



World Beat

Byrd could be third

WASHINGTON (AP) — The decision of Sen. John C. Stennis not to seek re-election next year places the Senate's majority leader, Robert C. Byrd, in position to become the Senate's president pro tem and third in line of succession to the presidency.

This could happen if Byrd, D-W.Va., wins re-election to the Senate and, if Democrats retain their Senate control. Democrats now hold a 54-46 Senate majority. Two Democrats and two Republicans have announced they will not seek re-election next year. If Republicans capture the Senate in the 1988 elections, Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., would become the Senate's most senior member and resume the post as president pro tem he lost when Democrats became the Senate's majority party in 1986.

Regional

Many acres closed

PORTLAND (AP) — Millions of acres of tinder-dry forest in Western Oregon were closed to the public today because of wind-whipped fires and the threat of more blazes, shutting down logging and halting deer and elk hunters. "We have wildfires just waiting to happen out there," said Doug Decker, a spokesman for the Oregon Forestry Department.

In rural Polk County, 60 people were evacuated from 24 homes Monday as a fast-moving fire headed toward Black Rock, a small community southwest of Dallas. The fire spread to more than 3,000 acres and remained out of control, but was moving away from the homes

today. Today's forest closure affects 10.3 million acres of state, federal and private land protected by the Forestry Department west of the Cascade Range.

Board allows benefits

LA GRANDE (AP) — A jailer who quit his job after being exposed to an inmate who tested positive for AIDS antibodies is entitled to receive unemployment benefits, a state panel says. The ruling by the state Employment Appeals Board marks the first time an AIDS-related dispute over jobless benefits has come before the three-member appeals panel.

Gerald Welch was hired as a Union County corrections officer in April 1984 but resigned this past summer after learning of his exposure. The state Employment Division in August denied Welch jobless benefits, saying he did not have good cause to leave his job. But the Employment Appeals Board overturned that decision, according to the Edward Northcutt of Salem, the panel's executive secretary.

Court rejects findings

SALEM (AP) — The Oregon Supreme Court said Tuesday that courts aren't bound by results of administrative driver license suspension hearings. The Supreme Court unanimously rejected the appeal of Donald M. Ratliff in a case from Klamath County. In another ruling, the Supreme Court revers-

ed a conviction because a man was questioned without advice of rights after being told he couldn't leave a police station.

In the hearings case, the state moved to suspend Ratliff's driver's license after he was stopped and arrested by a state policeman and refused to take a breath test. Ratliff challenged the suspension, and a state Motor Vehicles Division hearings officer held that the arrest was invalid. At Ratliff's criminal trial on a drunken driving charge, the judge refused to be bound by the hearings officer's finding and decided there were adequate grounds to justify the stop and arrest. Ratliff was convicted of drunken driving.

Evacuation forced

WOOD VILLAGE (AP) — Two condominium complexes and a day care center were evacuated Tuesday when a large grass and brush fire broke out in this suburban area east of Portland. All roads south of Interstate 84 were closed in the area after the five-alarm fire broke out shortly after 2 p.m., said Multnomah County sheriff's spokesman Jim Davis.

A fire dispatcher said the fire was about a mile by a half-mile in size. The blaze was reported contained shortly after 4 p.m. "It started out as a barn fire and rapidly spread," said Patty Kanner, a secretary at the fire bureau. She said no injuries were reported immediately and apparently no structures burned

except the barn. "One home apparently started to catch fire but they extinguished it right away," she said.

Suspect arraigned

COQUILLE (AP) — A 27-year-old Coos Bay man was arraigned Tuesday in Coos County District Court on two separate counts of aggravated murder in the death of a 2-year-old girl. Jeffrey D. Halladay, a student, was charged with independent counts alleging maiming and torture in the Monday death of Reitta Josephine Bessy, the daughter of the woman he lived with.

The charges will be presented to a grand jury on Thursday, said District Attorney Paul Burgett. No plea was entered and Judge Al Walsh didn't set bail, Burgett said. Burgett said an autopsy report attributed the child's death to multiple traumatic injuries and traumatic asphyxiation. Burgett refused to reveal further details of the child's death.

Coalition sues BLM

PORTLAND (AP) — A coalition of environmental groups has filed a lawsuit to stop logging old-growth timber on U.S. Bureau of Land Management land inhabited by the spotted owl. The lawsuit filed Monday in U.S. District Court seeks an injunction blocking timber sales on BLM land in western Oregon where the northern spotted owl is known to live.

The lawsuit claimed the birds would be endangered by logging the 200-year-old trees it prefers for nesting. "Such logging is a major cause of the decline of the northern spotted owl population and is likely to lead to the ultimate extinction of the species," the suit claimed. The BLM is scheduled to start offering timber sales next week on at least 1,151 acres of old-growth forests with spotted owls living in them in the Medford, Roseburg, Salem and Coos Bay districts, the lawsuit said.

Family wins lawsuit

PORTLAND (AP) — The family of a Lake Oswego man who was killed in an airplane crash in Eastern Oregon last year has been awarded \$700,000 by a federal court jury. The verdict ended the third of three related trials heard by the same jury, which awarded more than \$2 million to families of three victims.

It also brought to a close the last of five wrongful death lawsuits filed in U.S. District Court by survivors of five federal employees who died in the August 1986 crash. A pilot was flying the five men on a survey of U.S. Bureau of Land Management land when he crashed into a canyon wall on a survey of U.S. Bureau of Land Management land. Federal investigators determined that pilot error was the probable cause of the crash, which occurred about 65 miles south of Burns. The pilot also died in the wreck.



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