



Parker predicting deluge of legislative challengers for 2006

Kittle likes recruits; won't discourage primary races

By BRIAN A. HOWEY in Indianapolis

The drip-drip-drip of local elected officials entering the Indiana General Assembly political arena has been ongoing since last spring. This past week, it was Republican Madison County Councilman Dan Dykes announcing his challenge to State Sen. Tim Lanane, D-Anderson. "One thing I can offer some insight on is the impact of legislation on local units of government," Dykes told the *Anderson Herald-Bulletin*.

Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker promises that within a couple of weeks, the dripping will turn into a deluge.

"There are a lot of local officials and educators looking at legislative races," Parker told HPR.

How many? Six? A dozen?

"How about a dozen and a half?" Parker replied.

He pointed to freshman State Rep. Bill Davis, R-Portland, who in reaction to Delaware County property taxes going up, told the *Muncie Star Press*, "If local government keeps spending in line, there will not be big tax increases."

To which Parker responded, "Well, Bill, you created that mess." It was the legislature that has been spending and passing the burden to local units of government, then casting the blame.

As we've reported before, this dynamic has prompted local officials such as Richmond City Council President Bruce Wissel, Hendricks County Councilman Dick Thompson, Elkhart County Councilman John Letherman, and LaPorte School Board member Tom Dermody to ponder or begin to execute challenges to (in order) State Sens. Allen Paul, Joe Harrison, and Reps. Tim Neese and Mary Kay Budak in next May's GOP primary.



Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker is predicting a deluge of Democratic legislative challengers. (HPR Photo)



"I don't think it's bad. It's a free country and it's great to have Republicans willing to serve."

— GOP Chairman Jim Kittle Jr., on the growing number of legislative primary challenges to Republican incumbents

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Parker explained, "I cannot remember having candidate recruitment going so strong this early. There's going to be races in play next year that people aren't expecting."

Kittle won't discourage primary challenges

Indiana Republican Chairman Jim Kittle Jr. is not doing anything to tamp out challenges to GOP legislative incumbents. Nor does he think the Democrats will easily retake the House, despite the potential property tax firestorm, high gasoline and heating prices, inflation, and the Iraq War.

"First, second and third is product," Kittle said. "We have to have the best candidates. If you don't have a good product, you're not going to win. In 1992, in a strong Republican year, the Democrats held the House because they had better candidates. Our freshmen are the best we've ever had. They are all staying in the game."

Kittle believes his team focused on the House -- State Rep. Luke Messer, Mike Gentry and Iowa consultant Steve Grubbs -- will be formidable. "They've been together now for three cycles," Kittle said. "Our objective is not to stay at 52. Brian (Bosma's) theme is going to be '56 in '06.' You need the functional structure and that starts with the party and ties to the House campaign organization."

The third element is money. "With the unions, I think this is Custer's last stand," Kittle said. "If the Democrats don't win in '06, they will have a very difficult time winning when you have a totally funded and politically adept governor running and you have a Republican presidential race. I just don't see them winning in '08, so they have to win in '06."

And, he said, with Gov. Mitch Daniels, the GOP will have the money edge. "We will not be out-spent," Kittle promised.

As for the legislative Republican primary challenges, which in the past were viewed as virtual heresy, Kittle said, "Because it's gerrymandered, the race is the primary, not the general election. As I've said to you, we will have more primaries this time than we've had in recent history. Not that there will be 50, but I think there will be a few."

Past conventional wisdom was that primary challenges drained party and candidate resources. But a new way of thinking is that primary challenges can help clear out the

obstinate deadwood and create more resourceful and progressive legislators.

HPR asked Kittle, is that a good thing?

Kittle responded, "I don't think it's bad. It's a free country and it's great to have Republicans willing to serve. We don't all have to agree on everything."

A time and property tax package looms

Parker's mantra has been what he believes will be the crucial issue: time, taxes and education.

Last month, Daniels' OMB Director Chuck Schalliol warned in Fort Wayne that a taxpayer revolt is in the offing. This past week, press accounts revealed 8,000 property tax challenges in St. Joseph County and long lines and angry citizens in Grant County.

