

# Ethanol tax break extended

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate Finance Committee agreed Wednesday to extend a tax break for ethanol, the corn-based fuel additive, through 2007, a move strongly criticized by the chief tax-writer in the House.

By a voice vote, the panel supported the tax break, but moved to gradually lower it from 5.4 cents a gallon to 5.1 cents after 2005. The panel also voted to extend existing motor fuels taxes, including the 18.3-cent-a-gallon gasoline tax, through Sept. 30, 2005, and approved a new program to allow use of tax-free bonds to construct toll roads.

Ethanol, a fuel derived from corn and other agricultural products, enjoys a partial exemption from federal fuel taxes. That fact has made it unpopular with parts of the oil industry, and the ethanol battle has pitted the farm states against the oil states.

Six plants with 850 workers produce it in Nebraska, and a seventh plant has been built. By the end of 1997, the Nebraska Ethanol Board estimates the plants will be producing 300 million gallons of ethanol annually.

About 200 million bushels of grain, or about 15 percent to 20 percent of Nebraska's corn crop, is used in ethanol production, said Todd Sneller, administrator of the Nebraska Ethanol Board.

Sneller called the Senate committee's action "a crucial first step" toward extending the tax break. "We are all cautiously optimistic," he said.

Ethanol, which totaled less than 1 percent of all transportation fuels consumed in 1995, is commonly blended with gasoline to enhance oxygen content or octane level.

Rep. Bill Archer, R-Texas, who chairs the House Ways and Means Committee and traditionally fights to protect the oil industry, sought to eliminate the subsidy in his version of the \$152 billion tax bill enacted this year. But House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., rescued it after farm-state lawmakers complained. The final bill allowed the ethanol subsidy to expire in 2000.

"If we're going to change Washington by eliminating wasteful government spending, we should start by allowing this subsidy to expire as promised," Archer said in a statement.

The House Transportation Committee chairman, Rep. Bud Shuster, R-Pa., agreed. "I oppose ethanol. It robs money from the highway trust fund," Shuster said.

Sen. Bob Kerrey, D-Neb., defended the ethanol subsidy, saying it helps boost an important alternative source of energy and is a form of economic development.

"Thousands of Nebraska jobs — Nebraska has six ethanol plants that employ 810 Nebraskans directly and another 4,100 Nebraskans indirectly — and jobs across the Midwest depend on ethanol," Kerrey said.

The ethanol tax credit will cost \$208 million through 2007, according to the Joint Taxation Committee.

Earlier this year, Archer released a General Accounting Office report highly critical of the ethanol subsidy, which was first created in the 1970s amid the Middle East oil embargo to promote domestic energy independence.

The GAO report said the subsidy cost the highway trust fund \$7.1 billion, but said the corn-based fuel has done little to reduce air pollution or enhance the nation's energy security.

# Sex case nears trial

## An Army reviewing officer agrees with a recommendation to court-martial McKinney.

WASHINGTON (AP) — The sexual misconduct case against Sgt. Maj. of the Army Gene McKinney moved within a step of trial Wednesday when a reviewing officer concurred with a recommendation that McKinney be court-martialed.

Col. Owen Powell sent his report to Maj. Gen. Robert Foley, who will make the final decision on whether McKinney should stand trial.

Six women have alleged that McKinney made improper sexual advances toward them.

All six testified at a Fort McNair hearing to determine if there was sufficient evidence to order a court-martial.

McKinney, the Army's top enlisted soldier, has denied all the allegations.

Powell, commander of the Fort Myer Military Community, ordered the hearing and appointed Col. Robert Jarvis to preside. The proceeding lasted eight weeks, one of the longest such hearings in Army history.

Jarvis recommended that McKinney be court-martialed on 22 counts, including indecent assault, adultery and obstruction of justice, and sent his report to Powell for review.

The Army has refused to say what either Jarvis or Powell recommended. But sources close to the case, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed that both officers recommended the matter go to trial.

The brief Army announcement said that Foley could dismiss the charges, order nonjudicial action, return the case to Powell for dispo-

sition or order a general court-martial.

