

Tuesday

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Americans healthier, living longer

BY RANDOLPH E. SCHMID
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Declines in death rates from most major causes — including heart disease and cancer — have pushed Americans' life expectancy to a record 77.6 years. Women are still living longer than men, but the gap is narrowing.

Women now have a life expectancy of 80.1 years, 5.3 more

than men. That's down from 5.4 years in 2002 and continues a steady decline from a peak difference of 7.8 years in 1979, the National Center for Health Statistics said Monday in its annual mortality report.

Research indicates there also is an increase in active life expectancy, said Mary A. Salmon, a sociology professor at the University of North Carolina.

"It's not that we're having a lot of very old, sick people," she said in a telephone interview.

She added, "There has been lots of speculation on how this will affect Social Security, of course."

Indeed, a major debate topic in Washington and elsewhere is President Bush's plan to change Social Security, which he says is facing a financial crisis caused by

increasing life expectancy, lower birth rates and aging baby boomers.

The total number of deaths in the United States in 2003 was 2,443,908, an increase of 521 reflecting a growing overall population.

Most age groups saw a decline in mortality rates. Infant mortality, which increased to 7 per 100,000 in 2002 — the first such

rise in decades — was 6.9 in 2003, a change the agency said was not statistically significant.

While the overall life expectancy increase to 77.6 was good news, Americans still trail many other countries, according to statistics from the World Health Organization.

In 2002 figures, Japan had the longest life expectancy at 81.9 years.



Powerbooks, iPods get price reductions, A6

Judge sentences woman accused of digging up boyfriend's remains

The Associated Press

SHEBOYGAN — A woman accused of digging up and taking her boyfriend's cremated remains more than a decade ago — and drinking the beer that was buried with them — was sentenced to 60 days in jail Monday, a prosecutor said.

Karen Stolzmann, 44, was sentenced on a misdemeanor charge of possession of stolen property, Sheboygan County District Attorney Joe DeCecco said. She had faced up to nine months in jail on the charge, and DeCecco had recommended a six-month sentence.

Investigators accused Stolzmann of digging up the ashes of her former boyfriend Michael Hendrickson at a Columbia County cemetery possibly out of spite for his family.

Hendrickson was 27 when he died in 1992 from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. His relatives contacted authorities last fall after finding out his remains were stolen.

An exhumation discovered Hendrickson's cremated remains were missing from the Cambria Cemetery. Beer and cigarettes buried with him also were missing.



Sue Pischke/HTR

Jeff Roberts of Two Creeks, addresses his concern regarding the ice throws caused by the wind turbines and during the Planning and Park Commission public hearing Monday night. Roberts advises a change to set back the turbines a further distance for the proposed 474-foot-tall, 49 turbine Twin Creeks wind farm in the townships of Mishicot, Two Creeks and Two Rivers on Monday night at the Manitowoc County office complex.

Panel proposes changes to wind farm ordinance

BY NEIL RHINES
Herald Times Reporter

MANITOWOC — The Manitowoc County Planning and Park Commission has tabled several amendments to the county's Wind Energy System ordinance, in order to consider several changes to the text.

Three changes had been proposed to the ordinance (developed in September 2004) including a proposed noise limitation, some adjustments to property line setbacks and the division of large wind system as more than 100 feet in height.

Speaking before the commission and the nearly 200 people who jammed the room at the Manitowoc County Office Complex on Monday, Lynn Korinek, a member of a group called COWS, or Citizens Oppos-

ing Wind turbine Sites, said the opinion of the group's attorney, differs from the county's interpretation. Mark Hazelbaker of Sun Prairie is representing the group.

According to Korinek, Hazelbaker believes that the proposed setbacks are illegal because variances granted to Navitas Energy (the company proposing to build 49 wind turbines in the northeastern part of the county) do not demonstrate a proof of hardship.

One of the proposed amendments to the ordinance, as it now stands, would permit the Board of Adjustment to grant lesser setbacks than those in the original ordinance if the adjacent property is within the same wind farm system.

Gary French of rural Mishicot said the county's ordinance, and the Board of Adjustments granting of 31 variances to property line setbacks when they approved the conditional use permit for Navitas in December, does little more than set the stage for a "pinwheel forest."

Korinek said Hazelbaker also believes the proposed noise level of 50 decibels is too loud for nighttime levels. Mike Demske, recommended tabling the modifications pending review by Corporate Council Steve Rollins, including possible incorporation of some of Hazelbaker's suggestions, which Demske called "good ideas."

