

# Routine traffic stop reveals ID theft operation

BY STAN FINGER  
The Wichita Eagle

A routine traffic stop in south Wichita uncovered evidence of a significant identity theft operation, police said Thursday.

A Sedgwick County sheriff's deputy found a half-dozen fake IDs and numerous stolen

checkbooks after he stopped a car at about 1:45 p.m. Wednesday for a traffic violation in the 4200 block of South Hydraulic, police Lt. Clark Wiemeyer said.

The 35-year-old driver turned out to be wanted on an outstanding warrant, so he was arrested. When the deputy found the IDs, he

contacted Wichita police to let them know of the discovery.

"It's a sign of a times," said Wiemeyer, head of the financial crimes unit.

Thieves are stealing checkbooks or other forms of identification, he said, then making fake IDs so they can use the stolen checks. Investiga-

tors found paper for making fraudulent checks when they went to the homes of the driver and a second person implicated by Wednesday's traffic stop.

"With printers and computers, people can do that — start scanning stuff in, put your driver's license in there and you become whoever you

want to be," Wiemeyer said.

This operation differs from many other recent finds in that the suspects were going to extra lengths to make their IDs look authentic, he said. They were also printing fake checks.

No arrests have been made in the case at this point, police Lt. Doug Nolte said.

"We're still digging into it,"

Wiemeyer said. Nolte praised the sheriff's deputy for discovering the suspicious materials and knowing what to do once he realized what they were.

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# KC priest pleads guilty to child pornography charges

BY BILL DRAPER  
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — A Roman Catholic priest in Kansas City pleaded guilty Thursday to producing child pornography in a federal case that also led to charges against the diocese bishop for failing to report suspected child abuse.

Prosecutors said they would recommend that the Rev. Shawn Ratigan, 46, be sentenced to life in prison.

Ratigan had been scheduled for trial later this month. He was charged with child pornography in May 2011 in Clay County after police received a flash drive from the priest's computer

that contained hundreds of images of children, most of them clothed. Prosecutors alleged he photographed girls, sometimes under their skirts, in and around churches where he had worked in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

Under terms of the plea deal, Ratigan pleaded guilty to four counts of producing child pornography and one count of attempting to produce child porn. Eight other counts were dismissed.

Acting U.S. Attorney David Ketchmark said the guilty pleas represent one charge for each of five victims whose abuse started in June 2005 — one year after Ratigan was ordained.



Ratigan

"With today's guilty plea, the defendant publicly acknowledged for the first time that he sexually assaulted five young children over the course of several years," Ketchmark said at a news conference. "When a defendant who wears a religious collar, who has the trust of a community, engaged in conduct of this nature, his crimes are more devastating and more reprehensible."

The case opened old wounds for the Catholic Diocese of Kansas City-St.

Joseph, which in 2008 agreed to pay 47 clergy abuse victims a total of \$10 million and promised to train its priests about sexual abuse awareness and to report any suspicions that children were being placed in danger.

It also led to misdemeanor criminal charges against the diocese and Bishop Robert Finn — the highest-ranking Catholic official in the U.S. to be charged with shielding an abusive priest — for failing to report suspected child abuse to the state. Both have pleaded not guilty and are scheduled to go to trial in September.

In a statement released Wednesday, the diocese ex-

pressed its "profound concern" for anyone Ratigan harmed and said it is committed to making sure "every report of sexual abuse, boundary violation or misconduct is addressed thoroughly and immediately."

Ketchmark said Ratigan's plea means his victims won't have to go through a trial. Beyond that, Ketchmark said, Ratigan gets very little from the plea deal, especially since the eight related counts that were dropped can be taken into consideration when he is sentenced.

"Our recommendation will be a virtual life sentence to ensure there's no opportunity for him to harm another child," Ketchmark said.

Rebecca Randles, a Kansas City attorney who has represented dozens of people in civil suits who said they were abused by priests, read a statement on behalf of victims' families.

"We're happy about this, that this chapter is coming to a close without our children being identified or having to testify in the trial process," Randles said.

Ratigan also is facing three child pornography charges in Clay County, which were filed in May 2011.

Jim Roberts, a spokesman for the Clay County prosecutor's office, said Ratigan's pleas in federal court won't have an impact on the state charges.

# Salina water mains breaking at a record rate

BY CHRIS HUNTER  
Salina Journal

SALINA — As high temperatures hover over the Salina area, humans aren't the only ones suffering.

The sun is baking the ground, causing it to shift, and the city's water pipes, unfortunately, don't shift with it. Water mains are breaking at a record rate this year, and at record-breaking cost.

"When you have extreme temperatures and dryness, it wreaks havoc on our water system," said Martha Tasker, Salina's director of utilities. "When the soil shifts, our pipes tend to not shift with it."

The shifting ground also is causing roads and sidewalks to erupt, sending city and county road and bridge crews scrambling to make needed repairs.

Tasker said the breaks during the summer also come when water is in high demand and more water is being pumped.

"When there is more flow, more pressure and more water moving, you have more breaks," she said. "When you have such an extended period of heat, it exacerbates things. When you don't have a lot of rain, there are a lot of breaks."

More than 100 water mains have been repaired in the city since the beginning of the year, with 33 repairs in July alone — more than any month since 2000.

"We are already above our all-time high, which was 32 in December when it was cold and dry," Tasker said.

She said the public often notifies city crews about water main breaks.

"People often see water coming out of the ground and they call us," she said. "The



Tom Dorsey/Associated Press

Chad Farmer, an employee of the Salina Water Department, works to repair a break in an 8-inch cast-iron water main Thursday evening. City officials say they face record costs for water main breaks caused by the drought.

other way we find them is if the water levels at the plant are going down, and not because of an increase in usage by the customer. We also see tower levels start to drop."

