

MARCH MADNESS

THURSDAY'S LOCAL WINNERS: SHAWNEE HEIGHTS GIRLS, RILEY COUNTY BOYS, CENTRALIA GIRLS. SECTION C



THE TOPEKA CAPITAL-JOURNAL

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Weather

Today: Mostly sunny and milder; high 57.
Tonight: Increasingly cloudy, breezy; low 39.
Full report, 6C

Coming up



Career pointers

Your success at work could depend on how well you get along with your boss.

Sunday in Hers Kansas



Top art

The highest student art award at Washburn University, the Pollack Purchase Award, is presented.

Sunday in Arts & Leisure

Inside today



College hoops

K-State men and women are eliminated early in the Big 12 Tournament.

Sports, Page 1B



Feasibility

A Kansas Lottery report says Galena, in the southeast corner of the state, would be ideal for a casino.

Legislature, Page 3D

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USD 501

Parents may pay more



MIKE SHEPHERD/THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

Kendra Howell, 7, steps off a bus at Williams Science & Fine Arts Elementary Magnet School, where she is in the second grade. A potential budget deficit has Unified School District 501 considering options such as reducing busing or adding charges.

District weighs fees to close \$7 million gap

By Barbara Hollingsworth
THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

Public education may become more costly for parents of Topeka Public Schools students next year.

Facing potentially stagnant state funding, school districts across the state are looking to fees to help fund their budgets, said Veryl Peter, director of school finance for the Kansas State Department of Education.

In Topeka Unified School District 501, that could mean higher textbook fees and charges for participating in activities. Also, more families may have to pay for busing or provide other transportation for their children.

"We are seeing more of that than in the past," Peter said. "When money gets tight, then they start looking at those types of things."

While state aid per pupil has dropped \$7 since 2001-02, USD 501 has faced rising

RELATED

Governor meets with business-partnership; House rejects school finance plan Page 3D

ONLINE

Hear a school board member discuss possible cuts and find a complete list of programs and fees being considered.



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expenses, including health insurance premiums. Officials say the district has drained its reserves and now faces a \$7 million shortfall in next school year's budget, which includes funding for new programs designed to boost achievement in math and reading.

"That's a lot of money," said Mike Wilson, the district's associate superintendent of administrative and support services. "We're working hard to try to figure out where that

money is going to come from."

Higher fees, as they are currently being considered, could bring in about \$1 million. Still, no decisions have been made — a point Wilson stresses.

Some parents are questioning the fees, and even district leaders say it isn't something they want to pursue.

"I would hope this community would understand that the school board will have no choice," said board member Bruce Malory. "We have no financing options to pull out of the hat, but the Legislature does."

Lawrence Unified School District 497 is one district that has become more reliant on fees. Last school year, textbook fees increased and families within 2.5 miles of school began paying for busing.

Also, Lawrence students pay fees of \$50

Please see PARENTS, Page 10A

Payless union votes on contract

Leader says 2003 loss has made talks tough

By Michael Hooper and Sherrine Jones
THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL AND KSNT-TV

Union members at Payless ShoeSource's Distribution Center in Topeka will finish voting Monday on a new four-year employment agreement with the

company, a union official said Thursday.

Bill Moore, president of Teamsters Local 696, said union and company officials agreed not to debate details of the union contract in the media. But he said 600 employees in the bargaining unit were eligible to vote. Another 100 employees, who aren't in the bargaining unit, would be affected by the vote, the results of which should be known Monday night.

Moore said negotiations with

WHAT'S NEXT

Vote tally: Voting will conclude at 5 p.m. Monday, and results are expected to be available that night.

Payless started after Thanksgiving. The current employment contract expires in July.

Moore described negotiations as the toughest he has experienced with Payless ShoeSource because the company experienced its first loss in 2003. He said health care costs were an issue in

the negotiations, but he declined to elaborate.