The *Marion Chronicle-Tribune* quoted an angry taxpayer saying, "They give me this deadline and tell me that I have to come down here right away and pay it. They need to get their act together."

Parker noted the time zone issues. "There has been a lack of state leadership on this. Gov. Daniels created this mess. Now he's decrying the St. Joseph/Elkhart county time split," Parker said. "It was Democrats in the legislature who asked the governor to lead."

On Monday, many Indiana newspapers carried Mike Smith's *Associated*

Press story suggesting the legislature was exploring "A new cap on state property tax relief could save Indiana's government hundreds of millions of dollars, but thousands of homeowners and businesses could pay the price."

The cap is a major shift in a policy that has saved property owners billions over the past three decades, and some analysts and lawmakers say it will place the burden for spending increases by local governments squarely on property taxpayers' shoulders (*Associated Press*). The cap comes



Which one of these chairs - Indiana GOP Chief Jim Kittle Jr. (left) or Marion County Democratic Chairman Ed Treacy - will be smiling in November 2006?



just three years after lawmakers raised the sales tax to help soften the blow of a court-ordered change in property tax assessments, which caused many tax bills to skyrocket. Many predict the cap could contribute to double-digit percentage increases in local property taxes over the next two to three years.

The AP quoted Montgomery County Councilman Phil Boots as saying, "I'm very disappointed the state has put us in this situation. They have pulled the rug from under us."

Rep. Jeff Espich echoed comments made by Rep. Davis: If local governments hold spending growth to 80 percent of what it has been historically, there wouldn't be a problem.

In essence, Espich and Davis are urging local officials to do what I say, not as I do. The spending restraint and willingness to seek new revenues are not an Indiana General Assembly strength.

And Espich has consistently said he doesn't think the 2006 election year would be a good time to press for relief. The dilemma for House Republicans is this: to provide relief, taxes will have to be raised somewhere else. They have a Chicken Little mentality, fearful of any kind of state-oriented general tax increase.

And there's Gov. Mitch Daniels, who used political capital to push stadium/convention center taxes in the GOP-dominated doughnut counties around Indianapolis. This is a culture clash.

Education, taxes and transportation

Kittle and Messer take part in weekly meetings with Gov. Daniels that course between public policy and politics.

"The agenda will be set by Brian, Mitch and Bob, and led by the governor," Kittle said of Gov. Daniels, Speaker Bosma and Senate President Robert Garton, who he says will seek re-election. "I think they will all be on the same page."

As for property tax reform, Kittle said, "There will be some sort of relief."

Chairman Parker believes that Gov. Daniels has already used up a great deal of his political capital on time, stadium and BMV issues.

"The governor will have to do it," Parker said of pressing for property tax relief. He noted that former Gov. Joe Kernan, when he was lieutenant governor, called for many elements the legislature is now studying.

With Gentry and Grubbs, who helped orchestrate the gay marriage issue that helped freshmen Republicans Billy Bright, Troy Woodruff and Davis win upsets in 2004, Parker doesn't believe the social issues will be what voters want to talk about.

"Look at what's happening with Delphi," Parker said. "They are talking about cutting wages 60 percent. It's a different environment than 2004, when those issues were nationally led. "It will be about property taxes, education and jobs. They can try to placate their base with those issues, but they will alienate the middle." ❖



Chairman Kittle with future FSSA Commissioner Mitch Roob on election night 2002. (HPR Photo)

Kittle: Cuba or Bust?

INDIANAPOLIS - After Chairman Jim Kittle Jr. helped set the stage for Gov. Mitch Daniels' election in 2004, he had hoped to retire and go back to his business interests.

Gov. Daniels asked him to stay on. But for how long?

"Certainly I am serving at the pleasure of the governor," Kittle told HPR at Castleton's Bravo restaurant on Wednesday. As for how long, Kittle said, "I don't know. I really don't. It depends on when you get totally worn out."

Kittle said that Gov. Daniels has taken the lead, putting the party into a different mode. "The new structure has me spending about a third of my time on party matters," Kittle said.

He added that some might ask, what does he want?

