

Nation

Nationline

Looking ahead

No break for presidential candidates

The day after Christmas is a busy one for presidential candidates in Iowa. Democrats including Barack Obama, Hillary Rodham Clinton and Chris Dodd are planning events today, as are Republicans including John McCain and Mike Huckabee.

Also today:

► Merchants are preparing for a wave of after-Christmas shoppers to begin.

► The downtown Seattle bus tunnel will remain closed as Sound Transit officials continue tests. Computer problems in the system that lets operators control signals, ventilation and other functions led to the tunnel's closure this month.

Across the nation

Tiger escapes at San Francisco Zoo, kills 1

A tiger that mauled a zookeeper last year escaped from its pen at the San Francisco Zoo on Tuesday, killing one man and injuring two others before police shot it dead, police said.

The three men were in their 20s and were not zoo employees, San Francisco Police spokesman Steve Mannina said. They were attacked just after the 5 p.m. closing time outside the zoo's cafe on the east end.

It was unclear how or when the tiger escaped. The Siberian tiger, named Tatiana, attacked a zookeeper last December during a public feeding, the zoo told the Associated Press. Police shot the tiger when it started moving toward them, Mannina said.

The two injured men were stable but in critical condition at San Francisco General Hospital, San Francisco Fire Department spokesman Lt. Ken Smith said.

It was not certain whether other people were attacked. Smith said a thorough sweep of the grounds would be done in the morning.



By Pat Wellenbach, AP

Chilly swim in the ocean

Frigid freestyle: Lyle Prescott passes ice floes Tuesday along the coast in West Bath, Maine. After celebrating Christmas morning with family, she donned two wetsuits to brave the 40-degree water temperature for her daily plunge into the ocean.

Two Americans die in Panama plane crash

The bodies of two Americans and a Panamanian pilot of a plane that crashed over the weekend were found in Panama's mountains Tuesday, said Roberto Rolando Rodriguez, a spokesman for Panama's air security agency. A 12-year-old American girl survived.

Businessman Michael Klein, 37, his daughter Talia, 13, and pilot Edwin Lasso were found dead in the town of Las Ovejas, 270 miles west of the capital, Panama's civil protection agency said in a statement. Francesca Lewis, a friend of Talia's, survived and was hospitalized with hypothermia and multiple traumas, it said. The severity of her injuries was not immediately clear.

Michael Klein had been vacationing with his daughter and Lewis at a resort he owns in the Central American nation, his ex-wife Kim Klein told the Associated Press from Boquete, Panama. The three were to return to Santa Barbara, Calif., on Monday, she said.

Family OKs \$6M deal in Big Dig accident

The family of a woman killed when the ceiling of the Big Dig tunnel in Boston collapsed on her car has agreed to a \$6 million settlement with the epoxy supplier blamed for the accident.



Family photo

Del Valle: Killed in tunnel in 2006.

Powers Fasteners agreed to settle a lawsuit filed last year by Milena Del Valle's family, attorney Raipher Pellegrino, who represented her widower, said late Monday.

Del Valle, 39, was killed July 10, 2006, as she and her husband drove through an Interstate 90 connector tunnel. Investigators determined that the ceiling collapsed because an epoxy that was used was not safe for overhead loads.

In a statement, the company's president, Jeffrey Powers, said he hoped the settlement would begin to provide healing for the family.

WWII vet dies after reunion in Hawaii

A Navy World War II veteran died, one day after returning home from a reunion softball game for U.S. and Japanese veterans in Hawaii.

Karl Sommer, 81, had a heart attack and died over the weekend in St. Petersburg, Fla., said his wife, Marge.

Sommer, who served aboard Navy amphibious landing crafts, helped the Kids & Cubs team beat Japan's Over the Rainbows 14-2.

On Deadline: What others are reporting

Natural hallucinogen to be banned in Ill.

A natural hallucinogen that has politicians, spiritualists and scientists at odds with one another will be off limits in Illinois beginning Jan. 1, the *Chicago Tribune* (chicagotribune.com) reported.

Some argue salvia divinorum is an herb that should be freely available for research and personal use, but others say it's a drug that should be banned. On New Year's Day it becomes a felony in the state to possess or sell the hallucinogen initially used in religious ceremonies by Mazatec Indians in Mexico.

Salvia divinorum has gained popularity in the USA in the past 30 years, and is available in tobacco shops, "head shops," over the Internet and at some gas stations. In several states, including Illinois, it will be considered a Schedule I substance, the strictest level of control, on par with LSD and heroin, the *Tribune* said. "We decided to move forward rather than waiting for someone to be killed because of it," Republican state Rep. Dennis Reboletti told the *Tribune*.

