

## Decision layover

Business E-1

AA improves its balance sheet and delays a decision on its jet maintenance shops.

THE OPEN  
CHAMPIONSHIP

Skill and a bit of luck will determine the winner at this year's British Open.

Sports B-1

## Rapper's delight

Scene D-1

Tulsa's Young Hustlas Coalition will take the stage for a CD release party.



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# TULSA WORLD

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# Poultry suit settled for \$7.5 million

Of the \$7.5 million, \$7.3 million will go to Oklahoma City law firm McKinney & Stringer.

► Most will go for legal fees; Tulsa will not be repaid the \$4 million it spent trying to remedy water problems.

By DAVID HARPER  
AND P. J. LASSEK  
World Staff Writers

The city of Tulsa and its utility authority will receive \$7.5 million from six poultry companies the city sued over pollution in creeks and streams that feed two city water-supply reservoirs, Lake Spavinaw and Lake Eucha.

The money will be used to pay the city's attorney fees and litigation expenses, with none left to reimburse the city for the \$4 million it has spent

treating taste and odor problems in its water supply.

Of the \$7.5 million, \$200,000 will go to the city for out-of-pocket expenses, and the remaining \$7.3 million will go to Oklahoma City law firm McKinney & Stringer. The firm is receiving \$600,000 for out-of-pocket costs and the rest in cash and deferred payments, said Jim Cameron, Tulsa Metropolitan Utility Authority chairman.

But Peterson Farms attorney Scott McDaniel said Wednesday that the settlement goes far beyond money

and recognizes the future interests of both sides in the lawsuit.

Under a settlement agreement that was approved by U.S. District Judge Claire Eagan Wednesday afternoon, the so-called "poultry defendants" will transfer by wire \$5.65 million within three days to McKinney & Stringer, where it will be held in trust.

The other \$1.85 million will be paid by Peterson Farms Inc. on or before March 24.

For decades, many farmers have used the free chicken litter as fertilizer on their pastures. The phosphorus reaches the lakes through streams and creeks. Once it's in a lake, massive alga blooms grow, creating

chronic water taste and odor problems that are costly to treat.

The settlement falls short of placing liability on the poultry companies and the Arkansas city of Decatur for polluting Tulsa's drinking water but does create measures to restrict further contamination.

Tulsa Mayor Bill LaFortune said Wednesday that the settlement is historic.

"Everybody involved was not going to in any way give an inch in terms of protecting the water," he said. "There was never a gray area in that regard, but we did want to settle the

SEE SUIT A-5



Bill LaFortune

The mayor said finalizing the settlement marks a historic moment for the city.

# Guerrillas attack in Iraq

## U.S. soldier, friendly mayor killed; missile fired at plane

By STEVEN HURST  
Associated Press



BAGHDAD, Iraq — In a marked escalation in attacks, suspected insurgents tried to shoot down a U.S. transport plane with a surface-to-air missile Wednesday, killed an American soldier in a convoy and gunned down the mayor of an Iraqi city.

The new American commander in Iraq acknowledged for the first time Wednesday that coalition forces are facing a "classical guerrilla-type war situation" against opponents ranging from members of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party to non-Iraqi fighters from terrorist groups. Gen. John Abizaid spoke on the eve of a banned holiday Saddam loyalists could use to demonstrate their power.

The U.S. military said one surface-to-air missile was fired on a C-130 transport as it landed at Baghdad International Airport. It was only the second known missile attack on a plane using the airport since Baghdad fell to U.S. forces on April 9, said Spc. Giovanni Lorente. He said he did not know where the plane came from or whether it was carrying passengers, cargo or both.

Meanwhile, Mohammed Nayil al-Jurayfi, who had actively cooperated with U.S. forces as the new mayor of Hadithah, was killed when his car was ambushed by attackers firing automatic rifles as he drove away

from his office in the city 150 miles northwest of Baghdad, police Capt. Khudhier Mohammed said. One of the mayor's sons also was killed.

Mohammed said the mayor, who took office after Saddam's fall, was slain because he was "seizing cars" from Saddam loyalists who used to work in the deposed Iraqi leader's offices in Hadithah, a city in the restive "Sunni Triangle" that is home to many Saddam supporters.

The American soldier was killed and three others were injured in a rocket-propelled grenade attack west of Baghdad near the Abu Ghraib prison, a U.S. military spokesman said. In a separate attack, an 8-year-old Iraqi child died when an assailant threw a grenade into a U.S. military vehicle guarding a bank in west Baghdad.

