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UTM ROTC instructor charged with sex crimes

A 29-year-old former UT Martin ROTC instructor accused of soliciting an underage girl for sex was released on bond while prosecutors seek federal indictments against him.

Trenton resident Joseph Allen Spellings, a captain with the National Guard, is under investigation by the FBI for allegedly using MySpace to engage in sexually explicit conversations with a minor and using e-mail to send nude photos of himself.

An affidavit filed by the Memphis FBI Crimes Against Children Task Force indicates the Trenton Police Department received an initial complaint March 11 from a Trenton woman who expressed concern when her 14-year-old daughter was allegedly contacted over the Internet by Spellings, who is known to the family.

After the girl's family filed the complaint, Trenton police contacted F.B.I. agents who continued to communicate with Spellings, posing as the alleged victim. During the conversations, Spellings allegedly discussed trading nude photos with the girl and allegedly sent photos of exposed male genitals, according to the affidavit. Additionally, Spellings allegedly discussed having sexual contact with the girl, and setting up a meeting.

Spellings is charged with

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Dresden police warn public to be aware of con men

According to a Dresden police report, con men talked their way into the home of a local woman last week and robbed her.

On Monday, April 26, the unidentified victim told police three Hispanic males came to her Dresden home offering to sell some home improvement products that would help the existing floor last longer.

Once inside the residence, one of the suspects lured the victim into the kitchen, while another took her purse located in the living room.

A third suspect waited outside in the getaway car, described as a large, dark-green, four-door sedan, with missing hubcaps and red lettering on the license plate.

Area residents are asked to be on the lookout for the suspects and report any suspicious activity immediately to the nearest law enforcement agency.



Weakley County Chamber hosts President's Banquet

The Weakley County Chamber of Commerce presented the Weakley County Chamber of Commerce President's Banquet Tuesday, April 27, at the Boling University Center Ballroom on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin. (See article and additional photos on pages 4 & 5.)

Dresden approves fee increases, cutbacks in FY 2011 budget

By David Fisher Staff Reporter

During the regular monthly meeting of the Dresden Board of Mayor and Aldermen Monday, May 3, members approved the first reading of an ordinance outlining the budget for fiscal year 2010-2011, which includes various fee increases and cutbacks in expenditures to balance the budget.

Board members appointed Rob Newbill as a temporary replacement for outgoing Alder-

man Mike Parrish, who resigned his post after moving outside the city limits of Dresden.

The board approved the first reading of an ordinance regulating the placement of refuse and garbage cans in commercially zoned and residentially zoned areas of the city prior to and immediately after the scheduled collection by the city.

Board members also heard reports concerning recent problems with equipment failures

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Vickers pleads not guilty in sex case

A 44-year-old Martin school teacher, who is accused of having sexual relations with one of his students, has pleaded not guilty.

Last week, a grand jury in Memphis returned federal indictments against Stanley Wren Vickers for two counts of transporting a minor across state lines with the intent to engage in sexual activity.

The alleged victim, a 14-year-old eighth grade boy, was a student at the school where Vickers taught and a player on the soccer team he coached.

The government and economic teacher and girls' soccer coach at Westview, reportedly taught at Martin Middle School at the time of the alleged abuse.

Vickers appeared Wednesday

in federal court in Memphis and entered a "not guilty" plea.

The defendant was ordered to remain jailed pending a pre-trial conference scheduled for Thursday, May 27.

A jury trial is tentatively set to begin Monday, June 7.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation Crimes Against Children Task Force and the Martin Police Department are investigating the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Dan Newsom is handling the case for the government.

The maximum penalty for the charges levied is not less than five years and not more than 30 years in federal prison.

Vickers remains suspended without pay from his teaching duties pending the outcome of the case.

W.C.S.D. uncovers meth lab in Martin area

Weakley County Sheriff's investigators arrested several individuals last week on meth-related charges.

According to a press release from the Weakley County Sheriff's Department, six people were arrested Monday, April 26, at a residence on Hwy 431 West of Martin, after a "shake and bake" meth lab was discovered on the property by sheriff's deputies.

Those arrested are as fol-

- Billy Joe Readenour, 52, of Hwy 431 Martin;
- Tammy Lou Readenour, 50, of Hwy 431 Martin
- Jessica Spring Lynch, 22, of Union City
- Michael Thomas Lynch, 19, of Union City
- Dennis Wayne Cunningham, 35, of Dresden
- Casey Travis Dudek, 23, of

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Local youngsters enjoy a ride on the tilt-a-whirl at the carnival during the 31st annual Tennessee Iris Festival. (See additional carnival photos on page 3.)

Dresden hosts 31st annual Tennessee Iris Festival

By David Fisher Staff Reporter

Dresden was buzzing with excitement during this year's Tennessee Iris Festival held April 24-May 1. However, for the first time in its 31-year history, the Iris Festival Parade, scheduled for Saturday, May 1, was cancelled, due to heavy rains that flooded much of west Tennessee and caused road closings across the region.

Other events cancelled on Saturday included a 5K run, Iris Festival Pet Show, Iris

Tractor Pull, and a citywide yard sale.

With the exception of Saturday, most of the other events during the weeklong event were acclaimed a huge success by festival organizers. Festival-goers enjoyed a wide variety of events, including: opening ceremonies, cemetery walk, prayer breakfast, tasting party, bingo, baking contest, senior citizen luncheon, community wide gospel singing, golf tournament, community health fair, Fairy Tale Feast, quilt and needlework show, corner café, Ken-Ten Iris Association Flow-

er Show, Tennessee Iris Festival Horticulture Show, and Iris Music Fest.

The Iris Carnival, located in the downtown area, provided lots of fun rides, games, prizes, carnival treats, and other activities for the whole family. It opened Tuesday but shut down when rains set in late Friday that continued through Saturday.

There were also arts and crafts booths set up around the courthouse Friday, but they were closed Saturday because of inclement weather.

Weekend storms flood region

By David Fisher Staff Reporter

Compared to other Tennessee counties, Weakley was spared the worst of the flooding caused by heavy rains over the weekend that resulted in the death of 18 Tennesseans statewide, and caused millions of dollars in property damage.

The rising floodwaters resulted in mass evacuations across the region, especially in low-lying areas such as Dyersburg and Jackson, and

blocked many roads that do not normally flood.

On Monday, Weakley County Emergency Management Director Jamison Peevyhouse stated the southern portion of Weakley County received the most flood-related problems, especially in the Greenfield area.

"Roads around us are opening up and then closing back," Peevyhouse said. "They may be open one hour, and closed the next. It has affected some patient transfers into Jackson over the weekend, but most of these

roads have started to clear back up."

He stated the bottom along Hwy. 45 between Greenfield and Bradford is still underwater and remains impassible.

"We haven't had any actual flooding inside any houses, I understand," Peevyhouse said.

He said Weakley County assisted Gibson County Sunday with search and rescue operations for missing persons lost in the floodwaters.

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Everett-Stewart Airport hosts groundbreaking for \$4.9 million runway extension project

Everett-Stewart Regional Airport Manager Jo Ann Speer welcomes state and local officials and other distinguished guests to a groundbreaking ceremony marking the official start of construction on a \$4.9 million runway extension project. Other speakers are (l to r): Portis Tanner, who spoke on behalf of his father, U.S. Congressman John Tanner; TDOT Commissioner Gerald Nicely; Tennessee Aeronautics Commission Chairman Ron Cooper; and Dr. Chris Gooch, Everett-Stewart Airport Board Chairman. (Photo by David Fisher; see additional photos on page 2.)

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