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ARRESTS IN NBA GAMBLING PLOT

The FBI released an indictment accusing Miami Heat guard Terry Rozier and Portland Trail Blazers coach Chauncey Billups of involvement in an illegal gambling scheme. Page B1

TODAY'S MUST-READS

WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

Avelo quits Bradley after seeking free rent

Avelo Airlines is suspending its service to Bradley International Airport, the Connecticut Airport Authority announced Thursday.

The move comes three months after a state fuel tax exemption, meant to lure the airline to Connecticut, expired and after protestors picketed Bradley over Avelo's contract with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. **Full story, Page B4**

HOLYOKE

Council says no to finance fix plan — for now

City leaders in Holyoke are trying to fix how the city handles its money, but a plan to do that didn't get enough votes to move forward Tuesday night.

A modified version of the Municipal Modernization Act, called the Municipal Modernization Ordinance, failed in front of the full City Council this week. The proposal needed 9 votes to pass. It got 8 yes votes and 5 no votes, so it failed. **Full story, Page A3**

SPRINGFIELD

Rape suspect wins motion on evidence

A former middle school teacher accused of sexually assaulting two of his students scored a win Thursday, after a judge allowed a motion to suppress much of the evidence in the case.

Robert Gayle, a former teacher at STEM Middle Academy, stands accused of raping two students. **Full story, Page A3**

WEATHER

Clouds and sun.

High: 59°; Low: 35°

EXPANDED WEATHER, A8

Certified to Repair Mercedes-Benz and BMW

Thumbs up icons

Rick's
AUTO BODY

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SPRINGFIELD

11 proposals for courthouse



This is the complex, the Roderick L. Ireland Courthouse in downtown Springfield, that will be replaced in a high-profile hunt for a new justice center for Hampden County. (THE REPUBLICAN FILE PHOTO)

Existing site or strip club spot suggested

BY JEANETTE DEFORGE

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A pair of Boston-based developers are proposing two sites for a new Springfield courthouse, one at a closed strip club and the other at the spot where the existing hall of justice sits.

Chuck Irving, principal with The Davenport Cos., and Thomas N. O'Brien, chief executive officer of the HYM Investment Group, submitted one proposal with those two options to the state to replace the troubled Roderick L. Ireland Courthouse. Their second plan includes the former Mardi Gras strip club.

The announcement came Thursday, just as officials for the state Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance released a complete list of prospective developers

SEE **SITE**, PAGE A2



A look at a proposal for the new courthouse in Springfield from The Davenport Cos. and HYM Investment Group, shown by the businesses on Thursday. (DOUGLAS HOOK / THE REPUBLICAN)

2 development groups have submitted more than 1 project

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Developers propose building the region's new courthouse at sites throughout downtown — including Steiger Park, the location of a closed strip club, on Maple Street where two mostly vacant office buildings sit and next to the MGM casino.

The state Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance on Thursday released the addresses and names of developers interested in building a new hall of justice to replace the troubled Roderick L. Ireland Courthouse.

While state officials said there were a total of 10 projects submitted, developer HYM Investment Group and partner Davenport Companies turned in two alternative locations, bringing the total of proposals to 11.

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno said he was happy to see the level of competition for the estimated \$2 billion project. The new courthouse will replace the 1970s-era building at 50 State St.

The state Board of Asset Management agreed in January to fast track the project by having a private developer construct a 220,000- to 300,000-square-foot courthouse to its specifications and lease it for 40 to 60 years.

There were initial concerns that few proposals would be submitted, especially with business mogul Peter A. Picknelly talking about a mixed-use development on the Connecticut River waterfront that would include a courthouse. Sarno said he was pleased that was proven incorrect.

SEE **COURT**, PAGE A2

REGION

Everyone's mining closets, jewelry boxes

Customers flock to WMass gold dealers

BY DANIEL JACKSON

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They've mined closets and jewelry boxes, gathering up coins, chains, charm bracelets and items handed down from mothers and grandmothers.

With gold and silver prices hitting all-time highs, some residents in the Pioneer Valley have decided to cash in.

This month, gold began commanding a price of more than \$4,000 an ounce. And while the price of gold dropped from a high on Monday of more than \$4,300 a troy ounce, many of those who deal in precious metals say the hype is boosting business.

About 25 years ago, gold cost less than \$300 an ounce. Now, the price far exceeds what some paid 10-15 years ago for, say, a piece of jewelry.

"They're not surprised — they're shocked when they come in," Michael Sarkis, president of Springfield Jewelry and Diamond Exchange, said of people looking to sell their items. It can be a six- or seven-fold increase in price.

"Personally, I think it's going to go higher," Sarkis said. "But you never know."

While the exchange has seen a lot of people looking to cash in by selling, others want to invest,



This small gold bar was valued at \$1,442 and the gold coin next to it was valued at \$2,139 at 2:30 p.m. Wednesday. The price had changed by \$3 in the time it took to take a picture. (DOUGLAS HOOK / THE REPUBLICAN)

due to concerns about the state of the economy, he said. Gold is seen as a way to insulate against "hard economic times," Sarkis said, and globally there has been a high volume of trading.

A big factor? The Trump administration's efforts to impose tariffs on goods coming into

the United States to encourage a resurgence of manufacturing.

"I don't think the tariffs are going away anytime soon," Sarkis said.

David Rosen, a team member at The Gold Trader in Springfield, said business has been brisk, with the interest in selling and being influenced by headlines proclaiming recent moves in the metal's price.

The decision to sell, however, is a personal one, Rosen said. People may be trying to bring an investment to fruition, or may not want to keep precious metal in their house.

"It used to be very, very easy to determine when gold was going to go up," Rosen said, "if there was some sort of an international crisis or something crazy happened in the marketplace."

Now, other factors appear to be influencing the price, including market momentum, he said.

The price for gold surged in recent months. For instance, warehouse retailer Costco made headlines after it began selling gold bars in October 2023, moving hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of the metal.

"If you jumped on the Costco bandwagon a year and a half ago, you did great," Rosen said.

But when people come to him asking for his advice on investing in gold, Rosen said he tells them to first consult a financial advisor and to buy with an eye to holding the metal long-term.

SEE **GOLD**, PAGE A2