"Is it the IU Board of Trustees? Some people want to be on the board of trustees; why, I don't know. I said the only thing I want to be is ambassador to Cuba. But we don't have one and the governor doesn't name it. But I like Cuba." ❖



Indiana's leading employer? Well, it's government

INDIANAPOLIS - Who are Indiana's biggest employers?

The *Indianapolis Business Journal* printed a list of the top 25 this week and it is sobering.

No. 1 on the list is the U.S. government with 33,511 Hoosier employees. No. 2 is the State of Indiana with 33,040. Numbers 4 and 5 are Indiana University (16,615) and Purdue University (13,868). The City of Indianapolis is 11th (6,881), Indianapolis Public Schools is 13th (6,500) and Fort Wayne Community Schools is 22nd (4,158).

So that means that four out of the top five employers are government, and seven out of the top 25. When you add up all the city, town, county and township employees from across the state (roughly 285,000 employees), you find the "government industry" in Indiana is huge with around 325,000 employees. That compares with 570,000 in the direct manufacturing sector, 600,000 indirect, and 1.7 million induced (i.e. hairdressers, accountants and the like who are paid by manufacturing employees).



This is troublesome. Think about it. Government, financed by taxpayers, has become one of the biggest economic players in the state. Except that it sucks ... resources, as opposed to private corporations that contribute funding to government. "If we ignore this, if manufacturing goes away, then the whole state hollows out and collapses," said Ed Roberts, vice president of the Indiana Manufacturers Association. "Government consumes a lot of resources. But without those resources, it all collapses."

Even more sobering news comes in the private sector. General Motors (No. 8 at 10,826) and Delphi Corporation (No. 12 at 6,540) are either in big trouble or in bankruptcy. Two other big ones are Mittal Steel USA (No. 9 at 10,000) and U.S. Steel (No. 14 at 6,000), are in an industry that has been downsized and is prey to global rip currents.

The other big trend in this top 25 list comes with health care: Eli Lilly (No. 3 at 16,977); St. Vincent Health (No. 7 with 11,498), Clarion Health (No. 10 with 10,302), Community Health Network (No. 15 at 5,466), and Wellpoint

(No. 23 with 3,600 employees).

Over the last two weeks, I've featured columns about the state of Indiana's government. There was Gov. Mitch Daniels, who declared a "new fault line" exists in Indiana politics between the "stasists" -- those who advocate the status quo, often for their own gain -- and the "dynamists" who embrace change. And there was Indiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Randall Shepard, who surveyed the Indiana Constitution and explained, "For most purposes ... the real barriers are the things in statute and in our own minds. It seems to me the real question for modern reformers is not what the Constitution won't let us do, but what we are ready to do with each other for Indiana's future."

Of all the corporations that actually make something on this list -- Mittal Steel, Eli Lilly, GM, Marsh Supermarkets, Kimball International, Cummins, SBC Indiana, Rolls-Royce, Toyota, JPMorgan Chase, and Forest River, Inc. -- there is one common thread. They all revamped or realigned their corporate structures over the years. For many, it is a continual process.

Or as Roberts notes, the steel produced by the 16,000 workers at Mittal and U.S. Steel these days is of greater quality than that produced by the 50,000 or more workers in the 1960s.

A study by Thomas P. Miller Associates notes, "The primary source of lower numbers of manufacturing workers is the continual decline in the number of workers needed to produce an additional unit of output. In the 21st Century globally competitive economy, the only way to survive and continue to provide jobs is through high and rising productivity."

Now, my question for you today is, why do we not expect government, now one of the leading employment sectors, to also revamp and modernize its operations? Why shouldn't we expect greater productivity from government?

Indiana has more government than just about any other state in the union. We have blankets and blankets of city, county and township government. We elect more officials. We've just spent an entire summer fretting about the closure of a couple dozen Bureau of Motor Vehicle branches, when our manufacturing base is eroding.

Wake up, Hoosiers.

If, in a decade, government continues to be our biggest employer, we are going to be in deep, deep trouble. It is an unsustainable trend.

In Evansville and Vanderburgh County, there is a government "unification" process unfolding. As I noted before, two legislators have said they will carry legislation before the Indiana General Assembly, but they are fearful of being named until they know "which way the wind is blowing."



