

Planned

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

it must be big enough to house the nearly 1,600 students expected to attend by 2016.

The district also knows it plans to put the new building close to the intermediate school. Clark-Pleasant already owns the land, which will cut down on cost.

Locating the building next to the intermediate school will allow the two schools to one day share a gym, cafeteria and mechanical systems, Superintendent J.T. Coopman said.

Each building will have separate teaching and administrative staffs, he said.

The district's 10-year building plan calls for an addition to the middle school in 2010. This would connect the two schools and allow both buildings to share additional classrooms.

The expanded space would lend room for about 500 more children bringing the total capacity to 2,100 students.

The first phase of the project, which starts next year, is expected to cost about \$55 million, while an addition will cost another \$15 million. The estimates are based on the projected size of the school.

Once architects hear from the community at the first two forums, they will have an idea about what are concerns and priorities.

Although they won't have blueprints ready, they will have a better idea of how much the project will cost and what the tax impact will be.

At the Feb. 8 forum, the public will be given an idea about what impact the project will have on taxes and what a timeline for construction will look like.

At a school board meeting in February, board members have to conduct a public hearing where they explain that they are going to build the school and raise taxes to do it.

"What we hope to do is get support prior to, rather than ask for it after, the (tax) hearing so everyone is informed and has had an opportunity to give their input," said John Rigsbee, a principal architect with architect firm CSO Schenkel Shultz.

The architect firm is also conducting a phone survey over the next week of residents in the area, Coopman said.

People will be asked what their general feelings are about the school district, what they know about the building project and what they know about Clark-Pleasant's struggle to keep up with enrollment.

The goal is for 350 people to complete the survey and for the results to be compiled into a report which will be available by the forum on Thursday.

IF YOU GO

Forum for the upcoming Clark-Pleasant middle school building project

What: Learn why district officials say there is a need for the new middle school. Give your opinion about how big the building should be and what other factors should be considered as the school is designed.

Where: Clark-Pleasant Middle School, 222 Tracy St., Whiteland

When: 6:30 p.m. Thursday

Other forums and meetings

What: A forum to discuss the quality and potential design elements of the building

When: 6:30 p.m. Jan. 25

Where: Clark-Pleasant Middle School

What: A forum to discuss the budget, tax impact and project timeline

When: 6:30 p.m. Feb. 8

Where: Clark-Pleasant Middle School

What: School board meeting where board members will discuss the project

When: 7 p.m. Feb. 20

Where: Clark-Pleasant administration building, 50 Center St., Whiteland

What: Hearing before raising taxes to build the new middle school

When: 6:30 p.m. Feb. 22

Where: Clark-Pleasant Middle School

Democrats ponder middle-class tax cuts



AP PHOTO
House Speaker Nancy Pelosi says Democrats haven't ruled out proposing tax cuts for middle-income Americans.

Pelosi: Increasing taxes for wealthy still possibility

By JOHN HEILPRIN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

Democrats are not ruling out raising taxes for the wealthiest people to help pay for tax cuts for middle-income families, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

She spoke of pursuing an estimated \$300 billion that people owe in back taxes, eliminating deficit spending and reducing wasteful federal spending.

"As we review what we get from ... collecting our taxes and reducing waste, fraud and abuse, investing in education and in initiatives which will bring money into the treasury, it may be that tax cuts for those making over a certain amount of money, \$500,000 a year, might be more important to the American people than ignoring the educational and health needs of America's children," Pelosi, D-Calif., said in an interview aired Sunday.

A budget rule, known as the pay-

as-you-go rule, that was approved by the Democratic-run House on Friday requires that tax cuts have corresponding cuts in government spending or tax increases elsewhere to pay for them.

"What we're saying is Democrats propose tax cuts for middle-income families. And we want to have 'pay-go,' no new deficit spending. We're not going to start with repealing tax cuts, but they certainly are not off the table for people making over half a million dollars a year," Pelosi said.

The Senate's top Republican said most GOP senators oppose this budget rule because "it almost guarantees that the majority, if it

enacts it, will try to raise taxes."

"The last thing we need to do is to be raising taxes in this country, and 'pay-go' is the first step toward raising taxes," said Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.

Last week, the president challenged Democrats to join him in balancing the budget within five years and urged them to cut thousands of pet projects from future spending bills.

"If the president's willing to join with us to fight waste, fraud, and abuse, collecting the taxes, closing the loopholes, we can start there," Pelosi said. "What we'd like to do is come to the table as I say, put all our priorities on the table."

