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THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

TODAY: POSSIBLE SHOWERS 69/53 FORECAST: B12

INLAND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S NEWSPAPER

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SIMPSON BAILS OUT

A5 O.J. Simpson, accused of armed robbery and kidnapping, is free after posting bond in Las Vegas. Meanwhile, one of his accusers is arrested on a parole violation related to an Inland case.



Tribe members, gangs linked

COURTS: Authorities tie four people in the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians to the Mexican Mafia and other groups.

BY MICHELLE DeARMOND AND JOHN F. BERRY
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Authorities say that several members of a wealthy Inland gambling tribe have links to the Mexican Mafia and other criminal gangs, according to law-enforcement officials and documents from a pending court case.

Among the members of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians with alleged gang ties, two are charged

with conspiracy to commit murder in a case involving gang members, according to authorities. They were arrested during a drug bust at the reservation and in the San Bernardino area in December.

Suspected Mexican Mafia members, arrested in the same Drug Enforcement Administration-related raids, are co-defendants in the murder-conspiracy case, which is scheduled to return Wednesday to San

Bernardino County Superior Court. A preliminary hearing could be scheduled at that time.

An analysis of court records in that case and others involving tribal members, along with interviews with law-enforcement officials, show that at least four members of the 200-person tribe are suspected of having ties to criminal gangs.

Among the findings:
■ Law enforcement authorities say that tribal member Stacy Cheyenne Barajas-Nunez, 24, has bought
SEE MOB/A8



Stacy Barajas-Nunez has financially backed gangs, authorities say.

BUTLER 2 FIRE: OPTIMISM AS FAR AS ONE CAN SEE



MARK ZALESKI/THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

U.S. Forest Service Capt. Mike Koontz directs his crew along Highway 18. Fawnskin residents were allowed to return home Wednesday evening as officials announced the Butler 2 Fire was 93 percent contained and a layer of fog settled onto the mountains. **STORY, B1**

Bid blocked to extend troop leave

BY RENEE SCHOOF
MCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

WASHINGTON — In another defeat for Democrats trying to change President Bush's Iraq policy, the Senate on Wednesday blocked legislation requiring that members of the active-duty military must spend at least as much time in the United States as they've spent in Iraq or Afghanistan before they can be sent back to the war zones again.

Democrats plan several more bills in the next few weeks to try to speed troop withdrawals, but the one on "dwell time" was considered their best chance to get the 60 votes needed under Senate rules to shut off debate. It fell four votes short: 56-44.

A weaker "sense of the Senate" version that would've en-
SEE SENATE/A8



ED CRISOSTOMO/THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Bookstore employee Camilla Najarro, right, assists Riverside Community College students making purchases. A federal study shows students pay on average \$900 a year for books.

BLOATED BOOK PRICES

New laws try to rein in cost of college texts

BY PAIGE AUSTIN
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

College students will spend more than ever on textbooks this year, prompting dozens of state and federal laws aimed at stemming the skyrocketing costs.

Two bills passed by California lawmakers last week won't actually limit the cost

of textbooks, which has been climbing at twice the rate of inflation for 20 years. Rather, they will require publishers to be more open about their practices and pricing. The argument is that better informed professors will choose more affordable texts for their classes.

Critics of the measures

say they will do little to suppress the costs of textbooks.

However, the governor has yet to sign either bill into law. Students, professors, bookstore officials and activists will gather today at California State University, San Bernardino, and seven other colleges to prompt
SEE TEXTBOOKS/A8

Poor care a 'horror' in prisons

CALIFORNIA: A review says as many as 66 deaths last year may have been preventable.

BY DON THOMPSON
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SACRAMENTO — As many as 66 inmates died because of poor medical care last year, according to a report released Wednesday, including a man whose treatment for "constant and extreme" chest pain was delayed eight hours.

The report released by Robert Sillen, the court-appointed receiver in charge of California prison health care, reviewed 381 deaths. It found that 18 deaths were preventable and 48 were possibly preventable, for a total of about 17 percent. The report excluded suicides and executions.

"There are just far too many horror stories that continue to

occur," Sillen said.

Sillen took over the prisons' medical system in April 2006, after a federal judge found that an average of one inmate a week was dying of neglect or malpractice. Inmates have continued dying preventable deaths, according to the report, even as Sillen has begun making changes, which have cost state taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

"I had no expectations the first year that there would be any change in the numbers, because there are no quick fixes," Sillen said. "We've scratched the surface, but that's all we've done."

Sillen said he expects it will take another year or even two before preventable deaths decline as better doctors and nurses are put into place. Fifty-seven prison doctors and six nurses were fired, suspended or
SEE PRISONS/A2

Private contractors outnumber troops

IRAQ: Their significant presence raises questions about whether U.S. forces could sustain themselves.

BY RICHARD LARDNER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The United States has assembled an imposing industrial army in Iraq larger than its uniformed fighting force and responsible for such a broad swath of duties that the military might not be able to operate without its private-sector partners.

More than 180,000 Americans, Iraqis and nationals from other countries work under a slew of federal contracts to provide security, gather intelli-

IN MAIN NEWS

■ The Iraqi prime minister says U.S. bodyguards killed civilians "in cold blood." **A9**

gence, build roads, forge a financial system and transport supplies in a country the size of California.

That figure contrasts with the 163,100 U.S. military personnel, according to U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Fla., the organization responsible for military operations in the Middle East. The Pentagon puts the military figure at 169,000. There are another 12,400 coalition forces in Iraq.

But it has its dangers. Employees for Blackwater USA
SEE IRAQ/BACKPAGE

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A4 No waiting for flu shots

The supply of flu vaccine is so large — more than 132 million doses — that everyone who wants one can get one, health experts say. The flu season peaks in February, so it's not too late to get a shot.



INSIDE

A5 Rather taking CBS to court

Former CBS news anchor Dan Rather, saying he was made a "scapegoat" over an inaccurate story about President Bush's military service, sues CBS for \$70 million.



A7 Anti-Syrian politician killed

A car bomb east of Beirut kills a Christian lawmaker from the governing coalition and six others. It was the latest in a deadly string of bombings that has rocked Lebanon's political order as the country prepares to select a new president.