

NATION/WORLD DIGEST

Miller Cites 'Common-Sense' Voters For Lead

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — A conservative Alaska lawyer credits his primary vote lead over U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski largely to "common-sense" voters dissatisfied with the direction the federal government has taken.

Joe Miller, a 43-year-old Fairbanks resident, stunned political pundits this week with his 1,688-vote lead over Murkowski in the Republican primary.

Murkowski was heavily favored to win — and still could. She's banking on rallying when thousands of absentee ballots are counted.

Miller says his campaign also was boosted by the endorsement of former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin and the involvement of the Tea Party Express.

The race's outcome will remain in limbo at least until Tuesday. That's when state elections workers will begin to count absentee ballots. They have until Sept. 8 to deliver a final tally.

HP Raises Offer For 3Par, Trumping Dell's

SEATTLE (AP) — Hewlett-Packard is raising its offer for data-storage maker 3Par to about \$1.69 billion.

That tops rival Dell Inc.'s offer Thursday morning of \$1.52 billion. Dell made its first offer for 3Par Inc. on Aug. 16. Hewlett-Packard Co. countered on Monday.

Both companies are interested in 3Par as a way to save money as they bulk up data center operations, which help them deliver software and services to customers over the Internet.

Dell's agreement with 3Par gives Dell time to match competing offers such as the latest from HP.

Dell declined to comment on the new bid.

Feds: Don't Tip Off Miners On Inspections

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's top mine safety official is warning mine companies against tipping off their underground workers to surprise federal inspections.

Mine Safety and Health Administration director Joe Main tells The Associated Press he's seen a disturbing trend this year where mine workers illegally call down to tell miners that inspectors are in route.

Main's comments come as his agency issues a special guidance bulletin clarifying the ban on giving advance notice of inspections.

The government has stepped up surprise inspections in the wake of the Upper Big Branch mine disaster in April that killed 29 miners. Some workers testified that managers at the West Virginia mine found ways to tip off miners about inspections.

Iran Bars Local Coverage Of Opposition

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A purported media directive from Iran's leaders prohibits Iranian newspapers and news agencies from mentioning opposition leaders, including former President Mohammad Khatami.

The document, appearing on pro-reform websites, requires Iranian media to shun any coverage of Khatami and the former presidential candidates Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mahdi Karroubi.

Iranian authorities have not commented on the letter. It was not possible to independently verify its authenticity Thursday.

If true, however, it's another step by Iran to control the media after closing nearly all reformist publications and putting curbs on the Internet.

But it would actually change little since pro-government media have dropped most coverage of the opposition.

Taliban Hint At Attacks On Aid Workers

MIR ALI, Pakistan (AP) — The Taliban have hinted they may launch attacks against foreign flood relief workers in Pakistan, saying their presence is "unacceptable."

Pakistani Taliban spokesman Azam Tariq claimed Thursday that the United States and other countries were not really focused on providing aid to flood victims but had other "intentions" he did not specify.

Tariq strongly hinted that the militants could resort to violence. He said: "When we say something is unacceptable to us one can draw his own conclusion."

Tariq spoke with The Associated Press by telephone from an undisclosed location.

The U.S. and other countries have pledged nearly \$800 million and provided aid workers to help Pakistan cope with the worst floods in the nation's history.

Nigeria Announces Power Grid Sale, Repair

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — Nigeria has announced a plan to repair and privatize the oil-rich nation's decrepit national power grid.

President Goodluck Jonathan and officials unveiled the plan Thursday in Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital.

It calls for improving power generation by selling off the state-run Power Holding Company of Nigeria to private companies, who will rely on natural gas for power generation. The government would still own the transmission system.

Nigeria remains beset by blackouts and problems with its aging federal power grid, forcing the population to rely on private generators to provide electricity.

Jonathan gave his speech before journalists and the nation's elite at a ritzy hotel in Lagos, powered 24 hours a day by generators.

Teachers In China Say Kim Has Visited

BEIJING (AP) — Two teachers in northeastern China say North Korean leader Kim Jong Il visited their school in his second trip this year to his country's biggest source of diplomatic and financial support.

The teachers at the Yuwen Middle School in Jilin province said Kim visited the school Thursday for about 20 minutes.

His father Kim Il Sung attended the school from 1927 to 1930, according to the school's website. At the time, Yuwen attracted a cohort of socialist-leaning teachers.

The Chinese government has not commented on the visit by the reclusive leader who rarely travels abroad.

The surprise trip abroad comes as former U.S. President Jimmy Carter makes a rare trip to North Korea on a private mission to secure the freedom of an imprisoned American.

Iraqi Police Say Six Guards Killed In Ambush

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraqi police say six members of a government-allied Sunni militia have been killed in an ambush by insurgents in eastern Iraq.