WAR IN IRAQ

5 U.S. troops killed



AP PHOTO
An Iraqi policeman stands guard while others load a coffin with the body of a dead relative onto a car in Baghdad, Iraq, on Sunday. At

least 14 people were killed in Iraq on Sunday, as Iraqi troops waged a fresh battle to oust militias and pacify the capital.

Saddam's co-defendants await execution; 14 Iraqis die in attacks

By LAUREN FRAYER
AND SHAIKA MATTAR
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq

Two of Saddam Hussein's co-defendants were taken from their cells and told they were going to be hanged on the same day the former dictator was executed, their lawyer said Sunday.

But the two condemned men still await death as Iraqi officials decide how to avoid the kind of outcry that followed the hanging of Saddam on Dec. 30.

Also on Sunday, the U.S. military announced the deaths of five more American troops, and at least 14 Iraqis died in bombings and shootings.

Saddam's half brother and former intelligence chief Barzan Ibrahim and former head of Iraq's Revolutionary Court Awad Hamed al-Bandar were sentenced to hang after being found guilty along with Saddam of involvement in the killings of nearly 150 Shiites in the town of Dujail after a 1982 assassination attempt there against Saddam.

Their executions were postponed, however, until after the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha which ended five days ago.

Authorities also decided to give Saddam his own "special day," National Security

TRYING TO COPE

LAPORTE — Facing mounting debt and with no news of her husband, the wife of kidnapped businessman Jeffrey Ake has started bankruptcy proceedings for Equipment Express, the water bottling company he founded and ran until he was abducted in Iraq in April 2005.

Liliana Ake also has again put on the market the lakeside home she shares with the couple's four children.

"I can't afford (the house)," Ake told the Post-Tribune of Merrillville. "I have young children and a sick mother to take care of. I have some tough decisions to make."

Her husband was last seen in an April 13, 2005, video that showed him being held at gunpoint by at least three people, two days after he disappeared in Iraq.

adviser Mouwaffak al-Rubaie said at the time his execution.

One of Saddam's lawyers who met the deposed leader in his final days said over the weekend that Saddam expected to be executed and considered it the most beautiful end he could have.

Now Iraqi officials must decide how to carry out a second round of executions in

the face of worldwide criticism over their handling of Saddam's death. Saddam was taunted by some of those present in the execution chamber as he stood with a noose around his neck in the final moments of his life.

Al-Maliki has ordered an inquiry into the emergence of the unofficial video, on which Saddam is heard exchanging insults with his executioners and shown dying on the gallows.

In other developments, the U.S. military said three airmen were killed Sunday by a car bomb, a soldier was killed by small arms fire in Baghdad a day earlier, and another soldier died in combat in western Anbar province on Friday. A British soldier also died in a traffic accident.

At least 14 Iraqis died Sunday in bombings and shootings, including three Sunni Muslim shopkeepers gunned down in a busy marketplace and a Shiite cleric and his son killed en route to a mosque, police said.

A new battle for Iraq's capital was under way with Iraqi forces mired in gunfights with insurgents and U.S. helicopters hovering over an area where some 30 people died in fighting the previous night.

The fighting is part a military operation announced Saturday by the prime minister and intended to quell sectarian violence.

Report: Early NASA probes may have killed martian microbes

By SETH BORENSTEIN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

Two NASA space probes that visited Mars 30 years ago may have stumbled upon alien microbes on the Red Planet and inadvertently killed them, a scientist theorizes in a paper released Sunday.

The problem was the Viking space probes of 1976-77 were looking for the wrong kind of life and didn't recognize it, the researcher said in a paper presented at a

meeting of the American Astronomical Society in Seattle.

This new report, based on a more expansive view of where life can take root, may have NASA looking for a different type of Martian life form when its next Mars spacecraft is launched later this year, one of the space agency's top scientists said.

Last month, scientists excitedly reported that new photographs of Mars showed geologic changes that suggest water occasionally flows there — the most tantalizing sign that Mars is hospitable to life.

In the '70s, the Viking mission found no signs of life. But it was looking for Earth-like life, in which salt water is the internal liquid of living cells.

Given the cold dry conditions of Mars, that life could have evolved on Mars with the key internal fluid consisting of a mix of water and hydrogen peroxide, said Dirk Schulze-Makuch, author of the new research.

The Viking experiments of the '70s wouldn't have noticed alien hydrogen peroxide-based life and, in fact, would have killed it by

drowning and overheating the microbes, said Schulze-Makuch, a geology professor at Washington State University.

A new NASA Mars mission called Phoenix is set for launch this summer, and one of the scientists involved said he is eager to test the new theory about life on Mars.

However, scientists must come up with a way to do that using the mission's existing scientific instruments, said NASA astrobiologist and Phoenix co-investigator Chris McKay.

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