

Across the USA

News from every state.

Alabama: Montgomery — The Public Service Commission voted to allow Alabama Power to raise residential rates for electricity, even though usage declined this summer. A typical customer will pay about \$1.55 more each month for electricity starting in October under the 2% increase. Alabama Power is allowed a rate increase if its profit margin falls below 13%.

Alaska: Anchorage — The grandson of former Alaska lieutenant governor Jack Coghill was missing and feared drowned, Alaska State Troopers said. Michael Coghill, 26, of Nenana was on a boat trip with friends when their boat swamped at the mouth of the Tolovana River. His friends made it to a sandbar, but Coghill was last seen floating down the river clinging to a gas can.

Arizona: Tucson — The U.S. Forest Service has started a massive project to renovate the now-dry Rose Canyon Lake in the Catalina Mountains into a trout fishery within a year, provided that winter rains refill it. Officials estimate that it will take less than a month to remove 11,000 cubic yards of sediment that built up in the lake's upper reaches.

Arkansas: Little Rock — A federal lawsuit seeks to force the state to place a Green Party candidate on the ballot for a special election in the 3rd Congressional District. The party sued Sept. 4 and got an expedited hearing Thursday. Four Republicans and three Democrats have filed to run in the Sept. 25 election. If necessary, runoff will be held Oct. 16; the general election is Nov. 20.

California: Oakland — Dohani, the Oakland Zoo's African elephant calf, died of injuries accidentally inflicted by his mother, officials said. Dohani was born Aug. 30 and was a healthy 320 pounds before his death Sunday from broken ribs, a damaged lung and a chest wound. The wound suggested that his mother, Lisa, gored him with her tusk, but it appeared to be accidental, Zoo Director Joel Parrott said. ... **Oakland** — A former Manteca resident faces two counts of child abduction for fleeing to Texas and refusing to surrender custody of her two children to her ex-husband, a registered sex offender. Debra Schmidt disobeyed an Alameda County Superior Court order in 1997 when she moved with her daughters from Manteca to Austin. She says the move was to protect her two younger children from their father, Manuel Saavedra, who pleaded guilty in 1992 to a misdemeanor count of fondling a 13-year-old. Saavedra spent 15 days in county jail and completed a sex-offender program. Schmidt is scheduled to return to court Friday for a hearing to determine whether Texas or California courts have jurisdiction over custody matters for the children. Both states are claiming jurisdiction. Texas authorities arrested Schmidt in January 2000. She spent three weeks in a Texas county jail until she told authorities where the girls were.

Colorado: Denver — Vail ski area officials said they will redouble efforts to regain Vail's ranking as North America's favorite ski resort. Vail fell to No. 2 behind Deer Valley, Utah, in this year's poll of 20,000 ski magazine readers. Vail has led the poll 10 times during the poll's 14-year existence. Six Colorado resorts made this year's top 10: Vail, Aspen, Beaver Creek, Snowmass, Steamboat Springs and Breckenridge. ... **Boulder** — Bob Glass, founder of a gun-rights activist group and owner of Paladin Arms in Longmont, said he plans to run for the Libertarian nomination for governor in 2002. He said his decision to run was prompted in part by Gov. Owens' backing of a voter-approved ballot initiative that required criminal background checks of all buyers at gun shows.

Connecticut: Milford — A Trumbull man has been barred from trading baseball cards following accusations he sold counterfeit cards of baseball legends Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb. Greg Aginsky, who could have received a maximum prison sentence of 26 years and a \$50,000 fine, was placed on probation for two years.

Delaware: Wilmington — A city foundation and the state's Urban League chapter are planning a year-long study on gun crime in Wilmington and New Castle County. The groups hope to use findings from the \$75,000 study to come up with recommendations. Representatives said they were motivated by the killing of a 5-year-old boy in a Wilmington barbershop and by a downtown shooting.

D.C. Boat rides on the C&O Canal will resume Sept. 27. A storm last month sent so much water into the canal that the banks eroded and the main sewer line was undermined, officials said.

Florida: Tampa — A woman is charged with stealing her sister's identity and defrauding or attempting to defraud seven businesses of more than \$200,000. Isabella Orlando, 49, used her sister's identification without her consent, police said. She bought two scooters, three four-wheelers, one personal watercraft and cashed a \$1,500 check, officials said. She also tried to buy a \$180,000 home, they said.

Georgia: Atlanta — State revenue declined for the first two months of the current fiscal year, but officials caution against reading too much into the numbers. Tax revenue fell 6.2% for July and August, compared to the same period last year, a decrease of \$136 million.

