



ILLINOIS GOING TO THE BIG DANCE

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LINDSEY WILLHITE: The Illini, seeded ninth in the Southwest regional, will face their former coach, Lon Kruger, and UNLV Friday. If they win, Bill Self might be waiting in Round 2.



MIKE IMREM: What exactly Illinois did the past couple of months to deserve such faith is baffling. Was it losing to Michigan in its first postseason conference tournament game?



Too many local races?

Less than half of races on ballot will be contested

BY KERRY LESTER

It's a pickle that, every other April, manifests itself at the suburban voting booth.

Race after race — school board, park board, library trustee — has just one candidate per seat, if that, resulting in an automatic victory or special appointment to the slot.

Take the Fox Waterway Agency, where both open seats are uncontested.

Or Lombard's Helen Plum Memorial Library Board, where at the filing deadline, five candidates were running for seven seats.

Of course, uncontested races are not unusual — and even expected — these days, said Wayne Kankovsky, a candidate for the Helen Plum Library Board who has served as a library trustee for more than a decade.

"It's fairly low profile, depending on the situation with the library at that time. If there's nothing really happening, if there's no major plans involved, or crisis that has to be resolved, then people don't realize there are trustees in many cases. That affects the interest in the number of candidates."

Out of 528 local races in the upcoming April 5 election in northwest suburban Cook, and Lake, DuPage, Kane and McHenry counties, 238 are

Explosion, evacuations



Residents evacuated from areas surrounding the Fukushima nuclear facilities damaged in Friday's massive earthquake are checked for radiation contamination Sunday in Koriyama city, Fukushima prefecture, Japan.

6 injured at nuclear plant

Associated Press

SOMA, Japan — The second hydrogen explosion in three days rocked Japan's stricken Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant Monday, sending a massive column of smoke into the air and wounding six workers. It was not immediately clear how much — if any — radiation had been released.

The explosion at the plant's Unit 3, which authorities have been frantically trying to cool following a system failure in the wake of a massive earthquake and tsunami, triggered an order for hundreds of people to stay indoors, said Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano.

The blast follows a similar explosion Saturday that took place at the plant's Unit 1, which injured four workers and caused mass-evacuations.

Japan's nuclear safety agency said six workers were injured in Monday's explosion but it was not immediately clear how, or whether they were exposed to radiation. They were all conscious, said the agency's Ryohei Shomi.

Earlier, Tokyo Electric Power Co., which operates the reactor, said three workers were injured and seven missing.

The reactor's inner containment vessel holding nuclear rods was intact, Edano said, allaying some fears of the risk to the environment and public. TV footage of the building housing the reactor appeared to show similar damage to Monday's blast, with outer walls shorn off, leaving only a skeletal frame.

Edano says people within a 12-mile radius were ordered inside after the blast. AP journalists felt the explosion 25 miles away.

Edano says the reactor's inner containment vessel

Bank of Japan pumps funds into market

BY YURI KAGEYAMA

Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan's central bank injected a record 15 trillion yen (\$183.3 billion) into money markets, and the Tokyo stock market nose-dived today on the first business day since an earthquake and tsunami devastated the country's northeast and raised dire worries about the economy.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 stock average fell 487 points, or 4.8 percent, to 9,767.18. Worries about the economic impact of the disaster triggered a broad sell-off that hit all sectors.

The Bank of Japan moved quickly to try to keep financial markets stable. By flooding the banking system with cash, it hopes banks will

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DEVASTATION IN JAPAN



People walk on a tsunami-affected street Sunday in Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture, northern Japan.

• AFTERSHOCKS: Local expert says Japan could feel small quakes for months to come. Page 9.

• HOW YOU CAN HELP: Red Cross, UNICEF and other charities await your donations. Page 9.

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Wheeling's bike path plans complicated by rattlesnakes

An eastern massasauga rattlesnake is seen in its exhibit at the Philadelphia Zoo in this Sept. 5, 2003, photo.



ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

BY SHEILA AHERN

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Tucked near Dundee Road are hibernating eastern massasauga rattlesnakes waiting for spring.

Don't tell them about the bike path coming next year.

Wheeling is planning to build a paved bike and pedestrian

path along Dundee Road, from the Des Plaines River east to the I-294 overpass, that will connect with other bicycle paths in the area. Construction will start in spring 2012 and wrap up that fall.

Until then, a whole bunch of state agencies are deciding what to do about the snakes. The Wheeling Village Board recently

hired an environmental consultant for about \$25,000 to study the area.

While the snakes aren't the main object of the study, they are certainly a part of it, said Steven Rauch, an environmental services manager for Hey and Associates Inc. in Volo, who is in charge of the study and said it will look at wetlands

in the area.

The poisonous eastern massasauga rattlesnake is a recurring theme for projects near the Des Plaines River and forest preserves in Wheeling. However, because the snake is endangered in Illinois, Wheeling will need a special permit to

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