



HOWEY

Political Report

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Thursday, Sept. 8, 2005

The pending 2006 politics of Pandora's Box (& hope)

Assessing the tipping points of war, storm & energy

*Breathe deep, the gathering gloom; Watch lights fade from every room
Bedsitter people look back and lament; Another day's useless energy spent
- Moody Blues, Nights in White Satin*

* * *

By BRIAN A. HOWEY in Indianapolis

I found myself bobbing on my Hobie Cat sailboat in the dead calm of Eagle Creek Reservoir Sunday afternoon, under crystal skies. Every five or 10 minutes, I could hear the National Hot Rod Association's Grand National dragsters at nearby Indianapolis Raceway Park gulping down about 25 gallons of fuel in 4.7 seconds as they reached speeds of 325 mph.

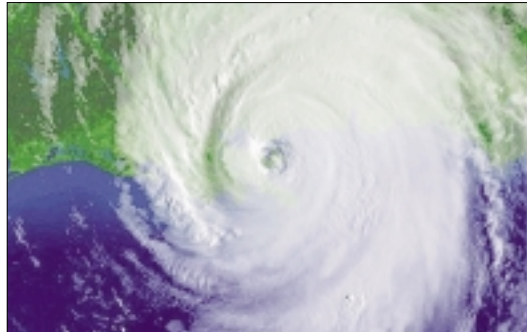
It sounded like an acid reflux America belching under breath.

The subplots to the Labor Day weekend of 2005 were almost as troubling as Sept. 11, 2001. There has been a Pandora's Box of war, storm, hunger, thirst, escalating gas prices, health care and taxes, an economy with little margin ... along with the hope we've seen from the generous American spirit.

Virtually everyone I knew had altered holiday travel plans due to the \$3.25 a gallon gasoline. That's money not spent on hotels, convenience stores, state parks, craft fairs and gift shops. People seemed conflicted, disorganized and depressed about the global havoc created by Hurricane Katrina. NBC's riveting Sept. 1 newscast from the New Orleans convention center and images of dead seniors in wheelchairs and dehydrated twin babies in the arms of an agonizing young mother made many of us weep, literally. The images of a political figure we all recognize -- Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour, the former Republican National chairman -- added familiarity to all the unknown faces.

Hoosiers reached out with their wallets and debit cards, with our National Guard, with our emergency rescue teams, our quarterback, and finally, we opened our State Fairgrounds, apartments and dorm rooms to the million people now seen as the 21st Century huddled masses.

Amidst all the desperate and heroic behavior, there emerged a blame game. And at this point of a developing political dynamic for 2006, while there are troubling times that appear to be settled on and just over the horizon, it is too early to know



Hurricane Katrina makes a devastating landfall.



"We're winning the war in Iraq. We've never lost a tactical engagement."

— U.S. Rep. Mike Pence, after returning from a two-day tour of Iraq

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Covering a Decade of Indiana Politics



how these will play out in Congressional and legislative elections.

Republicans under fire

The conventional wisdom is that Republicans will be under fire for the classic question posed by Ronald Reagan in 1980: Are you better off than you were four years ago?

It was a question that should have been asked on every Democratic presidential, congressional and legislative campaign ad in 2004, along with spinning gas pumps. But it didn't happen and Republicans control the entire show from a Hoosier perspective. We are now faced with a national catastrophe on the southern coast, crises with energy and health care, the Iraq war, immigration, and rising taxes.

But conventional wisdom is a dangerous game, as Republicans learned in 1998 when the looming impeachment of President Clinton was supposed to result in big GOP gains in Congressional and legislative races. It didn't happen.

A classic example of this came on Tuesday. Just as beleaguered Indiana counties were toiling with millions of dollars of deficits, out of the blue, Gov. Mitch Daniels announced \$177 million in early retrieved revenues, which will ease budget crunches in all but three counties.

Our dead calm analysis this week takes us to a literal Pandora's Box that didn't exist in 2000: the war in Iraq, the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the gasoline pump and family furnace, and the economy and taxation:

The diversion of a tipping point

Thirty-six hours after Hurricane Katrina ripped into the Gulf Coast, Charlie Cook of the *National Journal* wrote a thesis on what he called "an initial assessment of the political and economic implications of hurricane's damage."

