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LAWRENCE JACKSON/AP

President Bush poses for photographers after delivering a prime-time speech from the White House on the ailing financial markets Wednesday in Washington.

Deal near on bailout plan

JULIE HIRSCHFELD DAVIS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush is bringing presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain into negotiations on a \$700 billion rescue of Wall Street as Democrats and Republicans near agreement on a bailout plan with more protections for taxpayers and new help for distressed homeowners.

Senior lawmakers and Bush administration officials have cleared away key obstacles to a

deal on the unprecedented rescue, agreeing to include widely supported limits on pay packages for executives whose

Inside

Bailout blues may help define Bush's term.
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They're still wrangling over major elements, including how to phase in the eye-popping cost — a measure demanded by Democrats and some Republicans who want

stronger congressional control over the bailout — without spooking markets. A plan to let the government take an ownership stake in troubled companies as part of the rescue, rather than just buying bad debt, also was under intense negotiation.

A bipartisan meeting was set for Thursday to begin drafting a compromise, which top Democrats said they hoped could pass within days.

The core of the plan envisions the government buying up sour

assets of shaky financial firms in a bid to keep them from going under and to stave off a potentially severe recession.

Even as political figures haggled over the shape and price of the bailout, new economic indicators showed that orders for big-ticket manufactured goods plunged in August by the largest amount in seven months and that new applications for unemployment benefits were at their highest level in seven years.

Please see **BALLOUT**/page B2

Historic restoration nears completion

DOWNTOWN'S OLDEST BUILDING UNDERGOING MAKEOVER

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The opening of Jimmie John's Sandwich Shop was only the first step in the restoration of the oldest downtown building, which is at 537 W. Second St.

Doug Oakeson, one of three investors in the project, said renovations continue in other sections of the Farrell Block. He hopes it will be completed by April 2009.

"It's taken longer than we thought it would," he said. "We're making progress."

He said the five apartments that are being constructed on the second floor should be completed in the next 45-60 days. Drywall needs to be added and the rooms painted before they will be ready for tenants.

Two other commercial spaces will be available in the building as well, one on the eastern portion of the building and one to the south.

Oakeson said there has been some interest in the remaining portions of the building, and he anticipates a business will be able to move into the east bay by the first of the year. The southern section of the building should be ready by the end of the first quarter next year, he said.

More brick work and painting is needed, but Oakeson said it may have to wait until the spring.

"We want to make sure we do things right," he said. "We don't want to rush it."

Farrell Block was built in 1880 by Thomas Farrell and George Mowrey, and is the only stone building remaining in the downtown area. The building was added to the National Register of Historical Places in 1979 and some aspects of the project must be approved at the state and federal levels.

The building was the first stone building in Hastings, also known as "Stone Block," and was used for county offices when Hastings became the county seat, as a county court before a courthouse was built, as a school and as a theater, among other uses through the years, according to records at the Adams County Historical Society.

Randy Chick, director of the Business Improvement District, helped get the project started and said he is pleased by the results so far. Since Jimmie John's opened, the shop has generated a lot of traffic in the downtown area. He hopes to turn the area into a social hub as it has been in the past.

"That's part of the downtown experience that we try to generate in



AMY ROH/Tribune

Customers of Jimmy John's Gourmet Sandwiches leave the newly opened restaurant during the lunch hour Wednesday. Jimmy John's occupies part of the historic Farrell Block at 537 W. Second St.

everything we do," he said. "We're hoping that people come down to shop and enjoy themselves."

He said the franchise owner of Jimmy John's saw a value to having a store downtown and he hopes

other business owners will come to see the same.

Please see **HISTORIC**/page B2

Experts: Fluoride safe and effective

SHAY BURK

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It's safe, cheap and effective. That was the message shared by several speakers at a forum on fluoridation at Hastings College Wednesday.

"Safe is what the literature tells us. It's effective, we know it makes a difference and it's efficient, too," said Dr. Kim McFarland, the event's keynote speaker.

McFarland, a practicing dentist and professor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center's College of Dentistry, shared facts about fluoride, water fluoridation and benefits to the general public with the group of about 90 attendees.

"What we're talking about is simply adjusting the fluoride level of water to a level that is therapeutic to the point where there is a dental benefit," she said.

Please see **FLUORIDE**/page B2

On the Web

For more on the fluoride issue, see hastingstribune.com.

Officials: Safe haven law being misused

HASTINGS TRIBUNE

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LINCOLN — State officials held a news conference this morning regarding the influx of children being left at hospitals under the state's so-called "safe haven" law.

