

Calendar
girls raise
awareness for
breast cancer

LOCAL & STATE | B1

Visit us online at
NWFDAILYNEWS.COM for
Breaking News | Video | Forums

NORTHWEST FLORIDA
Daily
News



Johnson wins
4th straight
NASCAR
championship
SPORTS | C1

NOVEMBER 23, 2009 MONDAY 75 cents daily

THE DRILLING DEBATE: DAY 2

Military, drilling plans overlap

By TOM McLAUGHLIN
Northwest Florida Daily News
315-4435 | tomm@nwfdailynews.com

Eglin Air Force Base established its first test range in the Gulf of Mexico in 1958. Since that time, few, if any, have challenged the military's right to use the gulf for training or weapons testing and development. "We never had any problem," said Ralph Campbell, who worked with Eglin's first missile systems from 1958 to 1981. "People always did what the military told them." Today, Eglin lays claim to 123,000 square miles of water range and 134,000 square miles of total airspace over water. But its gulf domain has come under siege from Florida lawmakers who want to drill in state waters for oil and natural gas. In the 2009 legislative session, the Florida House passed a bill that could have brought offshore drilling to within 3 miles of the coast. All seven members of the Northwest Florida House delegation voted in favor. The Senate, however, did not consider the issue. In 2010, bills targeting the same waters for exploration and development are expected to be introduced again, and military officials are watching with a wary eye. "We would be impacted," Col. Arnie Bunch, vice commander of Eglin's Air Armament Center, told the Senate Rules Committee at a Nov. 5 meeting in Tallahassee. Eglin shares its water ranges with Tyndall Air Force Base and the Naval Warfare Center in Panama City as well as Hurlburt Field and Pensacola Naval Air Station. "There are lots of activities in

PLEASE SEE MILITARY | A8



An F-15E from the 40th Flight Squadron at Eglin Air Force Base flies over Destin during a training mission.

U.S. AIR FORCE

Lobbyists pay out as oil issue heats up

By PAUL FLEMMING
Gannett Florida Capital Bureau

TALLAHASSEE — Money makes things happen in this capital city. Consider Florida Energy Associates LLC, the entity behind the current push for drilling in Florida waters. Incorporated in December 2008, it has contributed \$50,000 to the Florida Democratic Party and \$75,000 to the Republican Party of Florida. This year, it also has spent between \$244,000 and \$324,000 on an all-star lineup of more than 30 lobbyists to push its cause before the Legislature and executive branch, according to lobbying-expenditure records that report ranges of money spent. "This issue's sudden arrival is really an illustration of how influential money can be in the political process," said Brad Ashwell, democracy advocate for Florida PIRG, a consumer watchdog group that

ON THE NET
Look up contributors and recipients of energy-industry political money in Florida in a searchable database at nwfdailynews.com.

opposes drilling. "The fact that one special interest can swoop in and spend x number of dollars and determine the fate of our entire coastline is incredible and absurd." David Rancourt is a lobbyist at Southern Strategy Group, the lead lobbying firm on behalf of drilling. Powerful Associated Industries of Florida also is fully behind the drilling effort. "I'm very proud of the people I represent," Rancourt said in October. "They're all from America. They're all God-fearing, tax-paying citizens." An analysis of campaign-finance data in state races shows the energy industry has contributed more than \$2.5 million to candidates, parties and committees since 2005. Although that is significant, it

is dwarfed by other players in the money game. The National Institute on Money in State Politics reported the real-estate industry contributed \$8 million to Florida state political campaigns in the 2008 election cycle. Insurance contributions contributed \$5.4 million, according to the institute. "From our perspective, the energy industry typically gets what it wants," Ashwell said. "They throw around a great deal of money." Environmentalists and other drilling opponents might not have the deep checkbooks of oil companies, but they do wield influence with their membership. "There are games these industry groups can play that advocates can't. I don't think a membership base carries the same clout as a direct contribution," Ashwell said. "There are people who will only respond to people who are giving them money, on both sides of the aisle."



