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SERIOUS BUSINESS



Rick Bennett, Maine Senate president pro tempore, chats with Sens. Tom Sawyer of Bangor and Chandler Woodcock of Farmington after the Senate session on Thursday. (NEWS Photo by Kevin Bennett)

Legislature faces tough budgeting task

\$200 million shortfall will limit spending for education, health care and drugs

By Emmet Meara
Of the NEWS Staff

AUGUSTA — The affect of an estimated \$200 million budget shortfall on ambitious plans to expand funding for education, health care and prescription drugs will dominate the 120th legislative session, members of the House and Senate said Thursday, the first working day of the new session.

House Speaker Michael Saxl called the legislators “the best Maine has to offer” and welcomed them to the “new” State House and State Office Building, which have undergone a massive \$60 million renovation. For the first time, both buildings meet handicapped standards and provide a healthy work environment for lawmakers and state employees, he said.

The \$200 million revenue gap is serious, but “not

insurmountable” when compared to the billion dollar shortfall of just 10 years ago, the speaker told House members. Legislators will toil over 2,344 bills, again a total “not insurmountable” when compared to last year’s record total of 2,598 bills. That means the Legislature must decide an average of 22 bills for each day of the session. “We have a lot of work to do,” the speaker said.

Saxl said the goals and aims of individual members may differ, but the bottom line in the session will be “to make Maine a better place.” Mainers need greater access to health care, education and prescription drugs, he said. Maine has one of the highest rates of uninsured residents in the country and lags behind the rest of New England in sending high school graduates on to college.

House Majority leader Patrick Colwell of Gardiner

said the Legislature will not forget domestic violence, which Gov. Angus King has termed “Maine’s public enemy number one.” Colwell will sponsor a \$4.5 million bill, offering a “holistic approach” to domestic violence, which would provide financial, health and housing support services to family members threatened with violence. “That’s a lot of money, yes. But domestic violence is a huge problem in Maine,” Colwell said.

House Democrats will part ways with Republicans who seek additional tax cuts, Colwell said. The Legislature has cut taxes by \$500 million in the last four years. Those cuts “came home to roost” and caused the revenue gap, according to Colwell. Cuts in the sales and income taxes alone total \$225 million, he said.

Gov. Angus King should form a study commission to conduct a comprehensive review of the entire state tax

See Session, Page A4

Jonesboro man dies of gunshot

Girlfriend to answer to murder charge today

By Mary Anne Clancy
Of the NEWS Staff

MACHIAS — A Jonesboro woman will mark her 20th birthday today with a court appearance on a charge of murdering her 24-year-old boyfriend, who was shot in the head and left unattended for nearly 12 hours.

Katrina Bridges was arrested late Wednesday night, eight hours after police entered the couple’s Look’s Point Road home and found Christopher Ingraham with a gunshot wound to the head.

Ingraham, the father of Bridges’ 4-month-old son, died at Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor about 2:30 a.m. Thursday, said Sgt. Dennis Appleton, lead detective for the Maine State Police Criminal Investigation Division in Washington County.

Appleton said Bridges and her mother had arrived at the Machias Fire Department about 1 p.m. Wednesday, and Bridges at first reported that she had been the victim of an early morning home invasion, robbery and abduction and that her boyfriend had been shot.

Bridges told investigators that two men the couple

See Shooting, Page A4



Bridges

FBI, CIA chiefs likely to stay

Bush picks loyalist for FEMA

By Ron Fournier
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sticking with Clinton appointees, President-elect Bush wants FBI Director Louis Freeh to finish the last two years of his term and may seek a brief extension for CIA Director George Tenet, advisers said Thursday.

His Cabinet complete, Bush broadened his focus Thursday to sub-Cabinet and senior White House positions by nominating campaign manager Joe Allbaugh to head the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

In the same Texas ceremony, campaign strategist Karl Rove was appointed Bush’s senior adviser and given control over the offices of political affairs, public liaison and strategic initiatives — an unusually broad portfolio.

See Bush, Page A4

Parking garage expansion urged

Bangor panel: 2 more levels needed

By Jeff Tuttle
Of the NEWS Staff

BANGOR — Anyone who’s circled the city’s downtown looking for an open parking space on a weekday morning knows it can be a waiting game.

City officials here know it too, and are looking to make the downtown a bit more motorist-friendly, recently voting to borrow up to \$3 million to add two new levels to the packed Pickering Square parking garage.

“We’re basically at or very near capacity right now,” said City Councilor Dan Tremble, who chaired a special committee on the city’s downtown parking situation. “Depending what happens with the [Maine Dis-

See Parking, Page A2



A car enters the parking garage in downtown Bangor recently. Most days the garage is 80 percent full. (NEWS Photo by Bob DeLong)

Smokers seek exams from Big Tobacco

W. Virginia suit represents healthy users

By Vicki Smith
The Associated Press

WHEELING, W.Va. — Tobacco companies have been forced to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on the medical bills of dead or dying smokers.

They’ve had to spend millions more on ad campaigns to discourage young people from smoking.

And now, in a precedent-setting case, a West Virginia jury will decide whether the industry should

be forced to spend as much as \$500 million on doctors’ exams for healthy people who, despite the warnings, kept on smoking.

Jury selection started in state court Thursday in a trial that is expected to take 3½ months.

It is the first time a class-action lawsuit demanding that a tobacco company pay for preventive medical monitoring has made it to trial in the United States.

Twelve other cases have been

See Tobacco, Page A2

Parents offer 16-year-old daughter gift of breast implants

By Mara D. Bellaby
The Associated Press

LONDON — Jenna Franklin is only 15 but she thinks she knows the secret to a successful future — bigger breasts.

Jenna’s parents want their daughter to be happy, so they’ve agreed to pay for breast enlargements as a 16th birthday present.

The unusual gift grabbed tabloid headlines and filled the airwaves Thursday, as Britons debated what kind of society places such a high value on appearance, particularly for young women.

The British Association of Plastic Surgeons stayed out of the debate, but other health specialists warned that Jenna was far too young. One Conservative Party

politician proclaimed the whole matter “shameful.”

But writing in the Daily Express — which splashed the story on its front page under the headline “Jenna is pretty and intelligent. So why on earth is her mother buying breast implants for her 16th birthday?” — Jenna insisted “you’ve got to have breasts to be successful.”

The youngster, whose parents

run a cosmetic surgery advisory service in Mansfield in central England, told the tabloid she started thinking about the surgery when she was 12.

“Every other person you see on the television has had implants,” she wrote. “If I want to be successful I need to have them too — and I do want to be successful, though I

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