

4C Sunday, December 31, 1995 W

WYOMING

The Billings Gazette

Klan plans King holiday protest

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — The Ku Klux Klan will hold a rally in Cheyenne in January to protest the Martin Luther King Holiday, the group's national director has announced.

Thomas Robb said his group will rally on the steps of the Capitol on Jan. 15, shortly after the Low and Charity Club's annual Martin Luther King march to the Capitol.

Robb said the rally, to begin at 2 p.m. on Jan. 15, is being held in response to requests from people in Wyoming and northern California.

He noted that the Klan has held rallies in the past in Denver and Boulder.

Some 30 to 15 Klan members will attend the rally, where they will display signs and banners and make speeches.

Clayton Gergering said the group is not welcome, but added officials cannot prevent Klan members from exercising their rights to free speech.

"My message to them is the people of Wyoming won't support them and they're just not welcome here," he said.

Gergering, who as a legislator supported the law that created the Martin Luther King Holiday in Wyoming, said he had planned to join a march in King's honor in Cheyenne on Jan. 15.

However, the Republican said he may change his plans if the situation in Cheyenne becomes volatile.

Robb said Gergering's statements are not typical of political officials.

"I think that while people are being discriminated against," he said, "we are becoming the new

minority." Time magazine reported that white people will be a minority in less than 50 years.

The government has turned its back on American workers through measures such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, Robb said.

Dorothy Black, president of the Low and Charity Club, the group that organizes the annual Cheyenne march in King's honor, said the march will be held at noon on Jan. 15 despite the Klan rally.

The King march usually attracts 200 to 300 people.

Casper business lays off 30 workers

CASPER, Wyo. (AP) — DefTech Technology Corp. has laid off about 30 of its workers in Casper, citing the partial shutdown of the federal prison system and slow sales.

The company, in a news release, announced that it had laid off the employees on Friday and said the work force reduction could last through the first quarter of 1996.

The news release noted that sales by DefTech, which manufactures "less-than-buffet" products for self-protection such as "pepper spray," generally dip during the winter months.

"However, the situation has been compounded by delays in payments for recent large contract sales to the U.S. military, delayed due to the government shutdown," the release said.

In addition, the company has not received payment for some large international payments, the release said.

DefTech owner Robert Oliver said the company was having a hard time getting paid by the federal government.

"We're having a hard time getting paid," he said. "We can't even find where some of our contracts are in the system. We can't even find people to talk to."

He pointed specifically to a contract with the federal prison system, which is on hold.

Believe me, if the prison guards aren't being paid, we're not being paid, he said. "If you can't be paid by your customers, you can't pay your people."

The company has also sold less of its arrived pepper spray than expected.

Oliver said, "Our aerosol spray business is nowhere what we anticipated it to be," he said.

In addition, the company's \$10 million contract with the government of Ecuador is being held up.

"When we build (the product) and have it all stacked in a warehouse, they have a major scandal and all their contracts are shut off," he said.

"Suing the government of Ecuador is not a pleasant task," Oliver said.

Oliver said he hoped the work force reduction would end within 90 days.

"We do not consider this permanent in any way, shape or form," he said. "There are very, very good people. We feel horrible about this."

The news release said the company expects a rebuilding period during the first quarter of the year.

"A fairly rapid recovery is expected, with 1996 sales projected to exceed 1995 by 15 percent to 20 percent," it said.

'Happy Face Killer' taunts officials

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The "Happy Face Killer" has written a taunting letter to prosecutors in Wyoming and Florida, daring them to try to sentence him to death.

Kath Hunter-Jensen, who claims to have killed eight women in five states, has avoided death sentences so far. Plea bargains in two Oregon cases and one in Washington have resulted in life sentences with 30-year minimums.

Jensen, known for the happy faces with which he decorates his letters, is jailed in Vancouver, Wash.

He sent the Oregon newspapers a copy of his latest correspondence, hand-printed on yellow legal paper.

"Boy, I got a deal for you, Mr. Prosecutor," his letter begins. "I will come to your state willingly to face the death penalty."

But, she adds, each state would have to provide him a court-appointed lawyer at taxpayer expense.

Prosecutors in Cheyenne, Wyo., earlier rejected Jensen's offer to help solve the killing of an Oklahoma City woman in exchange for a promise not to seek the death penalty.

In the letter, Jensen assumes he would be sentenced and sentenced to die. So he said he would run up the taxpayers' tab by ordering his lawyer to fight the death penalty in every way possible.

Jensen says in his letter that the expense of his appeals would prompt outraged taxpayers to oust the prosecutor from office.

That's a risky game, says District Attorney Michael Schenk in Portland's Multnomah County.

"If they want him, they can get him. It's not a good idea to agitate other jurisdictions," Schenk said.

Jensen also is under investigation in California.

Jensen concludes his letter in a conciliatory tone:

"Give me a life sentence, and I will cooperate fully and with two days to live with it, never to see me again."

Credit unions help furloughed workers

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — Several federal credit unions in Cheyenne are taking steps to help furloughed federal employees, according to officials.

Officials at several credit unions said while they have no specific programs in place to help employees until an agreement is reached on the federal budget, they can help on a case-by-case basis.

"We don't have anything specific set up, but we kind of go member by member," said Camille Shallen, president of the United Peoples Federal Credit Union. "All they have to do is ask, and we do what we can within reason."

Some credit unions are deferring payments on loans or extending interest-free loans to help the unemployed workers.

In Butler, an administrative assistant at the Wyoming Employment Federal Credit Union, said her institution was also providing cash advances in the short-term. If the furlough continues longer than expected, the advances will be repaid into loans that can be repaid "in a more lenient manner."

"We need to be flexible and help each other when rough times hit, and certainly employee organizations with (furloughed workers)," Butler said.

Pam Miner, president of the First Education Federal Credit Union, said aid would be provided as requested by members.

"We've already made that commitment that we will help them out, that's our job," she said. "We'll make sure people are financially stable until the crisis is over."

Miner said five members of her credit union have asked for help, which she said was a significant number.

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