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Presented By: 

Clearing House on the way for ads targeting elderly

PORTAGE, Wis. (AP) — Publishers Clearing House went on trial over its sweepstakes promotions for the first time Wednesday, with state lawyers accusing it of preying on the elderly with misleading advertising.

State lawyer Cynthia Hirsch said the sweepstakes' mailings dupe people into buying magazines and other merchandise in hopes of improving their chances of winning the jackpots, which can run into the millions.

"The essential misleading deception Publishers Clearing House communicates is the more you buy, the closer you get to the big prize," she said.

thing to enter the drawing. He said people did not know they were misled until Attorney General Jim Doyle sued. He called the move by Doyle, who plans to run for governor in 2002, "State's objection to the allegation."

"The essential misleading deception Publishers Clearing House communicates is the more you buy, the closer you get to the big prize."

— Cynthia Hirsch
 Wisconsin State Lawyer

In the civil case, the state is seeking an unspecified amount of money to reimburse residents it says were defrauded. It also wants the sweepstakes to change its marketing practices and pay a penalty.

In August, Publishers Clearing House agreed to pay \$18 million to 24 states and the District of Columbia to settle allegations it uses deceptive promotions. Wisconsin, which sued Publishers Clearing House last year, was not part of that settlement.

Publishers Clearing House attorney Jon Axelrod said the state's own witnesses would say they knew they had little chance of winning and did not have to buy any-

The trial comes after months of sometimes contentious exchange between the two sides. In September, Judge Richard Rehm banned inflammatory comments from attorneys both sides after Doyle called sweepstakes "burglars" and there was a "special place in hell for the company."

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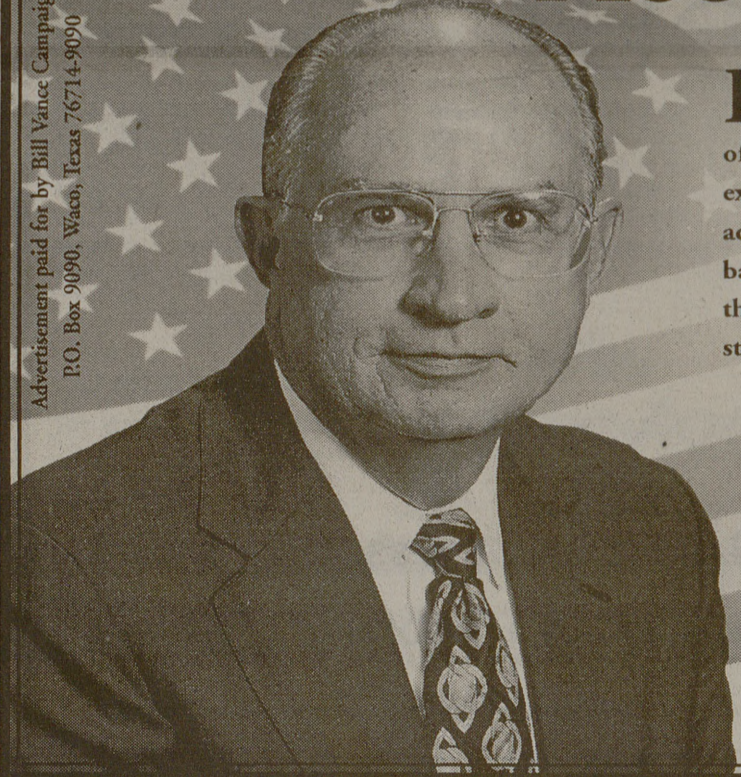


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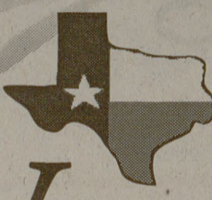
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News in Brief

Police officer shot in four-hour stand

DELLWOOD, Mo. (AP) — A police officer was shot and killed in what authorities say was a cold-blooded ambush that triggered a four-hour standoff before the suspect surrendered.

Thomas Meek, 43, was charged on Wednesday with first-degree murder.

The standoff began after Sgt. Richard Eric Weinholt, 44, and three officers were called to a home in St. Louis County on Tuesday. A tenant said he was afraid to approach the house because the suspect was inside and had earlier pointed a shotgun at him.

Weinholt was hit by a shotgun blast shortly after the officers entered. His bulletproof vest could not save him, and he later died at a hospital.

Missing boy found frozen in woods

PARK CITY, Utah (AP) — A 7-year-old boy, whose disappearance prompted police questioning of his father, froze to death after wandering into the Utah woods by himself, authorities said Wednesday.

Gage Wayment walked miles after leaving his father's pickup truck last Thursday. Utah medical examiner said preliminary finding. The boy's pajamas feet were frozen through, died at an unknown time of hypothermia.

The finding appears to end suspicions that the boy was killed by his father, Paul Wayment, Summit County Detective Rob Berry said. However, a lie-detector test was still expected to be performed later this week.

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