

Thieves get away with cash, hat and cigarettes

ROBBERY, from Page 1

it didn't work.

"I guarantee you it works now," she said, noting that the clerk wasn't close enough to an alarm button that also would have notified police. From now on, she said, the alarms will be checked weekly.

Blume said the robbers got away with a total of about \$835, stealing cash and checks, a leather hat off the souve-

nir stand and between seven and 10 cartons of cigarettes.

Before they left, she said, the man who had jumped behind the counter told the clerk, "If you tell anyone, I'll waste you."

She said the men didn't take the food they had brought up to the counter. Blume said the robbers didn't get much cash, and they would have stolen even less if the cashier had enough time between customers to put some of the

money into the safe.

"She's really good about doing that," the manager said.

The cashier called the police after the men were out of sight, Blume said, adding that she thinks the clerk handled the robbery well.

"I wouldn't have expected her to do anything else," she said. "It isn't worth the chance of losing someone's life."

She said the clerk decided to finish her shift after she talked with police

and calmed down. Blume said she and her husband stayed with the clerk until the end of the night.

"I thought she was very brave," she added.

Video cameras in the station filmed the robbery, Blume said, adding that she plans to have all employees watch the tape at the Goodland Police Department, where it is being held. She said the clerk told her she didn't recognize the men, but another employee might

have seen them before.

A man who worked the graveyard shift on Friday night, Blume said, told her four men came into the station that night and acted like they might rob the place.

The robbers were reportedly wearing Nike brand clothing, Blume said, and the male clerk told her the men who came in Friday were wearing Nike clothes. She said the Friday night clerk plans to watch the tape this week.

Blume said the cashier described the men as Hispanic, but wasn't sure of their ages. She said the man who jumped behind the counter had a small, thin mustache.

Blume said she thinks the men had planned the robbery.

Police Chief Ray Smee said police have no description of a car and aren't even sure if the robbers left in a car. He said this is the first time he remembers Presto being robbed.

Legislature waiting for final talley from tax returns

By John Hanna

Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA — State government is operating hand-to-mouth while it waits for Kansans to file their income tax returns.

The state needs \$17 million to meet its next payroll on Friday but had just \$3.8 million in its treasury Monday morning, Budget Director Duane Goossen confirmed.

Goossen said income tax payments could provide enough money this week to meet the payroll, but he acknowledged he has arranged some financial juggling in case revenues don't flow in as needed. He said the state will make its payroll.

However, Goossen said school districts, who were shorted half of the \$136 million due them on April 1, may not see that remaining \$68 million until May.

Legislators saw the latest developments as more confirmation of the depth of the state's financial problems.

"It looks like state government's ready to be brought to its knees," said Rep. Rocky Nichols, D-Topeka, a member of the House Appropriations Committee.

For months, as revenue collections have fallen short of expectations, the state has eaten into money set aside in its treasury — so-called rainy day funds — to pay the government expenses.

When the 2001 Legislature drafted the current budget, members expected

the state to end the current fiscal year on June 30 with \$374 million in its treasury, after spending \$4.5 billion.

The latest estimate, issued last week, is that the ending balance will be only \$34.4 million — even after millions of dollars in income, sales and excise taxes are collected this spring.

"It's a function of the money not coming in when we expected it to," said Senate Ways and Means Committee Chairman Steve Morris, R-Hugoton.

State law requires legislators to approve a budget that leaves an ending balance equal to 7.5 percent of expenditures. But if revenues are less than expected, the rainy day funds melt away.

Other states separate rainy day funds from their treasuries. That's the case in Missouri, where the governor must first declare an emergency and two-thirds of both legislative chambers must approve using the funds.

Kansas is struggling to pay bills from its treasury because the revenues don't flow in at the same time as bills come due.

For example, the state expects to collect \$764 million in individual income taxes in April, May and June, most of it in the weeks after the April 15 filing deadline.

Goossen noted that the treasury usually is at a low point in early April. Facing financial problems this year, the state can't rely on the cushion of rainy day funds that would be available

in good or normal years.

