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MHA employee assaulted, 3 threatened

Two who were living illegally at Holly Berry Court charged; others being sought

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MILLVILLE — An employee of the Millville Housing Authority was assaulted and three other employees threatened with bodily harm by individuals MHA officials say were living illegally at Holly Berry Court.

The authority has pressed charges against two men in connection with the harassment incidents.

They allegedly threatened to shoot MHA Executive Director Paul Dice and harm Ivy Evans, chief operations officer for the authority.

A third employee, who the MHA has declined to name, was also threatened, officials said.

Those who assaulted the fourth employee,

by striking him in the back of the head with a blunt object, remain at large, said MHA officials.

Dice declined to release the names of the accused, referring that question to city police.

Officers Tuesday evening were unable to retrieve the police reports necessary to identify the two men.

According to Dice, the incidents are a result of a year-old policy of strictly enforcing the MHA's lease conditions — including those regarding friends and family of residents who are not listed on any residential lease but continue to live in MHA facilities.

"In this particular instance, the two that are charged had been staying (at Holly Berry Court units) long over what our guest policy is," said Dice. "We then signed complaints against them

for trespassing."

Following the Dec. 9 court date for trespassing, Dice said the two proceeded to threaten to harm Dice, Evans and another employee outside Millville Municipal Court.

On Saturday, Dec. 12, a fourth employee was attacked at Holly Berry Court.

According to Dice, the assailants made it clear they were retaliating against the employee for "snitching" on them.

The employee suffered minor injuries, and was able to return to work Monday, Dice said.

He added he did not want to disclose the names and positions of the employee because he did not want to "single him or her out."

"We are doing everything we can to protect

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the rights of our tenants to a safe and quiet environment," said Dice. "Our biggest thing is that we get things like this into court."

According to officials, the subjects had been rotating between multiple apartment units at Holly Berry Court since August 2009.

However, officials would not say how they were related to the residents they were staying with, citing tenant privacy regulations.

The authority has stated it will be seeking action against the tenants who housed the two.

"These unfortunate situations are now within the court's jurisdiction," said Dice. "Hopefully, the outcome will quell the current dangerous situation and support our attempts to maintain civil and lawful behavior in Millville communities."