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Quick Take

DIRECT LINE



State's attorney, others say confrontation will work against expelled students

By BRAD MUDD
H&R Staff Writer

DECATUR — Local law enforcement officials are urging people to consider their actions before breaking the law in protest of the expulsion of seven high school students for a Sept. 17 fight.

During a Thursday afternoon news conference, Macon County State's Attorney Larry Fichter said he had received a comment by the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who said to "have your say, but don't say (I) am prepared to get arrested."

As part of their two-year suspensions, the seven youths are barred from school property and cannot be readmitted to school, Fichter said.

"The advice to show up (at school) puts them in further jeopardy," Fichter said. "Let the process work. Keep the peace and respect the process."

"To violate the law and the process sends the wrong message to the youth."

Jackson was in Decatur Tuesday and Wednesday, during which he spoke at a town hall meeting to garner support for the expelled students and met with school board Prentiss.

Hunt

Keep the peace and respect the process.

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Shelbyville wins

The Shelbyville High School football team defeated the Cero Gordo Sectional Thursday night and advance to the Tuscumbia Super-Sectional.

Sports / B1

1999 UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN

Goal	\$2.5 million
Raised	\$2,012,656.97
Needed	\$487,343.03
Days left	13

Lottery

Here are the winning numbers Thursday in the Illinois State Lottery:

- Pick Three-Midday: 7-8-4
- Pick Three-Evening: 3-4-8
- Pick Four-Midday: 0-2-8-9
- Pick Four-Evening: 6-5-4-8
- Little Lotto: 17-19-22-23-25
- Lotto Jackpot: \$4 million
- Big Game: jackpot: \$54 million

Weather

■ Today:	Sunny, High 67.
■ Tonight:	Clear, Low 39.

Details / B8

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Fichter: 'Respect the process'



BRIEFING: Jeffrey Taylor, attorney for the Decatur School District, listens to questions from members of the media Thursday afternoon at the Law Enforcement Center.

By KEN DICKSON
H&R Staff Writer

DECATUR — Local residents appear to be taking sides over the expulsion of several Decatur high school students. Some say the two-year penalties are too harsh, but most are supporting the decision.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, founder and president of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, was in Decatur Tuesday night. While he was here to lobby the board into reconsidering its decision and allow the seven youths to return to school Monday, he is planning a march for Sunday afternoon, but the details have not been announced.

The coalition came to a meeting to a fight Sept. 17 at an Eisenhower football game. All seven youths also have been arrested on prior to charges of fighting and action, but formal charges have not been filed.

It's clear that almost everyone has a distinct opinion on the

School board members say public has shown its support

subject, even if they are not affiliated with the Decatur School District, nor members of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition.

School board President Jackie Goetter said she had 16 to 18 calls at home and another 25 to 30 at the office.

"I've only received two or three that expressed disappointment in me or indicated I or the school board did a bad job," she said.

"The greater majority of the board's actions are in support of the board's actions."

"I had a dinner (Wednesday) night for the DMH Foundation and 20 to 30 people gave their support."

School board member Jan Manderach said she's had 20 to 25 conversations about the issue.

"To date, all of them expressed support for the board," she said.

School board member D.R.

SUPPORT

Continued on A4

INMATE OVERFLOW



BOOKED: Thirty-year-old Alidopsis Cooper of Decatur, a trustee at the Macon County Jail, helps prepare dinner trays for other inmates on Thursday afternoon. The jail, built with space for 205 beds, has at times held as many as 300 inmates.

By RON INGRAM
H&R Staff Writer

DECATUR — The Biven-Whitton Juvenile Detention Center and the Macon County Jail have been running at or over capacity for most of this year, prompting county officials to consider expanding both facilities.

Although no firm steps in that direction have been taken, Macon County Sheriff Roger Walker said he would like to see the county look at alternatives for inmate housing or at a jail expansion. He said officials have discussed building a larger juvenile detention facility and moving the Biven-Whitton center out of

the Law Enforcement Center, 333 S. Franklin St.

"We'd like to have the space they'd vacate here for a female cell block or segregation space" for pregnant inmates, Walker said.

The jail crowding problem is a perennial one that has worsened in recent years, despite a declining local crime rate. Officials attribute the jail's large population to an increase in police work and changes in state law that have upgraded certain misdemeanors to felonies.

The national average crime clearance rate for homicides is 60 percent.

Sheriff seeks alternatives to ease jail overcrowding

By RON INGRAM
H&R Staff Writer

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Macon County Jail

Average daily population

177	198	181	171	218	220
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Source: Macon County Sheriff

Chart: J. Zerfoss

Continued on A4

Smoking rate defies campaigns to quit during the '90s

ATLANTA (AP) — Despite years of anti-smoking campaigns, lawsuits and bans, the smoking rate among American adults has hardly budged in the last decade. In fact, because more and more 18- to 24-year-olds are lighting up.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Thursday that 24.7 percent of adults smoked in

1997. As a result, the CDC expects to fall far short of its goal of reducing smoking to 15 percent of the adult population by 2000.

"Despite the 1990s we've made virtually no progress whatsoever," said Michael Eriksen, director of the CDC Office of Smoking and Health. "The fact that we can't get rates below 25 percent really speaks to the addictive power of nicotine."

About 48 million adults smoked cigarettes in 1997, according to a CDC survey that year of more than 33,000 people. The rate in 1995 was the same — 24.7 percent — in 1995. It was 25.5 percent in 1990.

Among most adult age groups, smoking rates actually declined

from 1990 to 1997, but the percent increased during that period, from 24.5 percent to 26.7 percent.

But even though there is not only no progress to reduce overall adult smoking, but when you see the lack of progress is caused by an increase in the younger adults, you realize exactly how this epidemic plays out," Eriksen said.

Jean Schellenbach, a spokeswoman for American Cancer Society, said: "That is a major concern for us, that people who started smoking mainly before the age of 18, before high school, continuing to smoke — a testimony to the terrible addictive power of nicotine."

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