



In Weekend
Jeff Forworthy here tonight, HT7

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TO GIVE THE NEWS IMPARTIALLY, WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR

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Fast facts

- 25 of 46 targeted locations were visited.
- Seven different law enforcement agencies participated in the two-county sweep.
- This was the first operation of its kind in Georgia.

Authorities 'never quit' fighting meth trade

■ *Sting operation in North Georgia finds five labs and nets 10 arrests.*

By STUMP MARTIN
STAFF WRITER

ROCK SPRING, Ga. — More than 50 members of various Georgia law enforcement agencies in search of methamphetamine blanketed Walker and Catoosa counties Thursday to execute Operation Never Quit.

"We found five meth labs and arrested 10 people for either manufacturing or selling methamphetamine," Walker County Sheriff Steve Wilson said. "We went to the door and identified ourselves and asked for permission to come in and search. Everybody was cooperative."

The operation, planned for months, targeted more than 40 possible users or makers of methamphetamine in the two counties, authorities said.

Sheriff Wilson said five teams of law enforcement personnel, with six or seven members per team, began knocking on doors at 8 a.m.

The sheriff said this was the "first operation of its kind" to be conducted in Georgia. He said the effort reached 25 of

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Opening gateway to city

Fourth Street coming online today as work begins on First Street

By MIKE O'NEAL
AND KIMBERLY STARKS
STAFF WRITERS

Coming in on time and on budget, the \$6.2 million project to build Fourth Street Boulevard creates a gateway into downtown Chattanooga, city officials said.

Mayor Bob Corker said the soon-to-be landscaped median, fresh sidewalks and improved lighting will enhance the distinctive downtown experience.

"There is no question this is something that adds vitality to the city," he said.

Jeff Pfitzer, the city's manager of capital planning, said converting Fourth Street into a boulevard between Chestnut and Lindsay streets had been talked about for years, but work did not begin until autumn 2002. He said the boulevard opening is set for 12:30 p.m. today.

Mr. Pfitzer said the most significant differences for motorists will be the improved access from Interstate 24 and better traffic flow through the area.

"The entire character of the roadway has changed," he said.

Doug Stein, owner of the construction company that completed the project, said working on Fourth Street was like baking a three-layer cake.

"It was difficult to keep traffic open four ways because we'd never done it that way before, but I'm real proud of those guys on the job," Mr. Stein said. "We haven't put all the candles on it, but the cake is baked."

EPB employee Margaret Hodges said Thursday afternoon while walking on Walnut Street that she is excited about the improvements on Fourth Street.

"It was difficult to walk on Market and Walnut without fearing I'd twist my ankles on Fourth," she said.

Mr. Pfitzer said the completion of Fourth Street Boulevard is an important part of the over-



Edgar Bumgardner with Volunteer Highway Supply marks a turn arrow on Fourth Street. The street will be opened for traffic today.



STAFF GRAPHIC BY LAURA E. WALKER

all downtown revitalization plan. "Riverfront Parkway is becoming more of a local street as part of the 21st Century Waterfront Plan," he said about the \$120 million plan. "Now Fourth Street will assume a primary role in our transportation system with direct access to Interstate 24 and four new connections to Riverside Drive and

Amnicola Highway." Mr. Corker said some city projects, such as the Enterprise South industrial park, the HOPE VI project in Alton Park, traffic improvements near Hamilton Place mall and the future widening of Ashland Terrace are enhancements many residents might not notice.

But officials agreed everyone coming into Chattanooga can see and benefit from changes to the downtown street network.

Art Hickey, manager of the Little River Cafe on Market Street, said he had to find other ways of bringing customers into his business while the orange barrels lined Fourth Street and congested the area.

"We began developing delivery and catering; we didn't depend on customers walking in, because they couldn't get

Fast facts

Information on Fourth Street:

- Construction spanned a half mile from Chestnut to Lindsay streets.
- The job took 20 workers 14 months to complete.
- 600 orange barrels were required during construction.
- The boulevard has 40,000 square feet of sidewalk.
- There are 800 cubic yards of concrete between the red and gray bricks.

around," Mr. Hickey said. "In the long run it is a benefit to us because our walking customers will start returning."

Dawn Richardson, assistant

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House bill would raise fines for 'smut stuff'

■ *Legislation to place maximum penalty for broadcasting indecency at \$500,000.*

By ANDREW MOLLISON
COX NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON — The House responded Thursday to an avalanche of complaints about shock jocks and the Super Bowl halftime show by voting 391-22 to raise the maximum fine for broadcast indecency to \$500,000.

