

Gov. takes measure on pesticide exposure

Task force will study health effects

BY CAROLINE DYE
STAFF WRITER

Gov. Mike Easley announced the creation of a new task force Wednesday that is aimed at protecting agricultural workers from pesticide exposure.

The measure comes on the heels of an N.C. judge's recommendation earlier this month to lower the fine levied against Ag-Mart, a Florida-based tomato grower that exposed

its workers to pesticide toxins. The \$184,500 fine had been the largest in N.C. history.

Melinda Wiggins, executive director of Student Action with Farmworkers, a Durham nonprofit that works with college students in the Triangle area, said she welcomed the idea of the task force.

"Pesticide exposure is a huge problem," she said, adding that the Ag-Mart case has brought the issue

to light. "If they work on a traditional farm in North Carolina, they will be exposed to pesticide."

Wiggins also said many advocates believe the pesticide exposure of Ag-Mart employees caused birth defects in the several of the workers' children.

But Bob Krieger, a toxicologist at the University of California at Riverside who specializes in pesticide exposure and risk assessment, said he thinks much of the fear of pesticides is overblown.

"The public is so poorly informed

about pesticides, it makes great politics," he said.

He added that the risk of exposure for agricultural workers is minimal provided that workers follow label instructions and use proper equipment and clothing.

"They're at greater risk driving their car to work," he said.

He also said that certain groups of workers interact more directly with pesticides but wear more equipment to prevent toxic exposures and that normal day-to-day exposures are far below dangerous levels.

Sheila Higgins, manager of occupational surveillance for the N.C. Division of Public Health, said the state's increased scrutiny into pesticide practices is based on more than just the Ag-Mart incident.

"We're a prominent agriculture state," she said, adding that N.C. farms use a lot of pesticides and employ a large migrant worker

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MELINDA WIGGINS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF STUDENT ACTION WITH FARMWORKERS

population.

John Price, the director of the Office of Rural Health and Community Care at the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, said his office operates a farm worker health program and organizes outreach efforts designed to educate workers on appropriate ways to work with pesticides.

He said that pesticide exposure is not a common occurrence but that migrant workers occasionally show up at rural health centers saying they have been exposed.

Price said those who report exposure are hosed down and then

brought to hospitals for further treatment.

Price was appointed to the governor's task force to serve along with state health, labor and agriculture officials. The task force will meet for the first time in February and will report back to Easley in May.

In a statement released Monday, Easley said, "We are bringing our top experts together to address this issue, and their recommendations will make North Carolina a national leader in this area."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

National and World News

FROM THE
CAMPAIGN TRAIL

GOP convention may be contested

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — The Republican presidential race is so unsettled that some party officials are openly talking of a scenario that seemed almost unthinkable until now — the first contested GOP convention in 60 years.

Even if Republicans choose a nominee before they convene in Minneapolis-St. Paul on Sept. 1, there's a good possibility he will emerge weeks or even months after the Democratic nominee is chosen, giving Democrats an advantage.

Casino workers allowed to caucus

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A union with ties to Democrat Hillary Rodham Clinton failed in court Thursday to prevent casino workers from caucusing at special precincts on the Las Vegas strip.

The ruling by U.S. District Court Judge James Mahan was presumed to be a boost for Clinton rival Barack Obama in the Democratic presidential caucuses Saturday because he has been endorsed by the union representing many of the shift workers who will be able to use the precincts.

Economic stimulus could include tax breaks, not permanent tax cuts

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) — President Bush told congressional leaders privately on Thursday he favors personal income tax rebates and tax breaks for businesses to help avert a recession, officials said, as Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke joined in calls for an economic stimulus package.

Bush spoke with congressional leaders as top House aides worked on an economic rescue package that included more money for food stamp recipients and the unemployed as well as tax rebates and cuts.

Officials described the developments on condition of anonymity until a formal announcement was made, and no further details were immediately available about the size of the rebates or components of the emerging package.

One official said the president did not push for a permanent extension of his 2001 and 2003 tax cuts, many of which are due to expire in 2010. That would eliminate a potential stumbling block to swift action by Congress since most Democrats oppose making the tax cuts permanent.

