

Aurora Daily Sentinel Fax

Friday's weather

Pretty nice but pretty cool. Sunny today, high 35-40. Increasing clouds tonight, low 15. Cloudy tomorrow, windy, high 45-50.

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Health-care hustle

Former Sen. Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts told an audience of insurance, medical and business executives yesterday in Aurora that time is running out for passage of national health-care reform "that makes sense." He spoke at a forum at Aurora Regional Medical Center that wrapped up a day of lobbying Gen. Ross Romer and metro-area media for a managed-competition program.

Tsongas, whose own health was a factor in his withdrawal from the race for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1992, represents the Healthcare Leadership Council, a national coalition of doctors, executives of insurance, pharmaceutical, medical manufacturing, hospital and physician and nursing organizations. His appearances here were part of a campaign against some elements of President Clinton's health-care initiative and on behalf of reform based on managed competition.

He said the health-care issue is being driven by the nation's fiscal deficit. "If we don't contain the costs, we won't have a country left" — and the additional pressure of state governments eager to deal with reform in their jurisdictions. He said Romer's impatience with Washington lack of progress on the issue is typical. His frustration is very pronounced, Tsongas said.

Under this kind of pressure, he said, time is limited for adoption of a national program that can be tested adequately before the country has up to 50 different state systems that would be a nightmare for the industry and the people.

"Past another year, it's almost too late," he said.

In response to a question from Ben Lewis, executive director of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, Tsongas said he expected "the bloodiest fight" in Congress

to be over the issue of the expense of universal health care for small businesses. He said frankly he doesn't see "how it can work" without all employers, including the smaller ones, paying part of the tab.

Tsongas claimed credit "for putting managed competition on the table" in the 1992 campaign and that he is working now to get the president's position "back where he was" during that campaign — essentially in agreement with Tsongas.

He urged his listeners at ARMC to put pressure on congressional representatives for the reform they support.

Members of Congress on this issue are the "betters," he said.

APS eyes charter school

A group of Aurora Public School District teachers, working to establish the city's first school under the state's new Charter School Act, are stepping up their efforts. They hope to open Denver's open-enrollment school with an enrollment of some 140 in grades 1-6, with plans to expand later to K-5.

The teachers said they expect the APS Board of Education to make a decision on the school March 15, and that they plan two community information meetings on their plans this month. The APS board is scheduled to conduct a public hearing on the proposal Feb. 8 at the administration building, 1785 Peyton St.

The teachers' meetings are scheduled at 7 p.m. Jan. 19 at the North Branch Library, 1292 Peyton St., and at 7 p.m. Jan. 20 at the Central Library, 14949 E. Alameda Ave.

The school, as prescribed by the law, would be open to any child in Aurora up to the enrollment limit. It would be non-religious, multi-ethnic and tuition-free. The law requires the school district to provide funding to an approved charter school.

Bobbi Wong, a Dartmouth Elementary School teacher who is part of the charter-

school group, said the goal is "to create a new, more flexible way of educating children within the public school system."

Another member of the group, Bob Hamilton-Pennell, also of the Dartmouth faculty, said the school would feature "a personalized approach to education, with smaller-than-traditional classes and learning plans tailored to the needs and gifts of individual children."

A sticking point for the group has been finding a site for the school. One hope is to get a suitable facility on Lowry Air Force Base, which the Air Force is shutting down this year.

Airport growth probed

An all-day seminar for area landowners on the ramifications of urban growth likely to be attracted by Denver International Airport has been scheduled Feb. 4 at the Holiday Inn, I-70 and Chambers Road.

Colorado State University's Cooperative Extension Service in Adams County is sponsoring the session. Information is to be provided on issues ranging from development around the airport to effective influence on decisions related to growth.

Speakers will include Denver lawyer Michael Guyerson, addressing the "right to farm" as framed in laws aimed at preserving agricultural operations.

Correction

The *Daily Fax* reported incorrectly Jan. 5 the address of one of three banks a suspect told Aurora police he robbed to finance his crack cocaine habit. The Commercial Federal Bank is at South Dayton Street and East Alameda Avenue.

Quasi quote

And I can't even call Andrea.

Ken Hamblin

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