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**Obama to send aid to Haiti**  
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Morgantown, West Virginia

www.dominionpost.com

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**THURSDAY**

Jan. 14, 2010

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Your complete forecast **Page 6-A**

**TO FIND OUT** about school closings or delays, go to [dominionpost.com](http://dominionpost.com).

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- JORDAN, Donald Ray
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- SNIDER, Richard Dale
- SWISHER, Brenda Rae

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**Markets**

DOW 10,680.77 **▲ +53.51**

NASDAQ 2,307.90 **▲ +25.59**

S&P 500 1,145.68 **▲ +9.46**

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**'The Opera Show'**  
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Report: Decline in killings by allied soldiers key to winning over people.  
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# Property taxes to get update

## Consultant: Mon losing millions

BY TRACY EDDY  
The Dominion Post

The Monongalia County Assessor's Office is several years behind in updating prop-

erty assessments. And in just one neighborhood, that means the county is collecting about \$1 million less in property taxes than it should be. County Assessor Rodney Pyles met with Monongalia County Commissioners in a work session Wednesday to fill them in on his plan to correct the situation. Pyles brought with him consultant Kevin Rake of Tyler Technologies, a firm the assessor hired in July to help his office update its assessments and land maps — which determine the

value of a property per acre if it's residential or per square foot if it's commercial. Pyles said the county paid \$45,000 to hire the consultant. Rake's firm looked at 331 properties in a commercial neighborhood that includes downtown Morgantown and the Wharf District, he said. According to Rake's updated information, property values for the area would increase by about \$35 million, which could lead to nearly \$1 million more in taxes. The assessor's office prepared

notifications for those property owners, but Pyles said those letters won't be sent yet. Commissioner Asel Kennedy asked Pyles to hold off on sending the tax increase notifications and to put out a bid to update property assessments across the county, all at once. Rake said it would take as long as two years to update the assessments all at once. There could be issues with dividing the county into thirds and doing

SEE TAXES, 2-A

## Manchin puts schools on agenda



AP photo

**Gov. Joe Manchin delivers** his State of the State address in the House Chambers of the State Capitol in Charleston, on Wednesday.

Address highlights making fiscally responsible changes

**State Capitol**

Associated Press

CHARLESTON — Limited by recession-weakened revenues, Gov. Joe Manchin launched a legislative agenda Wednesday that he said would improve education, public safety and the business climate in West Virginia while keeping government finances stable.

Manchin's sixth State of the State address since taking office also included one proposal to ease business property taxes. Another would offer public funds to 2012's state Supreme Court candidates.

Addressing a House of Delegates chamber packed with state officials and guests, the governor renewed last year's call for changes to the public school calendar. He asked lawmakers to help him centralize the state's vehicle fleet, and for all West Virginians to take part in this year's Census.

The Mountain State lost more than 21,000 jobs in 2009, and the recession also prompted cuts to general revenue spending. Manchin cited signs that administration policies have helped weather the storm.

Aided by fellow Democrats and their legislative majorities, Manchin has favored bulking up reserves over starting or expanding programs. The Legislature expects to balance the new budget without the tax hikes or employee layoffs forced elsewhere.

"Our welcome centers and rest stops have stayed open, our state offices have normal operating hours, our social services continue and we are paying our

SEE MANCHIN, 2-A

## Man pleads guilty in '08 DUI death

Caused accident near Marilla Park

BY BRANDY BRUBAKER  
The Dominion Post

A Morgantown man admitted that he drove while drunk and caused a crash that killed a man and injured three others.



O'Neil Peart

O'Neil Anthony Peart, 30, pleaded guilty in Monongalia County Circuit Court on Wednesday to one count of DUI with death and three counts of DUI causing injury for the Oct. 24, 2008, crash on W.Va. 7, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Perri DeChristopher said.

Police said Peart was driving with a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .213 when he crossed the center line and hit a Ford Excursion near Marilla Park. The state's legal limit for driving is .08. The blood sample was taken about an hour after the crash, police said.

Peart's passenger, David Eugene Lamar, was killed. Amanda Moats, a passenger in the rear seat, was treated for internal injuries and injuries to her hip, according to the criminal complaint. A 14-year-old girl in the rear seat also was injured and treated for injuries to her hips and face.

The driver of the Excursion, Henry Hoopengartner, was treated at Ruby Memorial Hospital for neck and back injuries, the complaint said. Peart also was injured and was treated at Ruby Memorial Hospital. DeChristopher said she'll recommend a sentence of two to 10 years for DUI with death and one year each for each count of DUI causing injury, sentences which can run concurrently. Peart is being held at North Central Regional Jail, pending sentencing.

**INSIDE**

- **SENATE** president talks about Legislature's goals. **Page 2-A.**
- **AREA** officials react. **Page 2-A.**
- **TEXT** of the State of the

- State Address. **Page 1-D and 2-D** and [dominionpost.com](http://dominionpost.com).
- **HOUSE** GOP outlines its agenda. **Page 2-D.**
- **SPEECH** highlights. **Page 2-A.**

## Bankers apologize for actions leading to crisis

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Challenged by a skeptical special commission, top Wall Street bankers apologized Wednesday for risky behavior that led to the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. But they still said it seemed appropriate at the time.

The bankers — whose companies collectively received more than \$100 billion in taxpayer assistance to weather the crisis — offered no regrets for executive pay that is likely to increase as a result of their survival. They did say they are correcting some compensation practices that could lead to excessive risk-taking.

The tension at the hearing of the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission was evident from the outset. "People are angry," commission Chairman Phil Angelides said. Reports of "record profits and bonuses in the wake of receiving

### Survey: Recovery doesn't spur hiring

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The economic recovery is spreading to more parts of the country even as a growing number of people can't find full-time jobs.

The duality of the recovery is underscored in a Federal Reserve survey released Wednesday: The economy is growing, and the recovery is extending its reach geographically. Yet 27 million people are either unemployed,

forced into part-time jobs or so discouraged that they've stopped looking for work.

The Fed said that while the economy is still sluggish, conditions have improved modestly. But it also said the job market in most of the Fed's 12 regions remained "soft" as the new year began.

In a worse-than-expected report last week, the government said companies cut 85,000 jobs in December.

trillions of dollars in government assistance while so many families are struggling to stay afloat has only heightened the sense of confusion," he said.

Lloyd Blankfein, the chief executive of Goldman Sachs, should be

world of high-finance rationalized its way into risky transactions. Summarizing the thinking in the industry at the time, he said: "Gosh, the world is getting wealthier. Technology has done things. ... These businesses are going to do well."

## Obama gets spotlight — on German stage

Associated Press

BERLIN — A musical about Barack Obama's election campaign premieres in Germany this weekend, including love songs by the president to his wife Michelle and duets with Hillary Clinton.

Even John McCain and Sarah Palin are given stage time, with actors portraying the losing Republican candidates and belting out songs on their behalf.

The musical "Hope — the Obama Musical Story" opens at the Jahrhunderthalle concert hall in Frankfurt in a bilingual mix of English and German.