

National and World News

FROM THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

Giuliani pledges to promote U.S.

BEDFORD, N.H. (AP) — Republican Rudy Giuliani said Monday the reputation of the United States has suffered globally not so much because of arrogant actions but for lack of salesmanship about benefits of democracy.

If he is elected president, he said, he would seek ambassadors who would work hard to sell U.S. strengths to foreigners, not just explain those distant nations to Washington. But he conceded problems in the Middle East and the war in Iraq may be partially to blame on the United States.

Oprah supports Obama in Iowa

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Oprah Winfrey will join Democrat Barack Obama again on the campaign trail, this time visiting the early contest states of Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina, the candidate's campaign said Monday.

The popular talk show host and media mogul plans to visit Iowa on Saturday, Dec. 8, with stops in Des Moines and Cedar Rapids. The following day, she'll travel to Columbia, S.C. Later that day, Obama's campaign said, she'll travel to Manchester, N.H.

President Bush readies for Mideast peace conference in Annapolis, Md.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — President Bush stepped cautiously into the most direct Mideast peacemaking of his administration on Monday, meeting separately with the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to explore whether peace is possible.

A day ahead of a major Mideast peace conference in Annapolis, Md., Bush said he was optimistic. The gathering is to launch the first direct peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians of Bush's nearly seven years in office, and has attracted Arab and other outside backing.

Israeli and Palestinian leaders have already said they want to conclude a bargain within the 14 months that Bush has left in office.

Some in Bush's administration doubt that a settlement is possible in such a short time frame and have reservations about whether the Palestinians, in particular, are ready to make necessary concessions. The goal of the talks is to set up an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. Bush's tempered outlook as he readied the conference suggested he has his own misgivings.

Rebels killed by Chad army forces

N'DJAMENA, Chad (AP) — Soldiers killed several hundred rebels in fighting Monday in eastern Chad, the country's army said.

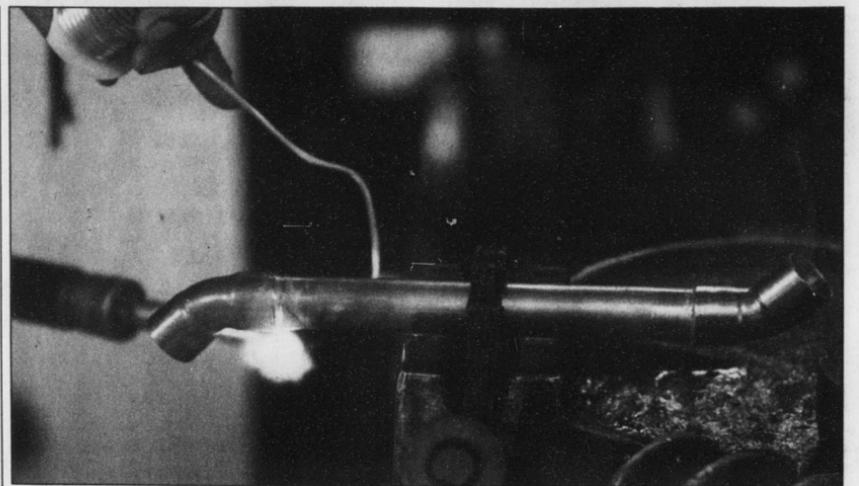
The battles at Abougouleigne, about 60 miles east of the main eastern town of Abeche, killed hundreds of rebels and left several more injured, according to the statement from the general staff.

The officer said several rebels were also taken prisoners. The statement did not say whether any Chadian army soldiers were killed or injured in the fighting.

Sen. Trent Lott to retire at year's end

PASCAGOULA, Miss. (AP) — Mississippi Sen. Trent Lott announced Monday he will leave a 35-year career in Congress in which he epitomized the Republicans' political takeover of the South after the civil rights struggles of the 1960s.

His decision to retire by year's end occurred five years after he was bounced as the leader of his party in the Senate over remarks praising a Senate colleague that were interpreted as endorsing segregation. Lott rebounded a year ago, winning re-election to a fourth term in the Senate.



DTH/ZACH HOFFMAN

Copper pipes must be sanded, cut and soldered before being installed between the floors and in the ceiling of Carmichael Residence Hall. The HVAC system has failed in recent years and has caused condensation.

HOUSING

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bond program, Hicks said.

Hicks said the higher prices prevent student rents from covering construction costs. "The plan was for Ram Village to pay for itself"

He added that raising student rent could help cover costs but that the department cannot take that step because campus housing contracts are voluntary at UNC.

Most all housing department funding comes from student rents.

The design for Ram Village was scaled back as prices rose — with a reduced number of floors in the buildings behind Craige and the change from single-occupancy to double-occupancy rooms in one building — but the project overall still vastly exceeded the budget.

Other University construction projects were affected by higher input costs, but many were able to secure additional funding in order to be completed, said Bruce Runberg, associate vice chancellor for facilities planning.

"It was quite a severe negative impact," he said. "We were able to get through that though with all of our projects."

While Ram Village was under construction, the University also was carrying out new construction with the first phase of the science complex — Chapman Hall and Caudill Labs.

