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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2006

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MOUNT UP

"Horsin' Around" at Sheriff's Department fundraiser.

LOCAL, 3A

3 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW TODAY

1 State officials have confirmed seven cases of E. coli infections in New York state tied to the national outbreak associated with pre-packaged fresh spinach.

2 The Buffalo Sabres will show off their new uniforms during an open practice at 10:30 a.m. today at HSBC Arena.

3 The Health Ministry of Japan said the country was likely to have 28,395 citizens aged 100 years or older at the end of September. Women comprise about 85 percent of that number.

ONLINE EXCLUSIVE ALL WET

Flooding concerns taking over portion of LaSalle neighborhood. Watch the video on our Web site.



WHERE TO TURN

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Delphi court hearings postponed

Bankruptcy court hearings to reject labor, supply contracts will begin Monday

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — The bankruptcy court hearings to determine whether Delphi Corp. can reject its labor agreements and certain supply contracts with General Motors Corp. have been postponed, the company said on Friday.

Delphi, which was part of GM until it was spun off in 1999, said the court had granted further adjournments in both cases. It has scheduled a Sept. 28 status

conference with the judge presiding over its bankruptcy case.

Friday was also the deadline for a second wave of UAW-represented Delphi employees to accept buyout offers. About 12,600 hourly employees have already taken early retirement offers.

A call to the UAW was not immediately returned.

The decision to postpone the bankruptcy court hearings came after GM, Delphi, and its unions

met on Thursday with Judge Robert Drain of the Southern District of New York.

The hearings to abandon labor contracts and retirement obligations had been scheduled to resume on Monday, while the hearing over the GM contracts had been scheduled to begin Sept. 28. Instead, the parties will continue negotiations out of court.

The company's largest employee union, the United Auto Workers, said on its Web site that

the postponement of the hearings was indefinite and that little progress had been made.

"While we have continued our discussions with General Motors and Delphi on issues concerning our members and retirees, we have no meaningful progress to report," the statement said. The postponements are "not an indication of any resolution of the many difficult and complex issues impacting UAW members and retirees."

Appearing in Detroit last Thursday, UAW President Ron Gettelfinger had cited problems with the negotiations.

"We're just very frustrated with that mess," he said.

Gettelfinger claimed that the early retirement and buyout deals Delphi had reached with its two largest unions should have helped the auto parts maker be more competitive.

He said, "It's simply a matter of greed now."

FREEDOM CROSSING



DAN CAPPELLAZZO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD: Laurene Buckley, Ph.D., director of Niagara University's Castellani Art Museum, speaks with Light of the World Mission's Bishop William H. Henderson of Buffalo about the pair of 1800s-era leg shackles on exhibit at the museum's "Freedom Crossing: The Underground Railroad in Greater Niagara" exhibit. The exhibit features stately artifacts and interactive videos. The Freedom Trail Festival, which celebrates the area's involvement with the Underground Railroad, will be held from noon to 6 p.m. today at Main Street and Ontario Avenue. Joining the festival this year will be the Ontario House Jazz Reunion. The reunion will include Bill Bates, Charlie Reeby and Pappy Martin.

Power input sought

STATE GOVERNMENT:

Forum on power for economic development to be held Monday.

BY JILL TERRELLI
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Those who think New York state needs to come up with a different plan to use its power will have an opportunity to have their voices heard.

From 1 to 3 p.m. on Monday, a state commission that was formed for the sole purpose of drafting a plan for how the state should use power for economic development will listen to the public.

For Western New Yorkers, it's a one-time only opportunity for in-person comment. Other forums are planned for New York City, Albany and Syracuse.

The forum, which will be held in Buffalo in the Walter J. Mahoney State Office Building, 65 Court St., is meant to inform the commission.

SEE POWER ON PAGE 5A

BANKING ON CHILD CARE

REBUILDING: Head Start executive director oversaw bank restoration project that will be honored later this month.

BY DENISE JEWELL
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Geraldine Donovan looked at an empty bank building on Main Street and envisioned a child care center bustling with 3- and 4-year-olds.

The Niagara County Head Start executive director saw classrooms where tellers once worked and a kitchen in an old bookkeeping room in the former HSBC bank branch at the corner of Michigan Avenue.



It was Donovan who guided the \$600,000 renovation to turn the century-old bank building into a school for five dozen preschoolers, said Niagara County Head Start Chairman Robert DiFrancesco.

"Her head was spinning when the idea was proposed," said DiFrancesco, who is also the principal of Niagara Catholic High School. "She was drawing

plans on the backs of napkins."

The Niagara Beautification Commission will honor Niagara County Head Start on Sept. 28 for the bank restoration along with several groups and individuals who have worked to revitalize sites in the city.

Donovan, a LaSalle resident, has worked both in her role as an educator and in her personal life to influence revitalization in Niagara Falls.

As a long-time Niagara Falls Planning Board member, Donovan frequently makes decisions that affect construction projects in the city. She joined the city's Historic Preservation Commission when it was created under former Mayor Irene Elia.

SEE CHILD ON PAGE 4A



JAMES NEISS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

SECURE:

Geraldine Donovan, executive director of Niagara County Head Start, stands with student Breajanye Crittenden, 3, in front of an old vault door, a remnant of the building's last owner. Donovan oversaw the renovation of a former Main Street bank building into a child care center.