

DRY SKIES
Mostly sunny but cooler today with highs only in the low 60s; chilly tonight.
Forecast, B6

The Providence Journal

WEDNESDAY
APRIL 30, 2008

75¢
Home Delivery 401.277.7600

projo.com

Central Falls imposes nighttime curfew

The move follows the shooting deaths of two teens in the city and concerns that some may be bent on retaliation.

BY TATIANA PINA
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

CENTRAL FALLS — Reacting to the fear that has gripped this city after two teenagers were shot to death over the weekend, the mayor yesterday imposed a 9 p.m.-to-5 a.m. curfew for all youths under 18.

After 9 p.m., anyone under 18 who is out on the street must be accompanied by a parent or guardian or the adults could face fines.

Inside by 9 p.m.

- Individuals under 18 years of age must be off the streets between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- Juveniles traveling to or from work during the curfew hours must be able to show proof of their employment.
- Parents or guardians of young people who violate the curfew will receive warnings and eventually will be fined.

"It's a 10-page document to keep kids off the street and safe," Mayor Charles Moreau told about 300 people who gathered at the gymnasium of the Ralph Holden Community Center for a meeting to seek reassurance that the

children of the city would be safe.

"For a 16-year-old to be shot down on Dexter Street is unacceptable. This is a fight between a group of children. It's not gangs, it's not adults. They're children and we will need parents' support. Be with your kids. Take them under your wing," Moreau said, standing at the podium accompanied by the police chief and three captains, city councilors, the superintendent of schools, state representatives, representatives of social agencies and the attorney general.

"How are my kids supposed to be safe when they are walking to and from school?" a mother asked.

SEE **CURFEW, A7**



Mery Morales and her son, Armani Villalona, listen to public officials talk about safety issues in Central Falls in the wake of two fatal shootings over the weekend.

THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL
BOB THAYER

CONFRONTING TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES

Losing confidence

The Consumer Confidence Index falls to its lowest level in five years. **A7**

America for sale

Families find themselves forced to sell off prized possessions to get by. **A7**

No quick fix

President Bush says there is no easy solution to these "very difficult times." **A7**

ENERGY ILLS



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BILL MURPHY

Smithfield school bus driver Lisa LeBlonde, of Woonsocket, fuels up before her afternoon run yesterday. To save money, the Smithfield school superintendent says he hopes to cut the number of buses from 26 to 24 and reduce the number of runs from 4 to 3.

Soaring fuel costs soaking municipal budgets

BY RANDAL EDGAR
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Six months ago, Smithfield School Supt. Robert O'Brien thought a \$310,000 heating budget would be more than enough to keep students and teachers warm this school year.

He also thought his estimate for next year — \$499,000 — would be enough, even with prices for heating oil and petroleum products on the rise.

Today he knows better. This year's heating budget is \$80,000 in the red, and, with the schools needing \$2 million in cuts just to bal-

ance next year's budget, he can only hope that his guess for next winter comes true.

O'Brien is not alone. Across the state, the fuel and oil prices that are whacking motorists and home heating oil users are also straining school and municipal budgets.

In Providence, the budget for gasoline — needed to power more than 200 police vehicles — is in the red by \$600,000. In Pawtucket, the accounts for diesel, gasoline and heating oil are over by \$100,000. In Warwick, higher diesel prices

are contributing to a projected \$60,000 deficit in the Fire Department.

Local officials say the spike in fuel and energy prices is not the biggest budget challenge they face this year. But with the state looking to cut local aid, and other revenues down because of the sputtering economy, they say the spike is coming at the worst possible time.

"We're getting hit from so many different directions, there's only so much you can do," O'Brien said. "I still have to heat schools. To

SEE **FUEL, A7**

THIRD OF FIVE PARTS

Assembly approves 24-hour gambling

The legislation extends operating hours on weekends and holidays at Twin River and Newport Grand, a move that advocates say will bring millions more to the cash-strapped state.

BY KATHERINE GREGG and CYNTHIA NEEDHAM
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE — The House and Senate yesterday approved 24-hour gambling at the state's two video-slot emporiums on weekends and holidays, after a raucous debate in which critics accused the Assembly's Democratic leaders of violating both the Constitution and the wishes of people living in Newport and Lincoln who have repeatedly said "no" to more gambling.

Along the way, the lawmakers rejected amendment after amendment that would have required voter approval, a larger appropriation for problem-gambling and a hike in

ALL NIGHT LONG

The legislation approved yesterday allows Twin River and Newport Grand to operate from 9 a.m. on Fridays to 3 a.m. on Mondays. It also allows the gambling facilities to operate on a 24-hour basis on all federal and state holidays.

SEE **GAMBLING, A6**

Obama calls pastor's words 'outrageous'

The Democratic presidential candidate repudiates the latest comments by the Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr.

BY PETER SLEVIN and DARRYL FEARS
THE WASHINGTON POST

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Using his sharpest language yet, Sen. Barack Obama strived to distance himself further from his former longtime pastor yesterday, calling the Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr.'s comments about the United States "outrageous" and "destructive."

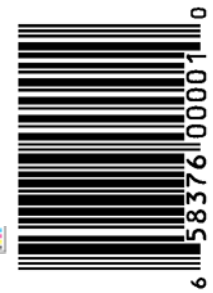
Laboring to contain damage to his presidential candidacy, Obama said Wright's recent appearances had left him angry and sad. He accused his spiritual mentor of exploiting racism and "giving comfort to those who prey on hate" at a time when the Illinois Democrat is vowing to bring the nation together. And he strongly took issue with some of the pastor's more controversial remarks.

"When he states and then amplifies such ridicu-



WRIGHT

SEE **OBAMA, A6**



INSIDE TODAY

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HOW WILL YOU USE YOUR REBATE?

Given the current tough economic times, many Rhode Islanders say they'll be spending their federal income tax rebates, which begin arriving this week, on life's necessities. **F1**

HOUSE OKs IMMIGRATION BILL

The House approves legislation that would require Rhode Island employers to use a program that checks whether a prospective new hire is in the country legally or can work here legally. **B1**

FOOTBALL MEETS MUSIC

The owners of the New England Patriots and Showcase Cinemas unveil plans for a live-music venue in the new retail and entertainment development next to Gillette Stadium in Foxboro. **E6**



SOX WALK OFF WITH A WIN

With two outs in the ninth, Kevin Youkilis lines a run-scoring single to center to give the Sox a 1-0 win over Roy Halladay and the Toronto Blue Jays, ending Boston's five-game losing streak. **C1**