

Lightning Open Preseason With 4-3 OT Win Against Dallas

DETAILS, Sports, Page 1

TAMPA, FLORIDA • ONLINE AT TBO.COM

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 20, 2007 • LIFE. PRINTED DAILY.

THE TAMPA TRIBUNE

and The Tampa Times

MOST DANGEROUS JOB

As cellular towers quickly sprang up to satisfy wireless demand, so have the deaths of those daring enough to scale them.



Tribune photos by MICHAEL SPOONEYBARGER

John Barber, a climber with Betacom Inc., replaces an amplifier for T-Mobile on a 160-foot-tower in Dover. Cellular tower climbers have the highest rate of deaths per 100,000 workers, higher than fishers and aircraft pilots.

HIGHLY DANGEROUS WORK

9,800 Approximate number of U.S. cell phone tower climbers

\$9 Starting hourly pay for some Florida tower workers. Others may earn \$20 to \$30 an hour

194,613 U.S. cell phone sites as of December

8 Deaths of cell phone tower climbers reported so far in 2007

18 Deaths in 2006

48 Deaths in 2005

200 Height in feet of average cell phone tower

1,100 In feet, the highest lethal fall recorded by Wireless Estimator

20 In feet, the shortest lethal fall recorded by Wireless Estimator



By RICHARD MULLINS
The Tampa Tribune

SUN CITY CENTER — The first lightning bolt cracked in the dark clouds a few hundred yards above John Jacob's head as he worked atop a 200-foot cellular phone tower in south Hillsborough County.

With wind swirling and sheets of rain pouring over him, Jacobs kept bolting together thin steel beams while long, white cellular transmitters for AT&T, T-Mobile and Metro PCS buzzed around his head, relaying calls, text messages and BlackBerry e-mail in a six-mile zone along Interstate 75.

Then a second lightning bolt crashed closer, a third even closer. That persuaded the 14-year tower veteran to tie up his equipment and climb down the thin, foot peg ladder rungs one by one to the gravelly ground below.

"I don't care about the wet," Jacobs said, shaking

See **TOWER CLIMBERS**, Page 7 ▶

No license or training is required to climb.

Government regulators "may not have a clue how many people die."

WINTON WILCOX
President of the industry's only official tower training group



Testaverde Back In Bay Area

The former Buc purchased a 7,090-square-foot home for \$4.5 million, a record for Hillsborough County this year.

DETAILS, Metro, Page 1

New Airline To Offer More Flights From Pinellas

DETAILS, Business, Page 1

Wrestlers Tied To Steroid Case

MANY BOUGHT FROM CLINIC, RECORDS SAY

By ELAINE SILVESTRINI
and JOSH POLTILOVE
The Tampa Tribune



Miller "Dr. Todd" to go to prison for conspiring to dispense steroids to teen.

TAMPA — For two years, a squat, yellow, storefront clinic on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard attracted steady business, promising patients enhanced sex drive, increased energy and an improved sense of well-being.

Proprietor John Todd Miller, known to some as "Dr. Todd," was no doctor, but he says in court papers that his Physician's Wellness Institute illegally dispensed more than \$150,000 worth of steroids at a rate of \$300 to \$2,800 a cycle.

Among the clinic's patients,

according to records, were a professional baseball player and a number of professional wrestlers, including Eduardo "Eddie" Guerrero, who died in 2005 at age 38, two years after the clinic was shuttered by investigators.

Investigation reports obtained by The Tampa Tribune say another professional wrestler, Pete Gruner, known as Billy Kidman, told Hillsborough County sheriff's deputies that he was referred to the

See **STERIOD CLINIC**, Page 7 ▶
Teen skater's titles stripped.

Civil Rights Battle Took Shape On Web

'JENA 6' RALLY ROUSED BY RADIO, INTERNET

By DARRYL FEARS
and AVIS THOMAS LESTER
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Spurred by the Internet and a nationwide urban radio program by a popular disc jockey, tens of thousands of people are expected to descend on a sleepy rural Louisiana town to protest what they say are excessive criminal charges against six black teenagers involved in a schoolyard brawl.

About 500 tour buses bearing thousands of riders were

scheduled to depart from cities across the United States early this morning for Jena, La., about 230 miles northwest of New Orleans.

They will join others who will travel by airplane, automobile caravans and motorcycle convoys in what organizers say is a protest reminiscent of the Freedom Rides of the 1960s.

The demonstration was to coincide with the sentencing of one of the defendants. A state appeals court dismissed his battery conviction last week, but organizers decided

See **JENA PROTEST**, Page 7 ▶
Town voted for ex-clan leader.



Charles Steele Jr., president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, rallies protesters Wednesday in Jena, La.

The Associated Press

ON TBO.com: See and hear what it's like to work atop the tall structures at Keyword: Tower Danger.



TODAY'S HIGH
86

TODAY'S LOW
74

Heavy rain is possible today with cloudy conditions. Rain chances and high temperatures stay on the high side through the weekend.

THE TAMPA TRIBUNE
A Media General Newspaper
200/202 S. Parker St., Tampa FL 33606-2395
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