"My thesis was that drawing the focus of the public and the news media away from the worsening situation in Iraq might, at least temporarily, help President Bush, while sharply higher gasoline and fuel oil prices could become the blow that tips our fragile economy into a real downturn," Cook explained.

"Friday afternoon, as I write this, my assessment is very different," Cook continued. "On the political level, playing off of Malcolm Gladwell's recent bestseller, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, I originally

argued that the public's increasingly negative attitude toward Bush and the war in Iraq might have been nearing a tipping point, which Gladwell argues is 'that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire.' Gladwell argues that sometimes fairly small, seemingly insignificant shifts can push something over that tipping point, with enormous consequences. On a political level, Katrina may have stopped one tipping point from having been reached, at least for now, while on an economic level, it could push the economy past another tipping point.



President Bush hugs a Hurricane Katrina victim at Baton Rouge, La., last Friday. (White House photo)

Cook explained that from the beginning of Bush's first term through mid-June of this year, in only two out of 170 Gallup national surveys did his disapproval ratings reach 50 percent or higher. Since mid-June, eight out of 10 Gallup polls have put his disapproval rating above 50 percent. And virtually every major national poll shows his job-approval ratings this summer at their lowest level yet. News from Iraq has been worsening, and the war, along with rising gasoline prices, had driven

Bush's approval ratings far below where those of every modern two-term president, save Richard Nixon, were at this point in their fifth year in office.

Cook explained, "But rereading my *National Journal* column Friday afternoon, it seemed detached from reality. I suspect that in the aftermath of Katrina there is a giant gap in public opinion separating those who have watched a good bit of horrifying television news coverage of the devastation and those who have not. Most of us viewers felt shock and disbelief at the images of death, destruction and misery we saw on Monday and Tuesday. Those feelings carried perhaps even into Wednesday. But the images on Thursday seemed to shift people from being numb to being angry."

It was NBC anchor Brian Williams' report from New Orleans Thursday that angered and scared many Americans. Cook explained that it was "the most powerful and heart-wrenching network news broadcast I've ever seen. The images and stories told were so disturbing that anyone who watched would be hard-pressed not to feel frustrated and angry on behalf of those people who had gone for days with little or no food and water or those awaiting rescue and evacuation days after the hurricane hit and the levees broke."

My analysis in Friday's *HPR Daily Wire* was similar: Watts. The 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Hurricane Andrew. September 11. These were all the national tragedies of our lifetimes. But none of these resulted in the horror we Americans saw coming out of New Orleans on



Thursday. The headlines in Indiana newspapers are saying it all this morning. In the *Johnson County Daily Journal*, it was "National Disgrace." In the *Columbus Republic*, it was "Anarchy in America." In the *Anderson Herald-Bulletin*, the headline over a story about gas prices said, "There's a little bit of panic."

The *Daily Wire* analysis continued: This is a nation that had the capability of dropping pallets of food to people in Afghanistan when our armed forces entered there in 2001. But the U.S. federal government couldn't drop pallets of ready to eat rations and water to the Superdome and New Orleans Convention Center four days after Hurricane Katrina. The fact that the whole world was watching via outlets like CNN was embarrassing. My family watched this horror show unfold on Thursday and we wept, seeing Americans being reduced to the kind of images we have seen in Iraq, Beirut or Rwanda. *In America*. "A scene of unimaginable horror in a major American city," reported NBC's Martin Savidge this morning. "Now chaos is rampant. Where is the federal relief?"

Cook's analysis continued, "President Bush masterfully demonstrated leadership qualities after 9/11. (His reaction to last year's Florida hurricanes and his efforts to help their victims were also impressive.) Americans were not just satisfied with the response of their government to the tragedy of 9/11, they were proud of it. But this Wednesday, Thursday and even Friday, as I write, I doubt many Americans who have followed the government's response to Katrina are proud."

Then came the first post-Katrina polls: Gallup noted that 13% said George W. Bush is "most responsible for the problems in New Orleans after the hurricane"; 18% said "federal agencies"; 25% said "state and local officials"; 38% said "no one is to blame"; 6% had no opinion. 29% said that "top officials in the federal agencies responsible for handling emergencies should be fired"; 63% said they should not; 8% had no opinion.

