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AREA NEWS IN BRIEF

Winfield prison escapee caught in Wichita

One of two inmates who escaped the Winfield Correctional Facility over the weekend was caught Wednesday in Wichita.

Authorities said a Crime Stoppers tip led them to a house in the 400 block of South Volusia, where Frank Crutchfield was arrested about 9:30 a.m. Crutchfield, 48, was returned to Winfield, where he is expected to face escape charges in Cowley County District Court.

Authorities are still looking for the other escapee, Robert Cook, 52. He is 5-feet-10 and 225 pounds, with gray hair, hazel eyes and a gray beard.

The two escaped from the Winfield Correctional Facility in a state-owned truck, which was found Sunday abandoned about 15 miles north of Winfield. Authorities think the two then stole a city of Douglass vehicle, as a dark-blue 2006 GMC Sierra with a Kansas license tag of 74914. The truck also has "City of Douglass" on a door on each side.

Anyone with information is encouraged to contact law enforcement or call 911.

— Eagle staff

Motorcyclist killed in crash is identified

A man who was killed Wednesday afternoon in a car-motorcycle crash on I-135 in north Wichita has been identified as a 25-year-old Wichita man.

The Kansas Highway Patrol said Preston Freeman Trotter was driving north near the 29th Street exit at 5:14 p.m. when his motorcycle ran into the back of a car that had stopped for another accident. Medics pronounced him dead at the scene.

— Hurst Laviana

Workshop to provide teddy bears for kids

Sedgwick County Extension will host a come-and-go sewing event next week in hopes of replenishing the supply of teddy bears local law enforcement officers use to comfort children in crisis.

The teddy bear workshop will start at 9 a.m. June 29 at the Extension Office, 7001 W. 21st St., and continue through the day, possibly until midnight.

Denise Dias, a family and consumer sciences agent who is organizing the event, said Sedgwick County sheriff's officers need teddy bears to comfort children who experience loss through fires, storms, crimes or other crisis situations. She set a goal of making 1,000 bears.

For more information about the workshop or to make a donation, contact Dias at 316-660-0100 or ddias@ksu.edu.

— Suzanne Perez Tobias

Man charged with taking El Dorado girl

A Canadian man has been charged in U.S. District Court for taking a 12-year-old girl from El Dorado to Michigan, where he was arrested.

Stewart Kenneth Cody McGill was charged with transporting a minor across state lines for the purpose of engaging in sex, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office. Authorities said McGill, from Ontario, Canada, picked up the girl, whom he met online last month, and started driving north on the Kansas Turnpike.

His car was stopped the next day in rural Michigan, where he was held by state police. If convicted, he faces between 10 years and life in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.

— Matt Riedel

Ex-teacher pleads guilty to sex crimes

BY AMY RENEE LEIKER
The Wichita Eagle

Former East High School English teacher Kurt M. Brundage pleaded guilty Wednesday to two felony counts of indecent liberties with a child in Sedgwick County District Court.

Brundage, 32, was originally charged with two counts of aggravated indecent liberties with a child and two counts of indecent liberties for incidents surrounding his contact with a 15-year-old girl on at least two occasions in January 2010. Brundage was employed as an English teacher at East High when the crimes occurred.

In court, Brundage answered with simple "yes" and "no" responses as Judge Joseph Bribiesca read the charges and discussed the state's recommendations.

"Do you understand this plea agree-

ment?" Bribiesca asked.

"Yes, your honor," Brundage said. The aggravated charges, which allege sexual intercourse occurred, were dismissed Wednesday under the plea agreement.



Brundage

The lesser charges alleged Brundage engaged in sexual touching with the girl. Each count carries a presumptive sentence of 31 to 136 months in prison and a maximum fine of \$300,000. He will have the opportunity to seek probation, but not a lesser prison sentence, under the plea agreement.

Brundage must also register as a sex offender and will be subject to post-release supervision by the Kansas Department of Corrections for life.

Brundage was arrested March 9 in Wichita after a woman reported to police in late February that he had touched her daughter inappropriately.

Brundage taught English at East High from Aug. 1, 2006, to July 31, 2011, and in the school's pre-International Baccalaureate program for ninth-graders. He was also the assistant cross country coach for boys and girls at the school in 2004 and 2005.

Wichita school district spokeswoman Susan Arensman said the district received no reports from students of inappropriate behavior by Brundage during his employment at East High. He left the school in July 2011 after taking a teaching job with the Eudora School District, located near Lawrence.

She said the district was unaware of any possible criminal activity involving Brundage until his arrest.

Authorities have not said whether the victim was a student at East High.

Arensman said there is no evidence that the crimes occurred at the school.

Brundage is free on \$100,000 bond. He also is on paid administrative leave from Eudora High School, district spokeswoman Kristin Magette said Wednesday, but said his teaching contract has not been renewed for the upcoming year. His employment ends June 30.