At least 16 children and youth, including 11 on Wednesday, have been abandoned at hospitals since Legislative Bill 157 became law in July.

Inside

Eleven children, including nine from same family, left at hospitals Wednesday.
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Weather

Lo: Clear tonight.
58 Sunny Friday.
Hi: Mostly clear
88 Friday night.



Art by CheyAnne Condry, 6, Lincoln Elementary

HOT DOG SCARE

PHILADELPHIA — After a bomb scare at the Philadelphia Phillies' ballpark, authorities pointed the finger at a fuzzy green suspect — The Phillie Phanatic. Hours before the Phillies-Atlanta

Nation

Braves' game on Wednesday night, a film crew shot a commercial of the mascot shooting heavily wrapped hot dogs from a launcher. But someone inadvertently left three of the duct taped hot dogs outside the ballpark, sparking security fears. Stadium employees were

evacuated and the bomb squad was called in.

Only after the packages were blown up did authorities realize they'd just exploded some sausages.

After the detonation, the game went on as scheduled.

The Associated Press

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Bailout: Deal said to be near on \$700 billion financial plan

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And new home sales tumbled in August to the slowest pace in 17 years, while the average sales price fell by the largest amount on record. It served to further dramatize the problem that Washington is trying to solve.

On Wall Street, stocks initially rose today on optimism about the deal but a credit market squeeze remained as doubts about the proposed plan's effectiveness drove demand for short-term, safe-haven assets.

Bush acknowledged in a prime-time television address Wednesday night that the bailout would be a "tough vote" for lawmakers.

But he said failing to approve it would risk dire consequences for the economy and most Americans.

"Without immediate action by Congress, America could slip into a financial panic, and a dis-

trressing scenario would unfold," Bush said as he worked to resurrect the unpopular bailout package. "Our entire economy is in danger."

Bush's warning came soon after he invited Obama and McCain, one of whom will inherit the economic mess in four months, as well as key congressional leaders to a White House meeting Thursday to work on a compromise.

With the administration's original proposal considered dead in Congress, House leaders said they were making progress toward revised legislation that could be approved.

Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., who has led negotiations with Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson on the package, said that given the progress of the talks, the White House meeting was a distraction.

"We're going to have to inter-

rupt a negotiating session tomorrow between the Democrats and Republicans on a bill where I think we are getting pretty close, and troop down to the White House for their photo op," said Frank, the House Financial Services Committee chairman. "I wish they'd checked with us."

Paulson and Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke have been crisscrossing Capitol Hill in recent days, shuttling between public hearings on the proposal and private meetings with lawmakers, to sell the proposal.

Obama and McCain are calling for a bipartisan effort to deal with the crisis, little more than five weeks before national elections in which the economy has emerged as the dominant theme.

"The plan that has been submitted to Congress by the Bush administration is flawed, but the

effort to protect the American economy must not fail," they said in a joint statement Wednesday night. "This is a time to rise above politics for the good of the country. We cannot risk an economic catastrophe."

Presidential politics intruded, nonetheless, when McCain said earlier Wednesday he intended to return to Washington and was asking Obama to agree to delay their first debate, scheduled for Friday, to deal with the meltdown.

Obama said the debate should go ahead.

Lawmakers in both parties have objected strenuously to the rescue plan over the past two days, Republicans complaining about federal intervention in private business and Democrats pressing to tack on more conditions and help for beleaguered homeowners.

Former President Clinton said

Thursday that one thing lawmakers must avoid is any bill that effectively rewards bad judgments and dangerous risk-taking among financiers.

"You have to be careful not to have unjust enrichment," he said on CBS's "The Early Show."

But many in both parties said they were open to legislation, although on different terms than the White House has proposed.

Some partisan sticking points remain.

Democrats are pushing to allow bankruptcy judges to rewrite mortgages to ease the burden on consumers who are facing foreclosure — a non-starter for Republicans.

Democrats acknowledge privately that the provision will almost certainly be dropped in the interest of a bipartisan deal. Obama told reporters it's "probably something that we shouldn't try to do in this piece of leg-

islation."

Democrats also want any potential proceeds the government reaps from the bailout to go to a fund designed to pay for housing for poor families. Many Republicans oppose the very existence of the fund, which they say is a backdoor means of funneling money to liberal political groups.

Democratic demands that Congress be given greater authority over the bailout and that the government be required to help homeowners renegotiate their mortgages so they have lower monthly payments already have been accepted in principle.

Under the bailout bill, which will let the government buy huge amounts of toxic mortgage-related assets, "we're now the biggest mortgage holder in town, and we can do serious foreclosure avoidance," Frank said.

