

SLIP & SLIDE

This morning's freezing rain changes to all rain this afternoon; clearing tonight.
Forecast, D6

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Want help converting to digital? You may be out of luck

There's already a backlog of people who've applied for government coupons for the converters needed to keep their older TV in operation.

BY C. EUGENE EMERY JR.
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

If you own an old television set and haven't made your request for one of those \$40 coupons to help you buy a digital converter box, you may be seeing a lot of snow on your Sony after Feb. 17, even if you request a coupon today.

The problem could apply to as many as 10,000 households in the Providence-New Bedford television market.

The Commerce Department's National Tele-

communications and Information Administration announced that its coupons program has run into a cash flow problem.

People who requested vouchers for the boxes this week are now on a waiting list which, as of Monday, was roughly 103,000 names long.

They will only get their coupons as already delivered coupons expire.

About half the coupons that have been ordered have gone unused.

The converter boxes, which range in price

from \$40 to \$80, are needed so older TVs can recognize over-the-air signals when stations switch to digital broadcasts next month. Cable and satellite television subscribers will not be affected.

The creation of the waiting list prompted Attorney General Patrick C. Lynch to issue a statement yesterday warning consumers not to fall for conversion-related scams designed to charge people far more than the cost of the box itself.

"As frustrating as it is that the federal government has failed to adequately fund this initiative,

Ready for digital?

Starting Feb. 17, television stations will switch from broadcasting analog to digital signals. Here's what you need to do to make sure your TV will still work:

- If your TV is hooked up to cable or satellite, you don't have to do anything.
- If you use an antenna to receive free TV stations, find out if your current set can receive digital signals by going to www.dtvtransition.gov. If your set can't receive a digital signal, you can either buy a new TV or purchase a converter box.
- You can get information about and apply for the government's \$40 discount coupon for converters at www.dtv2009.org or by calling (888) 388-2009.

SEE **DIGITAL TV, A6**

Teachers contest ordered cutback

The union wants the court to order East Providence to maintain an expired contract that the city says it can no longer afford.

BY GINA MACRIS
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — The East Providence teachers union yesterday asked a Superior Court judge to bar the School Committee from unilaterally cutting salaries and imposing payroll deductions to recoup 20 percent of

West Warwick looks for ways to cut \$15 million from the school budget. **B1**

the cost of health-insurance premiums.

Unlike teachers in many other communities, those in East Providence do not contribute to the cost of health insurance.

The union, the East Providence Education Association, argued that the rollback would

SEE **TEACHERS, B4**

Feinstein in battle with IMAX

The philanthropist files suit to restore his name to the theater and force the owners to honor his charitable commitments.

BY KATIE MULVANEY
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — You might notice something missing at the Providence Place mall these days:

philanthropist Alan Shawn Feinstein's name has been stripped from its big-screen theater.



FEINSTEIN

The theater, with its mammoth six-story screen, had borne Feinstein's name since it opened in 2003 under an agreement with the IMAX Corp. The company that bought the cinema about a year ago, however, opted to remove the ubiquitous handle, arguing it wasn't obligated to continue

SEE **FEINSTEIN, B4**

With an unemployment rate of 9.3% and the state facing a budget deficit of \$357 million for the current fiscal year, newly elected Senate President M. Teresa Paiva Weed says she and her colleagues at the General Assembly need to ...

'Hit the ground running'



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / **CONNIE GROSCH**

Sen. M. Teresa Paiva Weed is sworn in by acting chief justice of the state Supreme Court, Maureen McKenna Goldberg, as the first female Senate president in Rhode Island, with her husband, Mark Weed, by her side. "Nothing can compare to being at the top of the ladder," Paiva Weed said.

Madame President

A trailblazer adds the top post in the Senate to her extensive resumé

BY CYNTHIA NEEDHAM
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE

Sen. M. Teresa Paiva Weed has seen her share of firsts on Smith Hill.

A decade ago, the Newport senator was named the first female chair of the Judiciary Committee and later won the job as the first female majority leader.

But being elected the first female Senate president is another kind of first entirely.

"Nothing," she said, "can compare to being at the top of the ladder."

When her Senate colleagues — most of them male — elevated Paiva Weed to the Senate presidency yesterday, replacing Joseph A. Montalbano, she looked out from the rostrum, her smile genuine.

Nothing could compare. The road from Newport to the State House started back in college when Paiva Weed, now 49, worked as a legislative page.

In 1992, the 33-year-old lawyer ran for the Senate when

SEE **PRESIDENT, A7**

As the Assembly convenes, hints emerge of Carcieri's plan to curb massive budget deficit

House Speaker William J. Murphy vows that lawmakers "cannot and must not try to tax our way out of this economic downturn."

BY KATHERINE GREGG
JOURNAL STATE HOUSE BUREAU

PROVIDENCE — After an opening day that saw West Warwick Democrat William J. Murphy sail to a fourth term as House speaker and Newport Democrat M. Teresa Paiva Weed elected as Rhode Island's first female Senate president, state lawmakers braced for Governor Carcieri's unveiling tonight of his "hard-choices" plan for plugging the state's \$357-million current-year deficit.

Full details won't emerge until Republican Carcieri addresses the public at 7 p.m., during a block of radio talk show and TV time.

But while a spokeswoman for the governor said he had not yet finalized his deficit-avoidance plan as of late yesterday, sources close to him said he has been considering a mix of spending cuts and revenue-raisers, including

On TV tonight

Governor Carcieri tonight at 7 will present his plan to deal with the deficit. His address will be carried live on Channels 6, 10 and 12 and WPRO-AM radio.

a possible hike in the state's \$2.46-a-pack cigarette tax to the \$2.51-a-pack level in Massachusetts, an increase in the gross premiums tax on health insurance companies and the doubling of assorted Registry of Motor Vehicles fees.

As recently as Monday, he was also relying on contract savings, unfilled vacancies across state government, unspecified state and local "pension reforms" and "deferrals," a \$90-million-plus cut in municipal and education aid to the cities and towns, and unspecified reductions of almost equal magnitude in social-service spending to plug the hole.

As a consolation prize for the cities and towns, Carcieri considered renewing the annual GOP push for repeal of certain mandates, such as the use of school bus monitors, and

SEE **ASSEMBLY, A7**

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DEEPER IN DEBT

As he readies his economic stimulus package, President-elect Barack Obama braces the American public for what he warns will be "trillion-dollar deficits for years to come." **A6**

APPLE CHANGES ITS TUNE

In moves that will help shape the online future of the music business, Apple says that it will remove anti-copying restrictions on all of the songs in its popular iTunes store and allow record companies to set a range of prices for them. **A6**



WATERFRONT SITE FOR SALE

The state is asking \$3.5 million for most of the site of the former Shooter's Waterfront Café in Fox Point, property it acquired in 2000 as part of the Route 195 relocation project. **B1**