- SUNDAY Texas has drilling within sight of its gulf beaches. What's the experience there? Read the stories from Day 1 at nwfdailynews.com.
- TODAY Dollars are at the root of the drilling question. What would drilling mean to Northwest Florida's massive military mission? Which candidates are benefiting?
- TUESDAY How will the drilling proposal play out? Action expected in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C.
- INSIDE Prospect of oil is not a quick fix in Tallahassee | A8

Area retailers gird for early start on Black Friday

By TOSHA SKETO
and DUSTY RICKETTS
Florida Freedom Newspapers

Friday is the official kickoff of the hectic and highly profitable Christmas shopping season, and it is one of the busiest shopping days of the year. For local retailers who have dealt with a slumping economy all year, Black Friday cannot come soon enough. "We're actually expecting a better turnout than last year," said Angela Triplett, public relations manager

at Silver Sands Factory Stores in Destin. "Everyone is in a hunt for a value right now, which makes the center extremely popular." Shopping centers, such as Silver Sands, are opening their doors early and offering discounts on popular items they hope will be too good for shoppers to pass up. Silver Sands will open all of its stores at 12:01 a.m. Friday for a Midnight Madness blowout that includes six \$1,000 shopping sprees between 1 and 6 a.m. A DJ also will spin music outside the Tommy Hilfiger store.

This is the second year Silver Sands has opened at 12:01 a.m. for Black Friday. Although most stores at Santa Rosa Mall on Mary Esther Cut-Off will open at 6 a.m. Friday, some businesses, such as J.C. Penney and Old Navy, will open at 4 a.m. East River Smokehouse, a restaurant in the mall's parking lot that usually opens at lunchtime, will be open for breakfast Friday. The Red Cross also will sell Christmas trees in the parking lot. "We're going to have a lot of giveaways for them," said Loren

Moss, the mall's marketing manager. "We've got the only enclosed mall in the Emerald Coast, so it's the only place you can come and hit several stores and get a nice breakfast at the same time without having to brave the elements. We're on the coast, but still at 4 or 5 a.m., it's going to be a bit chilly out there." Walmart stores will start their Black Friday sales at 5 a.m. "We believe that no other retailer is better positioned to succeed this season than Walmart," said Kelly Cheeseman, a spokeswoman at Walmart's corporate office in

Bentonville, Ark. "Families trust Walmart for low prices, and we are planning to do all we can to deliver low prices this season." Best Buy in Destin will open its doors at 5 a.m. with sales on expected-to-be-hot items such as flat screen televisions, e-readers and laptop computers. "I think the sales this year are going to be a lot stronger than last year," said Stephen Watford, Best Buy's general manager. "There's some pretty attractive price points on laptops, television, movies and personal music playing systems."

NORTHWEST FLORIDA
6'0" 5'5" 5'0"
ARREST MUGSHOTS
nwfdailynews.com

HERE'S WHERE TO FIND YOUR FAVORITE CONTENT

CLASSIFIED	C6-8	LOTTERY	C3
COMICS	B7	MOVIES	B6
DEAR ABBY	B6	OBITUARIES	B2
EDITORIALS	A6	PUZZLES	B6-7
HOROSCOPE	B6	SPORTS	C1-5

COMMENT OF THE DAY
Problems plague swine flu vaccination program. Nope, just one problem — it's government-run.
READ WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING | B1

WEATHER
Areas of morning fog then mostly sunny.
High 70; low 52.
Waves 1-2 feet.
Gulf temperature 67.
Visibility 7+ miles | B8

3 SECTIONS 24 PAGES
A Freedom newspaper read by 94,200 people every day

6 63934 11111 4
Fort Walton Beach, Fla.,
Copyright © 2009
The Daily News

From the Front

MILITARY from Page A1

this area from all the Department of Defense agencies,” Bunch told the committee.

The colonel, who declined to be interviewed for this story, told senators “if the decision is made to drill in close, there will be impacts to what we do on a day-to-day basis.”

“How significant are those impacts?” he asked. “I would have to have more ideas of where they were talking about drilling so I could tell you that.”

Bunch told the Senate committee that local military leaders are consulting with the Department of Defense, which will articulate the military’s position on offshore drilling in gulf waters.

U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, who opposes opening the eastern gulf to drilling, has said he soon expects to receive a letter from Defense Secretary Robert Gates stating the department’s position.

The Department of Defense, responding to a request for comment on its position, e-mailed a statement that it attributed to “a spokesperson.”

“The Department of Defense supports the Administration’s goals to more fully develop offshore energy resources,” the statement said. “The DoD will continue to evaluate its military requirements and work with the Department of Interior to ensure the proper balance between our nation’s energy and security goals.”

