



Johnson City Press

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Tri-Cities, Tennessee

Today 50¢

BRIEFING



High
48
Low
23

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NEWS

Knifing acquittal/4A

The accused in a stabbing outside a Johnson City club last year has been acquitted of attempted second-degree murder.



Kerry defiant/7B

Democratic presidential contender John Kerry is unapologetic after referring to GOP critics as 'crooked... lying.'

SPORTS

Hawks fall/1D

Saint Joseph's first game at the top of the collegiate basketball rankings led to its demise, as the 27-0 Hawks lost to Xavier in the Atlantic-10 quarterfinals Thursday.

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- **JOHNSON CITY**
Susan Morrell
Timothy Mullins
Christopher Torbett
- **ELIZABETHTON**
Gladys Eller
William Shanks
- **GRAY**
Michael Smith
- **JONESBOROUGH**
Syril Dykes
James Whitson Jr.
- **KINGSPORT**
Leonard Ferguson
- **MARION, Va.**
Sally Miller
- **PENSACOLA, Fla.**
Carl Jenkins
- **RICHMOND, Va.**
Richard Sowers
- **TELFORD**
Leena Ewing

Front Page Design/Don Dale

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TCRA to settle 9-11 fiscal suit; impact still apparent

By HANK HAYES

Special to the Press

BLOUNTVILLE — The Tri-Cities Regional Airport Commission voted for closure Thursday in a lawsuit related to the financial pain caused by the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

After holding a 15-minute closed session with TCRA legal counsel Bill Bovender during a called meeting, commissioners decided to settle a federal court lawsuit filed against insurance provider Chubb Group for denying a claim involving the airport's immediate loss of busi-

ness after Sept. 11.

After that day, TCRA essentially did no business for three days. The Federal Aviation Administration canceled all flights nationwide, so TCRA collected no landing fees or other related revenues and lost an estimated \$88,000.

Chubb, one of the top publicly traded insurance organizations based on revenues in the United States, took the position that the TCRA policy didn't cover canceled flights but would have covered physical damage to the airport.

"The airport had business interruption coverage that specifically targeted an action by a

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You can call me AL



Ron Campbell/Johnson City Press

Constable Al Wheelock paid for this no-parking sign and some others in Gray.

State's Law Officer of the Year has seen many changes in long career

By JAMES BROOKS

Press Staff Writer

jbrooks@johnsoncitypress.com

Gray's Al Wheelock has been honored as Tennessee Law Officer of the Year by the Veterans of Foreign Wars after 37 years as a constable.

"The first time I was elected was in 1966," Wheelock said. "There's been a lot of changes in law enforcement in the county since then. Back in those days they about wore me out up here."

Back in those days the constables were a vital part of law enforcement in the county, with 27 of them patrolling their home districts. The sheriff's deputies were on the fee system. They had to buy their own cars and were later paid a meager salary plus

PROFILE NEIGHBORS YOU NEED TO KNOW

mileage.

"(Former Washington County Sheriff) Jim Seehorn told me that when he started with the (Tennessee) Highway Patrol he had to buy his own patrol car and pay to put the lights on it," Wheelock said. "Actually, I was the first uniformed law officer in Washington County. I wore a khaki Marine shirt with black lapel pockets."

The sheriff's department grew into a full-time, paid law enforcement organization largely at the expense of the constables who remained on the fee

system for the warrants they served. Today, they still have to buy their own cars and uniforms.

Wheelock, a Democrat, ran against former Sheriff Ron England a couple of times, and England rarely wasted an opportunity to vent his opinion that constables should be done away with. "That never stopped them from calling me out at 2 and 3 in the morning when something needed to be done," Wheelock growled.

In some cases, the constables were their own worst enemies, and on more than one occasion they were arrested themselves for unprofessional conduct ranging from abuse of the use of an emergency vehicle to taking roadside

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The Associated Press

Firefighters carry out a body on a stretcher from a bomb-damaged passenger train, following a number of explosions on trains in Madrid Thursday, just three days before Spain's general elections.

Terrorism hits Spain

■ Toll at least 192 in train attacks; shadowy group claims responsibility in al-Qaida's name.

MADRID, Spain — A series of bombs hidden in backpacks exploded in quick succession Thursday, blowing apart four commuter trains and killing at least 192 people and wounding 1,200. Spain blamed Basque separatists, but a shadowy group claimed responsibility in the name of al-Qaida for the worst terrorist attack in Spain's history. Panicked commuters trampled on each other, abandoning their bags and shoes, after two of the bombs went off in one train in the Atocha station in the heart of Madrid. Train cars were turned into twisted wrecks and platforms were strewn with corpses. Cell phones rang unanswered on the bodies of the dead as frantic relatives tried to call them.

"March 11, 2004, now holds its place in the history of infamy," Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar said.

The bombing came three days ahead of Spain's general election on Sunday. A major campaign issue was how to deal with ETA, the Basque militant group.

Campaigning for the election was called off and three days of mourning were declared.

It was also 2 1/2 years after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, and was Europe's worst since the bombing of a Pan Am jetliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988

An act of barbaric terrorism has engulfed Spain with profound pain, repulsion and anger.

— King Juan Carlos

killed 270 people,

The 10 backpack bombs exploded in a 15-minute span, starting about 7:39 a.m., on trains along nine miles of commuter line from Santa Eugenia to the Atocha terminal, a bustling hub for subway, commuter and long-distance trains just south of the famed Prado Museum. Police also found and detonated three other bombs.

"An act of barbaric terrorism has engulfed Spain with profound pain, repulsion and anger," King Juan Carlos of Spain said on national television.

Worst hit was a double-decker train at El Pozo station, where two bombs killed 70 people, fire department inspector Juan Redondo said. One corpse was

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Bucs bash

Sunday 'bracket party' gives fans a chance to celebrate with team

By SAM WATSON

Press Education Writer

swatson@johnsoncitypress.com

Back-to-back trips to the NCAA Tournament mean back-to-back "bracket parties" for East Tennessee State University basketball players, coaches and fans.

As the Buccaneers wait to learn where, when and most importantly which team they will play in the tournament's opening round, fans will get a chance to encourage the players toward victory Sunday in a party from 5:30-7 p.m. at the Centre at

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Bank makes plans for Med Tech site

■ Bank of Tennessee to build near J.C. Crossing.

By LESIA PAINE-BROOKS

Press Business Writer

lpbrooks@johnsoncitypress.com

Med Tech Park will be welcoming its first corporate player into the neighborhood by fall 2005.

Bank of Tennessee announced Thursday its plans to build a \$5 million multi-story building to be constructed on 3 1/2 acres overlooking the intersection of North State of Franklin and Knob Creek roads in Med Tech Park.



Lee Talbert/Johnson City Press

Bank of Tennessee President/CEO Kenneth Maloy said the project is a big investment for the financial center, which is expected to contain 30,000-

40,000 square feet, but one he anticipates will be "well worth the money spent." Ground is not expected to be broken on the project until this fall.

The building will house full-service consumer, commercial and private banking facilities as well as

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