

A family disturbance turned into attempted murder yesterday evening when a female opened fire on a male family-member and another individual with a rifle. The incident occurred in Columbia County just north of the Washington County line at 54658 Nehalem Hwy S., about 5 miles outside of Vernonia.

Sheriff's deputies from both counties converged on the scene, along with officers from several police agencies. Columbia County Sheriff's deputies arrested Sally Ann Lee, 57, Vernonia on four counts of attempted murder.

Dispatch received a call from the brother of the suspect (Tom Lee, 56), saying his sister was intoxicated and shooting a gun at 8:06 pm Sunday night. A Columbia County Sheriff's deputy was responding to the call from the Sheriff's Office in St. Helens, when the report came back indicating that people at the scene were running for cover. Dispatchers reported hearing at least two shots during the 9-1-1 call.

"We had one deputy on duty when the call came in," said Sheriff Jeff Dickerson, "and we were a long way away from the scene of the shooting. With the help of our partner law enforcement agencies, we were able to bring the scene under control and make an arrest without anyone getting injured."

The Sheriff's Office received assistance from a number of law enforcement agencies, including the Saint Helens Police, Clatskanie Police, Oregon State Police and Columbia City Police Departments. Neighboring Washington County sent five deputies to the scene to assist. A tactical dispatcher from Columbia 911, the Vernonia Fire Department, and Metro West Ambulance also participated in the multi-agency response.

"Members of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) responded to the scene," the sheriff added. "Our deputies, and members of the St. Helens Police Department provided the tactical team services during the incident."

Deputies at the scene recovered evidence of at least four shots that had been fired from a rifle. Witness statements indicated those shots had been fired in their direction.

Investigators believe the incident was the latest in a series of inter-family squabbles on the premises of Lee's U-Catch Trout Farm near the Washington-Columbia county line. Tensions had been high for the past few weeks after the suspect learned the house in which she was living was undergoing foreclosure proceedings.

Responding law enforcement learned the suspect had access to several firearms, and took precautions with the activation of the CIRT team. Deputies and officers surrounded a fifth-wheel trailer where she had holed up after the shooting incident. She was taken into custody just before 1 a.m., surrendering to authorities without further incident. She is lodged in the Columbia County Jail on four charges of Attempted Murder. Additional charges are expected, as the incident remains under investigation.