

IRON STRONG DAILY

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Local Kirkuk NGOs gather, discuss future

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The Kirkuk Provincial Reconstruction Team assisted local non-governmental organizations in setting up a conference at the Kirkuk Government Building in Kirkuk City, Iraq, Nov. 8-9.

Dr. Jeff Ashley of the U.S. Agency of International Development spoke at the conference, urging the importance of working together despite their cultural differences.

"It floods my heart with great joy to see so many representatives from the NGO sector in Kirkuk participating in this important conference," said Ashley.

He told the NGO participants, "after all your efforts and toil here we are today to bring together the best and brightest minds of the NGO's to talk about the future."

The local NGO leaders, mainly dealing with civil society, were able to share their problems and needs in



Members of the Kirkuk Provincial Reconstruction Team assisted local non-governmental organizations in setting up a conference at the Kirkuk Government Building in Kirkuk City, Iraq, Nov. 8-9. The conference assisted the local NGO's to learn ways to find solutions to solve their problems and work together no matter what political, religious, ethnic or gender affiliation they may be tied to.

the Kirkuk area through the two-day conference.

A female Arab member of the conference spoke about some issues the NGO's have had in the recent past. She said the Haweejah area in Kirkuk Province was so bad they couldn't leave their homes due to fear of being killed by insurgents. "It's 90 percent better, compared to before," the Arab woman said.

Another woman, who works with a Kurdish NGO, commented on the conference. "This is the best conference I've been to so far," she said. "We are looking for a neutral

community. The concept of democracy is new; no one knows how to use it. We need to educate our people through the NGO's," she continued.

The conference was run by Iraqis of all backgrounds; Christians, Arabs, Kurdish, Turcoman and other minority groups.

"These local organizations can have a significant and long lasting impact... regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender or political party affiliation," said Sri Kulkarni, the provincial reconstruction team's public diplomacy chief. "We are teaching them to find local solutions to local problems."



500 NP recruits graduate from MPSA



(LEFT) Iraqi National Police graduates march with the Iraqi flag during a graduation ceremony at the Mosul Public Safety Academy. Five-hundred recruits graduated from the MPSA.

(RIGHT) Iraqi National Police graduates break a block during a martial arts demonstration during at the Mosul Public Safety Academy. Five-hundred recruits graduated from the MPSA.



(LEFT) Iraqi National Police graduates march at the Mosul Public Safety Academy. The MPSA graduated 500 recruits.

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MONTANA

Students at a suburban St. Louis high school headed to the gymnasium for HIV testing this week after an infected person told health officials as many as 50 teenagers might have been exposed to the virus that causes AIDS.

Officials refused to give details on who the person was or how the students at Normandy High School might have been exposed, but the district is consulting with national AIDS organizations as it tries to minimize the fallout and prevent the infection — and misinformation — from spreading.

"There's potential for stigma for all students regardless of whether they're positive or negative," Normandy School District spokesman Doug Hochstedler said Thursday. "The board wants to be sure all children are fully educated."

A teacher in a neighboring district singled out a girl who dates someone at Normandy High and instructed her to get tested, Hochstedler said. A competing school's football team initially balked at playing Normandy's 8-0 team.

Jasmine Lane, a 16-year-old sophomore, said her boyfriend from a neighboring high school broke up with her on learning of the news — after she bought them tickets to homecoming.

"I cried so hard," she said.

Hochstedler said that as far as he knows, no other district has had to handle a similar situation. Students at the school of 1,300 are being tested voluntarily, and the district is getting advice on the best ways to support kids in crisis.

Sophomore Tevin Baldwin said that many of his classmates in this working-class city of about 5,000 residents want to transfer out of the district, which encompasses other towns.

"Nobody knows what's going on," he said. The district declined to respond to his assertion.

Marcus Holman, a 14-year-old freshman, said he never imagined HIV would become such a widespread threat at school.

"I'm just trying to pass, get to the next grade, safely," he said.

Normandy Superintendent Stanton Lawrence agreed that students remain focused on learning, despite concerns and distraction. There's no hysteria or panic, and school is running routinely, he said.

"They recognize this situation is what it is, and doesn't mean school is over," he said. "Their concern is heightened, but we have to face it and do the responsible thing."

