

# NEWSRELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 11, 2006

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### **Motorist rams prison vehicle, officer fires weapon**

DEER LODGE – Shortly after 1 p.m. Thursday, an Opportunity man drove onto Montana State Prison property and used his vehicle to ram a prison security vehicle driven by a correctional officer assigned to patrolling the perimeter of the prison outside Deer Lodge.

The motorist then used his car to pin the officer against his patrol vehicle and the officer discharged his weapon, said Powell County Sheriff Scott Howard.

The vehicle then left prison property and was pursued by law enforcement officers from Powell County, Deer Lodge County and the Montana Highway Patrol. The individual was apprehended without incident in Opportunity, south of Deer Lodge, Howard said.

He said that, upon apprehension, Ron Violette, 47, was taken to the Butte hospital for treatment of an undisclosed injury.

The circumstances related to the discharge of the officer's firearm are part of the investigation under way by the Powell County Sheriff's office and the Department of Corrections Investigative Unit, Howard said.

The prison was locked down for about two hours.

Warden Mike Mahoney praised Sheriff Howard, law enforcement officers from Powell and Deer Lodge counties and the Highway Patrol for their quick response. Both Sheriff Howard and the Warden Mahoney expressed gratitude for the working relationship that has developed over the years between the prison and county.

"We work well together and it shows with the professional level of response and assistance we give and receive," Howard said.

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