Hawaii: Honolulu — Education officials ordered Oahu's Makalapa Elementary School closed until at least today to find out what's causing kids to get itchy eyes, scratchy throats and rashes. About 19 pupils came down with the symptoms Monday and were taken to emergency rooms for treatment, officials said. Last week, 17 pupils and one adult were treated for the same symptoms.

Idaho: Moscow — Former attorney general Janet Reno's Oct. 2 speech at the University of Idaho law school has conservatives fuming. The Bellwood Lecture series has hosted conservatives like Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia without criticism, but Libertarian Party Director Ted Dunlap said he will protest Reno's appearance.

Illinois: Decatur — The settlement for workers at the closing Bridgestone/Firestone plant includes payments of up to \$24,000 for some employees and \$11,500 for workers eligible for immediate retirement, union officials said. The shutdown at the end of the year will affect about 1,400 current employees, 440 employees laid off in October and about 100 contractors.

Indiana: Indianapolis — White River Gardens closed its seasonal butterfly exhibit after fumigating 300 remaining exotic butterflies. Curator Duane Martin said federal regulations prohibited releasing the insects because they could multiply and damage crops and flowers. Of the 1,500 butterflies in the exhibit, all but the 300 died naturally.

Iowa: Iowa City — The gold dome of the Old Capitol building has apparently escaped damage, officials say. Some letters that officials thought were spray-painted or scratched on the dome by vandals are duct tape. Officials say the gold leaf is covered by a sealant, and the duct tape should just peel off. The letters "L + R" showed up on Iowa's former Capitol last weekend.

Kansas: Hutchinson — An entertainment promoter says news reports about an outbreak of hepatitis A in Reno County are partly to blame for lagging ticket sales for concerts at the Kansas State Fair. At least 63 people have contracted hepatitis A since last fall, including some new cases before the fair opened last week. Gil Cunningham told the State Fair Board that the media focus hurt ticket sales.

Kentucky: McKee — The state medical board suspended the license of P.G. Raithatha, who was found guilty of almost two dozen counts of federal health-care fraud. Under the order, Raithatha, a family-care physician, is prohibited from practicing in Kentucky until the case is settled. He is one of the owners of Mountain After Hours, which operated medical clinics.

Louisiana: Alexandria — Police decided that it was more than coincidence that the same couple was involved in 14 fender-benders, mostly at the same traffic circle. Rickie Lewis and Connie Bell were arrested and charged with insurance fraud in a scam that allegedly netted them more than \$230,000 since 1998. Police said the couple made the wrecks look like it was the fault of the other drivers.

Maine: Augusta — State health officials say four birds infected with the West Nile virus have been found in New Vineyard, Portland, Sabattus and North Berwick. These are the first incidences of the virus discovered in Maine since the virus spread to the USA in 1999. The mosquito-borne illness can cause inflammation of the brain and, in some cases, death.

Maryland: Cumberland — Concern about the possible loss of federal funding has prompted Allegany County's library officials to order the installation of Internet pornography filters on all 70 library system computers. Under federal law, providers can't get grants unless filters are placed on adult and children's computers, library officials said.

Massachusetts: Amherst — Selectmen have voted to allow a downtown display of 29 American flags only on six holidays a year. The vote came after hours of debate. Some of the 50 people turned out for the meeting waving Old Glory. The selectmen were reacting to the installation of 29 U.S. flags on downtown lamp posts by town veterans agent Rod Raubeson.

Michigan: Kalamazoo — Western Michigan University from now on will monitor large student parties following a weekend melee that resulted in the arrest of 21 people. Revelers smashed police cars and fueled fires with furniture before officers in riot gear dispersed the crowd with tear gas. WMU President Elson Floyd said student groups will have to register events at which more than 100 people are expected.

Minnesota: St. Paul — Minnesotans should enjoy their tax rebate checks this year, because there probably won't be any in the next two years, according to state Finance Commissioner Pam Wheeler. She told a state Chamber of Commerce conference that state revenues will probably fall next year. Minnesotans have received tax rebates three years in a row.

Mississippi: Wiggins — The Mississippi Highway Patrol has joined an internal investigation of a state inmate's complaint that he was abused at the Stone County Jail on Sept. 4. Sheriff Mike Ballard said. The jail's warden and chief of security were placed on administrative leave, Ballard said. He declined to release their names. The 375-bed jail houses both county and state prisoners.

Missouri: Jefferson City — The state cannot force two Cole County judges to turn over \$2.75 million in disputed funds, some of which paid for court-house improvements and staff salaries, a judge has ruled. The money was left over from an insurance company's insolvency. Attorney General Jay Nixon sued, claiming the judges should have turned the money over to the state treasurer.

