

state/nation/world

Tax overhaul to protect middle class

By JIM LUTHER
AP Tax Writer

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Three weeks before congressional negotiators begin writing a compromise tax overhaul plan, the top item on their agenda has been set: protect the middle class.

"How we treat middle-income families is going to be probably the most important issue for the Senate-House conference," Rep. Dan Rostenkowski, D-Ill., chairman of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee, said yesterday.

"I think the House bill is a bit better in that area," Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., volunteered.

Appearing with Rostenkowski on ABC-TV's "Good Morning America" program, Dole stopped short of saying he would like to see negotiators depart from the tax-rate structure in the Senate bill to pay for greater relief for the middle class.

"Obviously, all of us want to keep the rates as low as we can," Dole said.

Rostenkowski agreed but added: "There are areas that we're going to have to negotiate in order to keep those rates that low."

"A lot of middle-income people are going to be surprised that they will have to pay more tax under the Senate bill," said Janice M. Johnson, senior tax manager for Seidman &

Seidman accountants in New York. "Probably the two-earner yuppie couples with lots of debt, major purchases, business-related deductions and, people in their 20s to 40s... whose only retirement coverage is an Individual Retirement Account — they are going to be hit and they haven't really thought about it," she said.

The tax plan that the Senate approved Tuesday on a 97-3 vote would cut individual taxes by an average of 6.4 percent. Several lawmakers, including some of the most vocal supporters of the bill, said they were counting on negotiators to come up with a final plan that would be fairer to the middle class.

Senior tax-writers from the House and Senate will begin working on a compromise bill around July 15. Leaders hope to get the final measure to President Reagan for his signature about Labor Day.

Concerns about the middle class are based on estimates that under the Senate bill, the after-tax income of people earning between \$30,000 and \$40,000 would be raised by 0.4 percent — less than one-third the 1.4 percent boost for those making over \$200,000 a year.

The House plan would raise the after-tax income of the \$30,000-40,000 group by 1.0 percent, and of the over-\$200,000 group by 1.9 percent.

Bonnie to hit Texas coast today

By PAUL RECER
Associated Press Writer

GALVESTON, Texas — Thousands of workers fled offshore rigs, and residents boarded up beachfront businesses Wednesday as Hurricane Bonnie swept toward the Gulf Coast, the first blast of the 1986 hurricane season.

Although forecasters said Bonnie



Bonnie, the season's first hurricane, is shown above and to the right as it appeared yesterday afternoon. Still building strength at 9 p.m. CDT, the storm's 25-mile-wide eye was 125 miles southeast of Galveston.

was a small hurricane — its 75 mph winds barely classifying it as such — the storm was gaining power as it churned across the warm Gulf of Mexico toward this island city.

Bonnie was expected to strike land this morning, and few people were taking the storm lightly.

"I think it's dumb to stay if it gets that close," said Richard Polly, who was boarding up his home in Pirate's Beach on the west end of Galveston Island.

Hurricane warnings flew along a 270-mile strip of coast from west of Morgan City, La., to Freeport, Texas. Gale warnings and a hurricane watch were posted from the mouth of the Mississippi River to Port O'Connor, Texas.

At 9 p.m. CDT, Bonnie's 25-mile-wide eye was near latitude 28.5 north and longitude 92.0 west, about 125 miles southeast of Galveston. It was moving west northwest about 6 mph and was expected to continue that course.

"Right now, it's not very severe," said Neil Frank, director of the National Hurricane Center in Coral Gables, Fla. "It's getting better looking from the standpoint of organization, which means it's probably getting a little stronger. We're telling people to prepare for the worst at daybreak; prepare now."

An estimated 8,000 oil workers abandoned their offshore rigs on yesterday and Tuesday, although some skeleton crews remained aboard, according to oil company spokesmen.

Galveston officials advised residents not protected by the city's sea wall to leave their homes, and Texas Department of Public Safety troopers arrived to help direct traffic off the island in case a full evacuation was ordered. Long lines formed at service stations.

Bonnie's center could hit between Freeport and Galveston between 7 a.m. and noon today, according to the National Weather Service in Galveston.

AIDS education key, group says

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Schools could play a major role in fighting AIDS by educating students about the deadly ailment rather than trying to

against the spread of AIDS right now.

"Schools are in the best position to present information that may prevent unsafe sexual behavior among adolescents," she said at a news conference.