Crash landing at Heathrow airport

LONDON (AP) — A British Airways jet from Beijing carrying 152 people crash-landed Thursday, injuring 19 people and causing more than 200 flights to be canceled at Europe's busiest airport.

Investigators will speak to the pilots and study the plane's flight data recorder and maintenance records to determine what caused the crash landing at Heathrow airport, tearing the plane's underbelly and damaging its wings.

Nothing suggested it was terror-related, according to Scotland Yard.

Bin Laden's son works for peace

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — Omar Osama bin Laden bears a striking resemblance to his notorious father — except for the dreadlocks that dangle halfway down his back. The 26-year-old does not renounce his father, al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden, but in an interview with The Associated Press, he said there is better way to defend Islam than militancy. Omar wants to be an "ambassador for peace" between Muslims and the West.

Omar — one of bin Laden's 19 children — raised a tabloid storm last year when he married a 52-year-old British woman.

OLF opposition grows with Jones resolution

County resists Navy pilot-training site

BY MEGHAN COOKE
STAFF WRITER

In the latest attempt to prevent the U.S. Navy from building a landing field in eastern North Carolina, the Jones County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution Monday opposing the plan.

Seven other N.C. counties have passed similar resolutions.

Jones County is one of many sites being considered for the Navy's plan to build an Outlying Landing Field, a pilot-training site for aircraft carrier landings that would serve jets from naval and Marine air stations in Virginia and North Carolina.

Sondra Ipoock Riggs, vice chairwoman of the Jones County Board of Commissioners, said an OLF could be detrimental to the local economy.

"They (Navy officials) don't offer any incentives," she said. "People just don't want anything to upset their livelihood."

But Lt. Karen Eifert, public affairs officer for the Navy, stated in an e-mail that the OLF would create about 52 jobs and require a \$2.8 million annual payroll.

Jones is an agricultural county with much of its land devoted to livestock. Riggs said the noise from the jets would cause the livestock to huddle together, causing them to trample and smother one another.

Riggs said Jones County residents already have noise from four local

military bases in a 60-mile radius. "I feel like we've been patriotic enough," she said, adding that V-22 Ospreys frequently fly over her house.

But Riggs said that if the Navy picks Jones County, the board's motion will not stop it from building the OLF.

The ongoing battle between N.C. counties and the Navy already has resulted in a federal appeals court ruling that decreed that the Navy had not completed proper environmental analysis of its proposed sites. That ruling was punctuated by a 2008 defense appropriation bill that eliminated funding for the OLF in North Carolina.

Though the Navy was expected to announce its top potential sites in November, officials are still considering alternatives.

Audubon North Carolina, the Chapel Hill-based chapter of a national conservation advocacy group, has been involved in the OLF debate for several years, Executive Director Chris Canfield said.

Canfield said fuel and toxins from the jets would damage water and air quality although the potential environmental damage at any of the sites would vary.

Canfield said that the Navy plans for 30,000 operations to fly in and out of the proposed landing field each year and that these jets are some of the military's loudest.

Canfield said that the eastern N.C.

"People just don't want anything to upset their livelihood."

SONDRA IPOOCK RIGGS, VICE CHAIRWOMAN OF THE JONES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

communities are a unique ecosystem that should be protected. "It's one of the last strongholds of the state's last wildland and wetland."

He said that in the past the military has successfully made bases eco-friendly by selecting locations where operations don't interfere with wildlife, such as the area surrounding Fort Bragg.

"The state and the Navy need to work together to make progress in determining a site that will best serve the interests of both the Navy and the people of North Carolina," Republican U.S. Rep. Walter Jones stated in an e-mail. Jones represents North Carolina's third district, which includes several of the eight counties that have passed resolutions against the site, including part of Jones County.

He has publicly opposed the site along with Beaufort and Washington counties, but in a March 2007 letter to the Secretary of the Navy, Jones stated North Carolina would be "happy to be the home of the OLF."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Faculty center seeks leader

Hopes to select director before March

BY SERGIO TOVAR
SENIOR WRITER

A search is under way for the leader of a new center that soon will absorb the University's Center for Teaching and Learning.