An ABC News/*Washington Post* poll had similar findings: 46% approve "of the way George W. Bush is handling the situation caused by Hurricane Katrina"; 47% disapproved; 8% had no opinion. 48% "rate the Federal Government's overall response to the situation caused by the hurricane and flooding" as excellent or good; 51% rated it not so good or poor.

Most remarkable is that these poll numbers came after Friday, when Bush lauded the efforts of FEMA Director Michael Brown, the guy who was fired as director of the Arabian Horse Association. "And Brown, you're doing a heckuva of a job," Bush told the director. "The FEMA director's

working 24-7."

Former 9/11 Commissioner Tim Roemer had a different take, telling the *Washington Post*, "We've had our first test and we've failed miserably. We have spent billions of dollars in revenues to try to make our country safe and we have not made nearly enough progress." With Katrina, he noted, "we had some time to prepare. When it's a nuclear, chemical or biological attack, there will be no warning."

U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh was part of a burst of Democratic criticism over the relief effort in today's *New York Times*. "Our government failed at one of the most basic functions it has providing for the physical safety of our citizens," Bayh said.

What the polls reflect is that Americans appear to understand the true magnitude of the crisis: splintered homes and an estimated 10,000 dead over 90,000 square miles. It is a path of destruction unseen in America since Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman marched his army across Georgia to the sea in 1864-65. It is the largest displacement of population since the Civil War. Americans haven't witnessed city destruction on this scale since San Francisco in 1906; Chicago in 1871; Richmond and Atlanta in 1864-65.



Tim Roemer: We flunked the first test. (911 Commission)

Politics and the gas pump

There has been a dangerous political and economic shock to the system. Hoosiers have been grouching about \$2 a gallon gasoline since last March. Daniel Yeregin, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power* told the *New York Times*, "This is a lot like 1973. Since Monday, we've had a supply shock on top of a demand shock." He noted that the 1973 oil shock pushed the American economy into a recession.

That is potentially bad news for the current biennial state budget.

The statistics offered in the *New York Times* coverage are jarring. Oil was \$33 a barrel in January 2004; \$66 a barrel just before Katrina; over \$70 after; and today at \$64. Demand has grown 2 percent annually, "twice the average annual pace over the preceding decade." Katrina idled 10 percent of domestic oil refining. "Any significant disruption to the supply was quickly magnified in the markets," the *Times* reported. The post-Katrina disruption is now over 10 million barrels. There have been no new American refineries built since 1976; the number has been halved over the last decade to 149. American refining capacity has declined 10 percent, to 17 million barrels a day, while gasoline consumption has risen 45 percent to 9.5 million barrels a day.



The *New York Times* reported, "The economy may be able to withstand current prices, but energy markets are at the mercy of the slightest glitch anywhere around the globe. The idea of \$100-a-barrel oil, which was scoffed at as recently as two weeks ago, is now not so far-fetched."

"If oil hit \$100, it would have quite a debilitating effect," said William Hummer of Wayne Hummer Investments (*New York Times*). "The economy would slow to a crawl. It would be another blow to the airlines and the whole transportation sector."

While the hurricane may be a boom for Indiana's manufactured housing industry, a full-blown gas crisis could have a crippling impact on Indiana's automotive, logistics and transportation industries.

At French Lick last month, Indiana House Minority Leader B. Patrick Bauer echoed a recent HPR analysis of the "oil presidency" of Bush-Cheney.

The blame for a lack of comprehensive energy policy extends back to the Clinton-Gore years, as candidate Bush duly noted in Michael Moore's controversial film "*Fahrenheit 911*."

But in 2006, energy or lack thereof will be a GOP legacy. Already, State Reps. Dave Crooks, Craig Fry and Ryan Dvorak have called for Gov. Daniels to suspend the gasoline tax. They are preparing for the 2006 elections.

Pence: 'We are winning the war in Iraq'

It's the kind of statement a politically safe Republican facing a perennial gadfly opponent in 2006 can make. "We're



Rep. Pence (right, wearing flak jacket) in the Green Zone, Baghdad with Gen. David Petraeus, commanding officer. (Photo courtesy of Rep. Pence)

winning the war in Iraq," U.S. Rep. Mike Pence said after a Blackhawk bound, two-day whirlwind tour of Iraq. "We've never lost a tactical engagement with the enemy. We've never even lost a platoon."

