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Roads could be icy this morning; windy and very cold tonight.  
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# The Providence Journal

**FRIDAY**  
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2006 New England Newspaper of the Year

## State directors offer an array of cuts as deficits loom

Fewer state troopers, early release of prisoners and higher taxes on alcoholic beverages have all been proposed.

**BY KATHERINE GREGG AND ELIZABETH GUDRAIS**  
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU  
PROVIDENCE — With state government staring at the potential for multimillion-dollar deficits this year and next, prison administrators are contemplating widespread layoffs and the release of hundreds of inmates. The state police — with “ex-

treme difficulty” — have proposed the layoff of 54 troopers in the patrol division with the warning that cutting the patrol ranks this dramatically “will severely restrict barracks operations and decrease services to many areas of the state.”

Administrators at the Department of Human Services clearly struggled to keep intact the state-subsidized programs that help pay the medical bills of 186,000 people — nearly one out of every five Rhode Islanders.

But to do this, they suggested a 10-percent reduction in Medicaid payments to hospitals for outpa-

tient services; a curb on ever-growing state reimbursements to nursing homes; and the elimination of health-insurance subsidies for 750 employees at 50 childcare centers.

Instead of cutting, the folks at the state’s Department of Mental Health, Retardation and Hospitals suggested raising the current 10-cent-a-gallon excise tax on beer, wine and spirits by 16 cents to help pay for “community-based treatment and prevention services.”

They also proposed selling 30 acres of Camp Pastore, a 50-acre camp owned by the state in Char-

lestown that was once a summer camp for the Ladd Center, the state’s now defunct home for adults with developmental disabilities.

The proposals have been quietly streaming into the state Budget Office since early September, as part of the months-long vetting process that takes place before the governor submits his tax-and-spending proposals to the General Assembly each year.

Top state government administrators were asked to cut up to

SEE **BUDGET, A8**

### Proposals to make ends meet

■ **State police:** Lay off 54 troopers.

■ **Corrections:** Lay off 196 employees; release all minimum security inmates.

■ **Taxes:** Add 16 cents to current 10-cent-a-gallon tax on alcoholic beverages.

■ **Medicaid:** Cut outpatient reimbursements to hospitals by 10 percent.

■ **State property:** Sell 30 acres owned by the state in Charlestown.



KRT / BOB FILA

See **Page A8** for a department-by-department comparison.

## Bush backs off commitment to Iraq report

The president says he will give the Iraq Study Group’s report serious consideration but does not intend to accept all 79 recommendations.

**BY SHERYL GAY STOLBERG AND KATE ZERNIKE**  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — President Bush yesterday moved quickly to distance himself from the central recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, even as the panel’s co-chairmen opened an intensive lobbying effort on Capitol Hill to press Mr. Bush to adopt their report wholesale.

One day after the study group rattled Washington with its bleak

assessment of conditions in Iraq, its Republican co-chairman, James A. Baker, said the White House must not treat the report “like a fruit salad and say, ‘I like this but I don’t like that.’” He called the study “a comprehensive strategy.”

The Democratic co-chairman, Lee H. Hamilton, called on Congress to abandon its “extremely timid” approach to overseeing the war.

But Mr. Bush, making his first extended comments on the study, seemed to retreat from two of its most fundamental recommendations: pulling back U.S. combat brigades from Iraq over the next 15 months, and engaging in direct

SEE **BUSH, A12**

## Harrah’s effort cost \$17.8 million

That means the company spent \$125.86 for each vote in favor of the failed casino proposal.

**BY SCOTT MAYEROWITZ**  
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE — In the final two weeks before the election, Harrah’s Entertainment spent more than \$6.1 million in its unsuccessful bid for a Rhode Island casino.

That’s more than \$437,000 a day in that last push. Earlier, the Las Vegas casino company had been spending about \$140,000 a day, and for the overall campaign

spent more than \$17.8 million. The fight between Harrah’s and the anticasinogroup Save Our State was the most expensive race in the state’s history. By comparison, Governor Carcieri only spent \$2.08 million to win reelection in this year’s election.

More than 63 percent of voters last month rejected amending the state Constitution to give Harrah’s and the Narragansett Indian tribe exclusive rights to operate the state’s only casino in West Warwick.

Harrah’s got 141,806 votes for its casino proposal — a cost of

SEE **CASINO, A8**

## Providence police probe \$1,790 theft inside station

The money was taken from a robbery victim’s handbag left sitting on a detective’s desk.

**BY GREGORY SMITH**  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — The Providence police Detective Bureau is the place where crimes are solved and injustices are put right. Last year the detectives cleared hundreds of crimes by making an arrest.

