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July 29, 2016

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## Quick action stops blast



CHRISTOPHER TOMLINSON/The Daily Sentinel

Firefighters respond to a blaze Monday afternoon on Blair Road in Whitewater. One employee was burned in the flash fire at the black-powder manufacturing facility, but was able to prevent an explosion, according to agencies that investigated the incident.

## Man burned in Whitewater flash fire moved explosives from blaze

By ERIN MCINTYRE  
and GABRIELLE PORTER  
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When a flash fire ripped through the building of a Whitewater black-powder manufacturer on Monday, an injured employee kept the situation from getting even worse. Instead of running from the flames after he was burned, Greg Ziegler had the wherewithal to get on a forklift and use it to move the finished product away from the fire to keep the building from exploding, according to his friend and

former co-worker, Tom Butchko of Whitewater. Land's End Fire Protection District Chief Brian Lurvey and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives spokeswoman Lisa Meiman confirmed Ziegler's actions. "He was able to get it down the road and keep it from combusting," said Lurvey. The fire, which was ruled an accident after an investigation by the ATF, occurred when Ziegler was producing black-powder replacements, which are used for muzzleloading and other shooting sports.

According to the state of Florida's business records, Ziegler is listed as the president of American Pioneer Powder, Inc., which is licensed by the ATF to manufacture the ammunition at 1475 Blair Road. Federal investigators said the fire was a result of flash ignition, which causes a sudden, fast-moving fire when a mixture of air and particles in the air combust. Though Ziegler could not be reached via phone on Thursday, St. Mary's Hospi-



ROBERT GARCÍA/The Daily Sentinel

See FIRE, page 5A

## DA: Birgfeld skull wrapped in duct tape

### Defense: Many other suspects got little scrutiny in 2007 slaying

By GABRIELLE PORTER  
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Prosecutors giving opening statements Thursday in the first-degree murder trial of Lester Jones revealed for the first time that Paige Birgfeld's skull was wrapped in duct tape when hikers discovered the skeletal remains of the Grand Junction woman in 2012. Birgfeld, a single mother who moonlighted as an escort in the Grand Junction area, disappeared June 28, 2007. Her remains were found in a dry creek bed in Delta County nearly five years later in March 2012. The 65-year-old Jones, an occasional client of Birgfeld's, was arrested in November 2014 after a lengthy investigation and is now standing trial on charges of first-degree murder, second-degree murder and kidnapping in her death. Thursday marked the end of the four-day jury selection period with attorneys picking 11 men and four women to sit as the 12-person jury with three alternates. Chief Deputy District Attorney Dave Waite spoke to jurors about the condition Birgfeld's body was in when it was discovered years after her disappearance, mentioning the duct tape found wrapped around her head, and telling them that

the coroner was never able to determine the exact manner of death. "The defendant had done his job," Waite said. "He had put that body out there long enough." Waite and Public Defender Kara Smith also both spoke publicly for the first time about a suicide attempt Jones made less than three weeks after Birgfeld's disappearance and a day after he was grilled for five hours by investigators by the Mesa County Sheriff's Office. Waite said after Jones attempted to overdose on Tylenol PM on July 19, 2007, a suicide note was found that included the words "Tell the cops to get (expletive)-ed." Smith said the attempted overdose lends context to a bizarre exchange that Jones had by phone with a Mesa County sheriff's deputy that day. The deputy called Jones to tell him that his two vehicles — which had been seized by law enforcement under a search warrant — were available to be returned. Jones was apparently somewhat incoherent and spontaneously said to the deputy, "You asked me where I would bury a



LESTER JONES  
Was customer of Paige Birgfeld

See BIRGFELD, page 5A

## GJ man gets 18 years for killing 'pregnant' teen girlfriend



DARWIN BAGSHAW

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST  
Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — A teen convicted of beating his girlfriend to death with a shovel when he was 14 will spend at least 18 years in prison, the Utah State Board of Pardons and Parole has decided. Darwin "Christopher" Bagshaw, now 19, is set to have his first parole hearing in October 2034. A parole board will consider whether to

set a release date then, when Bagshaw will be 37 years old, or keep him in prison. His sentence could be as long as life in prison. Bagshaw, who was living in Grand Junction when he was arrested, pleaded guilty in the death of 15-year-old Anne Kasprzak. He got angry the night in 2012 when she said she was pregnant and they had to run away together, and hit her in the face several times with a

shovel, prosecutors said. An exam conducted after her badly beaten body was found floating in the Jordan River showed she wasn't pregnant, and her family later said she made up the story. The girl had survived an abusive childhood, going through several foster homes before she was adopted by the Kasprzaks at age 9. The teenager noticed Bagshaw in math class and started imagining a fu-

ture with him, her mother Veronica Kasprzak said. Bagshaw apologized to the victim's family and his own at his sentencing hearing in the murder case. His defense attorneys asked for a shorter sentence, saying he was scared and angry and was too young to process what was happening the night he killed Anne Kasprzak. The judge, though, called the beating unspeakably vicious and

handed down a sentence that carries a mandatory minimum of 15 years in prison. Though Bagshaw was originally charged as a juvenile, a judge agreed the case was serious enough to go to adult court. The girl's family has said that while Bagshaw was young at the time of the beating, he was responsible for Anne Kasprzak's death and should serve his sentence in an adult prison.

## US to fast-track oil, gas permits, amid steep slump

By MATTHEW BROWN  
Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. — U.S. officials announced plans Thursday to speed up permitting for oil and gas drilling on federal and Indian lands to reduce delays, as applications were projected to be down 40 percent versus their historical average amid an ongoing price slump. Low energy prices already have curtailed domestic energy exploration, driving down revenue. That's put a crimp in budgets for the major energy producing states, including Wy-

oming, New Mexico, Colorado, Alaska, North Dakota and Montana, which receive a substantial share of revenue from oil and gas activity on U.S. lands. In an attempt to streamline drilling approvals and reduce costs for companies, Bureau of Land Management Director Neil Kornze said all drilling applications would have to be filed online under the new proposal. The move follows years of

See PERMITS, page 5A



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton gives the thumbs-up as she appears on stage during the final day of the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia on Thursday night.

## US history is made: Clinton is nominee

PATRICK HEALY and AMY CHOZICK  
New York Times

PHILADELPHIA — Hillary Clinton, who sacrificed personal ambition for her husband's political career and then rose to be a globally influential figure, became the first woman to accept a major party's presidential nomination Thursday night, a prize that generations of American women have dreamed about for one of their own. Declaring that the nation was at "a moment of reckon-

ing," Clinton, 68, urged voters to reject the divisive policy ideas and combative politics of the Republican nominee, Donald Trump. She offered herself as a steady and patriotic American who would stand up for citizens of all races and creeds and unite the country to persevere against Islamic terrorists, economic troubles, and the chaos of gun violence.

See CLINTON, page 5A