



NEWS-DEMOCRAT

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Budget features officers, raises

Granite City plan is \$18.6 million

BY JAYNE MATTHEWS
News-Democrat

GRANITE CITY — The city's \$18.6 million spending plan for next budget year includes money to put plainclothes police officers in troubled neighborhoods and contains the first raises for city employees in nearly three years.

"One of the reasons we're in good shape is they got zero, zero for the past two years. It was very responsible of them," said Ward 2 Alderman Virgil Kambarian, chairman of the City Council's Finance Committee.

The percentage for the employees' raises has not yet been decided, he said.

The Police Department's new Neighborhood Intervention Unit will be a two-officer team patrolling at night in an unmarked car. They will target all types of crimes and city code violations — including overgrown yards and derelict cars — that affect people in a targeted neighborhood, Police Chief David Ruebhausen said Thursday.

The emphasis will be on drug and street offenses, he said.

"When you dedicate resources like that in a troubled neighborhood, they can make an impact in a hurry. We want people to be comfortable in their homes," Ruebhausen said.

The city has had community policing as far back as the 1980s, but had to discontinue it when federal law enforcement grants became less plentiful, Ruebhausen said.

To set up the program, the department will need one new police officer and a part-time officer from retirement. The part-time officer will free a full-time police officer from office duty.

January is the earliest the new, full-time officer can join the force, he said.

The money for the two officers is in the proposed city budget for the 2005-2006 fiscal year, Kambarian said.

The expected spending plan is about \$200,000 more than this year.

Kambarian said 11 of the city's 19 aldermen have seen

Please see **GRANITE, A2**

HERE FOR THE PARTY



Gretchen Wilson during a 2004 concert in St. Louis.



CURT LIBBRA/For the News-Democrat

Gretchen Wilson received a key to the city from Pocahontas Village President Dave Clark, right, and Village Board member Tim McKnight on Thursday at the newly minted Gretchen Wilson Park, where the Pocahontas Little League baseball team plays.

Wilson gets ball diamonds for birthday

BY CURT LIBBRA
For the News Democrat

POCAHONTAS — Her shoulders sank and head tilted as the music brought a blush to Gretchen Wilson's cheeks and an aw-shucks smile to her face.

"Happy birthday, dear Gretchen. Happy birthday to you," sang the crowd of about 1,000 people surrounding the Little League diamond in Pocahontas.

Wilson, who turned 32 on Sunday, returned to a hero's welcome Thursday in her hometown.

Pocahontas dedicated Gretchen Wilson Park on Thursday. The 35-acre park is named after the village's most famous daughter.



"It's nice to be sang to," said Wilson, who is used to it being the other way around.

This was Wilson's first pub-

lic appearance at home since hitting the big time. She was showered with gifts, including a key to the village, birthday cake, flowers, balloons and a banner autographed by players in the Pocahontas Little League.

The diamonds where the Little Leaguers play now bear the name Gretchen Wilson Park. Wilson donated \$15,000 to the park to build a pavilion.

"I can't tell you how much we appreciate all you've done," John Haberer, Little League

Please see **WILSON, A2**

Residents asked to use less water

Compliance said to be voluntary

BY JENNIFER KAPIOLANI SAXTON
AND LISA P. WHITE
News-Democrat

Police are not patrolling the streets looking for people watering their lawns but some Madison County communities continue to ask residents to conserve water.

Earlier this week, Edwardsville officials began asking residents

INSIDE: East St. Louis death is heat related.

PAGE A2 also provides water to Glen Carbon residents.

"We're just asking people to be sensible in terms of the amount of usage and the times of days and even the purposes," City Administrator Ben Dickmann said Thursday. "All of our towers are full. The lev-

Water saving tips

Don't water the grass or other landscaping during the heat of the day.

It's hot, but don't let the kids play with the sprinklers or the hose.

Turn off the water while shaving or brushing your teeth.

Take shorter showers.

Run dishwashers and washing machines only when full.

When washing dishes by hand, don't run water freely to rinse. Fill a second sink with rinse water.

