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Wednesday, March 24, 2010

Home sales in the Augusta metro area rose in February, bucking the national trend **BUSINESS, 7A**

NCAA DIVISION II MEN'S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT



ASU fans (from left) Carolyn Giles and Katrina Eason dance with cheerleader Megan King (right) and other cheerleaders at J.T.'s Sports Pub in Springfield, Mass., Tuesday evening. J.T.'s is the designated hangout place for Augusta State fans. MICHAEL HOLAHAN/STAFF

Jaguars fans keep the faith

By Chris Gay
Staff Writer

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — Wearing her "Our Team, Our Time" button, Carolyn Giles returned to her cheerleading roots Tuesday night.

At J.T.'s Sports Pub, Giles danced and led cheers in support of the Augusta State men's basketball team. At 8:30 tonight, the fourth-ranked Jaguars face Bentley in the Division II Elite Eight at MassMutual Center. The winner advances to the Final Four on Thursday. The national title game tips off at 1 p.m. Saturday.

"It is wonderful," said Giles, a former high school cheerleader who works in the Augusta State admissions office. "I'm hoping I don't have to go home until Saturday night. I'm in it to win it."

Two busloads of fans (about 100 people) traveled to Springfield to watch their team try to win its first national championship. Augusta State lost in the finals in 2008 and fell last year

in the Final Four.

Wearing her Jaguar gloves and tail, Kathleen Trigg, a lecturer in the school's communication studies program, is back for the third time.

"This feels like home," she said. "It feels like we belong here."

Mary Beth Westbrook, a senior English major, said she doesn't like basketball. But she traveled to the Northeast for the first time to support players such as Daniel Dixon and Ben Madgen, classmates throughout her academic career.

Augusta State graduates all five senior starters off this year's team. Fans know this could be the last Elite Eight trip for a while.

"Even if we don't come back here next year, we're still going to be one of the best programs in Division II," said administrative specialist Leza Witherington. "If we don't come back here next year, that's OK. But we'll be back again."

Reach Chris Gay at (706) 823-3645 or chris.gay@augustachronicle.com

TONIGHT'S GAME

WHO: Augusta State vs. Bentley
WHAT: Elite Eight, NCAA Division II men's basketball tournament
WHEN: 8:30 p.m.
WHERE: MassMutual Center, Springfield, Mass.

MORE ON THE GAME

- Jaguars are ready for the Final Four/1C
- Michaux: Team has defied the odds/1C

WATCH AT HOME

- Visit the NCAA's Web site at www.ncaa.com
- Under the Championship Tracker section, select Men's Basketball, then find "Switch Divisions" and select DII
- Select the "Click here for the full bracket" icon
- Click on the icon for the Bentley vs. Augusta State game
- Click on the "Watch" icon
- The icon will direct you to the CBS Sports page, which will display the live stream of the game at 8:30 tonight.

WATCH AT ASU

Augusta State will screen the game in the Jaguar Activities Center Ballroom at 8:30 p.m.

TRACK THE GAME on Chris Gay's live blog at blogs.augusta.com.

Game not on TV, but you can watch

By Stephanie Toone
Staff Writer

Kameron Khaksarfard could hook up his laptop to his television to watch Augusta State University's men's basketball team compete in the NCAA tournament tonight, but he's opting for a bigger screen with fellow fans.

"I streamed the game from my laptop last year," the Augusta State senior said. "It doesn't change my spirit for my team, but it's not as exciting."

The Jaguars will compete against Bentley University in their third consecutive showing in the Elite 8 in Springfield Mass., but it will not be shown on cable or network stations. The NCAA will live stream the game through its Web site, and Augusta State will screen the game in the Jaguar Activities Center Ballroom at 8:30 p.m.

If Augusta State makes it to the final round, CBS will air the game Saturday, said Gina Thurman, assistant dean of students. The network and cable stations are likely not airing tonight's game because of a lack of advertising appeal, Thurman said.

"It was a decision made by ESPN. I imagine that it has to do with money," she said. "It's expensive to broadcast."

Area bars have shown the Jaguars in the NCAA tournament in the past, but neither Indigo Joe's nor Wild Wing Cafe will show the game tonight. Somewhere in Augusta will begin live streaming from the NCAA Web site at 7 p.m., said manager Greg Warren. Each of the 42-inch-screen televisions will be tuned in to the Jags tonight, he said.

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U.S. HEALTH CARE

Bill is law

EDITED FROM WIRE REPORTS



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/ASSOCIATED PRESS
President Obama signed the health care bill into law Tuesday.

President Obama signed a nearly \$1 trillion health care overhaul Tuesday that will reshape the way virtually every American receives and pays for treatment.

After more than a year of hyperpartisan struggle – and numerous near-death moments for the measure – Obama declared "a new season in America."

Separate facts of the overhaul from fiction **PAGE 4A**

13 states sue

Minutes after President Obama signed the health care bill into law Tuesday, the top prosecutors in 13 states, including South Carolina, filed a lawsuit challenging the legislation. The attorneys general claimed the requirement for all Americans to buy health insurance is unconstitutional.

Many constitutional law experts, however, said the mandate is clearly within Congress' reach.

"The lawsuit probably doesn't have legs both as a matter of precedent and as a matter of common sense," said David Freeman Engstrom, a Stanford University Law School professor.

Q&A addresses the impact of the legislation **PAGE 4A**

Impact to be felt

The core of the massive law is the extension of health care coverage to 32 million who now lack it, but it also would affect almost every U.S. citizen.

EDUCATION

Government program likely to take over student loans

By Preston Sparks
Staff Writer

Health care isn't the only area the federal government is looking to reform. Student loans also are being targeted.

"I'm thinking that since it's part of the health care package, I don't think the public is aware," Augusta State University's financial aid director, Willene Holmes, said Tuesday, noting that she hasn't received calls from students or parents about the new federal government plan, which would replace students' private lender options after July 1. The plan is part of the health care legislation the U.S. House of Representatives passed Sunday.

"All indications are the private lenders as we know them, all of them are going to be out of the (student

loan) business," she added.

Holmes said that in the next week she'll notify students that if they applied for a loan for next fall they'll likely be going through the new federal government direct loan program instead of a bank.

The Senate will take up the proposed change next week, and approval is expected because only a simple majority vote is needed, The Associated Press reports.

The measure essentially would end government subsidies to private lenders and use that money instead for the government's own loan program and to provide \$36 billion in new spending for Pell grants, which are offered to the neediest students.

"So that's a good thing," Holmes said of the added Pell funds.

Please see **EDUCATION** on **PAGE 5A**

HEALTH CARE



JACKIE RICCIARDI/STAFF
Dr. Angela Overstreet-Wright examines Janie Padgett, who is a part-time substitute teacher, at Belle Terrace Health and Wellness Center.

Area patients see highs and lows **PAGE 5A**

Janie Padgett, who was seeing a doctor in Augusta as President Obama was signing health care reform legislation in Washington on Tuesday, is like many uninsured patients who use assistance programs but often end up in a gap.

Tamara Rajah, of the Skip to My Lupus support group in Augusta, said she is happy insurers won't be able to use her pre-existing condition to deny her coverage again but also believes the change needs to happen sooner than 2014.

USC Aiken tops Augusta State in baseball **SPORTS, 1C**

WEATHER



Mostly sunny
High: 78 Low: 43
More weather on **Page 10C**

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