

Miss., Ga. Mull Removal Of Confederate Emblem

The Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — Mississippi's House voted 120-1 Tuesday for a statewide election to decide whether the Confederate battle emblem should remain on the state flag. Senate approval is expected later in the week.

A gubernatorial commission in Mississippi recommended replacing the battle emblem with a circle of stars. Both options would be on the planned April 17 ballot.

Georgia lawmakers are also considering bills in both the House and Senate that would remove the Confederate bat-

tle emblem from their state flag.

"If (Miss. legislators) let it go to a vote, that's fine," said Lamar Roberts of Vicksburg, a former division commander of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. "I believe the present flag will win. ... It might offend some people. What about the majority it doesn't?"

The Confederate battle emblem — crossed blue bars with white stars on a field of red — has been on the Mississippi flag since 1894. It has appeared on the Georgia flag since 1956.

Southern heritage groups say it was a tribute to Confederate soldiers, but many blacks consider it a reminder of

slavery and racial discrimination.

The Mississippi Supreme Court last May ruled that the flag and the state coat of arms had no standing in state law.

Mississippi NAACP president Eugene Bryant said the civil rights organization believes with the backing of the state's political and business communities there will be a new flag. "No one really wants to handle it. They pass it on to the next hand, the next hand and on to the people of Mississippi. I still believe our state Legislature and our governor need to take a stand — don't dodge, don't duck, don't put their heads in the sand."

Airline Buyouts Spur Criticism

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — The megadeals that would give United and American Airlines control of half the U.S. market are running into opposition from consumer advocates and politicians, who warn that passengers will face fewer choices, worse service and higher fares.

American's plan to buy struggling Trans World Airlines is likely to be unveiled Wednesday. American is also looking to purchase part of US Airways Group Inc., potentially clearing the way for that company's purchase by United parent UAL Corp.

But criticism has been fierce. United is the nation's largest airline, slightly ahead of American, and their proposals would eliminate No. 6 US Airways and No. 8 TWA. The fourth- and fifth-largest airlines — Northwest and

Continental — already have an alliance.

Paul Hudson, executive director of the nonprofit Aviation Consumer Action Project, said the deals would end an era of competition in the airline industry.

"Prices will rise, the level of service is likely to go down and consumer choices will immediately drop," he said.

Hudson said other airlines would be forced to merge to survive, likely resulting in four huge U.S. airlines.

Congress will have its say on the deals before new antitrust officials in the Bush administration make the final decision.

"It is hard to imagine how this can be good for competition or for consumers," said Sens. Mike DeWine, R-Ohio, and Herb Kohl, D-Wis., who serve on a Senate subcommittee on business competition.

Both said their concerns will be addressed in hearings.

Consumers Union, publisher of

Consumer Reports, said the American-TWA deal "would further concentrate a market that is already noncompetitive" and urged the Justice Department to reject it.

Consumers Union already wants the United-US Airways deal blocked.

The airlines say consolidation would be good for the public, making travel easier by strengthening existing flight networks and weeding out unprofitable operations.

Under agreements that first surfaced Sunday and confirmed by industry sources, American plans to buy TWA and pay United nearly \$1.4 billion for a variety of assets: 86 jets, joint ownership of US Airways' Boston-New York-Washington shuttle, dozens of gates and landing and takeoff slots at East Coast airports and 49 percent of DC Air, which would be formed once United buys US Airways for \$4.3 billion.

Clinton Plan Aims to Quell Energy Crisis

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Clinton administration searched for ways to broker an agreement Tuesday to ease California's energy crunch and avert the growing threat of bankruptcy for the state's two major cash-starved utilities.

High-level administration officials and all the major players in the California power crisis met behind closed doors to try to fashion a framework for resolving the problems facing

the state's electricity supply system.

None of the participants talked to reporters as they entered the Treasury Department where the session was being held.

Federal options appeared to be few, and one key Republican senator already has warned against a bailout for the state, whose five-year experiment with electricity deregulation was described this week by Democratic Gov. Gray Davis as a "dangerous and colossal failure."

The potential economic fallout from California's power problems became more apparent Tuesday when Intel Corp., the world's largest manufacturer of computer chips, announced it would no longer expand its plants or build new ones in the state until the electricity problems — including sporadic threats of rolling blackouts and soaring prices — are resolved.

"Unless this energy issue is addressed ... it won't be just an issue of whether employers expand their operations here. It will be an issue of whether they continue to build their products here," warned Carl Guardino, president of the Silicon Valley Manufacturing Association, representing 190 California technology companies.


In the meeting Tuesday, the administration hopes to play "an honest broker role" among the parties trying to resolve the state's growing energy problems, said Gene Sperling, President Clinton's chief economic adviser.

The private meeting brought together state officials, including Davis, regulators and legislative leaders; the state's three largest electric utilities; nine of the major power producers and brokers, some of whom have been accused of price gouging, and the chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which has refused to impose wholesale price controls sought by Davis.

"We have very little direct authority over any of the parties," Sperling said.

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Campus Calendar

Today

6 p.m. — The Wesley Foundation will be having dinner, followed by a program of "Reconnecting" and catching up with friends.

Thursday

5 p.m. — The Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship for students will meet in Union 208 for discussion and worship.



8 p.m. — The Carolina Production Guild meeting will be held in Swain Hall Studio 2. The meeting is open to anyone interested in film production. No experience is necessary. For more information, contact cpfilms@hotmail.com.

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