

IN SPORTS, D1

WEST BOYS SET TO BEGIN SEASON

IN LOCAL & STATE, B1

'GREEN WAVE' WORK TO BEGIN

IN ARTS & CULTURE, C1

'NUTCRACKER' SEASON

TODAY'S OBITUARIES

- Vernon T. Brown
Hardy C Reyerson

HAVE YOU HEARD?

He called out drunk, then came to rob

OAKWOOD, GA. — Police in Georgia say a man called out of his Steak 'n Shake job because he was "intoxicated," then showed up anyway and demanded money while holding a co-worker at gunpoint.

The Gainesville Times reports 20-year-old Kentarias Gowans, of Flowery Branch, is charged with offenses including aggravated assault. Oakwood Police investigator Todd Templeton says Gowans called out on Thanksgiving, went to the restaurant that night, held a gun to a co-worker's head and demanded money.

Police say responding officers arrived to see employees running from the business, which had customers at the time. Police say an apparently still intoxicated Gowans briefly raised the gun at officers before dropping it. He was arrested after a brief struggle during which a stun gun was used.

It's unclear if Gowans has a lawyer.

The Associated Press

LOTTERY

Wednesday's Daily 3
8-1-8

Wednesday's Gopher 5
3-6-28-44-46

Wednesday's Powerball
8-27-44-51-61 and 14

Wednesday's Lotto America
34-38-45-47-51 and 10

Wednesday's Northstar Cash
3-8-14-16-18

Tuesday's Mega Millions
23-43-60-63-69 and 19

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WEATHER, PAGE B4

Sunny

High in mid 30s, low in upper teens.



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Mankato, Minnesota

Marriott planned for downtown

Would go above Cherry Street ramp

By Mark Fischenich
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MANKATO — A new 117-room Marriott hotel would be the latest in a string of recent multi-million

investments in downtown Mankato under a proposal coming before the Mankato Economic Development Authority Monday.

Developer Gordon Awsumb's Marriott SpringHill Suites hotel project would place guest rooms on the upper three floors of a five-story building constructed into the existing two-level parking ramp along Cherry Street and the Front Street

plaza. Some of the current parking ramp would be remodeled and incorporated into the hotel — including a ground-floor swimming pool, bar/restaurant and hotel lobby. A skyway connecting the hotel to Mankato Place is also requested.

A memo to the Economic Development Authority doesn't specify the construction timetable or

the total cost of the hotel development, which would be the latest in a spate of downtown construction this decade — joining new office buildings constructed across Cherry Street, the recently completed seven-story Eide Bailly Center at Second and Main streets and the five-story Bridge Plaza building under construction at Second and Mulberry streets.

"When you're talking about a hotel, you're well into the \$5 million range and it's probably a lot more than that," said City Manager Pat Hentges, who added that one or two other possible downtown hotel projects are being discussed.

