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Ottawa students charged with threats

By Kevin Caufield and Tom Collins
NewsTribune Reporters

OTTAWA — Three students at Ottawa Township High School have been charged for posting a pair of

written threats in two restrooms at the high school, Ottawa police said. Police chief Brian Zeilmann said the two notes were found taped to mirrors in two restrooms — a men's room and a women's room

— on separate floors. The notes, Zeilmann said, threatened students with assassination today. "All indications are that it was done as a prank that backfired on them," Zeilmann said, indicating

the perpetrators had hoped to force a school cancellation today. Aaron A. Hendrix, 17, of 512 Seneca Drive, Ottawa, a 15-year-old Ottawa boy and 15-year-old Ottawa girl all face preliminary

charges of misdemeanor disorderly conduct. Hendrix's case has been referred to the La Salle County State's Attorney's Office and the juvenile matters were referred to **See 'Threats' Page A2**

La Salle schools in good shape financially

By Matthew Baker
NewsTribune Reporter

Despite a strong evaluation by the state, continued fiscal responsibility is advised for La Salle elementary schools.

During a school board meeting Tuesday night, acting superintendent Al Humpage told the board they need to maintain the responsible measures that placed the district in the Financial Recognition range on the state's 2009 School District Financial Profile in order to prepare for possibly troublesome future.

"Overall, I think the district is in good shape," Humpage said.

Historically, the district has had little property wealth, Humpage explained, which means little local tax revenue and much reliance on state and federal funding. Using figures from the June 30, 2008 audit, Humpage showed the school only receives little more than 43 percent of its revenue from local sources.

Considering the state has serious budget deficit problems, Humpage warned the district may have to be wary of how much funding the state will actually be able to provide. He also discussed a recently reported topic at Ottawa Township High School, where it was brought up that the state is supplanting a portion of regular state aid payments with federal stimulus money.

Normally, schools are able to spend their state aid payments however they see fit, but the stimulus money has certain restrictions, according to Humpage.

In regards to budgeting, the school agreed on fees for the 2009-2010 school year.

Fee changes were proposed for four items. The cost of physical education uniforms for Lincoln Junior High School students will increase to \$20 from \$15.

"That's just to pay for the uniforms. We don't make money off of that," Humpage said.

The school will no longer be charging for locks for the physical education lockers **See 'La Salle' Page A8**

And freedom for all



NewsTribune photos/Amanda Whitlock

Terry Freeman (from left), Paul Williams, Horizon House support staffers Adam Mize and Jennifer Pittman, and Claude Stacey cheer for better state treatment of the developmentally disabled during the Freedom Quest '09 rally Tuesday afternoon. The group makes up part of the 10 local representatives who are joining more than 100 other disabled people and advocates traveling to Springfield over the next couple days to further their cause.

Horizon House joins others in quest for equality

By Matthew Baker
NewsTribune Reporter

Their voices may, at times, be difficult to understand, but the message coming from the developmentally disabled community in the Illinois Valley and around the state is clear: equality and freedom now.

Hundreds of local people with disabilities and their advocates met in the parking lot of Peru Eagle's Club on Tuesday afternoon to rally support for their cause and Freedom Quest '09.

Inspired by Civil Rights freedom rides of the 1960s, advocacy groups



Courtney Buchanan and Ronnie Leslie (center) lean on one another in the parking lot of Peru Eagle's Club. The pair, along with the rest of their group, traveled from Rock Island on the first leg of Freedom Quest '09's northwest route.

Illinois Voices and Campaign for Real Choices organized the Freedom Quest, which enlisted groups

throughout the state to send members of the disabled community to **See 'Freedom' Page A2**

Two charged in Peru beer can burglary

By Jeff Dankert
NewsTribune Reporter

Investigators believe they have solved the case of 1,000 antique beer

cans valued at about \$40,000 stolen this winter from a Peru collector.

Two Ottawa men are being held in Pontiac and Sheridan on other charges and will be brought to La

Salle County on writ warrants to face charges of Class 2 burglary, Police Chief Doug Bernabei said.

The men are Joseph J. Kelly, 45, of **See 'Beer' Page A2**



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Later on twitter.com/newstrib

Jim Cogdal tweets in from his seat at St. Bede/Princeton regional baseball with updates from Kevin Chlum at L-P softball.



Starting around 4:15