

# Daily Record

ELLENSBURG, WASHINGTON ♦ THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1997 ♦ VOLUME 96 No. 210 ♦ 35 CENTS

## Striking apple workers file WSP complaint

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**VANTAGE** — The more than 150 migrant workers who began striking Sept. 1 at the Auvil Fruit Co. in Vantage issued a media release to complain that Washington State Patrol and Kittitas County Sheriff's department officials escorted strikebreakers into the orchards this week.

Speaking for the striking workers, who are upset at what they call unfair working conditions and an unfair bonus-pay system, Guadalupe Gamboa, the state director of the United Farm Workers of America, said that 10 WSP troopers and 12 KCSO deputies were "involved in a coordinated effort with Auvil superiors to escort strikebreakers into the employer's orchards."

Gamboa, in a letter written to WSP patrol chief Annette Sandberg, wrote that the troopers and deputies "participated in actions that chilled the workers' rights to organize for better job treatment. WSP personnel

took part in a massive and intimidating show of force towards peaceful protesters that involved 26 law enforcement vehicles from Grant and Kittitas Counties.

"The specific intimidating actions engaged by these officials included displaying rifles and pointing video cameras at peaceful protesters and stopping and harassing protesters who were returning to the picket lines. As a result of these actions, one picketer was arrested and jailed as he attempted to return to the picket lines," Gamboa wrote.

Gamboa said there is no court order or other legal finding of unlawful behavior by the striking workers that would justify "such racist, biased and aggressive behavior by WSP troopers."

However, law enforcement officials said the troopers and deputies on the scene do not carry rifles and many of the officers called to the scene were of Hispanic descent, adding that the claims of racism are ludicrous.

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