Nation

FLATULENCE

CHARGE

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. — A West Virginia man who police said passed gas and fanned it toward a patrolman has been charged with battery on a police officer.

Jose A. Cruz, 34, of Clarksburg, was pulled over early Tuesday for driving without headlights, police said. According to the criminal complaint, Cruz smelled of alcohol, had slurred speech and failed three field sobriety tests before he was handcuffed and taken to a police station for a breathalyzer test.

As Patrolman T.E. Parsons prepared the machine, Cruz scooted his chair toward Parsons, lifted his leg and "passed gas loudly," the complaint said.

Cruz, according to complaint, then fanned the gas toward the officer.

"The gas was very odorous and created contact of an insulting or provoking nature with Patrolman Parsons," the complaint alleged.

He was also charged with driving under the influence, driving without headlights and two counts of obstruction.

Cruz acknowledged passing gas, but said he didn't move his chair toward the officer nor aim gas at the patrolman. He said he had an upset stomach at the time, but police denied his request to go to the bathroom when he first arrived at the station.

"I couldn't hold it no more," he said.

He also denied being drunk and uncooperative as the police complaint alleged. He added he was upset at being prepared for a breathalyzer test while having an asthma attack.

VOMIT PRANK

TEMPE, Ariz. — Police say members of an Arizona State University fraternity vomited milk from a campus bridge and caused a car crash that injured two people.

Tempe police Sgt. Steve Carbajal says the prank caused a woman in one car to stop in the road Monday night. Another car smashed into it from behind.

He says the woman and her 6-year-old daughter suffered only minor injuries.

University police say they are investigating the alleged prank.

The Associated Press

Historic: Building being renovated

Continued from page A1

Chick said the renovation of Farrell Block has generated a lot of buzz in the community and appears to be more successful than he originally hoped. He said it could draw interest in other downtown buildings as well as the historic building itself.

"It's gone way above our expectations," Chick said. "It's something not only the downtown, but the entire community, can be proud of."

Fluoride: Experts say element safe, cheap, effective

Continued from page A1

Fluoride is a natural element in water, air and soil, meaning that people breathe it in every day, McFarland said.

The fluoride level in the water in Hastings and Grand Island is .3 parts per million and neither community fluoridates its water.

Hastings voters will go to the polls on Nov. 4 to determine if the city should fluoridate its water supply or vote to opt out of the Nebraska Legislature's decision to require fluoride.

According to dentists and other medical professionals, the optimum level for fluoride is one part per million. McFarland said this one part per million can be represented as one droplet of fluoride dropped into a tub full of water.

That one droplet of fluoride would help to prevent the demineralization of teeth, which leads to cavities in children and adults alike. McFarland said fluoride prevents the loss of enamel, or hard coating, which protects a tooth.

She said fluoride, if added to a person's water later in life, also can help to re-mineralize the outer coating of a tooth and in some cases actually help to repair a small cavity.

Without fluoride, McFarland

said people can get cavities and eventually need crowns to fill in the missing tooth area or simply have the tooth removed.

Nationally, she said 20.5 percent of people 65 years and older have no teeth. In Nebraska, that number is at 23.1 percent compared to the 45 percent of people missing six or more teeth.

Even though fluoride can be beneficial, McFarland agrees that too much fluoride can be harmful, causing fluorosis, a discoloration of the teeth that in most cases is simply a cosmetic problem.

She said this problem forms typically in babies who are given too much fluoride. In one example, she said a parent may give the child a fluoride vitamin, fluoride rinses and fluoridated toothpaste in hopes that the child will not get cavities.

Instead, McFarland said the Centers for Disease Control recommends that all people drink fluoridated water and brush their teeth twice daily with fluoridated toothpaste to prevent the formation of cavities.

During the question-and-answer portion of the forum, Dr. Kevin Wycoff, a Hastings family physician, explained further the benefits and possible consequences of consuming fluoride.

"In the one part per million range that is standard for fluoridation, there have been no demonstrated dangerous effects to the body," he said.

When he first came to Hastings years ago, Wycoff said he was shocked to learn Hastings did not have fluoridated water. It was at that point that he started prescribing that babies 6 months and older get a fluoride supplement.

As for young infants, Wycoff said the American Dental Association agrees that babies who are breastfed or who drink ready-to-drink formula can have fluoridated water. Babies who are drinking formula from a powder mixed with water should use water without fluoride until at least 6 months of age as a precaution.

However, once a child is ready and starts to consume fluoride, McFarland said the child is really being benefited for a lifetime. That child will have 40 percent less decay over his or her lifetime if he or she continues to consume fluoride through the lifetime.