Jon Kietzer, the owner of the Landkamer Building at

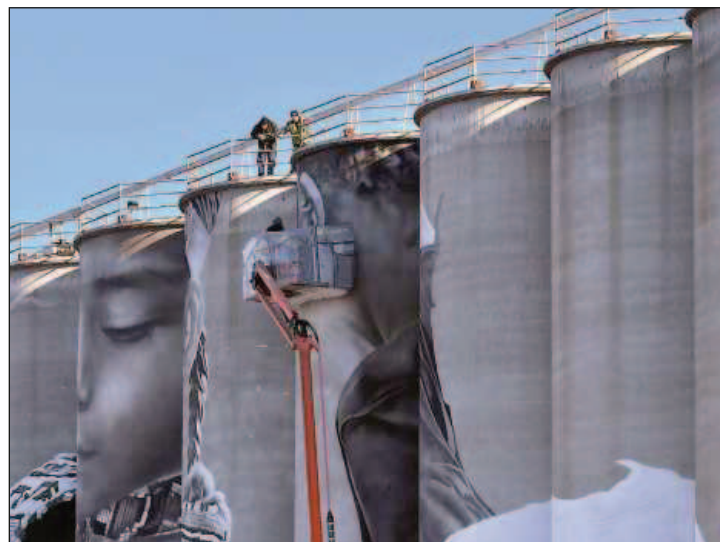
Please see HOTEL, Page A4

MURAL HEADWAY

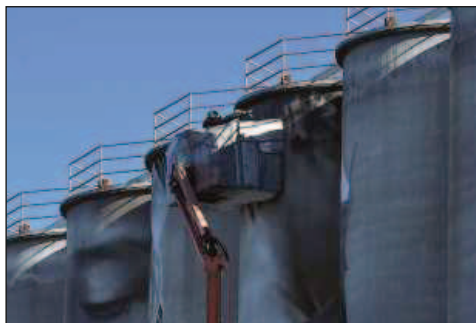


Pat Christman photos

Australian artist Guido van Helten works on adding figures to the west side of the Ardent Mills silos Wednesday. Van Helten hopes to make more progress on the figures before plummeting temperatures force him to pause for the winter.



Artist Guido van Helten pauses to chat Wednesday with a pair of workers atop the Ardent Mills silos in Mankato.



Artist Guido van Helten sprays paint high above the ground on the Ardent Mills silos Wednesday.



For a photo gallery, see
mankatofreepress.com.

Farmland rents stay up despite crop prices

By Tim Krohn
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With another harvest behind them, farmers are beginning to sit down with their landlords to look at farm land rental contracts for the year ahead. In most cases, it's the landlords who hold the cards.

"Based on commodity prices, yields and input costs, rents should be about \$100 an acre," said University of Minnesota Extension Educators David Bau. "But (rents) are about double that or more."

The University of Minnesota Extension is holding 40 land rental workshops around the state, including three in the Mankato area. (See related information.)

With recent years seeing low crop prices and higher input costs, along with yields this year that were below normal, traditional economic formulas would say rents should be falling. While they have dropped some, they haven't fallen nearly as fast or as much as they rose several years ago when commodity prices were at record highs.

In south-central Minnesota, rents went down 13% from 2014 to 2018 but went down just 0.6% from 2017 to 2018, according to an Extension report. Statewide, rates fell an average of 1.6% last year.

The report notes that while rents have decreased some in recent years, they went up substantially more in the years leading up to 2014.

"Farmland rents are the largest input cost for both corn and soybean farmers, and they have not come down as quickly as commodity prices have," Bau said.

For many farmers, rent comprises about 25% to

Please see CROP, Page A4

Democrats determined to see impeachment through

Legal scholars testify to Judiciary panel

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Three leading legal scholars testified Wednesday that President Donald Trump's attempts to have Ukraine investigate Democratic rivals are grounds for impeachment, bolstering the Democrats' case as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi made sure they're prepared

for that momentous next step.

Meeting behind closed doors ahead of an initial Judiciary Committee hearing to consider potential articles of impeachment, Pelosi asked House Democrats a simple question: "Are you ready?" The answer was a resounding yes.

Though no date has been set, the Democrats are charging toward a Christmastime vote on removing the 45th president. It's a starkly partisan undertaking, a situation Pelosi

hoped to avoid but now seems inevitable.

Trump is alleged to have abused the power of his office by putting personal political gain over national security interests, engaging in bribery by withholding \$400 in military aid Congress had approved for Ukraine; and then obstructing Congress by stonewalling the investigation.

Across the Capitol on Wednesday, the polarizing political divide over impeachment, only the fourth such inquiry in the nation's

history, was on display.

At the Judiciary hearing Democrats sided with the scholars who said Trump's actions reached the Constitution's threshold of "bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanors." Republicans pointed to the lone professor they were allowed to invite, who said impeachment was not warranted.

Democrats in the House said the inquiry is a duty. Republican representatives say it's a sham. And quietly

Please see IMPEACH, Page A4

FIND THE FREEDOM TO LAUGH, SNEEZE AND JOG AGAIN.



Although loss of bladder control may be embarrassing, it doesn't have to mean giving up belly laughs with friends. Our OB-GYN experts, led by a board certified urogynecologist, partner with you to help determine the best urinary incontinence treatment option, surgical or non-surgical, to fit your lifestyle and needs.

Mayo Clinic Health System in Mankato. Call 507-479-1480 to schedule an appointment. mayoclinichealthsystem.org

