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Oregon Daily Emerald

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NEWS DIGEST

Decline in gas prices linked to low demand

1 LOS ANGELES — Gasoline prices nationwide continued to slide, with the national average down about 2 cents a gallon as motorists cut back on driving amid a healthy supply of gas, the Lundberg Survey reported Sunday.

The weighted average gasoline cost, including all grades and taxes, was \$1.2611 per gallon Friday, according to the survey of 10,000 stations nationwide.

That was down 2.06 cents from the Oct. 10 survey and down about 6 cents since the summer peak on Sept. 5.

"The dual reasons for the drop are lower demand and higher supplies," analyst Trilby Lundberg said.

Gasoline was cheapest in St. Louis, where motorists paid an average \$1.009 for a gallon of regular gasoline at self-serve pumps. It was the most expensive in Honolulu, where the same gasoline cost \$1.616 a gallon.

At self-service pumps nationwide, regular gasoline averaged \$1.2155, mid-grade was \$1.3154 and premium was \$1.3975.

At full-service pumps, regular gasoline averaged \$1.5838, mid-grade was \$1.6681 and premium was \$1.7366.

Million Woman March unites black women

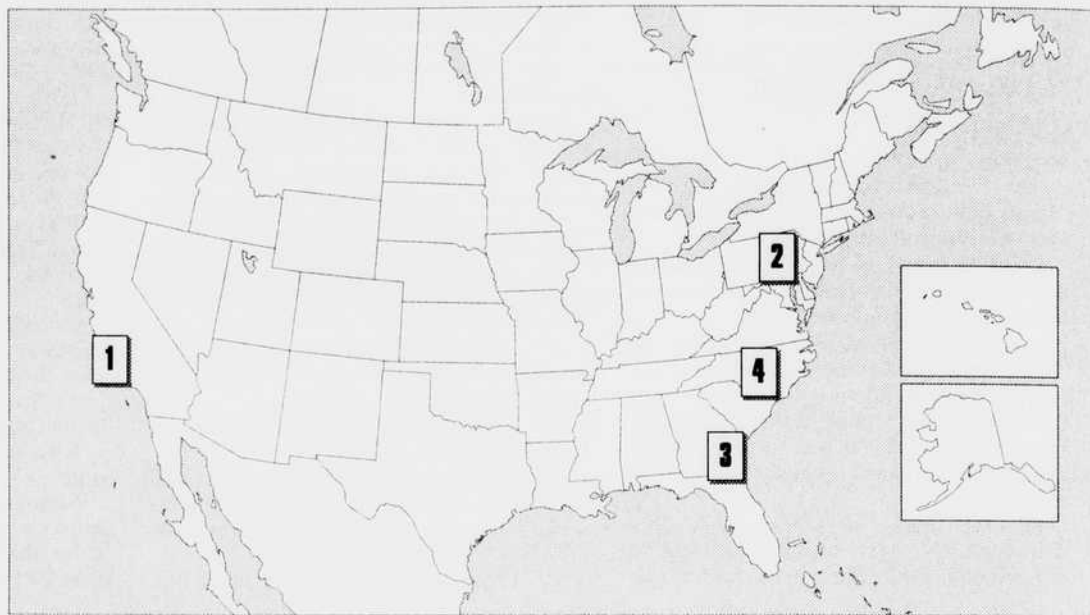
2 PHILADELPHIA — The crowd that gathered at the Million Woman March continued to trickle home Sunday, many armed with a newfound sense of power and passion for what it means to be a black woman.

And, they added, the spirit of the march will continue to emerge in thousands of towns and in millions of individual actions.

"It had to start somewhere," said Yvonne Tillery, a 37-year-old secretary from Chester, Pa. "We had the Million Man March. We've had the Million Woman March. Now it's time to put some heads together and do positive things."

Hundreds of thousands of people packed the Benjamin Franklin Parkway for the march Saturday, standing shoulder to shoulder on the mile-long avenue.

Crowd estimates ranged wide-



ly. Organizers estimated 2.1 million filled the route from City Hall to the Museum of Art in the early afternoon, when rain gave way to a chilly, gray day.

Police gave no official crowd count, but police sources told The Associated Press an estimate of between 300,000 and 1 million. The Philadelphia Inquirer said its police sources estimated the crowd as between 500,000 and 1.5 million for the seven-hour program, which included a keynote speech by Winnie Madikizela-Mandela.

"It was a great moment for all women across America. It was a chance to express themselves and to feel their power. I think it will make a great difference in the community — any community," said Gloristine Muhammad, 48, of Macon, Ga.

Martin Luther King III follows father's path

3 ATLANTA — After months of speculation, Martin Luther King III has emerged as the most likely candidate to take over as the head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Several SCLC board members Sunday confirmed a report that King, the son of the group's co-founder Martin Luther King Jr., is the heir apparent.

The SCLC's board of directors is expected to meet this week to vote on the appointment of the group's new leader. But the final decision will be made by SCLC

delegates.

One board member, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, said Sunday that the SCLC's search committee has recommended King as the top pick among finalists, but the decision isn't final.

