

News at a Glance

Jobless rate still bad for African-Americans

The Labor Department reported Friday that the economy has created nearly 300,000 new jobs in the past three months after a half-year drought, pushing the unemployment rate down to 6 percent in October and leaving little doubt that the jobs market is bouncing back. But it continues to be bad news for unemployed blacks.

For African-Americans, the jobless rate climbed three-tenths of a percentage point last month to 11.5 percent. The rate fell for whites, Hispanics, Asians, men and women.

"It's quite alarming that the Bush administration is celebrating ... a very, very minuscule decrease in the overall unemployment rate while African-Americans are still standing in the unemployment line," said Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. "I see nothing to celebrate in these numbers," he said.

October's job gains were in a range of service industries, including temporary employment, health care, social work, education, retail, leisure and hospitality, law and accounting.

But many of the new jobs were part-time or in low-paying industries, causing some economists to temper their enthusiasm over Friday's report.

'Big Brother' contestant loses bid for Philadelphia City Council

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Philadelphia voters apparently didn't want to inject even a hint of "Big Brother" into city government. Will Mega, a former contestant on the CBS reality show "Big Brother" was defeated Nov. 4 in his bid for City Council.

The 31-year-old Mega, who called himself a "hip-hop political-activist candidate," would have become the youngest member on the council. He ran on the Education Party ticket.

As a confrontational contestant on "Big Brother," Mega was the first person voted off in 2000. He has said his main goal on the show was to discuss racial relations in America. Mega is black.

Mega was once known as Hiram Ashantee, an organizer of the New Black Panther Party who worked for Nation of Islam outcast Khalid Abdul Muhammad. Muhammad, who died in 2001, became known for virulent attacks on Jews, gays and whites. Mega left the organization over "ideological differences."

Whites sue Boston Fire Department

BOSTON (AP) — Five white Boston men passed over for firefighter jobs in favor of minorities in 2002 have filed a federal lawsuit against the city, alleging that their constitutional rights were violated and seeking jobs and back pay.

Thomas P. Flaherty Jr., Kevin Williams, Edward Ferent, Edward J. Walsh Jr. and Richard M. Proia all scored 99 out of 100 on the April 2000 civil service exam, but say they were bypassed for minority hires with lower scores.

The suit follows a successful challenge to the Fire Department's affirmative action policy by another group of white applicants.

Last March, the First Circuit Court of Appeals reversed U.S. District Court Judge Richard Stearns and found the city has achieved racial balance for entry-level firefighters. Rookie minority firefighters now make up 31.5 percent of the department, while minorities in Boston are 38 percent of the population.

Lawyers for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, whose 1972 lawsuit led to the affirmative action program, said the upper ranks of the Boston Fire Department remain predominantly white, with only 6.2 percent minority.

Aretha Franklin, lawyers discuss settling suit against Star

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Lawyers for soul superstar Aretha Franklin and a national tabloid met in court Friday to discuss the possibility of settling her lawsuit against the Star.

Franklin's Los Angeles lawyer, Barry Langberg, filed suit against the supermarket tabloid and parent American Media Inc. last year over an article that alleged the singer had a drinking problem.

Langberg has said everything in the article published in March 2000 was false.

Franklin and lawyers for both sides left court late Friday afternoon without giving any word on what, if any, progress had been made.

Langberg hasn't said why he chose to bring the lawsuit in New Mexico, but he has said he could reasonably have filed suit in any state because the Star circulates in all of them.

Franklin, the first lady of soul, is best known for such hits as "Respect," "Natural Woman" and "Chain of Fools."

Blues legend Ray Charles donates \$1,000,000 to Dillard University

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Ray Charles has donated \$1 million to Dillard University for the creation of a program about black culture, the school announced Monday.

The donation will create an endowed faculty position and program devoted to the musical, culinary, artistic and linguistic contributions of black Americans. Dillard spokeswoman Maureen Larkins said.

Charles received an honorary degree in May from Dillard, a private, predominantly black school associated with the United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ.

The 73-year-old singer donated the money in the name of the Robinson Foundation for Hearing Disorders, a laboratory he founded in 1987 for the treatment and research of hearing problems.

Scandal in the eye of the beholder

Many politicians have overcome odds to win races

BY JOANN LOVIGLIO
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILADELPHIA — In the strange world of politics, where unswerving party allegiances and ingrained voter cynicism can be as much a part of the process as debates and photo ops, history shows that candidates associated with a criminal investigation often benefit from the negative attention.

Mayor John Street, who handily won a second mayoral term Nov. 4, saw his polling numbers rise and his listless campaign energize after an FBI bug was discovered in his office. Political analysts said a crisis can give a candidate the fuel needed to rally the troops and engage the electorate.