Montana: Helena — The state Board of Barbers has tentatively approved a plan to allow dogs in barber shops and is

seeking public comment. Hundreds signed a protest petition last year after the board fined Ed Dutton of Kalispell \$500 for having his dog in his shop. This summer, Gov. Martz appointed Dutton to the Board of Barbers.

Nebraska: Clay Center — Researchers at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center say they are working on a promising odor-eating product to control bad smells that come from cattle and hog yards. Microbiologists Vince Varen and Dan Miller say they have found some success inhibiting formation of odor-causing compounds by blocking interaction of bacteria with nutrients and animal waste.

Nevada: Carson City — Nevada's casino winnings declined to \$808.2 million in July, down \$18 million from a year ago. It was the third month this year with a decline, the state Gaming Control Board said. Gamblers' losses dipped 2.3% in July, partly due to mediocre business on the Fourth of July. Only downtown Las Vegas and the Boulder Strip reported higher gross revenue in Clark County. ... **Carson City** — The Nevada Highway Patrol needs to dramatically increase truck inspections to reduce the number of accidents involving commercial vehicles, according to state auditors. The officials said Nevada has some 2,300 intrastate motor carriers but no employees dedicated solely to inspecting them, even though federal money is available to hire at least three inspectors.

New Hampshire: Bow — Former U.S. representative Dick Swett has returned home after serving as ambassador to Denmark, and he and his wife Katrina are talking about possible runs for office. They're considering running for the 2nd District congressional seat he held a decade ago. They said they haven't made final decisions, except that they won't run at the same time.

New Jersey: Hackensack — New Jersey Transit plans a new service to notify riders of bus and train delays by e-mail, cellphone or pager. The free service known as My Transit has been offered so far only on the agency's Web site. More than 2,000 riders have signed up for the service since mid-July.

New Mexico: Deming — The Federal Aviation Administration awarded Deming \$150,000 a year for the next three years. The grant will be used for improvements and renovations that will increase safety and convenience for aircraft at the Deming Municipal Airport. Improvements will include a chain-link fence and new navigational aids and lighting equipment, officials said.

New York: New York — Roger Starr, an outspoken thinker on urban affairs who influenced public policy debates in New York City, is dead at 83. Starr is most remembered for his 1976 proposal for "planned shrinkage." He urged the city to abandon depressed areas like the South Bronx, citing declining population, lost jobs, social problems, high taxes and stressed services.

North Carolina: Chapel Hill — An unexpected jump in the number of freshmen enrolled at the University of North Carolina has many schools scrambling to accommodate students. The system has about 6,000 more students than last year. The increase has led to some students sleeping in converted study rooms and class sizes doubling.

North Dakota: Fargo — The sugar beet harvest is under way in the Red River Valley and early signs point to an average harvest, except for price. American Crystal of Moorhead, Minn., plans to harvest about 8.8 million tons of beets this year. The Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative of Wahpeton expects to harvest 1.8 million tons. But both co-ops say prices are at a 20-year low because of oversupply.

Ohio: Columbus — Parents in the suburban New Albany-Plan City School district must sign a code of conduct if they want their children to play sports. School officials say some parents who disagreed with referees' calls last year harassed coaches and referees. Parents, players and coaches in the 2,400-student district also must attend a lecture on sportsmanship and ethics.

Oklahoma: Tulsa — Tulsa Community College enrolled nearly 21,000 students this fall, a 6% increase over a year ago. That reverses a five-year trend of declining enrollment. Officials say much of the surge can be attributed to Internet-mediated courses and telecourses, a phenomenon that is boosting enrollment at most Oklahoma public and private colleges.

Oregon: Newport — A natural gas line on the Oregon coast was shut down due to a malfunctioning regulator, officials said. Northwest Natural Gas said the line was between Salishan and Whale Cove south of Depoe Bay. Crews were sent to repair the line, which serves about 2,000 customers.

Pennsylvania: Industry — Several fish caught in the Ohio River last week

probably are not piranha, but a vegetarian cousin. The state Fish and Boat Commission says the fish are really pacus, not piranhas. The sharp-toothed pacus don't attack fish and animals. They usually feed on vegetation or dead fish. Officials say someone probably bought the pacus at a pet store and dumped them in the river when they got too big.

Rhode Island: Woonsocket — Police are investigating the disappearance of money paid by an estimated 225 people to a local funeral home. A former director of the Menoche Funeral Home, which has been closed since June, has been cooperating in the investigation. Police want to know where the money kept in a separate account for prepaid funeral arrangements has gone.

South Carolina: Greenville — A man whose murder conviction was overturned pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter and will give police information about another robbery-slashing in exchange for a lighter sentence, authorities said. Darryl Holmes was sentenced to life for killing a convenience store owner. The state Supreme Court overturned the conviction because of hearsay evidence.

