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METRO

TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2003 • 50 CENTS

Louisville starts layoffs, pay cuts to address deficit

■ Eight human resources employees told they'll lose jobs; more cuts are expected.

By JOSEPH GERTH
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The Courier-Journal

Louisville metro government has begun cutting jobs and salaries as officials struggle to get control of a projected \$18 million budget deficit for the coming fiscal year.

Eight of the Human Resources Department's 55 employees were notified last week that they will be laid off June 30, and three others received pay cuts in what is expected to be the first of

several department efforts to reduce costs.

"There will be more of these likely in the coming weeks," said Chad Carlton, a spokesman for Mayor Jerry Abramson.

Rising personnel costs will far outpace projected revenue increases, forcing the Abramson administration to cut spending by nearly 5 percent to balance the metro government's \$400 million general-fund budget.

During the 2004 fiscal year that begins July 1, the metro government will

have to spend \$19.8 million more to pay for negotiated union contracts, pension and health-insurance increases, higher wages and debt service, Deputy Mayor Larry Hayes said.

Revenue likely will rise only \$1.5 million during that time, far less than the \$4 million increase the city and county governments collectively received this year and the \$9 million increase they got in 2001-2002.

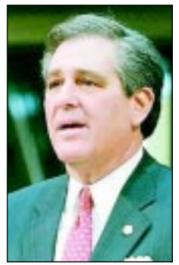
In response, the administration is looking at reducing staffing levels as one way to save money. Abramson

promises he won't raise taxes, and the Metro Council also has steadfastly opposed any hint of tax increases.

"This is going to be a continual process as we review the way we do business," Carlton said. "We're looking at how many people it takes to do the job."

Carlton said the Human Resources layoffs will save \$313,000 annually in salaries and benefits. Carlton said he

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After the merger of city and county governments, Louisville Metro Mayor Jerry Abramson has frequently said that "I have two of everything."



Large-scale combat in Iraq is finished, U.S. officials say



A U.S. soldier pointed his weapon at a man who was arrested in Baghdad with a group of men in a vehicle filled with weapons. The troops accused the men of attempting to ambush U.S. forces. Locals said the men in the group were non-Iraqi Arab fighters.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Marines take Tikrit with unexpected ease

By TONY PERRY
and JOHN DANISZEWSKI
Los Angeles Times

TIKRIT, Iraq — U.S. Marines captured Tikrit yesterday, the last big target of the war and the center of power for Saddam Hussein's Baath Party, as Pentagon officials declared that large-scale combat in Iraq was over.

"This is a day of emerging liberation for the people of Iraq," President Bush's spokesman, Ari Fleischer, said in Washington. Pentagon spokeswoman Victoria Clarke declared: "The (Saddam) regime is at its end."

While sniper fire and mortar attacks in Tikrit persisted into the night, the Marines said Saddam's Republican Guard chose to flee rather than fight. Brig. Gen. John Kelly, assistant commander of the 1st Marine Division, said the Guard no longer existed as a combat force and most Iraqi paramilitary fighters had disbanded.

The Air Force and Navy began sending planes and ships home, including the four B-2 stealth bombers that flew wartime missions; several strike aircraft, including stealth fighters; and two of the five aircraft carrier battle groups that have been engaged in the war. Also headed home were two attack submarines that had

joined cruisers and destroyers in firing 800 cruise missiles into Iraq.

Meanwhile, 11 containers buried close to an artillery ammunition plant in southern Iraq were discovered by U.S. troops yesterday and could be dual-use chemical and biological laboratories, U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Ben Freakley told CNN.

The 20-foot-by-20-foot metal containers, which could be attached to semitrailers or railway cars, were found by members of the 101st Airborne Division in Karbala. About 1,000 pounds of documenta-

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U.S. might set sights on Syria

Powell hints at possible diplomatic, economic steps

By DANA MILBANK
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration escalated its warnings to Syria yesterday, accusing Iraq's western neighbor of developing chemical weapons, harboring former Iraqi leaders and allowing foreign fighters to enter Iraq to attack U.S. troops.

White House press secretary Ari Fleischer said repeatedly at his morning briefing that "Syria needs to cooperate." He read from a CIA report to Congress last year that Syria had stockpiles of the nerve agent sarin, that it was "trying to develop more toxic and persistent nerve elements," and that it was "highly probable" that Syria was pursuing biological weapons. Fleischer described the document as "authoritative" and said the charge is "well-corroborated."

Fleischer declined to dispel the impression that the administration was targeting Syria for possible diplomatic or even military measures.

"I can only say to you that it should not be unexpected that the United States for a considerable period of time has said through diplomatic channels that nations that are rogue nations need to clean up their act," he said. "They should not harbor terrorists. They should not produce weapons of mass destruction."

Secretary of State Colin Powell, speaking to reporters



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after a meeting with Sheikh Mohammad al-Salem al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti foreign minister, said the United States will examine possible diplomatic or economic measures against Syria.

