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NORTH COUNTY TIMES

NEWS FROM ESCONDIDO, SAN MARCOS, POWAY, VALLEY CENTER, RAMONA, RANCHO BERNARDO, FALLBROOK AND ALL NORTH COUNTY



Big shoes

Aztec are banking on redshirt frosh to bring winning ways back to the mesa.

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Governor expected to sign rail bill

If passed, bond may open up funding for area transit projects

DAN SIMMONS STAFF WRITER

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Tuesday lent unexpected support to a bill that could open a way for San Diego and Riverside counties to compete for some proceeds from the \$9.9 billion high-speed rail bond on the November ballot.

Schwarzenegger decided to make an exception to his pledge that he would veto or avoid signing bills before lawmakers reach agreement on a state budget that is now two months overdue, said Aaron McLear, the governor's press secretary.

He was expected to sign a measure designed to strengthen the wording of the high-speed rail bond that is on the Nov. 4 ballot, McLear said.

The legislation would add some oversight requirements before the bond money could be spent on the first leg of the 700-mile rail system. When completed, the \$45 billion project would link California's largest cities with trains running at top speeds of more than 200 mph.

But the legislation is not what it seems, said John Chalker, a San Diego member of the California Transportation Commission.

Chalker said the original

RAIL, A-5

INSIDE



Computers cause massive delays

Dozens of U.S. airports hung up by software glitch.

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Glimmer of hope

Reports suggest housing bottom may be near.

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Patchy fog, then partly cloudy. Highs in 70s and 80s, lows in 60s, Page D-6.



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ELECTION 2008 N.Y. SENATOR DECLARES: 'BARACK OBAMA IS MY CANDIDATE'



STEPHAN SAVOIA / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., addresses the Democratic National Convention in Denver on Tuesday.

Clinton urges unity

Salvos from former Obama rival now aimed at McCain

DAVID ESPO ASSOCIATED PRESS

DENVER — Hillary Rodham Clinton summoned the millions of voters who supported her in the primaries to send Barack Obama to the White House Tuesday night, and drew thunderous applause at the Democratic National Convention when she declared her one-time rival is "my candidate and he must be our president."

"We don't have a moment to lose or a vote to spare," said the former first lady, writing the final chapter in a quest for the White House every bit as pioneering as Obama's own.

The packed convention floor became a sea of white "Hillary" signs as the New York senator — Obama's fiercest rival across 56 primaries and caucuses — strode to the podium for her prime-time speech. The signs were soon replaced others that read simply, "Unity."

While her remarks included a full-throated endorsement of Obama, Clinton did not say whether she would have her name placed



Wednesday | The headline, prime-time speaker will be vice presidential nominee Sen. Joe Biden. Other speakers include former President Bill Clinton, New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson and Sens. Evan Bayh and John Kerry.

Thursday | The convention moves to INVESCO Field at Mile High as Barack Obama accepts the Democratic nomination. Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter

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in nomination or seek a formal roll call of the states when the party's top prize is awarded by delegates Wednesday night. Clinton had been the prohibi-

tive favorite for the nomination when she launched her campaign last year, seeking to become the first female president. She fell behind Obama after the leadoff Iowa caucuses in January, and he now is poised to become the first black nominee of a major party.

Obama turned the featured speaking slot of the convention's second night over to Clinton, hoping she could nudge her disenfranchised supporters toward his candidacy.

He called her after her speech to express his appreciation, aides said.

She followed others to the podium who ripped into Republican John McCain as indifferent to the working class and cozy with big oil.

"If he's the answer, then the question must be ridiculous," New York Gov. David Paterson said of the GOP presidential candidate.

Said Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland, "It's time to bring our jobs back and bring our troops home."

"Call the roll!" urged Ted Sorensen, a party elder eager to

UNITY, A-4

Democrats blast McCain, though some urge caution

CHARLES BABINGTON ASSOCIATED PRESS

DENVER — Democrats used the second night of their four-day convention to punch back more aggressively at John McCain, even as some party insiders warned that hitting too forcefully might jeopardize Barack Obama's upbeat, all-inclusive image.

With party leaders trying to strike the right balance between positive and negative messages, elected officials paraded to the convention podium Tuesday to portray Obama as an agent of change, and McCain as a continuation of President Bush's policies. Vermont Sen. Patrick Leahy,



CHRIS CARLSON / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ohio delegates Peggy Tanksley of New Philadelphia, Ohio, right, and Cathryn Fellingner of Columbus, Ohio, show their support for the party during the Democratic National Convention in Denver on Tuesday.

for instance, mentioned McCain six times in a brief speech. "As much as John McCain would like us to believe he's different, his economic plan offers not a single new idea, just more of the same,"

Leahy said. His midafternoon remarks probably got scant notice from TV viewers. But Democrats got a

DEMOCRATS, A-4

INSIDE ON A-13: Feds find no real threat to Obama's life n Kennedy rose from hospital bed to give speech

\$723K deficit at arts center

Dismal ticket sales for events blamed for loss

DAVID GARRICK STAFF WRITER

ESCONDIDO — City officials said Tuesday that Escondido's performing arts center lost more than \$723,000 during the fiscal year that ended June 30, one of the larger budget deficits ever posted at the 14-year-old facility.

The size of the deficit vindicates the City Council's decision two weeks ago to end the practice of letting arts center employees and volunteers book theater performances, Councilman Dick Daniels said.

"It was clear before these new numbers that we needed to make a major change in how the center operates," said Daniels, explaining that the center has run deficits in 11 of the 14 years it has been open. "This just makes our decision that much more relevant."

The new approach calls for the center to rent its two theaters to private promoters, who will book and present singers, musicals and other acts. The new model transfers the financial risk of such shows from the city to the promoters.

Daniels said this latest deficit will be nearly the last that Escondido taxpayers have to cover at the center.

DEFICIT, A-5



DON BOOMER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

California Center for the Arts, Escondido, sales representative Stephanie Sawyer works at her ticket window Tuesday.

As costs rise, incomes fail to keep pace

San Marcos' 7 percent tops N. County in income decline

ZACH FOX STAFF WRITER

North County incomes have failed to keep pace with inflation in yet another indicator that the region has entered a recession.

Rising gasoline prices along with an increased cost of food have pushed up the cost of living, while fewer jobs and weaker consumer spending mean local residents are not earning enough to keep up, according to a release Tuesday by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Further, the release reports numbers only through 2007, and recent jobs reports suggest the economy has weakened even more this year.

"This is a story of a grim, stagnant economy between 2006 and 2007. And it's really the best we'll see in this

INCOMES, A-10