For the fiscal year ended Jan. 31, company sales fell 3.3 percent to \$2.78 billion. Net loss totaled \$100,000 versus an income of \$105.8 million in 2002. The revenue decline was due to a decrease in same-store sales. The earnings decline was due to lower gross margins and higher marketing expenses.

For about seven months,

Please see PAYLESS, Page 10A

Bombings' origins unclear

By Dafna Linzer and Pamela Sampson
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Spanish leaders were quick to accuse Basque terrorists Thursday for setting off devastating commuter train attacks in Madrid.

But hours later they were less sure. A shadowy Muslim militant group, the Brigade of Abu Hafsa al-Masri, claimed responsibility in the name of al-Qaida, and a van found near the attacks had detonators inside and tapes of Quranic verses.

Spanish officials used to blaming terrorism on the Basque separatist group ETA said they were opening up several lines of inquiry.

If ETA was behind the 10 bombs that tore through trains and stations around Madrid, killing at least 192 people and injuring more than 1,400, it would mark a stunning turning point for the group.

For years ETA relied on targeted killings, extortion and kidnappings to press for an independent homeland straddling parts of Spain and France. Now experts believe a younger generation of ETA leaders is moving the group toward al-Qaida-style actions.

"You've lost the old guard who were very reticent about killing

larger numbers of people because they think that will not help their cause," said Mia Soar, a European terrorism analyst for Jane's Information Group in London.

London's Arabic newspaper Al-Quds al-Arabi said it received a five-page e-mailed claim of responsibility from the Brigade of Abu Hafsa al-Masri, which said the brigade's "death squad" had penetrated Spain.

The United States believes the group lacks credibility and its ties to al-Qaida are tenuous. In the past, the group has made false claims of responsibility.

RELATED

Attack sends shockwaves to U.S. stock markets. Page 7A



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rescuers work around the destroyed train at Atocha station in Madrid after 10 blasts rocked railway stations across a nine-mile section of the city just three days before Spain's general elections, which have been postponed. The blasts killed at least 192.

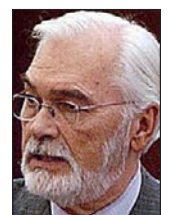
Judge detains convict

Ruling on possible D.A. leak of offender's report expected in April

By Steve Fry
THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

A U.S. District Court judge in Topeka on Thursday ordered convicted sex offender Stephen W. Grimm, 28, held without bond pending trial on federal child pornography charges.

A few blocks away in Shawnee County District Court, a judge wrapped up a hearing on whether Shawnee County District Attorney Robert Hecht had leaked to his daughter, Lisa Hecht, a confidential psychological evaluation of Grimm and should be sanctioned.



Robert Hecht denies sharing confidential report with daughter

U.S. Magistrate Judge Gary Sebelius ordered Grimm detained just two weeks after Shawnee County District Judge Franklin Theis had placed him on probation for a sodomy conviction in state court. Grimm pleaded no contest on March 14, 2003, to sexually assaulting a 6-year-old boy.

Theis sentenced Grimm on Feb. 27 to nine years and nine months in prison for the sodomy conviction, then suspended the prison term and placed him on probation for the same amount of time with a number of conditions.

Sebelius said Grimm wasn't a risk to flee but that he was concerned about the community's safety.

He noted that Grimm was a longtime Shawnee County resident and had a "remarkable set of parents." However, Sebelius said, child pornography is a crime of violence; Grimm has a "significant criminal history," including lewd and lascivious behavior; and he has a record of failing to comply with probation conditions.

Grimm is unemployed, and Please see CONVICT, Page 12A

GRIMMETT CHARGES

In Shawnee County District Court: Convicted of aggravated criminal sodomy of a child younger than 14.
In U.S. District Court: Pending charges of using a minor to engage in sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing a video, possessing child pornography obtained by computer, and forfeiture of the computer, VCR and a video recorder used in the offenses.