

NATION/WORLD DIGEST

Obama Urges Increase In Clean Energy Tax

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Mixing policy and politics, President Barack Obama called on Congress Friday to expand a clean energy tax credit that could pay off in Nevada, where Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid is struggling in his re-election campaign.

Obama told an audience at the University of Nevada that a \$5 billion increase in clean energy manufacturing tax credits could generate nearly 40,000 jobs. Some of those could arrive in Nevada, where 14 percent unemployment threatens to undermine Reid's argument that his position as majority leader pays dividends to his state.

Reid, who is seeking a fifth term, has been pushing hard for investments in solar energy to capitalize on his home state's scorching climate. He's had some success attracting projects to the state but he and other Democrats are battling uphill going into November's critical midterms.

Obama, who was wrapping up a two-day swing through Missouri and Nevada, told listeners in economically pressed Nevada that thanks in part to Reid the economic recovery is on the right track — though still not moving fast enough.

Inventories Rise 0.5 Percent In May

WASHINGTON (AP) — Inventories held by wholesalers rose for a fifth consecutive month in May but sales fell for the first time in more than a year, sending a mixed signal about the strength of the recovery.

The Commerce Department says wholesale inventories rose 0.5 percent in May but sales dropped by 0.3 percent. It was the first decline for sales since March of 2009.

The May sales decline is the latest sign that the economic recovery could be losing momentum as it enters the second half of this year. Weakness in sales could discourage businesses from boosting their orders. That would translate into a slowdown in factory production.

Chrysler, Ford Recalling SUVs, Vans

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government says Chrysler is recalling about 22,000 sport utility vehicles and trucks to fix brake tubes that could lead to the loss of brake fluid.

Ford Motor Co., meanwhile, is recalling more than 30,000 2010 Transit Connect vans to replace pushpins holding the liners above the driver's head. The company says government testing found it failed to meet federal standards protecting the head.

Chrysler says its recall affects certain 2010 Dodge Nitro, Dodge Ram, Jeep Liberty and Jeep Wranglers that could have defective brake tubes. The problem could lead to the loss of brake fluid, making it difficult to brake and posing the threat of a crash. Ford's recall is expected to begin in July. Chrysler says owners should be notified in August.

New Charges Against Somali Pirates

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — A federal grand jury in Virginia has returned new charges against 11 Somali nationals accused of separate pirate attacks on two Navy ships.

They include allegations the defendants had a rocket-propelled grenade launcher and assaulted federal officers. The charges add another possible mandatory life term for the five defendants accused in the April 1 pirate attack upon the USS Nicholas off the coast of Africa.

The six defendants accused in the April 10 attack on the USS Ashland also face an additional charge of assault on a federal officer with a dangerous weapon, which carries a maximum term of 20 years in prison.

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Boat, Two Bodies Pulled From Philadelphia River

BY GEOFF MULVIHILL AND MARYCLAIRE DALE
Associated Press Writers

PHILADELPHIA — Two days after a barge crashed into a stalled tourist boat, leaving two Hungarian tourists missing, authorities retrieved two bodies from the Delaware River, including a girl identified as one of the victims. Identification of the second body was pending.

The body of a girl later identified as 16-year-old Dora Schwendner was spotted by a crew on a fishing boat before dawn Friday about two miles downriver from the site of Wednesday's crash.

The second body was retrieved later in the day, after a barge brought in to help to lift the duck boat off the river's bottom was moved.

Authorities could not immediately confirm whether the body was that of Szabolcs Prem, 20, the other missing Hungarian tourist.

The six-wheeled duck boat was struck by the barge on Wednesday around 2:40 p.m., some 10 minutes after it splashed into the water near Penn's Landing.

Carrying 35 passengers and two crew, the tourist boat had mechanical problems and its engine stalled. The captain, Gary Fox, said he put out a distress call. The passengers were told to put life jackets on ahead of the barge striking the boat.

Within seconds it capsized and sank, though all but two people were rescued without serious injury.

On Friday, pulling the bodies and the amphibious boat from the water closed the recovery efforts that attracted scores of onlookers to the river's banks and caused the Delaware River to be closed to pleasure boats.

Now, investigators are left with several questions: How did the crash happen? Why did the duck boat stall? Did its skipper let other vessels know? Did the captain and crew of the tug pushing the empty barge know — or should have known — the duck boat was idle in the water, its anchor deployed?

The National Transportation Safety Board was spending Friday interviewing people who were aboard either of the boats at the time of the crash.

The federal crew expected to remain in Philadelphia about a week longer, but will continue their probe in Washington.

One issue to be examined is whether the tug boat was able to see the duck boat in the water because of any blind spot, an issue known to tug boat pilots.

Joseph Dady, president of the National Mariners Association and a tug boat pilot himself, told The Associated Press that tugs always have blind spots when they're pushing barges.

In this case, where the tug's wheel house was relatively low and the barge was light and floating high in the water, it could have been large he said.

He said the Coast Guard requires lookouts on board tugs or barges in situations like that, but that they're often not posted and the rule is not often enforced. U.S. Coast Guard Capt. Todd Gatlin disputed that the regulation is not enforced.

Tug pilots are also required to use radar to make sure they're not at risk of hitting other vessels. The duck boat did not have a radar reflector, so it's not clear whether it would show up on a boat's radar.