It is that kind of timidity that will lead to a hollowing out of Indiana.

We have a governor who is a reformer.

Will he have progressive Democrats and Republicans in the legislature who are willing to reposition the state, and look for greater productivity from our public sector?

Or do we want the timid followers to become staunch

defenders of the unsustainable status quo?

This needs to be debated in every Indiana General Assembly House and Senate district, be it in the May primary or the 2006 general election.

We are at a crossroads. We need credible candidates to stir this debate. ❖

Miers withdraws nomination; Lugar decries process

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Under withering attack from conservatives, President Bush ended his push to put loyalist Harriet Miers on the Supreme Court Thursday and promised a quick replacement. Democrats accused him of bowing to the "radical right wing of the Republican Party" (*Associated Press*).

The White House said Miers withdrew her name because of a bipartisan effort in Congress to gain access to internal documents related to her role as counsel to the president. But politics played a larger role: Bush's conservative backers had doubts about her ideological purity, and Democrats had little incentive to help the nominee or the embattled GOP president.

U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar introduced Judge John Roberts to the Senate Judiciary Committee on Sept. 12 at the beginning of Roberts' confirmation hearing. In that statement, he said the following, which he reiterated today:

"... Today's Supreme Court regularly faces issues of enormous public import and attendant controversy. Many are deeply divisive, with well-funded, well-organized advocacy groups passionately committed to one or the other side, and for whom the central, well-nigh exclusive focus is simply 'who wins.' Media coverage in the 'information age,' whether on talk radio or countless cable outlets featuring 'talking heads' for each side, fuels both the controversy and the resultant tendency to see the Supreme Court as a kind of 'political branch of last resort.' When a Court vacancy occurs, the confirmation process takes on the trappings of a political campaign, replete with interest-group television ads that often reflect the same over-simplifications and distortions that are disturbing even in campaigns for offices that are in fact political.

"All of this may be understandable. It remains, in my view, a fundamental departure from the vision of the courts and their proper role that animated those who crafted

our Constitution. The Founders were at pains to emphasize the difference between the 'political branches' – the Executive and the Legislature – and the Judiciary. Their concern about the potential dangers of passionate, interest-driven political divisions, which Madison famously called the 'mischiefs of faction,'[1] influenced their design of our entire governmental structure. But they were especially concerned that such mischiefs not permeate those who would sit on the bench. Otherwise, they warned, 'the pestilential breath of faction may poison the fountains of justice,' and 'would stifle the voice both of law and of equity.'[2]



Chief Justice Roberts and U.S. Sen. Lugar. (Photo courtesy of Sen. Lugar)

"I believe that each of us in the Senate bears a special responsibility to prevent that from occurring. The primary focus of these hearings and our subsequent debate and vote on the floor will be Judge Roberts and his qualifications. But another focus will be whether the Senate, in discharging the solemn 'advise and consent' duty conferred by the Constitution, is faithful to the trust

the Founders placed in us. That focus necessarily will shine with special intensity on this Committee, as millions of the fellow citizens we serve follow its proceedings in the coming days.

"Former Yale Law School Dean Eugene Rostow once described Supreme Court Justices as 'inevitably teachers in a vital national seminar.'[3] When vacancies occur and Supreme Court nominees are presented for confirmation, members of the Senate – and particularly members of this Committee – become guest lecturers in that seminar, with all Americans in the classroom paying close attention. I believe that seminar's vital lesson should not and must not be 'who wins' a given case, or how the nominee might 'vote' on a given controversy of the moment. Rather, the timeless lesson that transcends any particular case and whatever controversy may swirl about it is how our courts resolve disputes, from the momentous to the mundane, in administering a fair, impartial system of justice that must stand outside the political passions and pressures of the day, and whose judges must put aside whatever personal views they may have on the issues presented. . ." ❖



