

## NEWS BRIEFS

### STATES URGED TO SPEND MORE TO CUT SMOKING RATE

ATLANTA -The U.S. government's effort to cut the adult smoking rate to 12 percent or less by 2010 will fail unless most states increase funding for anti-tobacco programs, federal health officials said on Wednesday. The warning by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention accompanied a study showing the vast majority of states in 2003 were nowhere near the nation's ambitious smoking target. The smoking rate among states last year ranged from a high of 30.8 percent in Kentucky to a low of 12 percent in Utah, the only one to reach the federal target. Utah has a heavy proportion of Mormons, who are religiously opposed to smoking. About 440,000 Americans die each year from lung cancer and other diseases related to tobacco use, making smoking the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, according to the federal government. States spent \$541.1 million on anti-tobacco programs in 2003, a 28 percent reduction from 2001 and less than 3 percent of the estimated \$19 billion they expected to receive from tobacco excise taxes and tobacco settlement money. The CDC did not say how much the states spent in 2002. Tobacco companies agreed in 1997 and 1998 to pay \$206 billion as part of a landmark legal settlement.

### AL SHARPTON, WIFE ANNOUNCE SEPARATION

NEW YORK (AP) - The Rev. Al Sharpton and his wife, Kathy Jordan Sharpton, have announced their separation after 23 years of marriage. The Sharptons said in a statement Friday that they "will remain on the best of terms." The pair "have extremely active careers and their separation allows them to continue pursuing their work interests," the statement said. "They will continue to work together in their civil rights work and in their other business ventures, including those in the entertainment industry." "Together they have successfully raised two daughters, one of whom started college this year, and the other of whom will be graduating high school in June," the statement said.

### CONSERVATIVE RADIO HOST APOLOGIZES FOR RACIAL SLUR

MILWAUKEE (AP) - A conservative talk-radio host has formally apologized for using a racial slur on the air, then joking about it for a week. Mark Belling used the word "wetback," a derogatory term to describe illegal Mexican immigrants, in a discussion on his Oct. 27 show about potential voter fraud in Wisconsin. "You watch the voter turnout on the near south side (of Milwaukee), heavily Hispanic, and compare it to the voter turnout in any other election, and you're going to see every wetback and every other non-citizen out there voting," he said. He sarcastically apologized on the air last Monday, then joked about the situation for days and polled listeners about whether he should have apologized. The comment sparked a protest of 300 people Friday at Milwaukee's WISN studios, which broadcast Belling's daily radio talk show, and caused one advertiser to pull ads from the show. In his apology released Saturday, Belling said he would "try to grow and be a better person based on the lessons my terrible mistake has taught me." Belling blamed the error on arrogance. "It's clearly offensive and shouldn't be used in any context, whatever class of Hispanic immigrant that you're talking about," Belling said. Belling's show has aired for 15 years and regularly tops the ratings.

### IVORY COAST SHUTS DOWN COCOA EXPORTS

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) - Deadly violence in Ivory Coast has shut down cocoa exports in the world's largest producer, closing ports that ship more than 40 percent of the world's raw material for chocolate, cocoa traders said Tuesday. Clashes that have pitted Ivory Coast's government and supporters against French forces come at the peak of Ivory Coast's harvest, last year at a record of 1.4 million tons. Violence has closed the country's two main ports, in Abidjan and San Pedro, since Saturday afternoon, traders and other officials told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity. Cocoa buyers are not venturing out to buy, they said.

## Alabama vote taps southern sympathies

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Old times are not forgotten in the heart of Dixie. Alabama voters elected a Supreme Court candidate linked to Old South ideals and apparently killed a move to strike segregationist language from the state Constitution, a victory of sorts for the state's neo-Confederate crowd.

Michael Hill, president of the pro-secession League of the South, said Tom Parker's election Tuesday and the Amendment Two results make it obvious many Alabama voters still identify with Southern causes.

A Black law professor said the twin developments were worrisome.

"The message is that people don't care, they don't understand, and that some

people are bigots," said Bryan Fair, who teaches at the University of Alabama.

Parker denied any race-based agenda, and Amendment Two opponents said their objections were based solely on the possibility that the measure would lead to new taxes for public schools, not racism. But issues and symbols dating back generations became an undercurrent flowing through some races in Alabama.

Parker — a former aide to Roy Moore, the Alabama chief justice who was ousted from the bench for refusing to remove a Ten Commandments monument from the courthouse — did not back down when stories emerged shortly before the vote about his handing out tiny Confederate flags and associating

with leaders of ultraconservative, pro-Confederacy groups, including the League, which campaigned heavily for him.

Parker and Moore also were leading opponents of Amendment Two, which would have stricken from the Constitution language mandating segregated schools and imposing poll taxes — provisions, now unenforceable, that were approved in 1901 to repress Blacks and poor Whites.

Critics claimed another part of the proposal could have led to federal court orders for big tax increases to fund schools.

Unofficial returns showed voters defeating the amendment by a razor-thin margin, but the final outcome may not be known until provi-

sional ballots are counted next week.

In case the amendment ultimately fails, legislators plan to use a special session beginning next week to introduce new versions of Amendment Two, minus the language that opponents claim could lead to a tax increase. Hill said he supports the idea of removing the segregationist language.

Parker spent less than \$200,000 on the general election and attributed his victory more to his support of Moore's Ten Commandments fight than any links to pro-Confederate groups.

But he also said: "I think Alabamians appreciate our history, and that includes the Civil War and civil rights."

The League of the South (See Alabama, Page 6)

## Florida gets first Black sheriff in a century

QUINCY, Fla. (AP) - A Black candidate was declared the winner Friday after a recount in the racially charged campaign for sheriff in Florida's only majority Black county.

Morris Young became Gadsden County's first Black sheriff since Reconstruction.

Young, who had a 70-vote lead going into the machine recount, defeated Chief Deputy Ed Spooner by 115 votes. He said he would work to unite the racially divided county and convince supporters of Spooner, who is White, that he can do the job.

"The main thing is earning their respect," Young

said. "I've got to show them Morris Young is capable."

Earlier Friday, county officials began the recount as the candidates and their lawyers watched. More than 20,600 votes were cast Tuesday.

While Young expressed confidence that the machine recount would ultimately make him the sheriff, a few others were wary in a county where Black people, while in the majority, have long complained about the power structure and racism.

"As sheriff I want to change that," said Young, a school resource officer with the sheriff's department who

was hired six years ago by his opponent. "I feel confident I won the race fair and square."

Election observers and representatives of civil rights groups watched the recount, trying to guard against a repeat of the distrust that developed here in 2000 when there were complaints of intimidation and other wrongdoing.

There were allegations of harassment in connection with this year's sheriff's race. Some White supporters of Young said they were hassled, including one White man whose truck was painted with racial epithets.

Spooner had said earlier he hoped the community

would get behind the winner.

"If that's the result we're going to live with it ... we're going to make it a smooth transition and we're going to make it work as a whole community," Spooner said. "I would urge everyone to be a part of that. This animosity of hard or hurt feelings ... Settle down, folks." Spooner disavowed any racial intimidation, saying "if that happened, it shouldn't have."

Young will replace Sheriff W.A. Woodham, who is retiring after more than 30 years in office.

Gadsden County is located northwest of Tallahassee on Florida's Panhandle.



**JUDGE KAREN BENNETT**

**Justice Court Department 7**

**Proud Public Servant**

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*Thank You for your generous and genuine support...*

*I will always hold this Community near  
and dear in my heart...*

*Thank You Again*