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CVPS to tap power of cows

By DARREN M. ALLEN
Vermont Press Bureau
MONTPELIER — Power happens.

At least that's the hope of the state's largest utility as it announced plans Thursday to harness the digestive after-product made by some of the state's hundreds of thousands of cows for electricity.

If the state's utility regulators sign off on the idea, Central Vermont Public Service Corp. will give some of its 148,000 customers the option to use electricity generated by farmers who will turn tons of cow manure into kilowatts of electricity.

"We hope to create supply and demand simultaneously."

Stephen Costello, CVPS

"Through CVPS Cow Power, customers who feel strongly about renewable energy can vote for it by choosing it," Robert Young, the company president, said in a statement. "We believe a significant number of customers will choose it."

Customers would pay a 4-cent surcharge for every kilowatt hour of electricity they use under the program, and they would have the option of buying all, half or a quarter of their electricity from the cow-manure produced power.

For a typical 500-kilowatt-a-month customer, the surcharge would amount to \$20 if the full-cow power option is chosen; the surcharge would amount to \$5 a month if only a quarter of the customer's power comes from the farm.

"We hope to create demand and supply simultaneously," company spokesman Stephen Costello said. "This isn't going to change the world, but it offers benefits to our customers, to farmers and to the environment."

The company has been in negotiations with about a dozen large dairy farms in Vermont. Under the

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Firefighters carry bombing victims from a train that was blown apart by one of 10 explosions Thursday morning in Madrid. More than 190 people were killed. It was Spain's worst terrorist attack ever.

192 killed in terrorist explosions

By MATTHEW SCHOFIELD
Knight Ridder Newspapers

MADRID, Spain — At least 192 people were killed and another 1,200 were 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.

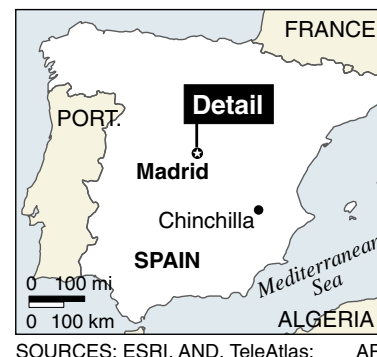
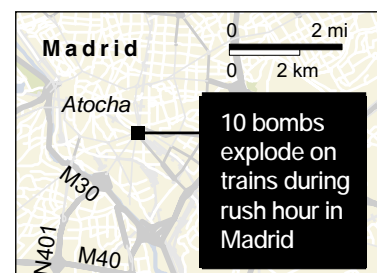
Government officials quickly blamed the bombings, three days before national elections, on the Basque separatist group ETA, which has waged a bloody 40-year campaign for independence.

A letter to an Arabic-language newspaper in London later claimed the attacks were carried out by the al-Qaida terrorist network, but it 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 last year 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 seven detonators, an Arabic tape and Quranic writing, and were investigating a link to the attacks.

"This pain will never leave Madrid," Mayor Alberto Ruiz Gallardon said Thursday afternoon.

The bombs were carried onto the trains in satchels, and were believed to have been made from dynamite and explosives stolen from France three years ago.

Police said 10 bombs rocked the trains. Another three were found

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Gay marriage suffers blows coast to coast

By DAVID KRAVETS
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The California Supreme Court ordered an immediate halt to same-sex weddings in San Francisco on Thursday. Meanwhile, Massachusetts lawmakers gave preliminary approval to a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriages in the only state where they have been ruled legal.

Teary-eyed couples were quickly turned away at San Francisco's City Hall, where 4,161 gay couples have tied the knot in the last month. "We were filling out the application and they told us to stop," said Art Adams, who was the first to be denied as he and partner Devin Baker sought a license. "It's heart-breaking. I don't understand why two people in love should be prevented from expressing it."

On the other side of the country, Massachusetts legislators returned to the Capitol to consider a constitutional amendment that would strip gay couples of their court-granted right to marriage but allow civil unions.

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N.H. Senate votes not to recognize same-sex marriages. Page A6

The amendment won approval during two preliminary votes, but its final passage is far from certain. Gay marriage supporters were conducting procedural maneuvers that could ultimately lead to the proposal's defeat.

Massachusetts took center stage in the national debate over gay marriage following a landmark decision by its highest court in November that was reaffirmed last month.

The rulings set the stage for the nation's first legally sanctioned gay marriages on May 17.

Lawmakers seeking to put a gay marriage ban before Massachusetts voters were unsuccessful during a joint House-Senate session last month.

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom waded into the debate at

See Page A10: Marriage

Firm vows prisoners get care outside state

Legislators focus on inmates' health

By CLAUDE R. MARX
Vermont Press Bureau

MONTPELIER — Officials of a company that is housing several hundred Vermont prisoners out of state assured lawmakers Thursday that it does not cut corners on inmate services to keep costs down.

Corrections Corporation of America vice president Tony Grande said the firm saves money by purchasing products in large quantities and locating in remote areas where wages are lower.

He added that CCA gives prisoners better health-care services than the corrections industry standards require.

"Inmates with chronic mental illness are evaluated every 90 days, twice the industry standard, which is two times per year," he told the Senate Institutions Committee at one of the three hearings at which

he testified Thursday. CCA is a Nashville-based firm that recently signed a 29-month, \$29.5 million contract with the state to house up to 700 Vermont prisoners. Currently, 334 inmates are spread out over two facilities in Kentucky and four prisoners are being housed in Arizona.

The most aggressive questioning came from Sen. Vincent Illuzzi, R-Essex Orleans, chairman of the Senate Institutions Committee, and Sen. Matthew Dunne, D-Windsor, who focused on how the company looked after the prisoners' health.

In response to a question from Illuzzi, Grande said there was a nurse on site during the day and one on call at all other times. He said the company had contracts with psychiatrists and psychologists to provide mental health care.

Though Grande said later that he was not sure how much time

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Split shift



John Capen splits wood Thursday on West Proctor Road under the supervision of his dog Chinook.

Many fail to take Vt. tax credits

By ANNE WALLACE ALLEN
The Associated Press

MONTPELIER — Vermonters are missing out on millions of dollars because they are not applying for the earned income and child tax credits for which they're eligible, Gov. James Douglas said Thursday.

"No one should pay more to the government than they're required to," Douglas said at his weekly news conference at the State House.

Nationally, 15 to 25 percent of the earned income credit goes unclaimed, he said.

"That means millions of dollars was unclaimed by Vermonters last year," Douglas said.

An estimated 20 percent of eligible Vermonters do not apply for the earned income credit, said Christine Curtis, who works for

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RUTLAND

OxyContin has caused at least as much pain as it has relieved. PAGE B1

Teen drinkers should have been cited, State Police head says. PAGE B1



Playing up a blues streak

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SOUTHERN VT

Vermont Yankee officials defend proposed power increase. PAGE B4

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