

STATE

Chicago to host NATO

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A senior administration official says President Barack Obama will host the NATO and G-8 summits in his hometown of Chicago next year.

The official says world leaders will gather in Chicago in May to discuss the future of coalition operations in Afghanistan. The U.S. will be in the midst of drawing down more than

30,000 troops from Afghanistan by the time the summits take place.

Obama will announce steps toward drawing down those forces by the end of next summer during a prime-time address to the nation Wednesday night. He will announce the summits in his speech. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the plans ahead of the president's announcement.

Blagojevich trial jurors finish 8th day of deliberations

By Associated Press

CHICAGO — Jurors at ousted Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich's corruption retrial have finished yet another day of deliberations without reaching a verdict.

Wednesday was their eighth day of discussion. They'll start their ninth day on Thursday morning.

As on previous days, jurors offered no clues Wednesday about where they were in the process.

Jurors sometimes send notes to the judge that can indicate they've hit a roadblock. But this jury has sent only two and neither was very telling.

Jurors at Blagojevich's first trial deliberated for 14 days before coming back deadlocked on 23 of 24 charges.

The retrial jurors are considering 20 counts. Blagojevich has denied all the charges, including that he tried to sell or trade President Barack Obama's vacated Senate seat.

ACCIDENTS, from page 1

Craig said drivers and passengers are going to be much safer if wearing a safety belt.

"There's some officers who are trained to check child safety seats to see if they're cracked," Craig said. "There's no reason (the child safety seat) shouldn't be safe after an accident."

Two separate accidents occurred June 7, about an hour apart. In the first accident near mile post 185, Dale E. Tanksley, 56, of Bee Branch, Ark., failed to reduce his speed heading south on Interstate 57. Tanksley rear-ended Timothy D. Buenker, 40, of Charleston, and continued moving in the right lane and struck a minivan. Raymond P. Houser, 67, of Toledo, was a passenger in the van. Tanksley and Houser died in the accident.

The second accident which oc-

curred south of Neoga happened when a semi-trailer, driven by Lawrence Baunsgard, 50, of Waterford, Mich., swerved onto the shoulder and struck David Erlinger's, 24, of Albers, semi-trailer, which had been parked on the southbound shoulder two miles south of Neoga after a blown tire, a police report said.

Kauffman said drivers should learn to reduce their speed.

"We advise motorists to slow down, obey speed limits, and to never text and drive," Kauffman said. "It is construction season, so we urge motorists to be aware of work zones, obey speed limits and buckle up. We look forward to saving more lives."

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Lawmakers OK cutting salaries

By The Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD — Illinois lawmakers approved another year of construction spending to ensure that \$18 billion worth of projects don't grind to a halt next week and slashed their own salaries while they were at it Wednesday.

Their actions, conducted in just a few hours during a special trip to the Capitol, mean thousands of construction workers will continue getting paid, but lawmakers will take 12 unpaid furlough days and give up a cost-of-living raise to help balance the budget, just as many other state employees are doing.

The cuts will cost each legisla-

tor about \$3,900 — a prospect that caused some grumbling.

"I will never vote to cut my salary," said Sen. Annazette Collins, D-Chicago. "I would do it for free if I was rich, but I'm not. I have mouths to feed."

Construction money and legislative salaries were left hanging when lawmakers ended the spring session three weeks ago.

Allowing construction spending to continue for another year, usually a routine matter, had been sidelined by a budget dispute between the Senate and House. Senate Democrats added \$430 million in non-construction spending changes to the bill, but the House refused to go along. The spring

legislative session ended without a construction bill being approved.

Eventually, Gov. Pat Quinn warned that without the spending bill, Illinois would have no legal authority to continue spending money on new roads, bridge repairs or building upgrades once the current budget expires June 30. He predicted that would mean the loss of about 52,000 construction jobs.

To keep that from happening, Senate Democrats agreed to drop the spending proposals that weren't related to construction. Both the House and Senate returned to Springfield for a one-day session Wednesday, quickly approving the revised spending measure without a single "no" vote.

2 tornadoes confirmed, outages remain in Illinois

By The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Fast-moving thunderstorms and a pair of tornadoes moved across northern Illinois, leaving hundreds of thousands in the dark and closing several suburban Chicago post offices and a Cook County courthouse on Wednesday.

Tornadoes struck the Chicago suburbs of Downer's Grove and Mount Prospect on Tuesday evening, the National Weather Service confirmed Wednesday. Both tornadoes had wind speeds of between 90 and 100 mph, were 200 yards wide and traveled about 2 miles.

Nearly 400 ComEd repair crews worked to fix the storm damage that left more than 420,000 customers without electricity.

About 169,000 customers remained without power Wednesday evening, according to ComEd. About 1,700 customers were in the city of Chicago and the rest in the Chicago suburbs.

"Unfortunately, due to the extent of the damage, it could become a multiday effort," ComEd spokesman Tony Hernandez told the (Arlington Heights) Daily Herald for a story published Wednesday. "But, crews are out working as fast and as safely as possible to get service restored as soon as possible."

Several post offices in the northern and western suburbs also were without power, disrupting mail service, said U.S. Postal Service spokesman Sean Hargadon.

Mail delivery and retail services were limited in places with ZIP codes

beginning in 6-0-0, including Des Plaines, Glencoe, Lake Forest and Wheeling.

"We're still having carriers deliver mail" because some items had been processed by the time the power went out at a processing facility Tuesday night, Hargadon said.

Officials were hoping to resume regular postal service on Thursday, he said.

"We're still waiting on an update from ComEd," he said. "They have a lot to handle."

In the meantime, he encouraged customers to visit alternate retail sites that have mail service.

The storm also left the courthouse in west suburban Maywood in the dark. All proceedings were canceled, and cases scheduled for Wednesday were continued.

BILL, from page 1

Rose said that Derek Markley, Eastern's president's assistant, did the research for the bill and that the president came to Rose with the idea.

Rose said that it is important to keep people in the state for financial and economic reasons.

"Keep(ing) people here in Illinois helps the workforce base and makes for a good pool for employers to draw from," Rose said.

SB 1798 was filed in February and passed May 27, according to Rose and the Illinois General Assembly website.

Although the bill was not filed until February, Rose said that he and Eastern's president had been talking about the idea since last fall.

Melissa Sturtevant can be reached at 581-7942 or dennewsdesk@gmail.com

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