Mike Downey, *Chicago Tribune* - If you throw a parade, they will come. Thousands of them. Or millions maybe. White Sox fans. Cub fans (OK, some, not all). Chicago fans. South Siders. North Siders. East Siders. (In other words, from Indiana). White Sox fans from the suburbs. Downstate fans. Baseball fans. Ghosts from Iowa cornfields. Shoeless Joe. Buck Weaver. Kid Gleason, the 1919 White Sox manager, who was born on an Oct. 26 - it was on his 139th birthday Wednesday that the Sox played for the championship. Maybe he will come. And how about Charles Comiskey, the original owner, who died on an Oct. 26? Maybe he could come, too. And how about your late dad, to have a game of catch? Maybe they all could come. If all it would take is for the Chicago White Sox to win a World Series, that *day* has come. ❖

Jack Colwell, *South Bend Tribune* - President Bush, once with the highest presidential approval rating ever in the Gallup Poll, 90 percent, has plummeted in popularity. In the latest Gallup sampling for CNN and USA Today, the president's approval rating slipped to only 39 percent, his lowest ever. From the heights to the depths. In a poll two weeks after Sept. 11, 2001, President Bush, magnificent in rallying the nation to respond to the terrorist attacks, achieved that 90 percent Gallup job approval rating, highest for any president since the renowned polling organization began asking the approval question during Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency. A factor, though by no means the only one, in the current Bush decline was his response to another terrible disaster, this time Hurricane Katrina. Not magnificent. This time, stumbling and bumbling. Is this the same president who said the right things and said them well after 9/11? This time he said the wrong things, including the infamous praise of that political hack he placed in charge of FEMA: "Brownie, you're doing a heckuva job." Can the president bounce back? Of course. Whether he will and, if so, how much, will depend on future events and the effectiveness of his responses to them. While 39 percent approval is not exactly a vote of confidence, every other president, starting with Lyndon Johnson, has at some point sunk lower than 39 percent. Bill Clinton fell to 35 percent. Even Ronald Reagan dropped to 35 percent. Iraq will be much more significant than Katrina in the making or breaking of future Bush popularity. As the trial of Saddam Hussein continues, the story of his cruelty could lead more Americans to decide Bush was right to invade and topple the dictator. But if the insurgency continues, strong as ever, with American casualties rising and hope

vanishing for any major troop withdrawals, more Americans could decide the Bush administration blundered in invading or in handling the situation after the initial military victory. ❖

Gary Gerard, *Warsaw Times-Union* - Delphi Corp. is the big automotive-related company that filed for bankruptcy this past week. Also this week, General Motors, the company that spun off Delphi in 1999, announced huge third-quarter losses. It's fascinating to me to read about these companies and how they deal with their financial woes. Take Delphi, for example. The Troy, Mich., based company employs 14,700 workers in Michigan. The Delphi plant in Kokomo employs 5,500 and one in Anderson employs 1,000. They are the nation's largest automotive parts supplier. They make everything from brakes to radios. And while the rumors were flying prior to Delphi's bankruptcy filing, the company sweetened the pot for its top executives. Prior to the filing, severance packages for Delphi's white-collar employees were capped at 12 months of pay. But voila, now Delphi's top executives are eligible for up to 18 months of pay and some of their regular bonus. ❖

David Rutter, *Post-Tribune* - Duck! Er, we mean fore! Just as an errant duffer yells just before he conks you in the head with a sliced drive, many warnings may be well-intended but don't have much useful effect. Like Gov. Mitch Daniels, who tells us of pending winter heating problems in a homey "warning letter from your Uncle Mitch" included with NIPSCO gas bills this month. In it, he warns bills will be going up way high this winter and we should all watch out and try to be careful with our heating needs. Check your furnace, he says. And make sure the house isn't leaky. And sign up for one of the utility's payment plans. And, of course, let's all not be mad at the power companies for the prices because, you know, they are just victims of the fates. Duct tape your kids. Huddle under the blankets. Turn the stove up high and peer into the dark opening. Desperate times require desperate housewives. Truthfully, we wish someone had advised the governor in advance just to hush up, because it makes him look like a schnook. Image is everything. ❖





