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Burglary ring members released

Ron Brown
Staff Writer

Two more members of what Rapid City police called the largest burglary ring operation ever solved in South Dakota received judicial clemency Tuesday.

Brian Keith Bock, 21, Isabel, and Bryan Alan Peterson, 22, Lemmon, will be released from prison Friday after serving 347 days behind bars.

The pair, along with two other former South Dakota School of Mines & Technology students, were responsible for breaking into more than 40 businesses in a six-county area before they were caught last year.

Most of the stolen goods were recovered, but the loss and damages totaled more than $45,000.

Bock was originally sentenced to three concurrent 10-year terms in prison, with five years suspended, and an additional five-year prison term to run concurrently. Bock had admitted to committing 27 burglaries. He pleaded guilty to four.

Peterson was initially ordered to serve three concurrent six-year terms with three years suspended on each. He had admitted to breaking into 19 businesses. He pleaded guilty to three.

"I guess society has had our retribution," 7th Circuit Judge Ruland Grossbaum said after the men told him of their impressions of prison life.

Bock and Peterson have paid more than $9,000 in restitution since beginning their sentences last May.

A third member of the four-man ring, Lawrence "Tre" Vestling III, has yet to begin making restitution payments, according to the Pennington County victim's assistance office.

Vestling's eight-year sentence was trimmed by five years Feb. 19.

Grossbaum had described Bock as being "cocky" at his sentencing last year. But Tuesday, Bock choked back tears as he described the state penitentiary as a "really dirty" place. "It stinks. It smells really bad," Bock said. "There's killers and what-not in there."

Peterson said he had been beaten up "for making eye contact" with a prisoner.

The felony convictions will be erased if Bock and Peterson successfully make the remainder of their restitution payments.

Each will have to stay employed until the victims have been paid, and on probation until Jan. 5, 1999, Grossbaum said.

Weston County board to discuss 1991-92 calendar

NEWCASTLE, Wyo. — The Weston County School District One Board of Trustees will consider the 1991-92 school calendar and school board policy changes at its regular meeting today.

In other business, Bette Sample, representing the Innovative Grants Advisory Committee, will make a presentation. Also making presentations will be Mike Starks for the Discussion Committee and Transportation Director Gene Mills.

The trustees will hold an executive session to discuss possible litigation. Under old business, the trustees will discuss band uniform bids, bus bids, track financing and the superintendent search.

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City loses 300 jobs to Casper

Staff and AP Reports

Casper's gain is Rapid City's loss in a contest for 300 new jobs to be created when Defense Technology Corp. of America moves its operation from Ohio within the next year and a half.

Robert Oliver, the company's president and chief executive officer, announced Tuesday that the Wyoming city would be its new home. Citing a better tax climate and work ethic, Oliver said the company was leaving Rock Creek, Ohio.

Defense Technology produces Chemical Mace and Pepper Mace for law enforcement and military uses.

In their search for a new home, company executives have been in close contact with Rapid City economic development officials over the past several months.

According to Bob DeMersseman, director of the Rapid City Economic Development Partnership, a cheaper building tipped the decision in Casper's favor.

"We were in the running all the time," DeMersseman said. "We did our best, but we just didn't have the building for them."

Casper, its energy-dependent economy racked since the 1980 oil bust, has lots of vacant buildings. Defense Technology reportedly paid $1.25 per square foot for the 30,000-square-foot building that will house the company.

"We're moving ... because this state has sensible tax laws with all factors being favorable for the businessman," Oliver said. "And the people here have marvelous work ethics."

During the first phase of the five-phase relocation, the company will employ about 40 people in the manufacturing of the aerosols.

In addition, the company's international sales division will move to Casper and will be in operation by May 15, distributing Del-Tec Products nationwide.

When the move is completed, the company is expected to employ 300 people in Casper, with 95 percent of the work force coming from that area.

"We want the people of Casper to know that we're here for the long haul," Oliver said. "This company intends to grow and bring prosperity to its employees and the city."

Spearfish man missing after morning walk

Barbara Ordahl
Northern Hills Bureau

SPEARFISH — Authorities are looking for a 71-year-old Spearfish man who was reported missing from his home Monday night.

Findley Creighton, 204 Washington St., went for his usual morning walk about 11 a.m. Monday and did not return. His wife, Ida, reported his disappearance to the Spearfish Police Department about 10 p.m.

Neither his wife nor police suspect foul play.

Ida Creighton said she knew of no reason her husband would intentionally leave home and that there was no hint he had done so. His electric razor was set on "recharge" at home, indicating he planned to return from his walk, she said.

She became seriously worried when he failed to return in time for their daily coffee date at McDonald's restaurant, she said.

Searchers have scoured the area where Creighton takes his walks. So far they have found no clues. Friends and the couple's three sons in Spearfish, Sturgis and Hill City have not seen him, his wife said.

"It's just not his character at all," she said. "We don't suspect anything; we just are baffled. He just went out for a walk and didn't come back."

Creighton reportedly was in good health and had no memory problems. He is described as 5 feet, 10 inches tall with short brown hair turning gray at the temples. His right index finger is missing, and he was last seen wearing an acid-washed black denim jacket and jeans, a black Western hat with a red band, Western boots, a large Black Hills silver ring on his left hand, and brown wire-rim glasses.

Anyone with any information about Creighton is asked to call the Spearfish Police Department at 642-2755.

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