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FRIDAY, JUNE 8, 2012

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75 CENTS

VALLEY CENTER COMMUNE



Mike Hutmacher/The Wichita Eagle
Daniel U. Perez talks with his attorney Alice Osburn during his preliminary hearing in Sedgwick County District Court on Thursday.

Perez faces trial in 2003 death at compound

BY TIM POTTER
The Wichita Eagle

Prosecutor Marc Bennett said there's no way that Patricia Hughes drowned herself in a pool at a Valley Center compound.

Defense attorney Alice Osburn suggested that maybe the 2003 death was a suicide.

After the two attorneys made closing arguments this afternoon in a preliminary hearing for defendant Daniel Perez, Judge Clark Owens ruled there was enough evidence to send Perez to a July 30 trial on a charge of first-degree premeditated murder in the death of Hughes, a 26-year-old mother.

Owens also found that prosecutors showed enough evidence at a hearing last week to try Perez on more than 30 other charges including rape, sodomy, sexual exploitation of a child, aggravated assault, criminal threat and directing that false information be put on life insurance and car credit applications.

Please see **PEREZ**, Page 7A

DEATHS UP AS WAR WINDS DOWN

Suicides are surging among U.S. troops

BY ROBERT BURNS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Suicides are surging among America's troops, averaging nearly one a day this year — the fastest pace in the nation's decade of war.

The 154 suicides for active-duty troops in the first 155 days of the year far outdistance the U.S. forces killed in action in Afghanistan — about 50 percent more — according to Pentagon statistics obtained by The Associated Press.

The numbers reflect a military burdened with wartime demands from Iraq and Afghanistan that have taken a greater toll than foreseen a decade ago. The military also is struggling with increased sexual assaults, alcohol abuse, domestic violence and other misbehavior.

Please see **SUICIDE**, Page 5A

Kansas universities poised to raise tuition



Mike Hutmacher/File photo

Students at all six of the state's public universities may be paying higher tuition in the fall.

Regents preparing to vote on schools' requests

BY SARAH TUCKER
The Wichita Eagle

Students at Kansas universities may soon be paying more tuition — again.

Later this month, the Kansas Board of Regents is expected to vote on proposed tuition increases at all six state universities, just as it did a year ago.

Ed McKechnie, the regents' chairman, said the board has done "quite a bit of work" to understand and anticipate this year's proposals.

"We took significant cuts three years ago," he said. "The

last couple of years, we've been held flat, but basics go up.

"There's nothing too outlandish here when you consider the state hasn't increased funding."

At the regents' meeting in May, all six public universities submitted tuition increase proposals. Each proposal included a breakdown of the tuition increase by credit hour, resident status and undergraduate or graduate classifications.

Also included in the proposals were suggested fee increases, how each school plans to use the increased revenue and

Please see **TUITION**, Page 8A



Mike Hutmacher/File photo

WSU tuition for in-state graduate and undergraduate students could rise 4 percent, pending approval by the Regents.

NEW FEDERAL STUDY SHOWS PREVALENT USE

Study: Older teens often text behind the wheel

BY MIKE STOBBE
Associated Press

ATLANTA — More than half of high school seniors admit they text or e-mail while driving — the first federal statistics on how common the dangerous habit is in teens.

An anonymous national survey conducted last year found that 58 percent of high school seniors said they had texted or e-mailed while driving during the previous month. About 43 percent of high school juniors acknowledged they did the same thing.

"I'm not surprised. I'm not

surprised at all," said Vicki Rimasse, a New Jersey woman whose son caused a fender bender earlier this year after texting in traffic. She made him take a safe-driving class after the mishap.

"I felt like an idiot," said her 18-year-old son, Dylan Young.

"It caused me to be a lot more cautious," said the high school senior, although he conceded that he still texts behind the wheel.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released the

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