Charles Gittins, McKinney's civilian lawyer, has said that if a court-martial is ordered he will file a motion detailing cases in which general officers accused of the same activity alleged against McKinney were not threatened with prosecution. He said the officers were allowed to retire with full benefits.

Earlier this week, Gittins filed a motion denouncing the Jarvis report as "flimsy and superficial."

He said that Jarvis' 2½-page report had "no critical analysis of the evidence or explanation of what circumstances required the testimony of 56 witnesses."

The defense also said the Jarvis report included no discussion "of evidence contradictory of the complaining witnesses."

Meanwhile, on Capitol Hill, House and Senate negotiators agreed to reinforce the Army's training command in light of the sex scandal that rocked a training center at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

Rep. Steve Buyer, R-Ind., said lawmakers working on the 1998 defense authorization bill agreed to add 1,200 to 1,300 positions to Army manpower, with most of the new personnel going to the service's Training and Doctrine Command.

Studies by Buyer's House National Security personnel subcommittee and by the Army pointed to problems in the training of drill sergeants, as well as an overstretched work force in the training command, as factors leading to problems with sexual harassment and misconduct.

The studies followed incidents at Aberdeen that resulted in nine drill sergeants and 15 others being disciplined for sexual misconduct. In one case, a drill sergeant was convicted on 18 counts of rape.

# Bomb removed from building

By BRAD DAVIS  
Assignment Reporter

A pipe bomb that could have "levelled an entire building" was removed without incident from an apartment building in central Lincoln Wednesday night by the Lincoln Fire Department bomb squad.

The bomb squad arrived about 8 p.m. at 1420 D St. and evacuated the building and two homes next door.

Adam Sasse, a 21-year-old Americorps volunteer, said he was tilling his yard at his cabin on the Elkhorn River when he came across a plastic tube Wednesday afternoon.

"I found a little piece of pipe," Sasse said. "I took the cap off one end and it had some wires and a green and yellow tube inside it that had one-fourth of a pound of TNT in it."

Instead of leaving the bomb where he found it, which is what firefighters later said he should have done, Sasse took the bomb from the cabin site and brought it back to his Lincoln apartment.

"I picked it up and brought it home — I was curious," Sasse said.

After bringing the tube home, Sasse called a friend of his who is a University of Nebraska-Lincoln science student. She told him to call the police.

"They told me to go outside and wait for them," Sasse said.

Lincoln Fire Department Deputy Chief Jerry Greenfield said the device was 24 inches long and 2½ inches wide.

"It was a real bomb," Greenfield said.

An LFD bomb technician removed the bomb from the apartment building and placed it in what Sasse described as a dump truck full of sandbags. People

watched outside the evacuated building and two houses next door, which also were evacuated.

Greenfield said the bomb squad would take the bomb apart and detonate it today. He said he did not think there were any other bombs at the site near the Elkhorn River, but the situation may be investigated.

John Klein, owner of the apartment building from which the bomb was removed, said he had encountered fires in some of his other properties, and was not concerned when he was told about the bomb.

"There's nothing you can do. You just stand and wait to see if the building is going to blow up or not," Klein said.

# Congress approves pay increase

WASHINGTON (AP) — Capping weeks of intense maneuvering, Congress approved legislation Wednesday that clears the way for a \$3,000 cost-of-living increase in lawmakers' \$133,600 pay.

The 55-45 Senate vote was the latest in a series of close calls for the bill, which leaders in both houses and both parties nursed toward passage over many weeks without permitting a direct roll call vote on a pay increase.

Even so, the political anxiety was evident in the Senate, where 19 of the 30 lawmakers seeking re-election next year voted against the bill, and only 11 voted in favor.

"We shouldn't be receiving a (cost-of-living adjustment) during that period of time" when lawmakers

are asking others to sacrifice, said Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., who faces the voters in 13 months and was one of a small number of senators to speak out against the increase. "I cannot support the COLA at this point in time."

While partisan tensions inevitably surfaced, the issue exposed generational splits within the two houses. In the House, the younger, reform-minded Republicans were vocal in their opposition, while the older lawmakers of both parties provided the bulk of the support needed for passage.

"Maybe it's the fat \$100 a month that everybody gets out of this," second-term Rep. Joe Scarborough, R-Fla., said scathingly after an earlier House vote.

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