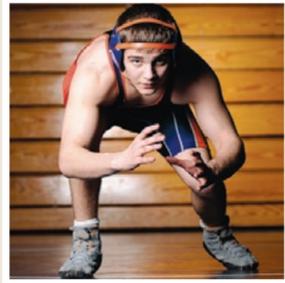


MORNING NEWS

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ANIMAL CONTROL

Ordinance Draws Attention

COUNCIL COMMITTEE RECEIVES FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED CHANGES

By Steve Caraway
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SPRINGDALE — The City Council Ordinance Committee received the feedback it wanted Tuesday from opponents and proponents of suggested changes in Springdale's animal ordinance.

Those interested in the changes packed the room, with speakers opposing the changes while others asked for stricter enforcement by animal control officers.

"That is what this meeting is about," said Alderman Mike Overton. "We need to hear the ideas our

residents have."

The committee meeting came before the council meeting. The ordinance committee plans to refine the proposal and bring it back to its next meeting on April 14, Overton said.

The new regulations came after proposed animal ordinances came before a City Council committee last summer. The changes would place more responsibility on pet owners, said Brett Harris, director of animal services. Harris and Amber Roe drew up the changes, using ordinances already in effect in cities all over the country,

Harris said.

The changes include requiring a chip to be placed under a dog or cat's skin for identification. Chips would help owners recover their lost pets, said Charlotte Venable, a volunteer with the animal shelter.

Animals do lose their tags and the shelter would have no method of finding the owner without chips, Venable said.

The shelter euthanized 1,599 pets in 2009, Harris said.

The cost of chipping animals is too much, said Kerry Teems.

"It could cost \$55 to \$65 per animal," Teems said.

The cost could lead people to abandon more animals during tough economic times, said Craig Campbell.

"It's a bad time to bring up any extra expenses," Campbell said.

The shelter would offer chipping under the direction of a veterinarian at a cost of \$20 per animal, Harris said. The chipping cost would replace an annual \$5 license fee with a one-time fee, Harris said.

The city has a problem with dogs running loose, said Herman Sizemore.

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Interpreter Issue Delays Trial

MAN CHARGED WITH ASSAULT

By Ron Wood
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FAYETTEVILLE — A judge delayed the start of a trial for a man accused of strangling and raping a Fayetteville woman last year because of differing interpretations of statements the Spanish-speaker made to police.

Jose L. Mendez, 47, of Rogers was set for trial today in Washington County Circuit Court in an assault of his former girlfriend. Mendez is charged with attempted capital murder, rape, aggravated assault and aggravated residential burglary.



Mendez

Police say Mendez broke into the woman's Fayetteville apartment about 3 a.m. May 13 and began choking her when she woke up. Mendez then sexually assaulted the woman as she lay unconscious on her bed, according to the arrest report. Mendez also allegedly hit the woman in the head. The woman was treated for her injuries at a local hospital.

Mendez was arrested at the U.S.-Mexico border May 14 in Laredo, Texas, and was returned to Washington County, where he has remained in jail in lieu of \$100,000 bond.

During the investigation, Detective Jared Pina, a Springdale police officer fluent in Spanish, interviewed Mendez. Pina was to testify at trial about what Mendez told him during that taped interview.

But, the defense hired a translator who contends Pina's version of what Mendez said is incorrect. They also contend translations must done by a state-certified translator to be admissible in court.

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Officials Say Parking Deck Cost Overruns On Track

By Scott F. Davis
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The cost overrun on the construction of the piers for the parking deck at the Washington County Courthouse appear to be staying within engineers' estimates, officials said Tuesday.

More than a third of the piers are completed, and engineers say it's too soon to know if the extra cost will come in on the low or high end of the estimates.

Construction of the deck halted earlier this year after significant cost overruns were discovered. The contractor found voids and harder than expected rock when drilling piers, officials said.

The \$4.3 million bid by VCC LLC was calculated using bid specs for concrete piers based on test bores, but once work began the contractor learned the piers will have to be deeper than expected and some

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PICTURE POSE



STAFF PHOTO SARAH BENTHAM

Jacob Brown, 4, of Gravette smiles Tuesday as he gets his picture taken inside a photo booth at The Jones Center in Springdale. The center is hosting special events throughout the week to celebrate area schools being closed for spring break. Activities kick off at 10 a.m. daily and are offered at no charge. The pool and ice arena will be open extended hours for \$2 per person. For more information about Spring Break Week 2010, including a list of activities, call 479-756-8090 ext. 2222, or visit jonesnet.org.

Witness Testifies About Weapon

CRIME LAB ANALYSTS TAKE STAND IN DIMAS-MARTINEZ MURDER CASE

By Tracy M. Neal
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BENTONVILLE — A witness testified Tuesday morning that Erickson Dimas-Martinez asked him to retrieve the gun that may have been used to kill Derrick Jefferson.

Jefferson, 17, of Centerton was killed Dec. 30, 2006. His body was found that morning in the driveway of a home at 4265 N. 40th St. in Springdale.

He had been shot once in the head.

One of the suspects — Dimas-Martinez — is on trial. He is charged with aggravated robbery and capital murder. Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty.

Uris Magana-Galdamez, charged

as an accomplice, will be tried later.

Edwin Mancia, who is Magana-Galdamez's cousin and a former friend of Dimas-Martinez, testified Tuesday morning. Mancia, 22, is being held in the Benton County Jail as a material witness. Mancia testified that he was arrested in November 2008 for not having a driver's license, and immigration officials placed a hold on him. Mancia, who is from El Salvador, said at 16 he illegally entered the United States and came to Northwest Arkansas.

According to Mancia, Dimas-Martinez called him at 10 p.m. Dec. 31, 2006, and told him that



Dimas-Martinez

Magana-Galdamez was in trouble. Mancia testified Dimas-Martinez told him that his cousin had been arrested with false papers and the owners of those papers had supposedly killed someone.

Mancia told jurors Dimas-Martinez asked Mancia to go to Magana-Galdamez's home and retrieve a gun. Mancia testified he agreed to get the gun because he believed his cousin was falsely accused of a crime.

He went to Magana-Galdamez's residence the next afternoon and Magana-Galdamez's brother-in-law found the gun in a ceiling area near the garage and then gave the gun to him, Mancia said.

Mancia took the gun to his home. Almost a week later and after Dimas-Martinez's arrest, Mancia turned the

gun over to police.

Tony Pirani, one of Dimas-Martinez's attorneys, was critical of Mancia's testimony since Pirani claimed that Tuesday's testimony was the first time Mancia had made claims about Dimas-Martinez telling him about false papers and a murder.

Pirani pointed out Mancia did not make the claim in his first interview with investigators in January 2006 and later in an application for a visa, which Mancia wants in order to stay in the country.

Mancia also claimed Dimas-Martinez referenced a threat concerning people, including Magana-Galdamez, testifying against him.

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