

THE HAWK EYE

167th year — No. 247

BURLINGTON, IOWA

FRIDAY

MARCH 12, 2004

50 cents

Spotlight



Bullriders hit Burlington

Burlington's annual indoor bullriding event, Snowbull, is being held at Memorial Auditorium with action heating up for the weekend. **Page 1C**

Vision Iowa contest heats up

Cedar Rapids project organizers hope to snag entire \$14 million in fund coffers.

By JAMES QUIRK Jr.
jqquirk@thehawkeye.com

While Burlington-area officials are hoping to secure a \$7.76 million Vision Iowa grant, officials from Cedar Rapids are standing

in the way.

Cedar Rapids officials hope to capture the entire \$14 million remaining in the Vision Iowa program's pot.

Cedar Rapids and Linn County officials made a presentation to the Vision Iowa Committee Wednesday, but, according to some Burlington area officials who attended, they walked away with instructions to find more local funding for a \$55 million collection of projects called Cedar

Bend.

The Cedar Bend project, according to Doug Wagner, chief of staff at the Cedar Rapids mayor's office, includes a plan to transform a landfill into a park, build a 15,000-seat amphitheater, create a lake in an industrial sand pit and construct a community center/farmer's market.

Cedar Rapids and Linn County plan to contribute about \$20 million toward the projects, a private developer plans to con-

tribute \$15 million toward the amphitheater and about \$6 million is expected to be raised in philanthropic donations, Wagner said.

Already, \$2 million of the \$6 million in donations has been raised, but the effort hopes to get \$14 million through Vision Iowa, he said.

"Things went very well," Wagner said of the presentation.

The Vision Iowa Committee believes Cedar Rapids and Linn

County have money in reserve accounts that could beef up the local commitment and want Cedar Bend officials to come back a more modest request when they negotiate with the Vision Iowa Board during an April 14 meeting.

The Vision Iowa board already has awarded \$211.3 million for projects across the state and has \$14 million remaining in its **See Vision page 7A**

Top stories

Few show up for hog lot hearing

The second proposal in two months for a large hog confinement operation in Henry County is not generating anywhere near the controversy of the first. **Page 3A**

Iraqi connections lead to charges

A former news reporter and press secretary for four members of Congress was charged Thursday with being a paid Iraqi intelligence agent and trying to contact her distant cousin — the White House chief of staff — to alter U.S. policy. **Page 8A**

Scoreboard

Texas	63	
Baylor	59	
Oklahoma	78	
Kansas State	66	

In Sports

Weather



Sunny to partly cloudy.
High 41 Low 29
Details, 8B

Wall Street

Thursday's indicators

Dow	10,128.38	-168.51
NASDAQ	1,943.89	-20.26
S&P	1,106.78	-17.11

Selected stocks, page 6B

Tomorrow

Three Hancock County school districts exploring reorganization possibilities are seeking input from district residents as to what they want for their children's future education. **In News**

Inside

28 pages, 3 sections

Business	6B	Horoscopes	11C
City & Region	3A	Iowa & Illinois	4A
Classifieds	4C	Lotteries	3A
Corrections	3A	Nation & World	8A
Crossword	10C	Opinion	6A
Dear Abby	11C	Reader services	2A
Deaths	7B	Sports	1B
For the Record	7B	TV listings	10C
Happenings	10C	Weekend	1C

Home delivery

Call 1-800-397-1708 or visit thehawkeye.com for affordable home delivery.



IOWA'S OLDEST NEWSPAPER
ESTABLISHED 1837
www.thehawkeye.com

Musical makeover



Scott Morgan/The Hawk Eye

Georgia Keitzer of Mediapolis applies makeup to Sherri Boschee of Burlington as Kay Mizer of Mediapolis, background, applies makeup to Keith Brower of Burlington Thursday before a dress rehearsal for the "Sound of Music" production at the Mediapolis Community Auditorium. Boschee plays Sister Sophia and Brower plays Franz the Butler. "Sound of Music" runs Friday through Sunday, with tickets available Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. by calling Bette Siefen at (319) 394-3811 or after 6 p.m. at the theater box office.

Vilsack touts economic recovery

Governor says state programs helping create new jobs.

By DAVID PITT
The Associated Press

DES MOINES — Iowa's economic recovery is ahead of many states in part because of state programs that have helped create jobs and built recreational projects and civic centers across the state, Gov. Tom Vilsack said Thursday.

Vilsack said personal income is growing at a faster rate than the national average, job creation is much higher in Iowa than the nation as a whole and the state's unemployment rate is lower than the national average.

"It's been pretty remarkable progress," Vilsack said.

Personal income for the nation grew 1.1 percent in the third quarter of 2003, while Iowa's grew at 1.8 percent, ranking the state second in the nation, according to U.S. Department of Commerce figures.