"This is an era in which people think that all politicians are at least a little bit dishonest, so when someone gets targeted by the FBI it really doesn't stand out so much," said Darrell West, a political science professor at Brown University in Providence, R.I.

Combine that cynicism with a mistrust of investigators, an established party machine, racial tensions, and a belief that a city is doing well, and you have a recipe for Election Day success for many a beleaguered



Mayor John Street celebrates his victory Nov. 4.

administration.

Take, for example, Providence, where Mayor Vincent "Buddy" Cianci Jr. was forced from office in 1984 after pleading no contest to attacking his ex-wife's lover with an ashtray, fireplace log and lighted cigarette. He received a five-year suspended sentence but was re-elected in 1990, and remained beloved even as he was about to be convicted of racketeering conspiracy in an FBI probe into City Hall. He is now in federal

prison.

"(Cianci's) job approval rating never dropped below 60 percent, including when he was under indictment," West said. "People said they thought he was dishonest but a strong leader ... and they were willing to trade off roguish behavior for results." Many in the city's large Italian populace also believed that Cianci's ethnicity made him a target, West said.

Neither Street nor anyone else has been accused of

wrongdoing in the FBI probe, but the cases of Cianci and others suggest that criminal charges often have little effect on voters when they do come to pass.

Marion Barry won his last of four terms as mayor of Washington, D.C., after FBI agents videotaped him in 1990 smoking crack in a hotel room, and he served six months in prison.

Voters in the 2001 election

See Street on A4

100-year old pension funds secured for Tubman

BY J. ZAMGBA BROWNE
AMSTERDAM NEWS

NEW YORK (NNPA) — An \$11,750 pension that Harriet Tubman, a courageous freedom fighter, should have received from January 1899 to March 1913 for the death of her husband, Nelson Davis, a veteran of the Civil War, has been secured.

The funds, secured recently by Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.), will be made available under an interior appropriations bill. But the full House and Senate must first approve it.

Julian M. Hill, executive director of the Harriet Tubman Awards Jubilee Inc., said that he and the organization are pleased with the senator's interest in the matter.

"We would also appreciate, however, if she and other elected officials would help us fulfill the dream of designating March 10 each year a legal holiday in the Empire State to honor Tubman, Hill said.

"We want to continue the campaign so that all New York residents can develop an appreciation for Tubman, an incredible and relentless freedom fighter," he added.

Councilman Bill Perkins, who was instrumental in renaming St. Nicholas Avenue in Harlem for Tubman, praised Sen. Clinton's initiative to secure the funds that were denied for so long.

"It is shameful that a heroine such as Harriet Tubman did not receive her justice while she was alive, not to mention the fact that she herself deserved a pension for her service to the nation as a spy

in the Civil War," he said.

Perkins said the new designation given to St. Nicholas Avenue creates the first and only major street in the entire state of New York that is named after a woman of African ancestry.

Clinton said that the funds would be used to preserve and maintain Tubman's home in Auburn, N.Y., and to honor her memory. Clinton requested the funds after students in Albany brought the matter to her attention. She also said



Tubman

that she was grateful to the students and that she is proud something can be done now to honor Tubman's memory and make sure this injustice is remedied.

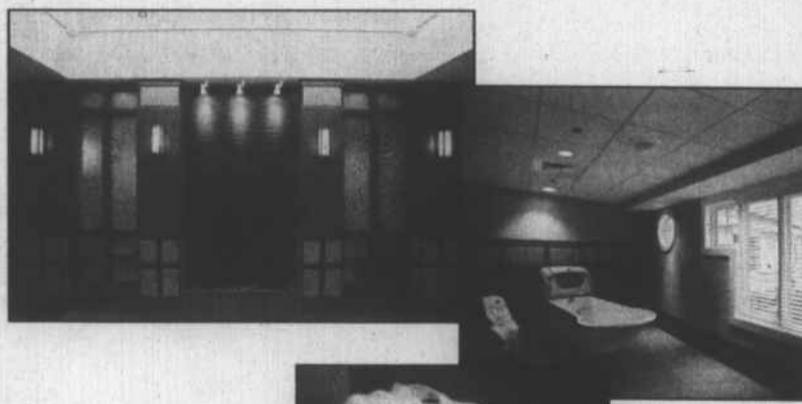
"Harriet Tubman was one of our nation's most courageous freedom fighters, and it is important that we officially recognize her extraordinary services," Clinton declared.

Tubman reportedly requested a pension for her

See Tubman on A10

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