



Annual Russell auction, a big car show and more /Hot Ticket

Madrid attacks kill 190

By MAR ROMAN Associated Press Writer

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 1,200.

Spain blamed Basque separatists, but a shadowy group claimed responsibility in the name of al-Qaida for the worst terrorist attack in Spain's history.

Panicked commuters

trampled on each other, abandoning their bags and shoes, after two of the bombs went off in one train in the Atocha station in the heart of Madrid. 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.

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

Responsibility for bombings far from clear /7A

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

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

It was also 2 1/2 years after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New

York and Washington, and was Europe's worst since the bombing of a Pan Am jetliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 killed 270 people.

The 10 backpack bombs exploded in a 15-minute span, starting about 7:39 a.m., on trains along nine miles of commuter line from Santa Eugenia to the Atocha terminal, a bustling hub for subway, commuter and long-distance trains just south of the famed Prado Museum. Police also found and detonated

three other bombs.

Worst hit was a double-decker train at El Pozo station, where two bombs killed 70 people, fire department inspector Juan Redondo said. One corpse was blown onto the roof.

At the Santa Eugenia station, "there was one carriage totally blown apart," said Enrique Sanchez, an ambulance worker. "People were scattered all over the platforms. I saw legs and arms. I won't forget this ever. I've seen horror."



AP PHOTO

Rescue workers cover bodies alongside a bomb-damaged passenger train following a number of explosions in Madrid, Spain, Thursday. The explosions killed more than 190 rush-hour commuters and wounded more than 500 in Spain's worst terrorist attack.

Wait to skate ends today



TRIBUNE PHOTOS BY STUART S. WHITE

C.J. Haymaker, 14, dreams of opening day at the Great Falls skate park Thursday afternoon. The dream becomes a reality at 3:30 this afternoon, weather permitting. BELOW: Kip Kirol, left, and Kirk Turoski check out a set of bowls at the park Thursday.

Riverside Railyard ready to rock 'n' roll

By KIM SKORNOGOSKI Tribune Staff Writer

C.J. Haymaker sat at a picnic table Thursday after school, his feet resting on his skateboard, eyeing yards of concrete bowls and curves.

For a month, the 14-year-old visited the Riverside Railyard skate park daily, waiting to slide across the rails on the park perimeter and roll down the bowls.

"It's just so tempting, isn't it," he said to his friends Cory Ehnes, 14, and Vinny Gilles, 13. "I can't wait. I've been waiting a long time."

This afternoon, only two words — weather permitting — can keep Haymaker and dozens of other skaters from finally riding the nearly \$1 million concrete park.

To much anticipation, the skate park in Elks Riverside Park will open at 3:30 p.m. today, unless snow freezes inside the bowls making them too slick to skate.

For weeks construction workers shooed away eager kids, and the Park and Recreation Department took dozens of calls daily asking when it would open. Thursday, skaters walked the dips and scaled the steep, 9-foot bowl walls in preparation.

"We get more and more calls each day," Parks Maintenance Supervisor Giles Salyer said. "They're sitting in the park even though they know they can't skate it yet. I guess that's just

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Court blocks San Francisco gay marriages

By DAVID KRAVETS Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — The California Supreme Court Thursday ordered an immediate halt to gay marriages in San Francisco, delivering a victory to conservatives who have fought for a month to block the ceremonies.

The court did not rule on the legality of such marriages, and justices said they would hear such a case

Massachusetts legislature resumes debate /3A

The dispute began Feb. 12, when Mayor Gavin Newsom ordered his administration to issue same-sex marriage licenses. A steady stream of gay couples from around the country have traveled to be married at City Hall, just a block from the Supreme



Newsom

Court. More than 3,700 couples having tied the knot in San Francisco so far.

The action by California's highest court came two weeks after state Attorney General Bill Lockyer and a conservative group asked the seven justices to immediately block

the gay marriages. The justices ruled unanimously that Newsom must "refrain from issuing marriage licenses or certificates not authorized" by California marriage laws.

Had the court declined to intervene, the legal battle over gay marriage in California would have taken years as gay marriage lawsuits traveled through the state's lower courts.

Newsom's defiance of California law prompted a

host of other municipalities across the nation to follow suit, and President Bush last month said he would back a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriages.

Lockyer and the conservative Alliance Defense Fund said the court's action was urgently needed because thousands of newly married gays might otherwise think they enjoyed the same rights granted other married couples.

NorthWestern Corporation files bankruptcy plan

Battle ensues over utility's future

By MIKE DENNISON Tribune Capitol Bureau

HELENA — NorthWestern Corp. late Thursday filed its plan to reorganize the bankrupt company into a new utility that would continue serving more than 300,000 Montana customers, but it's just the beginning of what could be a gritty financial war over the company's future.

Groups of creditors who are owed more than \$1 billion will battle over their share of the company, while Montana utility regulators will size up how the options might affect electric and natural gas ratepayers.

Meanwhile, prospective buyers like MDU Resources Group of North Dakota are preparing to argue that they can offer creditors and utility customers a better deal.

"As soon as we see the plan, we'll analyze it and

Inside on 5A:

- SEC looks into utility's accounting. Plan includes funding to defend executives.

compare it to our (offer)," MDU spokesman Dan Sharp said last week. "We still believe we are the best solution for this issue."

NorthWestern filed its plan and related documents Thursday evening with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Wilmington, Del.

Key contents and issues of the plan include:

- Investors owed \$1.3 billion of NorthWestern's "unsecured debt" are proposed as new owners of the company, exchanging that debt for 35 million new shares of stock in the reorganized firm. They're being asked to accept \$710 million in value for the debt they're

See NORTHWESTERN, 5A

Firefighter garners national nomination for Harlem heroism

By KAREN OGDEN Tribune Regional Editor

A volunteer firefighter who collared and handcuffed the dangerous suspect in the fatal shooting of a Blaine County sheriff's deputy last May is nominated in the national Volvo For Life Awards.

Twenty-seven-year-old Scott Baker, who has since moved to Great Falls where he works at Home Depot, was nominated in the "off-duty heroism" category.

Prizes start with a certificate of merit for the top 100. The top three receive \$50,000 to donate to charity and the grand award winner will drive a Volvo — a new one every three years — for the rest of their life.

Winners will be announced April 7.

Baker's father, former Harlem police chief Bill Baker, nominated him for the award.

The younger Baker calls the contest a "long shot." He's among 2,700 Americans competing for the honor.

Whether he wins or not, those who saw his heroism at the nightmarish scene in a weedy field in Harlem last May will remain grateful.

"I want to thank him for what he did," Blaine County

Sheriff Glenn Huestis said this week. "Had he not shown up, what would have happened we don't know."

The toll already was heavy when Baker arrived.

Minutes earlier, 28-year-old Deputy Josh Rutherford was fatally shot as he chased Larry Jackson Jr.

across a field along Highway 2.

Jackson, 25 at the time, bit off another man's nose, ear and pinky finger

in an earlier incident, according to court documents.

Rutherford pursued Jackson as he fled after allegedly trashing his girlfriend's home.

Several blocks away, Baker and his wife, Yasmine, were returning home from the eighth-grade graduation ceremony of Baker's nephew.

Baker had just kicked off his shoes when he heard heavy breathing over the family's police scanner and a frantic call for help: "Officer down!"

Having worked as a sher-

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