

LOCAL & STATE, B1

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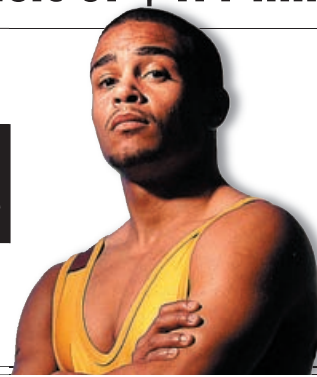
Peoria's beloved River Station reopens with revamped menu and renovations



SPORTS, D1

TOUGH LESSON

East Peoria senior Donny Cotton learns from losses, is named Wrestler of Year



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Iraq war enters fifth year

Bush asks for patience as American support continues to decline

BY JENNIFER LOVEN
OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Iraq war lumbered into its fifth year Monday with President Bush pleading for patience to let his revised battle plan work and Congress' new Democratic leaders retorting that no patience remains.

"The new strategy will need more time to take effect," Bush said in remarks televised from the White House to mark the four years since

he ordered the invasion. He challenged Congress to send him a war funding bill "without strings and without delay."

He got a swift response from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

"The American people have lost confidence in President Bush's plan for a war without end in Iraq," said Pelosi, D-Calif. "That failed approach has been rejected by the voters in our nation and it will be rejected by the Congress."

Four years in, the war has claimed the lives of more than 3,200 members of the U.S. military. Predictions about the cost and length of the war have been far surpassed. The public overwhelmingly opposes the war, and Bush's approval rating stands near his all-time low.

Trying to halt spiraling sectarian bloodshed, Bush has ordered nearly 30,000 more combat and support



ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Bush speaks at the White House on Monday.

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INSIDE STORIES

► Former deputy in Saddam Hussein's government is changed.

► Bombs tear through mosque, other Iraq targets, killing 26.

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Parents express anger in sex case

Group looks for answers after Illini Bluffs teacher arrested on assault charge

BY DAVE HANEY
OF THE JOURNAL STAR

GLASFORD — Parents and teachers crowded the Illini Bluffs School Board meeting Monday night, many just trying to find answers to rumors circulating about a teacher jailed for allegedly having sex with a student.



IAN M. McDONALD

The group of about 30 questioned whether the board performed the proper background checks and whether the school received any previous complaints of a sexual nature against Ian McDonald, a high school social studies teacher and varsity boys basketball coach arrested Wednesday on a sexual assault charge.

McDonald allegedly admitted to having a seven-month relationship with a student that began last May when the girl was 17 years old.

The board unanimously voted to accept McDonald's resignation after a lengthy executive session Monday night.

Some of the parents in the audience said they believe the incident has tarnished the district's reputation. They wanted to know what Superintendent Randy Stueve and the District 327 School Board knew about McDonald's alleged crimes, and when they knew it.

Among those who spoke was Dan Hicke, whose son graduated from the high school last year.

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SHOCK AND AWE



ADAM GERIK/JOURNAL STAR

Jeremy Stellwag of Belleville speaks at Monday's public hearing on electricity rates at Neighborhood House. Stellwag took the day off to drive the 180 miles north for the meeting. "I have to go to Ameren (for electricity)," he said. "If you don't have a choice, that is not American."

Consumers fired up about electric hike

BY ANITA SZOKE
OF THE JOURNAL STAR

PEORIA — They came from all across the state — Pekin, Alton, even Belleville — all demanding answers.

The debate over skyrocketing electric bills heated up Monday at a public hearing held by the Illinois Senate Environment and Energy Committee at Neighborhood House.

More than 100 consumers shared their stories about the financial impact of the bills. Some said they have had to choose between putting food on the table and having heat or getting the prescription they need.

"Basically, it's 100 percent un-American that we have a monopoly," said Jeremy Stellwag, a Belleville resident. "If you don't

Please see CONSUMERS, Page A7



ADAM GERIK/JOURNAL STAR

State Sen. Dave Koehler, D-Peoria, speaks as Sens. Dale Risinger, R-Galesburg, left, and John Sullivan, D-Rushville, listen during Monday's hearing on electric rates.

Ameren says rates can't be reversed

Utility can't afford to roll back hikes, pushes idea of re-regulation

BY PAUL GORDON
OF THE JOURNAL STAR

PEORIA — Ameren Illinois could not afford to return to electric rates charged before they were unfrozen in January while discussions about possibly re-regulating the industry occurred, a company official said Monday.

It also is unlikely, because operating costs increased too much while the rate freeze was in place, that re-regulation would enable the rates to fall that low again, said Scott Cisel, CEO of Ameren Illinois.

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SCOTT CISEL

Pet food recall spurs concerns

Veterinarian clinics field flood of calls from owners

BY SCOTT HILYARD
OF THE JOURNAL STAR

PEORIA — The announcement of a voluntary nationwide recall of wet pet food linked to the kidney failures and deaths of 10 cats came during the weekend. The anxious phone calls to area veterinarian clinics started immediately and escalated Monday.

"I'd bet we've gotten more than 50 phone calls at least," said Sherry Siragusa, a veterinarian with Demanes Animal Hospital in Peoria. "And everybody coming in for regular visits with their cat or dog is asking about it. People are concerned."

The reason for the widespread concern is the widespread nature of the recall. The food, manufactured in two facilities in the United States by Menu Foods, was sold under dozens of popular brand names, including Eukanuba, Iams, Nutro, Purina, Science Diet and Pet Pride and sold in some of

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UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales' hold on his job continues to slip with new details on attorney firings.

NATION, PAGE A2



THRIFTY SHOPPERS

Secondhand stores such as Goodwill and Salvation Army outlets have become big business in the Tri-County Area.

BUSINESS, PAGE C1