But now the police have a mystery in their own house that they

have not been able to solve. Who stole \$1,790 from a robbery victim’s handbag that had been left sitting on a detective’s desk?

It’s an embarrassment that the police have not been eager to talk about. No report of the theft has been available to the public among the other public records in the police records room. But officials acknowledged the incident in response to a Providence Journal inquiry.

“Certainly [detectives are] up-

SEE **THEFT, A10**

## A SENATOR’S FINAL DAYS



AP / KEVIN WOLF

Sen. Lincoln Chafee carries a box out of his office yesterday as he packs his belongings in the Russell Senate Office Building on Capitol Hill. Among the mementoes are posters dating to the long-ago campaigns of his late father, Sen. John Chafee.

## Chafee packs up, moves on

As he makes his rounds on Capitol Hill, the moderate Republican is praised by colleagues from both parties.

**BY JOHN E. MULLIGAN**  
JOURNAL WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON — It’s a tradition observed every two years on Capitol Hill, nonetheless painful for all its familiarity: farewells to the vanquished.

So this week, having met defeat in last month’s elections, Sen. Lincoln D. Chafee walked his ritual last rounds through corridors he has ranged since 1999.

“Interminable,” Chafee called the exercise yesterday morning as he took one of his last official walks across Constitu-

tion Avenue to the Capitol. He said it with a laugh that seemed to be one part cheerful, one part rueful.

Chafee encountered Sen. Russ Feingold near the steps of the Capitol, under a December sun that was bright but not so warm. They spoke, inevitably, of the war.

“You were the most courageous person in the country on this,” the Democrat from Wisconsin told Chafee. Characteristically, the Republican from Rhode Island tried to shrug off the compliment, but Feingold insisted on Chafee’s singularity.

“A member of the president’s own party” who voted against the war, Feingold said.

Inside, Chafee mounted a senators-

only stair to the cloakroom and marched to the floor to cast one of his final votes.

For the record, it was Senate Roll Call Number 273, to limit debate on the nomination of Andrew von Eschenbach to head the Food and Drug Administration.

Chafee joined the 89-to-6 majority in favor of allowing a vote on the appointment.

The white-maned dean of the Senate, Democrat Robert Byrd of West Virginia, spoke in praise of Chafee. The unofficial guardian of the Senate’s ancient folkways, Byrd capped his tribute with the highest encomium in his lexicon:

“You’re a senator!”

“I’ll take that,” Chafee said later, re-

SEE **CHAFEES, A9**



## Ebola virus may drive gorillas into extinction

**BY DENISE GRADY**  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Ebola virus has killed from 3,500 to 5,500 gorillas in one region of the Congo Republic since 2002, and its continued spread, along with hunting, could wipe out the species, researchers reported yesterday.

“A lot of animals are dying,”

said Peter D. Walsh, an ecologist at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Primatology in Leipzig, Germany, and an author of a report published in the journal *Science*. “There’s a massive decline.”

Several Ebola vaccines have been developed that work in animals in the lab, including mon-

keys, and Walsh is eager to test them on gorillas in the wild by injecting the animals with darts or putting an oral vaccine in food. By tracking the spread of the virus and vaccinating animals in its path, it might be possible to stop outbreaks, he said.

SEE **GORILLAS, A11**

Western lowland gorillas at a zoo in Kent, England, in 1996. Researchers say vaccinating the gorillas in the wild may end the Ebola outbreaks responsible for the decline in their numbers.

AP / ROY LETKEY

**INSIDE TODAY**  
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6 SECTIONS / 54 PAGES

Ask Army	F8	Local News	D1
Bridge	F8	Lotteries	C3
Business	E1	Obituaries	D4
Classified	E6	People	F1
Comics	F9	Rhode Island	B1
Crossword	F8	Sports	C1
Editorial	B4	Television	F10
Legal ads	E4	What’s happening	F8
Lifebeat	F1		
Movies			

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### STATE DOT HEAD TO RETIRE

James R. Capaldi, who rose through the ranks to become director of the state Department of Transportation, says he will retire this month after serving more than 35 years at the agency. **B1**

### TRYING TO GET OUT OF JAIL

Survivor winner Richard Hatch seeks to get his tax-evasion conviction overturned, saying the judge should have let him raise allegations of cheating. **B2**



### PEARL HARBOR REMEMBERED

Nearly 500 survivors from ships sunk 65 years ago honor Pearl Harbor victims at ceremonies in Hawaii. **A2**

C M Y K