

# The Daily Roar

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MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION – BAGHDAD

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## Memorandum of Understanding



by Spc. Benjamin Crane, MND-B, PAO

Hussein Al-Tahan (left), governor of Baghdad and Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, commanding general of Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and the 4th Infantry Division sign a memorandum of understanding at Forward Operating Base Blackhawk Jan. 14.

**By Staff Sgt. Brock Jones**

*MND-B PAO*

BAGHDAD – The governor of Baghdad, the provincial chairman, and U.S. military and civilian leaders united their efforts regarding infrastructure and services projects in Baghdad and the outlying province when they signed a memorandum of understanding at Forward Operating Base Blackhawk in the International Zone Jan. 14.

The MOU establishes and outlines project development, execution and turn over procedures for U.S.-funded projects in and around Baghdad.

The memorandum was signed by Mueen Al-Kadhimi, Baghdad provincial chairman who presided over the ceremony; Hussein Al-Tahan, governor of Baghdad; Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, commanding general of Multi-National Division – Baghdad and the 4th Infantry Division; Maj. Gen. Michael Eyre, commander of Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Rear Adm. Kathleen Dussault, commander of Joint Contracting Command – Iraq

**See MOA Pg. 3**

## New Year ushered in ‘new beginnings’

**Spc. Douglas York**

*MND-B PAO*

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – With Christmas and New Years happily in their rear view mirror, home is now finally in sight for many Soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division.

The light at the end of the tunnel squarely in their sights, some of them took a moment to reflect on the accomplishments of their tour and the road ahead for Iraq.

“It’s important now that we’ve reached this New Year and a new beginning full of

promise – a fresh start that we start it off right,” said Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, a native of Hattiesburg, Miss., who is the commanding general of Multi-National Division – Baghdad and the 4th Inf. Div. “That’s our theme today: ‘New Beginnings.’”

Hammond opened the town hall meeting by talking about the road they have traveled and the challenges still remaining until they are replaced by the 1st Cavalry Division in February. The town hall meeting was broadcast via video teleconference

and webcast with the Fort Hood and Fort Carson communities.

After a few more remarks, he turned the time over to the meeting’s two guest hosts, who continued the “new beginnings” theme and did some reflecting of their own about the accomplishments of their Soldiers and how they’ve improved the status of Iraq.

“It’s been a tremendous advancement for both the U.S. and the Iraqi people,” said Lt. Col. Bob Hatcher, a native of Mont

**See Town Hall Pg. 2**

# Ironhorse Town Hall; beginning full of promise

## Town Hall, From Pg 1

gomery, Ala., who is the commander of the 64th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Inf. Div. "We've been taking part in security and safety for the Iraqi citizens and preparing them for the next set of elections."

Hatcher's fellow emcee chimed in, speaking about the deeds of his Soldiers.

"I'm very proud of the work the 'Gambler Guns' have completed thus far, overcoming crew shortages and a myriad of other challenges," said Lt. Col. Kevin Vizzarri, a native of Philadelphia, who is the commander of the 4th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, Combat Aviation Brigade. "We've flown over 10,000 hours, or three years worth of Fort Hood, Texas, flight time in only 6 months."

Hatcher and Vizzarri then introduced the first of the night's guest speakers, who talked about the various aspects of his relatively short and whirl-wind military career as well as his young Family in the making.

"I collect reports from different intelligence collection teams on the ground in Baghdad," said Spc. Scott Snow, a native of Garland, Texas, who serves as an intelligence analyst with the Ironhorse Division's Analysis Control Element.

Snow has served in the Army for 17 months and has spent the bulk of that time away from his wife, who is expecting a child shortly after he returns.

Following Snow, an assortment of individuals spoke about the upcoming elections and how each of them contributes to the new and free Iraq.

"The provincial elections will take place on January 31st and are for the Provincial Councils, which are the Iraqi version of state legislators," said Katie Bresnahan, a Department of State civilian employee currently assigned to the Governance Section of the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team. "While Iraq has had several elections since 2003, the upcoming provincial elections will mark a new beginning for local Iraqi Government," the Chicago native added.

