

## **Hualapai six settle**

Parties have reached a settlement resolving a wrongful termination lawsuit that six firefighters brought against the Hualapai Valley Fire District 2 1/2 years ago. The District was renamed the Northern Arizona Consolidated Fire District #1 while the suit was pending in U.S. District Court.

Defendants Jeff Campbell, Oscar Lopez, Raymond Schnabel, Kamrin Dooley, Mike Carlson and Jeff Nyberg alleged their terminations from the Fire District were retaliatory and discriminatory and were linked, in part, by their membership in the United Professional Firefighters union, Local 4191. Legal action brought by Union attorneys named the District as a defendant, along with former Fire Chief Wayne Eder and members of the Fire District Board.

The Defendants and their attorneys maintained that there was no merit to the lawsuit that has now been dismissed.

“It is the mutual desire of the parties to avoid the expense, uncertainty and inconvenience of litigation by settling their differences in accordance with terms of this Agreement,” states the settlement agreement approved June 25 by Judge James A. Teilborg.

One component of the resolution eliminates any record that the firefighters were terminated from their positions. Their personal records will instead reflect voluntary resignations in each instance.

The resolution further eliminates any effort for any of the parties to blame one another or hold anyone responsible for the employment departures that occurred between January, 2006 and January, 2007.

“This Agreement is a compromise of disputed claims,” the settlement stated. “Neither this Agreement nor any provision hereof shall be construed as an express or implied admission by Defendants, or any of them, or any of the other released parties, of any improper conduct, omissions, fault or liability whatsoever.”

The settlement awards the firefighters one lump sum payment of \$500,000 from the Fire District's insurance carrier. An undisclosed amount is taken from the sum to cover legal expenses incurred by plaintiff attorneys.

The remainder of the settlement award was to be distributed among the firefighters. How the money was apportioned has not been publicly disclosed but local Firefighter's Union head Robert Borker said he's been told the money was divided equally.