"It's not written in stone, but somebody's got the chisel," the board member said.

King did not return telephone messages seeking comment.

Lowery announced this summer that he would be stepping down from the head of the group founded 40 years ago by the Rev. Ralph Abernathy Jr., Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders.

Lowery's successor had not been selected at the time of the SCLC anniversary banquet held in his honor in July, so he agreed to stay on until one was named. King, 40, was reported to be a leading candidate at the time.

"If they want to go with Martin, we have to give him a chance," said state Rep. Tyrone Brooks, who was mentioned earlier this year as a possible contender. "I'm certainly not opposed to Martin, but we need to know where he plans to take the organization."

Army may have poor mental health care

4 RALEIGH, N.C. — Internal Army documents indicate serious and widespread problems

with the Army's mental health system, a newspaper reported Sunday.

The consequences, at times, have been deadly, according to The News & Observer of Raleigh. Mentally disturbed soldiers have been left untreated in sensitive military jobs, and others have committed suicide, the report said.

The Army insists its system is first-rate.

"We think we have one of the finest mental health systems in the world," said Lt. Col. Rick Spearman, a spokesman for Fort Bragg. "On the whole, there is not a serious problem."

But the Army's own reports suggest otherwise. A review of suicides at Fort Bragg over the past 11 years by the newspaper shows:

- High-ranking officers have barred mental health workers from approaching some of the soldiers most likely to need help.

- Psychiatrists and psychologists offer no confidentiality to soldiers. Many soldiers avoid seeking help because they know their commanders may be notified and they fear their careers will be ruined.

- Suicide attempts and serious cases of alcohol abuse have gone unreported by superiors and military police. At Fort Bragg, attempts at suicide have gone unreported even by the base hospital.

— Compiled from AP wire reports

Hotel staff, guests report ghostly encounters

Fun-loving ghosts make themselves at home in the newly renovated Geiser Grand Hotel

The Associated Press

BAKER CITY — Every night at the Geiser Grand Hotel is Halloween.

Ghosts are said to haunt the mahogany columns, sparkling Viennese crystal chandeliers and rooms full of marble-topped antiques.

"The staff kind of lives with it," said owner Barbara Sidway. "Some of them accept it and some are freaked out by it."

Acknowledged as the finest hotel between Portland and Salt Lake City after it was built in 1889, the Geiser Grand reopened this summer following a three-year, \$6 million restoration project.

Sidway and her husband, Dwight, the owners of Sidway Investment Corp. of Hillsboro, began renovating the Geiser Grand after restoring the 18-story Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, Fla.

"The Biltmore was the most haunted building we ever worked on, bar none," Dwight Sidway said. "On that project, we actually had men run out of the building and never come back."

The Sidways say the spirits that haunt the Geiser Grand are generally more congenial. They throw noisy parties in vacant rooms, toss things about, blink the lights off and on, rearrange furniture and tie knots in curtains.

The couple say they tried to sleep in a second floor room one evening as loud music and shrill laughter got under way on the floor above.

"I could put my hand to the wall and feel the vibration of the music," Barbara Sidway said. "It sounded like there was a serious, big party upstairs."

Dwight Sidway rushed up to quiet the noisy guests, but the sounds led him to an unused room that suddenly turned silent as a tomb. "There wasn't a soul up there," he said.

Still, during the renovation, while crews worked seven days a

week in three shifts to finish in time for the 1997 summer season, a dozen workers quit, claiming they had encounters with ghosts.

Bill Harp, a hotel cook, says he and another employee watched a large carton of glassware rise into the air, float about four feet and crash to the floor.

"I never believed in ghosts until I started working here," Harp said.

A century ago, people marveled at the Geiser Grand's Italian Renaissance Revival architecture, French menus, white-gloved waiters, potted palms and one of the first Otis elevators in the frontier West.

But the hotel later fell on hard times and became a brothel, a veterans hospital and a casino before it finally closed in 1969.

Barbara Sidway says alleged encounters with ghosts often have involved the smiling "Lady in Blue" attired in a 1930s-era dress, hat and veil. Another apparition resembles a saloon dancer of the '20s, dressed in a red corset and flapper-era hat with peacock

feather.

Mark Fogelson, who worked nights restoring the decorative flourishes inside the hotel, claims to have seen one or another of the female ghosts at least 20 times.

"I'll bet you there are 25 total ghosts," Fogelson said. "There wasn't ever a quiet night."

Bartender Tina Sissel says ghosts have locked her in the hotel's liquor room at least seven times.

In one upstairs room, hotel guests sometimes are startled to hear their bathroom shower come on, followed by the sounds of an invisible person bathing. In another room, guests occasionally report being jarred awake by the sound of a locomotive and boxcars thundering past the bed. The staff refers to those rooms, respectively, as the "rain room" and the "train room."

Michael Morse, the hotel's executive chef, who stands 6 feet 5 inches tall and tips the scales at 280 pounds, says he's not intimidated by the ghost stories.

"They are friendly ghosts," Morse said.