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HARD WORK THAT HELPS CELEBRATE A SEASON



Thomas Strickland pulls two freshly cut Christmas trees toward a bailer as he helps harvest the evergreens in E.A. Hartley's fields south of Boone. The Christmas tree harvesting season is getting into full swing in Western North Carolina. Story, page 3A.

STAFF PHOTO BY CHUCK LIDDY

Congress OKs budget bill; veto certain

Negotiations on an administration offer to end the government shutdown fail, but may resume later.

By R.A. ZALDIVAR
KNIGHT-RIDDER NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON — Moving to reverse decades of Democratic policies, the Republican House and Senate approved a budget Friday that would: ■ scale back programs for the elderly and poor; ■ cut taxes for middle-class families and investors; ■ and put the government on track to a small surplus in seven years. "It's a fundamental change in America," said Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole, R-Kan. "It's a fundamental change in the direction of this country."

The Senate and House action came in the face of a certain veto by President Clinton that Republicans lack the votes to override.

The Senate vote Friday night was 52-47. No Democrats voted for the bill, and one Republican, Sen. William Cohen of Maine, voted against it. (Both of North Carolina's Republican senators, Jesse Helms and Lauch Faircloth, voted for the measure.)

Earlier, the 237-189 House vote also followed party lines, with only five Democrats voting for the bill and one Republican, Rep. Christopher Smith of New Jersey, voting against it. (The North Carolina delegation in the House voted along party lines.)

Because the Senate struck some minor provisions, the House will have to vote again on the massive bill — a formality that could take place as early as today.

As the Senate debated the bill, White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta negotiated with congressional leaders over a Clinton administration offer to accept the goal of a balanced budget over seven years — one of the Republicans' key demands. A deal would clear the way for ending the 4-day-old shutdown of government services.

As the federal budget dispute continues to reverberate across North Carolina, a majority of those polled by The News & Observer say keeping Medicare and Medicaid benefits is more important than balancing the budget. Story, page 6A

POLL

Source: State-wide poll taken by FGI. Margin of sampling error plus or minus 4 percentage points.

What is more important, trying to balance the federal budget by reducing Medicare or Medicaid, or keeping benefits as they are for recipients?

Keep benefits
Balance federal budget
Don't know/no answer

MEDICARE RESPONSE:	MEDICAID RESPONSE:
75%	64%
18%	26%
7%	10%

NCSU trustees approve tuition hike

By Thomas Healy
STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH — N.C. State University trustees voted Friday to raise tuition by \$400, a move that will strengthen the school's library but impose hardship on a campus where 80 percent of students work to put themselves through college.

In approving the increase, trustees followed the example set by UNC-Chapel Hill two months ago. But unlike its rival to the west, NCSU will not spend the additional revenue on faculty salaries.

Instead, a little more than half of the \$8.2 million will go to the library, helping to increase its collection of periodicals

and books and allowing it to stay open 24 hours. The remaining money will be spent on financial aid, most of it to help needy students cover the cost of the \$400 increase.

Trustees said they regretted having to increase the financial burden for students. But they thought they had little choice, given the legislature's reluctance to increase funding and the university's growing needs.

To support their case, the trustees listed statistics showing that NCSU's library ranks in the bottom half of research libraries nationwide. It also ranks last among UNC system schools in library expenditures as a percentage of total

educational costs.

"I'm going to stop short of saying we fixed the library," said board chairman Keith Harrod. "But we made a significant swing in that direction."

The increase, which takes effect next fall, will bring in-state tuition to \$1,359 and out-of-state tuition to \$9,918. Student fees will add nearly \$800 to that bill.

In keeping with a resolution passed by the faculty senate, the trustees decided not to spend the tuition revenue on raises for professors. But they did urge the school administration to find other ways

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INSIDE

■ **No oversight visits:** N.C. State trustees — including the president of the student body — vote to restrict the hours of co-ed visitation in all campus dorms. ►18

Greenville police to chat with users of escort services

By Jerry Allegood
STAFF WRITER

GREENVILLE — The Greenville police department made lots of men antsy this week when it announced that detectives will call customers of four local escort services to ask whether they saw the world's oldest profession being practiced during their visits.

The department's phones have been ringing more than usual.

