

Across the USA NEWS from every state

Alabama: Montgomery — Republican Gov. Bentley ordered an across-the-board cut of 3% in the state education budget and said he will cut most agencies in the state General Fund budget 15% after working with the Legislature to protect some essential services. Bentley said the \$5.5 billion education budget has a \$165 million shortfall.

Alaska: Fairbanks — The Junior Yukon Quest has been canceled this year because the 130-mile sled dog race did not attract enough mushers. The race had been scheduled for next weekend in Fairbanks. The race requires a minimum of 10 mushers. Spokeswoman Abbie West says five had signed up.

Arizona: Phoenix — Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio said in a news release that he was invited by a teacher to read to sixth-graders at Sahuaro Elementary School, then uninvited. He says Washington School District administrators had the teacher rescind the invitation because he is too controversial.

Arkansas: Little Rock — The *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* reports that Arkansas Baptist College will offer small loans to businesses to bring them to the area around the campus. Loans of \$50 to \$5,000 will be available. The Scott Ford Center for Entrepreneurship and Community Development, due to open early next year, will provide the loans.

California: Vallejo — School district spokeswoman Tish Busselle says a student at Grace Patterson Elementary School was given two marijuana-laced cookies at a convenience store on the way to school. After four students shared a cookie, three were taken to the hospital with flu-like symptoms. A fourth went home with a parent.

Colorado: Denver — A proposal to allow moviegoers to donate a dime at theaters to draw filmmakers to the state has received final approval from the state House. The bill, which goes to the Senate, would allow voluntary donations at theaters for the Colorado Film Commission, which offers incentives to filmmakers for shooting in Colorado.

Connecticut: Hartford — A hearing is planned today on a bill that would set up a cord blood collection program in the state. Under the plan, which is expected to initially cost about \$200,000, parents could donate their infant's umbilical cord blood, which is rich in stem cells that can be frozen and used to treat various diseases and conditions.

Delaware: Middletown — Johnson Controls-Power Solutions Group is investing \$60 million in a new production and distribution center for lead acid batteries. The 400,000-square-foot facility will add 67 full-time jobs by June 2012.

The Economic Development Office will award \$2.06 million to help with construction and new equipment, and a \$385,000 jobs grant will be awarded.

D.C.: The Committee on Public Works and Transportation concluded that Council Chairman Kwame Brown "inappropriately requested" a Lincoln Navigator and city officials violated the law by leasing the SUV, *The Washington Post* reported. A 2004 law prohibits the city from leasing or buying vehicles that get under 22 miles a gallon.

Florida: St. Petersburg — Archaeologists expected to begin unearthing a 1,000-year-old canoe from the Weedon Island Preserve. Phyllis Kolianos, program coordinator for the preserve's Cultural and Natural History Center, said experts believe the 40-foot pine canoe, carved from a tree trunk, would have been large enough cross Tampa Bay.

Georgia: Augusta — Tonya Bonitibus, executive director of the Savannah Riverkeeper group, plans to live on a raft in the Savannah River for as long as it takes to recruit 500 new members in a drive that begins today. The 20-by-20-foot raft has a shower and toilet. She said she hopes to bring attention to the importance and beauty of the river.

Hawaii: Wailuku — Castle & Cooke has generated \$6 million from the auction of 11 luxury condominiums on Lanai that had failed to sell during the financial crisis. Opening bids were set at \$435,000 to \$845,000, much less than similar units were bringing two or three years ago. The highest bid: \$1.6 million.

Idaho: Boise — A bill that would let school districts sell ad space on the sides of school buses cleared the state Senate 25-9 Tuesday. Assistant Majority Leader Chuck Winder says the ads could generate up to \$1 million a year. The bill gives the State Board of Education authority to determine what ads are acceptable and bans political ads.

Illinois: Springfield — Carroll County corn yields topped all counties last year at 190 bushels an acre. The state Department of Agriculture reported that the corn yield per acre fell 10% in 2010. The state averaged 157 bushels of corn an acre, vs. 175 bushels in 2009. Piatt County's yield of 63 bushels of soybeans an acre beat the state record of 51.5.

Indiana: Fort Wayne — The state Housing and Community Development Authority approved \$10 million in tax credits for construction of 66 rent-to-own homes in the Renaissance Pointe project this spring. Qualified buyers could rent for 15 years, then could buy the homes at substantially below the original \$130,000 to \$150,000 cost.

Iowa: Waverly — A Waterloo man has pleaded guilty to two counts of impersonating an emergency medical care provider in Bremer County. Christopher Hill faces up to 10 years in prison. Hill told the judge he carried a scanner and assisted authorities in a car accident and an industrial accident. He said he was trying to impress someone.

Kansas: Hutchinson — A concert to celebrate Kansas' 150th birthday will go on, but Kansans won't be able to see it on television. Lynn Meredith, CEO of Smoky Hills Public Television says proposed budget cuts to public TV and radio will prevent it from producing and airing a "Home on the Range" concert in Hutchinson on March 13.

