

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

chron.com

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2009

★★★

VOL. 108 • NO. 156 • \$1.00

TOLLS TO ROLL

The Metropolitan Transit Authority may convert HOV lanes into toll lanes along I-45 North and South, U.S. 59 North and South, and U.S. 290.



Source: Metro CHRONICLE

Solo drivers get turn on HOV lanes

■ Metro plans to revamp 83 miles of freeway to allow them access, with a fee

By **ROSANNA RUIZ**
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Metro officials are moving forward with plans to convert 83 miles of HOV lanes to high-occupancy toll lanes that solo drivers could pay to use.

At its monthly meeting Thursday, the Metropolitan Transit Authority's board of directors will consider converting 83 miles of high-occupancy vehicle lanes along the North, Northwest, Southwest, Eastex and Gulf freeways into so-called HOT lanes.

Under Metro's plan, which would use federal stimulus funds, vehicles with more than one passenger still could use the lanes for free, but single-occupant vehicles would pay a toll that varies by the time of day and amount of traffic congestion. Toll rates

Please see **LANES**, Page A6

CITY & STATE

Voter ID poised for Senate OK

Final Senate passage of the controversial bill requiring voters to show photo identification is expected today. From there it goes to the Texas House.

STORY ON PAGE B1

HPD SAYS ALLEGED MADAM 'HEIDI FLEISS OF HOUSTON'



MODEST LIFESTYLE: Deborah and Charles Turbiville, arrested last week, lived quietly in a west Houston subdivision.

■ Vice officers claim she had 1,500 clients, catered to city's high rollers

By **BRIAN ROGERS, BILL MURPHY and MIKE TOLSON**
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

With two locations, several Web sites, dozens of employees and perhaps thousands of loyal, well-heeled customers, the business that Deborah

and Charles Turbiville allegedly nurtured over the last few years was impressive for a pair of young and inexperienced entrepreneurs. Some say it was the largest of its kind in Houston.

But prostitution is not legal. For all their efforts, the Turbivilles apparently now

chron.com

READ IT: The arrest affidavit in the prostitution case is at blogs.chron.com/newswatch

find themselves in need of a new line of work, as well as a good lawyer.

The couple stands charged with running a sophisticated brothel and call-girl opera-
Please see **RING**, Page A6

SPRING BREAK SPECTACLE

Don't try this at home, kids



JULIO CORTEZ : CHRONICLE

SPRING breakers watch world champion diver and cancer survivor Bill Brown, 55, of Orlando, Fla., jump from 85 feet to perform his signature dive — a double somersault with a half twist at 55 miles per hour — before splashing into 9½ feet of water at Space Center Houston on Tuesday. See video of this and his fire-lit dive at chron.com

Thankful Rockets rally behind Landry

■ Player escapes shooting with minor wound

By **FRAN BLINEBURY and MIKE GLENN**
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

In the aftermath of Carl Landry's shooting early Tuesday, his Houston Rockets teammates were frightened and relieved, yet determined not to let the incident dramati-

cally alter their lifestyles. "It's scary," said forward Shane Battier. "This is a guy we were joking and riding with on the plane just hours before. My feeling is thankfulness that he's going to be OK."

"You have to be careful and be aware of your surroundings. Even then, there's no guarantee you're safe. But I'm not going to lock myself in my house with an arsenal of weapons."

Landry, 25, suffered a gunshot wound to his lower left leg Tuesday morning in a possible drive-by shooting or failed robbery near downtown, police said. He was released after treatment at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center.

"I'm just thankful that he's all right," said Rockets head

Please see **LANDRY**, Page A6

Congress moves to tax AIG bonuses

■ White House says Obama learned of \$165 million payments last Thursday

By **SHAILAGH MURRAY, PAUL KANE and MICHAEL D. SHEAR**
WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — Senior White House officials said Tuesday night that President Barack Obama did not learn that \$165 million in bonuses were to be paid to executives of American International Group until Thursday, one day before they were issued

and two days after his Treasury secretary was informed that the payments were going forward.

Obama aides defended Timothy Geithner's handling of the situation Tuesday, with White House press secretary

Robert Gibbs saying the president has "complete confidence" in the Treasury chief.

In a letter to congressional leaders Tuesday night, Geithner said that in addition to pressing the company on compensation issues, the Treasury Department will deduct an amount equal to the total bonuses paid from a pledged \$30 billion commit-

ment to the troubled insurance company.

As Geithner and other Obama aides continued to scramble to pull back the bonuses and calm the public furor they sparked, Congress was preparing its own remedies. In what they acknowledged would be an extraordinary move, leading Demo-

Please see **AIG**, Page A6

INSIDE

Business . . . **D1** ; Editorials . . . **B8**
Comics . . . **E8** ; Lottery . . . **A2**
Crossword . . . **E7** ; Movies . . . **E4**
Directory . . . **A2** ; Obituaries . . . **B6**



WE RECYCLE

MORE ON ECONOMY

■ **Housing:** Slumps in area home sales and median price intensify. **PAGE D1**

■ **Refining:** Motiva is latest to halt a project. **PAGE D1**

■ **Wall Street:** Market rallies on upbeat national home construction news. **PAGE D4**

STAR

GRAB A BOARD, LADIES

The Sowle sisters are skater girls. And you can be, too.

STORY ON PAGE E1

MICHAEL PAULSEN : CHRONICLE

Want more low-price grocery deals? Go online at Target.com/weeklyad.

SUPER TARGET
EXPECT MORE. PAY LESS.®

©2009 Target Stores. 039131 Prices valid 3/15/09 through 3/21/09.

2 for \$1
You save 98¢ on two
Cucumbers & Green Peppers

2 for \$5
You save 1.98 on two
1-lb. Fresh Strawberries

\$6/lb.
You save 2.99/lb.
Sutton & Dodge®
Choice Angus Beef T-Bone Steak
Limit 6 per guest.