"In light of this new environment, they (Syrian officials) should review their actions and their behavior, not only with respect to who gets haven in Syria and weapons of mass destruction, but especially the support of terrorist activity," Powell said.

At the Pentagon, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told reporters that Syria had allowed "some Iraqi people" to cross its borders, "in some cases to stay and some cases to transit." Foreign fighters also were allowed to enter Iraq via Syria to target U.S. troops, Rumsfeld said after talks with the Kuwaiti foreign minister. Rumsfeld also said Syria had tested chemical weapons.

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From the FRONT

Tikrit secured

U.S. Marines overran loyalists in Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit, seemingly ending the major combat phase of the war.

Baghdad

Iraqi police and U.S. troops jointly patrolled Baghdad streets to quell lawlessness.

Discovery

Eleven containers buried close to an artillery ammunition plant could be dual-use chemical and biological laboratories, U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Ben Freakley said.

Syria relations

The U.S. said it will consider steps against Syria because of concern Damascus is harboring Iraqi fugitives and tested chemical weapons.

3-PAGE REPORT

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Updates at www.courier-journal.com

Indiana Senate passes bill approving French Lick casino

By LESLEY STEDMAN
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The Courier-Journal

INDIANAPOLIS — Legislation to authorize a casino in Orange County, Ind., passed a key test yesterday — winning Senate approval and leaving elated supporters confident that it will become law after a decade-long fight.

"I'm feeling great," said Mirm Hardin of French Lick, who joined about 60 supporters in watching the vote from the Senate balcony. "We made it. It's done."

The bill now goes back to the House, which must consider

GAMBLING: A horse track wants to open an off-track betting parlor in Clark County, Ind. **B1**

changes made by the Senate.

But the measure enjoys widespread House support. And its chief supporter, Rep. Jerry Denbo, made it clear yesterday that he too believes the battle has been won.

"There's no doubt" the bill will become law, said Denbo, D-French Lick. "This is the crowning moment for French Lick and West Baden," where the casino would be located. "I just

feel really, really good about this."

Gov. Frank O'Bannon isn't likely to veto the bill; he is on record in support of a casino in the Southern Indiana county.

The Senate was considered the toughest test for House Bill 1902, in part because many Republicans — including the body's leader — oppose any gambling.

But 16 Senate Democrats joined 16 Republicans to pass the legislation. Eighteen senators voted no.

Orange County was once a resort area that attracted the wealthy, who came to take the cure at the area's mineral



BY STEVE DURBIN, THE C-J

springs and gamble at its illegal casinos. But once the gambling was shut down in the 1940s, the area fell on hard times economically.

HB 1902's supporters say their aim is to help boost the economy in the county, which

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Blast supervisor wins \$142,500 in suit

Man cited danger, refused to set off explosives at mine

By ALAN MAIMON
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The Courier-Journal

A former Eastern Kentucky blasting supervisor who claimed he was being pressured into setting off explosives in violation of state law was awarded a financial settlement from his employer and a coal company.

Oat Marshall of Jackson received \$142,500 in a joint settlement with his former employer, El Dorado Chemical of Oklahoma City, and coal company

Consol of Kentucky Inc., said Ned Pillersdorf, Marshall's attorney.

The lawsuit was scheduled for trial today in U.S. District Court in Pikeville. The settlement was reached last week.

Marshall claimed in a 2001 lawsuit that El Dorado officials repeatedly told him to blast in excess of the 20-foot depth limit allowed in Consol's permit to clear ground for a strip-mining operation in Deane. Marshall said he was concerned that a deeper blast might cause rock and debris to leave the mining site and threaten people who lived below.

Rather than obey the orders, Marshall quit his \$37,000-a-year job in August 2001. The suit alleged that as a result of the company's actions, Marshall

lost earnings, suffered mental stress and incurred medical expenses because of stress.

"The lesson here is that the court system protects people who walk off the job rather than do something illegal," Pillersdorf said yesterday.

Lucious Thompson of Letcher County, a member of the environmental group Kentuckians For The Commonwealth, said Marshall should be thanked not just for refusing to detonate blasts that could have injured people, but also for setting an example for other blasters who might be asked to violate the law.

"This will let coal companies know that employees are not

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INSIDE

Metro

■ **Ethics charges:** Gov. Paul Patton has formally denied the four ethics charges filed against him last month by the Executive Branch Ethics Commission stemming from his relationship with Tina Conner. **B1**

Business

■ **Bond reduced:** A judge has cut in half — to \$6 billion — the bond Philip Morris must post before it can appeal a court verdict. This means states will get \$2.6 billion owed under the U.S. tobacco settlement. **F1**



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FORECAST

Louisville area: Mostly sunny, breezy and warm today. High, 84. Mostly clear to night. Low, 59. Partly cloudy tomorrow. High, 77. **Details, B4**

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