Kentucky: Frankfort — The Public Service Commission approved East Kentucky Power Cooperative's request to cancel plans for a coal-fired power plant in Clark County. The utility announced in November that it had scrapped plans to build the 278-megawatt plant at Smith Generating Station because the plant was not needed.

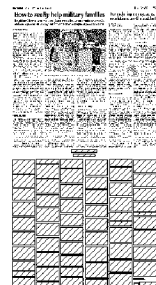
Louisiana: Baton Rouge — The due date for a study of the possible consolidation of Southern University at New Orleans and the University of New Orleans has been delayed to March 15. A judge stopped the study last month after a lawsuit was filed by a group of Southern students. A second judge lifted the restraining order.

Maine: Portland — Three airports will share more than \$542,000 in federal grants. Millinocket Municipal will get \$170,750 to buy land and rehabilitate infrastructure; Central Maine of Norridgewock received \$136,750 to remove runway obstructions; and Auburn/Lewiston Municipal received \$235,000 for an environmental study.

Maryland: Baltimore — U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will not provide funding for the city's lead paint abatement programs after the city health department didn't fix up enough homes under the latest \$4 million grant. HUD is seeking documentation that all the money in the last grant was spent appropriately.

Massachusetts: Webster — The town health board approved a plan to put 4-by-8 foot signs on dilapidated buildings with the owner's name, address and phone number. Selectman Mark Dowgiewicz proposed the step after hearing it costs up to \$9,000 a year to deal with squatters and vandals.

Michigan: Detroit — Robert Ritchie, popularly known as Kid Rock, will be honored by the NAACP for his advocacy for the city. Rock will receive the Great Expectations Award at the Fight for Freedom Fund Dinner on May 1. Chapter president Wendell Anthony said Rock is "a champion" for his community and has started businesses in the city.



Minnesota: Chanhassen — Chanhassen Dinner Theatres is raising money this month to feed the hungry. "Feed My People" is a partnership between Chanhassen and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, sponsor of Chanhassen's *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Audience members can donate to Minnesota FoodShare.

Mississippi: Jackson — Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee Chairman Hob Bryan, D-Amory, killed a bill to create a registry for midwives. The bill, which passed the House, would have allowed midwives to be included in a registry after certification.

Missouri: Kansas City — An exhibit about Diana, Princess of Wales, opens Thursday at Union Station and runs through June 12. "Diana, a Celebration" includes her wedding dress, family heirlooms, home movies and 28 outfits.

Montana: Billings — Enrollment at the state's two-year colleges is up 81% from 2001. John Cech, deputy commissioner for two-year education, said that in 2009, 27.6% of college students in the state went to two-year schools.

Nebraska: York — Arraignment in York County District Court has been scheduled for Stacy Findley, 35, who is accused of faking customer returns and taking the refunds. The *York News-Times* said a manager at Petro Fuel Island showed police a video of Findley working on a return and refund with no customer present. An affidavit says she admitted taking more than \$1,400.

Nevada: Reno — A 60-year-old Reno woman has been arrested as a suspect in a bank robbery. Lenna Lee Anderson is accused of taking an undisclosed amount of cash after she gave a teller at the Bank of America downtown a note stating she was armed. Police found her at a bus stop less than a block away.

New Hampshire: Concord — The state Department of Employment Security said the unemployment rate for January was 5.6%, the same as December. That's down from 6.7% in January 2010. And 790 more state residents had jobs than in December; 8,350 more did than in January 2010. Nationally, the unemployment rate for January was 9%.

New Jersey: Camden — The city is sending property-tax bills to non-profit day care centers, which haven't been asked to pay taxes before. Camden County tax administrator Kelly Heppe said it was wrong not to bill them. Day care center operators told *The Philadelphia Inquirer* they can't afford the taxes.

New Mexico: Rio Rancho — The city has activated red-light cameras, but drivers have 30 days before they trigger \$100 fines. The cameras were installed at two intersections in areas considered prone to dangerous driving. One is at Unser and Northern Boulevard, the other at Unser and Southern Boulevard.

New York: Stanfordville — Richard Daines, who left a lucrative private-sector career to fight for public health issues, including a battle against childhood obesity, died Saturday at home two months after stepping down as state health commissioner, said spokeswoman Claudia Hutton. He was 60. The cause of death has not been confirmed.

North Carolina: Fort Bragg — A ceremony at Pope Air Force Base marked its merger with nearby Fort Bragg. The Army is assuming responsibility for the base, which will be renamed Pope Field. Once the merger is complete, Fort Bragg will have about 58,000 uniformed military personnel and 13,000 civilian workers. The Air Force will see its numbers reduced by about 1,100.

North Dakota: Bismarck — The Board of Higher Education is opposing a bill that requires the University of North Dakota to keep its Fighting Sioux nickname. The state House has approved the bill that also instructs the attorney general to sue the NCAA if any penalties result from the name. Board President Jon Backes said UND and the state could face a lawsuit they're not likely to win.

