

NEWS BRIEFS

CCSN TO HOST PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR

The Community College of Southern Nevada, along with the state Department of Education is hosting a Professional Development Seminar on Information Technology, Business and Marketing on Thursday, May 1, at the Cheyenne Campus. "Our seminar will help participants gain insights into many 'best practices' their colleagues are using to advance skills and work performance," says Warren Hioki, CCSN associate dean of engineering technology and a program organizer. "Sessions will also afford opportunities for regional and statewide networking." The free seminar is open to business, computing and marketing professionals and will feature two keynote addresses and six workshops from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Among the topics will be information technology, business and marketing instruction, IT skill standards development, Microsoft certification and more. More than 125 attendants from around the state are expected. Those interested in call 651-4185 or send an e-mail to warren.hioki@ccsn.edu.

REFRIGERATOR RECYCLING PROGRAM BEGINS IN SOUTHERN NEVADA

On Monday, Nevada Power began picking up old, energy-inefficient refrigerators from residential customers so they could be recycled. Customers can receive \$30 for each unit (maximum of two units). The program will run through July 31 or until funding is expended. By eliminating unnecessary appliances, Nevada Power can lower its system-wide usage, reducing the amount of energy it needs to produce or purchase power during peak periods, which helps all customers. Many old refrigerators consume inordinate amounts of electricity. The program also benefits the environment and preserves natural resources. All possible components of the appliances will be recycled and all hazardous materials handled appropriately. Those interested can call 1-877-811-8700 to schedule an appointment for pick up. Rebate checks will be mailed to customers within four weeks after collection of the appliance.

JUDGE DISMISSES BLACK GROUP'S NYPD LAWSUIT

NEW YORK (AP) - A federal lawsuit filed by a black police officers' group, which claimed the police department violated the officers' civil rights by monitoring private conversations, has been dropped by a judge who called organization's claims "baseless." U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Griesa dismissed the civil rights suit, which charged that city's police department was trying to silence 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care because of the group's frequent criticism of the NYPD, Newsday reported in Saturday editions. The group's leader, Eric Adams, filed the lawsuit in 2001. The plaintiffs claimed that illegal wiretaps were put on their phones, in violation of their constitutional right to equal protection under the law and their right to protection from illegal search and seizure. Griesa noted that the NYPD was conducting an investigation of Adams when it received word that he was seen with Omowale Clay, a member of the Black Liberation Army who was convicted of federal gun possession stemming from a 1981 armored car robbery. Griesa granted the city's motion to dismiss the case, saying that no wiretaps had been used. Adams said he is discussing with his lawyers a possible appeal.

APPEALS COURT UPHOLDS DEE BROWN RULING

TORONTO (AP) - A court decision that overturned the drunken driving conviction of former NBA player Dee Brown was upheld by an appeals court, ruling his arrest was due to racial profiling. In the decision issued last week, the Ontario Court of Appeals said Brown's 1999 arrest was unconstitutional because he was singled out as a black man who was casually dressed and driving an expensive vehicle. Brown, a member of the Orlando Magic's front office, played for the Toronto Raptors at the time. The appeals court also said the trial judge ignored evidence of racial profiling and had a negative view of the arguments in Brown's defense. Brown was convicted in July 2000 of drunken driving. Superior Court Justice Brian Trafford later threw out the conviction and ordered a new trial, and the prosecution appealed.

Harlem children show high rate of asthma

NEW YORK (AP) - One in four children in the city's Harlem section has asthma - double the rate researchers expected and one of the highest neighborhood rates in the nation, a study found.

Dr. Stephen Nicholas, who led the study, said Harlem Hospital Center staff members were alarmed at the steady stream of children who came in for asthma treatment over the past few years.

"We've discovered the underbelly of the iceberg and it's twice as large as we thought that it was," he said.

Nicholas, the hospital's director of pediatrics and a Columbia University profes-

sor, said the effort to test every child in a 24-block area found that 25.5 percent of 1,400 children under 13 had asthma.

The study, funded by the nonprofit Robin Hood Foundation, began in 2001 and is continuing.

Doctors had expected the rate to be about 12 percent, slightly less among the youngest children, Nicholas said.

Asthma researchers have said they do not know of anywhere in the country where the rate of the disease is well documented at above 20 percent.

"When we looked at the

numbers, we were stunned at the number of children who had asthma," Nicholas said.

About 6 percent of all Americans have asthma and about 5,000 people die of it each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Asthma occurs when the airways become inflamed and constricted, making breathing difficult. Scientists think the condition may be genetic, but that environmental factors like pollen, dust, animal dander, air pollution and cold air can contribute to attacks.

