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STATE

Traces of West Nile virus found in S.C.

COLUMBIA, S.C. — The state's health agency says it has found mosquitoes in South Carolina that have tested positive for the West Nile virus.

"This is the first time that West Nile virus has been found in mosquitoes in South Carolina," said Dr. Chris Evans, a medical entomologist at DHEC's bureau of laboratories.

The mosquitoes were collected at two sites in the Harbison area in Richland County. This particular species, the southern house mosquito, is one of the primary carriers for West Nile virus in the United States, Evans said.

"It generally is an urban, rather than rural, pest and breeds continuously during the warm months especially around stagnant water that is high in organic debris," Evans said. "It feeds mostly on birds at night, biting their feet and legs, but it also feeds on mammals, including humans and horses."

Board at odds over agency spending

COLUMBIA, S.C. — The State Budget and Control Board agreed Tuesday to set aside \$101 million in a reserve account to cover lagging tax collections, but they couldn't agree to a plan to cut state agency spending.

Gov. Jim Hodges was the only member to vote against setting aside money from the capital reserve account.

The governor said he was sure that the state would meet revenue projections and that any action only three months into the budget year was premature.

It was a tough meeting for a politically divided budget board. Hodges and the two other Democrats on the panel are facing challengers this November, while the Republican members don't have the same political pressure.

NATION

Medical marijuana legal in Santa Cruz

SANTA CRUZ, CALIF. (AP) — Calling Santa Cruz a sanctuary from federal authorities, medical marijuana advocates — joined by city leaders — passed out pot to about a dozen sick people at City Hall.

"Santa Cruz is a special place, and today we're letting the world know how compassionate we can be," Mayor Christopher Krohn said. "We're taking a stand."

Marijuana is illegal as a medicine or as a recreational drug under federal law. But state law, and county and city ordinances, say it's legal if recommended by a doctor.

Drug Enforcement Administration spokesman Richard Meyer said he was appalled by Tuesday's event, and feared the community "is sending a dangerous message to its children."

Voters won't get say in N.C. lottery

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — The state House on Tuesday rejected legislation to allow North Carolina voters to have their say on whether they want a state-run lottery.

The vote means the lottery issue is dead for the year, said Speaker Jim Black, who thought the defeat would become a campaign issue for the GOP. North Carolina is one of 12 states without a lottery — the only one on the East Coast — but residents have been playing the lottery for over a decade in surrounding states.

North Carolinians are projected to spend more than \$200 million this year on lottery tickets in Georgia, Virginia and South Carolina, according to one study.

South Carolina started its lottery this year, leaving Tennessee — which has a referendum on its November ballot — as the only neighboring state without one.

WORLD

Al-Qaida connected to reporter's death

KARACHI, PAKISTAN (AP) — An al-Qaida suspect arrested with alleged Sept. 11 organizer Ramzi Binalshibh has been identified as one of the killers of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl, a senior police official said Tuesday.

The report is the strongest evidence yet of an al-Qaida connection to Pearl's kidnapping and murder, but may complicate the government's case against four men already convicted of the crime.

The official refused to identify Pearl's alleged killer by name but said he was not among the five suspects, including Binalshibh, who were handed over to U.S. authorities Monday and flown out of the country.

Pearl, 38, was kidnapped Jan. 23 in Karachi while researching Pakistani Islamic extremists.

Four militants, including British-born Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, were convicted of the crime in July. Saeed was sentenced to death by hanging and the other three received life sentences. All four have appealed.

S. Korea fight spurs call for jurisdiction

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA (AP) — An investigation into a weekend brawl between U.S. soldiers and South Korean activists on a Seoul subway could take time because of sharply conflicting claims by both sides, South Korean police said Monday.

The activists allege that one of the soldiers, Pvt. John Murphy, started the brawl by punching former opposition legislator Suh Kyong-won, who was handing out fliers about two South Korean girls who died June 13 after being struck by a U.S. military vehicle.

Murphy and two other soldiers claim they were the ones assaulted when Murphy declined to accept the Korean-language flier, which he cannot read.

Since the fatal incident in June, activists have been demanding more South Korean jurisdiction over U.S. soldiers.



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