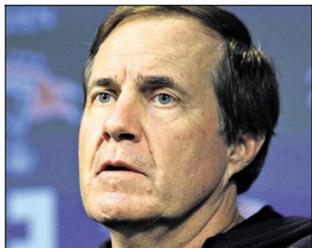


FINAL SCORES

Colts 'D' sees call as 'disrespect'

But Pats' Belichick says fourth-down play was 'our best chance to win,' 4C
Ravens win, 1C



Bill Belichick: Lost 35-34 to Colts.



NO. 1 IN THE USA

HOLIDAY MOVIE PREVIEW



Moon rises: Kristen Stewart at premiere.

Hollywood tightens its belt for the season

Fewer films in mix at theaters. Highlights, 1-3D
Premiere of New Moon, 4D

Tuesday, November 17, 2009

Newsline

News Money Sports Life



In Beijing: Presidents Hu Jintao and Obama.

Obama's call goes unheard

President's remarks on censorship at forum are blocked to most in China, 4A
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For some, stimulus has sting

More than 15 million may owe the IRS because of revision in tax tables, 1B

Palin on White House bid: 'Not on radar'

Former Republican vice presidential candidate shares with Oprah in media blitz for new book, 2A.

Report: More in America going hungry

Obama says his administration is taking steps to boost food programs for the growing crisis, 3A.

Debate simmers over shift in detainees

Some in Illinois village want the jobs, but others say they could be a target of terrorism, 3A.

Money: GM starting loan repayment

Automaker still not profitable in North America but says \$8.1B could be paid off by summer, 1B.

Sports: Top baseball rookies honored

Marlins outfielder Chris Coghlan edges NL field; A's pitcher Andrew Bailey has cushion in AL, 1-2C.

Life: Obesity devouring health dollars

America's growing problem could cost the country \$344 billion in annual expenses by 2018, 7D.

USA TODAY investigation Schools in the dark about tainted lunches. Includes photo of tortillas and children in a school hallway.

No Halloween prank: Sick children line up outside the nurse's office at Starbuck Middle School in Racine, Wis., on Oct. 31, 2007. They became ill after eating tortillas from Del Rey Tortilleria in Chicago.

Cause of tortilla-linked illnesses still a mystery

By Blake Morrison and Peter Eisler USA TODAY

RACINE, Wis. — Students at Starbuck Middle School stumbled through the halls just after lunch on Oct. 31, 2007, holding their bellies and moaning. When the vomiting began, teachers knew that it wasn't a Halloween prank.

By midafternoon, almost 70 children waited outside the nurse's office at the school near Milwaukee. "There were so many kids there, it was like, 'Holy cow!'" recalls Michael Hannes, then a seventh-grader who felt "like someone kept punching me in the stomach."

Days would pass before local health officials determined that the tortillas served at Starbuck and four other schools in Racine were to blame for 101 illnesses. An Internet search showed them the stunning particulars: The company that supplied the tortillas had a long history of making children sick.

Before the illnesses in Racine, flour tortillas from Chicago's Del Rey Tortilleria caused similar outbreaks at more than a dozen schools in two other

states — in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. In 2006, Del Rey recalled tens of thousands of tortillas after health officials linked them to illnesses at schools in Massachusetts and Illinois. And in a 2006 study of prior outbreaks, a panel of top scientists with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration even offered this warning: "Flour tortillas manufactured by Del Rey hold the potential to cause illness."

Despite the concerns, the FDA never shared the panel's warning with school officials anywhere.

"That just blows my mind," says Dana Maldonado, the Racine district's food services coordinator, who first learned what the government knew about Del Rey tortillas from USA TODAY. "We absolutely would not have used them had we known."

Cover story

Not until earlier this year — almost six years after the first outbreaks in Massachusetts — did the government temporarily shut down Del Rey to make the company fix its sanitation and safety problems. No more outbreaks linked to Del Rey products have been reported.

The story of how food with a history of making kids sick continued to get into schools illustrates broad failures in government programs meant to provide safe, quality meals for America's children, a USA TODAY investigation found. Parents and schools often have no idea where the food comes

Please see COVER STORY page 6A

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Grifters cash in on stimulus aid

Scams promise funds — but first, 'Your account number?'

By Brad Heath USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Stimulus aid has sparked an economic boom for some unwanted entrepreneurs — con men.

