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# Herald & Review

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**Saturday**  
November 13, 1999  
Decatur, Illinois

## Quick Take Bombers, Hawks ready for showdown

The Meridian Hawks and the Argenta-Oreana Bombers meet today in quarterfinal play. The unbeaten Newton Eagles travel to Benton for their game, and Tuscola faces Tolono Unity.

Sports / D1, 3



## Folk saint

Mexicans and Americans still seek healing from faith healer Jose Fidenio Constantino, "El Nino Fidenio," 61 years after his death.

Lifestyle / B1

## 1999 UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN

Goal ..... \$2.5 million  
Raised ..... \$2,139,471.09  
Needed ..... \$360,528.91  
Days left ..... 6

## Lottery

Here are the winning numbers selected Friday:  
■ Pick Three-Midday: 2-4-9  
■ Pick Three-Evening: 6-9-0  
■ Pick Four-Midday: 0-8-4-5  
■ Pick Four-Evening: 4-8-9-6  
■ Little Lotto: 01-03-15-21-25  
■ Lotto jackpot: \$6 million  
■ Big Game: 20-26-27-40-45  
■ Big Money Ball: 22  
■ Big Game jackpot: \$5 million

## Weather

■ Today: Mostly sunny, High 75.  
■ Tonight: Clear, Low 44.

Details / B8

## Inside

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## City braces for multiple marches

Teachers show support for board

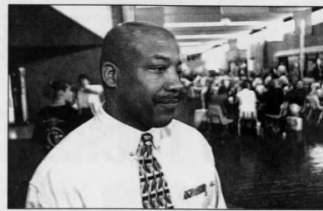
By TONY REED  
Herald Staff Writer

DECATUR — Decatur's teachers stood squarely behind their school board on Friday in an ocean of blue ribbons that underlined a defiant "Yes" to the idea of zero tolerance for violence.

The ribbons — symbolic of support for the board — were everywhere as more than 2,000 teachers gathered in and around Decatur for the Macon-Platt Educational Conference, a series of professional seminars designed to improve classroom skills.

But the topic on many minds, inevitably, was the furor surrounding the school board's decision to support the board.

TEACHERS  
Continued on A4



TOP ISSUE: Joseph Smith, principal at Washington School, says educators at Friday's Macon-Platt Educational Conference were talking about the current events in the Decatur School District. Smith said zero-tolerance of violence "sends a message that our schools are going to be safe, and it sends a message that teachers can be safe also." Related story / A3

Decatur officials say safety is top priority after KKK plans demonstration to counter Rainbow/PUSH effort

By PAUL BRINKMANN  
Herald Staff Writer

DECATUR — The maelstrom of public attention surrounding seven students expelled from the Decatur School District could reach a new level Sunday as a planned march by Jesse Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH Coalition has attracted attention of an Indiana Ku Klux Klan group.

City officials met for hours on Friday "to make sure this is a safe event for anyone involved," said Mayor Terry Howley.

"We want to reassure all citizens of the city that there will be adequate police protection. We hope there will be no incidents,"

Howley said. "Everyone has told us they plan to be peaceful."

City officials now are preparing for demonstrations by three groups — Rainbow/PUSH, the American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and a group of local residents marching against violence led by city council member Betsy Stockard.

Also on Friday, Decatur school board President Jackie Goetter said she forwarded copies of Jackson's in-point proposal to the school district's attorney and all one of the board members.

MARCHES  
Continued on A4

## ILLINOIS FARM OUTLOOK

### State crops come up feast or famine



CHECKING PRICES: Assumption farmer Jim Coffman, right, chats with Sigan's sales manager Mike Orris Thursday, after looking over a John Deere 8100 tractor.

Depending upon location, farms had either very good or very bad yields; officials say crisis is far from over.

By PAUL BRINKMANN  
Herald Staff Writer

DECATUR — The ears of corn in Roger James' hands told the story of farming in Illinois this year.

One ear was fat and six inches long with full golden kernels; the other was a puny four inches, skinny and curved with missing kernels.



August while the other had a few tenths of an inch. It was the most crucial rain of the year.