Bresnahan also stated that the upcoming elections will be more inclusive than previous elections and will be open to Iraqis from all

walks of life, to include former insurgents and religious minorities. Moreover, 25 percent of the council seats must now be held by women, she added.

After Bresnahan, one of the regions' elected officials offered his thanks and the gratitude of his countrymen, via a translator, about the sacrifices it has taken to get Iraq where it is now.

"(Thank you) for democracy, through the blood of your Soldiers and your people and for all of the sacrifices you have given the Iraqi people to improve the democracy (here) as a strong ground," said Yacoub Yousef, a native of Aamel, Baghdad, currently serving as the Council Chairman for the Rashid District Council. "Because of the sacrifices the United States has given and its military, the result of this sacrifice is the democratic Iraq we're now seeing. This (nation) is more advanced than it was during the dictator (Saddam Hussein) or during the previous regime and now we have elections; people can elect for themselves."

"The Army has been a new beginning for me," said Pfc. Lyndsey Dransfield, a native of Draper, Utah, who serves as the layout editor for the 4th Inf. Div.'s "The Daily Roar." Dransfield is a public affairs special-

ist assigned to the 128th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment of the Utah Army National Guard. She said since arriving in Iraq, she's had the opportunity to meet all kinds of people, learn about a different culture and see the progress all involved are making here and write stories about it.

While all spoke of Iraq's new identity the meeting reached its concluding segment with two pairs of Soldiers whose own 'identity' is sometimes hard to distinguish.

Privates Moner Kamel Abed and Karim Kamel Abed, identical twin brothers from Hila City, Iraq, currently serving as Security Personnel with Company 5, 2nd Battalion, 44th Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division, spoke through a translator about why they decided to join the ranks.

Both have served in the Iraqi Army for approximately eight months and said when they saw the sacrifices the American Troops and civilians were making for Iraq, it made them decide to serve in the IA and sacrifice for their country.

Following the Amed brothers were the other set of twins, a pair of Army captains who hail from Sacramento, Calif.

It is unique in that one sister will replace the other, in the same job, as the 1st Cav. Div. transitions with the 4th Inf. Div.

"This experience is new for us because we are actually doing the transfer of authority together," said Capt. Brenda Trevillion, 4th Inf. Div.'s protocol officer. "She's (twin sister Belinda) actually taking over for me here, and I will be doing her job (at Fort Hood)."

Drawing the meeting to a close Hammond offered a few closing remarks about the quality of his 'Steadfast and Loyal' Soldiers.

"People here have performed above what they normally would have performed – because they care," Hammond said. "But, we want to get home. We want to embrace the local community; we want to love them; we want to probably cry a little bit, and we can't wait for that."

Keeping these mutual thanks and thoughts of new beginnings in mind, the Ironhorse Division has more than earned the right to start anew back home.



by Spc. Douglas York, MND-B, PAO

Privates, and identical twin brothers, Moner Kamel Abed and Karim Kamel Abed currently serving as Security Personnel with Company 5, 2nd Battalion, 44th Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division, speak to the people watching and listening to the broadcast of the 4th Infantry Division's monthly town hall meeting Jan. 14.

# Soldier in focus

## 'Maddawg' Metal Worker makes the mission

Today's Soldier in Focus, Spc. Keith Jennings, a metal worker assigned to Company B, 4th Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, welds a joint for a new grip Jan. 14 at Forward Operating Base Falcon. Jennings works in the Service and Recovery Section of the "Maddawgs" forward support unit. Jennings, a native of Tassel County, Va., left the U.S. Army National Guard in 2001 for active-duty service in support of the Global War on Terror. He is in his third deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, serving with the "Ivy" Division since January 2005. Jennings said that he enjoys his job and especially enjoys making a difference and making other people's lives easier. "I feel that my mission is very important, but it is not just me, myself; there is a team supporting service and recovery. I help them out, and they help me out."



Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

## IA, U.S. Soldiers conduct reconnaissance patrol in Hamza

**By Sgt. Rodney Foliente,**

*2nd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.*

CAMP ECHO, Iraq – Soldiers from 4th Battalion, 8th Iraqi Army Division, and Company B, 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, conducted a reconnaissance patrol in Hamza Dec. 30.

The patrol allowed the Soldiers to become more familiar with the town, its people and the local leaders.

"It is important for us to know the area better and meet the people on missions like this. When the people see us out among them we get to know each other better and build trust between us," said Ali, a sergeant with 4th Bn., 30th Bde., 8th IA Div, through a translator.

"It is an important relationship we are building. They help us help them and let us do our job better because they know what is happening in their area. Also, the more the citizens see us doing our job, the more they trust us to keep them safe," said Ali.

"These missions build the people's trust in us when we talk with them, help them and show them that we work for them and for their safety," agreed Damin, a staff sergeant with 4th Bn., 30th Bde., 8th IA Div., through a translator.

"It's necessary to talk to all the people so they understand our presence and what our mission is," said 1st Lt. John Mullany, platoon leader, Co. B, 2-8 IN, who comes from Gainesville, Va.

Throughout the day, the patrol walked through market streets and residential areas, stopping to greet people and ask questions about the area. Crowds of children threaded their way into conversations with Iraqi and American Soldiers.

"I like interacting with the people, even if you're not talking about mission related things, but about Families and things like that; I enjoy it. I don't think there is any better way of building trust," said Mullany of interacting with the people and showing them the Soldiers are there for the people.

## Iraqi, U.S. leaders in Baghdad sign memorandum of understanding

**MOA, From Pg 1**

Afghanistan; and John Bass, team leader of Provincial Reconstruction Team – Baghdad.

"Today we're signing an agreement to set forth the procedure between the Iraqi government and the Coalition Forces," said Al-Kadhimi. "We are going forward to start rebuilding Baghdad and other provinces."

Hammond, a native of Hattiesburg, Miss., expressed his gratitude to be a part of such an agreement and was clear about the role that U.S. forces will play regarding the MOU.

"This agreement signifies the way ahead where (Chairman Kadhimi and Gov.

Tahan), under their leadership, are taking charge of the reconstruction, and we are in a support role. My pledge is that we will fulfill every element of this agreement; we will support it at all times.

"We're proud to be part of the solution here."

The agreement was an important step forward in the continued reconstruction efforts that are ongoing in the city of Baghdad and the surrounding province.

"It's an important agreement because it governs the way that we plan, prepare, execute and also coordinate the range of products that we assist with in the reconstruction of Baghdad, both the municipal area of Baghdad city proper as well as

across the province," said Brig. Gen. Robin Swan, a native of Pittsburgh, who serves as a deputy commanding general of MND-B and the 4th Inf. Div.

The MOU is not only about the physical reconstruction of Baghdad and Iraq but also about the continuing efforts to build lasting relationships, said Bass.

"On one level, this agreement is about reconstruction in the physical sense of building infrastructure for the citizens of Iraq. But equally important, it is about reconstructing and building relationships across the Government of Iraq, between the Government of Iraq and its citizens, and between the Government of Iraq and the U.S.," he said.



by Staff Sgt. Jessika Malott, 8th MP Bde. PAO

## IPs get kick out of graduation

BAGHDAD – Two demonstrators test their fighting skills during a martial arts exhibition at Al Furat Iraqi Police Training Center Jan. 14. The class was the second iteration of former Sons of Iraq (Abna al-Iraq) to complete the training to become Iraqi Police.



by Cpt. Dusty Gray, 2nd BCT PAO, 1st Armd. Div.