Darrell Wilson, a spokesman for K-Sea Transportation Partners, which operates the tug called The Caribbean Sea, said he would not talk about details like whether there was a lookout or whether the radar was working properly.

Those are questions the NTSB was looking into.

The Coast Guard's Gatlin said the area where the crash happened — a spot near a marina and used by boats of all sizes — does not have speed restrictions. "It's basically a safe maritime speed," he said.

Another question in the investigation is whether the tugboat pilot heard any distress signal from the duck boat.

Chris Herschend, president of the boat company, Ride the Ducks, said Friday that Fox told him he had put out a distress call on Channel 13, which is monitored by boaters but not recorded.



Philadelphia police Marine Unit boat and officers behind the barge where the crane lifts the duck boat accident on the Delaware River, Friday, July 9, 2010.

Sea Turtle Egg Evacuations Begin Along Oiled Gulf

BY BRIAN SKOLOFF
Associated Press Writer

PORT ST. JOE, Fla. (AP) — Biologist Lorna Patrick dug gingerly into the beach Friday, gently brushing away sand to reveal dozens of leathery, golfball-sized loggerhead sea turtle eggs.

Patrick, of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, carefully plucked the eggs from the foot-deep hole and placed them one-by-one in a cooler layered with moist sand from the nest, the first step in a sweeping and unusual turtle egg evacuation to save thousands of threatened hatchlings from certain death in the oiled Gulf of Mexico.

After about 90 minutes of parting the sand with her fingers like an archaeological dig, 107 eggs were placed in two coolers and loaded onto a FedEx temperature-controlled truck. They are being transported to a warehouse at Florida's Kennedy Space Center where they will incubate and, hopefully, hatch before being released into the Atlantic Ocean.

The effort began in earnest along Florida's Panhandle, with two loggerhead nests excavated. Up to 800 more nests across Alabama and Florida beaches will be dug up in the coming months in an attempt to move some 70,000 eggs to safety.

Scientists fear that if left alone, the hatchlings would emerge and swim into the oil, where most would likely die, killing off a generation of an already imperiled species.

"This is a giant experiment," said Jeff Trandahl, director of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, which helped organize the plan.

Trandahl acknowledged many of the hatchlings may die from the stress of being moved, but he said there was no other option.

Each nest is monitored from the moment it is made and left in place for about 50 days. Then the eggs will be taken to the NASA temperature-controlled warehouse, kept at roughly 85 degrees, where they should begin hatching within about 10 days or so of arrival. The hope is that the ones that survive will return to nest where they were born after about 30 years, but no one knows if the experiment will be successful.

FedEx has offered to transport the eggs free of charge.

Virginia Albanese, CEO of FedEx Custom Critical, said the company will continue the effort for about four months, averaging three 500-mile trips a week from the Panhandle to Cape Canaveral. By mid-July, the company expects to be making six trips a week in its 53-foot customized 18-wheeler.

The special coolers, manpower and other expenses associated with the plan could cost the federal government, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and private partners hundreds of thousands of dollars, which BP will be asked to pay for, said Thomas Strickland, assistant secretary of the U.S. Interior Department's division of Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

NAACP To Recapture '08 Momentum

BY HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH
Associated Press Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The head of the nation's largest and oldest civil rights organization, fearing a loss of momentum since the 2008 election, plans to use the group's annual convention to get people "off the couch" and re-energized to fight back against a tea party movement that opposes much of President Barack Obama's agenda.

The NAACP convention, set to start Saturday, also will focus on education and the mounting jobs losses that have disproportionately affected minorities. Headliners will include First Lady Michelle Obama and the Revs. Jesse L. Jackson and Al Sharpton.

"We have to close the enthusiasm gap and remind people that the majority that existed two years ago still exists today," said Ben Jealous, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, in a phone interview.

Since the presidential election, the tea party has emerged, espousing a political philosophy of less government, a free mar-

ket, lower taxes, individual rights and political activism.

To Jealous, the movement is pushing the country backward. He said that when people "get hit in the pocketbook, they start looking for scapegoats, and they start tearing the country apart."

"What is crucial, he said, is to talk about issues that unite the United States. "The danger of the tea party is that people see them and think about periods in history when groups like them were much more powerful than they are now," he said. "And so a lot of what we spend energy doing is explaining to people what reality is, and that the reality is that the majority from 2008 still exists. It went no where but back on the couch, and our biggest challenge is to get it back off the couch and back to the streets and back on the battlefield."

Greg Ward, a Kansas real estate agent and a tea party activist who cofounded a group called the Kansas 912 Project, disputed assertions that the group doesn't want progress and said its members have made extra efforts to include black conservatives who are concerned about the direction of

the country.

"I think part of the tea party thing is people are just tired of the polarization and the lack of the government being in touch with the majority of the people," Ward said.

Beyond increased activism, Jealous said the top short-term goal is jobs. The convention, which will take place in Kansas City and goes through Thursday, will include a session on green jobs, and speakers will talk about how the BP oil spill is affecting several disenfranchised communities, including Vietnamese, American Indian and black fishermen and oil workers.

"Nothing happens unless people get back to work," Jealous said. "We don't have money for schools. We don't have money to pay mortgages with, so jobs are key."

Speakers at the convention also will include Education Secretary Arne Duncan, who has pushed to turnaround faltering schools in poor communities. Duncan also has vowed increased vigilance to make sure students have equal access to everything from college prep classes to science and engineering programs.

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