

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

ONE OF AMERICA'S GREAT NEWSPAPERS

50 CENTS

TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2006

VOL. 79, NO. 233 3/21/06 • FINAL

Pittsburgh Task Force moved aside

O'Connor grabs lead role in Fifth-Forbes development

By Mark Belko
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Pittsburgh Mayor Bob O'Connor will take charge of redeveloping publicly owned properties on Fifth and Forbes avenues Downtown, replacing the private group that has been leading the effort for more than a year.

Pittsburgh Task Force that he would take the lead role in finding developers for nearly 20 Urban Redevelopment Authority-owned properties in the run-down retail corridor.

Over the last year, the task force has been instrumental in recruiting Millcraft Industries Inc. of Washington County to buy the Lazarus-Macy's store and in generating a \$50 million to

\$60 million proposal from Washington, D.C., developer Madison Marquette to redevelop other buildings in the corridor.

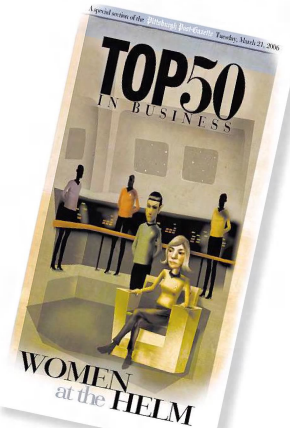
Mr. O'Connor stressed yesterday that he doesn't intend to go it alone. He said he wants all major Downtown stakeholders to be involved in revitalization of the retail district.

To that end, Mr. O'Connor and the URA plan to seek a planner

and designer to help develop standards for buildings, streets, sidewalks and other aspects of the corridor, with input from the task force, the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, the Cultural Trust, property owners and others.

Mr. O'Connor said one of his main goals will be to ensure

SEE MAYOR, PAGE A-6



Women represent more than half the region's work force but less than 10 percent of board members and senior executives at the region's 55 largest public companies, according to a Post-Gazette analysis. But heavy representation in the arts and university sector helps lift women overall to 28 percent of board seats and 26 percent of staff positions at 185 of the region's biggest companies and nonprofits. For more on the study as well as a rundown of the region's biggest, most profitable and fastest-growing public companies, see this year's **Top 50 in Business, Section E**

CHAOS IN GAZA



Hatem Moussa/Associated Press

Palestinian police officers, one injured, take cover during a gunbattle with Palestinian gunmen on the road leading to the Erez crossing between the Gaza Strip and Israel near the village of Beit Hanoun yesterday. The battle was one of five confrontations between militants and police that left 23 people injured. The clashes highlighted the Gaza Strip's raging chaos, which will present a daunting challenge to the incoming Hamas government. **Story, Page A-4**

Bush defends optimism on Iraq

City he cited, however, may not remain peaceful long

By Peter Baker
The Washington Post

CLEVELAND — As President Bush tells the tale, the battle for Tal Afar offers a case study in how U.S. and Iraqi forces working together can root out insurgents and restore stability. "The example of Tal Afar," he told an audience here yesterday, "gives me confidence in our strategy."

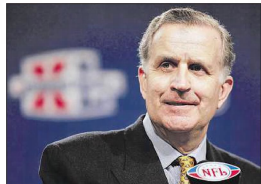
Reports from the streets of Tal Afar, half a world away, offer a

more complex story. U.S. forces last fall did drive out radicals who had brutalized the mid-size city near the Syrian border. But lately, residents say, the city has taken another dark turn. "The armed men are fewer," Nassir Sebt, 42, an air-conditioning mechanic, told a Washington Post interviewer yesterday, "but the assassinations between Sunni and Shiites have increased."

The twists of Tal Afar underline the difficulties Mr. Bush

has had in reassuring a doubtful American public that progress is being made in Iraq. The president and his aides say that the positive developments in Iraq get overwhelmed by the grim pictures of mayhem and massacre that dominate the evening news. If Americans knew about the success stories, the White House maintains, they would understand Mr. Bush's confidence.

