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NEWS BRIEFING

A LOOK AT THIS MORNING'S HEADLINES

House speaker's visit delights Republicans and Democrats alike



OLYMPIA (AP) — House Speaker Newt Gingrich's Seattle stopover Wednesday has both Republicans and Democrats atwitter.

Republicans are delighted with the appearance of one of the party's top luminaries, controversy and all. The state party hopes to net \$200,000 from three appearances by the Georgian who succeeded Washington's own Speaker Tom Foley, a Democrat turned out in the 1994 election.

Democrats are tickled, too.

They see Gingrich as the embodiment of public unhappiness with Congress and some of the future budget cuts. Gov. Mike Lowry plans to help serve at a temporary soup kitchen in a Seattle labor hall to demonstrate against Gingrich's policies.

Both a demonstration and pro-Gingrich counterdemonstration are planned outside the Westin Hotel in Seattle where some of the events are scheduled.

The speaker, taking a breather from balanced-budget talks in Washington, D.C., is scheduled to keynote a sold-out \$5-a-ticket rally of 1,800 partisans at the Doubletree Suites ballroom in Tukwila, south of Seattle. U.S. Sen. Slade Gorton and all seven Republican U.S. House members from Washington will attend, said party spokesman Todd Myers.

After a news conference, Gingrich will attend a \$1,000-a-ticket reception and \$250-a-plate dinner, both at the Westin. Myers said several hundred tickets were sold to the dinner and a smaller number for the reception.

The profits will be used for state party aid for Republican candidates this fall, Myers said.

"It's great any time you can pick up that sort of money, and we expect the Democrats to be bringing in President Clinton and Al Gore a little later" for their own fund-raiser, he said.

School bus collision with semi kills driver, injures 37 children



GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) — A school bus driver with 39 students aboard drove Tuesday into the path of a semi-trailer truck at a slippery intersection, killing himself and sending 37 children to hospitals.

The children suffered wounds ranging from head injuries and broken bones to cuts and bruises. Several were admitted to hospitals, including one in critical condition.

Police Capt. Glenn Matzke said the bus driver, 60-year-old Richard Winters, may not have yielded to the truck or stopped for a stop sign.

The bus was turning onto a thoroughfare with a 45 mph speed limit. The truck may have been momentarily hidden behind a mirror, said Allen Lamers, vice president of The Lamers Bus Line, which owned the bus.

Lamers said the intersection is a "bad situation" and needs a stop light. "The accident probably could have been prevented if there had been control lights there."

Some of the children were trapped in the school bus before being taken to hospitals. Two were admitted in serious condition, four in fair condition and one in stable condition.

Winters was assigned the MacArthur Elementary School bus route last month, Lamers said. He has been a licensed bus driver since October 1994, and had driven charters before getting the school bus.

Randy Griswold, who arrived at the scene shortly after the crash, said the left side of the driver's cab was demolished, and the driver "wound up curled up like a ball in the stairwell. ... It's a scene you can't describe."

Griswold's 6-year-old daughter, one of the pupils on the bus, suffered minor injuries.

Chechen rebels take 2,000 people hostage in Southern Russia



MOSCOW (AP) — Chechen rebels seized a hospital and took 2,000 people hostage Tuesday in a southern Russian city, battling troops in the streets and threatening to "turn this city to hell and ashes" if Russia doesn't pull its forces out of Chechnya.

At least 23 people were killed in the assault on Kizlyar, in the republic of Dagestan, 60 miles northeast of the Chechen capital of Grozny. A similar episode at a hospital in June left more than 100 people dead.

President Boris Yeltsin raged at his military for letting such an attack happen for a second time, denouncing soldiers he said were snoozing when they should have been blocking rebels.

The attack, led by a son-in-law of separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, was the latest sign of new life in the beleaguered Chechen rebel movement after several months of low-level activity.

Russian troops sealed off the town and fought hundreds of rebels in street skirmishes, news reports said. Chechen snipers controlled a bridge across the Terek River and two high-rise apartment buildings near the hospital.

The rebels threatened to kill hostages if Russia did not withdraw its troops from Chechnya. An unconfirmed ITAR-Tass report said rebels killed two of their hostages.

"We can turn this city to hell and ashes," the leader of the raid, 28-year-old Salman Raduyev, said in an interview broadcast Tuesday evening by Russian TV.

The attack prompted Yeltsin to call an emergency session of security chiefs in the Kremlin and brought renewed appeals from critics to end the war.

The raid recalled an attack in June when Chechen rebels seized about 1,000 hostages in a hospital in the southern Russian town of Budyonovsk.

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