The Harlem study also found asthmatic children are about 50 percent more likely

to live with a smoker than children who are not afflicted.

"There's no doubt that smoking is one of the clear cut ways we can reduce the number of asthmatic attacks," Nicholas said.

Nicholas said doctors, nurses and social workers were reducing other environmental threats by improving roach and rodent control, providing cleaning services and working with landlords to repair apartments.

"Probably the most important thing we do is make sure kids have medical care, somebody they call their own doctor who takes responsibility for them," he said.

Proposed districts in Texas irk Democrats

WASHINGTON (AP) - A top congressional Democrat says a redistricting map that House Majority Leader Tom DeLay sent state lawmakers would eliminate five Democratic congressmen and provides no new representation for minorities.

The map hasn't been officially made public but has been circulating in Austin and in Washington since late last week. It drew immediate criticism from Rep. Martin Frost, D-Arlington, who led Democrats' redistricting efforts nationwide in 2000.

Frost said he confirmed the map originated with DeLay, R-Sugar Land, through a high-profile Republican source.

"It's very clear what Tom DeLay is trying to do. He is trying to eliminate five

Democratic congressmen from office while at the same time not increasing the number of Hispanics and the numbers of blacks in office," Frost said Wednesday.

DeLay's spokesman Jonathan Grella referred questions to Jim Ellis, who heads DeLay's Americans For Republican Majority political action committee.

Ellis said DeLay's office has submitted several maps to state lawmakers. He said others have submitted maps as well. He disputed Frost's assessment of the map and said it does create another minority district.

"There's no final map on any of this, but we believe the court map is deficient because it under-represents Hispanics and African-Americans and Republicans. That's what

we're trying to fix," Ellis said.

DeLay has made no secret of his dislike for the current boundaries of Texas' congressional districts. He says they don't reflect the Republican majority in Texas. He has been pressing state lawmakers to revisit redistricting and draw boundaries that will help more Republicans get elected to Congress.

The state's 32-member congressional delegation is made up of 17 Democrats and 15 Republicans. It gained two congressional seats in 2000 because of its population growth and both of those seats went to Republicans.

Bob Richter, spokesman for state House Speaker Tom Craddick, said Craddick had seen the map but does not like it because it splits Midland and Odessa. He said

Craddick would not like to see this map passed by the House.

Richter said the map was given to Craddick's office from an aide to a Republican state representative who did not want to be identified. "We don't have maps from DeLay," Richter said.

Some of the changes under the proposed map:

- Rep. Max Sandlin, D-Marshall, would be paired with Rep. Nick Lampson, D-Beaumont, in a district that runs nearly the length of the Texas' easternmost border.

- Blacks in Frost's North Texas district would be divided into three surrounding districts, which Frost said would not likely pass Voting Rights Act muster.

- The Rio Grande Valley (See Texas, Page 12)

Housing discrimination complaints rising

WASHINGTON (AP) - While scrolling through the classifieds for apartments for rent, Ana Ramirez's eyes stopped on what she thought was a good deal for her and her young daughter: a two-bedroom, two-bath apartment just 15 minutes from work for \$600 a month.

But when she called for more information, a woman told her, "No pets. No children."

Ramirez hung up but then remembered it was illegal to discriminate against someone with kids. "I said, 'Wait a minute, she can't do this,'" she recounted later.

Ramirez, a fair housing advocate from Toledo, Ohio, sued and has settled out of court. Hers was one of more than 25,000 claims or complaints of housing discrimination filed last year, up 7 percent from 2001, according to a report from the Na-

tional Fair Housing Alliance.

The alliance is a coalition of private, nonprofit local groups that gets government funding to handle cases and raise awareness of the issue. Advocates say the past year's increase is probably due to more cases being reported and increased awareness rather than a surge in discrimination itself.

More people were also brought into the housing market last year because of low interest rates, which may have led to more chances for discrimination, said Floyd May, deputy assistant secretary for fair housing for the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"Where you have nowhere to go and the discrimination occurs you pretty much have to find someplace else to live and the discriminator wins," said the alliance's executive director, Shanna Smith. "The

chance of being caught is so remote that they can act with impunity."

The Fair Housing Act, which was signed into law 35 years ago, prohibits discrimination in the financing, rental or sale of any housing based on race, color, religion, sex

or national origin. A 1988 amendment extended coverage to outlaw discrimination based on disability or family status.

A separate survey commissioned by HUD last year showed widespread public (See Rising, Page 12)

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