SEE BUSH, PAGE A-3



NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue

Tagliabue steps down from NFL

By Gerry Dulac
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Having made a living handling fractious negotiations and brokering labor agreements, Paul Tagliabue was not going to be talked into changing his mind.

When he called Steelers Chairman Dan Rooney yesterday morning, there was no compromising on his course of action.

Mr. Rooney, chairman of the National Football League's ownership committee, was

the first person Mr. Tagliabue elected to call shortly after 9 a.m. And it was Mr. Rooney who informed each of the league's other 31 teams, via e-mail, that Mr. Tagliabue, 65, is retiring after 16 years as NFL commissioner, effective July 31.

He leaves a legacy of having expanded the league by four teams, realigned the divisions, revamped the scheduling formula and twice negotiated labor agreements with the players union.

SEE NFL, PAGE A-2

Top church official dismissed in controversy over finances

By Ann Rodgers
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Confronted by allegations of financial misconduct, the head of the Orthodox Church in America has dismissed a priest from a top administrative post and hired a major law firm to investigate.

A prominent critic of the church's financial practices praised the moves, while an administrative post and hired a major law firm to investigate.

Web site has detailed the accusations, was encouraged that Metropolitan Herman retained a law firm known for investigating corporate misdeeds.

"If this is going to be open and above board and disclose things so that everyone knows what happened and we can move forward, that would be excellent," said Mr. Stokoe of Dayton, Ohio, a former member of the church's Metropolitan Council.

Harry Kutner, an attorney said his client is a scapegoat.

SEE CHURCH, PAGE A-6

County will help out on assess appeals

By Jerome L. Sherman
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

If you're still wondering whether you should file an assessment appeal this year, Allegheny County may have an answer for you.

Chief Executive Dan Onorato yesterday said his office would file appeals for a class of about 9,000 property owners who

bought properties after the 2002 reassessment and subsequently saw their school districts or municipalities win assessment increases based on sales prices.

The county is no longer using current market value, or the amount your home would fetch today on the open market, to assess property. Instead, it has adopted a 2002 "base year" system, meaning a property's assessment should reflect what it was worth four years ago.

Last week, a judge said that system is legal, and county officials are hoping to adjust values for recently purchased properties with assessed values above their 2002 numbers.

Properties from 100 of the county's 130 municipalities fit

SEE ASSESS, PAGE A-6

Prostitution ring traded in girls as young as 12

By Robin Erb
and Roberta de Boer
Stock News Alliance

HARRISBURG — For a truck stop that became one focus of "Innocence Lost," a major federal inquiry into underage prostitution, The Gables is surprisingly small and homely.

"You could sit and watch girls run down the rows, run under the trucks, in all directions," Trooper David Olweiler said. "There were some nights out there it looked ridiculous."

On a stretch of roadway just off I-81 and surrounded by other larger, better-lit truck stops, The Gables' patch of asphalt ends at the edge of a woods — convenient for hookers hiding from police.

The truck stop was often jammed by late afternoon, according to investigators, especially "party row," the dark far end of the parking lot notorious for "lot lizards."

If she was able to duck the cops and enticed enough cli-

SEE TOLEDO, PAGE A-6



Weather
Cold with a brush of snow.
High 34, low 23.
Page B-8

Bridge B-5
Business A-7
Classified D-8
Comics C-6
Crosswords B-5
Editorials B-6

Horoscope B-5
Local B-1
Lottery B-2
Magazine C-1
Manages D-10
Movies C-3

My Generation C-7
Obituaries A-11
Portfolio A-2
Scoreboard D-7
Sports D-1
Television C-4

post-gazette.com
Search Pittsburgh Post-Gazette newspaper libraries as far back as 1990.
For a link to details on our archive service, visit www.post-gazette.com

