

Friends, family vow to aid arson suspects
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Friends and neighbors rallied to support two men accused of starting a fire last week at a local truck dealership. More than 50 people gathered Monday evening in front of the Lane County Jail where Jeffery Michael Luers, 21, a self-described anarchist, and Craig Andrew Marshall, 27, are being held.

"Both men's parents and friends believe in their innocence and have pledged a vigorous legal defense locally and internationally for their immediate release," Phil Weaver, a spokesman for Luers and Marshall, wrote in a news release. They face several charges in connection with a fire that destroyed one truck and damaged two others at the Joe Romania truck dealership off of Franklin Boulevard. They also have been linked, police say, to an attempt to damage several fuel trucks at Tyree Oil Inc. on May 27. The two face charges of two counts of first-degree arson, first-degree criminal mischief, two counts of both unlawful manufacture and possession of a bomb, two counts of attempted arson and attempted first-degree criminal mischief. The men are being held without security.

A first-degree arson conviction carries a mandatory sentence of 7 1/2 years in prison. Weaver, a mediator providing dispute resolution services in Lane County and an activist with Eugene PeaceWorks, said the arrests represent an ongoing effort by authorities to intimidate activists.