"I'd say we've hit rock bottom," said Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, D-Topeka.

Goossen said he believes enough individual income tax payments will arrive for the treasury to make payroll

payments Friday.

But he said Monday he had arranged to borrow money from state universities and the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, which also receive money from fees, just in case.

"We'll just go for some other pots of

revenue if we have to," Goossen said. "Making payroll is our number one cash flow priority."

On other issues:

- A Senate bill increasing existing agriculture fees and imposing new ones faced opposition in the House.

- Gov. Bill Graves signed a bill re-drawing the 40 state Senate districts, sending it to the attorney general for review.
- Student leaders at the University of Kansas announced a rally of college students for April 18 at the Statehouse.

Israel not bowing to pressure to stop

INTERNATIONAL

CASABLANCA, Morocco — Under Arab pressure to force Israel to pull its troops out of the West Bank, Secretary of State Colin Powell is reaching out to Egypt for help in persuading Yasser Arafat to clamp down on terror against Israel.

Powell, in the second day of his Middle East mission, drew mixed results in meetings in Morocco with Moroccan King Mohammed VI and Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia.

His quest for support was overshadowed by their anger at Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for sending troops deep into the West Bank in a drive against militants who have terrorized Israel with suicide bombings. Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak also has been highly critical of the Israeli operation.

Powell said yesterday that he was encouraged, but added, "Let's hope this is not a little bit of this and a little bit of that," with advances in some areas and pullbacks in others.

Powell denied he was delaying in getting to Jerusalem in order to give Sharon more time on the West Bank.

LONDON — Kings and queens from across Europe gathered today in the ancient halls of Westminster Abbey for the Queen Mother Elizabeth's funeral as huge crowds stood outside to honor a woman beloved for her kindness and dedication to duty.

People across Britain and around the world mourned her death March 30 at the age of 101. Thousands of people began lining up along the funeral procession route before dawn.

Up to 200,000 people stood in line, some for up to 12 hours, to view the queen mother's coffin as it lay in state

ap news capsules

at Parliament for four days. The doors finally closed this morning with people still rushing to get in.

Leaders and representatives from across the world attended the funeral in a great display of Europe's royal houses. The monarchs of Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands attended, along with U.S. first lady Laura Bush, and the leaders of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the representatives of many other countries.

After the funeral, a cortege was to take the coffin by car to Windsor Castle for the royal family's private interment of the queen mother in a chapel alongside her husband, King George VI, who died in 1952.

NATIONAL

SPACE CENTER, Houston — Space shuttle Atlantis zoomed toward the international space station today on a journey to deliver the station's backbone — a 44-foot-long girder that is the foundation for further expansion of the orbiting outpost.

Yesterday's launch of Atlantis and its crew of seven astronauts was filled with drama right to the very end.

Stiff wind at the launch pad in Florida threatened to further delay the start of Atlantis' 11-day mission. Liftoff had already been delayed four days because repairs had to be made to a leaky fuel line on the launch pad.

But the weather cleared up.

Then just before liftoff, a last-minute computer problem almost forced another delay. But controllers quickly reloaded the needed system software and sent Atlantis on its way with just 11 seconds to spare at the end of the five-minute launch window.



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Mike & Marla Harrison



Internet switch tomorrow

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nwkansas.com
customers

After a week's delay, we at **nwkansas.com** are ready to move forward with improvements to our system. We were forced to delay this change because of a mistake by our supplier. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

On Wednesday we will change our Internet source connection to Southwestern Bell Internet Service. Bell promises a faster and more efficient connection to the Internet, BUT the Domain Name Service numbers (DNS numbers) in your computer should be changed that day. You should have received a letter and an email with the new numbers and how to change your computer.

For Goodland customers changing the numbers is not as critical as other cities in the nwkansas.com system because the new high speed equipment in Goodland will handle the assignment of the DNS numbers automatically.

If you have trouble, call *The Goodland Daily News* or Tom Betz or one of his helpers at 785-899-2338. We will have extended hours Wednesday and later in the week and do our best to help you through this change.

Better Internet service is our goal. Please bear with us through this changeover.



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