

**Best Of 2**

Tyler Civic Theatre brings Broadway hits to town

Marquee



**Hitting The Links**

Nelson, Hagler share lead after first round of Texas State Open

1D



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75¢

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Tyler, Texas

**MINEOLA CHILD SEX RING CASE**

**Pittman Guilty, Gets Life**

Jury Deliberates Conviction, Sentence Swiftly

By DAYNA WORCHEL  
Staff Writer

A Smith County jury sentenced Dennis Boyd Pittman to life in prison and gave him a \$10,000 fine Thursday after convicting him of engaging in organized criminal activity for his role in the Mineola child sex ring case.

Pittman, 47, will have to serve at least 30 years in prison before he is eligible for parole.

The guilty verdict came after the jury deliberated for an hour and 45 minutes. He faced a sentence of five years to life or 99 years.

It took the jury about 20 minutes to decide on a punishment.

Smith County District Attorney Matt Bingham declined comment after the trial Thursday, citing a protective order that remains in place because there are two more defen-

dants in the case to be tried. Those two defendants, Sheila Sones and Jimmy Sones, still are in the Smith County jail. Their trial dates have not been set.

Pittman is the fourth of six defendants accused in the crimes, which involved a group of siblings who reportedly engaged in sexual acts in front of a paying audience of adults in 2004.

Two of the other defendants, Jamie Pittman and Patrick Kelly, had their life sentence convictions overturned and their cases remanded for a new trial in June by the 14th Court of Appeals in Houston. The two, who were convicted in 2008, have not had new trial dates set.

Another defendant, Shauntel Mayo, had her sentence upheld by the 14th Court of Appeals, although the court ruled that her sentences for multiple charges could run concurrently.

During closing arguments in

Pittman's trial Thursday, Bingham discounted the theories of Dr. Marc Lindberg, a research psychologist who defense attorney Jason Cassel called as a witness during the trial.

During trial testimony, Lindberg had discussed the concept of implanted memories and suggestibility in children. He said children could be influenced to remember events that had not really occurred simply by thinking about them.

Bingham described how at one point during the trial, one of the children became very emotional and asked for a break.

"She had a tear running down her face, which came to rest on her chin before it fell — what part of an implanted memory is that?" he asked the jury.

See PITTMAN, Page 6A



— Staff Photo By Herb Nygren Jr.

**CONVICTED:** Dennis Boyd Pittman looks at the spectators after being found guilty in his trial in Smith County 241st District Court in Tyler on Thursday. Pittman was found guilty of engaging in organized criminal activity in the Mineola child sex ring crimes.

DAY 85

**STANCHED**



**BP Finally Stops Oil Spewing From Gusher**

By COLLEEN LONG  
Associated Press Writer

NEW ORLEANS — The oil has stopped. For now.

After 85 days and up to 184 million gallons, BP finally gained control over one of America's biggest environmental catastrophes Thursday by placing a carefully fitted cap over a runaway geyser that has been gushing crude into the Gulf of Mexico since early spring.

Though a temporary fix, the accomplishment was greeted with hope, high expectations — and, in many cases along the beleaguered coastline, disbelief. From one Gulf Coast resident came this: "Hallelujah." And from another: "I got to see it to believe it."

If the cap holds, if the sea floor doesn't crack and if the relief wells being prepared are completed successfully, this could be the beginning of the end for the spill. But that's a lot of ifs, and no one was declaring any sort of victory beyond the moment.

See OIL, Page 6A



— AP Photos

Above, rain falls on oil sheen in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Louisiana on Thursday. Below, these images show oil flowing from two of three valves on the 75-ton cap early Wednesday (left), one of three valves late Wednesday (center), and no longer flowing on Thursday.



**VAN ZANDT COUNTY**

**Incidents Prompt Rules For Deputy Constables' Actions**

Commissioners Worry Actions Could Lead To Lawsuits

By KENNETH DEAN  
Staff Writer

CANTON — After several controversial incidents involving deputy constables, the Van Zandt County Commissioners Court is scheduled to implement rules and

procedures in place to protect the officers, the public and the county.

The recommendations for the rules and procedures were presented to the court by a specially formed committee. It consists of commissioners and constables and came on the heels of separate incidents in which the actions of deputy constables were called into question.

The first incident occurred on April 4 when 24-year-old Chris-

topher Culpepper was pulled over by deputy constable Troy Tucker, who, according to reports, was driving a farm truck with farm tags equipped with flashing lights.

Precinct 2 Commissioner Virgil Melton said Culpepper apparently did not stop for the deputy constable and kept driving. When the deputy constable finally stopped Culpepper, he charged the man with evading with a vehicle — a state jail-felony.

Melton and Precinct 3 Commissioner Duanne Harvey said a truck bearing farm plates should not be equipped with emergency lights.

The Texas Transportation Code states "a farm truck is a vehicle operated for the purpose of transporting the owner's poultry, dairy, livestock, livestock products, timber in its natural state and farm

See VAN ZANDT, Page 6A

**TEXAS BUDGET**

**Rusk State Facing Potential Cutbacks**

State Shortfall Could Pull 10 Percent From Hospital

By KELLY GOOCH  
Staff Writer

RUSK — Rusk State Hospital could lose more than 45 beds and about 100 to 110 staff if proposed state budget cuts are adopted.

The Department of State Health Services has outlined nearly \$246 million in possible cuts as Texas faces a potential \$18 billion shortfall in the next budget period.

The 2011 Legislature will have the final say as agencies respond to budget-trimming orders from Texas leaders, including Gov. Rick Perry.

Rusk State Hospital Superintendent Ted Debbs said if the Legislature decides the budget cuts are necessary, two units would essentially be cut at the hospital. That represents a 10 percent reduction in the hospital budget, or about \$4 million.

The entire hospital budget, Debbs said, is more than \$42 million.

He said one of the primary problems with cutting beds is that people would have a harder time getting into the facility, which provides adult psychiatric services for 32 counties in East and Southeast Texas.

See RUSK, Page 6A

**9P DAY PLANNER**

8 AM	NOON	5 PM
78° SW 5 MPH	90° WSW 7 MPH	97° SW 8 MPH

**What's INSIDE**

Community	3B	Sports	7C, 1-6D
Crosswords	5C, Marquee	Tyler & East Texas	1B
Business	6C	Editorial	4A
Classified	1-5C	Movie Listings	Marquee
Comics	Marquee	Obituaries	4-5B
		Weather	8C

**MARKETS**

<b>DOW</b>	<b>NASDAQ</b>
10,359.31	2,249.08
-7.41	-0.76

Barcode: 7 82956 00250 4

**Bible Thought**

For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away.

— Psalm 31:10

**CBS 19**

**TOTAL TEAM COVERAGE**

**fit CITY challenge**

The Fit City Challenge, a project of the Tyler newspaper and KYTX CBS19 on the importance of fitness, continues with the creation of a new website, FitCityTyler.com. See stories, videos and photos from the project and take a poll.

**GOLDEN TICKET Caribbean**

The Tyler newspaper and CBS19 are sponsoring a new contest that could be your "Golden Ticket to the Caribbean." Get details on Page 6A.