

Minutemen meet without a hitch

Northwest Harold

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CRYSTAL LAKE – The Illinois Minuteman Project's anti-illegal immigration seminar at McHenry County College went off with little contention Friday, two months after its original forum was canceled.

Rosanna Pulido, who recently stepped down from her position as the organization's director to become a field representative for the Federation for American Immigration Reform, briefly addressed the first planned seminar, citing the Holiday Inn's stance that she had not been truthful in saying who she was.

"Folks, that's a lie," she said. "I'm Rosanna Pulido. I've been Rosanna Pulido for 51 years."

She also said MCC president Walt Packard told her that the Minutemen were a group known for inciting violence, a charge she denies.

Pulido called to the members of the audience to get active in combating illegal immigration.

"I'd be very grieved that after the meeting people have just come here to get their ears tickled," she said. "I believe that moral outrage is the greatest motivator."

In August, the Minuteman Project's seminar at the Crystal Lake Holiday Inn was canceled after police informed the hotel that it would have to spend up to \$3,500 on extra police to handle protesters at the McHenry County Peace Group's planned demonstration in opposition to the Minutemen.

Attorneys for the Holiday Inn filed an emergency restraining order against the Minutemen, saying the group breached its contract, which was upheld by a judge.

On Wednesday, members of MCC student organization Latinos Unidos submitted a petition with about 400 signatures protesting the event.

The seminar's highlighted speaker was Sheriff Dan Beck from Allen County, Ohio, who gained national attention for his tough stance on illegal immigration.

"The advocates for illegal immigrants want law enforcement to pick and choose which laws we enforce on particular groups of people rather than enforce the laws fairly on everyone," he said.

His department, with help from organizations such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement, has been responsible for about 100 detainments and deportations of illegal immigrants, Beck said.

These include people from countries beside Mexico, he said.

"We have not seen one complaint of improper conduct or profiling by any person legally in our community," Beck said.

Beck discussed on the steps his department has taken against illegal immigration, focusing on partnerships with other law-enforcement agencies, as well as industry leaders.

Carlos Acosta, executive director of the McHenry County Latino Coalition, said some methods discussed by Beck were creating a division between law enforcement and immigrants, causing violent crimes to go unreported.

"My first concern is that Sheriff Beck turned a blind eye to violent crime," Acosta said.

Kim Hayes of Crystal Lake attended simultaneous rallies held by both Minutemen and the Peace Group after the first cancellation and was back for more education on illegal immigration.

"I'm here to hear," Hayes said. "I'm not a member of the Minutemen, but I like what they're doing and I want to hear more."

But Pauline Walker of Crystal Lake said she was alarmed at some of the attitudes of other attendees, particularly when one man stood up and said Mexicans are trying to take over the United States.

"It makes me think of Nazi Germany," she said.