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# City/Region

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## NEWS BRIEFS

By State Times staff and news services



Greenpeace's Joe Thornton explains study

### Greenpeace gives report

Major chemical companies between Baton Rouge and New Orleans discharge almost 400 million pounds of toxic chemicals into the environment each year, according to a study released by the environmental group Greenpeace at a press conference today.

Joe Thornton, author of the report, said the figures are based on reports made by chemical companies to the Department of Environmental Quality as required by state law. Thornton spoke at a press conference in Port Allen that was originally scheduled to coincide with the arrival of a Greenpeace research boat.

"We're not here to cause a ruckus," he said. "We're here to get the facts, and we're here to get the facts right." Thornton said he and his colleagues, including congressional candidate Faye Williams, met the vessel today as it returned from taking water samples on stream.

Greenpeace plans to present DEQ with the data later today. Although DEQ has the information provided by chemical companies, it has not compiled the data into one report, according to Greenpeace coordinator Brian Hunt.

"We want to go to DEQ and present them with their own data now in a usable and comprehensive form," Hunt said.

Richard Kleiner, spokesman for the Louisiana Chemical Association, said local chemical companies voluntarily provided Greenpeace with information about emissions.

"The Greenpeace report is nothing new," he said. "We shared emission reports with our neighbors in June and let them know what we were producing."

### 3,323 absentee ballots cast

By the time absentee voting closed Tuesday afternoon, a total of 3,323 East Baton Rouge residents had cast absentee ballots for the Nov. 8 election, Registrar of Voters Neil Bandison said.

A total of 1,529 absentee ballots were cast Tuesday alone, he said.

Bandison had predicted earlier that absentee voting for the upcoming general election would be about double what it was for the primary election, but the primary election, he said, had a 1,500 absentee ballot vote.

With the higher absentee turnout, Bandison said he felt safe predicting that voter turnout next Tuesday will be somewhere between 60 percent and 72 percent, compared to a 53 percent turnout for the Oct. 1 primary.

### Suspect loses gun, gas grenade

City police officers chasing a man through a housing project on East Boulevard this morning lost the suspect but found a gas grenade and a gun in his coat pocket.

Officers began chasing the suspect when he ran from something on a balcony in the housing project at 2538 East Boulevard. An officer struggled briefly with the suspect, and the man lost his jacket during the struggle, police said.

Officers found a round grenade along with a 25-caliber automatic pistol in one of the jacket's pockets. A supervisor ordered the officers not to touch the grenade until it could be checked out by a bomb expert.

Det. Chip Landry with the sheriff's office determined the device is an old military model low gas grenade which could have caused injury to anyone nearby if it had been detonated.

Possession of their gas grenades is illegal, Landry said.

### Lawmakers asked to offer cuts

Lawmakers are being granted an invitation this week, but it's not for a party.

Instead, they are being invited to offer ways to cut \$40 million out of an already greatly trimmed state budget that's being planned for next year.

House Appropriations Committee chairman Robert Arty said the Bremer administration has just about exhausted the suggestions offered by cost-cutting studies dating back several years.

"I'm sending out a letter to every legislator, explaining to them that, with the failure of fiscal reform, we must now find \$60 million in cuts," Arty said.

"We've done all we can at this point, and I think we need to hear from them," he said.

## Roemer is eyeing new inmate furlough policy

By Marsha Shultz, Capitol News Bureau

Gov. Buddy Roemer is eyeing a new inmate furlough policy that eliminates the possibility of weekend leaves for most prisoners who have enjoyed the privilege in the past, including those who work at the Governor's Mansion.

The reassessment of the state's furlough policy came after an incident that left a Baton Rouge woman dead and an inmate prisoner accused of murder.

Roemer canceled all inmate furloughs statewide after the Aug. 6 incident involving Wesley Dyson, one of 12 trustees assigned to cooking and housekeeping duties at the governor's mansion.

Dyson was serving time in connection with another death. In an interview, Roemer said the new policy basically will restrict furloughs to those inmates who are within six months of their release. He said a normal policy statement should be ready for release later this week.

Roemer said he envisions leaves for such things as job interviews that inmates may schedule near the end of their terms.

Roemer said he disagrees with the past furlough policy, which treated prison leave "as some kind of a reward for services within the institution. To me that's not valid. It's a misapplication of furlough policy."

In addition, he said, "I did not like the fact that certain

kinds of inmates, because they are in a special place, would be treated differently."

State regulations do not allow furloughs for inmates convicted of murder and other violent crimes. But exceptions were allowed for inmates serving the last six months of their sentences and those, like Dyson, who were assigned to the Governor's Mansion.

In the year before the Dyson incident, the state granted 251 such furloughs.

Under current policy, medium security prisoners, like those located at Jackson-area institutions, could get up to two holiday furloughs a year; minimum security inmates, like those at Camp Boeuregard or Jackson Barracks, quarterly furloughs; those housed at State Police barracks here, like Dyson, bi-monthly visits and those on work release programs, monthly furloughs.

Besides checks and balances within the correctional system, local law enforcement officials were also given the chance to veto an individual furlough candidate's application.

Roemer said the furlough programs in 15 other states have been reviewed as the new state policy was drafted.

