

LARGE CROWD PACKS LIBRARY AS EARLY VOTING GETS UNDER WAY, C1
REGION



Chuck Amato returns to Raleigh as Florida State takes on struggling Wolfpack, B1
SPORTS



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NATION

Three decades after removing lead from gasoline, the Environmental Protection Agency is slashing the amount of the toxic metal that will be allowed in the nation's air by 90 percent. **A6**

A packaged "incendiary device" exploded in a suburban St. Louis parking garage on Thursday, injuring the man who picked it up, rocking an office high-rise and forcing hundreds of people to evacuate. **A2**

WORLD



Hurricane Omar fell apart out at sea Thursday after delivering a glancing blow to the U.S. Virgin Islands and lashing the most-populated island of St. Croix with rain. **C5**

STATE

Sen. Elizabeth Dole said Thursday she would support the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, as long as it was based on ground conditions and had the support of the military. **C4**

PEOPLE

Actress and singer Edie Adams, the blonde beauty who won a Tony Award for bringing Daisy Mae to life on Broadway and who played the television foil to her husband, comedian Ernie Kovacs, has died. She was 81. **A2**



ELECTION 2008

COMING SUNDAY
Special section to include sample ballots, candidate bios.

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Palin: Voters' choice is clear

Alaska governor rallies GOP faithful Thursday at Elon

By Robert Boyer
Times-News

robert_boyer@link.freedom.com

ELON — Resplendent in GOP red heels, Sarah Palin toed the platform above home plate at Latham Park at Elon University and hammered home a low-taxes, small-government, pro-family, pro-America message to the delight of a large crowd.

Palin, the first female GOP vice presidential candidate, came to the university Thursday and touted her record and that of her presidential running mate, Arizona Sen. John McCain.

She painted her opponents, Sens. Barack Obama and Joe Biden, as tax-happy and tainted by ties to a terrorist and voter fraud.

Palin said Obama and Biden "think that government is the solution."

"I disagree with that. I think that government too often is the problem," she continued. "And we need government put back on your side so that our businesses and our families can keep more of what they produce and earn, and then you prioritize, you reinvest ... that is how jobs are created and our economy gets moving again."

Palin said voters can trust McCain. "In this election you have a choice between inspiring words and inspiring and trustworthy deeds that come from John McCain," she said. "Now North Carolina, I'm here to ask you — are you ready to help us carry this state to victory? Are you ready to make John McCain the next president of the United States?"

The crowd frequently interrupted her speech with full-throated approval, hoisting signs, waving pom-poms and chanting "USA, USA ... Sarah, Sarah, Sarah" and "Drill, baby, drill."



The Associated Press

Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, the Republican vice presidential nominee, waves to supporters during Thursday afternoon's campaign stop at Elon University.



Peter Schumacher / Times-News

Elon students demonstrate their enthusiasm for Sarah Palin during the Alaska governor's visit to campus on Thursday afternoon.

For months, the Obama campaign has linked McCain to the policies of President George W. Bush. In Wednesday's debate, McCain drew a contrast between himself and Bush. Palin picked up that theme and slammed the Democratic ticket.

"They look to the past because they

See **CHOICE CLEAR**/Page A2

More to the story

■ Early voting gets up and running in Alamance County and across the state/**Page C1**

■ Rumored Palin visit to Turrentine Middle School had to be scrapped at the last minute/**Page C1**

Social Security benefits make significant jump

Scheduled increase of 5.8 percent is largest since 1980

By Martin Crutsinger
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Social Security checks are going up \$63 a month for the typical retiree — the largest increase in more than a quarter century but likely

to seem puny to the millions who have been watching in horror as Wall Street lays waste to their retirement nest eggs.

Every little bit helps, but the boost is coming after a year when people living on fixed incomes have been pounded by surging energy prices and higher food costs — and lately have been seen their lifetime savings shrivel along with the stock market.

The yearly adjustment in Social Security checks is linked to government inflation figures, but advocacy groups for seniors say it's far short of what the

typical retiree needs to keep up with rising living costs.

The Senior Citizens League said it did a study that indicated people 65 and over have lost 51 percent of their buying power since 2000, with the price of home heating oil and gasoline more than doubling since the beginning of the decade and such food staples as eggs and potatoes showing big increases as well.

"Although the word crisis gets thrown around a lot in our national dialogue, there's no other word to describe

it. Millions of our nation's seniors are facing an economic crisis," says Daniel O'Connell, the league's chairman.

Adds Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Economy.com: "Most households will take any cash they can get in these very difficult times when seniors have been panicked watching the fall in stock prices and what is happening to banks where many of them have their CDs."

The 5.8 percent increase announced

See **SOCIAL SECURITY**/Page A2

FRAMING THE DEBATE

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second of a five-part series looking at issues surrounding the race for governor. Today's installment is about **health care**. Coming Saturday: Energy.

Candidates' health care plans differ broadly

By Barry Smith
Freedom Raleigh Bureau
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RALEIGH — Democrat Bev Perdue has a goal of having health insurance for all children who don't already have insurance.

Republican Pat McCrory wants to give more incentives to the private sector to provide health insurance for their employees.

Perdue, the state's lieutenant governor, and McCrory, the mayor of Charlotte, are vying for gover-

nor of North Carolina. Voters will elect North Carolina's next governor on Nov. 4.

"The goal I have of providing health insurance for all kids who don't have health insurance I believe is a critical goal of the 21st century," Perdue said. "It will take us a while to get there."

She said that if children aren't provided health insurance, we will pay for them when they make emergency room visits.

"We'll be much better off having

a healthy and well kid going to school or coming to day care so that they become healthy and well workers," Perdue said.

In addition to incentives for businesses to cover their employees with health insurance, McCrory supports offering child health care tax credits and tax credits for the uninsured.

He said that he would like to do away with a lot of the health insurance mandates now required by

See **FRAMING DEBATE**/Page A9

THE CANDIDATES

PAT MCCRORY

Republican
Home: Charlotte
Family: Wife, Ann, and yellow lab, Mic.
Education: B.A. in Education and Political Science, Catawba College



BEV PERDUE

Democrat
Homes: New Bern, Chapel Hill
Family: Husband, Bob Eaves, two sons, Garrett and Emmett
Education: Ph.D. University of Florida, in Educational Administration

