

# THE KANSAS CITY STAR.



## FYI AT THE MOVIES

One has no bite and the other isn't much fun, but audiences will surely flock to see "The Wolfman" (★★) and "Valentine's Day" (★) this weekend. | D1, D2

TODAY'S WEATHER: LOW 30, HIGH 35. MORNING SNOW, AFTERNOON SUNSHINE. | B12

75¢

## Jobs bill accord becomes discord

Democrats pare back their plan, prompting Republicans to accuse them of renegeing.

By ANDREW TAYLOR and STEPHEN OHLEMACHER  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON | Stung by criticism that a bipartisan jobs bill emerging in the Senate wouldn't create many jobs, Senate Democrats on Thursday proposed a new, stripped-down version that they hope will still get support from both parties.

Republicans, however, accused Democrats of renegeing on their deal, putting in jeopardy a short-lived attempt at bipartisan lawmaking.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's latest bill focuses on several popular provisions aimed at boosting job creation, including a new tax break negotiated with Republicans for companies that hire unemployed workers and for small businesses that purchase new equipment. It also would renew highway programs and help state and local governments finance large projects.

Reid, of Nevada, unveiled the pared-back plan after Senate Democrats balked at a broader bill stuffed with unrelated provisions sought by lobbyists for business groups and doctors.

The cost of the package would be at least \$15 billion over the next decade.

The surprise blew apart an agreement with key Republicans such as Chuck Grassley of Iowa, who worked with Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, a Montana Democrat, for weeks to produce a bill

SEE JOBS BILL | A18

## NEXT STOP: NATIONAL SPELLING BEE



JOHN SLEEZER | THE KANSAS CITY STAR

The winner of this year's Olathe Spelling Bee, 8-year-old Vanya Shivashankar, got a trophy and also a hug Thursday from big sister Kavya, who last year won the national spelling bee.

## This family's winning spell lives on

Little sister proves to be a super speller, too. Olathe third-grader now gets a shot at the big time.

By KEVIN WRIGHT  
The Kansas City Star

Kavya Shivashankar was visibly nervous Thursday sitting in the gallery at Frontier Trail Junior High School, watching her younger sister compete in the 2010 Olathe Spelling Bee.

But Vanya, her sister, showed the nerves of steel Kavya had when she won last year's Scripps National Spelling Bee.

"It's different having to watch," 13-year-old Kavya said.

For the Shivashankars, however, the result was the same.

On Thursday, 8-year-old Vanya won the Olathe bee, which means she's now headed to the national bee.

The competition starts June 2 in Washington, D.C.

SEE SPELLING | A18

MISSOURI | Regulatory panel takes a more aggressive stance

## MGE HIKE REQUEST REDUCED BY HALF

Gas utility is taken to task on several issues, including one that will affect other utilities.

By STEVE EVERLY  
The Kansas City Star

Missouri utility regulators on Thursday slashed in half Missouri Gas Energy's request for a rate hike and signaled a tougher stance in dealing with the company and other utilities.

MGE had requested a \$32.4 million annual revenue hike, but the Missouri Public Service Commission unanimously approved cutting that in half, which will hold the increase in the average customer's bill to \$2.26 a month. The company has 501,000 residential customers in western Missouri.

The commission approved a 2.35 percent increase, which will go into effect in mid-March.

By denying such a big chunk of the utility's request, the ruling actually lowered the utility's rate of return. That was a departure from the commission's recent practice of approving nearly all utility requests for higher returns.

Regulators also rebuked MGE on several other fronts:

They criticized the utility for not spending all of the money previously advanced by ratepayers to help customers conserve energy. For the first time in the state, the utility will have to spend a percentage of its operating revenues on the conservation program.

MORE BUSINESS NEWS, A19

Call center opening in Lenexa expects to employ 220.

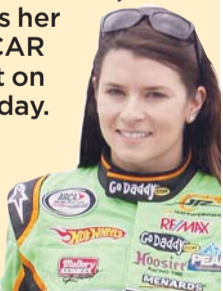
SEE MGE | A18

### NATION

Former president Bill Clinton undergoes a heart procedure at a New York hospital. | A2

### SPORTS DAILY

All eyes are on Danica Patrick, who makes her NASCAR debut on Saturday. | B1



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### LOCAL

## Golden apple for teachers?

Missouri and Kansas are in a federally fueled push to find ways to pay teachers based on performance.

By JOE ROBERTSON  
The Kansas City Star

Meet Jenna Delay, high school English teacher.

Just got a stellar evaluation.

While her principal watched recently, she had Olathe North High School sophomores of wide-ranging demeanors and beliefs openly sharing their feelings as they prepared to read the Greek tragedy "Antigone."

She is studying instructional strategies in her free time. Team-leading. Working extra hours. Graded outstanding by almost every measure.

And is paid basically the same wage as any other nine-year teacher.

With Missouri and Kansas joined in a federally fueled rush to find ways to pay teachers by their performances, Olathe North Prin-



JOHN SLEEZER | THE KANSAS CITY STAR

The Olathe School District has established a system of observation to grade teachers on performance. Olathe North High School Principal Connie Heinen this week watched Jenna Delay.

icipal Connie Heinen would have policymakers think of Delay and teachers such as her.

"I think it should happen," Hei-

nen said. "There are a lot of Jennas who work long hours and work on

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