Iowa's January unemployment rate was 4.1 percent, better than the national rate of 5.6 percent, according to Iowa Workforce Development.

The state reported employment increased by 28,200 jobs from December to January out of



Vilsack

a labor force of 1.6 million people.

Nationally, job growth for the month climbed by 112,000 jobs out of a national labor force of 146.4 million.

Vilsack has been highly critical of Bush administration fiscal policies, saying last month that Bush "has walked away from the job of creating jobs."

Vilsack said Iowa has performed better than average in part because of programs such as the Iowa Values Fund, an economic development fund intended to lure high-tech industry to the state, and Vision Iowa, which has funded parks, civic centers and recreation projects across the state.

Vilsack made his comments in a speech before the Iowa chapter of the American Institute of Ar-

■ GOP plans to release budget targets

See page 5A

chitects, meeting Thursday in Ames.

In a tape of the speech, he encouraged the group's members to help spread the word about the state's successes.

"Now what we have to do is make sure that Iowans fully understand what's happening in our state," he said.

Republican legislative leaders have said it's unlikely they will follow Vilsack's suggestion of borrowing money to fund Vision Iowa and they likely will not consider providing a steady stream of state money for the Iowa Values Fund until next year.

Contractors in Iraq have political ties

Republicans, Democrat senator tied to firms with government contracts.

By MATT KELLEY
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Many of the firms awarded \$1.2 billion in Iraq reconstruction business this week have strong Washington connections: Several are generous Republican donors, one company is partly owned by a California senator's husband and another is tied to a Pentagon official involved in the contracts.

The Parsons Brinkerhoff construction company was one of two firms picked to share a \$43.4 million contract to help manage reconstruction of Iraq's electricity grid. Retired Navy Rear Adm. David Nash, director of the program management office for the Pentagon in Baghdad, is a former president of a Parsons Brinkerhoff subsidiary.

The company also has Republi-

can connections. It gave \$90,000 to various Republican Party committees in the past five years, \$8,500 to similar Democratic groups.

"It's hard to find a major company in America anymore that doesn't have political connections," said Danielle Brian, the head of the independent watchdog group Project on Government Oversight. "Federal contracting has become political. Just about every company that can compete does have political connections."

Defense Department officials say neither Nash's connections nor politics had anything to do with the contract award, and that all eight awards were chosen through open competition. Nash does not have any authority to award contracts, said Army Lt. Col. Joe Yoswa, a Pentagon spokesman.

"His only involvement is to set priorities for tasks requested in the (contract) proposals," Yoswa said.

See Contractors page 7A

Bombs kill more than 190

Terrorists hide explosives on trains in Madrid.

By MAR ROMAN
The Associated Press

MADRID, Spain — A series of bombs hidden in backpacks exploded in quick succession Thursday, blowing apart four commuter trains and killing at least 192 people and wounding more than 1,400. Spain at first blamed Basque separatists but a shadowy group claimed responsibility in the name of al-Qaida for the worst terrorist attack in Spanish history.

Panicked rush-hour commuters trampled on each other, abandoning their bags and shoes, after the first three bombs went off in one train in the Atocha station in the heart of Madrid. Seven other bombings followed on other trains.

Train cars were turned into twisted wrecks and platforms were strewn with corpses. Cell phones rang unanswered on the bodies of the dead as frantic relatives tried to call them.



The Associated Press

Rescue workers work around the destroyed intercity train Thursday at Atocha train station after a number of blasts rocked railway stations in Madrid.

"March 11, 2004, now holds its place in the history of infamy," Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar said.

The bombings came three days ahead of Spain's general election on Sunday. A major campaign issue was how to deal with ETA, the Basque militant group that is

seeking greater autonomy. Campaigning for the election was called off and three days of mourning were declared.

The bombings occurred exactly 2½ years after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United

See Bombs page 7A



The demolition of several Iowa Army Ammunition Plant buildings contaminated by decades of weapons manufacture could be months or years away, according to Army officials involved in the plant's cleanup.

Plant environmental project director Rodger Allison said following Thursday's Restoration Advisory Board meeting that plans to destroy several IAAP buildings by burning them to the ground are still being discussed by Army and Environmental Protection Agency officials, but he could not provide a timeline. Funding options and other studies must be completed before action is taken, he said.

"We had sent the requirement for funding to environmental channels, and that funding was declined," Allison said of a funding request to the Army Environmental Center.

Estimated at more than \$1 million, the project — called thermal decontamination — will rid buildings at IAAP of dangerous chemicals by burning them to the ground. The plan has drawn the concern of RAB members and the public since it was discussed in a November meeting.

Allison said funding for the burns will be sought from the Army's Joint Munitions Command, headquartered in Rock Island, Ill. But action could be months or years away. Chemical and historical studies of the buildings must first be conducted before they are burned.

See IAAP page 7A