South Dakota: Rapid City — An accounting firm that performed an independent audit of the sale of the state cement plant found no irregularities. The state sold the business to a Mexican corporation after a special legislative session in December. Critics have complained about secret negotiations conducted by Gov. Janklow, arguing for release of sale details.

Tennessee: Memphis — An extra-long rig carrying a 50-ton evaporator to a Kingsport paper mill will take six days to follow a circuitous, 970-mile route this week across Tennessee. It took planners three months to plot an itinerary that avoids low bridges and interstate highways. The route will take six days to negotiate at a maximum 28 mph.

Texas: Houston — State correctional officials are looking outside Texas borders to recruit guards for a prison staffing shortage. Officials are hoping a pay raise approved by the Legislature this spring will lure enough people from six nearby states — New Mexico, Oklahoma

, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas and Alabama — to fill 3,000 positions. The turnover rate among Texas prison guards grew from 12.1% in 1996 to 22% last year, officials said. ... **Huntsville** — Gov. Perry granted a 30-day stay to convicted killer Jeffrey Tucker, in the wake of terrorist attacks Tuesday in New York and Washington. Concerns were raised about the availability of U.S. Supreme Court justices in Washington for any appeal. Tucker was condemned for fatally shooting Wilton Humphreys, 65, while trying to steal his truck 13 years ago.

Utah: Salt Lake City — Twelve school districts could lose more than \$400,000 because about 200 students didn't have up-to-date inoculations during last school year. State law allows the Office of Education to withhold \$2,116 for every student not in compliance. Box Elder, Granite and Salt Lake districts stand to lose the most money, between \$60,000 and \$135,200 each.

Vermont: Montpelier — Lawmakers are objecting to Gov. Dean's decision to restrict low-income Vermonters' access to the painkiller OxyContin. Dean announced in July that Vermont Medicaid would demand prior approval for any recipient's OxyContin prescription. Members of a legislative committee say Dean is overreacting to reports about illegal use of the painkiller. ... **Rutland** — A city alderman has come up with a simple way to fight crime: Clear away brush that could provide camouflage for drug dealers. Alderman Greg Thayer spoke at a meeting on community crime prevention in the city's southwestern section.

Virginia: Fairfax — Two centuries of military artifacts will be displayed at a national Army museum to be built at Fort Belvoir. The \$100 million facility would sit on a 30-acre site along U.S. 1 in southern Fairfax County. The plan would end two decades of efforts by Arlington, Va., the District of Columbia and Pennsylvania to house the museum.

Washington: Seattle — Residents of King County may have a chance to vote in November on religious freedom. The right to worship is already protected

in U.S. and state constitutions, but the county council is expected to recommend an amendment to the county charter saying the same thing. The amendment arises from a dispute over county growth management rules that ban large new churches and church schools in rural areas. ... **Vancouver** — Clark County has turned down a request by Costco Wholesale to build a store in the Salmon Creek area, citing potential traffic problems. Issaquah-based Costco has until Sept. 24 to appeal the decision to a county hearings examiner. Costco wanted to build a 142,800-square-foot store, a 5,200-square-foot tire center and a gas station on 18 acres.

West Virginia: Harpers Ferry — A Maryland man and his 8-year-old son spent nearly 24 hours in a cave at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park before being rescued. Phillip Olmert, 36, and his son started making their way toward the entrance of the cave after their light burned out at about 3:30 p.m., said chief park ranger Larry Johnson. They inadvertently got on a shelf above the entrance of the cave, Johnson said. They decided to stay where they were, about 2,000 feet into the cave.


Wisconsin: Milwaukee — Amtrak has dropped plans for daily trips between Milwaukee and Fond du Lac, a spokesman for the agency said. Kevin Johnson said Amtrak found there wasn't enough mail and express business to support the route. The round-trip route would have run once a day and might have included stops in Brookfield, Elm Grove, Slinger and Lomira.

Wyoming: Cheyenne — The state Senate has received private pledges to pay for 25 of the 33 new desks in the upper chamber. The House of Representatives has no plans to raise money for 65 desks on the east side of the Capitol. The Legislature recently assigned a \$354,160 contract to buy 98 new desks and other items for the Senate and House chambers. The Senate's desks will be a bit larger than the House desks.

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Urgent news for people who took

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Many consumers who took the cholesterol lowering drug BAYCOL® have developed an illness called Rhabdomyolysis that causes kidney failure, muscle pain and weakness, and even death. Kidney failure is often accompanied by darkened, discolored urine. BAYCOL® has been withdrawn from sale. If you or a loved one took BAYCOL® and experienced any of these health problems, call us immediately so that we can consider your potential claim against the drug manufacturer.

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