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It was a dramatic departure from recent statements by U.S. Sen. Chuck Hagel, who suggested that the U.S. was "losing the war." The Israelis had never lost a tactical engagement to Hamas, but withdrew from Gaza and parts of the West Bank following a two-year suicide bombing campaign. The 1968 Tet offensive was a military defeat for the Vietcong, but it forced President Lyndon Johnson to call off his re-election and was a precursor to a Communist victory seven long years later after Americans grew weary of casualties.

When HPR asked State Rep. Scott Reske, D-Pendleton and a Marine reserve helicopter pilot who spent a month in Iraq last year, if we were "winning," he answered, "Insurgencies are rarely defeated militarily. It almost always takes a political solution."

We could think of two that were accomplished militarily: Gens. Grant and Sherman threw everything they could at the Confederacy in the American Civil War, and Commissar Trotsky's Red Army, which crushed the Mensheviks with the use of ruthless terror from the Cheka secret police.

Pence, a member of the House International Relations Committee, led a bipartisan congressional delegation to the country over the Labor Day weekend. The entourage met U.S. military officials --Gen. John Abizaid, commander of U.S. troops in the Middle East, and Gen. David Petraeus, who heads the allied operation in Iraq -- as well as Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari and Indiana troops from 138th Signal Battalion serving in Ramadi.

He agreed with Reske's premise and said the U.S. is working on both the military and political fronts. "This is a combination military and political solution," Pence said. "You've got to take the fight to enemy and then defeat them."

Pence said that about 112 Iraqi battalions are in uniform, with 30 percent of them able to operate independently from the 165,000 allied troops in the country.

Capt. Tim Jeffers, an aide to Gen. Petraeus, noted on his website, "There are over 185,000 Iraqi Security Forces trained and equipped as of Aug. 29."

Pence explained, "They are adding more to that number every day. Every general I talked to ... was of the mind that we have to bring their army up, have the constitutional

reforms, standing up and then drawing down."

The critical question is, will they stand and fight?

The United States spent some 15 years training the South Vietnamese army, which turned and ran in 1974-75. U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer told HPR in 2003 that it takes eight years for the U.S. to develop a battlefield-ready staff sergeant; more than a decade for field commanders. This is an Iraqi army built from scratch.

Pence touted achievements in rebuilding the country's schools and infrastructure. He said that Iraqi oil production is now more than pre-war levels. If a new constitution is approved in October, that would go a long way toward undermining the 10,000 insurgents roiling Iraq. "If the new government is seen as legitimate, there is a strong consensus that the country will stabilize," said Pence. He asserted that al-Qaeda is trying to become an oil power by taking over the country. "You either defeat them on their home court and stand up a free and democratic society, or future generations of Americans will have to

deal with them...in ways we may not want to," Pence said. He said that 95 percent of Iraq is peaceful and that Baghdad "is coming back to life."

Pence explained that once Iraq can provide for its own security, U.S. troops will be able to withdraw.

Troubling tell-tales of war

But there were troubling tell-tales of Pence's two-day visit. The delegation stayed in Kuwait because of security concerns. American diplomatic delegations were fired on and there was a suicide bombing in Basra on Wednesday. In the Green Zone, Pence was seen wearing a flak jacket. Four hours before the delegation visited a military base in Balad, it came under mortar fire.

Jeffers noted the draft Constitution was submitted to the Transitional National Assembly over the objections of the Sunni delegation. "It is hard to say what will happen next," Jeffers explained. "It is possible that the constitution will be accepted by the majority of Iraqis in all 18 provinces on Oct. 15. On the other hand, it is also possible that it will be rejected by the three majority Sunni provinces, which would stall progress on the constitution, sending the TNA back to the



Rep. Pence with Hoosiers in the 138th Signal Corps. He noted what he called a "steely-eyed resolve" in their mission. (Photo courtesy of Rep. Pence)



drawing board, so to speak. A two-thirds majority is necessary to adopt the draft constitution in each province. I'm sure there will be all sorts of arm twisting going on between the Kurds, Shia, and Sunnis between now and then. It will be interesting to see what happens."

What does Lugar think?

Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Richard Lugar has chaired 29 committee hearings on Iraq this year, said spokesman Andy Fisher. That is substantially more than any other committee in Congress. No committee has looked at more angles and heard from more experts. "Everyone wants metrics of success, and there are many metrics that are being used," Fisher explained. "There are also many successes that are under-reported. The painful deaths and setbacks have been more obvious. Given the successes and setbacks, Lugar devised our last three hearings in July to put on the table policy or action options that could be made by the administration at this point, in other words some pro-active steps. We've been working on a date for Secretary Rice to come to the committee and testify regarding these options. We hope that will be in the next month."

As for whether Lugar agrees with Pence that we are "winning" the war, Fisher referred HPR to Lugar's comments on the Aug. 14 broadcast of CNN's *Late Edition*.

WOLF BLITZER: What do you think, Senator Lugar? Does the United States have adequate military forces in Iraq?

SEN. LUGAR: We do not have adequate forces to provide the kind of security after our forces work with Iraqis to get rid of insurgents in particular cities and provinces. When the withdrawal occurs, sometimes the insurgents return, and this comes from the fact that we cannot leave forces behind. They are at a premium to find other places. What I think has been apparent for a long time has been a running argument, as Senator Nelson points out, from the very beginning with regard to occupation and preparedness, in which those at least in charge felt that we wanted to get by with a minimum of force. And we have attempted to do that. Now, having said that, at this stage I agree with Bill Nelson that it's very unlikely that we are going to send more troops to Iraq. We are going to have to train the Iraqis faster and harder. And the metrics of how well we're doing really are of the essence in giving this new government some opportunity to operate and give real civil government to Iraqis that deserve it."

Pandora's politics; breathe deep

People tend to vote their pocket books, thus the price

of gas and keeping the home furnace running this winter will almost certainly have a political impact in 2006. The tragedy of Katrina could mean opportunities for Hoosiers, particularly in our manufactured housing sector. A gas shortage could idle thousands of our auto workers, put the economy in a tailspin. Gas prices are already heavily impacting school and municipal budgets and property taxes.

The greatest issue facing Hoosier families isn't gay marriage. It will be escalating tax rates; food, energy and health care costs.

The war will also shape the dynamic in major fashion. If things haven't stabilized by this time in 2006, the Democrats will likely be using Pence's comments this week along with those made by Vice President Dick Cheney in June (the insurgency is in its "last throes") as homestretch campaign fodder. Cindy Sheehan began articulating this angst this past summer. It is a potentially dangerous tipping point for

Republicans.

Property taxes (higher bills will go out just before the 2006 primary and general elections) will likely put Republicans on the defensive. Another wave of local officials tired of the pass-the-buck mentality could result in more contested legislative races.

The danger for Democrats will be how they capitalize on the economic and war anxiety. This past week they were pointing to a *Government Executive* magazine story that blamed then-OMB Director Mitch Daniels for not funding repairs to the New Orleans levee system (the *Washington Post* reported today that the Army Corps spent \$740 million at the levee breach site, but on a little used nearby canal). Others talk of global warming, and another Category 4 or 5 hurricane into an American population center this year or next might be such a tipping point.

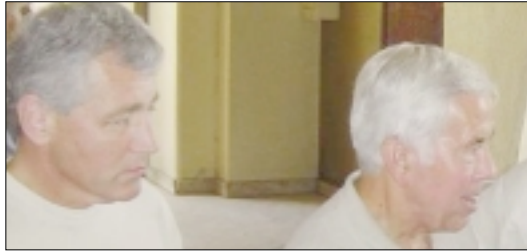
Democratic strategist James Carville told the *Evansville Courier & Press* today that while the federal response to Katrina was "overwhelming" in its inadequacy, he is refusing to wade into the "blame game."

"I'm trying to help raise money, get focused, you know what I mean?" Carville said. "I'm not at the epicenter of the blame game or the take responsibility game or whatever we have going on."

Iraq, however, is different. "It's got to be the least planned for, most strategic blunder this country has had since Vietnam," Carville said.

Breathe deep, Hoosiers.

The challenges and dilemmas are troubling. There will be twists in conventional wisdom. But there are also opportunities and, ultimately, hope.



