Major Medicare changes become law

By SCOTT LINDAUL
The Associated Press
WASHINGTON — President Bush is going into law the most far-reaching changes in Medicare since the program's inception nearly 40 years ago, checking off a top priority amid questions about its scalability.

The most significant part of the $400 billion overhaul adds prescription drug coverage to the federal health insurance program for the elderly, starting in 2006. Beginning next May, seniors can buy a Medicare-approved discount card for $30 or less to help offset the growing costs of prescriptions.

But a wide array of other pilot programs are meant to tweak the Medicare system, and will add to the cost of the changes Bush signed Monday.

One of the costliest among them sets aside $300 million for a two-year, six-state effort for at least 50,000 patients to cover a limited category of self-administered prescription drugs. "No less than 40 percent of the funding shall be for oral cancer," Congress directed in a report accompanying the bill. "Other programs are designed to help health care providers and their patients, including a two-year program to cover chiropractic services without prior approval by a medical doctor." Still others are aimed at attacking waste.

\[Please see MEDICARE, 5A\]

P.M. News Wire
The Northeast is digging U.S. forces in Iraq are...

Coming Tuesday in The

Nuwaubians parade DA, police investigate

By JOSH RAYBURN
The Brunswick News

All four were represented in the Brunswick Christmas parade, but only one could end up in court for doing so.

Stephen Kelley, district attorney for the Brunswick Judicial Circuit, said Monday he may seek to prosecute the United Nuwahbian Nation of Moors who marched in the parade Saturday handing out literature and asking spectators about the guilt or innocence of their leader, Malcolm York.

And the Brunswick Police Department is investigating the group for giving children documents containing profanity.

York, known as Chief Black Thunderbird in the religious sect, will face federal charges of child molestation and avoiding financial reporting requirements in the U.S. District Court in Brunswick on Jan. 5, 2004. The trial was moved from Macon due to pre-trial publicity.

According to the Downtown Development Authority, the parade's organizer, the group did not properly identify itself when it applied to participate.

"They said they were a Masons group, a Shriners group," said Meredith Hanak, DDA executive director. "We had no reason to question them as we wouldn't any..." Please see PARADE, 5A.

The series

Today: The transfer option

Wednesday: Finding qualified teachers

Thursday: Bringing special education students into the mainstream

Friday: Closing the achievement gap

Saturday: What lies ahead

The reporter: Miram Haskell

as now, locally allowed transfers were grant

ded for non-academic reasons, such as problems with a school environment or a school's proximity to a parent's workplace.

Please see TRANSFER, 2A.

Decision comes as surprise to mayor

By KAREN SLOAN
The Brunswick News

The Brunswick Police Department is no longer accredited as meeting the highest standards for police work set by the Commission for Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies.

The department, without public announcement or informing the mayor, withdrew its application for re-accreditation prior to going before the commission's 21-member board last month.

The decision to drop its application cost the department not only prestige, but also the more than $7,500 it had spent pursuing re-accreditation.

Brunswick Interim Police Chief Ed Johnson attended the commission's annual conference Nov. 22 in Colorado Springs, Colo., but told The News he would not comment on the withdrawal of the application. She said she wanted to address the city commission before making a public statement.

"I just don't want to say anything about it until I have an opportunity to talk to the commissioners," she said.

Johnson is scheduled to address the city commission at its Dec. 17 meeting, City Please see POLICE, 5A.

Right to transfer says, 'your pupils are failing'

New rules add state, federal layers to local education

By MIRIAM HASKELL
The Brunswick News
Joanne Robison immediately trusted her decision to send her three children to an out-of-zone school to be educated. She knew in her heart that transferring them to St. Simons Elementary from the school they were zoned to attend, Altamaha Elementary, was the right move.

"It's really been a great blessing because the kids love it," Robison said from the playground at the island school, where Caleb and Joshua climbed monkey bars as they waited for Kansas to finish her violin lesson.

Robison and other parents like her got a pat on the back from President Bush in January 2002 when he signed the massive No Child Left Behind legislation.

In it he authorized a plan that would lead to the identification of certain schools as in need of improvement, or failing to make adequate progress based on goals set by each state, and give parents the option to remove their children's from those schools and send them to another, better performing one.

The legislation, now being phased in nationwide, establishes a goal of having every child graduating at grade level in mathematics and reading by 2014. To do so, it sets a variety of requirements and offers some funding to state and local school systems.