The St. Louis County Health Department said last week that a positive HIV test raised concern that students at Normandy might have been exposed. The department is not saying whether the infected person was a student or connected with the school, only that the person indicated as many as 50 students may have been exposed.

The Health Department also will not say how any exposure might have occurred. Health Department spokesman Craig LeFebvre has said the possibilities include sexual activity, intravenous drug use, piercings and tattoos.

Hochstedler said the district doesn't know the person's identity, or even whether he or she is a student.

"We do know there was some potential exposure between that person and students," he said. "We don't know the individual or the route of transmission."

The district learned Oct. 9 of

the potential exposure and within a business day worked out with the Health Department how to release the information and handle testing, he said.

"They took a very proactive stance," he said. "There's no precedent for this."

Students are being tested at six stations in the high school gymnasium, one class at a time. Only representatives from the Health Department are with the students, who are offered educational materials and a chance to ask questions before they are given an opportunity to be tested with a mouth swab, Hochstedler said. They may decline.

They exit through a separate door, and no one in the school would know who did or did not get tested.

"It's entirely up to the student," he said. "There's a lot of stigma associated with this."

The district will never know whether or how many of its students tested positive, he said.

"Once they're tested," he said, "it's an issue between the department and the child and his family."

So far, the district has met twice with parents and begun to ask ministers in the community to stress the importance of responsible behavior, Lawrence said.

Students in grades four through 12 already take classes that discuss the consequences of risky behavior, including HIV, he said.



FOOTBALL



(AP) Kurt Warner's ageless arm and an improbable goal-line stand at the finish saved the Arizona Cardinals from an ugly loss on a national stage. The Cardinals stopped Michael Robinson up the middle from the 2-yard line as the game ended Monday night to preserve a 29-24 victory over the San

Francisco 49ers.

Warner finished 32-of-42 for 328 yards and three touchdowns without an interception in Arizona's sixth consecutive home victory, fourth this season.

The NFC West-leading Cardinals (6-3) never led until Karlos Dansby's 34-yard interception return set up Warner's 5-yard TD pass to Anquan Boldin with 4:16 to play.

San Francisco (2-7) had two chances after that.

The first ended on Adrian Wilson's diving interception of Shaun Hill's pass. The second was much more nerve-racking for the home team and exasperating for the 49ers, who lost their sixth in a row.

Hill's 14-yard pass to Jason Hill moved it to the Arizona 1. With the last few seconds ticking off, 49ers running back Frank Gore was pushed by a

defensive player as he ran around left end, then stumbled to the ground just outside the 2.

After officials reviewed the play to make sure Gore was down by contact, the 49ers handed off to the fullback Robinson, who was stuffed nowhere near the goal line.

The Cardinals opened a four-game lead in the NFC West. The other three teams in the division — San Francisco, Seattle and St. Louis — are all 2-7.

Allen Rossum returned the opening kickoff 104 yards for a touchdown and the 49ers never trailed until Arizona's late score.

Shaun Hill, replacing the benched J.T. O'Sullivan for his third career start in seven NFL seasons, threw for two touchdowns in the first half but lost a fumble and threw two interceptions in the second.

RACING

(AP) Jimmie Johnson moved a step closer to a third consecutive Sprint Cup title by winning the pole Friday at Phoenix International Speedway.

Johnson, the defending race winner, turned a lap of 134.725 mph in his Chevrolet to earn the top starting spot Sunday. If he gains 57 more points than Carl Edwards, Johnson would only need to start the season finale to become the first driver since Cale Yarborough (1976-78) to win three straight titles.

"That's really the bottom line is we need to be 162 up leaving here, then all I have to do is go down there and start," Johnson said. "Am I planning on that being the case? No. Carl's car has been so strong. My goal is to outrun him. I don't want this margin to shrink anymore."

Edwards, who had the fastest car in Friday's final practice session, qualified 15th because he said the engine in his Ford bogged down on the backstretch during his lap. Winner of the last two races, Edwards has chopped away at Johnson's lead and now trails him by just 106 points with two events to go.

"I really like this track," said Edwards, who has five top 10 finishes at Phoenix in eight career starts. "We've been very fast here in the past. It's a really fun race and I feel good

about it."

