

Former gov. asks for null conviction

By Michael Tarm
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

CHICAGO — Former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich has asked a judge to nullify the lone conviction in his mostly deadlocked corruption trial, saying the jury's decision was underpinned by errors at trial and misconduct by prosecutors.

Trial Judge James Zagel should override jurors' verdict and acquit Blagojevich of lying to the FBI or set it aside and try him again on that charge, defense attorneys said in a motion filed at the U.S. District Court in Chicago.

"The fact is that the government knew — and knows — that Blagojevich was not lying to the FBI," says the motion, filed late Monday.

"The conviction in this case is not legally sound."

If Zagel refuses to toss the conviction — which many legal observers say is likely — then the multiple arguments in the filing could lay the groundwork for any appeal to a higher court.

Blagojevich's trial lasted two and a half months.

At its end, jurors convicted the impeached governor on just one

of 24 counts against him. Prosecutors told the judge they will try Blagojevich again on the deadlocked charges, a retrial that is expected to start in January.

Among the charges jurors couldn't agree on was that the twice-elected governor attempted to sell or trade an appointment to the U.S. Senate seat President Barack Obama was vacating in exchange for a lucrative job or campaign donation.

The charge of lying to the FBI was considered the least serious of them all, carrying a prison sentence of up to five years. Other charges, including racketeering, could result in a 20-year prison term. Blagojevich, 53, has denied any wrongdoing.

Also in the filing, Blagojevich's attorneys allude to his financial straits, saying a legal fund he drew on has run dry. One consequence, they claim, is that he can't even foot the bill to secure all official trial transcripts — rendering his lawyers' work more difficult.

But the primary focus of the filing is the sole conviction.

Prosecutors accused Blagojevich of lying in a March 2005 FBI interview during his ini-



Associated Press photo

Former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich talks to the media in Chicago after a jury found him guilty of one count of lying to federal agents.

tial term as governor — first when he asserted he kept a "fire-wall" between political campaigns and government work; and second when he insisted he did not "track" campaign contributions.

Jurors only agreed he lied about not tracking donations.

But the motion argues they should have been told they had to agree on both before they could convict on the single count of lying.

It also says the meaning of "track," in the context of the charge, was unclear.

Strong winds could fan flames in Colo. wildfire

By Dan Elliott
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

LOVELAND, Colo. — Firefighters were trying to gain ground on a wildfire in the northern Colorado foothills Tuesday ahead of strong winds expected to move in, potentially spreading the flames.

The fire, the second major blaze to break out on the Front Range in a week, has burned nearly 1,000 acres, or about 1½ square miles, of tinder-dry grass and trees in steep terrain just west of Loveland.

The fire, which has destroyed two homes, was 20 percent contained. Terry Krasko, a spokesman for the team coordinating more than 400 firefighters, said the containment figure is expected to be higher by the end of the day.

"The fire's looking very, very good," Krasko said.

Earlier, incident team manager Jim Thomas said the next 36 hours are pivotal for crews to make headway because of the wind in the forecast. Thomas said the fire wasn't moving toward populated areas but gusts of up to 20 mph were possible Tuesday and winds of up to 28

mph were expected Wednesday. "We're going to go out and pound on it," said Thomas, who also led the fight against a wildfire near Boulder last week that destroyed at least 166 homes.

The northern Colorado fire prompted the evacuation of a four-mile radius, but some residents were being allowed into the evacuation area Tuesday to check on their homes, escorted by sheriff's deputies.

Sheriff's officials said they want the residents to spend only about 30 minutes in their homes before they are escorted out again.

Officials said earlier they expected some people would stay, even if the return was supposed to be temporary. It wasn't clear what deputies would do if anyone resisted leaving.

Authorities don't know exactly how many homes and residents are in the evacuation area. The Red Cross said 76 evacuees have registered with the agency. Sheriff's investigators believe the fire was started Sunday by two people burning leaves and tree branches at a home. They plan to turn their findings over to prosecutors to determine whether criminal charges should be filed.

Eiffel Tower bomb threat reportedly false alarm

By Angela Doland
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

PARIS — Paris' Eiffel Tower and its immediate surroundings were evacuated Tuesday evening after an anonymous caller phoned in a bomb threat, but a police search turned up nothing suspicious, French media reported.

Officials evacuated about 2,000 people and combed through the 324-meter (1,063-foot) tower, a Paris police spokesman said. By midnight, people were walking around and riding bikes underneath France's most popular tourist spot again. The tower itself, which had 6.6 million visitors last year, usually closes at 11 p.m.

Media reported that the scare was a false alarm. Paris police did not immediately return calls seeking information.

French media also said parts of

a second tourist hub — the Saint-Michel subway station near Notre Dame Cathedral — were briefly evacuated following a similar threat. The station was the target of a terrorist attack in 1995 that killed eight and injured scores of people.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the threats. But it comes after the head of France's counterespionage agency was quoted this weekend as saying that the risk of a terrorist attack on French soil has never been higher.

Bernard Squarcini told Le Journal du Dimanche newspaper that France's history as a colonial master in North Africa, its military presence in Afghanistan and a bill aimed at banning burqa-style Muslim veils in public all make the country a prime target for certain radical Islamist groups.

Earlier Tuesday, the ban on

face-covering Islamic veils passed its final hurdle in parliament, but there was no immediate indication the threats were linked to the proposed ban.

The proposal drew the indignation of the No. 2 of al-Qaida, Ayman al-Zawahri, who said the drive to ban the veil amounted to discrimination against Muslim women.

Bomb threats are frequent in Paris, a city that has also experienced terrorism firsthand.

Algerian Islamic insurgents bombed the Saint-Michel station on July 25, 1995.

That attack killed eight people and injured 150.

It was the first attack in a campaign of violence that terrorized Paris subway commuters.

Gas cooking canisters loaded with nails, sometimes hidden in garbage cans, were used in many of the bombings.



Associated Press photo

Paris' Eiffel Tower and its immediate surroundings were evacuated Tuesday evening after an anonymous caller phoned in a bomb threat.

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Fresh Harvest Kafe
Are U Hungry

Best Sports Bar
Champ's Sports Grill
Gingerbread Man

Best Dine In
Rotelli Pizza & Pasta
Chili's Grill

Best Burgers
Champs Sports Grill
Chili's Grill

Best Pizza
Bell's Greek Pizza
Papa Johns

Best Delivery
Wings Over Happy Valley
Uncle Chen's

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Bradley's Steaks & Hoagies
Boots Sub Shop

Best Italian
Rotelli Pizza & Pasta
Mario & Luigis

Best Late Night Food
Wings Over Happy Valley
Are U Hungry

Best Smoothies
Pita Pit
Irving's Bagels

Best Asian Food
Uncle Chen's
Fuji & Jade Garden

Fastest Pizza Delivery
Canyon Pizza
Domino's Pizza

Best Salads
Fresh Harvest Kafe
Pita Pit

Best Sushi
Fuji & Jade Garden
Maki Yaki

Fastest Asian Delivery
Uncle Chen's
Hunan Wok

Best Mexican
Chili's Grill
Qdoba

Best Subs/Hoagies
Boots Sub Shop
Are U Hungry

Best Bang For Your Buck
Wings Over Happy Valley
Canyon Pizza

Best Breakfast
Irving's Bagels
Fresh Harvest Kafe

Best Wings
Wings Over Happy Valley
Canyon Wings