Ohio: Toledo — Construction on the Turnpike near the Indiana state line will reduce traffic to one lane in each direction for nearly 13 miles this spring and fall from Montpelier east to Archbold.

Chief engineer Dan Castrigano said work on the \$11.6 million project will begin in early April. Work will be interrupted and lanes will reopen for the high-traffic months of July and August.

Oklahoma: Muskogee — Prosecutors charged Jeffery Grannon, 56, with first-degree murder after authorities recovered remains that may be of Grannon's wife, Carol. The body was found in cement in a sewer drain behind Grannon's home and sent to the medical examiner. Grannon's son, Joshua, said his father killed Carol Grannon.

Oregon: McMinnville — Yamhill County Sheriff Jack Crabtree said rescuers freed a family whose four-wheel-drive vehicle was stuck in deep snow in the coastal mountain range. The search began Monday after a man used his cellphone to call for help. The man drove into the mountains Sunday with his wife and their 10-month-old child.

Pennsylvania: Scranton — John Audubon Elementary School, which closed in October after water damage led to a mold problem, is unlikely to reopen by the time the school year begins in fall. District engineer Gene Peters told a school board committee that the mold has been removed, but water is still getting in through the walls and roof.

Rhode Island: Providence — The teachers' union has filed an unfair labor practice complaint with the Rhode Island Labor Relations Board. The school board voted last week to send layoff notices to 2,000 teachers effective at the

end of the school year after city officials said that would give them maximum flexibility in light of a budget deficit.

South Carolina: Beaufort — Jeff Rhoads Sr., 54, of Burton returned a library book 39 years after it was due to Shell Point Elementary School. He isn't sure how he came by the book about snakes. He never attended Shell Point. But he remembers he loved the book and read it to children in his neighborhood growing up. Rhoads rediscovered the book while spring cleaning.

South Dakota: Sioux Falls — A judge refused to expand a lawsuit beyond the seven people suing a urology clinic and its owners. The plaintiffs sought to make it a class-action suit representing more than 6,000 patients. The lawsuit against Siouxland Urology Center alleges that the former patients could have been exposed to infection because single-use medical equipment was reused.

Tennessee: Nashville — The state Emergency Communications Board voted to add training requirements for 911 dispatchers who take calls about missing or exploited children. Five hours was added for new dispatchers and two hours of continuing education every two years.

Texas: Laredo — Two ice chests on a bus from Mexico yielded nearly 58 pounds of iguana meat mixed with corn dough. U.S. Customs and Border Protection announced the seizure by agriculture specialists at the Laredo Port of Entry. Luggage was being examined at the Lincoln-Juarez International Bridge when the food items were discovered.

Utah: Salt Lake City — Search and rescue teams in 25 counties got more than \$273,000 from the state last year. The state Search and Rescue Advisory Board says a little more than half the money was spent on equipment. About 24% paid for searches for missing or injured people, and 19% paid for training.

Vermont: Burlington — Vermont Telecommunications Authority Chairman Steven Shepard is asking the Attorney General's office to review the propriety of an unannounced \$2 million grant to telecommunications company Sovernet that is intended to lower the cost of building a 770-mile high-speed fiber network in rural areas of the state.

Virginia: Richmond — Prisoners will have access to a guide that teaches them how to file lawsuits under a settlement with the Department of Corrections. The National Lawyers Guild and the Center for Constitutional Rights sued after the department blocked access to *Jailhouse Lawyer's Handbook*.

Washington: Tacoma — Nine sixth-grade boys have been expelled from a Tacoma middle school for suspected participation in a "fight club." School officials told *The News Tribune* they found out about the club when the relative of one participant spoke to TV station

KCPQ. The length of expulsion will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

West Virginia: Bluefield — The Flowers Bakeries subsidiary here will close Saturday. Production and sales will be shifted to other subsidiaries in the region. Its 164 workers will get a severance package, and pay and benefits through April 30. Bakery President Robbie Watkins said the facility is outdated.

Wisconsin: Janesville — Police say a couple found dead in the basement of their Janesville home Sunday had a suicide pact. Deputy Chief Dan Davis says the couple, in their mid-40s, had health and financial problems. Davis says notes, conversations with family and Facebook postings indicated the two committed suicide together, and a gun was found at the scene.

Wyoming: Casper — Hazel Jennings has turned 105. She was born on a Nebraska cattle ranch when Teddy Roosevelt was president. In the year of her birth, a massive earthquake and fires destroyed San Francisco. Jennings' husband, John, died 46 years ago. They had one son. Jennings has 10 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

U.S. territory: Puerto Rico — Guayama Mayor Glorimari Jaime Rodríguez will receive the Compassion Award from the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. She approved legislation prohibiting exportation, breeding and use of monkeys for experiments, ending plans by Bioculture Puerto Rico to capture monkeys from Mauritius and sell the offspring to foreign laboratories.

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