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★★★★ MIDDLESEX

Job action continues

By DIANE KIESEL and
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News Tribune staff writers

NEW BRUNSWICK — Members of the Middlesex County Sheriff's Department were not expected to return to work today, despite hopes to the contrary by county officials.

Meanwhile, the job action is not expected to create security problems at the trial of Joanne Chesimard, accused of murdering a state trooper on the New Jersey Turnpike more than three years ago.

"We will not be back tomorrow," said Joseph Kasha, president of PBA Local 165, which represents the courthouse officers.

Approximately 170 employees of the department either called in sick yesterday or took advantage of personal days, and it was expected that the same number would do so today.

Members of Local 165, together with those who belong to PBA locals 152 and 219, which represent sheriff's officers assigned to the county workhouse and county

jail, respectively, began the job action yesterday to protest lagging contract negotiations.

Following a two-hour negotiating session yesterday, which Freeholder Director Thomas Molyneux hoped would prompt the officers to return to work today, Kasha accused the county of refusing to negotiate fairly.

While Kasha said the presence of only Molyneux without the rest of the freeholders resulted in "no meaningful dialogue," Molyneux conversely called the meeting "fruitful and progressive."

"I would characterize it (the fact that the entire board was not present) as disgraceful," said Kasha.

County Personnel Director William O'Leary who was present at the negotiating session with county negotiators William Ritter and William Hughes, Sheriff Joseph DeMarino, Undersheriff Stanley Marcinczyk and PBA Local 165 attorney Michael Justin, thought the combination of the job action and the Chesimard trial

constituted an "emergency situation."

He hoped Justin could persuade the officers to return to work, he said last night.

Unconfirmed reports indicated that a busload or busloads of demonstrators from New York would arrive at the courthouse today to picket for Mrs. Chesimard's cause.

However, Sheriff DeMarino said last night that he had at least 35 superior officers, who could provide adequate security for the trial.

DeMarino, who said he was in sympathy with the men, added that the job action would not disrupt security "one iota."

In other areas, however, DeMarino said the staff was "limping along." Superior officers, he said, were working 12-hour shifts, followed by a 12-hour break.

Kasha also reported that 16 exempt men, chosen specifically to provide security for the Chesimard trial, would work, together with a few non-union employes and

See JOB, Page 4