U.S. Rep. Jeff Miller, who represents much of Northwest Florida and serves on the House Armed Services Committee, said he never has opposed drilling in the gulf “as long as it doesn’t impact the military mission.”

“I would venture to say the state would not want to impact the military mission, though that’s not saying something can’t happen,” the Chumuckla Republican said. “It could very easily be at conflict.”

In the waning days of the 2009 legislative session when Rep. Dean Cannon of Winter Park introduced a bill seeking to open state waters to drilling, Northwest Florida lawmakers supported it without consulting anyone from any of the five local bases that would have



U.S. AIR FORCE

Destin is seen from the turret gunner’s position on a B-17 Flying Fortress named “Nine-O-Nine” as it flies over the Gulf of Mexico.

been affected.

Reps. Ray Sansom, Brad Drake, Marti Coley, Jimmy Patronis, Greg Evers, Dave Murzin and Clay Ford all voted in favor of the bill.

In recent interviews, Coley, Patronis and Ford took credit for pushing through an amendment designed to protect military missions.

Even with the amendment, Sen. Don Gaetz, R-Niceville, said he would not have voted for Cannon’s bill.

“In my judgment, it did not properly take into account our bases and missions,” he said.

This time around, Cannon, who is next in line to be speaker of the House, should expect more resistance to his drilling bill from the Northwest Florida delegation. Each member says the military mission is a priority that must be addressed in 2010.

“We need to ask somebody to go up and ask the military specifically if they are OK with offshore drilling in particular geographic areas,” Murzin said.

Sen. Mike Haridopolos, R-Melbourne, next in line to be Senate president, said he favors approaching the issue cautiously and believes there is room for compromise between the state and the military.

“We don’t want to interrupt the mission, but we don’t want to see land set aside just to set it aside,” he said. “We’ll sit down and see what is in the best

interest of Florida. We’re not going to undercut the mission of the Air Force, let alone the military.”

Gaetz said weighing the military’s interests in the drilling debate is “for me, the gatekeeper issue.”

“You can’t kill the goose who laid the golden egg,” Gaetz said, referencing the military’s estimated \$60 billion impact on Florida’s economy. “And you don’t want the golden goose to fly away.”

Lawmakers championing drilling next session also can expect opposition from local groups that have gotten behind the military to protect its water ranges.

About a dozen chambers of commerce from Tallahassee to Pensacola have signed a resolution opposing offshore drilling, said Carol Roberts, president of the Bay County Chamber of Commerce. More have given verbal support but are awaiting word from the Department of Defense before putting their position in writing, she said.

“If our politicians claim to be supportive of the military, why would they be for oil drilling?” asked Brian Haugen, president-elect of the Destin Area Chamber of Commerce. “Drilling is not a good thing for us. It’s going to ruin tourism and degrade our military mission, and for what? Possible oil reserves?”

“That doesn’t make much sense to me.”

Prospect of oil not a quick fix in Tallahassee

By JIM ASH
Gannett Florida Capital Bureau Chief

TALLAHASSEE — To lawmakers staring down the barrel of a \$2.6 billion budget deficit next year, the prediction of \$2.3 billion a year in direct revenue from oil and gas drilling in Florida waters might sound like a dream come true.

Orlando economist Hank Fishkind made the prediction in a report released last summer. He was hired by Florida Energy Associates, an industry group that is the major backer of offshore drilling in Florida.

But some industry observers, regulators from gulf drilling states and critics of offshore drilling say the prediction is overstated.

“Legislators should be careful,” said Robert Bryce, managing editor of Energy Tribune, an independent trade publication. “Even if the industry could produce those kinds of numbers, you won’t see any revenue for probably 10 years. You don’t have the rigs, you don’t have the personnel, you don’t have the pipelines.”

Fishkind concluded that Florida waters could hold as much as 3 billion barrels of oil and the industry could pump 150 million barrels per year for 20 years. Assuming oil averages \$75 per barrel, the state would receive \$2.25 billion in direct payments from oil drilling.

But a 2007 U.S. Geological Survey report puts the amount of oil in the gulf at far less.

The report estimates the entire Gulf of Mexico region — Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia,

offshore and onshore — would yield 690 million barrels of oil.

Revenue figures from other drilling states also suggest to critics that Fishkind’s numbers are optimistic at best.

● Texas, one of the nation’s largest oil producers, received about \$321 million in oil and gas royalty revenues in 2008 and another \$22 million in bonus and rental payments the same year, according to the Texas General Lands Office.