McFarland said fluoridated water is a benefit for a child in more ways than simply preventing cavities. She said more than 51 million school hours are lost each year in the U.S. because of

dental-related illnesses. That doesn't include the loss of productivity when a parent is away from work and the cost of fuel to drive the child to the dentist.

Nationally, 78 percent of children will have at least one cavity by age 17. In Nebraska, 60 percent of children have at least one cavity by the time they enter third grade.

The national health goal is for 75 percent of the U.S. population to have fluoridated water supply by 2010, McFarland said. That number is at about 70 percent now with more than 184 million people receiving the optimal fluoridation amount through their public water supply.

McFarland said there are three types of fluoride compounds that can be added to the water supply. The type used in Nebraska is the liquid form called hydrofluorosilicic acid. Other states use solid forms called sodium silicofluoride and sodium fluoride.

Andy Kahle, a drinking water program specialist with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, said fluoride, in each of the forms McFarland mentioned, is a by-product of fertilizer production.

In a question regarding contaminants in the fluoride solu-

tion, Kahle said that the acid is not a pure solution.

"What Randy gets in Holdrege is 23-25 percent pure. The rest is water and some other things. You would have to contact the distributor or manufacturer to find out more," he said, referencing Randy Bailey, a water operator from Holdrege who also spoke at the forum.

As for the stability of the fluoride injection systems, Kahle said these systems are manufactured by people and thus have problems.

He said he is not aware of any illnesses caused by a larger than recommended amount of fluoride going into the water supply, however.

Wycoff said there are times when too much fluoride is harmful, but the only times that is an issue is when the levels are greater than four parts per million.

At the one part per million levels, a person would have to ingest 80 to 200 gallons of water to reach the acute toxicity level. However, McFarland said it would be impossible to drink that amount at any one time.

McFarland reminded the group that the new state law only requires that fluoride up to the optimum level of 1.2 parts per million of fluoride be put into the city's water supply.

Safe haven: Parents aren't absolved of responsibility

Continued from page A1

Officials from the Department of Health and Human Services said that leaving a child at a hospital does not terminate parental rights and does not mean that no criminal charges will be filed.

LB157 prohibits prosecution when a child is left at a licensed Nebraska hospital, but does not protect parents from being charged for incidents that happen before the child is left.

"If abuse or neglect is uncovered that occurred before the child was turned over to a hospital, county attorneys do have the option of filing charges," said Todd Landry, director of the division of children and

family services in HHS. "The law only protects people from prosecution against the actual act of leaving the child at a hospital. There seems to be a misconception that when a child is dropped off at a hospital, the parents are absolved of responsibility. That couldn't be further from the truth."

If parents choose to use this law, Landry noted that the courts and HHS will now be very involved in these families' lives. Courts are likely to require parents and guardians to participate in parenting classes, family therapy, conflict resolution or other services in an effort to reunite youth with their families and may order child support

payments while they are in state custody, he said.

"LB157 was intended to protect helpless children who are in immediate danger, such as an infant who is left outside or unattended. It was not intended for those having difficulty parenting older youth who may be defiant, unruly or who have behavior problems," Landry said. "I am very concerned about the situations we've seen so far. I empathize with parents who aren't sure where to turn, but I want to encourage those families to use other options before taking the drastic step of abandoning a child."

Landry also called for the modification of LB157 to return

the focus to infants who are in immediate danger of being harmed.

Local resources are available and can be found by calling 211 or going to the HHS Web site, www.dhhs.ne.gov. HHS offices can provide information about options and resources.

"It's important to recognize the potential trauma abandonment can cause for children of all ages," Landry said. "For the benefit of the child, it's important that LB157 only be used when the child is in immediate danger of being harmed."

Safe haven cases are handled in the following manner:

◆ Hospitals contact local law enforcement to inform them of

a child being left at their facility.

◆ Law enforcement places the child in DHHS' temporary custody on emergency protective hold for up to 48 hours.

◆ The county attorney decides whether to file a request to make the child a state ward.

◆ The courts rule on that request and either make the child a state ward or return the child home.

Once the child is placed into the temporary custody of HHS, the legal process is the same for all children. This is regardless of how they entered the system, whether through reporting of child abuse and neglect, a case being handled by the Office of Juvenile Services, or LB157.



MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Stop out during the DUCKS UNLIMITED Greenwing Day on Sunday, September 28.

Sign up from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. for a Bunker Hill Membership

Receive 15 FREE birds when you sign up for your membership.

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