

BRIEFS
STATE

INDIANAPOLIS

Guidant exec admits FDA got wrong information

A Guidant Corp. executive acknowledged the medical device maker changed one of its defibrillators in 2002 and later incorrectly told regulators it had no effect on the product's performance.

Still, Fred McCoy, head of Guidant's cardiac rhythm management division, said in a deposition released this week that he didn't think the faulty defibrillator was responsible for patients' deaths.

"This particular failure mechanism does not have the capacity to kill a patient," McCoy said during a January deposition.

ST. MARY-OF-THE-WOODS

Former Indiana nun closer to sainthood

The 19th-century founder of a community of nuns in western Indiana has edged closer to Roman Catholic sainthood with the Vatican's approval of a second miracle, the reputed curing of a man's damaged eyesight.

Mother Theodore Guerin, who founded the Sisters of Providence community near Terre Haute, is credited with helping restore the eyesight of Phil McCord, an employee at the order's mother house.

To become a saint, the pope must declare that person worthy of veneration or imitation.

McCord, the director of facilities management for the order since 1997, said during a news conference Wednesday that surgery to remove a cataract from his right eye in 2000 resulted in a damaged cornea, and his doctor recommended a corneal transplant.

McCord, 59, of Terre Haute, said that while pondering whether to have the transplant, he entered the chapel at St. Mary-of-the-Woods College.

"Mother Theodore, if you've got any influence" McCord recalled praying, "I'd like you to exercise it now to help."

His eyesight began improving the following morning, he said during a news conference the order conducted to announce the Vatican had recognized the miracle.

Pain in the pocketbook

Consumer prices rise as energy costs continue climbing

By JEANNINE AVERSA
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

Consumer prices galloped ahead in January at the fastest pace in four months, especially pinching the wallets of motorists and other energy users.

The latest picture of the nation's pricing climate, released by the Labor Department on Wednesday, reinforced expectations that Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke and his colleagues will boost interest rates in the months ahead to blunt inflation.

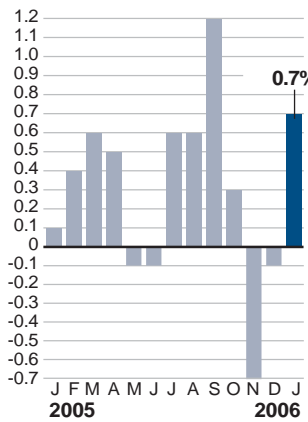
The government's most closely watched inflation barometer, the Consumer Price Index, advanced by 0.7 percent, compared with a 0.1 percent dip in December. The seesaw pattern mostly reflects gyrating energy prices.

"Consumers continue to be battered by rising costs," said Joel Naroff, president of Naroff Economic Advisers. "It's tough out there for most households."

Rising inflation is straining families' budgets. A separate report showed that workers' average weekly earnings, adjust-

Consumer prices

Changes from the preceding month in the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics AP

ed for inflation, dropped by 0.4 percent in January compared with a year ago. For most workers last year, paychecks didn't keep pace with inflation.

While the Bush administration has talked often about the generally good shape of the economy, Democrats have expressed wor-

ries about low, and middle-income families struggling under the weight of rising prices and living paycheck to paycheck.

The main culprits behind January's higher CPI reading were rising energy and food prices.

Excluding energy and food costs, core prices rose by a modest 0.2 percent in January, following a 0.1 percent increase in December. More expensive clothing and new cars were mostly blamed for the slight pickup in core inflation.

Fed officials are especially interested in the core inflation readings. By excluding energy and food prices, which can swing widely from month to month, the core inflation gauge gives economists a better sense of how other prices are acting.

From an economic point of view, core inflation isn't overly worrisome, but it is generating some angst within the Fed, said Sherry Cooper, chief economist at BMO Nesbitt Burns.

"The risks remain skewed to a mild up-creep in core inflation during the months ahead" and that will keep the Fed on a rate-raising path, she predicted.

More Americans seek help from food banks

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON

More than 25 million Americans turned to the nation's largest network of food banks, soup kitchens and shelters for meals last year, up 9 percent from 2001.

Those seeking food included 9 million children and nearly 3 million senior citizens, says a report from America's Second Harvest.

"The face of hunger doesn't have a particular color, and it doesn't come from a particular neighborhood," said Ertharin Cousin, executive vice president of the group. "They are your neighbors, they are working Americans, they are senior citizens who have worked their entire lives, and they are children."

The organization said it interviewed 52,000 people at food banks, soup kitchens and shelters across the country last year. The network represents about 39,000 hunger-relief organizations, or

about 80 percent of those in the United States. The vast majority are run locally by churches and private nonprofit groups.

The surveys were done before hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit the Gulf Coast in 2005.

After the hurricanes, demand for emergency food assistance tripled in Gulf Coast states, according to a separate report by the group.

The new report, being released

today, found that 36 percent of people seeking food came from households in which at least one person had a job. About 35 percent came from households that received food stamps.

Cousin said the numbers show that many working people don't make enough money to feed their families. She said the food stamp numbers show that the government program, while important, is insufficient.

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Love, John & Sharon Parish

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