## Students partners in academics

BAGHDAD –Capt. William Richardson (left), of Tehachapi, Calif., and Lt. Col. Michael Shrout, of Renton, Wash., meet with students from the Flowers of the Future Elementary School Jan. 11 after a school supply drop off at the newly renovated school. Both Soldiers are members of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

## ◆ This Week in 4th Infantry Division History ◆

**Vietnam 1967** - Operation Sam Houston continued. The Division welcomed a new commanding general, MG William R. Peers. Contact with the enemy was sporadic during this week as the BDE's continued patrols through the rugged jungle terrain.

**1968** - With the impending TET offensive looming the Division repositioned its units. 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry was deployed north of Pleiku City. 1st Battalion, 503 Inf was in a blocking position west of Duc Co. 4th Engineers were alerted to relieve and/or reinforce the cities.

# Daily Iron Games

The objective of the game is to fill all the blank squares in a game with the correct numbers. There are three very simple constraints to follow: **Every row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order. Every column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order. Every 3 by 3 subsection of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9.**

4	8			3				
		6	4					
	2		9					6
8	3	1	2					
	9		6	7	8			
			8	4	1	3		
3				8	7			
			7		6			
	5				9	4		

Every Sudoku game begins with a number of squares already filled in, and the difficulty of each game is largely a function of how many squares are filled in. The more squares that are known, the easier it is to figure out which numbers go in the open squares. As you fill in squares correctly, options for the remaining squares are narrowed and it becomes easier to fill them in.

### Tuesday's Sudoku challenge results

2	5	3	9	6	4	8	7	1
9	6	7	1	8	2	3	4	5
4	1	8	7	5	3	9	2	6
5	9	2	3	1	8	7	6	4
3	8	6	4	7	5	1	9	2
7	4	1	6	2	9	5	3	8
8	3	5	2	9	6	4	1	7
6	7	9	8	4	1	2	5	3
1	2	4	5	3	7	6	8	9

# Safety Sense

MND-B is challenged by a wide range of threats that range from accidental to tactical. These challenges require our leaders to use proven measures to provide positive protection to our Soldiers and equipment. Composite Risk Management helps leaders and Soldiers to identify, evaluate, and mitigate hazards ultimately controlling risks to our operations. The Soldier's role in CRM is to help identify hazards, recommended controls, and implement risk mitigation measures. Mission success is everyone's responsibility and the proper use of CRM will help us succeed.

**IRONHORSE SOLDIERS**  
Composite Risk Management

**What will KILL me or my buddy?**

- ▶ Enemy
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Materiel/System
- ▶ Human Error

Tactical (Threat Based) RM  
+ Accidental (Hazard Based) RM  
= Composite Risk Management

**Steadfast & Loyal!**

*Chaplain's Inspiration*

To be trusted is a greater compliment than to be loved. Since this is true, let's do our best to make the time we have count. Rather than live with reluctance, let's live with exuberance. Every day is a gift. Instead of fearing what's ahead, let's face it with enthusiasm. Let's make each day count as we work to protect and secure the nation of Iraq and serve our Soldiers.

Proverbs 10:27 "The reverence of the Lord prolongs life."

## David Letterman's Top Ten Highlights Of My Hall of Fame Baseball Career presented by Jim Rice and Rickey Henderson

10. "Winning the MVP in 1978, and a Tony in 1983" (Jim Rice)
9. I designed the first vibrating jockstrap" (Rickey Henderson)
8. "During the 1981 season I lost my glove and played an entire west coast trip using a small box" (Jim Rice)
7. "All the free gum" (Rickey Henderson)
6. "I caught a squirrel in the outfield and the umps let me eat it" (Jim Rice)
5. "Being a Met, a Blue Jay, a Padre, a Dodger...Hell, even I can't remember all the teams I played for" (Rickey Henderson)
4. "Before every game, I ate the same meal: pancakes smothered in pine tar" (Jim Rice)
3. "Sleeping with Madonna" (Rickey Henderson)
2. "Sleeping with Madonna" (Jim Rice)
1. "I played with Jose Canseco and never got to inject anything in his ass" (Rickey Henderson)

## Daily Laugh

Law of Cat Inertia - A cat at rest will tend to remain at rest, unless acted upon by some outside force - such as the opening of cat food.

