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1:51 p.m. -- Two men sue local Boy Scouts over sexual abuse 25 years ago

Patrick Orr - Idaho Statesman

Edition Date: 07/10/07

Two men are seeking financial damages against the Ore-Ida Council of the Boy Scouts of America and the Boy Scout's parent organization for being sexually abused by a former Caldwell-based assistant Scoutmaster in the early 1980s.

The lawsuit was filed today in 4th District Court by plaintiffs Ron Morgan, 40, a former Caldwell resident who now lives in Arizona, and an unnamed plaintiff "John Doe" of Idaho, who both say they were sexually abused by assistant Scoutmaster James Phillip Schmidt between 1979 and 1982.

Morgan, who lived in Nampa at time of the abuse, said he decided to come forward this year because his 10-year-old son is in Boy Scouts and he wanted to ensure that any organization which is entrusted to care for children be held accountable for their safety.

Officials with the Ore-Ida Council of the BSA said they could not comment on the lawsuit today because they had not had time to read or study it.

Schmidt was convicted in 1983 of a charge of lewd and lascivious conduct with a minor — a 10-year-old Caldwell Cub Scout. He is currently listed as a registered sex offender in Maryland.

Morgan's Coeur d'Alene-based attorney, Leander L. James, credited a new Idaho law passed earlier this year which allows victims of child abuse to sue an abuser's employer up to five years after realizing that the abuse has injured or is injuring them.

Morgan is the first person in Idaho to sue under House Bill 125, James said.

The suit seeks financial damages against the Boy Scouts of America and likely will take several years before a jury trial will begin.

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Katherine Jones / Idaho Statesman
 Ron Morgan is among the first to file under a new Idaho state law that gives victims of sexual abuse more time to file civil lawsuits. Morgan, who now lives in Arizona, and an unnamed plaintiff from Idaho both say they were sexually abused by assistant Scoutmaster James Phillip Schmidt between 1979 and 1982. Defendants also include the Boy Scouts of American and the Ore-Ida Council of the BSA.

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