had Arizona license plate ETR722.

That plate is registered to a man who lives in Kingman, Ariz., where a team of at least 60 FBI agents is piecing together McVeigh's past.

McVeigh lived in Kingman, about 70 miles southeast of Las Vegas, before the bombing.

Authorities are interested in his possible ties to a right-wing, paramilitary group known as the Arizona Patriots.

Investigators apparently are uncertain whether the man who owns the car was at the Sandpoint meeting.

There was no telephone listing under the man's name. Lt. Dean Brice of the Kingman Police Department confirmed Monday his agency's computer records had the same address for the man as was on the Ford's registration.

Brice wouldn't say whether the man had a criminal record, and referred further questions to FBI officials, who wouldn't comment.

The April 8 rally in Sandpoint was sponsored by the Idaho Citizens Awareness Network. The constitutionalist group known as I-CAN includes militia members and sympathizers.

Among those at the meeting were its co-founder, Pastor Dave Barley, formerly of Arizona, and Louis Beam, a former Texas Ku Klux Klan leader.

Beam, who also has served as Aryan Nations ambassador at large, has bought land east of Sandpoint and is applying for permits to build a home, sources say.

Beam and Aryan Nations leader Richard Butler stood trial in Fort Smith, Ark., in 1988, with convicted murderer Richard Snell. The defendants were acquitted of a plot to overthrow the federal government.

Snell was executed in Arkansas, just hours after the Oklahoma bombing. Snell had threatened that his death would be avenged.

Beam couldn't be reached for comment Monday.

Barley and I-CAN co-founder Bill Smyth of LaClede, Idaho, said they weren't aware of anybody from Arizona at the Sandpoint rally.

Barley and Smyth said, however, that they didn't know everyone in attendance.

Smyth estimated that 200 people were at the rally; Barley said he came in late and saw about 80 people.

"Our meetings are open to all the public and everyone is welcome," Smyth said.

Before the meeting, about 100 pro-gun demonstrators carried picket signs supporting the Second Amendment outside the Sandpoint Community Center, Smyth said.

Afterward, they watched a video by Sheriff Richard Mack, of Graham County, Ariz. He is a hero to those in the militia movement because of his legal attack on the Brady Bill, which requires a waiting period for gun purchases.

Barley, co-founder of the Idaho Citizens Awareness Network, moved to Sandpoint from Scottsdale, Ariz., in 1991.

He assumed the Christian Identity ministry from the late Sheldon Emry, a radio minister who preached the message that white people are the true Jews.

Barley, 40, now is pastor at the Lord's Covenant Church and its outreach arm known as America's Promise Ministry, which produces radio programs. The sect has its church and office on Great Northern Road, near the Sandpoint airport.

On another front, law enforcement authorities throughout the Northwest and elsewhere have been told to watch for two Ryder trucks rented in Fargo, N.D., a day after the bombing.

The trucks were rented by one or more people who used phony identification and haven't returned the trucks, sources confirmed Monday.

The yellow Ryder trucks are identified as a 1993 Ford, with a Texas license plate, and a 1994 GMC with a Kentucky plate, sources said.

"I can't give you a confirmation or even a denial," FBI spokesman Nestor Michnyak said when contacted in Washington, D.C.

Authorities don't know if the truck thefts are in any way tied to the Oklahoma bombing, which was carried out with a Ryder truck.

Still, there is increased security at all federal buildings, including new, round-the-clock security guards patrolling the U.S. Courthouse and adjoining Post Office in Spokane.

(Staff writer Kevin Keating contributed to this report.)