STATE BRIEFS

Forest fires force home evacuations

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. (AP) - A forest fire that has burned about 1,000 acres here and forced the evacuation of eight homes could take a week to contain, officials say.

The fire in the Wampee community west of North Myrtle Beach burned Thursday toward the Conway Bypass between state Highway 90 and the beach, Forestry Commission spokesman Ken Cabe said.

Cabe said no one had been injured and no homes had been damaged. Two unoccupied buildings were burned.

In response to the fires, Gov. Hodges issued an emergency executive order that will allow the National Guard to use aircraft to fight the fires.

"On a scale of one to 10, this is a nine," said Henry Bell, a ranger with the commission. "This fire is going to be bad. We're not going to control it anytime soon."

Bell said this could be the worst fire in Horry County this season. The combination of wind and recent dry weather made the fire hard to fight. In less than an hour, the fire had consumed 100 acres of trees.

Firefighting efforts were complicated by the Carolina Bays in the area, Cabe said. While the vegetation in the bays was dry and burning, the boggy nature of the bays made it difficult to use bulldozers.

IT HAPPENED NEWS YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED

POWDER NOT ANTHRAX: The white powder found in a mail bin in the post office in Taylors has tested negative for anthrax, postal spokesman Harry Spratlin

TRUCK DRIVER SENTENCED: A Manning, S.C., truck driver who drove the wrong way on I-95 and triggered a string of crashes that killed three people last fall was sentenced to 10 years in prison on Wednesday.

NATION BRIEFS

Senate increases intelligence funds

WASHINGTON (AP) -

The Senate unanimously approved a bill Thursday that would beef up the intelligence services to strengthen America's ability to combat

"Our legislation authorizes activities that will rebuild the foundation of our intelligence community so that we can meet the terrorism challenge," said Sen. Bob Graham, D-Fla., chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., the committee's top Republican, said, "The war we fight today is an intelligence-driven one to a degree that we have never seen before.'

"Wherever terrorists and their supporters can be found. that is the battlefield," Shelby said. "Never before have we demanded or have we needed so much from our intelligence

Unexploded bombs force evacuation at Michigan college

HOUGHTON, MICH. (AP)

— Two unexploded bombs were found on the campus of Michigan Technological University, and the school is offering a \$2,000 reward for information.

Campus police discovered the bombs at about 3:30 a.m. Monday during what was supposed to have been a routine campus search near the U.J. Noblet Forestry Building and the U.S. Forest Service Engineering Laboratory. Work at the labs includes genetic engineering research for the forest products industry.

A state police bomb squad defused and removed the bombs. No injuries were reported.

The bombs consisted of three 5-gallon buckets filled with an unknown liquid wired to two ignition devices.

These were real devices," school spokesman Dean Woodbeck said. "We think that whoever did this ... was specifically targeting something dealing with the forestry building and the forest building.'

Alabama man ends **Greek segregation**

TUSCALOOSA, ALA. (AP) — A black man has joined an all-white fraternity at the University of Alabama, becoming the first man to break the color barrier in a Greek-letter group on the campus.

University spokeswoman Janet Griffith said Wednesday the man, who didn't want his name made public, joined an undisclosed fraternity this fall after rush.

The lack of blacks in the university's traditionally white fraternities and sororities was an issue earlier this year after a black woman failed to gain a membership invitation from any white sorority.

The woman, Melody Twilley, said she suspected she was rejected because of

IT HAPPENED NEWS YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED

COURT TO DECIDE ON DRUGS TESTING: The Supreme Court agreed Thursday to decide whether leaders of untroubled schools should have the same authority to test students for drugs as do schools with serious narcotics problems.

WITH VOTERS AWARE, BALLOTS IMPROVE: Voters in this week's mayoral election improved their technique when using punch-card ballots, cutting by half the rate of uncounted votes from last year's disputed presidential vote.

