

MIXED
A bit cooler, with
afternoon showers;
high around 80.
Forecast, C6

The Providence Journal

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THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BILL MURPHY

An aerial view of the former Newport Bridge, renamed for longtime Sen. Claiborne Pell, which was completed in 1969 at a cost of \$61 million.

Pell Bridge paint job: \$78 million

In today's dollars, the state will spend nearly a quarter of what it cost to build the bridge to strip and repaint it.

BY PAUL EDWARD PARKER
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

What would 24,000 gallons of paint look like?

It would fill a backyard swimming pool that is 18 feet by 36 feet.

It would be enough to flush all the toilets in South Kingstown — at the same time.

It would be enough mozzarella for a pizza the size of the basin in Waterplace Park.

And it would cover the Pell Bridge from Jamestown to Newport in three fresh coats, which is what the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority plans to do with it.

The authority is putting together plans to

strip all the paint off the Pell Bridge and repaint the span. The five-year project would be done in phases beginning in 2009, with the work going out to bid next year. Planners expect it will cost about \$78 million. When the bridge was completed in 1969, it cost \$61 million. Factoring in inflation, that same cost would be \$342 million today, meaning that painting the suspension bridge will

cost nearly a quarter of what it would cost to build the span. It is difficult to put that cost into perspective by comparison to other suspension bridges because big bridges are rarely com-

Engineers test steel pilings as they prepare for a new Sakonnet River Bridge. **Page B1**

SEE PELL, A7

Claiborne Pell Bridge

Type: Suspension
Color: Unnamed shade of blue-green
Dedicated: June 28, 1969, as Newport Bridge
Cost: \$61 million (\$342 million in 2007 dollars)
Renamed: 1992
Overall length: 11,248 feet (2.13 miles)
Main span length: 1,600 feet (longest in New England)
Tower height: 400 feet above mean high water
Roadway height at center span: 215 feet
Roadway width: 48 feet
Toll: \$2 cash, or tokens at \$10 for 11 or \$50 for 60

Iraqis fail to meet standards, GAO finds

The White House criticizes an independent draft that says Iraq has met only 3 of the benchmarks set by Congress despite the recent U.S. troop increase.

BY ANNE FLAHERTY and ANNE GEARAN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — An independent assessment concluding that Iraq has made little political progress in recent

months despite an influx of U.S. troops drew fierce objections from the White House yesterday and provided fresh ammunition for Democrats, who want to bring troops home.

The political wrangling came days before the report was to be officially released, and while most lawmakers were still out of town for this month's recess, reflecting the high stakes involved for both sides in the Iraq war debate. President Bush,

SEE REPORT, A8

1,900 to lose childcare aid tomorrow

More stringent limits on eligibility for state-subsidized childcare are expected to save Rhode Island taxpayers \$19.8 million.

BY STEVE PEOPLES
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

An estimated 1,900 Rhode Island children will lose subsidized childcare benefits tomorrow.

Their parents, daycare providers, and social-welfare advocates are bracing for the most dramatic policy shift in the state's childcare system in the last decade.

Parents are turning to neighbors, friends or even older siblings to care for children who previously attended a licensed facility with trained teachers and staff that offered food and transportation. A total of 1,500 working families will lose subsidies Sept. 1. That's more than 20 percent of the families in the system today.

SEE CHILDCARE, B3

Two firefighters killed in Boston restaurant blaze

JOURNAL WIRE SERVICES

BOSTON — Two Boston firefighters were killed and 11 were injured battling a blaze that appeared to have started in a grease-caked ventilation shaft at a Chinese restaurant Wednesday night, officials said yesterday. They were the first Boston firefighters to die in the line of duty since 1994.

Chief Kevin MacCurtain said the fire burned in a crawlspace above a drop ceiling for about an hour, undetected by patrons and staff at the Tai Ho Mandarin and Cantonese Restaurant, a popular place for takeout, in the West Roxbury neighborhood.

When smoke and flames started punching through the ceiling about 9 p.m., the restaur-

SEE FIREFIGHTERS, A6

Ruling opens a window into doctors' files

A federal court opens access to parts of the Medicare database, a treasure trove that patients could use in choosing physicians.

BY RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR
LOS ANGELES TIMES

WASHINGTON — Whether it's a hernia repair or heart bypass, doctors who perform a given operation more frequently get better results. The problem for patients has been determining who those physicians are before picking one.

Now a court ruling appears to open the way for consumer access to such information, potentially transforming the relationship between doctors and their patients, as well as the business of health care.

Last week, a federal judge in Washington ruled in favor of a consumer group that sued the Health and Human Services de-

SEE DATABASE, A6

From ACI, a helping hand and four paws

Two soldiers who lost limbs in Iraq and Afghanistan receive service dogs trained by inmates at the ACI.

BY AMANDA MILKOVITS
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

CRANSTON — Army Specialist Sue Downes lost her legs and nearly her life when an improvised explosive device ripped through the Humvee she was riding inside in Afghanistan last year.

As she recovered, a stranger with only his time to give was training a puppy to be the companion for Downes' new life.

Downes, a mother of two from a small town outside Knoxville, Tenn., is the first female veteran to get a service dog trained through the Canines for Combat Veterans program, run by the National Education for Assistance Dog Services. Her new companion is Lila, a yellow Labrador Retriever trained by an inmate at the Adult Correctional Institutions, where selected inmates have been training dogs to serve handicapped adults and children for

SEE DOG, A9



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / KATHY BORCHERS

Army Specialist Sue Downes, who lost her legs in Afghanistan, meets Lila, her service dog, and Chris Bergin, center, the ACI inmate who trained her, as corrections Director Ashbel T. Wall II looks on.



INSIDE TODAY

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6 SECTIONS / 46 PAGES

Ask Amy	E8	Local News	D1
Bridge	E8	Lotteries	C4
Business	F1	Obituaries	D4
Classified	F4	People	E1
Comics	E9	Rhode Island	B1
Crossword	E8	Sports	C1
Editorial	B4	Television	E7
Legal ads	E7	What's Happening	E8
Lifbeat			
Movies	E1		

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PUSHING AHEAD ON WIND POWER

Governor Carcieri moves up by two years his target date for building an offshore wind farm to produce 15 percent of the state's electricity, telling a group of stakeholders, "We have to take control of our future." **F1**

FBI SPIED ON CORETTA SCOTT KING

FBI agents secretly monitored Coretta Scott King's activities and conversations for years after her husband's assassination in 1968, according to newly released documents. **A2**

PATRIOTS PLAY THE ROSTER

Tom Brady, Ty Warren, Adaluis Thomas and Donte Stallworth warm up on the field at Gillette Stadium, but the action goes to lesser-known players like Bam Childress, left, in the Pats' 27-20 win over the Giants last night. **C1**