The killings early Thursday in Diyala province come a day after a spate of nationwide bombings and shootings mostly targeting Iraqi security forces left at least 56 people dead.

Diyala police spokesman Maj. Ghalib al-Karkhi said the government-allied fighters, known as Sahwa or Awakening Councils, were driving near the town of Muqadiyah, about 60 miles (90 kilometers) north of Baghdad, when their car hit a roadside bomb.

Al-Karkhi said four of the guards were killed immediately. He said gunmen then shot the survivors.

The Awakening Councils joined with U.S. forces against al-Qaida in 2006 and helped turn the tide of the war.

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Experts: Drilling Ban May Not Be Needed

BY MATTHEW DALY
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — A ban on deepwater drilling may no longer be needed now that the oil industry and the government appear to have developed safer drilling regimes, an expert panel said Thursday in a report to the presidential commission investigating the Gulf oil spill.

The report by the Bipartisan Policy Center is likely to boost oil industry groups and Gulf Coast lawmakers who are pushing to end the six-month drilling moratorium before its scheduled Nov. 30 expiration.

The report said the April explosion and fire on the Deepwater Horizon rig showed how unprepared government and industry were for a major spill.

The moratorium allowed time for both industry and government to make offshore

drilling safer, the report said. The report praised steps taken by the Interior Department to increase safety of so-called blowout preventers and improve the integrity and control of deepwater wells.

"If industry is diligent in incorporating these requirements and DOI is vigilant in oversight and enforcement, we believe this new regime will provide an adequate margin of safety to responsibly allow the resumption of deepwater drilling in the Gulf of Mexico," the report said.

The oil spill commission asked the Washington-based policy center to look into the wisdom of using a moratorium to prevent spills in the aftermath of the BP disaster.

The report did not specify a timetable when the moratorium should be lifted, but Jason Grumet, the policy center's president, said in an interview that it should be lifted

as soon as possible. Still, Grumet said it likely will take months for some operators to comply with the new requirements.

"All companies must be held to a consistent set of safety standards even if it delays or discourages some rigs from drilling in the Gulf," said Grumet, a co-author of the report.

Michael Bromwich, director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement, said he appreciated the report's acknowledgment of work the agency has done to improve drilling oversight in the wake of the Gulf spill.

Bromwich said he is meeting with all sides of the drilling debate to consider how deepwater drilling can resume safely.

"Before that, however, we need to ensure that workplace and drilling safety, spill response and containment issues are appropriately addressed by industry," he said.

Blagojevich Headed For Retrial Early Next Year

BY MICHAEL TARM AND DON BABWIN
Associated Press Writers

CHICAGO — By dropping all charges against Rod Blagojevich's brother on Thursday, the federal government removed what had become an obstacle to their primary mission: convicting the impeached Illinois governor in a retrial now set for early next year.

Jurors who deadlocked last week on all but one of 24 charges in the first trial described the case against Robert Blagojevich as by far the weaker of the two. And they said the former Army officer presented an earnest, sympathetic figure when he insisted on the witness stand that he and his brother did nothing wrong.

Robert Blagojevich's attorneys said prosecutors first signaled their desire to simplify their strategy on Wednesday when they privately offered to separate his case from the former governor's. Still, he was surprised when the government dropped the charges instead.

"When it comes to my brother I've become accustomed to being an afterthought," Robert Blagojevich said while celebrating at his son's Chicago condo. "I've been an afterthought in this whole trial, this whole process. I was a very small part of the six-year investigation."

Legal analysts said it was a

rare but strategic step by the government.

"It is a very smart move on the part of prosecutors," said Bill Healy, a Chicago-based jury consultant. "This should really worry Rod, because they can focus like a laser on him now. The prosecution's going to have a stronger case the second time 'round."

Judge James Zagel said Rod Blagojevich's retrial will start the week of Jan. 4, but did not set a specific date. He said he probably won't allow the former governor more than two taxpayer-funded lawyers when the case begins anew — though he might allow more if lawyers volunteered or were financed by a benefactor.

Rod Blagojevich's attorneys argued that he needed the half-dozen attorneys he had during the first trial, and said afterward they would meet with him before deciding on any changes to the defense team.

In court, prosecutors said their decision to drop charges against Robert Blagojevich was based on his less central role in alleged schemes to sell or trade an appointment to President Barack Obama's old Senate seat and to pressure people for campaign donations.

Some jurors said the panel was close to acquitting Robert on at least one count and were split on another three. A few said they did not want to see him retried.

BALLOT

From Page 1A

Turner, Union and Lincoln counties have released their ballots to the Secretary of State's website. Yankton, Clay and Douglas counties have not yet released their ballots to the information portal.

JRWDD QUESTION

Hutchinson County voters, along with those in Day and Hand counties, will decide whether to withdraw from the JRWDD. The district includes all or part of 14 counties.

