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PRECINCT PARTY



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Despite the rain, Northwest Tap Connection's Totally Tap Kids performed Saturday, June 18, at the Seattle Police Department's East Precinct Community Picnic. Members of the community had an opportunity to meet their local officers, take a tour of the precinct, enjoy some free entertainment and eat a free hot dog and enjoy some ice cream.

State Spending Plan

Governor's budget includes big cuts for school spending

By Mike Baker
The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — A dejected Gov. Chris Gregoire gave final approval last week to a new state spending plan, bemoaning in particular the sweeping cuts it makes to one of her prized issues: education.

Gregoire said the spending reductions — totaling \$4.5 billion over the next two years — were necessary at a time of economic turmoil. But she was not pleased with the results of the last two-year spending plan she will sign before departing office in 2012.

"I undo how many years of my career? I'm going to undo how many of the things I've worked for?" Gregoire said. "I have a very heavy heart today."

Gregoire said she was particularly panged by the impacts on education, which bore the brunt of the reductions. The spending plan reduces salaries for teachers and classified educational staff by 1.9 percent while slashing pay for administrative staff by 3 percent. It suspends programs designed to keep class sizes low.

Higher education will also endure a large share of the cuts. To offset the spending reductions, Gregoire and lawmakers approved double-digit tuition hikes in each of the next two years.

Those increases, combined with ones in previous years, mean tuition at the University of Washington will be twice as expensive when Gregoire departs office than when she began. Rates could still go higher because Gregoire pushed a measure giving institutions the power to set their own rates.

The budget was just one of many key bills that Gregoire approved Wednesday to conclude her work for the legislative session. She also green-lighted an overhaul of the state's workers' compensation system, new limits on the state's debt and a bill that allows Washington to solicit bids for a pos-

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US Attorney Pushes Pot Legalization

Former prosecutor says it's time to regulate the drug like alcohol

By Gene Johnson
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — A man who once served as the Justice Department's top official in Seattle said Tuesday that he is sponsoring an initiative to legalize possession of up to an ounce of dried marijuana in Washington state, a measure he hopes will help "shame Congress" into ending pot prohibition.

John McKay spent five years enforcing federal drug laws as

the U.S. attorney in Seattle before he was fired by the Bush administration in early 2007. He told The Associated Press on Tuesday that laws criminalizing marijuana are wrongheaded because they create an enormous black market exploited by international cartels and crime rings.

"That's what drives my concern: The black market fuels the cartels, and that's what allows them to buy the guns they use to kill people," McKay said. "A lot of Americans smoke pot and

they're willing to pay for it. I think prohibition is a dumb policy, and there are a lot of line federal prosecutors who share the view that the policy is suspect."

McKay is joining Seattle City Attorney Pete Holmes, travel guide Rick Steves and the state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union in forming a group called New Approach Washington. They're pushing an initiative to the Legislature that would regulate the recreational use of marijuana in a way simi-

lar to how the state regulates alcohol. Their bill would legalize marijuana for people over 21, authorize the Liquor Control Board to regulate and tax marijuana for sale in "standalone stores," and extend drunken driving laws to marijuana, with blood tests to determine how much of pot's active ingredient is present in a driver's blood.

New Approach Washington planned a news conference Wednesday to announce the effort. No state has legalized

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Is Big City Life Getting You Down?

New research shows your neighbors are stressing you out

By Malcolm Ritter
AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — This may come as no surprise to residents of New York City and other big urban centers: Living there can be bad for your mental health.

Now researchers have found a possible reason why. Imaging scans show that in city dwellers or people who grew up in urban

areas, certain areas of the brain react more vigorously to stress. That may help explain how city life can boost the risks of schizophrenia and other mental disorders, researchers said.

Previous research has found that growing up in a big city raises the risk of schizophrenia. And there's some evidence that city dwellers are at heightened risk for mood and anxiety disorders, although the evidence is

mixed.

In any case, the volunteers scanned in the new study were healthy, and experts said that while the city-rural differences in brain activity were intriguing, the results fall short of establishing a firm tie to mental illness.

The study, done in Germany and published in Thursday's issue of the journal

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