

GIRLS' BASKETBALL PREVIEW

The Detroit News

Monday, November 30, 2009

Metro Final

SPORTS, 1B, 7B

Casino bankruptcy fees add up

Holiday sales off to merry start

But retailers worry weekend's shopping uptick won't last

BY JACLYN TROP
The Detroit News
AND ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
Associated Press

New York — Holiday shopping held steady through the Thanksgiving weekend after retailers saw a huge crowd of bargain shoppers on Black Friday buying discounted flat-panel TVs and fleece jackets.

Economic worries about jobs were still apparent as shoppers stuck to their lists and focused on practical and small-ticket items for themselves and for their loved ones, resulting in a mildly encouraging start to the season.

Online sales on Thursday and Friday, however, rose 11 percent to \$913 million, according to comScore, an Internet research firm.

Preliminary figures released Saturday by Shopper-Trak, a research firm that tracks more than 50,000 outlets, showed sales rose 0.5 percent to \$10.66 billion Friday, compared with a year ago. Regionally, sales were up 1.3 percent in the Midwest, 4.7 percent in the West and 0.6 percent in the South, but fell 4.9 percent in the Northeast.

The question now is whether merchants will be able to keep customers coming back for the rest of the season.

The National Retail Federation

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Bedbugs are back

Critters' irritating bite makes sleeping tight tough

BY STEVE PARDO | The Detroit News

Detroit

It started in February when Debra Miller, who works as a caregiver, noticed dozens of red welts on the body of a man she cares for in the Griswold Senior Apartments complex.

"We didn't understand what was going on," Miller said. "At first we thought it was the soap. Then we thought it was the fabric softener. Finally, I held up a magnifying glass and saw that something was digging into his skin."

It was bedbugs. And the man's apartment was infested with them.

The minuscule blood suckers — once essentially eradicated in the United States — have made an explosive comeback. Evidence of their return first showed up in coastal cities of New York and Los Angeles more than a decade ago and, since then, they have spread throughout the nation. Living in walls and mattresses, they can go a year without a blood meal. They come out at night, feasting on blood and leaving ugly welts.

The good news is they don't carry diseases, but they're resistant to modern pesticides and are adept hitchhikers, stowing away in suitcases, pant seams or inside the keys of laptop computers.

State health officials put together a task force this year because of the

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Photo by Robin Buckson / The Detroit News; Detroit News photo illustration

A resident shows recent bedbug bites at the Griswold Senior Apartments in Detroit. Bedbugs have been spreading in Michigan.

Ailing Greektown shells out nearly \$41M to lawyers, accountants, others

BY NATHAN HURST
The Detroit News

Detroit — Lawyers, accountants and other professional firms have billed Greektown Casino-Hotel more than \$40 million over the past 18 months for fees related to the casino's bankruptcy case.

One noted bankruptcy fees expert estimates the \$40.8 million billed to Greektown is at least double what is customary in cases involving a similar debt load, asset values and duration.

But the firms submitting the bills say the amounts are reasonable for a bankruptcy complicated by surprise purchase bids, litigation over a development agreement and intervention by local and state authorities.

Details of the professional fees are outlined in a document obtained this month by The Detroit News. It breaks down monthly professional and legal bills paid in the Greektown case from May 2008, when the casino filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, through last month.

The document is significantly more detailed than monthly income and expense reports required by the bankruptcy court. The amounts were verified by Greektown's Chief Executive Officer

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David Coates / The Detroit News

Greektown's bankruptcy fees have increased in the last few months, with almost \$5 million spent in October alone.

Bankruptcy details: Restructuring is big business for firms. 12A

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Levin casts doubt on Afghan troop boost

Washington — President Barack Obama is expected Tuesday to announce a large U.S. troop buildup in Afghanistan, and a key Senate Democrat says the president needs to show how his plan will bolster Afghan forces in the war against the Taliban and al-Qaida. "The key here is an Afghan surge, not an American surge," Michigan's Sen. Carl Levin said Sunday. NATION & WORLD, 8A



Scott Olson / Getty Images

An Afghan soldier gets ready to patrol. Sen. Carl Levin says Afghan forces are the key to success.

Woods addresses crash but doesn't meet cops

Windermere, Fla. — Tiger Woods said in a statement Sunday the early-morning crash in which he was injured "is my fault" and that his wife acted bravely in helping him afterward. However, the world's top golfer canceled plans to meet state troopers. SPORTS, 1B

Budget-cut experiment gets personal

In the sixth week of his Grand Experiment to pare \$1,000 from his household spending, Brian J. O'Connor tackles "his" and "her" money and finds it's dangerous territory. YOUR MONEY, 14A

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