By Alan Gomez with staff and wire reports

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From N.C. to Rome, tidings of comfort and joy

From staff and wire reports

Parts of the Midwest enjoyed a white Christmas as the nation celebrated the day remembering the victims of 9/11 as well as U.S. troops at war overseas.

In Mooresville, N.C., a computer glitch shut down the freezer at a Target store, prompting store managers to donate the entire stock of frozen goods to the needy. Food kitchen volunteers called it a Christmas miracle.

"I don't know how many hundreds of families got blessed," said Vicky Mayberry, a volunteer at the Mooresville Soup Kitchen.

In New York, families of victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks joined police, firefighters and rescue workers for a midnight Mass at Ground Zero. Catholic priest Brian Jordan,



By Matt Rourke, AP

Canceled: Revolutionary War re-enactors head to shore after attempting to cross the Delaware River at Washington Crossing, Pa.

who presided over the Mass, said Port Authority officials told him intensifying construction would make it impossible to continue the tradition in 2008.

But Port Authority spokesman Steve Coleman said Monday that a spot would be found if Jordan wanted to hold future services at the site.

A winter storm delivered snow to parts of the Midwest,

causing some traffic accidents and flight delays but no major problems.

United Airlines canceled about 50 flights in Denver, which got up to 7 inches of snow, and some in Chicago.

Because Tuesday was a light travel day, United spokeswoman Robin Urbanski, said passengers on canceled flights had been moved to others.

Besides in Colorado, snow fell in parts of Wyoming, Minnesota and Nebraska.

President Bush celebrated Christmas with family at Camp David in Maryland.

He gave his wife, Laura, a silver tray and purse, and she gave him a coat and warming soles for cold-weather biking, according to Sally McDonough, Laura Bush's press secretary.

The president called 10 U.S. servicemembers deployed

overseas to thank them.

He exchanged holiday greetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said.

From Vatican City, Pope Benedict XVI appealed to leaders around the globe to find the "wisdom and courage" to end conflicts in Darfur, Iraq, Israel, the Palestinian territories and Afghanistan.

Christmas Day brought disappointment as well.

Ronald Rinaldi, chosen to play George Washington in the 55th annual re-enactment of the military leader's Christmas crossing of the Delaware, could not make it across.

Strong currents swept one boat downstream, and it had to be returned to the Pennsylvania shore by rescue crews.

A push for female-friendly cities

As women take over downtown demographics, urban designers skewing to their needs, safety

By Haya El Nasser
USA TODAY

PHILADELPHIA — Chunks of the sidewalk behind the 16th Police District building off Lancaster Avenue are so torn up that mothers pushing strollers and women in wheelchairs can't negotiate the jumbled concrete slabs without venturing into the street.

Many then must climb a flight of stairs to get to the front door of the old row houses in west Philadelphia. If kitchens are on the second floor, they lug groceries, canes or strollers up another flight of stairs. All along the way, they fear crime.

"There are some areas that aren't well lit at all," says Blaine Straub, 25, who lives near Lancaster Avenue and had to get around in a wheelchair after she broke her ankle in October. "That's a little intimidating."

In a neighborhood where 54% of the residents are women, 70% of the households are headed by women and 70% of the elderly are women, the broken walkway on North Sloan Street symbolizes some of the physical challenges that women in America's cities face: an unsafe urban environment that's not conducive to walking.

Medical experts, concerned about increased rates of obesity, diabetes and hypertension, have studied how the design of cities affects health for some time. Now, they're focusing on its impact on women, an increasingly prominent demographic segment of the urban landscape.

Health scientists are joining urban planners and targeting the specific effects that the layout and design of streets, houses and transportation systems have on women.

Focus on women's safety

"Women are feeling frustrated in dense urban environments that are not designed for them to be able to get out," says Afaf Meleis, dean of the School of Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania here. "We tell women, 'You need to walk and exercise.' ... If there's violence going on, it prevents them. Curbs are not designed for women and women's shoes. We really have not taken gender into consideration."

Health and planning professionals convened in September on the Penn campus a few blocks from this neighborhood when the School of Nursing hosted a rare gathering of policymakers, politicians, health officials and researchers.

"Decisions that are made for women are going to be made for men as well," says Eugenie Birch, chairwoman of Penn's



Photos by Eileen Blass, USA TODAY

Safety concerns: Blaine Straub, 25, who broke her ankle in a bike accident, navigates over a rough Philadelphia sidewalk to a library.



Taking over streets: Tonyetta Demby, 38, of Philadelphia, pulls her cart across trolley tracks at 40th Street and Lancaster Avenue.

department of city and regional planning. "But there might be more sensitivity to safe places, to lighting, to creating an environment that women would more likely inhabit."

