

THE DAY TAKES A LOOK AT THE WHEELS OF SUMMER IN A SPECIAL AUTOMOTIVE SECTION

# The Day

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## GOVERNOR UNDER FIRE

# Panel looking at Florida trip, other gifts to Rowlands

Junket was paid for by friend who does business with state

By **TED MANN**  
Day Staff Writer

**Hartford** — Investigators for the House Select Committee of Inquiry trained new attention Tuesday on a trip to Florida by Gov. John G. Rowland and his wife, paid for by a friend whose companies do business with the state. The chief investigator for the com-

mittee, James Mintz, said he had not concluded examining the relationship between Rowland and William R. Berkley, who has treated Rowland and his wife to free vacations and appealed to the governor for help when one of his companies lost a state contract in 2001.

In an affidavit prepared for the committee by Berkley's lawyer, Stanley Twardy, the businessman confirms

See **INQUIRY** page **A7**

**INSIDE:** Peter Ellef, Gov. Rowland's former chief of staff, has been put on notice to expect a federal indictment this summer. **A6**



James Mintz, chief investigator for the House Select Committee of Inquiry, holds up a copy of a children's book written by Gov. John G. Rowland's wife, Patricia Rowland, during a hearing before the committee at the Capitol in Hartford on Tuesday. The committee is conducting an inquiry into Gov. Rowland's actions in office.

**BOB CHILD** / Associated Press

Free flight courtesy of GOP heavyweight

By **MATTHEW J. MALONE**  
Day Staff Writer

**Hartford** — When Gov. John G. Rowland flew to Las Vegas on a private jet in November 2000, a man who has given more than \$170,000 to Republican causes picked up the tab.

The flight was a focus Tuesday of the Select Committee of Inquiry's hearings on gifts and free services Rowland has accepted during his tenure.

Crusader Aviation, a subsidiary of the Waterbury-based charter service Key Air, owns the plane Rowland flew, according to the Federal Aviation Administration. Thomas R. Holmes, a resident of Longboat Key, Fla., formed Crusader with a partner in 1996.

Holmes, a former chairman and chief executive officer of Naugatuck-based USCO Logistics, has given generously to Rowland, the Connecticut Republican Campaign Committee and the Republican National Committee.

See **HOLMES** page **A6**

## MIDDLE EAST BARRIER



**LEFERIS PITARAKIS** / Associated Press

A Palestinian youth rests Tuesday against 26-foot-high concrete blocks that will be used in the construction of Israel's controversial security barrier next to the town of A-Ram on the outskirts of Jerusalem. The wall will separate tens of thousands of Palestinians, most of them with Israeli residency, from their workplaces, schools and families in Jerusalem. See related story on **A2**.

# Explosions shut down main Iraqi oil terminal

Disruption could cost \$1 billion; snipers kill four foreign workers

By **EDWARD WONG** and **JAMES GLANZ**  
New York Times News Service

**Baghdad, Iraq** — Two explosions at oil pipelines near the Persian Gulf forced the shutdown of Iraq's main oil export terminal on Tuesday for what is expected to be about 10 days, costing the country perhaps as much as \$1 billion in revenue.

The shutdown, which the authorities said was caused by a bombing on Monday and a bombing or malfunction on a second line on Tuesday, came on a day when snipers lining a highway and an overpass near Baghdad International Airport staged a well-organized ambush on a convoy, killing at least four foreign contractor workers, an American military official and a security contractor said.

And the specter of sectarian strife coursed through the streets of Baghdad on Tuesday. Hundreds of furious Shiite Muslim mourners staged a funeral march through the capital and accused a hard-line Sunni cleric in the volatile city of Fallujah of ordering the deaths of six Shiite truck drivers discovered Monday in a morgue in the neighboring town of Ramadi. The cleric denied giving the order and the identities of the killers and their religion could not be established.

The incidents came in the midst of a mounting number of dramatic and sophisticated attacks taking place as

See **EXPLOSIONS** page **A5**

## State's school districts look to save money on utility bills

New bulk-buying program could lower costs by 5 percent

By **JUDY BENSON**  
Day Staff Writer

**Hartford** — School districts statewide that sign up for a new group-purchasing program for electricity could reduce utility costs by around 5 percent annually during the fiscal year that begins July 1, organizers say.

The program, announced Tuesday during a news conference by the Connecticut Alliance of Regional

Educational Service Centers, is the result of a five-year effort led by LEARN, the educational service center for southeastern Connecticut.

All the school districts in this region are planning to sign up, except for Norwich and Groton, which obtain their power from local utilities, said Virginia Seccombe, LEARN's executive director. Statewide, at least 100 of the approximately 165 local districts are expected to participate. "The concept is simple," said Seccombe. "By buying electricity in bulk, every school district in Connecticut can save money on electricity."

The program will also allow districts to receive credit for reduced

See **SCHOOL** page **A3**

## From 'Rough Terrain' To A Steadier Path

Fitch High senior dodges some ruts, sets sights on college

By **GLADYS ALCEDO**  
Day Staff Writer

**Groton**  
**WEST CRUZ ADMITS** he's been through a lot in life, but his dark brown eyes don't hint of the struggles he has faced in the years leading to his graduation this Friday. Rather, the 18-year-old Robert E.

Fitch High School senior is looking forward to the end of summer and the start of college, something he sees as the beginning of "a different life — a step into another world."

That wasn't always his outlook. Once, he couldn't wait to finish high school and just get a job.

Even that vision became blurred when he had to face juvenile delinquency, his mother's death and homelessness.

Crüz recalled his freshman year — for an English exam he just wrote his name and didn't take the test. And there were periods when he barely attended school.

"I didn't envision myself to be here," he said recently, sitting in the kitchen of his Shennecossett

See **FITCH** page **A3**



**DANA JENSEN** / The Day

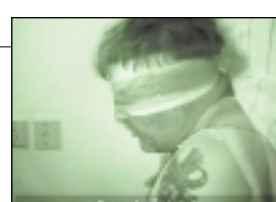
Fitch High School senior West Cruz at an after-school multicultural club meeting earlier this month.

**INSIDE TODAY**

### NEWS

#### Death Threat

An Islamic Web site shows videotape of a blindfolded American hostage in Saudi Arabia and says his abductors threatened to kill him. **A2**



#### Good News

A survey of businesses across the state shows that credit availability remains good and is expected to improve. **B6**

### WEATHER

#### Enjoy

Today, partly sunny and pleasant. High 79. Thursday, cloudy with a chance of showers. High 76. **D8**

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