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Take on handguns no longer concealed

Within the last week or so, a half-dozen people have asked me to write something about the issue of packing and displaying heat — to put, perhaps, a different perspective on the question of whether it should be legal for qualified Oklahomans to carry guns that are visible to the public at large; to holster up, as it were.

Some days, you just can't write about puppy dogs and morning glories.

If a number of readers bring a similar request to the screen, that usually means there could be thousands more who wouldn't mind seeing some thoughts on the aforementioned subject.

Some days, you can't write about babies and butterflies.

Some days, you need to write about such things as the possibility of showing force in defense of what's yours and what you hold near and cherish.

Scant statistics: The chief questions about showing firearms seem to center on whether that might prevent an attack — or make it easier for somebody who's legal to defend himself or herself — or whether it might spark a shootout.

In the Old West, plenty of people showing holstered guns were blasted in ambushes.

True, some were only winged and came up firing.

So few statistics are available on long-range crime trends in places where you can wear your gun almost on your shirtsleeve that it's mostly guesswork when it comes to determining whether a concealed weapon is defense enough or could be improved upon.

Would a person so inclined be less likely to try to rob an establishment where the man or woman working the register had a gun on his or her hip?

Would a carjacking or a mugging be less inviting if a sidearm glistened in the streetlight?

More people, more loonies: The Second Amendment doesn't give a person the right to keep and store arms under the counter or behind the door. It's about keeping and bearing arms. It's the definition of bearing that comes into question in some states.

Here's what changed since this amendment was phrased: There are a whole lot more people around.

And whereas the percentage of loonies in the general population could be similar to when the amendment was drafted, now, there are obviously millions more strange characters in the current mix.

So along with a check of proper citizenship regarding gun laws, how about a nice, quick little sanity check, as well? You're OK, I'm OK, but we don't want that one over there packing on his or her hip, do we?

Fair board OKs mediation

At issue is a backlog of city utility bills that the fairgrounds stopped paying after its annexation.

BY KEVIN CANFIELD
World Staff Writer

The Tulsa County fair board agreed Monday to accept an offer from the city of Tulsa to enter into mediation over disputed utility bills at Expo Square.

The fairgrounds has refused to pay its city stormwater and trash bills since Jan. 1, 2009, when the

city's annexation of the fairgrounds took effect. The amount at issue is \$277,272.

The fair board designated County Commissioner John Smaligo, one of its members, to represent the county at the mediation session.

"We still maintain that the memorandum of understanding exempts us from these regulatory fees," Smaligo said after the fair board's meet-

ing. "But we understand that in this situation we need to be working toward a mutually beneficial agreement, and that's what we hope to accomplish in this mediation."

The mediator will be retired Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice Daniel Boudreau, a lawyer who works for Dispute Resolution Consultants Inc.

The city and county will split his fee of \$350 an hour, and each group will also pay a \$150 administration fee.

The proceedings are set for 9 a.m. June 16.

Last year, Boudreau mediated a resolution to another city-county dispute over a new jail agreement.

Smaligo said he is hopeful for a similar success.

"I was very excited to find out that the Mayor's Office was recommending Judge Boudreau again in this mediation process," he said. "And I think it will provide a wonderful opportunity for us to be able to resolve these differences and do so outside of a court of law."

SEE **FAIR** A12

THOREAU: MAKING IT REAL



Eighth-grade math and science teacher Joey Newsom explains how the WeatherBug station works in his classroom at Thoreau Demonstration Academy. Photos by JAMES GIBBARD/Tulsa World

Students catch WeatherBug

Middle school uses grant to teach students to apply concepts in the real world

BY ANDREA EGER
World Staff Writer

Oklahoma's volatile weather brings math and science concepts to life inside Joey Newsom's classroom at Thoreau Demonstration Academy.

Thanks to a \$12,000 grant from the Foundation for Tulsa Schools, a rooftop weather station and camera linked to an international network called WeatherBug allows students to track up-to-the-minute conditions in their own backyard or even in Zhijiang, China.

"If you look in the (text)book, it will have Antarctica temperatures, but with this, we can look at data we can relate to," eighth-grader Justin Flewellen, 14, said.