"We had to look at making reductions in scope of projects," Runberg said. "We had to find additional funding for a couple of the projects. There was a wide range of solutions."

Clearing the air

With debt at a maximum and the projected cost of a full renovation on Hinton James increasing by about \$10 million, the housing master construction plan had to be shelved.

"We've had to scale back on that aggressive list," Hicks said.

The new construction schedule began this summer when housing staff started to rewire electricity in Hinton James in order to install window air-conditioning units.

The project will continue this summer, and the building will be completely air conditioned by next fall at a total cost of less than \$1 million. Once Hinton James is air-conditioned, Craige and Ehringhaus will get window units the following summers.

While housing officials said window units are not the most efficient way to cool a building, they said they are the most cost-effective approach.

Heating and air conditioning also is a key factor in the department's decision to close Carmichael, Old East and Old West for a year of renovations each.

Because of budget cuts when Carmichael was constructed in 1986, replacing a faulty HVAC system has become necessary.

"They put in an inferior HVAC system," Hicks said, noting that in recent years the system has been failing and causing condensation. "You had a building where it rained. We felt it was time to replace that."

Old East and Old West will be closed in the 2008-09 school year to address similar issues stemming from what Hicks called "inferior

renovations" in 1993.

"The HVAC system is very similar to Carmichael," Hicks said. "We've already replaced the roof once."

The department will manage interior renovations, such as installing a new HVAC system, while repairs to the historic buildings' exteriors will be conducted by the University, Hicks said.

Once Old East and Old West reopen in fall 2009, all campus residence halls will be open, increasing the department's bed capacity to an all-time high.

But once the project is completed, the department still must find funding for complete renovations — similar to the recently finished Morrison project — to Hinton James, Craige and Ehringhaus. Hicks said he couldn't give a timeline for the projects.

Each of the high-rise renovation projects are not currently feasible because the cost of building materials remains high and the department has not paid off debts related to the construction of Ram Village and other projects.

Lofgren stressed the importance of the complete renovations, despite the department's inability to fund such projects in the near future.

"By the time it's 40 to 50 years old, you need to do it all," he said.

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

RECONTRACTING

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had been assigned to a three-bedroom apartment with a stranger.

"That way you know what you're getting," she said of the new system.

In late January, applications will be open to undergraduates who did not live in Ram Village this year but wish to in 2008-09. Each applicant will receive an in-person sign-up time in early February.

Each student's sign-up time will be based on two factors — academic year and the number received in the application lottery.

The lottery number determines the time of the appointment on the correct day. Rising seniors can sign up Feb. 4, while Feb. 5 is reserved for rising juniors and Feb. 7 for rising sophomores, said Larry Hicks, director of the department of housing.

Any apartments still open at the end of the process will be made available during open-campus recontracting a few weeks later.

The Old East and Old West residence halls will be closed for renovations during the 2008-09 school year. Current residents who had hoped to recontract their room there will be given additional priority if they choose to move elsewhere on campus, officials said.

Meanwhile, other recontracting processes, such as theme housing and most other housing, will begin at about the same time as last year.

Recontracting for the 2006-07 school year came under fire when housing officials decided to give priority to underclassmen, when rising seniors previously had priority.

The decision was reversed after students voiced opposition to it.

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SPRINKLERS

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— also prompted the Chapel Hill Town Council to require sprinkler installation in all Greek houses.

"It is clearly the most effective way to protect people from fire," Chapel Hill fire Chief Dan Jones said.

But the law doesn't apply to campus housing, as the buildings are state-owned. Currently 56.8 percent of the 9,500 beds on campus are in rooms equipped with sprinklers.

The Princeton Review gave UNC a score of 82 on its 60-99 fire safety scale. All of N.C. State University's residence halls are equipped with sprinklers, and it scored a 96.

"We're about the middle of the pack," Hicks said, adding that adequate safety measures are in place. "Sprinkler systems are ... not the only definition of fire safety," he said, citing alarms and extinguishers.

The structure of residence halls — many of which were constructed primarily with concrete — prevents the spread of fires, such as the one that destroyed a Carrboro apartment building Sept. 30, Hicks said.

He cited a 2005 electrical fire in Ehringhaus Residence Hall, which destroyed one room but had little impact on the rest of the building.

But Jones said the use of less flammable building material does not reduce the need for sprinklers.

"The building burning is not the threat to human life," Jones said. "It's furniture, decorations and carpeting. That's where the sprinklers come in."

Still, Steve Lofgren, assistant director for facilities, said he has no concerns about the level of fire safety on campus.

"I sleep well at night," he said.

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ROPER

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his membership on the President's Commission on White House Fellowships.

But Roper said he thinks adding the Medco board of directors position will not prevent him from carrying out his duties at the University.

"I'm very much interested in making sure that I keep outside activities to a limited amount so I can focus my attention on responsibilities here at UNC," he said. "I think I'll be able to do things about the same way that I've done them."

Machlowitz said that Roper's extensive experience — which includes directing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention before he came to UNC in 1997 — made him stand out.

"Each member brings one form of knowledge to the board," Machlowitz said. "It's not meant to interfere with anyone's full-time job."

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