"Generally I sell just enough in the fall to pay bills and get by," James said. "This year will be different. I don't know how much longer this can go on."

James knows that many farmers to the north of his area had a good year. He acknowledges that he farms marginal ground in river bottoms and chalky soil, but he has usually managed to get out a decent crop. This year, some of James' fields yield-

ed as little as eight or nine bushels per acre.

Farm economy experts and farmers alike agree that the farm crisis is far from over. Although farmers in the northern part of the state reported record yields, some as high as 200 bushels per acre, those in Southern Illinois were hit with a wet spring that forced many to plant as late as June. When the heat of summer came, those young crops dried up.

The crisis is still rippling through some parts of the economy as strapped farmers pinch pennies, in hard hit rural areas, local governments are trying to keep property taxes at the same level in an effort to protect farmers further.

Gary Schnitke, economist at University of Illinois, said good crops will help some farmers survive the year because of government loans, but low commodity prices are still dragging down the industry.

"With these low prices, you aren't going to see this situation resolved anytime soon," Schnitke said.

The USDA and industry analysts have predicted that prices are not likely to recover soon. This year's corn and soybean crops are the third biggest on record despite the spotty drought.

According to a study performed by Schnitke and other economists, the average farm income in the state is about \$25,000 this year, well below the 10-year average but up from last year's figure of \$16,746.

Unfortunately, more than half of this year's income is from regular and emergency government aid programs.

"Income would only be \$12,000 without government programs. That is not good enough for farmers to survive without help," Schnitke said.

The farm income study also took note of the line between north and south. Macon

## Financial position of farms

Distribution of 1,078 Illinois grain farms



County is part of the central district for crop reporting, where farmers' average income was \$31,984, corn yielded an average of 162 bushels per acre and soybeans yielded 49 bushels per acre, the highest yields in the state.

But in James' area, the East Southeast District, farmers are averaging only \$17,000 a year, even with government assistance. Corn and soybean yields are significantly lower. Further south, income averages drop into the negatives.

The regional difference is being felt by farm equipment dealers in both areas.

Farm equipment sales have lagged all year throughout the state, but two dealers in Macon County said sales have picked up since the harvest.

"We are selling more small tractors and used equipment over the last four to six

CROPS  
Continued on A4

## U.S., U.N. buildings attacked in Pakistan

Terrorist bin Laden may be behind rocket launches.

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — Hours after U.S. and U.N. missions were targeted by rocket attacks, Pakistan's military leader offered Friday to mediate between the United States and Afghanistan's Taliban rulers over suspected terrorist Osama bin Laden.

Six rockets were fired from cars near the U.S. Embassy, the U.N. building, an American cultural center and downtown government buildings in Pakistan's capital, injuring six people.

There was no evidence so far that bin Laden, who Washington says masterminded the deadly bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa last year, was behind Friday's attacks.

But Pakistani Interior Ministry officials said immediate suspicions focused on the Saudi dissident. The blasts occurred two days before a U.N. deadline for the Taliban to turn over bin Laden for trial or face sanctions.

Gen. Pervez Musharraf, who seized power in Pakistan a month ago in a bloodless coup, refused to speculate on who carried out Friday's attacks until an investigation is completed.

But he said he wants to help fight terrorism and offered to mediate with the Taliban over bin Laden, who has been hiding in Afghanistan since 1996.

"If he is involved in terrorism, yes, surely, I would like to negotiate with the Afghan government as how to resolve the issue," Musharraf told The Associated Press.

"It will be really sad that a country which needs help ... will have to face sanctions," he said. "I would like to play my role with the Taliban and see how a compromise can be reached."

"We are against all forms of terrorism, especially against the use of religion for promoting terrorism," Musharraf said. "Surely I will like to contribute toward curbing terrorism in whatever form."

The United States says bin Laden runs a network of Islamic militants called al-Qaida, a living under protection of the Taliban, who rule 90 percent of Afghanistan. It twice in 1998 planned the August 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed 224 people.

A guerrilla who said he conducts weapons training for al-Qaida warned Friday that a special commando unit had been cre-

ATTACK  
Continued on A6