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Sue Pischke/HTR

William Strasser of rural Mishicot, addresses the commission regarding the audible noise produced by the operation of wind turbines and the potential health hazards they can cause.

Bush Medicaid plan concerns governors

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After meeting with President Bush, governors expressed concern Monday that the administration's proposal to cut some \$40 billion from the Medicaid health insurance program for the poor would further strain already tight state budgets.

"All governors are very, very reluctant to see any kind of major reduction to the system," Republican Bob Riley of Alabama said.

Democrat Janet Napolitano of Arizona said the president was too focused

on a specific figure that would help reduce the federal deficit. "If the president wants Medicaid reform, then he needs to have a reform discussion that's not driven by an arbitrary budget number," she said.

Some governors, however, said they realized they eventually must compromise. They also wanted the ability to experiment in order to lower costs. Many were encouraged by parts of the administration's budget proposal that would give states more flexibility.

At the meeting, Bush promised to work with gov-

ernors to restrain soaring Medicaid costs and revamp the program. But he also indicated he would keep trying to eliminate some federal aid.

"We want Medicaid to work," Bush told the governors before an hourlong, private question-and-answer session. "The system needs to be reformed and we want to work with governors."

But the one detail Bush emphasized was his plan to cut federal dollars in an effort to stop state Medicaid accounting practices that the administration con-

tends cheat taxpayers.

Many state leaders say the money derived this way is essential. Federal officials say the practice artificially inflates health care prices to bring in more federal cash, which states sometimes use for other purposes.

"We're worried" about the transfers, Bush said. "We put that on the table for discussion, so that the system works the way it's supposed to work."

Riley said Bush's proposed cuts would cost Alabama \$600 million over the next four or five years.

TR schools to adjust in 2005-06

St. Peter, YMCA to use space in Case

BY AMY WEAVER
Herald Times Reporter

TWO RIVERS — The plan to restructure the public schools in Two Rivers without Case Elementary School will take effect this September.

The Two Rivers Public School District Board of Education unanimously agreed Monday night with the recommendation from the district's reorganization committee to move Case students to Margee Elementary School and start sending fifth-graders to L.B. Clarke Middle School for the 2005-06 school year.

Margee will be a kindergarten through fourth-grade building, while Koenig Elementary School will house, at least for a year, kindergarten through fifth-grade. Eventually all fifth-graders will go to Clarke.

The board's action came a month earlier than anticipated, leaving district offi-

cial with extra time to help staff, students and the community with the huge changeover. District Administrator Randy Fredrickson said staff and administrators would be working together in the next few months on the transition process.

"Our work is just beginning on that," he said.

Changes will be shared with the public through school newsletter, the Parent-Teacher Organizations and direct mailing. News will also be available on the district Web site, www.trschools.k12.wi.us. The decision to move forward with changes this year will also allow St. Peter the Fisherman Catholic Parish to start leasing Case this fall, instead of next fall.

The school board had decided to close Case because of declining enrollment and loss of revenue on Nov. 8 and agreed to terms of a lease with St. Peter on Dec. 14.

The Catholic Community asked the district early last year about the possibility of renting some empty classroom space to contain its school.

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Snowmobile crashes account for 26 deaths

The Associated Press

A deadly weekend on Wisconsin's snowmobile trails pushed the number of fatalities to 26 so far this winter, already more than a year ago with much of the central and northern regions of the state still covered in deep snow ideal for riding, according to the Department of Natural Resources.

Four snowmobilers and one driver of an all-terrain vehicle who slammed into a snowmobile were killed over the weekend in five separate crashes in three counties, investigators said.

"It is not unprecedented, but it is a lot," said Bill Engfer, the DNR's chief of recreation and safety. "There is a lot of people out there snowmobiling, but when you look at the causes of these things, not everyone obviously, but a high percentage are speed- and alcohol-related."

Twenty-five people were killed in snowmobile crash-

Safety tips

- The state Department of Natural Resources provides classes on snowmobile safety. Some tips include:
- Slow down
 - Stay on marked trails
 - Avoid traveling across a body of water
 - Don't consume alcohol or drugs
 - Carry a first aid kit

es last winter. The most snowmobile-related deaths was 39 during the 1999-2000 winter, the DNR said.

During the 1999-2000 winter, the 39th fatality occurred on Feb. 18, suggesting this winter won't end up as deadly, Engfer said. Typically, most snowmobiling in the state winds down by mid-March, he said.

Wisconsin has 220,652 registered snowmobiles, and its hundreds of miles of groomed trails also attract riders from nearby states, Engfer said.

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