Casey's beloved White Sox

TRENDLINE: HPR called up St. Joseph County Democratic Chairman Butch Morgan on Wednesday and left this message: "Hey Butch. I just got a call from a reporter at the *Houston Chronicle* who said they discovered an apparition outside Minute Maid Stadium today. He identified himself as Casey Pajakowski." Morgan called me this morning to report that a week from today, he, *South Bend Tribune* columnist Jack Colwell and Marilyn Rszewski, Pajakowski's daughter, would be making a trip to the late St. Joseph County Democratic chairman's grave. "I will be leaving a memento I picked up at the second World Series game in Chicago." Morgan said. Colwell used to take Pajakowski to games at old Comiskey Park. I remember former congressman Tim Roemer showing up at Pajakowski's home in October 1989 to talk about his 1990 race against U.S. Rep. John Hiler. Pajakowski virtually ignored him and Roemer thought he had angered the old chair. Finally, Pajakowski turned to Roemer and said, "Son, when the World Series is on, I don't talk to no one." Lord knows what Pajakowski would have said had a budding candidate shown up during a White Sox World Series game. And, it is worth noting, that in the Oct. 13 edition of HPR, we predicted a White Sox championship. It brought this note from Sen. Lugar's chief of staff, Mary Morris: "Bob Elson used to say at the beginning of a home game, "The White Sox take the field and Aparicio leads the charge!" in Soxtober 2005, it was Konerko and Posednik and Garcia and Buehrle and



Indiana 2006 Congressional

U.S. Senate: Republican: U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar. **1988 results:** Lugar (R) 1,430,525, Wickes (D) 668,778. **1994 results:** Lugar (R) 1,039,625, Jontz (D) 470,799, Bourland (L) 17,343, Barton (A) 15,801. **2000 Results:** Lugar 1,425,150, Johnson (D) 680,046, Hager (L) 33,896. **2006 Forecast:** Asked about a potential opponent for Lugar, Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker said, "Our first priorities are going to be the Congressional seats, the House seats, and the three statewide." This means a token gadfly opponent will likely face Sen. Lugar. **Status: SAFE LUGAR.**

2006 State Races

House District 48: Republican: State Rep. Timothy Neese, Elkhart County Council President John Letherman. Democrat: Open. **2002 Results:** Neese (R) 10,251, Carter (D) 5,248. **2004 Results:** Neese (R) 18,241. **2006 Forecast:** Local speculation is that Letherman will not run because of his concern over who would take over his county council leadership role. But he hasn't said that publicly. **Status: Leans R.**

Senate District 25: Republican: Madison County Councilman Dan Dykes. Democrat: State Rep. Tim Lanane. **2002 Results:** Lanane 19,662, Jackson (R) 16,418. **2006 Forecast:** Fifteen-year Madison County Council veteran Dan Dykes is thinking of running for higher office: the District 25 seat in the Indiana Senate, now held by Democrat Tim Lanane (de la Bastide, *Anderson Herald-Bulletin*). Dykes, a Republican, formed an exploratory committee Thursday to begin raising funds for the 2006 race. Fellow County Councilman Scott Tischler is campaign chairman and Anderson City Controller Morris Long is treasurer. "I know it will be a tough race," Dykes said. "I'm going up against a formidable opponent who has won in the past. I do have better name recognition than some of his opponents in the past." Dykes noted that in 2002 Brenda Jackson lost to Lanane by about 3,000 votes after a late start on her campaign. He doesn't know if he will face a primary challenger. "You never know," Dykes said. "When people say they would welcome primary opposition, they are lying to you." Lanane said, "It is not a surprise. I expected to have an opponent. I do plan on running for another term in the Senate." Dykes was appointed to the County Council in 1991 to complete the term of Jack Lutz, who moved to the Indiana House when Pat Kiely resigned. "I learned a lot during my years on the council," he said. "One thing I can offer some insight on is the impact of legislation on local units of government." **Status: LEANS LANANE.**

Senate District 26: Republican: Andrew Phipps, Bruce Munson. Democrat: Lewis Colter. **1998 Results:** Craycraft (D) 16,824, Wenger (R) 13,414. **2002 Democratic Primary Results:** Craycraft 9,653. Dixon 2,288. **2002 General Results:** Craycraft (D) 16,939, Phipps (R) 16,330. **2006 Forecast:** Former State Rep. Bruce Munson is being strongly encouraged to enter this race. He's exploring his options. **Status: TOSSUP.**





Organization day set for Nov. 22

INDIANAPOLIS - The Indiana Senate will convene for its annual Organization Day on Tues., Nov. 22 at 10:30 a.m. This is the first official business day of the 2006 legislative session. No word yet on an exact reconvening date for January.