The Center for Faculty Excellence aims to connect faculty members with resources across the University to assist them in becoming better teachers, researchers and leaders.

Applications are available for the director position of the center, which the University hopes will be up and running in July.

"We want to provide a more comprehensive set of resources on campus for our faculty," said Carol Tresolini, associate provost for academic initiatives.

She added that the center will absorb and build on the responsibilities of the Center for Teaching and Learning and expand it to

include more outreach to support faculty in research and leadership.

The search committee met Thursday to discuss the qualifications desired in job candidates.

Bill Balthrop, communication studies professor and chairman of the search committee, said the group is narrowing its search only to tenured faculty members at UNC.

"We're looking for someone who is visible and recognized for his vision and leadership," Balthrop said.

The director will be responsible for planning the center's programs, promoting collaboration between disciplines and securing funds and grants.

Balthrop added that he hopes to select the director by mid- to late-February.

The idea for the center came after Provost Bernadette Gray-

"We're looking for someone who is visible and recognized for his vision and leadership."

BILL BALTHROP, SEARCH CHAIRMAN

Little appointed a task force to look for ways to enhance the professional development of faculty and to make resources more available to members of the University.

"The provost asked us to look at what would make faculty more successful on campus," said Patrick Conway, economics professor and chairman of the faculty development initiative planning committee.

The task force presented a report in May that made recommendations in three areas — research, teaching and leadership.

Conway said some of those tips include developing more leadership and faculty mentoring programs and providing better research support to associate professors.

Balthrop said the report was enthusiastically received by both the faculty and the administration.

He added that once the director is hired, the committee will conduct a nationwide search for an executive director, who will be responsible for day-to-day operations.

The executive director position is needed because the director will serve only part time so that professorship duties are not overlooked.

"This member could still be teaching and doing research for half the time," Balthrop said.

The director would receive a stipend, in addition to current salary, that will be decided after the selection process is completed.

Tresolini said the money now being appropriated to the Center for Teaching and Learning will be used for the new center's budget.

Contact the University Editor at uodesk@unc.edu.

Nominations Requested for Chancellor's AWARDS

For excellence in Student Activities & Leadership
Nominations are encouraged from all members of the University Community

SENIOR AWARDS	PRIMARY AREA OF ACHIEVEMENT
Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award	Humanitarian contribution (one male, one female)
Irene F. Lee Award	Character, scholarship, leadership (female)
Walter S. Spearman Award	Character, scholarship, leadership (male)
Frank Porter Graham Award	Improving quality of life of the University community through principles of equality, dignity and peace
George Moses Horton Award	Leadership, initiative, creativity in multicultural education programs
E. Eugene Jackson Award	Member of the graduating class whose leadership and selfless dedication have strengthened the class pride and University loyalty, enriching the lives of seniors, and made the most significant contribution to the University
John Johnston Parker, Jr. Medal	Student self-governance
J. Maryon Saunders Award	Recognizes the greatest contribution to the preservation and enhancement of the feeling of loyalty and goodwill
Ferebee Taylor Award	Recognizes the principle of honor as one of the University's most hallowed ideals
JUNIOR AWARDS	PRIMARY AREA OF ACHIEVEMENT
Jane Craig Gray Memorial Award	Character, scholarship, leadership (female)
Ernest L. Mackie Award	Character, scholarship, leadership (male)
GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL AWARD	PRIMARY AREA OF ACHIEVEMENT
Boka W. Hadzija Award	Awarded to the graduate/professional student who has been judged most outstanding in character, scholarship and leadership
OTHER AWARDS	PRIMARY AREA OF ACHIEVEMENT
Ernest H. Abernethy Award	Student publications
Cornelius O. Cathey Award	Recognizes the greatest contribution to the quality of campus life or the efficacy of University programs for students through sustained, conservative participation in established programs, or through creative, persistent effort in development of new programs
Gladys & Albert Coates Award	Given to a member of the Student Congress judged most outstanding on a criteria of statesmanship, commitment and constructive involvement in issues affecting the quality of the University community
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James O. Cansler Service Award	Presented to a junior or senior whose faith has inspired outstanding service to the needs of humanity, locally or abroad

Nominations Due
Nomination Forms Available Online
For More Information Contact

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