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Wildcat Press Pass: See video highlights of last night's game. Plus post-game comments from the players and Late Olson wildcats.azstar.net.com

State fires alt-fuels whistleblower

Boss also spoke up; he's out of work, too

By Howard Fischer

PHOENIX — The state worker who sounded early warnings about the runaway popularity and growing price tag of tax credits for alternative-fuel vehicles has been fired.

State Commerce Director Jackie Norton confirmed yesterday that Amanda Ormond, who had been director of the state energy office, was relieved of her duties Friday. Norton refused to discuss the reason.

But several state lawmakers who dealt with the mess said the action was curious — particularly since the only other person who is out of a job is Jack Haenichen, Ormond's boss, who also tried to warn the Governor's Office last before the price tag for the credits grew from \$10 million to more than \$600 million. He agreed to retire last fall.

SEE ALT-FUELS / A9

No give as Bush talks with McCain on reforms

By Sonya Ross

WASHINGTON — President Bush and former rival John McCain discussed the Arizona senator's bid to reform campaign finance reforms but failed yesterday to reconcile their differences.

McCain, a three-term senator from Arizona, said after the Qval Office meeting that Bush still did not support key provisions of McCain's bill or agree on when the legislation should be put to a vote, a detail now being negotiated with Senate leaders. Still, he said he believed they would keep talking and ultimately would settle their differences.

"I come away with the distinct impression that he's favorably disposed towards continued discussions on this issue and seeing if we can't work out something with the belief that both of us hold that this system needs to be fixed," McCain said.

He said the president "didn't go

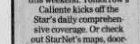
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Tucson rookals

The colossal Tucson Gem, Mineral and Fossil Show case rumbles into town this weekend. Tucson's Caliente kicks off the Star's daily comprehensive coverage. Or check out StarNet's maps, do-it-yourself directions and other useful information at www.azstar.net.com/gemshow01/

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CURBING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

Border arrests down

Flow of entrants subsides along frontier, but it may be an aberration



A group of apparent illegal entrants seeks cover near Douglas. Arrests of border-crossers in the Border Patrol's Tucson sector are down 23 percent this fiscal year.

By Ignacio Ibarra

DOUGLAS — U.S. immigration officials aren't ready to claim victory, but all across the Southwest's border with Mexico the flow of illegal immigrants appears to have slowed this fall and winter.

Arrests of illegal border-crossers dropped by 23 percent so far this fiscal year in the Border Patrol's Tucson sector compared with the same period last year — the lowest year in history. This month, they're down 40 percent

compared with last January.

And in the sector's Douglas/Saco corridor — which was the nation's hottest spot for illegal border jumping last year — arrests are down at least 40 percent this fiscal year, which began Oct. 1.

Arrests have dropped from San Diego to El Paso to Del Rio, Texas. Immigration officials say some of the credit goes to the U.S. Border Patrol, which is in the sixth year of its Southwest Border Initiative, a buildup of agents, technology and equipment.

But they say several other fac-

tors also are at work.

Changes in Mexico's political and economic scene may be encouraging optimism and a wait-and-see attitude for would-be migrants.

What may be spreading that the U.S. economy faces a potential slowdown and that fewer jobs will be available here.

The Border Patrol's campaign to warn migrants of the dangerous journey across Mexico and the United States may be getting through, especially in Central America.

SEE ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION / A8



Border Patrol agent Joe Santos remains vigilant at his post. Officials say they won't ease their grip on the border despite what appears to be recent success.

Civil rights leader urges halt to border vigilantism

The conviction and actions of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in the fight for civil rights have served as a role model for countless people.

He articulated the principles of civil rights, and those who followed King continue to broaden them, said civil rights lawyer Morris Dees, chief legal counsel for the Southern Poverty Law Center.

But the push to secure civil rights for more will remain a slow struggle, said Dees, a leading figure in the national civil rights movement since 1960.

"I think we'll continue to take three steps forward and one step backward," Dees said in an interview before he spoke to an audience of more than 750 people last night at the Doubletree Hotel.

Dees was the keynote speaker at the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Dinner, sponsored by the Tucson Human Relations Commission.

Tucson is east Montgomery, Ala., where much of the civil rights movement began, but we've had our share of Jim Crow laws.

Today, we continue in Southern Arizona to grapple with incidents of civil rights abuses and block full equal access to the powers.

We only need to look at the border in southeastern Arizona, where ranchers have taken it upon themselves to en-



force immigration law. Border ranchers may argue that they're protecting their property, but Dees said that argument doesn't give you the right to take the law into your own hands," he said.

Words of disapproval against vigilantism must be loud and clear and must come from the highest levels of government, said Dees, who founded the civil rights center in 1971.

The governor, the state attorney general and law enforcement leaders must

SEE CIVIL RIGHTS / A9

IN TODAY'S STAR

Accent The one-size-fits-all fabric of a "dimple top" sweater is riding a fashion wave.

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Weather TODAY'S FORECAST A little cooler, a little cloudy. High 50 / Low 24. Yesterday: High 70 / Low 30. For complete weather information, see the Weather Report sign at each of our stores. www.azstar.net.com/weather

ARIZONA & THE WEST A8
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TELEVISION B3

\$2 and \$5 coins possible - Gramm wants full redesign

By Lance Gay

WASHINGTON — At the top of the agenda of the new Congress putting new money in the pockets of Americans by redesigning U.S. coins. If the vending industry has its way, there could even be new \$2 and \$5 coins, and the end of the penny.

Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, chairman of the Senate Banking Committee overseeing coin issues, says that one of his top pri-

SEE COINS A9