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SUSPICIOUS LETTER CONTAINING POWDER ARRIVES AT LA PORTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE IN MICHIGAN CITY LEADING TO EVACUATION -PERSON OF INTEREST IN CUSTODY-

On Wednesday, September 17, 2014 at approximately 9:50 am (CST) a La Porte County Clerk's Office employee who was working in the La Porte County Courthouse in Michigan City opened a letter that had been received in the office via United States Postal Service mail. Upon opening the letter, the employee discovered that the envelope contained a powdery substance and a letter. It was immediately taken to the Courthouse Security office that is manned by La Porte County Sheriff's deputies.

Upon observing the powder, the deputies summoned La Porte County Emergency Services in case the powder contained a harmful chemical or agent. The deputies also observed that a letter was inside that indicated that explosives were located in or near the Courthouse. Therefore, deputies immediately began to evacuate the building and called for the Michigan City Police Department, La Porte County Sheriff's Office, La Porte County Hazardous Materials Team, Michigan City Fire Department and La Porte County Emergency Management.

Once evacuated, it was verified that no employees were exhibiting signs of sickness and all were accounted for. The La Porte County Hazardous Materials Team tested the powder and determined that it tested positive for talcum powder and verified that it had no hazardous or health threatening qualities. Once that verification was made, a bomb sniffing canine from the Michigan City Police Department and his handler swept the interior of the building and no suspicious items or devices were found. At approximately 12:45 pm employees were allowed back into the building and a short while later the public was also granted access. The Michigan City Courthouse is now open.

Because of the nature of this letter and threat, the United States Postal Inspection Service, Federal Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco Firearms and Explosives and the Federal Bureau of Investigation were called to assist with the investigation. A person of interest was quickly identified and investigators from the Michigan City Fugitive Apprehension Street Team (FAST) soon located the suspect at a home in the 1800 East block of Michigan Boulevard in Michigan City. He was taken into custody without incident and is currently being detained in the La Porte County Jail awaiting formal charges.

This investigation remains open and is still being actively investigated. Additional information will be released when the suspect is formally charged.

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* COURT OFFICES *

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