

In brief

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Bank robber pleads guilty to 3 heists

An Ypsilanti Township man is expected to serve about 16 years in prison after pleading guilty this week in federal court to three local bank robberies last winter, authorities said.

Dominique Coleman-Bey, 34, pleaded guilty Tuesday to a federal indictment charging him with bank heists in Ypsilanti Township, Pittsfield Township and Ann Arbor. His brother-in-law, 26-year-old Aaron Hill, pleaded guilty to the same charges earlier this year and is expected to be sentenced to a maximum of 10 years in prison.

Authorities also linked the two men to at least three local robberies of gas stations and convenience stores around the time of the bank robberies. They confessed to robbing a TCF Bank on Packard Road in Ypsilanti Township on Dec. 23, the Bank of Ann Arbor in Ann Arbor on Jan. 8, and the TCF Bank branch on Carpenter Road in Pittsfield Township on Jan. 15, FBI Senior Agent Greg Stejskal said.

Both men were caught the night of the Pittsfield Township bank robbery and have been held in federal custody. Coleman-Bey had been released from prison six months earlier after serving time for 12 felony convictions that included several robberies.

Coleman-Bey will be sentenced in January.

Medicinal marijuana rally set for Sunday

Proponents of Ann Arbor's medical marijuana referendum are holding a rally Sunday to mobilize support for the measure.

Speakers will include Chuck Ream, a Scio Township trustee who led the drive to collect signatures to put the matter on the Ann Arbor ballot, and a Traverse City man with multiple sclerosis who was arrested on possession charges earlier this year.

The event will be held from 12:45 to 2 p.m. at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Ann Arbor, 4001 Ann Arbor-Saline Road.

U-M prof to serve on state committee

A University of Michigan professor has been appointed by Gov. Jennifer Granholm to the state's Investment Advisory Committee.

Marina von Neumann Whitman of Ann Arbor will represent the general public on the board for a term expiring on Dec. 15, 2006. She is a professor of business administration and public policy for the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, and will assist the committee with reviewing investments, goals and objectives of each of the state department's retirement funds.

The board may also, by majority vote, direct the state treasurer to dispose of any holding or holdings, and to make specific investments.

Water rate hike smaller than in past

Greater Ypsilanti area residents could see a smaller increase in drinking water rates next year than in previous years.

The Detroit Water Department announced Wednesday a 3.5 percent combined increase in water and sewage rates to meet revenue obligations next year, said George Ellenwood, public affairs manager with the department. "It's a preliminary number," he said.

The figure is an average and will change from one community to another. The department serves 125 communities, including the Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority.

It is too early to tell how the combined increase would affect rates in the Ypsilanti area, said Larry Thomas, YCUA's executive director. Those rates will be announced in December, he said. The authority provides water and sewage services to the city of Ypsilanti and Superior, Pittsfield, Augusta and Ypsilanti townships. It also processes sewage from three Wayne County townships.

The proposed combined increase announced Wednesday could mean smaller increases to YCUA's customers, Thomas said. Last year, the combined increase was about 9 percent and Detroit handed YCUA an 18 percent increase, Thomas said.

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