Many of those mandates — which are accompanied by threats of removing federal funding to systems if not put in place — have come under criticism. To legislators, they may appear overly strict or unworkable in practice, local systems often lack the budgets to staff and implement the initiatives.

One major component of the legislation is the identification of so-called Needs Improvement schools.

To do that, the Georgia Department of Education has set up a series of performance goals, or what it calls Annual Measurable Objectives, that schools and school districts must meet in order to be classified as making yearly progress. This means that each year, individual public schools will be assessed by the state using criteria such as test scores and attendance and can be classified as either making progress or failing to do so.

Schools that do not make state-defined progress face increasingly stringent consequences that can lead to a state takeover of school management.

Less serious measures include requiring schools to provide outside tutoring services or, as in the Robisons' case, allowing children to transfer schools. When transfers were granted last summer, the Robisons' assigned school, Altamaha Elementary, was classified as a Needs Improvement: their school of choice, St. Simons Elementary, was set up to receive children whose parents opted to pull them out of a Needs Improvement school.

But Robison had picked St. Simons Elementary three years ago, before Altamaha Elementary received the Needs Improvement school stamp. At the time, just...
Parade: Organizer questions application

Continued from 1A

Other group like that. This may lead to making the parade only open to locals.

"There were people who were offended," Kelley said. She was a member of the group handing out literature at Wal-Mart, the store with jurisdiction in the central case but could prosecute the group for violating the development authority.

"I might look into prosecuting them for submitting false information to a government, which is a felony," he said.

The Nawabian delegation in the parade included depictions of the Egyptian pharaoh Ramses, participants wearing bird and cow masks, and a group of mummers carrying parasols.

Mayor Brad Brown was in the parade and said a document entitled "Medical Records Don't Lie" contained profanity and was distributed along the parade route and given to children.

"Our local police are dealing with it," he said. "They started getting complaints on Saturday, and so did I. Hopefully we can do something about this."

One thing that could happen is the trial being moved out of Brunswick. Kelley said a federal court judge could see the Nawabian's actions as polluting the jury pool and decide to change the trial venue again.

Contacted by The News this morning, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Macon, which is prosecuting the case, would not comment on the parade actions. A spokesperson did say the information could be used during a pre-trial conference set for Dec. 16 in Macon.

The Nawabian entry in the Brunswick Christmas parade Saturday marches in ancient Egyptian garb.

-A view of the parade and the winning entries. 3A

Police: Mayor wants to know reason

Continued from 1A

Manager Roosevelt Harris said.

"The failure to re-accredit means only that the department does not meet standards set by the accrediting commission, a non-government, voluntary association. The department will continue to operate as usual."

The police department was given a copy of the commission evaluator's report prior to the withdrawal of its application, said Maya Mitchell, a program specialist with the commission. The commission's board makes its decisions on accreditation based upon the assessor's report.

"The accreditation program is a management system for CEOs of organizations, which allows them to conduct self-examinations of issues within their own departments," said Janice Dixon, also a program specialist. "It also allows them to demonstrate that they are meeting these top standards. For some departments, it's a way to initiate changes."

An assessment team looks at the organization's structure, personnel matters, hiring, management and operations, among other things, said Dixon.

The accreditation process is time-consuming and involved for the departments that apply.

It can also be costly. For the Brunswick Police Department, which has 78 full-time employees, the cost for the commission's evaluation was $7,650.

That amount does not include costs associated with the time and preparation involved by the police department itself.

The city police department, initially accredited by the commission in 2000, underwent a three-day on-site evaluation this past September.

The department can reapply for accreditation at any time. The benefits of CALEA accreditation are numerous, Dixon said. In addition to community confidence and recognition as a top department.
Catching football fever is easy to do

