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Helena man cited for pointing gun at airplane banner

The Associated Press

A former Helena city commissioner pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct Thursday for pointing a shotgun at an airplane pulling an anti-abortion banner.

Steve Netschert, 47, told authorities he was pointing the gun at the banner, not the plane, as a joke, according to police reports.

It was just an unfortunate set of circumstances that did not necessarily reflect the intent, Netschert said

Thursday afternoon. He declined further comment.

According to police reports, an officer spotted Netschert pointing the gun in the air in a parking lot at about 4:30 p.m. Wednesday. As the officer pulled into the parking lot, Netschert was breaking down the shotgun.

He advised the officer he was doing this as a joke, said Police Chief Troy McGee, who didnt know if the gun was loaded.

The officer conferred with Assistant City Attorney Bob Wood, and later issued the citation to Netschert.

He was creating a hazardous condition by waving a gun on a busy street corner, Wood said. Someone could react badly if they saw that. It had the potential of causing tremendous chaos.

Netschert pleaded guilty to the misdemeanor charge on Thursday; he was fined \$190 and given a five-day deferred sen-tence.

He was straight up with it and dealt with it right away, Wood said.

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