That means fixing sidewalks, lengthening the time traffic signals give pedestrians on crosswalks, designing housing without stairs and encouraging walking, biking and mass transit by building trails and safe access to public transportation.

Addressing such issues "is an emerging trend," says Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, chairwoman of UCLA's urban planning department.

The connection between urban design and health has been the foundation of how cities plan growth. Building codes and zoning regulations were created largely to ensure public safety and to limit overcrowding and the spread of disease.

The linkage gained new relevance in the late 1990s when environmentalists and opponents of sprawl who were pushing for less driving and more walking found common ground with health professionals campaigning to reduce skyrocketing rates of obesity.

Now, for the first time, the intersection of disciplines is be-

coming more gender-specific because of powerful demographics:

► There are 118.5 million women in the nation's central cities and their suburbs, more than half the urban population.

► About 17 million women in those areas are age 65 and older — almost 60% of the total number of seniors in cities.

► Women 65 and older are three times as likely as their male counterparts to live alone.

► More than 14 million women live alone in cities.

► More than 23 million women are heads of households.

► More than 60% of those who care for an older person are women.

"Women's health is incredibly important not just for women but for the entire family," says Dean Kehler, a member of the board of directors of the Penn School of Nursing and CARE, a global humanitarian organization that focuses on women. "No disrespect to the men, but if mother's ill or grandmother's ill, it doesn't just affect her, it threatens the whole family."

The school's LIFE (Living Independently for Elders) program provides nursing home-

City women

■ 2000 ■ 2006

Women living in central cities or their suburbs:

Number (in millions)

114

118.5

Percentage of the population

45%

51%

Source: Census Bureau

By Adrienne Lewis, USA TODAY

drive the longest. "They make more trips," Ginzler says. "They're the ones running errands."

That has led to efforts to improve road signs in Michigan. In Iowa, transportation planners are adding left-turn lanes and signals at intersections to reduce accidents, she says. Some are offering training to ease the fear that some women have taking public transportation.

Gaining some ground

Planning for women's safety isn't a novel idea for the folks who run the People's Emergency Center in West Philadelphia. The social service agency for homeless women and children formed the PEC Community Development Corp. in the early 1990s to provide housing for the families they were helping.

Kira Strong, vice president of economic and community development, says developers and designers still have to be nudged into thinking about women's needs.

"You take a typical three-story row home that has two apartments, and they want to stick the kitchen on the third floor," she says. "Do you want to carry your groceries and strollers up to the third floor?"

A three-story, six-unit apartment building for teenage mothers who are coming out of foster care is being planned. It will have no elevator, but developers are putting a rack in the lobby for bikes and strollers.

"It's a little small nod to the fact that we've got moms here and they're single," Strong says. Straub, a cabinetmaker before she injured her leg, says it has been challenging to reach the area's only supermarket.

"It closes really early," she says. "If the only store available is down some dark street all torn up, it's not acceptable to a lot of women."

N.Y. town favors letting seniors work off taxes

By Jim Fitzgerald
The Associated Press

GREENBURGH, N.Y. — Audrey Davison lives alone, gets a \$620 Social Security check each month and worries about the sharply rising taxes on her four-bedroom house. Davison, 76, raised her family there, and after 43 years, she doesn't want to leave Greenburgh.

Greenburgh doesn't want her to leave, either.

The town is pushing a program that would let seniors work part time, for \$7 an hour,



By Julie Jacobson, AP

Davison: Willing to work part time to offset property taxes.

to help pay off some of their property taxes.

"People shouldn't have to sell their house, move away to a

place with less taxes, leave behind their family and friends," Town Supervisor Paul Feiner said. He envisions retired doctors mentoring schoolchildren, retired accountants helping with the town's finances, retired lawyers offering their services for a discount.

There are plenty of less-skilled jobs as well, Feiner said.

"It's not like we're going to see Grandma running the snowplow," he said. "There are lots of things people can do for the town, and it wouldn't cost us that much to pay them."

The proposal has caused a stir in Greenburgh, a town of 90,000 in Westchester County, which has the nation's third-highest homeowner property taxes. Similar programs are considered successes in Colorado, Massachusetts, South Carolina and elsewhere.

Davison, who suffers from arthritis and sciatica, supports the idea. She said she pays about \$12,000 a year in property taxes — perhaps \$2,000 to the town — and has taken out a reverse mortgage to pay bills.

Scott Parkin, spokesman for

the National Council on Aging, said the plan sounded interesting, as long as it wasn't limited to menial work. "It's certainly in line with what we stand for, keeping seniors involved in work or volunteering as a part of healthy aging," he said.

Feiner's proposal faces some obstacles. If the wages earned are to be tax-free and directly credited to the property tax bill, the state Legislature would have to approve. And unions would have to be convinced that the program is no threat to their members' job security.