Law of Cat Magnetism - All clothes attract cat hair of opposite color in direct proportion to the importance of the occasion for which you are dressing. If you do not own a cat with the requisite hair color, this law will still, somehow, apply.

Law of Cat Thermodynamics - Heat flows from a warmer to a cooler body, except in the case of a cat, in which case all heat flows to the cat.

Law of Cat Stretching - A cat will stretch to a distance proportional to the length of the nap just taken.

**BEETLE BAILEY** BY GREG & MORT WALKER

WHO WERE YOU ON THE PHONE WITH ALL THAT TIME?

A ROBOCALL FROM A LOAN COMPANY

WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST HANG UP?

THAT WOULD BE RUDE!


**Hometown Briefs**

**Caring may help keep girls in school**
*The Gazette*


More than 8,000 girls from seventh to 12th grade dropped out of Colorado public schools in the 2006-07 school year.

What might have kept them in the classroom? Having a teacher, Family member or mentor tell them they can overcome obstacles and succeed - and are expected to, according to speakers at Tuesday's Education Advocacy Circle of the Women's Resource Agency.

"Kids do not care how much you know until they know how much you care," said Mary Thurman, deputy superintendent for Colorado Springs School District 11. All children, from those in special education to those in gifted programs, are at risk of failure if they're not challenged and given expectations, she said.

The agency sponsors occasional round-table discussions on women's issues to promote the sharing of resources and ideas. At Tuesday's meeting, participants heard about several educational programs, the need for volunteer mentors and some success stories.

Every D-11 teacher is trained in the "response to intervention" system, which Thurman described as a way to ensure that lessons are adjusted or enhanced so that all children learn.

"If your instruction is not working, we put things in place so you learn," she said.

Although the high school dropout rate for girls statewide is about 4 percent, it has risen steadily the past few years. It was 3.2 percent in the 1996-97 school year and dropped to a low of 2.1 percent in the 2002-03 school year before beginning to rise again, according to statistics on the Colorado Department of Education Web site.

**Superintendent outlines top priorities**
*Killeen Daily Herald*


In light of School Board Recognition Month, Copperas Cove Independent School District Superintendent Dr. Rose Cameron outlined her top priorities for the coming year at a board meeting Tuesday, including ensuring that Impact Aid legislation is reauthorized by Congress.

Impact Aid is a federal program administered by the Department of Education that gives money to school districts that lose property tax revenues due to the presence of large federal bodies in the area, such as military bases.

The money is used by local schools to hire teachers, purchase school supplies, and pay for other school district needs.

As a part of the No Child Left Behind Act, Cameron said Impact Aid is currently "in limbo" until it is reauthorized.

"It's very concerning to us, and we want to see that legislation reauthorized," Cameron said. "We want to make sure it's funded appropriately."

Other priorities Cameron discussed were to continue giving teachers the resources necessary to be effective in the classroom and maintaining high school programs that prepare students for college.

Cameron said in the long term, CCISD will have to focus on what facilities are needed to accommodate the school district's continued growth.

**Silence is sweet with absence of coqui**
*The Honolulu Star Bulletin*


Wahiawa is considered free of noisy coqui frogs after an intensive three-year eradication campaign coordinated by the Oahu Invasive Species Committee.



As a key to success, committee manager Rachel Neville credited the fact that the project got sufficient funding to attack the coqui population before it grew too large, according to a news release yesterday.

"We feel comfortable that we have eradicated them," said Chelsea Arnott, a supervisor of the committee affiliated with the University of Hawaii Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit.

Army personnel cleared brush and state Department of Agriculture and Division of Forestry and Wildlife crews joined in the systematic effort of spraying citric acid solution in the forest habitat on federal, state and private land.

Area residents, who reported coqui sightings and tolerated the noise of nighttime spraying operations, were also parties to the effort, said Becky Azama, a section chief of the Agriculture Department plant pest control branch.