WeatherBug gives Newsom ac-

cess to curriculum from which he can pick and choose, depending on the grade level of his students or the concepts he is teaching.

"One of the biggest educational uses is in teaching kids how to read charts and diagrams with scientific data and the WeatherBug software is really helpful for that," he said.

Newsom's algebra students don't learn the difference between mean, median and mode with random sets of figures.

They use outdoor temperatures collected from their school's own station, which is perched atop a 25-foot radio tower on the roof.

"They're able to look at average temperatures for 71st and Memorial or compare our data with thou-

SEE **WEATHER** A12



Eighth-grade math and science teacher Joey Newsom works with student Sandra Escalante, 14, at the WeatherBug station in his classroom at Thoreau Demonstration Academy in Tulsa.

'Yeah, like I can tell you it is 65 degrees in — I cannot pronounce that (city) name, China.'

SANDRA ESCALANTE

Eighth-grader at Thoreau Demonstration Academy

Agencies team up to tackle chronic homelessness

BY MIKE AVERILL
World Staff Writer

A collective of organizations is ready to roll out the first phase of a plan to eliminate chronic homelessness in Tulsa.

Once funding is secured, "A Way Home for Tulsa" will begin the one-year process of laying out a plan to house the 105 most chronically homeless people and help them stay housed.

Once they are housed, they can meet with a team of case managers from various agencies

SEE **HOME** A12



Emergency workers load a man into an ambulance after firefighters pulled him from the Arkansas River on Monday morning. The man, whose kayak had gone over the Zink Lake low-water dam, was pronounced dead at a hospital later Monday. SHANNON MUCHMORE/Tulsa World

Kayaker dies after going over dam on Zink Lake

BY SHANNON MUCHMORE
World Staff Writer

A kayaker who fell into the Arkansas River on Monday was pronounced dead at a Tulsa hospital after rescue crews pulled him from the water.

The 35-year-old man, who was not identified Monday pending notification of his relatives, was kayaking alone when he went over the Zink Lake low-water dam under the pedestrian bridge near 31st Street and Riverside Drive about 10:30 a.m., Tulsa Fire Department spokesman Bill French said.

The river just beneath the dam features a strong undertow that firefighters have referred to as a "drowning machine."

The man fell out of the kayak and into the churning waters before drifting south. He was wearing a life preserver but not a helmet, officials said.

Tulsa firefighters sent out three rescue boats and were able to reach him about a mile south of the bridge. They pulled him out, unconscious and in cardiac arrest, and began CPR immediately.

SEE **DAM** A12

Top administrator in ME's Office resigns

• The troubled state agency essentially is left without anyone in charge.

BY NOLAN CLAY
The Oklahoman

OKLAHOMA CITY — The top administrator in the troubled state Medical Examiner's Office resigned Monday, basically leaving the agency

without anyone in charge. Tom Jordan wrote that he will begin a new job in the private sector June 14. He has served six months as chief administrative officer of the Medical Examiner's Office.

He was paid \$90,000 a year, a spokeswoman said. The agency already is without a chief medical examiner. The last chief medical examiner, Dr. Collie M. Trant, was fired Feb. 5 after less than nine months in the position.

The deputy chief medical examiner, Eric Duval, quit shortly afterward.

The agency is responsible for investigating sudden, violent, unexpected and suspicious deaths in the state.

Much of the work involves autopsies that are crucial to murder cases and important to families wanting answers about why their loved ones died.

The agency has been in turmoil for several months.

A sexual battery trial for a

former chief investigator got under way Monday.

Trant is suing to get his job back. His lawsuit names Jordan as a defendant.

In his resignation letter, Jordan wrote, "I have no doubts that once the dust settles with the legal issues, this agency will prosper and become a model for others to emulate."

Jordan was a deputy director for the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation before he joined the Medical

Examiner's Office.

Rep. Randy Terrill, chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Public Safety, said Jordan is leaving because he had an opportunity to pursue a different venture that would be financially beneficial to him and his family.

"We had and still have a great deal of confidence in the job that Tom Jordan has done," said Terrill, R-Moore.