Source: Illinois American Water

els are OK and we're meeting our demand."

According to a statement from the city, "each person is

Please see **WATER, A2**

Bank workers grilled in vote-fraud probe

Checks were cashed for \$5 and \$10 bills

BY GEORGE PAWLACZYK
News-Democrat

BELLEVILLE — Federal agents interviewed employees at a Belleville bank in May, concerning checks in excess of \$1,000 cashed for \$5 and \$10 bills paid to local Democratic officials just before the November election, said Republican politician Steve Reeb.

Reeb, the unsuccessful candidate for St. Clair County Board chairman in the November election, said a friend, who is an official at Bank of America, told him in March of concerns about transactions brought to the official's attention by a cashier.

Reeb said after getting his friend's permission, he told the FBI in late March about

the checks. He said agents met in May with the bank official and employees.

At the federal vote-fraud trial that concluded Wednesday with guilty verdicts against all five East St. Louis politicians, there was testimony from several witnesses about a need to pay voters \$5 and \$10 apiece to ensure a heavy majority for Democratic candidates in the November election.

There was also testimony that on Oct. 31, two days before the election, St. Clair County Democratic Central Committee Chairman Robert Sprague met at the VFW in East St. Louis and passed out about \$73,000 in checks to East St. Louis Democratic precinct committeemen. Lawyers for the vote fraud tri-

Please see **FRAUD, A2**

Collinsville hopes census figures can boost city's tax revenue

Population of 25,000 needed for home rule

BY ELIZABETH DONALD
News-Democrat

No matter the heat, Collinsville's census workers are now on the job.

About 85 enumerators have started going door to door throughout the city, according to City Administrator Pam Hylton. The enumerators are taking a headcount of the entire city, as

officials hope to update the population of Collinsville to take into account its growth since the 2000 census.

"We appreciate the residents' cooperation with this process," Hylton said. "It will help to secure additional revenue for the city in the future, and that helps everyone."

Specifically, the state and federal taxes determined by popula-

tion make up 15 percent of the city's budget. Officials have estimated that if the population has grown as much as they expect, Collinsville would see an additional \$760,000 over the next five years. That easily pays for the \$356,423 census, half of which is paid to the census workers.

The enumerators will carry official badges, Hylton said.

The census workers will have a few questions to ask, which

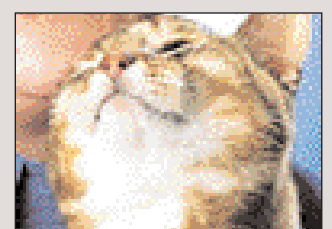
should not take more than a few minutes, Hylton said. The entire census is being taken door-to-door, without write-in forms.

Census workers will be out today and Saturday but will have Sunday and Monday off, Hylton said. "They'll be back Tuesday in full force, for at least the next month," she said.

According to the 2000 census, Collinsville has 24,707 residents, just shy of the 25,000 mark for home-rule status.

Because the city has issued more than 600 new housing permits since then, it seems likely the special census would make Collinsville a home-rule city. Home rule allows city governments more freedom than governments of cities that do not have home rule, including the ability to impose new taxes.

Contact reporter Elizabeth Donald at edonald@bnd.com or 345-7822, ext. 21.



Coming Saturday

Are you a laid-back person with a Type A cat? A Purina expert talks about the different personalities of cats and how to choose a pet. In Lifestyle.

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LOTTERY FOR ILLINOIS

Pick 3-Midday: **0-8-6**
Pick 3-Evening: **4-8-0**
Pick 4-Midday: **0-6-3-3**

Pick 4-Evening: **7-6-6-2**
Little Lotto: **09-15-32-34-38**
Jackpot: **\$7.5 million**

FOR MISSOURI

Pick 3-Midday: **0-7-4**; Evening: **3-0-6**
Pick 4-Midday: **4-7-3-9**; Evening: **5-8-6-7**
Show Me 5-Midday: **8-9-12-25-30**
Show Me 5-Evening: **7-15-22-28-42**