Arnott said no one in Wahiawa has reported hearing the high-decibel mating call of male coqui since November 2006. Residents of the area adjacent to the Schofield Barracks East Range first reported the noise in 2001. At the height of the Wahiawa infestation in 2004, more than 130 male frogs inhabited the 10-acre area, according to the report.

The eradication announcement was made now, two years after silence descended in Wahiawa Heights but after coqui were heard recently in Kailua, to let Oahu residents know

**Nurses in high demand**
*The Fayetteville Observer*


When Katie Wylie tells her grandchildren about her trials and tribulations during the Great Recession of '09, they might fall asleep.

After all, it's unlikely Wylie will go hungry, or even be forced to cut back. She'll have no tales of wandering from state to state, looking for a job, any job.

In fact, it's highly likely Wylie's salary will grow, along with her benefits and her position in life.

Why? Because Wylie is a registered nurse. And these days, nurses — like other health care professionals — are in such high demand that hospitals are competing for them by offering sign-on bonuses, scholarships and career-advancement incentives in return for work commitments.

While people in other professions worry about losing their livelihoods because of economic cutbacks, the Department of Labor estimated that nearly a million additional nurses would be needed between 2006 and 2016. With statistics like that, a good nurse shouldn't have any trouble finding a job with plenty of perks, said Phyllis Malone, recruitment manager at Cape Fear Valley Health System.

"This is a national problem," Malone said. "Nursing needs have changed. People live longer. People are sicker than they used to be. There is such a need."

Wylie, whose husband is stationed at Fort Bragg, recently left Duke University Medical Center for Cape Fear Valley to be closer to home.


**Hometown Briefs**

**Neighborhood leader runs for council**
*The Capital Journal*


Karen Hiller, a leader in Central Topeka neighborhood improvement efforts, announced her candidacy today for the District 1 seat on the Topeka City Council.

Hiller, 55, of 1018 S.W. Lane, becomes the second person to run for the seat held by Lana Kennedy, who hasn't said if she'll seek re-election.

"I have a record of taking on things that people thought couldn't be done, bringing people together around them, and achieving success," Hiller said. "I am humbled by the support and encouragement I have had so far, and by the desire expressed by so many to see things change in our city."

Shawn Leisinger, 39, of 433 S.W. Lincoln, is the other candidate to have announced a run for the District 1 seat. The city's primary election will be March 3 and the general election April 7.

Hiller worked 34 years for Housing and Credit Counseling, Inc., where she was executive director 25 years. She indicated in a news release announcing her candidacy that she led the statewide coalition that established a department of housing and the housing trust fund in Kansas.

**Steinmeier heads to Mideast for truce**
*The Local*


German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier will travel to the Middle East Wednesday for the second time in a week in a renewed bid to help forge a truce in the Gaza Strip.

Steinmeier's trip to the region would include talks in Jerusalem with the Israeli government, as well as visits to the West Bank city of Ramallah and Cairo, his spokesman Jens Plötner told a news conference.

"The goal of the foreign minister's efforts is to open a way towards a lasting and comprehensive ceasefire," Ploetner said. Steinmeier would be adding his voice to the calls for an "immediate humanitarian truce" to stabilise the worsening situation on the ground and enable the political framework for a long-lasting ceasefire to be put in

place, he added.

Plötner said Steinmeier had held telephone talks since his return from the region early Monday with key players in the region as well as EU partners. A diplomatic source later told AFP that the Gaza war was now on a knife-edge, with the potential for a start to talks between the two sides and the ever-looming risk of an even more dangerous conflagration.

"We want to help advance the growing momentum toward a humanitarian truce with our visit," the source said.

During Steinmeier's last visit to the region, he offered on Saturday "concrete help" to secure the borders around the Gaza Strip and combat arms smuggling via Egypt. The situation has dramatically worsened since then, with the death toll from Israel's incursion into Gaza surpassing 1,000.