"There is dichotomy, contrasting philosophies," Roemer said. "Furlough is a reward for good performance in an institution is one. The other philosophy says furlough is to be used to integrate into society an inmate that has a known date of release."

## Defense begins for Freddie Mills

By Howard Hoffman, State Times writer

The defense began presenting its case this morning after Judge Ad Hoc Jerome Winsberg denied a motion to acquit Freddie Mills of the February 1987 rape of 9-year-old Willie Strowder.

The first defense witness said Mills played cards in the early evening, then drank some wine and partied at a teen club until 2 a.m. the night Strowder was brutalized and killed.

When Assistant District Attorney Wiley Dial rested the state's case this morning, defense attorney Don Johnson asked the judge to find Mills innocent of aggravated rape.

"There's been no proof," Johnson said. "There's been no evidence of aggravated rape."

Johnson said the state's key witness, Patrick Wells, testified that Mills did not participate in the rape of Strowder.

Johnson admitted that the court might consider a lesser verdict of attempted aggravated rape, but urged the judge to acquit Mills of aggravated rape.

Winsberg denied the motion without explanation. Wells was on the witness stand for much of Monday and Tuesday.

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### Voting dilemma



Students at Progress Elementary School wait for their chance to cast a ballot for president and mayor during a mock election at the school on Tuesday. Many of the eight to 12-year-olds had to stand on chairs to reach the levers. A teacher said some of the students had never seen a voting machine.

## Metropolitan Council Races

### Welch, Gerald say they pin hopes on door-to-door push

By Cherrise Sontner, State Times writer

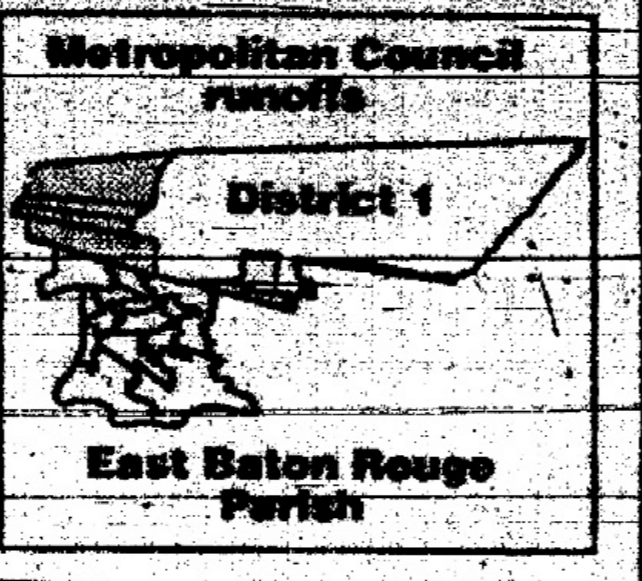
Baker attorney Jewel E. "Duke" Welch and former state Sen. Gordon Gerald are spending the final days of their runoff campaign walking door-to-door, asking residents in Metropolitan Council District 1 to vote for them on Nov. 8.

The two say they haven't made any changes in campaign strategy for the runoff election and are still emphasizing the need for improved roads and drainage in the district.

Welch and Gerald are seeking the District 1 seat now held by mayor president candidate Tom Ed McHugh.

Welch got 3,012 votes, or 37 percent, in the Oct. 1 election to capture the seat. Gerald received 2,271 votes, or 28 percent, to take the second slot in the runoff.

The two unsuccessful candidates in the



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### Democrats Honore, Woods seek District 2 council seat

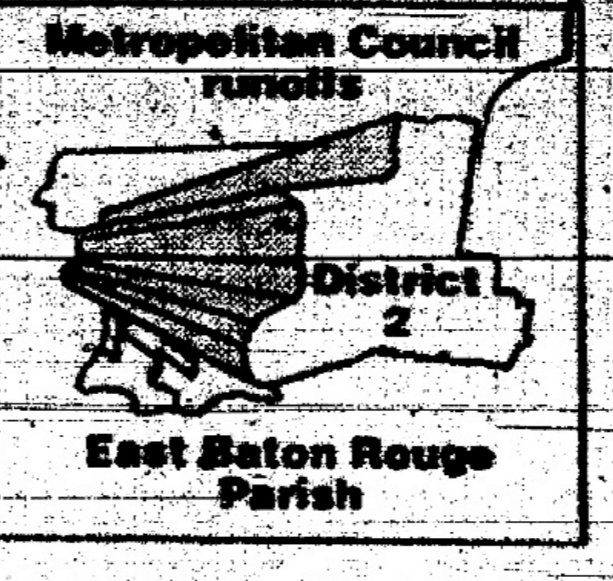
By Nora Norris, State Times writer

The District 2 seat on the Metropolitan Council is being sought by two Democrats who emerged the top vote-getters from a field of eight candidates in the primary election.

The runoff candidates are Dalton W. Honore, who won 15 percent of the vote, and Thomas Woods, who captured 29 percent of the vote.

The seat is currently held by Acie Bellon, appointed to fill the unexpired term of Kip Holden, who was elected to the House of Representatives.

Honore, 45, was the first black deputy with the sheriff's office here and served as head of the Sturdiville substation for five years. The former deputy is on leave as a legal investigator for the parish attorney's office and operates Honore's Grocery Store. He formerly taught school.



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