All Hutchinson County voters will find the James River question on their ballot, Warné said. The ballot measure in each of the three counties will be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast.

A new state law gives a county's voters the ability to withdraw from a water development district. JRWDD officials are watching the Hutchinson County vote in particular, as the county has been a longtime member and lies in the heart of the water district.

"The ballot explanation will tell the voters that their county

commissioners presented a resolution to the South Dakota Board of Water and Natural Resources, for the purpose of scheduling a vote on whether the county should withdraw from the James River Water Development District," Warné said.

If a county's voters decide to withdraw, the decision would take effect after the official canvass, she said.

LEGISLATIVE RACES

County central committees sought to find replacement candidates in three area legislative districts by this month's deadline.

In District 17, Terri Jorgenson of Hurley replaced John Lang of Lennox as the GOP candidate in the Senate race. She will face Democratic incumbent Eldon Nygaard of Vermillion.

District 17 includes Clay County and most of Turner County.

In District 19, Republicans could not find a replacement for Valerie Campbell of Springfield, who withdrew from the House race. The House field now includes Democrats Frank Kloucek and Kyle Schoenfish, both of Scotland; Republican Ed VanGerpen of Avon; and independent Lonnie Mayer of Tripp. District 19 consists of

Scarcity Of Jobs Puts More Risk Of Foreclosure

BY ALAN ZIBEL AND CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
AP Business Writers

WASHINGTON — The jobs crisis is putting more Americans at risk of losing their homes.

One in 10 households has missed at least one mortgage payment, and more than 2 million homes have been repossessed since the recession began. Few expect the outlook to improve until companies start to hire steadily again and layoffs ease.

And while there was some good news Thursday — a modest decrease in the number of Americans filing for jobless benefits for the first time in a month — the figure is still too high to bring down the unemployment rate.

So the housing crisis goes on, even though the average rate on a 30-year mortgage fell again this week to an all-time low of 4.36 percent.

"Ultimately, the housing story, whether it is delinquencies, homes sales or housing starts, is an employment story," said Jay Brinkmann, the top economist for the Mortgage Bankers Association.

It's just one of the problems confronting Federal Reserve chief Ben Bernanke as he speaks Friday at a closely watched conference in Jackson Hole, Wyo. The Fed has mostly exhausted its ammo to give the economy a jolt.

Just under 10 percent of homeowners are delinquent on

at least one mortgage payment as of June 30, according to a quarterly report on delinquencies released by Brinkmann's trade group. That's more than double the level before the recession.

The percentage of mortgage borrowers receiving foreclosure notices did fall slightly from the previous quarter, the first drop in four years. And the percentage of loans receiving their first notice of foreclosure also dipped.

But many experts say the situation is getting worse. July was the worst month on record for new home sales and the worst in 15 years for sales of previously occupied homes.

The supply of unsold homes on the market keeps getting bigger. At the same time, the growing number of foreclosures keeps pushing down home prices and scaring potential buyers and sellers from the market.

More than 2.3 million homes have been repossessed by lenders since the recession began in December 2007, according to foreclosure listing service RealtyTrac Inc. And 6 million more will be lost to foreclosure over the next three years, by some estimates.

If that happens, home prices will probably sink further, and the economy will suffer. Builders will keep construction to a minimum, and Americans will be less willing to spend because of their lost home values.

Douglas, Hutchinson, Bon Homme and northwest Turner counties.

In District 21, Brandon Sazue of Fort Thompson replaced Steve Smith of Chamberlain as the Democrat in the Senate race. Sazue will face Republican incumbent Cooper Garnos of Presho. District 21 includes Charles Mix, Brule, Buffalo, Lyman and Jones counties.

The Secretary of State's office has released the voter registration totals as of Aug. 3, the latest available data:

- District 16 (Lincoln and Union counties): 7,415 Republicans; 5,441 Democrats; six Constitution Party members; 22 Libertarians; five members of other parties; and 3,120 independents;
- District 17: 4,936 Republicans; 5,249 Democrats; four Constitution Party members; 32 Libertarians; 14 members of other parties; and 2,489 independents;

- District 18 (Yankton County): 5,850 Republicans; 5,265 Democrats; seven Constitution Party members; 31 Libertarians; eight members of other parties; and 2,260 independents;
- District 19: 7,353 Republicans; 3,656 Democrats; seven Constitution Party members; 17 Libertarians; no members of other parties; and 1,149 independents;
- District 21: 5,173 Republicans; 6,595 Democrats; nine Constitution Party members; 14 Libertarians; five members of other parties; and 1,326 independents.

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INTERMEDIATE INT BOOK 10 #6

Yesterday's Solution

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Check tomorrow's paper for the solution to today's puzzle.


EA BOOK 10 #6

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