

Former Kickapoo Firefighter Pleads Guilty to Charge

(KNZA/AP)-- A former Kickapoo volunteer firefighter has admitted to covering up for the department's former leader who is charged with arranging for fires to be set that the tribe was paid to fight.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Kansas says 35-year-old Arlene Negonsott, of Horton, pleaded guilty Tuesday to concealing a felony. She admitted through her plea to not telling investigators what she knew about former Kickapoo Tribal Volunteer Fire Department Chief Stephen Ramirez when she was interviewed about a series of fires on the Kickapoo Reservation in Brown County.

Sentencing will be set for a later date. Negonsott faces up to three years in federal prison and a fine up to \$250,000.

Ramirez is awaiting trial on wire fraud charges. Prosecutors initially said Ramirez recruited Negonsott to set fires on reservation in 2015 that the department fought. The Bureau of Indian Affairs paid the department \$600 for each fire.

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