"It is better that it happened now than several

months from now when we're well down the road of trying to get things back on track there."

A bill is moving through the Legislature that would put the agency's chief administrative officer in charge of hiring the chief medical examiner.

Oklahoman Capital Bureau reporter Michael McNutt contributed to this story.

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ME's Office ex-investigator's sex-battery trial begins

• He's charged with lewdly touching a subordinate.

BY NOLAN CLAY
The Oklahoman

OKLAHOMA CITY — A jury was selected Monday for the sexual-battery trial for

the former chief investigator of the state Medical Examiner's Office.

Kevin Rowland, 44, is accused of lewdly touching an investigator he supervised after lunch at a restaurant in south Oklahoma City in December 2007.

Rowland denies wrongdoing, contending that if he did anything, it was harmless

horseplay.

The Oklahoma County jury — six men and six women — will hear Tuesday from the former investigator, who claims that Rowland touched him on the chest and made a sexual remark. The employee worked in the Tulsa office but was fired Feb. 10.

A prosecutor told jurors Monday that Rowland chose

the restaurant because he liked the waitresses' breast sizes. The prosecutor told jurors that Rowland said to the male employee in a crude way that he had nice ones, too.

"It was embarrassing, and it was not done as a joke," Assistant Attorney General Mykel Fry said.

Defense attorney Scott Adams said Rowland is being

prosecuted because he made enemies who want to shut him up. He said employees in the Medical Examiner's Office sometimes used crude humor, but that was how they dealt with the horrors they faced in their jobs.

Rowland faces a separate trial later in Tulsa, where he is accused of raping a female employee of the Medical Ex-

aminer's Office. He denies the accusation.

Rowland resigned in February 2009 after he came under investigation. He wrote that he was quitting because of job stress. He had worked for the Medical Examiner's Office since 1985, mostly as an investigator.

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EPA website now offers more, searchable data

BY JOHN ESTUS
The Oklahoman

OKLAHOMA CITY — It just became easier to find out whether kids live near arsenic transfer sites, among other things.

The federal Envirofacts database was updated last week with detailed data about the thousands of toxic chemicals that are released into the environment regularly.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's website houses the database, which is searchable by address, allowing people to learn what toxic chemicals are released into the air, water or land in their area.

For instance, Envirofacts data show that the only major toxic chemical releases in Oklahoma's urban areas come from oil refineries in west Tulsa and Sand Springs.

Most toxic chemicals released in the state are in rural areas.

Updated data include chemicals released, descriptions of the chemicals, who releases them and how often, aerial images of the fa-

cility, inspection reports and demographic information about the area.

Whether chemical facilities have violated EPA rules also is listed in the database.

The site can be found at tulsaworld.com/envirofacts.

Steve Owens, assistant administrator for the EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, said, "The addition to Envirofacts will provide the American people with unprecedented access to information about chemicals that are manufactured in their communities."

The Oklahoma City metro area's only active toxic chemical discharger is the Xerox plant in Yukon, which regularly discharges nitrates, methanol and other chemicals into the air.

The plant has remained in compliance with clean-air standards, data show.

Last week's update included the addition of 6,300 chemicals and 3,800 chemical facilities nationwide.

More updates are planned as part of the EPA's ongoing effort to disclose more of its data to the public.

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A monitor in a Thoreau Demonstration Academy classroom shows students the weather conditions outside. JAMES GIBBARD/Tulsa World

FAIR:

Each side has a different interpretation of a memo of understanding.

FROM A9

The dispute stems from an agreement of understanding signed by then-Mayor Kathy Taylor and then-County Commissioner Randi Miller as part of the annexation.

The memorandum states in part that the fairgrounds' operations are grandfathered and exempt from the city's regulatory ordinances and regulations, in existence at the time annexation becomes effective and thereafter including but not limited to those relating to noise,

building permitting and inspections."

The county argues that "the city's regulatory ordinances and regulations" includes stormwater and trash fees.

The city contends that the memorandum exempts the fair board from regulations related to permitting and inspection of fairgrounds property, not utility bills.