Sens. Hagel and Lugar in Iraq in 2004. Their assessments haven't been as optimistic as Rep. Pence's. (Photo courtesy of Sen. Lugar)



Jerry Davich, *Times of Northwest Indiana* - I wonder. While watching television coverage of the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, I wonder if a natural disaster of that magnitude could happen here. I wonder if I, for one, also would have rebuffed warnings to leave my home -- and nearly everything I owned -- for safer shelter, like so many Gulf Coast residents who opted to go down with the only ship they captained. I wonder how we, as a community, would respond if it was our homes, our neighborhoods and possibly our hope that's now awash in grief -- all in the blink of Mother Nature's eye. I wonder if Americans will rally behind the Gulf Coast survivors like they did for the tsunami survivors. Or not as much. Or much more. I wonder if they -- we -- will band together in national unity like we did after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, selflessly pledging our time, money and concern. Or, like a drunk who punches invisible foes in the alley, we instead stagger along alone, without the benefit of a new common enemy to aim our fists toward. Let's face it, hating a hurricane is not only silly, it's sublime. Regarding national relief efforts, I wonder if it will matter that the majority of Gulf Coast survivors appear to be predominantly black and poor, or that TV coverage included plenty of these poor blacks looting stores by the hundreds. Did anyone else notice the two telling news photos taken of survivors searching for food in flood waters at abandoned stores? In the photos' captions, a white couple "found" bread and pop, while a black man "looted" for his food. I wonder if this sort of coverage, regardless of how minimal or accidental, will affect how deeply Americans will reach into their pockets to help. ❖

Gary Gerard, *Warsaw Times-Union* - With each passing day this week, the news from New Orleans just keeps getting worse. At first, on Monday morning, it seemed as if Katrina had weakened enough to spare a major disaster on the Gulf Coast. But it didn't take long Monday to realize that this was a very grave situation indeed. By Tuesday, it was clear that this was a catastrophe -- a disaster of epic proportions. By Thursday, I was able to view digital satellite photos of New Orleans before and after Katrina. The damage illustrated in those photos -- found on digitalglobe.com -- is unimaginable. Thousands and thousands of homes and businesses under water in New Orleans. Miles and miles of coastline wiped clean by storm surge. Entire coastal towns flattened and swept away. The scope of the damage is incredible. The storm surge was measured at 29 feet, the largest in history. Secretary Michael Chertoff, director of the Department of Homeland Security, said damage from the hurricane affects an area encompassing 90,000 square miles. Let me put this in perspective for you. Indiana, which is

roughly 140 miles wide and 270 miles long, encompasses 35,970 square miles. By the end of the week, the desperate nature of the situation became more evident. I-10 took on the look of a highway in a third world country with dead bodies along the road. There were shots fired at would-be rescuers. The death toll certainly will climb into the thousands. Millions of people have lost their homes. Some economists say in the short term, a disaster of this magnitude has the potential to wreak economic havoc. But they are quick to point out that down the road, the disaster offers large numbers of jobs for those who will rebuild and provides demand for large amounts building materials. If there is a silver lining, I suppose that's it. We need to be patient. We need to be generous. We need to pray. ❖

Andrea Neal, *Indianapolis Star* - After the bodies are recovered and debris cleared from New Orleans, the federal government will no doubt accept blame for an agonizingly slow response to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. As a teacher of American history, I hope the blame ends there.

Glued to my television set over the past few days, I have watched as one person after another -- ordinary folk and elected officials -- have misstated the role of the federal government in emergency response. Some have attacked the feds for not coming to New Orleans before the hurricane hit to force people from their homes. There are historic, political and philosophical reasons that federal troops didn't march south the minute meteorologists forecast a Category 4 storm. "It would be unprecedented," says Professor Brian J. Nickerson of Pace University's Institute for Public Policy and Management in New York City. "In situations like this, the response of the federal government is at the request of the local government. That is how protocol works. The protocol is based on the custom of federalism." In our federal system, power is shared by local, state and federal governments and each has distinct spheres of influence. There is overlap, to be sure, but the feds traditionally oversee national security while state and local governments do natural disasters. Complicating the lines of authority, each branch of government has different roles. Once invited, the president may order troops in, but only Congress can spend money. In the absence of a single, centralized authority, coordination in any catastrophe is a challenge. "The biggest problem we have is inherent in our system of federalism, a system that is intentionally designed to be fragmented, for good reasons, because we are fearful of centralized authority," Nickerson says. "It creates a situation where any type of governmental effort at centralization or coordination is going to be an uphill battle. You are almost going against the forces of the political nature of federalism." ❖