By BUDDY L. ELKINS
The Brunswick News

Now you find yourself looking at the cars with the Georgia flags; the people wearing red and black, talking at each other, and you can't help but wonder. What will it all be about? You're at a football game. You don't watch the sport. You just sit there and watch the people in the stands, hoping to find your way back to the hotel. It's the Georgia-Duke game on Saturday. It's a football game between Georgia and Duke at Duke Stadium in Durham, North Carolina. It's a football game, and there are thousands of people in the crowd. The game is over, and you're heading back to your hotel. You're tired, but you're happy. You've had a good time. You've seen some good football. You've seen some good people. You've seen some good food. You've seen some good sights. You've had a good time. You've had a good day. You've had a good weekend. You've had a good football game. You've had a good time. You've had a good weekend. You've had a good football game. You've had a good time. You've had a good weekend. You've had a good football game. You've had a good time. You've had a good weekend. You've had a good football game. You've had a good time. You've had a good weekend. You've had a good football game. You've had a good time. You've had a good weekend. You've
Creek shows debris near the water line, in the stream bank near the outfall pipe; and paper and rag debris is visible in a close-up of the weeds beside the outfall pipe. In addition, a small amount of foam can be seen below the weeds.

Holland collected water samples by the effluent discharge pipe that dumps water into Academy Creek that then flows to the Turtle River and St. Simons Sound.

The state laboratory that tested the water found suspended solids in the water above allowable levels.

Jim Harris, environmental engineer with the EPD, said there is an explanation why the level was high.

"There was river water backing up into the pipe at that time," Harris said. "Water coming out of time you can see visually with your eyes, there's a problem. People need to know there's something wrong down there."

Laboratory analysis of the level of nitrite, which is associated with raw sewage, was at 0.015.

"The sample confirmed in my mind what I saw," Holland said. "Even though it seems like a very small level, it is detectable. Nitrite is discernible at .004 parts per million. Harris said the nitrite level was high and that he has no explanation for that. However, he said that there are other sources of nitrite besides human waste. They include detergent and fertilizer. The plant does not monitor nitrite levels. The EPD conducted a walk-through inspection of the city's water pollution control plant earlier this year and initially pleaded guilty to 74 counts of child molestation and related charges, as well as one count of transporting children across state lines for sexual purposes, in return for a recommended 15-year prison sentence. The plea was rejected by U.S. District Court Judge Hugh Lawson, who said the sentence was not harsh enough for the crimes. Lawson then withdrew himself from the case and Royal took over. Through his attorneys, York withdrew his guilty plea. It was former followers of York, both children and adults, who accused him of molesting them. York is also facing charges of trucking financial reporting requirements.

According to the federal indictment, a woman considered to be York's main wife, Kathy Johnson, is also facing charges of transporting children across state lines for sexual purposes.

The United Nuwabian Nation of Moors currently has a 90-member compound in Putnam County, and in addition to claiming to have been from another galaxy, has claimed to be of American Indian and Egyptian heritage.

In Nuwabian literature, the group refers to York as a king of gods or savior. The group now refers to York as Chief Black Thunderbird, and calls him the leader Yamassee Native American Moors of the Creek Nation.

Trial: Moved from Macon

Continued from 1A

"Other than just having a large crowd there, we didn't have any problems with violence or anything like that," said Hofman. "They basically just had picnics and played music outside of the courthouse."

The trial comes as a surprise to Brunswick police. The department has not been officially notified of the trial location change, said Capt. Kevin Jones of the Brunswick Police Department.

U.S. Marshals inspected the federal courthouse in Brunswick and found it acceptable to host the high-profile trial.

York was arraigned May 5, 2002.

Economy best in

By JEANNINE AVERSA

WASHINGTON — The economy grew at a blistering 7.2 percent annual rate in the third quarter in the strongest pace in nearly two decades. Consumers spent with abandon and businesses ramped up investment, compelling new evidence of an economic resurgence.

The increase in gross domestic product, the broadest measure of the economy's performance, in the July-September quarter was more than double the 3.3 percent rate registered in the second quarter, the Commerce Department reported Thursday.

The 7.2 percent pace marked the best showing since the first quarter of 1984. It exceeded analysts' forecasts for a 6 percent growth rate for third-quarter GDP, which measures

Halloween Party
FRIDAY NIGHT, October 31st
Costume Contest & Prizes
Come Dance to your Favorite Tunes
Featuring Live Band FREE STYLE
No Cover for the Ladies
Doors Open at 7:00 pm
STARMILE LOUNGE
(formerly Diz Country)
241-12 Mile East-Starting Line - 912-245-2344

WANTED
PEOPLE WHO LIKE CATFISH
Catch Your Own Catfish or Bass
Catch A Catfish or Bass

Abundant Life Fellowship presents the HALLELUJAH FESTIVAL
Friday, October 31st