Israel bombed smuggling tunnels and fought pitched battles with Hamas on Wednesday as UN chief Ban Ki-Moon arrived in the region, calling for an immediate ceasefire and underlining the key role played by Egypt. As diplomatic efforts to end the conflict intensified, the EU said it was breaking off talks with Israel over upgrading relations in response to its actions in Gaza.

**Company may stop paying idled workers**
*The Montgomery Advertiser*


Louisiana-Pacific Corp. has agreed to pay Clarke County \$500,000 a year for up to three years because the company is unable to comply with an incentive deal that required it to employ at least 130 workers.

The deal will allow the company to stop paying the 130 workers at its idled mill near Thomasville. The mill produced oriented strand board.

Clarke County commissioners were briefed on the deal Monday.

The company still has to iron out an agreement with state officials.

Alabama Development Office Director Neal Wade has said that the poor economy has several other companies asking about rewriting their incentive agreements with the state.

Companies often enter into incentive agreements with state and local governments when they are considering locating in a community. In the agreements, state and local governments offer tax breaks and other incentives while the companies promise to create jobs.

State and local governments put up about \$17 million to get Louisiana-Pacific to build the \$260 million mill.

Clarke County imposed a \$25 tax on license plate renewals to repay the \$7 million it borrowed to aid the company.

The mill had not reached full operation when it was damaged by an explosion in May. The company repaired the plant, but announced in October it would not reopen because demand for the oriented strand board had declined in the stagnant housing market.

**New passenger bill of rights**
*The Dallas Morning News*


FlyersRights.org, formerly known as the Coalition for an Airline Passengers Bill of Rights, said that Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., and Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, have introduced new legislation to protect passengers caught on grounded airplanes.

Past attempts to pass such legislation kept getting sidetracked, but we've got a new Congress and now the new bill.

The bill would require airlines "to offer passengers the option of safely deplaning once they have sat on the ground for three hours after the plane door has closed," FlyersRights.org says.

In addition, airlines would have "to provide passengers with food, potable water, comfortable cabin temperature and ventilation and adequate restrooms while a plane is delayed on the ground," it says.

The bill would set up a "consumer complaint hotline so that passengers can alert the agency about delays," FlyerRights says.

And airports and airlines would be required "to develop contingency plans to be reviewed and approved by DOT, and fines for air carriers and airports that do not submit or fail to comply with contingency plans."

Says Kate Hanni, whose lengthy, unwanted stay on an American Airlines jet in Austin on Dec. 29, 2006, made her a consumer-rights missionary, issued this statement:

"We applaud Sen. Boxer and Sen. Snowe for introducing the Airline Passengers Bill of Rights in Congress to give passengers legal rights and ensure their well-being.

## Sports

# Serena survives match points to reach Sydney tennis semis

Agency French Press

SYDNEY – World number two Serena Williams saved three match points to win a torrid three-setter against Danish teenager Caroline Wozniacki and claim her place in the semi-finals of the Sydney WTA International on Wednesday.

The American nine-time Grand Slam champion was taken to the brink in a 2hr 40min dogfight by the 18-year-old Wozniacki, before Williams prevailed, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 7-6 (7/3).

Wozniacki, the youngest player in the women's draw, held three match points but Williams fought back to take the final set into a tiebreaker, which she nervelessly claimed seven points to three.

It was the second time this week that Williams has had to fight off match points, having saved four in her first-round win over Australian Samantha Stosur.

Williams has now battled back from match point down and gone on to win eight times in her career, five of them in Australia, and only once has she failed to go on and win the tournament from that position.

Williams now has a semi-final on Thursday with Russian world number four Elena Dementieva, who battled for 2hr 43min in fierce afternoon heat before dousing Polish sixth seed Agnieszka Radwanska 6-2, 5-7, 6-4.

"I was a little tight, but it was just more my mistakes," Williams said. "I really should've closed it off in two sets and I'm not really happy with the way I played today.

