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(Neb.)-Officials dispute Whiteclay Burn Victim's Lawsuit

By: Dennis and Kathi Brown Posted at: 12/29/2012 06:16 PM

LINCOLN, Nebraska (AP) - Authorities are disputing a lawsuit that accuses them of negligently setting a fire that burned a man in Whiteclay.

Attorneys for the Rushville Volunteer Fire Department and the Sheridan County sheriff argue in court filings that they were not responsible for the injuries to Bryan Bluebird, an Oglala Sioux Tribe member who lives on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Bluebird alleges that authorities failed to spot him before they set a controlled grass fire in a field where he was resting. He also accuses them of igniting the blaze on a dangerously windy day.

Authorities say they aren't liable because they were acting within the scope of their duties, and they argue that Bluebird's injuries were caused by his own negligence.