"We've gotten several calls," said Det. A.J. Dennison, who is leading the investigation. "People are nervous."

Police collected about 100 names and addresses from business records during an investigation into alleged prostitution at local escort services over the past several weeks. Dennison said the customers — some who paid for services with credit cards — will not be charged as part of the investigation. But they will be questioned, beginning next week.

"I don't think their wives will be too happy when I ask them why their name and credit card numbers appear on the business records of the escort services," he said.

Police have not disclosed the customers' names, saying they are part of an investigation. Most have Greenville-area addresses, but none are particularly well-known or prominent, Dennison said. All will be treated the same, he said.

Some men have called to complain about the tactic. Other curious souls have called to find out more about it.

The tactic should "strike a little fear and let them know we are serious," Dennison said. Investigators won't care if the investigation worries some people, he said, if it slows down prostitution.

Robert W. Oast Jr., city attorney in

SEE GREENVILLE, PAGE 16A

TODAY

Cary remains unbeaten
Cary advances in the state playoffs by beating Millbrook, 36-15. In the state independent 2-A championship, Charlotte Country Day beat Ravenscroft, 17-14.
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W. Charlotte	8
N. Durham	0
W. Craven	36
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Bertie	32
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Business1D Deaths8B Metro1B
Classified1F Editorials18A People2A
Comics10E Lenders2E Sports1C

Today: Mixed clouds and sun. High 56, low 36.

Sunday: Breezy, mostly sunny. High 56, low 34.
Page 8C TOMORROW

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Thankful: Students in Wake and Orange counties will have five days to celebrate Thanksgiving.

Metro — Page 1B

Tar Heel voters cool to Clinton

A poll just taken also finds Gov. Hunt doing well

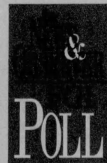
By John Wagner
STAFF WRITER

Bill Clinton has experienced many ups and downs during his three years in the White House, but in North Carolina his standing hasn't changed much from when he was elected.

Clinton continues to struggle to gain the affection of state voters, according to a statewide poll conducted last week for The News & Observer. In fact, Tar Heels favored Kansas Sen. Bob Dole over the president, 49 percent to 41 percent.

Throw independent Ross Perot into the mix, and the race would tighten, with Dole defeating Clinton by a slim margin here, just as George Bush did in 1992.

The poll, conducted by FGI Integrated Marketing of Chapel Hill, surveyed 601 registered voters between



Nov. 8 and 12, just before the partial federal shutdown caused by the budget standoff between Clinton and Congress. The poll's margin of error is plus or minus 4 percent. Among its other findings:

■ Democratic Gov. Jim Hunt remains one of the most popular governors in the country, with a 74 percent approval rating, the same as last April. Only 18 percent of those polled disapprove of the job that Hunt is doing, while 8 percent aren't sure.

■ Sen. Jesse Helms could face a tough re-election fight next year. If the election were held now, former Charlotte Mayor Harvey Gantt would draw 46 percent of the vote to Helms' 45 percent.

■ A Colin Powell presidential bid showed promise in

SEE POLL, PAGE 16A

FDA advisers OK artificial fat, nonprescription sales of Rogaine

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — An advisory panel told the government Friday that it's safe to approve the first zero-calorie artificial fat, leaving it to consumers to decide whether they want to accept the side effects.

Scientific advisers told the Food and Drug Administration that olestra should be sold, even though it has some unpleasant side effects and there are questions about its long-term nutritional impact.

"The consumer will vote at the cash register whether they accept the symptoms that go along with olestra products," said Howard

University's Donna Richardson, a nurse.

The FDA then announced that it should finish deciding olestra's fate within two months, unless an unexpected question turns up. The FDA never publicly sets deadlines for itself.

Commissioner David Kessler wouldn't say whether he would follow the advisory panel's recommendation, but the FDA usually does.

Another panel of scientists told the FDA that balding Americans should be able to buy the hair-growth drug Rogaine without a prescription.

SEE FAT, PAGE 16A

Exide Electronics moves to industry forefront

Raleigh's Exide Electronics Group, which makes uninterruptible power systems that keep personal computers running, is buying a Finnish competitor for \$195 million in cash and stock. The purchase will "shake" Exide roughly as large as the current market leader, American Power Conversion Co.

Business — 1D