BAD NEWS IN JOB RATES: The nation's unemployment rate soared from 4.9 percent in September to 5.4 percent in October, and companies eliminated 415,000 jobs, the biggest one-month drop in 21 vears.

Bush says U.S. will persevere

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA — President Bush assured an uneasy nation Thursday night that the United States will prevail against terrorists and said Americans should not "give in to exaggerated fears or passing rumors."

In a prime-time address, he told Americans to turn their fears into action: Volunteer in hospitals. schools, homeless shelters and at military facilities or train for emergency service work and join a new victory abroad - "We will persecivil defense force he hopes to build.

'We have entered a new era. This new era requires new responsibilities - both for the government and our people," the president said.

Nearly two months after the attacks in New York and Washington, Bush conceded that his administration doesn't know who unleashed anthrax in the U.S. mail Nor did he offer hope that U.S. troops would soon find Osama bin Laden.

But he confidently predicted

vere in this struggle, no matter how long it takes to prevail" and lauded Americans for their actions so far.

"We are a different country than we were on September 10th: sadder and less innocent; stronger and more united; and in the face of ongoing threats, determined and courageous," the president told a crowd of 5,000, most of whom were police, postal workers. firefighters and other uniformed public servants.

WORLD BRIEFS

Prince Charles gets slapped with flower

RIGA, LATVIA (AP) - A 16-year-old girl slapped Prince Charles' face with a red carnation Thursday as he stopped during a tour of downtown Riga to talk with a group of children.

"I'm against the Afghan war," the teenager said in Russian to reporters as police took her away

The girl, who gave only her first name, Alina, was still in police custody late Thursday afternoon. Police spokeswoman Krists Leiskalns wouldn't say whether she would be charged.

After the incident, the heir to the British throne flinched and looked startled, but then continued on, chatting with some of the several hundred people who turned out to see

IT HAPPENED **NEWS YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED**

MAHINOG, PHILIPPINES

(AP) — Tropical storm Lingling battered the Philippines for a second day Thursday, leaving at least 108 people dead, sinking a cargo ship and virtually shutting down several provinces.

U.S. general defends timeline of attacks

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - The top U.S. commander of the war in Afghanistan defended the military's effort on Thursday, saying, "We like the progress we have had up to this point.

"It is only those who believe this should be done in two weeks' time ... who are disappointed in this," said Gen. Tommy Franks, who heads the U.S. Central Command.

In his first appearance at a Pentagon news briefing, the Army general was asked about criticism that the monthlong bombing campaign has been "too timid."

"Absolutely not," Franks said. "We are on our time line I find our progress up to this point satisfactory," he added.

Both Franks and Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said the effort to topple the al-Qaida terrorist network and its Taliban protectors will continue unabated.

"This will take as long as it takes," Franks said, calling it a 24hour-a-day effort. He wouldn't rule out the use of U.S. or allied ground forces in the battle.

"As we stand where we are now, we want to keep all the options open," the military commander said.

Without offering specific num-

bers, Franks said he believes that Taliban military forces have been torn "asunder." Later, he said those forces have had difficulty communicating and planning, but offered no other assessment of their combat power.

Franks said terrorist leader Osama bin Laden isn't a focus of the military campaign.

"We have not said Osama bin Laden is a target of this effort," he said, saying the main focus is on the entire al-Qaida terrorist network.

On Wednesday, Rumsfeld said U.S. airstrikes in Afghanistan have killed scores of Taliban and al-Qaida fighters. The terrorist network and its Taliban allies still have between 40,000 and 50,000 troops in Afghanistan, Rumsfeld said in a television interview.

Twice a day, he said, reports cross his desk detailing Taliban battlefield dead, from a half-dozen to 20 at a time. The commandant of the Marine

Corps, Gen. James Jones, said Thursday the USS Peleliu, a largedeck amphibious assault ship in the Arabian Sea, had been "pulled off station" temporarily to perform a sensitive mission. He wouldn't provide details but said the new mission was unrelated to the war in Afghanistan. An aide said the Peleliu would remain in the same general area to do its new mission.

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