Brundage was hired late last spring to teach English to 12th-graders, Magette said. He holds no other paid positions, such as coaching, at the school.

Brundage was placed on administrative leave three days after his arrest, she said, and the district has received no reports from students of inappropriate conduct by Brundage while he was at the school.

He also faces revocation of his

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Criminal inquiry into house with dead cats



A Wichita police officer gets decontaminated by a member of the Wichita Fire Department after working a scene in which 31 dead cats were found inside a house on the 200 block of North Green on Saturday afternoon.

BY SARAH TUCKER
The Wichita Eagle

Wichita police said Wednesday they have opened a criminal investigation into the case of 31 dead cats and two live dogs found in a house at 235 N. Green over the weekend.

The 69-year-old woman who had been living there told police that she had been checking on the animals daily.

"Clearly, that was not the case," Deputy Police Chief Tom Stolz said Wednesday.

Police arrived Saturday to check on the woman's welfare after a call from a concerned neighbor, according to Stolz. Abandonment seemed evident due to flies on the window and the smell coming from the house.

Officers called the fire department so firefighters could enter the home in hazmat-level suits to search for the woman, Stolz said. They entered the home and, instead of finding the woman, found 31

dead cats and two flea-infested dogs who were feeding on the cats. Police then called the Wichita bomb team to process the potential crime scene.

Under the Kansas Cruelty to Animals Statutes, cruelty to animals is defined several ways, including "abandoning or leaving any animal in any place without making provisions for its proper care."

Should the woman be charged under state statute, she could face a maximum of one year in jail, as well as a maximum \$2,500 fine.

A Wichita police detective with specialized training in animal cruelty has been assigned to the case, police said.

Police have not arrested or charged the woman, pending the results of their investigation. She was no longer living at the house on North Green; she was instead staying at a friend's house after recently being hospitalized.

Reach Sarah Tucker at 316-268-6514 or stucker@wichtaeagle.com.



Wichita police officers tie bags containing deceased cats after they were found inside a home Saturday.

County weighs salaries, benefits

BY DEB GRUVER
The Wichita Eagle

Instead of looking at salaries and benefits as separate pots of money, Sedgwick County plans to reduce expenses next year by using one to offset the other.

County Manager William Buchanan proposed to offset a 4 percent pool for performance-based raises with changes to health care coverage for the county's 2,837 employees.

The effect would be a 2 percent increase in cost to the county for wages and benefits as opposed to a 4.2 percent increase if the county did not make changes in its health plan, Buchanan told commissioners Wednesday.

Salaries and benefits cost the county nearly \$143 million this year.

Buchanan said governments typically approach compensation from a traditional viewpoint: attract employees who are willing to receive lower salaries for better benefits and job security. Raises and cost-of-living increases often are automatic, he said.

"Does this compensation strategy still work?" Buchanan asked in his presentation.

"We have a \$9 million-and-more problem, and we know that," he said, alluding to a \$9.3 million deficit the county is hoping to eliminate by the end of next year.

Buchanan said a budgeting plan that looks at total compensation instead of separate pots of money would help the county attract and retain good employees, encourage employees to take personal responsibility for their health and reduce future increases in benefit costs.

Just more than 75 percent of county employees earn \$50,000 or less. The average salary among employees is \$42,565, and the median salary is \$38,042.

Average total compensation with pay and benefits is \$60,582, according to Buchanan's presentation.

The county surveyed 14 Kansas counties about whether they provide raises or cost-of-living

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County solid waste fee unchanged for 2013

BY DEB GRUVER
The Wichita Eagle

The solid waste management fee Sedgwick County homeowners pay will stay \$5.70 next year, commissioners voted Wednesday.

The solid waste fee covers trash processing, disposal and recycling. The fee also is used for special projects such as the household hazardous waste disposal center, Christmas tree recycling and coupons that allow residents to dispose of bulky waste.

The county generated 396,275 tons

of trash last year, down 2.2 percent from 2010. That's 4.36 pounds of trash per person per day last year, environmental resources director Susan Erlentweil told commissioners.

Recycling totaled 47,220 tons last year, up 1 percent from 2010.

Construction-related waste that went to a landfill totaled 196,778 tons last year, up 9 percent from 2010. Construction and demolition waste that was recycled totaled 20,919 tons last year, up 55 percent

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COUNTY OFFERS FREE COUPON TO DISPOSE OF WASTE

Sedgwick County is offering residents a coupon to get rid of up to 1,000 pounds of bulky trash for free. The coupons are good for up to \$30 worth of trash disposal.

Bulky waste includes furniture, mattresses, appliances, electronics and other items trash haulers don't pick up with regular trash. Tires, items with Freon or hazardous materials are not allowed.

To get a coupon, which must be used by Oct. 31, call 316-660-9110 or request one online at www.sedgwickcounty.org. Residents must provide their name and address.