800 Katrina victims in Indy, 125 in Bloomington

INDIANAPOLIS - American Red Cross officials estimate that more than 800 evacuees from Hurricane Katrina have sought refuge in the Indianapolis area (*Indianapolis Star*). Most of the evacuees are staying with friends or family, while the Red Cross shelter in Indianapolis is housing 63 people, said Chris Hintz, a spokesman for the American Red Cross of Greater Indianapolis. Another 125 evacuees will arrive in Bloomington (*Herald-Times*).



his final decision last week while on vacation. He said two factors in his decision were his history of working in the Republican Party in Warrick County and his belief that whoever is elected must be ready for the general election in 2006. He said the precinct committeemen will have to consider electability and find someone who is "simply prepared to run a campaign next year." Others interested in the seat are Vanderburgh County Commissioner Suzanne Crouch, Alcoa engineer John Fulton, retired Army lieutenant colonel and insurance agent Don Mattingly, Warrick County activist Don Mottley, Evansville Chamber of Commerce lobbyist Steve Schaefer and Evansville firefighter Frank Vincent.

Gibson County gets 10 Commandments back

PRINCETON - A federal judge has ruled the Ten Commandments monument on the Gibson County courthouse lawn in Princeton, Ind., meets the new constitutional test established by the U.S. Supreme Court in its landmark rulings this summer on the public display of the biblical edicts (*Evansville Courier & Press*). The order, issued Wednesday by U.S. District Court Judge Richard L. Young in Evansville, reverses his earlier decision in January ordering the monument's removal.

Allen County's fixed gas price ends in 2006

FORT WAYNE - Allen County might be getting a bargain on its gasoline this year, but its purchasing director all but guaranteed Wednesday that would not be the case in 2006 (*Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*). Bruce Little, county purchasing director, said the recent rapid increase in gas prices has made it unlikely the county can lock in a price for its gasoline purchases next year.

Sabotage suspected at Dutch-owned CAFO

WINCHESTER - Police are going door to door in a rural neighborhood surrounding a Dutch dairy CAFO (concentrated animal feeding operation) to investigate monitoring-well tampering (*Muncie Star Press*). Someone cut padlocks, opened lids and contaminated two of the four ground-water monitoring wells at the controversial Union-Go Dairy, the owner and his consultants suspect. Harmful levels of E. coli bacteria and nitrate were detected in the sabotaged wells.

Lafayette to seek increased tax levy

LAFAYETTE - Lafayette officials are considering the possibility of going before state tax officials and basically begging them to allow the city to raise the tax levy in 2006 to pay police and fire pensions (*Lafayette Journal & Courier*). If they don't get the money they need, city officials will have to take the money from another city fund to pay pensions next year.

Vigo, Parke commissioners to stay on Eastern time

TERRE HAUTE - Vigo and Parke County commissioners say they plan to stay where they are - on the same time as Indianapolis, despite decisions by commissioners in Sullivan and Vermillion to petition for a change to Central time (*Terre Haute Tribune-Star*). Vigo County commissioners plan to remain Eastern, the same time as Indianapolis and Marion County. "I think that is what is best for the county," said Commissioner President Paul Mason. "I've gotten a lot of letters from businesses and the Vigo County School Corporation. They are all for staying on Eastern time. They would rather be on Central, but want to stay in sync with Indianapolis. ❖

Justice Krahulik dies

INDIANAPOLIS - Jon Krahulik, 60, Indianapolis, a former Indiana Supreme Court justice known for his mental and physical fortitude, died Tuesday after a long struggle with cancer (*Indianapolis Star*). Mr. Krahulik was appointed to the court by Gov. Evan Bayh in 1990. "Jon Krahulik was a good friend, devoted family man and faithful public servant," said Bayh, now a U.S. senator from Indiana. "He exhibited courage in the face of adversity, and I will miss him." Indiana Chief Justice Randall T. Shepard called Mr. Krahulik "a genuine, warm and caring person."

Conner enters HD78 race

BOONVILLE - Warrick County Commissioner Carl Conner will definitely be part of the pack of Republicans going after the House District 78 appointment if Rep. Vaneta Becker resigns the seat to move to the Senate (*Evansville Courier & Press*). Conner, 60, said early on that he was considering a run for the appointment but made