The fair board, officially known as the Tulsa County Public Facilities Authority, is made up of the three county commissioners — Smaligo, Fred Perry and Karen Keith — and two appointees, Daryl Woodard and Mike Spradling.

Monday's vote was 3-0; Woodard and Spradling were absent.

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DAM:

The river is high because Tulsa has had nearly 4.5 inches of rain this month.

FROM A9

He was taken to the riverbank near Cherry Creek, just north of Interstate 44 on the west bank of the river.

He was then taken in critical condition to St. Francis Hospital, and he was pronounced dead a few hours later.

The river's water level was high Monday because of recent rains.

Tulsa has received nearly 4.5 inches of rain so far this month, according to the National Weather Service.

"The water has been flow-

ing really rapidly there (by the low-water dam) because of all the recent rain," Fire Capt. A.J. Ridener said.

The dam has long been a dangerous spot for swimmers and boaters.

At least 13 people have drowned there since 1983, Tulsa World archives show.

When a person gets caught in that area — as witnesses said happened to the kayaker Monday — it can be nearly impossible to break free, Ridener said.

In the churning water, "it's just a continuous cycle of up to the top and back to the bottom," he said.

Buoys mark the dam on its north and south sides.

Boaters and swimmers aren't supposed to go beyond those marks and should avoid the area entirely, Ridener said.

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WEATHER:

Students have a birds-eye view of weather patterns.

FROM A9

sands of other WeatherBug

stations," he said, pointing to the computer screen where eighth-grader Sandra Escalante was working.

"Yeah, like I can tell you it is 65 degrees in — I cannot pronounce that (city) name, China," Escalante said, laughing and pointing to Zhijiang on a map.

A camera capable of

panning 270-degrees gives students a birds-eye view of weather patterns in the area, which have been especially interesting this spring.

"We usually watch for weather patterns approaching from the west. We can turn on our camera and see the wall clouds coming at us," Newsom said.

Viewers of KJRH, Channel 2, also can see that vantage point because meteorologists there have remote access to Thoreau's WeatherBug camera and sometimes show the view on their news programs.

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HOME:

The plan will enable clients to get all the assistance they need in one place.

FROM A9

who will work to help them overcome their obstacles.

At present, homeless people have to deal with several case managers for different services, and those people often don't have contact with one another.

"It's all so scattered and they never negotiate all their problems," said Greg Shinn, associate director of the Mental Health Association in Tulsa.

With this plan, people will have access to everything

they need in one place.

"We have a great shelter system, but people aren't supposed to be living there. It's supposed to be temporary. Instead they're living there or are in and out of the shelters," Shinn said.

The first phase should cost about \$700,000. That includes the hiring of the Long Term Care Authority of Tulsa, which has developed case management systems that work statewide, Shinn said.

The authority will develop a governance model and develop the program's infrastructure.

It also will train the case managers, who will be funded through the initiative.

Case managers will meet for a half-day once a week for joint casework focused on a couple of clients.

"There might be 12 & 12, Legal Aid, Volunteers of America" and the Mental

Health Association in one room, Shinn said. "If they can't get housing because of some legal things, they can turn with the attorney to solve that quickly. They need rehab? There's 12 and 12."

"We're all there. MHAT (the Mental Health Association) says you do the legal stuff, go to rehab and we'll have housing for you when you're done."

The Tulsa Community Foundation is facilitating the initiative, which will involve 40 to 50 organizations.

Jim Lyall, associate director of the Community Service Council, said the initiative includes partnerships with faith-based groups in the communities where the individuals are housed to help them become part of the community.

"They'll really see the community coming around them and encouraging their role

in the community instead of seeing themselves as homeless outsiders," he said.

Shinn agreed.

"If you just put them in a room, they can feel isolated and get depressed. That can lead to a relapse, and that failure can be traumatic," he said. "People who are formerly homeless have the same wants and needs, but because of the stigma, they're looked at differently."

Once the first 105 people are housed, the initiative will stretch out to the rest of the homeless population.

Lyall said: "We know they can overcome mental or physical illness and substance abuse — sometimes one, two or all three. They need community assistance. This brings all the players together to help the individual."

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