Pence heralds Bush's call for spending cuts

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Mike Pence delivered the following speech on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives this morning commending President Bush for his leadership in calling for fiscal responsibility during efforts to rebuild the Gulf Coast: "When it comes to making tough choices in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, presidential leadership will make the difference. Yesterday in remarks before the Economic Club of Washington, D.C., the President of the United States called on Congress to, 'Redouble our efforts to be wise about how we spend your money.' The President went on to say, 'We can help the people of the Gulf Coast Region recover and rebuild, and we can be good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars at the same time.' He called on Congress to reduce unnecessary spending, to identify offsets, and pledged again to offer spending rescissions to provide the emergency relief, in his words, 'In a fiscally responsible way.'

Skillman announces Katrina assistance

INDIANAPOLIS - Lt. Governor Becky Skillman announced Wednesday that the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority

(HCDA) endorsed a plan to offer state assistance for victims of hurricanes Katrina and Rita who are still living in Indiana (*Crawfordsville Journal Review*). The Interim Hurricane Housing plan was approved by the HCDA board at its meeting Wednesday morning in Indianapolis. "There is still a need and the action taken today says that Indiana will not turn its back on our fellow Americans in their time of tragedy," remarked Skillman, who oversees HCDA. "We knew going in that the needs of the people displaced by these hurricanes would, in all likelihood, be long term. That is why we are committed to making our services available until there is no longer a need."

Ellsworth lashes out at Hostettler for ignoring vets

EVANSVILLE - Vanderburgh County Sheriff and 8th District Congressional challenger Brad Ellsworth expressed disappointment today in Rep. John Hostettler's failure to listen or respond to the needs of Indiana veterans who recently sought the Congressman's help in securing better medical care. This morning, the *Evansville Courier & Press* reported that Rep. John Hostettler failed to respond to a letter from local veterans seeking his help in getting better medical care for veterans, including care at the Evansville clinic. Neither Rep. Hostettler nor his staff responded to a letter personally delivered to his Evansville office on September 26. "This is just the latest example of John Hostettler's failure to listen to the needs Hoosiers," Ellsworth said. "These are people who fought to protect America's freedom, played by the rules and kept America safe. The thousands of veterans who live in southwest Indiana, and those fighting overseas in Iraq today, deserve a Congressman who will listen to their needs and deliver when it comes to the health care and medicine

they need."

Rogers, King upset over Gary BMV plans

GARY - The Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles plans to open a 400-square-foot Gary branch in the Family and Social Services Administration building, but it may be December before the facility is operational, BMV Commissioner Joel Silverman said (*Times of Northwest Indiana*). In spite of the announcement, the battle over the city's BMV branch doesn't appear to be over. Gary Mayor Scott King issued a statement Wednesday saying the Family and Social Services branch would be inadequate in size and would provide inadequate service, and he questioned the propriety of putting the BMV branch in the same building that welfare services are handled. King also said he was "baffled" that it would take a month or more to open what he referred to as a "BMV Lite" because of its restricted services. State Sen. Earline Rogers, D-Gary, also expressed dissatisfaction with the proposed facility. She said a branch with only two terminals to serve customers wouldn't be satisfactory for a city of 100,000 people.

Pastrick selling East Chicago home

OGDEN DUNES - Less than a year after he left office after 32 years as mayor, Robert A. Pastrick is moving on (*Post-Tribune*). Pastrick, who was born and raised in the city and served more than 50 years in various city jobs — including eight terms as mayor — has put his longtime home on Fir Street up for sale. "For all intents and purposes, we're going to stay here in Ogden Dunes," in a home his rivals have long whispered Pastrick spent most of his time away from work. "I'm at an age now where I'm going to start to take it easy," Pastrick said.

