

SUNNY, COOL

Sunny but chilly today with highs in the upper 40s; clear skies tonight.

Forecast, B8

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Lagging lottery revenue may further strain R.I. budget

Lottery officials expect the state's gambling receipts to be \$11.1 million less than anticipated.

BY KATHERINE GREGG
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE — At the rate recession-wary Rhode Islanders are buying Lottery tickets and playing their favorite video-slot machines, the state's gambling receipts will fall \$11.1 million behind earlier estimates for the

year.

State Lottery officials delivered the grim news yesterday at a Revenue & Caseload Estimating Conference that began earlier this week amid warnings: "The worst is not over by any means."

At their last meeting in May, the state's official revenue estimators

— who include the state budget director and top fiscal advisers to the House and Senate—anticipated an overall \$365.5 million from the sale of traditional Lottery tickets and video-slot play at Twin River and Newport Grand.

But Rhode Island is now seeing the downturn that is playing out nationwide in the gambling industry. The state's Daily Numbers game was down 2.69 percent

during the first three months of the year that began on July 1, compared with the same three-month stretch a year ago; Keno sales were down 7.06 percent, and Powerball sales down 15.14 percent.

There were bright spots, including an uptick in instant-win ticket sales, but the 4,752 video slots at Twin River and the 1,460 at Newport Grand that have been

the big moneymakers for the state trailed last year's collections during the same months by 0.19 percent. While recent renovations moved players from one location to another at Newport Grand, they did not boost business.

If trends continue, Lottery Director Gerald Aubin and Chief Financial Officer Dan Sarro said, the Lottery's contribution to state

coffers would be closer to \$354.4 million than the projected \$365.5 million.

In most years, the Lottery has been a reliable and growing contributor to the state treasury. State revenue from the Lottery has increased steadily from \$249 million in 2003, to \$281.1 million in 2004, to \$307.6 million in 2005,

SEE REVENUE, A4

CAMPAIGN 2008



Republican John McCain, left, and Democrat Barack Obama both stump for votes in the battleground state of Florida yesterday, with less than a week left before the presidential vote. Obama aired a 30-minute commercial touting his candidacy while McCain challenged his Democratic opponent's qualifications. Details, A8

AP / STEPHAN SAVOIA, left; JAE C. HONG, right



Charges against Irons dismissed

A Superior Court judge says the former state Senate president cannot be prosecuted by the Ethics Commission for his actions in the General Assembly.

BY BRUCE LANDIS
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — A judge yesterday dismissed ethics charges against William V. Irons, saying that the former state Senate president is protected by the state Constitution from prosecution based on his legislative activities.

The decision was a major setback for the state Ethics Commission, which has successfully prosecuted several legislators, imposing fines of \$10,000 and more. If the ruling is upheld, it could mean that the commission could no longer prosecute members of the state House and Senate for ethics violations based on their votes or other legislative activities.

Commission lawyer Jason M. Gramitt said he was disappointed by Superior Court Judge Francis J. Darigan's. He said he expects that the commission will appeal to the state Supreme Court.

John Arruda, the past president of the watchdog group Operation Clean Government who filed the ethics complaint against Irons in 2004,

SEE IRONS, A11

THE YOUTH VOTE



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / KATHY BORCHERS

At Tiogue Elementary School in Coventry, above, second graders Brandon Pavilia, left, and Noah Cloutier prepare to vote, while Destiny Trinidad, center, contemplates her choice. Below, first graders Miranda Smith and Julia Henault, review the ballot.

Many school across Rhode Island are holding mock elections to increase awareness of the electoral process.

BY LISA VERNON-SPARKS
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

COVENTRY — Myles Marino, a second grader at the Tiogue Elementary School, bit his lip and closely studied his choices. Each one had a small oval for him to fill in with a pencil.

It wasn't a standardized test, but it was serious business for Myles and more than 300 other Tiogue students who cast paper ballots yesterday for the next president as well as state and local offices during a mock election. The kindergarten-through-fifth-grade school is among thousands around the country participating in the National Student/

SEE ELECTION, A8



projoVIDEO

Video: Students at Tiogue Elementary School in Coventry cast their votes for president. Watch the video at projo.com

Pair vying for House seat in South County

BY DONITA NAYLOR
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

In Rod Driver's campaign commercial, cartoon sheep "baa" their assent to bills being herded through the Rhode Island House.

"When legislators follow the leadership like sheep," Driver says in a voiceover, "baaad things happen."

Sheep also figure into the landscape of Driver's opponent, David B. Hathaway, 48. On Hathaway's 145-acre farm in Exeter, a small flock of real sheep is watched over by a donkey. An elephant might make more sense as a symbol for Hathaway, a

SEE RACE, A10

Feeding more than a hunger for knowledge

With 80 percent of Providence's public school students coming from families at or below the poverty line, Hope High School and a supermarket chain open a food pantry.

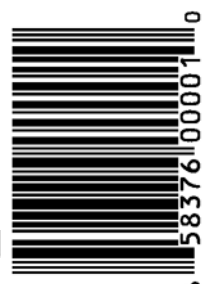
BY LINDA BORG
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — Whole Foods is putting its money where its mouth is. The high-end natural foods store has opened its first food bank in a public school, Hope High School on the city's East Side.

Yesterday, a dozen special-needs students from Hope's Arts Community cut the ribbon on the Whole Kids Food Bank, carved out of a storage room on the basement floor. The partnership makes a lot of sense: It pairs a natural foods company that donates 5 percent of its after-tax profits to nonprofit organizations with a high school that, under new leadership, has transformed itself from an urban failure to an urban success.

"We've been called Whole Paycheck," said Whole Foods marketing team leader Chelsey

SEE FOOD, A6



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FED CUTS KEY RATE

The Federal Reserve slashes a key interest rate by half a percentage point in its latest effort to revive the sagging economy as the government begins distributing funds from the recently approved rescue package. D1

FALL-BACK BENEFIT

You may be doing your heart some good when you turn back your clocks one hour this weekend, according to an article in The New England Journal of Medicine. A2

PHILLIES WIN WORLD SERIES

Resuming play after a 46-hour rain delay, the Philadelphia Phillies win the World Series for the second time in franchise history, beating the Tampa Bay Rays 4-3 in Game Five. C1

PROTEST IN PROVIDENCE

At least 500 people representing six municipal unions turn out



to protest an appearance by Providence Mayor David N. Cicilline over the city's decision to switch to a different health-insurance company. B1