"This triple-X smut stuff should never be broadcast on the public airways," said the bill's chief sponsor, Rep. Fred Upton, R-Mich., as he held up a loose-leaf notebook bulging with transcripts.

Only a handful of members opposed raising the fine from current levels of \$27,000 for a radio or TV station and \$1,000 for a performer or journalist.

"Never would I have thought that defending the Constitution in this House would be a lonely job," said Rep. Gary Ackerman, D-N.Y., who joined 20 other Democrats and Rep. Ron Paul, R-Texas, in voting against the bill.

"I believe in decency, I believe in Mary Poppins, I believe in all things nice," Ackerman said. "But what is at stake here is freedom of speech."

"This is not about free speech," countered Rep. Mike Pence, R-Ind., a former talk show host. "This is about decent speech within the constitutional standards that every broadcaster should uphold."

The House vote sent the Broadcast Decency Enforce-

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Terrorists blamed for deadly Spain blasts

More than 190 killed in a series of train explosions

By MATTHEW SCHOFIELD
KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS

MADRID, Spain — More than 190 people were killed and at least another 1,200 injured when a series of terrorist bombs ripped through trains during the Spanish capital's morning rush hour Thursday. It was the bloodiest such attack in Spain's history.

Government officials quickly blamed the bombings, three days before national elections, on the Basque separatist group ETA, which has waged a bloody 40-year campaign for independence. A letter to an Arabic-language newspaper in London later claimed the attacks were carried out by the al-Qaida terrorist network, but provided no evidence.

The letter, which dubbed the

explosions "Operation Death Trains," called the attacks "a way to settle old accounts with Spain, crusader and ally of America in its war against Islam."

The letter, delivered to the Al Quds Al Arabi newspaper, was signed by the Abu Hafs al Masri Brigades, the same group that claimed responsibility in 2003 for the November bombings of two synagogues in Turkey and the August bombing of a Marriott hotel in Indonesia. The group, which is linked to al-Qaida, has falsely claimed responsibility for other attacks, however, and some intelligence officials think it exists in name only.

Late Thursday, Spanish police reported finding a van with

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Rescue workers labor inside a train at Atocha train station following a blast. Explosions rocked three stations in Madrid on Thursday.

Gay marriages dealt setback in California, Massachusetts

By BOB KEEFE
COX NEWS SERVICE

Gay marriage advocates suffered a double-barreled setback Thursday, as states on either side of the country moved to prohibit same-sex weddings.

The California Supreme Court on Thursday ordered the city of San Francisco to imme-

diately stop issuing marriage licenses to gay couples, a month almost to the day that the city set off a national debate by allowing such unions. The court said the city was violating state laws that declare a marriage is between a man and woman.

In Massachusetts, meanwhile, the Legislature gave preliminary

approval to a state constitutional amendment that would ban gay marriages but allow civil unions.

Opponents of gay marriage hailed the actions by the two states as major victories, and said they were more proof that the country as a whole is against the idea of same-sex weddings.

"This is a momentum swing," said Glen Lavy, senior attorney for the Alliance Defense Fund, a conservative group that sued to stop the gay marriages in San Francisco. "But frankly, you've got people up in arms all around the country about this lawless-

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ISSUE

Chickamauga lock funding sparks dispute

Federal official says Congress' approval of a bigger lock may have kept project out of administration's budget. Rep. Wamp calls that claim "absurd."

By ANDY SHER
WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON — Tennessee lawmakers' successful push last year for a larger Chickamauga Dam replacement lock may have hurt the project's chances for funding in President Bush's 2005 budget, according to a top federal official.

"As far as I can tell, that's what the problem is," Army Assistant Secretary John Paul Woodley Jr. said in an interview this week.

Mr. Woodley said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' original report on a replacement for the 64-year-old lock recommended a 75- by 400-foot lock over the 110- by 600-foot structure that ultimately was approved by Congress last year.

The corps' assessment was based on the project's net economic contributions to the National Economic Development Account, Corps of Engineers' officials said. The plan seeks to maximize

federal investments in water infrastructure projects.

"The difference between the project authorized and the NED is in many ways very small," Mr. Woodley conceded. "But under our rules it doesn't have to be very large. It can be very slight, and we'd still have a policy issue."

U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp, R-Tenn., called the contention ridiculous and said there was relatively little difference. He said the \$300 million larger lock costs only about \$26 million more over the projected

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TODAY'S WEATHER

Sunny, cool.
High 55
Low 30
Details, C6



Cleaner air

Radio responds to indecency debate. Lifestyle, E1

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