

# Local

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## GOP official breaks ranks on charter

Knoxville City Councilman **Joe Bailey**, who's been running the McCain-Palin campaign out of the Knox County Republican Party's headquarters, has found himself in an awkward position over proposed amendments to the Knox County Charter on Tuesday's ballot.

Bailey supports the amendments that were designed to streamline Knox County government, while Republicans in the official party organization are opposed to them. The party has provided money to a

group fighting the amendments, and there was anti-amendment literature around the headquarters while Bailey worked there.

"People have come to me and said they don't understand why I'm for the amendments. It's put me in an awkward position," he said.

Bailey said he understands how the local GOP "got to where we are."

The amendments would result in the responsibility of four offices presently held by elected officials being assumed by the county mayor beginning in 2010 and letting the mayor appoint directors to run them subject to approval of County Commission. County Commission also would be reduced from 19 to 11 members.

Opponents argue that voters' rights to decide on public officials are being taken away.

"I'm very much for the amendments, efficiency, less government, accountability," Bailey said. "People in those offices are friends of mine. Some were just elected. I think (the fee offices) are totally unnecessary in government."

He said he doesn't agree that voters' rights are being removed and that he supports the "open" process that led to the amendments being placed on the ballot. That included a study of county governments done by the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy at the University of Tennessee, Bailey said.

**Corey Johns**, the party's vice chairman, said he had talked with Bailey about the issue.

"I told him that we were careful that none of the contributions designated for the McCain-Palin effort were allocated to other activities. Any other expenses were out of the party's general operating fund," Johns said.

**VICTORY CELEBRATIONS:** Both the Democratic and Republican parties will have celebrations Tuesday night after the polls close at 8 p.m.

Democrats will be in the lobby of the Knoxville Convention Center at Henley Street and Clinch Avenue. **Sylvia Woods**, party chair, said she expects Democrats from outlying counties to attend.

The Republicans will gather at the Crowne Plaza hotel.

**SCHOOL MOCK ELECTION:** A mock presidential debate will be held at 10:30 a.m. today in West High School's mini-auditorium sponsored by a contemporary American issues course taught by **Rich McKinney**.

**Erin Rainey**, a West High junior handling publicity for the event, said **Matthew Reese**, a sophomore, and **Matt Jones**, a senior, are running as William Williams and Bobby Roberts, respectively, and keeping their party affiliations secret.

"The objective is to both educate the members of our class on where (Barack) Obama and (John) McCain stand and to see how many of the students who vote in our mock debate know what their candidate stands for and why they support that candidate," she said.

Georgiana Vines is retired News Sentinel associate editor. She may be reached at 865-577-6612 or gvpolitics@hotmail.com.

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# Legislators to get raise

Per diem, mileage pay also increased in accordance with law

**BY TOM HUMPHREY**  
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**NASHVILLE**— State legislators will be getting a pay raise, an increase in their daily expense allowance and more money for their commuting mileage after this week's elections.

The increases, based on escalator provisions placed into law during past years, come as the state is

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facing a ballooning budget deficit that Gov. Phil Bredesen says may reach \$600 million in the current fiscal year.

The base salary for a state legislator will increase from the current \$18,123 to \$19,009 — or just less than 5 percent — effective Tuesday, according to the state Comptroller's Office.

The increase is based on a law adopted by the Legislature in 2004 that declares legislators get a pay raise every two years based on the amount of increase in state employee compensation and other benefits over the two-year period.

While state employees got no general pay raise from the Legislature in 2008, they did get a pay raise and other increases in benefits the prior year, and that means an \$886 annual boost for lawmakers.

In 2006, the base salary was increased from \$16,500 to \$18,123 in accord with the 2004 law.

The "per diem" allowance provided to legislators for each day engaged in legislative business was increased this month from \$161 to \$171, according to Connie Ridley, director of the Legislative Office of Administration.

State law calls for the per diem figure to be adjusted annually on Oct. 1 based on a federal government calculation of the costs of meals and lodging in Nashville. The calculation lists Nashville as the most expensive place to stay in

See **RAISE** on B8

## Moment



Major Mitchell holds Warren Peace in a stranglehold during a professional wrestling match at the National Guard Armory near Athens, Tenn. Major Mitchell is a war veteran character played by Chris Mitchell, and Warren Peace is Dustin Palmer's character.

"I'm really Warren Peace when I put on the hair extensions and spandex. I'm a rock star that never really made it," Palmer says. "I'm spoiled. I'm the biggest diva. There will be women here, and I'm still the biggest diva."

Mitchell says he got involved in the sport because "I've always been kind of a big, physical guy. It's something I thought I'd be good at. ... Girlfriends will always come and go, but wrestling will always remain."

## Listen in on the Moment

Hear Dustin Palmer tell his story in his own words at [knoxnews.com](http://knoxnews.com)

Moment is a weekly photo column as seen through the eyes of News Sentinel photojournalist Saul Young. To view previous Moment photo columns, go to [knoxnews.com](http://knoxnews.com). To suggest a topic for this photo column, e-mail Saul Young at [young@knoxnews.com](mailto:young@knoxnews.com).

## Coyotes gone, parents, pet owners relax

**BY MIKE BLACKERBY**  
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The plaintive late-night wails of coyotes have abated in a West Knoxville subdivision — at least for now.

Thanks to an assist from Mike McMillan, the residents of the Westwood subdivision no longer have to worry about the safety of their small children and pets.

McMillan, the owner of McMillan Wildlife Control, recently trapped and removed four coyotes from the subdivision, which had been plagued with killings of cats by the animals since last summer.

McMillan used padded foot-hold and collar traps to snare the coyotes, which appeared to be members of a family unit.

Westwood resident Rhiannon Kirkpatrick, who spearheaded the recruitment of McMillan after several cats were killed in the neighbor-

See **COYOTES** on B5

## Local hero humbled by honor

Man who helps disaster victims featured on CNN

**BY MORGAN SIMMONS**  
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The 2008 tornado season is on track to be the worst in U.S. history, and hurricane damage this year is second

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■ **Link:**

Learn more about First Response Team of America.

only to 2005, when Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans. Tad Agoglia has had his hands full as a result. Agoglia is the founder of the First Response Team of America, a Knoxville-based nonprofit that delivers emergency relief to communities free of charge. Since last winter, he and his team have been chasing natural disas-



PATRICK WRIGHT/SUBMITTED

**Tad Agoglia**, founder of the Knoxville-based nonprofit First Response Team of America, is shown in Lafayette, Tenn., this year helping victims of a Feb. 5 tornado.

ters around the U.S., including the tornadoes that ripped through Lafayette in north-central Tennessee last February, claiming 14 lives.

At 9 p.m. on Thanksgiving, the 32-year-old Long Island native will be featured in a television special, "CNN Heroes: An All Star Tribute," hosted by Anderson Cooper

from the Kodak Theater in Hollywood, Calif.

Agoglia is among 10 community heroes who have been selected nationwide by a panel of leaders and humanitarians. In addition to receiving \$25,000, each honoree will be eligible to win an

See **AGOLIA** on B8

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