

Herald & Review

Monday
November 8, 1999
Decatur, Illinois

Serving Central Illinois Since 1873

'It's all or none'



ARM-IN-ARM: The Rev. Jesse Jackson, center, starts Sunday's march toward Eisenhower High School arm-in-arm with Rainbow/PUSH Coalition local chapter president Rick Tomlinson (with sign). The crowd gathered at the Church of the Living God, PGT Temple 3, to show support for the seven students expelled by the Decatur school board. To Jackson's left is Jeffrey Perkins, the only school board member who voted against the expulsions.

Jackson urges support from peers to return teens to class

By BILLY TYUS and KEN DICKSON
H&R Staff Writers

DECATUR — The Rev. Jesse Jackson today will walk with seven expelled students to Eisenhower High School in hopes of having them reinstated. If they are not allowed in, he and other members of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition want other high school students to walk out in protest. "I challenge parents of school children," Jackson said during a rally Sunday. "If these seven can't go, the rest can't go."

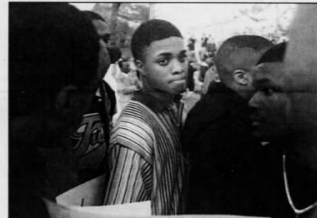
"It's all or none."

In a scene reminiscent of the civil rights marches of the 1960s, Jackson led the crowd through the streets of Decatur in support of the students before gathering at Eisenhower. While march organizers estimate the crowd at about 5,000, Decatur police are estimating it was 1,200. Jackson told the crowd — the

majority of which was local — to stand behind the expelled students because one day a similar situation could face their children. He asked that parents keep their children out of school if the students aren't allowed to return. "Tomorrow when the sun rises, we will rise and bring our children to school and stand here until a change comes," he told the crowd. "We will meet here at 7:30 and stand here until it closes if we have to."

"Have your children behind you."

The Decatur school board voted in early October to expel the students for two years in connection with a Sept. 17 fight at Eisenhower. The school board has said the expulsions could be reviewed at the end of the school year and their reinstatements based upon participation in a community-based tutoring and service program.



ATTORNEY ADVICE: Roosevelt Fuller, center, and other students expelled by the Decatur school board listen to advice from an attorney for the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition. The teens were advised not to speak to anyone after crossing onto school district property at Eisenhower High School.

Board members said they were enforcing their "zero-tolerance" policy toward violence in the district when issuing the expulsions. School board president Jackie Goetter said Sunday the district

New direction sought for the Lincoln Square Theatre

By SUSAN REEDY
H&R Staff Writer

DECATUR — Lincoln Square Theatre officials are considering new oversight of the theater's daily operations they hope will translate into more performances and a boost for downtown nightlife.

The board of directors will decide Wednesday on a 90-day trial agreement in which Avon Theater general manager Skip Huston and his management team would oversee the daily operation of the Lincoln, said Carla Brinkotter, Lincoln Theatre board president.

"We need someone who can be there on a regular basis," she said. Managing director David Golden, who had taken care of some of the daily operations, left about five weeks ago, she said.

Huston's team, which also runs the Avon, would be responsible for such things as maintenance, booking the theater, selling concessions and updating the board on the theater's needs.

"We've got to get (the Lincoln) open every weekend. A theater is only a theater if you're using it."

Skip Huston, Avon Theater general manager

"We've got to get this theater open every weekend. A theater is only a theater if you're using it. Otherwise it's just big open space," Huston said. "I want people to ask, 'What's at the Lincoln?' not 'Is the Lincoln open?'"

Brinkotter said during the trial period, concessionaires and the janitorial staff will be paid but others on Huston's management team will not.

Huston said his team's first priority if they take over the daily operation of the Lincoln will be a complete "pathology" of the building, from the heating and cooling system to the lighting.

At the same time, his team will work on booking the theater with musical and theatrical performances to publicize.

