

A DUSTUP

Cloudy today with highs in the upper 30s, with light snow showers tonight.

Forecast, F8

The Providence Journal

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THURSDAY
DECEMBER 20, 2007

50¢

\$2.40 per week by carrier

Firefighter was paid overtime to fill vacancy he created

Providence union president Paul Doughty's insistence that he has done nothing wrong is disputed by Chief George Farrell.

BY DANIEL BARBARISI
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — Providence Fire Union president Paul Doughty has not come to work for much of the last three years, staffing what Chief George Farrell said appeared to be a no-show position in the department's training division instead of working a fire truck.

At the same time, Doughty was making extra cash working overtime shifts to fill the vacancy created when he left his job on a special hazards truck, according to a Journal analysis of department re-

ports; Farrell said that amounted to double-billing the city.

The state police are investigating Doughty, who could face criminal charges. Two fire chiefs may be disciplined internally for failing to oversee Doughty, said Farrell, who was appointed chief of the department in May.

"It wasn't too long that I was here before I was sure that things were going on that shouldn't have been," said Farrell, who was president of the Providence fire union from 1996 to 2002.

A month after he took over, Farrell

moved Doughty back to special hazards truck 1, the firefighter's post for nearly 20 years.

Doughty asserts that he has done nothing wrong; he acknowledges that he did not come to work for almost three years, but said he had been authorized to work full-time on union business by Farrell's predecessor as chief, David Costa. He said that previous union presidents — including Farrell — have been allowed to do union business full-time. The union contract allows the president to take time off for union business, but it does not specify how much.

Doughty said Farrell is investigating him in retaliation for his role in ongoing

contract-related conflicts between the union and the city.

"It's just a tactic to undermine us because of all the acrimony between the two groups," Doughty said.

Former Chief Costa has moved to Maine, and did not respond to requests for comment. His two assistant chiefs said they knew of no such agreement between Costa and Doughty.

Chief Farrell has been quietly looking into Doughty's job status since shortly after he took the department's top spot. He said that only he and two other chiefs knew about the informal investigation



JOURNAL FILE

Paul Doughty became head of the firefighters union in 2004.

SEE OVERTIME, A2

Tragedy in storm's wake



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BILL MURPHY

Andrew Plante, left, 19, of Blackstone, Mass., receives a flower delivery from Scott Groome, a driver for Flamingo Flowers. Andrew's mother, Rita Plante, was killed Tuesday night when she was struck by a plow truck while walking home after parking her car.

Two pedestrians forced from snow-covered sidewalks killed

A Woonsocket man and a Blackstone, Mass., woman walking in the road are struck by plow trucks in separate incidents, the police say.

BY TATIANA PINA and PHILIP MARCELO
JOURNAL STAFF WRITERS

Two people forced into the streets by snow-packed sidewalks — a Woonsocket man going to work in the predawn darkness and a Blackstone, Mass., mother of five heading home in the early evening — were struck and killed by snowplows this week.

The plow driver in the Woonsocket accident, which occurred early yesterday morning, was cited by state police for equipment violations, while the police are still searching for the driver involved in the Blackstone accident on Tuesday.

"It's just sad that this happened in two locations. I just pray our walkers will be more vigilant and drivers will control their vehicles," said Michael Annarummo, Woonsocket's director of public works and administration.

In Woonsocket, at 5:43 a.m. yesterday, it was still dark as 48-year-old Raymond Boucher Jr. walked south on Cumberland Street near Cass Avenue on his way to work at the CVS warehouse. Boucher was walking in the street with his back to traffic.

The police said they believe he never saw the plow that struck him from behind.

The driver, Krzysztof Mirga, 32, who was driving a dump truck with a plow attached, told police he did not see Boucher in the street, said Woonsocket Deputy Chief Richard Dubois at a

news conference yesterday at police headquarters. Mirga hit Boucher with the plow blade. Boucher, who lived at St. Germaine Manor at 429 East School St., Woonsocket, was taken by rescue to Landmark Medical Center just down the block. He was pronounced dead at 6:26 a.m., Dubois said.

