



CITY SNAGS TITLE GAMES

St. Joseph chosen to host high school softball championships.

Details in **SPORTS**

St. Joseph News-Press

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'REBUILDING AMERICA'

Obama: War funds could be put to better use

By **KEN NEWTON**
St. Joseph News-Press

KANSAS CITY — Barack Obama brought the convention-week vitality of his campaign to a place whose worker base might diminish before a new president takes office.

Two days before accepting the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, Mr. Obama outlined for American Airlines workers a plan to revive the U.S. economy.

In the process, the Illinois senator called Republican presumptive nominee John McCain out of touch with the hardships of Americans and promised an agenda that would provide middle-class tax relief, strengthen education and make health care more accessible.

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ALEX BRANDON/Associated Press

Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., waves as he gets on his plane at Charles B. Wheeler Downtown Airport in Kansas City, Mo., Tuesday.

For a video of Obama's Kansas City appearance, please visit www.stjoenews.net.

inside today



SMOKIN' GOOD CHICKEN

Barbecue champion Rodney Dyche gives tips for cooking the best-tasting bird.

Details in **DIEM**

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES | Less driving means less tax money



ERIC KEITH/St. Joseph News-Press

As Missourians curtail their use of gasoline by driving less or using more fuel-efficient vehicles, the state takes in less tax money, which could affect construction projects.

MoDOT prepares for day when funds may drop

By **RAY SCHERER**
St. Joseph News-Press

Imagine a world where major highway projects come to a halt because there's not enough money to improve roads.

This scenario isn't happening yet in Northwest Missouri. It could be a year or so away, however, as drivers continue to spend less money on gas purchases that help fund road work.

So far, Missouri is among a few states left in the nation to have escaped the phenomenon of reduced gas tax revenue for highways. A portion of consumers' money spent at the gas pump goes into a state tax that the Missouri Department of Transportation uses.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Missourians preliminarily drove more than 5.7 million

miles in June, compared to more than 6 million miles in June 2007 — a reduction of nearly 5 percent.

Don Wichern, engineer for the MoDOT district office in St. Joseph, said the agency has so far withstood the national fuels downturn brought on by high fuel prices. But the safety net may not last much longer.

"Right now, we have not dropped any level of service," Mr. Wichern said. "We have tried to become more green, or more efficient. It (less gas tax) hasn't affected our projects yet."

Among MoDOT's recent cost-saving strategies are staggered, four-day work weeks, reduction in fleet vehicles, and sharing resources with adjacent districts.

Staying put

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Missourians preliminarily drove more than 5.7 million miles in June, compared to more than 6 million miles in June 2007 — a reduction of nearly 5 percent.

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Utility rates going up — again

By **SUSAN MIREs**
St. Joseph News-Press

Utility rates only know one direction: Up.

And more hikes are on the way. Consumers already bearing the burden of higher fuel and food prices are doing their best to adjust.

St. Joseph sewer rates will go up in October; a water rate adjustment is pending and Kansas City Power & Light expects to request a rate increase in the near future.

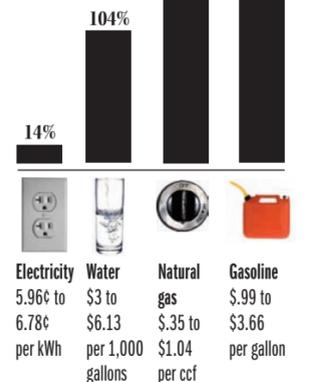
"We realize any rate increase is a rate increase and we're going to do everything we can to help customers through a difficult time period," said Chuck Caisley, senior director of public affairs for KCP&L.

The company wants more money to pay for retrofitting the Iatan I coal-powered plant near Weston, Mo., to

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A decade of cost increases

This chart shows the increase in costs of water and energy over the past 10 years in St. Joseph.



'Blue Collar' town: White's show sells out

By **BLAKE HANNON**
St. Joseph News-Press

Robidoux Resident Theatre business manager Jeff Haney thought he knew what to expect when his group booked comedian and "Blue Collar Comedy Tour" headliner Ron White to perform at the Missouri Theater on Oct. 23.

But he had no idea. The tickets went on sale at 9 a.m.

Friday, and by 9:03 a.m., the tickets available on the RRT's Web site were sold. A line formed early in the morning to buy tickets at the RRT office, 126 S. Eighth St. It only took two hours for all of the show's 1,178 tickets to disappear.

"I thought I'd work on it for a week," Mr. Haney said. "I just didn't know how popular he was."

The tickets went fast, but getting them wasn't easy. The RRT Web

site shut down within minutes after being flooded with hopeful ticket buyers and with Mr. Haney as the sole phone operator and box office attendant at his RRT office, he admits it was far from efficient.

"I have really happy people and really angry people," he said.

Those angry people may have reason to smile again soon. Mr.

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Submitted photo

Comedian Ron White will perform at the Missouri Theater on Oct. 23.

“ I thought I'd work on it for a week. I just didn't know how popular he was. ”

JEFF HANEY, Robidoux Resident Theatre business manager



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OUTSIDE



TODAY
HIGH: 86° LOW: 63°

Morning fog gives way to a mostly sunny day.
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