LINCOLN
Continued on A8

Quick Take



TOUCHDOWN: Chicago Bears running back Lynn Milburn scores in the team's 14-13 victory over the Packers.

Memorable win

In a fitting tribute to the late Walter Payton, the Bears break a 10-game losing streak against the Green Bay Packers by blocking a last-second field goal.

Sports / B1

Heavy ruling

A judge's anti-trust ruling on Microsoft could put an end to Wall Street's record-setting rally.

Nation / A2



The Field of the Dogs
By KATHERINE PETERSON
Chapter 6 / A3

1999 UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN

Goal	\$2.5 million
Raised	\$2,012,656.97
Needed	\$487,343.03
Days left	11

Lottery

Here are the winning numbers selected Sunday in the Illinois State Lottery:

- Pick Three-Evening: 8-5-9
- Pick Four-Evening: 7-4-2-9
- Loto Jackpot: \$5 million
- Big Game Jackpot: \$62 million

Weather

■ Today: Partly cloudy. High 75.
■ Tonight: Partly cloudy. Low 50.

Details / B14

Inside

Ann Landers	B7
Classifieds	B10-13
Comics	B8
Lifestyle	B7
Movies	B7
Obituaries	A11
Opinion	B11, 12-13
Puzzles	A4
Sports	B1-6
Television	B9



54
Celebrate 2000

Sponsored by:
Arthur Darnes Midland Co.
Decatur Memorial Hospital
Winds Power Co.

50 cents
Our 120th year
Issue 312 • Two sections

7 02138 70001 2

Costs complicate Edison choice

Teacher salaries, busing and building maintenance remain as issues

By KEN DICKSON
H&R Staff Writer

DECATUR — What would it cost to have a private corporation run a school in the Decatur School District?

That was a burning question when the Decatur school board was actively considering a possible contract with the Edison Project to run Washington and South Shores schools.

South Shores Principal David Kidd will present a plan Tuesday to the school board asking to become a choice school. The proposal has since stalled negotiations with the Edison Project.

Edison, a private corporation based in New York City, operates 79 schools in 11 states, including two in Peoria that opened this fall. Its contracts, however, vary from school district to school district, so what is playing in Peoria may not play here.

Superintendent Kenneth Arndt said Decatur has a unique problem that may make any future Edison negotiations difficult. The school district is not in a financial position to offer more than the average operating expendi-

ture per pupil, and that figure is well below the state average.

As of the latest audit on June 30, Decatur spends \$5,883 per pupil per year. The state average for the 1998-99 school year was \$6,682.

"The bottom line is we may not be spending enough per kid to make it worth their while," Arndt said. "It may depend on getting other districts in Central Illinois to sign contracts — that would help Edison recover some of the costs through economy of scale."

In addition to Decatur, Edison has talked with school officials in Springfield, Rockford, Champaign and Urbana.

Blanche Fraser, Edison's vice president of Midwest development, said that despite Decatur's low level of spending, the district still interests her company.

"We have schools in Connecticut that spend \$10,000 per student



each year," she said. "There are others in Georgia, for instance, that are in the \$8,000 range. I would say \$5,800 is toward the middle of schools already possessing contracts with Edison."

A number of financial issues, including who would pay for school building maintenance, would have to be resolved before the school board would vote on a

COST
Continued on A7

EDITOR'S NOTE: A proposal to turn management of two Decatur schools over to the Edison Project was part of a sweeping plan presented to the school board Sept. 14 by Superintendent Kenneth Arndt. With an alternative proposal by South Shores School to become a choice school without Edison — a proposal to be presented formally at Tuesday's school board meeting — the school district has suspended negotiations with Edison for now but may look again at the privately owned corporation in the future. This special report explores what Edison could mean for Decatur schools. Here is the lineup.

SUNDAY: The changes that come with the Edison Project and their possible impact are examined.

TODAY: Many financial questions about bringing Edison to Decatur have yet to be resolved, but its introduction in the Peoria School District gives some indications.