

NEWS BRIEFING

A LOOK AT THIS MORNING'S HEADLINES

Oregon considers moving boundary for public beaches



PORTLAND (AP) — For the first time in the 29 years Oregonians have been guaranteed access to the beach. The state parks staff is recommending moving the boundary line.

Ranchers have asked that the line be moved closer to the beach along the New River, which runs through Coos and Curry counties near Langlois. The ranchers contend the current boundary prevents them from building fences so they can graze cattle on their own land.

Parks and Recreation Department Director Robert L. Meinen was recommending the commission endorse the move.

The Beach Law of 1967 guarantees public access to Oregon's 360 miles of coastline. The boundary line generally runs where vegetation meets the sand and is legally established by a survey called the zone line. Along New River, the line fell east of the spit because it didn't then have beach grass.

Ranchers maintained fences and grazed cattle west of the zone line until about 1990, when people started complaining. In April 1990, Rancher Gerald Kamph and his two sons ordered an Oregon Natural Resources Council volunteer off their property west of the line after she got out of a canoe on the New River.

The department ordered a survey of the zone line at New River. An Oregon State University oceanographer concluded that the spit could wash out, obliterating the current vegetation line.

On April 22, a state attorney general's opinion concurred with Kamph's position that the zone line does not establish public-access rights.

Meinen will tell commissioners the public will continue to be able to float the New River.

Comatose woman raped, gives birth to healthy baby



ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP) — A premature baby born six weeks ago to a comatose woman who was raped in a nursing home is being raised by his maternal grandmother, the family's attorney said Tuesday.

Neurologists say it is unlikely the mother, who has been in a chronic vegetative state since a 1985 car crash, retains any conscious awareness of herself, let alone the pregnancy and birth.

In the hospital, the baby boy was brought to her to hold twice a day, but a nurse had to wrap the woman's arms around him.

"Mom would not be able to reach and grasp and hug the child," said Bob Loeb, a spokesman at Strong Memorial Hospital. "Some people observed that she became relaxed a little bit, that she kind of sensed another living thing next to her, but that's all highly subjective."

Born two months premature on March 18, the child is now almost double his birth weight of 2 pounds, 11 ounces. He was taken home Sunday by his grandmother.

Doctors believe it is the first case of someone getting pregnant and having a baby while in a coma-like state.

The 30-year-old mother could be discharged later this month from the hospital where the natural childbirth took place, but she's unlikely to be returned to the nursing home in suburban Rochester where she was raped last August.

Parrinello said he's drafted a legal complaint against the nursing home, and has begun negotiations over possible compensation.

So far, no one has been charged with the rape, which was discovered only last December. A DNA analysis of blood taken from a fired nurse's aide is expected to be completed in about a month.

Marines kill three Liberians as fighting engulfs Monrovia



MONROVIA, Liberia (AP) — U.S. Marine guards shot and killed three Liberians firing toward the U.S. embassy Tuesday as fierce battles engulfed the capital, littering its streets with bodies a day after a cease-fire collapsed.

The shootings, the first exchange of gunfire involving U.S. troops since Liberia's civil war reignited in early April, came as new factional fighting left the 10-day-old, U.S.-brokered truce in tatters.

At an army barracks a few blocks from the embassy, the floor of a clinic was awash in blood as scores of victims were carried in or dragged themselves through the door. Doctors said at least three people had died and 60 were wounded, many of whom were civilians.

Fire from mortars, machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades echoed through the city, forcing George Moose, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for African affairs, to cancel talks at the embassy with government, peacekeepers and factional leaders.

Moose, in a telephone interview from the embassy, warned of a "major catastrophe" if the fighting continued. He blamed warlord-turned-politician Charles Taylor, whose standoff with a rival April 6 provoked two weeks of warfare culminating in the cease-fire.

"Taylor will be held responsible," Moose said. "If he persists in taking power, he should expect a strong international reaction."

In Monrovia's Mamba Point diplomatic section, where the embassy is located, rival factions battled for control through the afternoon. At least nine bodies were scattered on the streets of the beachfront neighborhood. It was unclear whether those killed died while fighting or were caught in crossfire.

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