



FIRST VISIT: Pope Francis brings his 'church of the poor' to a polarized U.S. **A3**

74°
Sunny skies
WEATHER, A6

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LePage cites 'hatred' between branches

LePage confirms he will back initiative that would eliminate state's income tax

Governor called on 'to do his job' as appointments halted

BY LAUREN ABBATE
Staff Writer

FARMINGTON — Gov. Paul LePage at a public town meeting Tuesday night in Farmington reaffirmed his assertion that he will lead the effort for a 2016 ballot initiative that would seek to eliminate the state's income tax.

Reforming the state's tax system was the primary point in what he called his "vision for Maine," but LePage also stressed the importance he believes welfare reform, lowering energy costs and the reduction of student debt will play

in Maine's future prosperity at the first of what he said will be weekly town hall-style meetings.

"In Augusta, I'm the bad guy because I'm trying to lower the taxes so that it can stay in your pockets, and that it can stay in the Maine people's pocket and they can spend it the way they choose to spend it," he told a full crowd in the University of Maine at Farmington's Thomas Auditorium. "(But) I think that's the American way. I believe in smaller government, individual rights and keep what

INITIATIVE, PAGE A2



Staff photo by Michael G. Seamans
Gov. Paul LePage smiles Tuesday during a town hall-style meeting at Thomas Auditorium in Preble Hall at the University of Maine at Farmington.

BY STEVE MISTLER
State House Bureau

AUGUSTA — Gov. Paul LePage, prolonging a dispute with the Legislature, says he's suspending appointments to state boards and commissions charged with handling an array of state business, including adjudication of drug-related cases, overseeing the University of Maine System and resolving disputes between injured workers and their employers.

Several agencies and branches of government are affected, including the state's drug court, the University of Maine System trustees and the Workers Compensation Board, but it's unclear whether LePage's

move will have an immediate effect on state operations.

The governor told the Maine Public Broadcasting Network on Monday that he is halting gubernatorial appointments to fill vacancies for boards and commissions until at least January. The move follows LePage's decision in June to withdraw 21 of his nominations to more than a dozen state boards and commissions. As he did in June, LePage said his move to leave vacancies is linked to his unhappiness with the performance of the Legislature, which in many cases reviews and approves his nominations.

The administration said in June

LEPAGE, PAGE A2

MAINE APPLE ORCHARDS

It's time for picking

Nearly ideal conditions producing robust crops

BY CRAIG CROSBY
Staff Writer

The cool-down experienced around the state this week is a reminder that Mainer will soon be lugging firewood and shoveling snow, but in the meantime it means it's time to pick the apples. Growers say those who do will not be disappointed.

“It's a wonderful crop this year.”

JAN RACKLIFF,
MORRISON
HILL ORCHARD
IN FARMINGTON

“We've got a bumper crop of apples,” said Rod Bailey, of Bailey's Orchard in Whitefield. “We've been busy.”

Orchards throughout central Maine have been open for pick-your-own business for a couple weeks as their early varieties have come into season, but unseasonably warm weather has had people focused on cooling off at the beach rather than picking apples. Daytime temperatures this week have dropped back into the 60s and are hitting the 40s at night.

“It started off kind of slow because it was so hot,” said Marilyn Meyerhans, of Lakeside Orchard in Manchester and The Apple Farm in Fairfield. “I think people were still in summer mode.”

Those who wake from their summer slumber and go to the orchards will find a robust crop of apples

APPLES, PAGE A2

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Staff photo by Joe Phelan
Aravis Epley, 2, gets a lift from her mother, Christina Epley, to reach an apple Tuesday at Lakeside Orchards in Manchester.

Residents question historic designation

Augusta forum addresses building owner's concerns on procedure, restrictions

BY BETTY ADAMS
Staff Writer

AUGUSTA — City property owners asked dozens of questions Tuesday at a forum focused on a proposed historic district ordinance at the Baker Community Center.

More than 80 people turned up at what Mayor Dave Rollins counted as at least the 10th public meeting or hearing on the issue.

City councilors have yet to vote on the proposed ordinance, which carries a unanimous recommendation for passage from the city's Planning Board. Questioners wanted to hear about the restrictions, the procedures, the timelines and the effects on the community.

The moderator, Daniel Wathen, a former chief justice of the Maine Supreme Court who lives on the city's east side and whose property would not be affected by the ordinance, said the forum's intent was to provide information.

“We're not seeking to change anyone's mind, just to make sure you folks are better informed when you left than when you arrived,” he said.

The proposed ordinance would create a locally designated historic district that encompasses two existing designated National Historic Districts surrounding Winthrop and Crosby streets. It includes the downtown Water Street area north until just beyond Bond Street and south as far as a small portion of Western Avenue at Memorial Circle. It includes homes and other buildings along parts of State, Green, Bridge, Chapel, Melville, South Chestnut, North Chestnut, Spring, Winter, Summer and other streets.

The proposed ordinance lists as its intent “to safeguard, in the face of intensified growth pressures, the structures and areas that give beauty and pleasure to residents, attract visitors and new residents, give the city its distinctive character, and educate the community about its past.”

Jennifer Bryant, an attorney representing the board of the Bread of Life Ministries, said that organization, which has

FORUM, PAGE A2

'I just never thought she would be first'

Relatives of Sidney teen who died in ATV crash prepare cemetery on family farm

Halee Cummings and one of her horses. The Sidney teen, who died in an ATV accident Friday, loved horses and was a competitive barrel racer.

Halee Cummings
Facebook picture



BY PETER MCGUIRE
Staff Writer

SIDNEY — Halee Cummings' family had always planned to build a family burial ground on a small hill overlooking the family's dairy farm.

Tuesday members of the large extended family and close friends were hard at work clearing out an area, grading and building a mound for the cemetery.

“We've talked about it for a few years, and now we're getting

it done,” said Jami Paquette, Cummings' mother.

Cummings' death Friday night in an all-terrain vehicle crash was the sad event that pushed the family into making the cemetery a reality.

“I just never thought she would be the first,” Paquette said.

Less than a week after her daughter died, it still hasn't sunk in for her mother. Paquette admitted that what looks like strength is really denial.

“It's pretty much unreal still,” she said. “Halee and I are pretty

much inseparable. When reality comes back, it is not going to be good.”

Cummings, 18, a high-achieving, dedicated young woman, loved competition, loved horses and excelled at barrel racing.

She was killed Friday night when the ATV she was a passenger on went off the side of a gravel driveway and into a ditch at an apparent high rate of speed, striking several trees, according to the Maine Warden

CUMMINGS, PAGE A2

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INDEX

Business	D2
Classified	D1, D3, D5-6
Comics & Puzzles	D4
Community	B5
Entertainment	C6

Heloise & Horoscope	D4
Obituaries	B4
Opinion	A4
Sports	C1-5
TV & Crossword	C6



Volume 191, Number 266