Mirga "felt the accident and got out and saw the man in the road," Dubois said. Mirga works

for K&K Masonry. He is not contracted by the city and was not plowing at the time, Dubois said.

A driver who was behind Mirga corroborated Mirga's detailing of events, Dubois said. The state police cited Mirga for having a plow blade a foot-and-a-half longer than allowed by state regulation, for operating a truck over the weight limit and for a turn signal violation. Dubois said that based on accounts of what happened, he did not believe there would be criminal charges.

Dubois said that it is likely that the uncleared

SEE DEATHS, A11



Jennifer LaPointe climbs the snowbank as she makes her way around a police car that is stopped to help middle school children cross Cumberland Street in Woonsocket — the location where Raymond Boucher, 48, was hit from behind by a snowplow and killed as he walked to work yesterday.

THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL
FRIEDA SQUIRES

Teen gets Training School for fatal crash

Michael J. Silveira, 17, was driving while intoxicated when he crashed last month, killing passenger Jonathan Converse, 16.

BY EDWARD FITZPATRICK
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — A Barrington teenager entered a plea agreement yesterday and was sentenced to serve two years in the state Training School for driving while intoxicated and slamming a car into a tree, killing his best friend.

Michael J. Silveira, 17, of 91 Sowams Rd., pleaded no contest to a charge of driving under the influence with death resulting. He admitted that he and a small group of teens spent the evening of Nov. 5 drinking Busch Light, and that he had a blood alcohol level above the legal limit when he sped down New Meadow Road and crashed, killing one of his passengers, 16-year-old Jonathan C. Converse.

Family Court Chief Judge Jeremiah S. Jeremiah Jr. said he thought Silveira should be sent to an adult court and the Adult Correctional Institutions. "If you want to act like an adult, you should suffer the adult consequences," he said.

But Jeremiah said he decided to honor the plea

SEE SENTENCE, A10

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Extra: To read the Family Court transcript, go to projo.com

EPA blocks tougher rules on auto emissions

The federal agency claims that the energy bill signed into law yesterday supersedes states' effort to cut greenhouse gases.

JOURNAL WIRE SERVICES

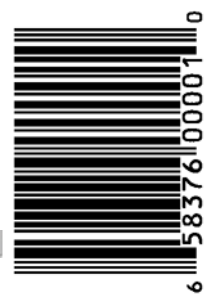
WASHINGTON — The Environmental Protection Agency yesterday denied California and 16 other states, including Rhode Island and Massachusetts, the right to set their own standards for carbon dioxide pollution from automobiles.

The EPA administrator, Stephen L. Johnson, said the proposed California rules were preempted by federal authority and made moot by the energy bill signed into law by President Bush yesterday. Johnson said California had failed to make a compelling case that it needed authority to write its own standards for greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks to help curb global warming.

"The Bush administration is moving forward with a clear national solution, not a confusing patchwork of state rules," Johnson said in an evening conference call with reporters. "I believe this is a better approach than if individual states were to act alone."

The decision immediately sparked a heated de-

SEE EMISSIONS, A14



INSIDE TODAY

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SANTA FUND AND HASBRO
A total of \$9,389 has been donated.
See latest donations on Page B3

LAST-MINUTE TAX RELIEF

Congress moves to spare millions of Americans from being subject to the alternative minimum tax, a measure intended to affect only the truly rich. A4

A CHANGE IN CARE

Close to 300 foster children who turned 18 in state custody lose the protection of the Family Court as the state Department of Children, Youth and Families moves to shift the young adults to less expensive voluntary aftercare programs. B1



'TWEENERS' POWER

With tickets for tonight's Hannah Montana concert selling out in three minutes, the Dunkin' Donuts Center finds that "tweeners" are a lucrative and growing market. F1