Instead of focusing on the younger children who are coming down with AIDS at birth or through contaminated blood products," she said, education is the only vaccine we have

agers, 41 percent of whom are sexually active, and teach them how to keep from getting AIDS, formally called acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Relatively few schoolchildren have been diagnosed as suffering from AIDS or carrying the AIDS virus, but some of their cases have been highly publicized as groups of parents or officials have tried to keep them out of schools.

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state news briefs

Two alcohol-related accidents kill 4

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Drunken drivers were involved in two separate crashes in which four young people died and nine others were injured, the Allegheny County coroner's office said yesterday.

Investigators in the Pittsburgh suburb of Upper St. Clair Township at first thought that an error in judgment led to a crash at 11 p.m. Tuesday that killed two 17-year-old township girls and injured five others, said Deputy Chief Harry Frusch.

But Coroner Joshua Perper's office said the driver, Laura Kiphouse, had a blood alcohol level of .12 percent, more than the 10 percent recognized by the law as intoxication.

Kiphouse's passenger, Kristin McMaster, had a blood alcohol level of .09 percent, well under the legal limit, Perper's office said.

Police said Kiphouse was apparently trying to cross all four lanes of U.S. 19 from a side street when her car, carrying five passengers, was struck in succession by two other cars. Her car burst into flames after the crash.

Meanwhile, the coroner's office said blood tests showed that the driver who killed himself and a passenger in a separate crash Tuesday morning had consumed nearly twice the alcohol needed to be considered drunk.

John Seizer, who had turned 21 on Monday, had a blood alcohol level of .19 percent, nearly twice the legal limit. Gerald Payton, 19, one of five passengers in the compact car, had a blood alcohol level of .22, Perper said. Payton also died.

Police said witnesses and skid marks indicated Seizer was driving at least twice the posted 35 mph speed limit when the car uprooted a utility pole, overturned and burned.

Eric Calfo, 19, of Clairton was in serious condition at Mercy Hospital. Richard Burford, 16, of Pittsburgh was in fair condition at Presbyterian-University Hospital. Holly Cassidy, 16, and Dana McAndrew, 14, both of Pittsburgh were in fair condition at Children's Hospital.

Kiphouse's passengers included Joseph Thomas, 18, Jill Munns, 15, and Michael C. Sutt, 18, who were in serious condition at Allegheny General Hospital. Richard Dunham, 18, was in stable condition at St. Clair Memorial Hospital.

One of the other drivers, Raymond Thomas, 24, was in critical condition at Allegheny General.

House approves Sunshine bill

HARRISBURG (AP) — The House approved legislation yesterday that would bolster the state's "Sunshine Law" and allow greater public access to governmental meetings.

The bill would require government agencies to open meetings held "for the purpose of making a decision." The current Sunshine Act, as interpreted by a 1977 Commonwealth Court ruling, only guarantees access to meetings when votes are to be taken.

Thomas DeWall, executive director of Common Cause Pennsylvania, said the bill was a compromise between supporters of a stronger law and legal challenges, which generally opposed more extensive changes.

The legislation also would strengthen notification requirements for public meetings and expand what agencies and governmental units must include in the official minutes of public meetings.

Under the legislation, closed "executive sessions" could still be held to discuss such topics as personnel matters, employment, labor relations, disciplinary actions or real estate transactions.

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nation news briefs

Girl wrestler settles sex-bias suit

SEATTLE (AP) — A high school that refused to allow a member of a visiting varsity team to wrestle because the athlete was female has agreed to apologize and pay the young woman \$500.

In a settlement proposed by the state Human Rights Commission, Marysville-Pilchuck High School must apologize to Carey Rosenow, its own students and to the student body of Vashon Island High School.

Rosenow, who pinned three opponents last season while a member of the Vashon High varsity wrestling team, was told she could not wrestle at a Marysville tournament because she was female.

Her team walked out and she filed a sex discrimination complaint with the commission.

"Apparently we were in violation of the law," said Dean Farley, Marysville School District assistant superintendent. "If that was so, we had to handle it. I don't think it was ever our intention to discriminate."

Rosenow, 17, finished in fourth place in her league with a 6-5 record.

Brazil renews relations with Cuba

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — The government on yesterday said it was re-establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba, severed 22 years ago by Brazil after its military staged a right-wing coup.

Roberto Abreu Sotelo, minister of Foreign Relations, made the announcement at a news conference at the Foreign Ministry.

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