"I've watched her (Wozniacki) a lot, and she played totally different from what I've seen her play. I think this is the best she's ever played in her life really. Hopefully, she'll keep it up."

Russian second seed Dinara Safina reached the semi-finals of the Sydney tournament for the first time after wearing down tenacious French opponent Alize Cornet, 6-3, 6-4.

Safina will play world number 29 Ai Sugiyama in the semi-finals after the Japanese player's walkover thanks to Svetlana Kuznetsova's abdominal strain.

It was the first time Wozniacki, ranked

12, had played the American superstar, but she broke Williams' serve five times and looked every part a top player of the future with her wonderful groundstrokes.

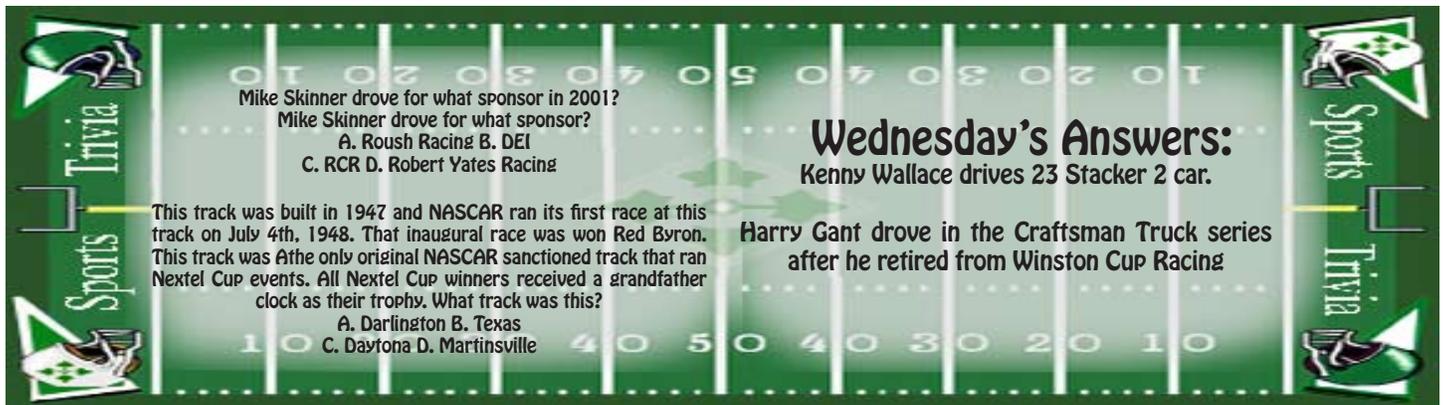
Earlier in the day, the score belied the on-court battle with Safina taking 1hr 48 min to subdue 18-year-old Cornet in scorching temperatures hovering around 36 Celsius (97 Fahrenheit).

Safina, like the majority of the overseas competitors, is hitting the height of an Australian summer after preparing in a freezing mid-winter Europe and she felt the effects of the strength-sapping heat.

"Obviously, you cannot prepare in Europe with the same conditions as the sun," she said. "I'm just trying to get as fit as I can. I was running a lot to get fitter, and that's all. Basically, there's not much you can do.

"It's now just a matter of getting used to the weather, because the body is ready."

Safina described the conditions, similar to what she is likely to experience in Melbourne, as tougher than those at the US Open.



Mike Skinner drove for what sponsor in 2001?  
Mike Skinner drove for what sponsor?  
A. Roush Racing B. DEI  
C. RCR D. Robert Yates Racing

Wednesday's Answers:  
Kenny Wallace drives 23 Stacker 2 car.

This track was built in 1947 and NASCAR ran its first race at this track on July 4th, 1948. That inaugural race was won Red Byron. This track was the only original NASCAR sanctioned track that ran Nextel Cup events. All Nextel Cup winners received a grandfather clock as their trophy. What track was this?  
A. Darlington B. Texas  
C. Daytona D. Martinsville

Harry Gant drove in the Craftsman Truck series after he retired from Winston Cup Racing



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