Between 2000 and July 27, the city has spent about \$5.187 million fixing 1,482 water main breaks.

The city averaged 125.2 breaks between 2000 and

2011. The majority of problems occurred before 2004.

"We had a lot of problems in 2003 because of the water pressure in the pipes," Tasker said. "When I came on in

2003, we started to pay more attention to the pressure and reduced the number of breaks."

Tasker said Salina is not the only town having problems with water main breaks. In 2011, Wichita had 802 breaks, Topeka had 786 and Hutchinson had 103.

Aside from money, the breaks cause the city to lose water.

"When we have breaks, we have 11 to 14 percent of water pumped through that pipe that goes unaccounted for," Tasker said.

Dave Nowak, director of Saline County's road and bridge department, said some county roads are beginning to "unravel" because of dry conditions.

"We need moisture to hold the roads together," Nowak said. "The gravel material is getting fine and powdery. We are starting to see the road bed."

Driving down Fairchild Road in Saline County can be a bumpy ride, but it recently became hazardous for Dennis Cooley, assistant road superintendent for Saline County Road and Bridge. The dry weather has brought the road bed, including large rocks and metal, to the surface as the gravel has turned to powder.

Cooley said the roads can be repaired only when there is enough moisture, but it won't be cheap. The county will have to purchase a lot of aggregate material to use on the roads.

Cooley said he has never seen the roads in this state in his 25 years with the county.

"There is just no way to combat it," he said. "It would be impossible for us to water all of the roads. We just need moisture."

## ABORTION

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covered by the remaining charges, the clinic faces one misdemeanor count each of not properly examining whether the fetus was viable and one misdemeanor count of performing an illegal late-term abortion. The clinic's attorneys have said repeatedly it violated no laws.

The charges dismissed Thursday were 13 counts of each misdemeanor, covering abortions occurring before the change in the deadline for pursuing charges.

When that deadline hit for those abortions in July 2005, Kline was Kansas attorney general and was locked in a legal dispute with Planned Parenthood and another abortion provider over access to key information in patients' medical records as he investigated providers. Kline didn't gain access until October 2006, just before losing re-election as attorney general.

Kline became Johnson County's district attorney in January 2007 and continued investigating Planned Parenthood. He lost the August 2008 Republican primary to Howe.

In November, Tatum dismissed 26 misdemeanor counts accusing the clinic of failing to maintain reports on individual copies of reports on individual abortions as required by law and 23 felony counts of creating false copies of such records when required to produce them in 2006, during Kline's investigation as attorney general.

# Douglas County first to use cellphone-tracking 911 system

Associated Press

LAWRENCE — Douglas County is the first in Kansas to use a national safety database designed to help emergency dispatchers more quickly find people who use cellphones to make 911 calls, county officials said Wednesday.

Under the system, called Smart911, emergency dispatchers can access personal information that would help locate the caller. Unlike landlines, which show the

address of the caller, cellphone calls display only the number and wireless carrier. Dispatchers can locate the tower where the call was placed, but not an exact location for the caller.

"Often we have to do a lot of research to figure out where they are or who they are," said Scott Ruf, director of Douglas County Emergency Communications.

With Smart911, residents voluntarily submit information, including cellphone numbers, to the national

database.

"It's another resource for us," Ruf said. "It will make us more effective and efficient in delivering emergency services to people who need it."

Smart911 is offered through Rave Mobile Safety, a Massachusetts-based company that partnered with the University of Kansas on its campus alert system.

"I hope that other counties will soon follow to offer enhanced response so it can be available throughout

Kansas," said State Sen. Marci Francisco of Lawrence.

Residents can register at a website, www.smart911.com, and add as much information as they want. They also can manage their information through the online account.

Ruf said the information becomes available to dispatchers only during 911 calls from a registered phone, so the information can't be used by law enforcement for other things. In a large 911 emergency, dis-

patchers would be able to provide information to officers, medics and firefighters.

Douglas County Sheriff Ken McGovern said public safety officials have worked with Douglas County Senior Services and Independence Inc. to encourage their clients to use the system.

"In their profile, a citizen can tell us who lives in their house, what their medical conditions may be, if they have pets and where children's bedroom locations are," McGovern said. "If a

child is missing, parents can have their current photo and description in their profile, allowing officers to have that photo in hand much faster.

"In an emergency, more information means greater effectiveness, saving invaluable time and lives," he said.

Douglas County will pay about \$18,000 a year for the service, with the funds coming from a 911 fee on phone bills collected by the state, which reimburses most of the revenue to counties.

## ANDOVER

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expensive.

Should the increase pass, the district plans to spend roughly \$228,000 — 53 percent — on teaching staff positions and roughly \$67,000 — 15 percent — on coaches and activity sponsor

positions. The remaining funds would go toward instructional support — about \$118,000, or 27 percent — and district maintenance — \$20,000, or 5 percent.

Whether the LOB increase is passed or not, the district's mill levy will go down for Andover residents due to several factors, Evans said, including refinanced bonds and increased enrollment.

If the LOB increase is

passed, the mill levy would be reduced by 2.5 mills. If it is voted down, the mill levy would be reduced by 3 mills.

Under state law, Kansas school districts are allowed to raise the LOB 1 percent to a maximum of 31 percent of their general budget through a referendum only. Evans said that 90 to 95 percent of Kansas school districts are at the 30 percent LOB already, while a handful are at 31

percent.

The Andover School District has held the LOB at 30 percent for the past four or five years, Evans said. The past year's LOB budget was approximately \$8.7 million.

District officials say they are unaware of any organized opposition to the increase.

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