For all the years combined between 1922 and 2008, oil drilling in coastal Texas waters generated \$2.84 billion in royalties, rentals and bonuses, the Lands Office also reported.

● Last year, Louisiana received \$2 billion in oil and gas revenues, including mineral royalties, severance taxes, bonuses and rentals, but that figure also includes substantial onshore production, said Patrick Courreges, a spokesman for the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources.

● In 2008, Alabama received \$316 million in oil and gas royalties plus another \$50 million in severance taxes, according to figures compiled by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Still, Fishkind is sticking to his numbers.

He and other drilling supporters point out that official estimates of oil resources always have lagged behind eventual production levels.

“The history of the gulf has been that all of the projections have been conservative,” said Ryan Banfill, a spokesman for Florida Energy Associates.

Dillard's

Pre-Thanksgiving

SAVINGS & VALUES

\$39⁹⁹

Sango "Bistro" Dinnerware

50% off 16-piece dinnerware sets in black or cream. Orig. \$80.

\$49⁹⁹

49-Piece "White Laurel" Dinnerware Set

Gourmet Expressions white embossed stoneware with service for 6. Orig. \$100.

\$19⁹⁹

Lenox "Holly" Table Cloths

Plus, 50% off "Holly" place mats, napkins and table runners. Available in red or green.

\$19⁹⁹

Crock Pot or Electric Knife

Crock Pot 6-qt. Slow Cooker with Little Dipper or Hamilton Beach Carve 'N' Set Electric Knife. Reg. \$39.99

\$99⁹⁹

Nobility 8-Piece Comforter Sets

"Chatham" queen or king comforter sets in truffle, latte or maize.

\$99⁹⁹

Animal Print Comforter Sets

Veratex queen or king microplush comforter sets in zebra or cheetah patterns. Orig. \$200-\$220.

ENTIRE STOCK

Pre-lighted Christmas Trees

40% off

Choose from 7.5' Seneca Spruce, 9' Seneca Spruce, 7.5' Grand Spruce or 9' Grand Spruce. Reg. \$200-\$475. Available in store only.

Home available in most stores. Selected styles. Selection varies by store. All items subject to prior sale. Please call 1-800-345-5273 or visit www.dillards.com to order from home.

HOLIDAY "SPEND & GET" - Receive \$30 in Dillard's Reward Certificates!

Just spend \$250 or more at Dillard's with your Dillard's Card, now through November 25, 2009.*

*Subject to credit approval. \$250 of net purchases (excludes less tax, adjustments and returns) must be made using your Dillard's Card at Dillard's 11/1/09-11/25/09 to qualify for \$30 in Reward Certificates, which will be sent to you within 60 days. Offer excludes purchases. One offer per account. Employees, officers, and directors of Dillard's, Inc. are not eligible. See Rewards Program terms in Cardholder Agreement or application for more details. The Dillard's American Express® Card is issued and administered by GE Money Bank. American Express is a federally registered service mark of American Express and is used by GE Money Bank pursuant to a license.

YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE

LAYAWAY PAYMENT PLANS FOR CHRISTMAS

FREE BOARD BAG FOR NON-LAYAWAY PURCHASES

10% OFF ALL BOARDS

SHOP OUR WAREHOUSE FOR:
GO PRO CAMERAS
YOLO APPAREL
PADDLE SHIRTS
DRY BAGS
MEYER SKIMBOARDS
KAHUNA BIG STICKS
KAHUNA LONG BOARDS
BOARD FISHER

Yolo Board L.L.C.
820 County Hwy 393 N
Santa Rosa Beach,
FL 32459
Mon-Fri 10-3, Sat by Appt
850-622-5760 office
850-217-9015 cell
YOLO BOARD
yoloboard.com

COLUMBIA

Columbia ParCar Corp.

\$5,475.71

Federal Income Tax Credit *

Only a few cars remain...Reserve yours today!

*The Federal income tax credit is \$5,475.71 for select Columbia ParCar LSV models as a qualified plug-in electric vehicle under the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008. This IRS certification is valid on purchases made only through 12/31/09. Always consult your tax advisor for any and all tax advice before making any purchases.

ELECTRIC CART COMPANY

5480 U.S. Hwy 98 W | Santa Rosa Beach
850.622.2000 P 850.622.2004 F
www.electriccartcompany.com

COLUMBIA ParCar IS ALL AMERICAN MADE