



ALONE IN 1ST

SORIANO, SOTO POWER CUBS TO CENTRAL LEAD. B1

localNews

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RIDGE EDITION

Feds will announce corruption indictment

More than 30 convicted of corruption in last five years

BY BILL DOLAN
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HAMMOND | Acting U.S. Attorney David Capp's office is set to announce new public corruption indictments today.



PROSECUTOR DAVID CAPP

A press advisory from the Hammond-based federal prosecutor did not disclose the newest target of his office's Operation Restore Public Integrity, an effort by state and federal

authorities that has secured more than 30 convictions of public figures in the last five years. It will be the first public corruption indictment

See INDICT, A9

Meeks testifies in federal court trial

Former GUEA official says God motivates her testimony

BY JOE CARLSON
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HAMMOND | Jojuana Meeks, who embezzled thousands from the Gary Urban Enterprise Association, took the witness stand Wednesday to describe how she may have unwittingly helped three other men pilfer the organization.



JOJUANA MEEKS

Prosecutors say Meeks, as director of the GUEA, bought two Gary buildings in October 2001 that led to large, secret profits for three men who did not own the structures.

The men - Lake County Councilman Will Smith Jr., tax collector Roosevelt Powell, and attorney Willie Harris - are on trial this

See GUEA, A9

Hobart apple orchard is learning center for 40,000 kids each year



JOHN J. WATKINS | THE TIMES

Six-year-old Josie Colgrove from Elliott Elementary School in Munster has a bit of a problem picking an apple from a tree Wednesday while on a field trip to County Line Orchard in Hobart. The orchard holds more than 60 tours on a busy day.

Mother Nature's classroom

BY CARRIE RODOVICH AND DEBORAH LAVERTY
Times Staff Writers

HOBART | Bill Lanfear, a retired engineer, smiled warmly as he greeted a just-arrived group of lively youngsters and their more subdued parents and teachers.

The group, from Tall Oaks School in Valparaiso, is one of the first of 64 school tours that will be conducted at the County Line Orchard on Wednesday alone, said Ryan Richardson, co-owner of the orchard.

"This is the start of our

See ORCHARD, A9



Students from Elliott Elementary School in Munster make their way back to their wagon Wednesday during a field trip to County Line Orchard in Hobart.

Casinos brace for a taxing season

Lawmaker laments state approval of gaming 'barges'

BY PATRICK GUINANE
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INDIANAPOLIS | Indiana's riverboat casinos could be asked to pony up for property-tax relief when the General Assembly returns to session next year, a lawmaker said Wednesday.

"I can't imagine that won't come up in some context," state Rep. Scott Pelath, D-Michigan City, said. "Within the context of property taxes, I don't know what's not on the table."

A legislative panel grilled Ernie Yelton, executive director of the Indiana Gaming Commission, for more than two hours Wednesday. Afterward, Pelath said the commission should have asked the Legislature before allowing Horseshoe Casino in



Hammond and Argosy Casino in southern Indiana to move ahead with "massive" expansion projects.

Indiana riverboats had been governed by U.S. Coast Guard

See CASINOS, A9

BAYH PUTS FORWARD PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Savings would depend on income and tax bills

BY BILL DOLAN
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U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh has introduced a bill that he says would lessen the blow of recent property-tax increases for nearly 1 million Hoosier homeowners.



SEN. EVAN BAYH, D-INDIANA

The legislation, which also is advancing in the U.S. House with the help of downstate U.S. Rep. Baron Hill, would give a break to those who pay property taxes but don't itemize deductions on their federal income taxes.

Bayh said he and Hill have been besieged by state residents asking for relief.

"It's no secret rising property

See TAXES, A9

Obituary section moves to new home

Effective today, yourLives (obituaries) will no longer be found on a section cover.

Instead the obituaries will move five days a week behind the bizNews section.

On Sunday and Monday, obituaries will be found in the around-Town section. The news obituary feature will continue as a part of yourLives.

In addition, the advice-and-puzzle page previously found on the second page of the daily classified section will now most often be found in the daily features section.

The change will permit better organized classified sections. It also will mean an expanded local news report. - THE TIMES

WHAT'S UP?

Lawmaker says Gaming Commission stretched its authority by letting two riverboat casinos proceed with big expansions that make them more like buildings.

REACTION

Top official of gaming commission says new construction standards allowing the expansions meet state law, as does an agency rule involving casino license ownership transfers.

WHAT'S NEXT

Lawmakers irked at the commission will consider drafting legislation to address their concerns.

- Bridge & Horoscopes C9
- Classifieds E1, F1
- Comics C11
- Community A11
- Crossword C9, E3
- Movies C2
- Nation/World A15
- Obituaries D5
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