The American driver of the vehicle was wounded along with four Iraqi bystanders, according to Army Maj. Kevin West.

"They're killing more Iraqis than they are Americans," West said, shaking his head.

Abizaid, the new head of the U.S. Central Command, said in

SEE IRAQ A-4



WALLY SANTANA / Associated Press

U.S. soldiers guard the body of a soldier killed in an attack on a convoy on a main highway in West Baghdad as a medivac Black Hawk helicopter takes off Wednesday. One U.S. soldier was killed and two others were injured when a powerful explosion went off as their supply convoy made its way along the main highway west of Baghdad, soldiers at the scene said. The explosion occurred as a 20-vehicle military convoy was passing a wrecked truck that had been abandoned along the side of the road.

# FBI investigating Stites in property purchases

By ZIVA BRANSTETTER  
World Projects Editor

The FBI is investigating property purchases by former state Rep. Chad Stites, and grand jury subpoenas are expected to be issued soon, Tulsa County District Attorney Tim Harris said Wednesday.

"An FBI agent has been assigned to the case and we're anticipating grand jury subpoenas being issued," Harris said.

Stites said he was unaware of the development and had not received

any subpoenas.

"This is the first I've heard of it," Stites said.

Officials at the U.S. Attorney's Office declined to comment.

In addition to serving as a state representative, Stites was paid to appraise foreclosed properties before they were sold at sheriff's auctions. Tulsa County Sheriff Stanley Glanz fired Stites as an appraiser after the Tulsa World reported Stites and his

SEE STITES A-3



Chad Stites

The FBI is investigating property purchases by the former state representative, and grand jury subpoenas are expected to be issued soon.

# GRDA scuttles questioned policy

► State officials had ruled the tax-sheltered deferred pay plan for top executives to be illegal.

By RANDY KREHBIEL  
World Staff Writer

VINITA — The Grand River Dam Authority on Wednesday agreed to discontinue a tax sheltered deferred compensation plan for senior administrators that has drawn fire from the state auditor and the attorney general.

After a closed session with First Assistant Attorney General Tom Gruber lasting more than an hour, the GRDA directors voted to terminate the plan and negotiate settlements with the one former and five current employees covered by

it. The action was made retroactive to June 6, 2002, the date the attorney general's office first told the GRDA the plan was illegal.

"Because of the potential for litigation, we've been advised to make a settlement," said audit committee chairman W.R. "Dick" Horkey.

The GRDA resisted attempts to kill the plan for more than a year. The plan, established in 1994 to keep several key administrators, currently has a value of about \$965,000.

"We entered into this at a time when energy was booming," said Horkey. "We had to do something or lose some good people."

Created in the 1930s to administer dams and reservoirs on the Grand River and to generate and market electricity, the GRDA is a self-

SEE GRDA A-3

# Tulsa rate of suicides alarming to officials

By MATT ELLIOTT  
World Staff Writer

Tulsa suicides this year could eclipse last year's total if a present trend continues, alarming city law enforcement and mental health officials.

As of Tuesday, Tulsa police had investigated 40 suicides compared with 54 for all of 2002.

"If things continue in 2003 as they have, we may reach a new all-time high," said Mike Brose, executive director of the Mental Health Association in Tulsa.

In 2000, police investigated 75 suicides — the highest total on record. The average annual total is typically in the mid-40s, Brose said. 2000 was the climax of a rise in suicides, which had fallen to historically low levels in the 1990s.

"Based on comparisons with past years, we may very well have 75-80 people take their own lives before the

SEE SUICIDE A-3

## For help

If you or someone you know suffer from depression, feelings of hopelessness or suicidal thoughts, help is available:

In case of immediate threat of harm to self or others, call 911, or the 24-hour COPES Crisis Line at 744-4800.

For adolescents, call Youth Services of Tulsa's 24-hour crisis line at 582-0061. The organization also operates a shelter and provides counseling services.

Also, people can call the Helpline, 836-HELP, which offers information and personalized assistance in finding community resources.

For more information on local resources, call the Mental Health Association in Tulsa at 585-1213 and ask for the Mental Health Assistance Center.

The center has an updated list of available services or can connect a family or individual with low-cost or sliding-scale basis services, even if the client is uninsured.