State and federal officials say they are fielding thousands of reports of scam artists, many operating from overseas, using the promise of money from the Obama administration's \$787 billion economic recovery plan to entice people to hand over bank account numbers. The scams are so numerous, and the criminals hard to identify, that authorities say it's all but impossible to catch them.

"People are being tricked out of their money," according to Federal Trade Commission lawyer Monica Vaca.

Rip-offs based on current events are nothing new. In the past few months alone, scams have tried to cash in on Michael Jackson's death, the swine flu and foreclosure prevention. "These are true predators," says Tony Green, a spokesman for the attorney general's office in Oregon. When it

comes to stimulus scams, he says, that usually means "appealing to people's desperation."

Oregon officials warned consumers in August that con men were sending out thousands of e-mails telling people they were entitled to stimulus money from the IRS. All people had to do, the e-mails advised, was provide a bank account number. In another scheme, reported in New York, a telephone caller promised \$1,000 worth of free groceries for any person willing to provide a credit card number to pay a small processing fee.

Exactly how many people have been conned is impossible to measure, but the numbers are likely substantial. FTC lawyers filed four civil cases this year accusing companies of using misleading promises of stimulus aid to persuade people to buy products or provide personal information. They estimate that about 270,000 Americans were victimized in those schemes alone, Vaca says.

Detectives in Fort Lauderdale concocted a stimulus scheme of their own: In August, they mailed letters to people wanted for crimes ranging from failing to pay child support to attempted murder, saying they were eligible for stimulus checks. When 76 of them showed up to claim the money, officers put them in handcuffs instead. "It looked very real," said Sgt. Frank Sousa, a police spokesman.

New focus in breast cancer screening

Report: Most don't need tests until 50

By Liz Szabo USA TODAY

Most women don't need to get mammograms until they reach age 50, according to a controversial new report that recommends that far fewer women undergo the breast cancer screenings.

For years, mammograms have been recommended every year or two for women beginning at age 40. The new report from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, issued Monday night, now says women this age should simply talk to their doctors about the benefits and risks. The group also says there's no benefit to performing breast self-exams. The recommendations, which help shape how doctors practice, don't affect women at high risk, such as those with strong family histories of cancer.

The task force also says older women don't need as many mammograms: Women ages 50 to 74 should be screened only every other year, not annually, as currently recommended.

The independent panel of experts updates its recommendations as new research becomes available, says task force vice chair Diana Petitti, a doctor at Arizona State University in Phoenix.

The authors say there are good reasons to change mammogram advice: Younger women have the least to gain, and the most to lose, from screening.

Mammograms cut the risk of dying from breast cancer by about 15%, both for women in their 40s

At risk

A woman's risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer in the next decade:

1.4% At age 40

2.4% At age 50

3.6% At age 60

Source: National Cancer Institute. Note: Includes only women who have never had breast cancer

and 50s. But because younger women have such a low overall risk — the 10-year breast cancer risk for a 40-year-old is only 1.4% — their absolute reduction in death is very small, the report says.

Yet younger women have a much higher risk of being harmed from the tests. That's not because the procedures themselves are dangerous. Instead, women are at risk from false alarms, also known as "false positives," which occur when mammograms produce suspicious findings in women who are actually cancer-free. These women may experience additional pain, expense and worry because of follow-up scans and biopsies.

An estimated 64% of 40-something women have had a mammogram in the past two years, along with 72% of women ages 50 to 65, according to an editorial published with the recommendations in today's Annals of Internal Medicine. More than 193,000 American women will develop breast cancer this year, and 40,000 will die of it.

It's not yet clear whether the recommendations will change insurance coverage for mammograms. Medicare's mammogram coverage, for example, is not tied to task-force recommendations.

The American Cancer Society voiced its displeasure with the new recommendations. "The task force is essentially telling women that mammography at age 40 to 49 saves lives; just not enough of them," Otis Brawley, the society's chief medical officer, said in a statement. About 17% of breast cancer deaths occurred in women who were diagnosed in their 40s, he said.

But a report in last month's Journal of the American Medical Association found that mammograms often miss very aggressive cancers that develop between screenings, while finding slow-growing tumors that may not pose a threat.

Advocacy groups, such as Breast Cancer Action, welcomed the new recommendations.

Breast Cancer Action's Barbara Brenner says health leaders have oversimplified and oversold the benefits of mammograms.

"The biggest problem will be women who don't believe this," says Brenner, a breast cancer survivor. "So many women think that screening saved their lives."

Benefits and risks

Screening Q&A, 5D

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By Anne R. Carey and Adrienne Lewis, USA TODAY

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