Jamie McMurray qualified second in a Roush Fenway Racing Ford and was followed by Kurt Busch in a Dodge for Penske Racing and David Reutimann in a Toyota for Michael Waltrip Racing.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. was fifth and was followed by Ryan Newman, Jeff Gordon and Denny Hamlin. Paul Menard and Mark Martin rounded out the top 10.

Only 44 cars attempted to qualify, so Joe Nemechek was the only driver failing to make the field.

The attention now turns to Sunday, where Johnson will try to pull

the title out of Edwards' reach.

He used this track to put the closing touches on his first two titles, finishing fourth in 2006 to take a healthy lead into Homestead. A year ago, he won — his fourth consecutive win of the season — to deflate teammate Gordon's title hopes.

"This is one of our better tracks," he said. "I think history shows that Homestead's been better — has been better for the Roush guys — so I want to leave here without using any points. If I get to 56 points and end up 162 ahead, right on. I mean that's the ultimate goal. But the goal is to outrun (Edwards), wherever that is."



JERUSALEM

(AP) A luxurious gold, pearl and emerald earring provides a new visual clue about the life of the elite in Jerusalem some 2,000 years ago. And its discovery was a true eureka moment for excavators.

The piece was found beneath a parking lot next to the walls of Jerusalem's Old City. It dates to the Roman period just after the time of Jesus, said Doron Ben-Ami, who directed the dig.

The earring was uncovered in a destroyed Byzantine structure built centuries after the piece was made, showing it was likely passed down through generations, he said.

Archaeologists came upon the earring in a corner while excavating the ruins of the building under a parking lot. "Suddenly one of the excavators came up shouting 'Eureka!'" said Ben-Ami.

The find is eye-catching: A large pearl inlaid in gold with two drop pieces, each with an emerald and pearl set in gold.

"It must have belonged to someone of the elite in Jerusalem," Ben-Ami said. "Such a precious item, it couldn't be one of just ordinary people."

Archaeologist Shimon Gibson, who was not involved in the dig, said the find was truly amazing, less because of its Roman origins than for its precious nature.

"Jewelry is hardly preserved in archaeological context in Jerusalem," he said, because precious metals were often sold or melted down during the many historic takeovers of the city.

"It adds to the visual history of Jerusalem," Gibson added, saying it brings attention to the life of women in antiquity.

Ben-Ami the piece's placement in the destroyed building protected it from looters and kept it preserved. Its

location also showed that it must be older than the house itself.

The Israel Antiquities Authority said the earring appeared to have been made using a technique similar to that depicted in portraits from Roman-era Egypt. Experts were able to date the earring by comparing it to similar finds in Europe.

In a statement released Monday, the Antiquities Authority said the earring was "astonishingly well-preserved." Finds from the Roman period are rare in Jerusalem, Ben-Ami said, because the city was destroyed by the Roman Empire in the first century A.D.

Though Gibson dates the piece slightly later than the antiquities authority, to sometime between the second and fourth centuries A.D., he said its quality and beauty were impressive.

And Ben-Ami said he expects more small, luxury items to turn up in future excavations.



ECUADOR



(AP) Lava was rising anew in the crater of Ecuador's Reventador volcano on Monday, a day after bursts of ash forced temporary closure of the capital's airport.

Geophysics Institute technician Patricio Ramon said explosion rocked the 11,686-foot (3,562-meter) volcano and lava poured its flanks on Sunday. Officials suspended flights into Quito's airport for three hours as a precaution.

Heightened activity at Reventador could threaten a highway and two oil pipelines, Ramon said. Both lines were operating normally on Monday.

The volcano experienced a violent eruption in 2002 that shot ash 10 miles (17 kilometers) high, blasted a flow of volcanic material nearly 5 miles (8 kilometers) down its slopes and dusted Quito, 60 miles (100 kilometers) to the west with a thick layer of ash.

Fumaroles were rising as well from two volcanos in neighboring Colombia, the 17,598-foot (5,363-meter) Nevado de Huila and the 8,694-foot (2,650-meter) Machin.

Colombia's Institute of Geology and Mining issued alerts and 450 people voluntarily evacuated their homes near Machin, according to officials there.