

COURIER-POST

Monday, March 15, 2010

South Jersey's Newspaper

75 cents



SCOTT ANDERSON/Courier-Post
Genevieve Okoro of Eastern grabs a rebound over Blair Curzi of North Hunterdon in the Group 4 state title game.

Cherokee, Camden Catholic boys take state hoops' titles

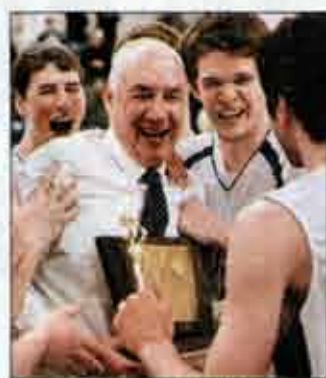
Courier-Post staff
TOMS RIVER

South Jersey claimed two state basketball championships Sunday as Cherokee High School won the Group 4 boys' crown. Camden Catholic won top honors in the Non-Public A boys' state title game at the Ritacco Center.

■ Complete coverage of state championship games. **1C, 3C, 4C**

For Cherokee, MVP Wes Tisdale collected 10 points and 12 rebounds as the Chiefs defeated Plainfield 52-38 to capture the school's first Group 4 state crown. Camden Catholic, No. 1 in the Courier-Post's South Jersey rankings, won the school's first state title since 2003 when the Irish edged Seton Hall Prep 68-63. Anthony D'Orazio scored 31 points.

In girls' action, Florence proved no match for New Providence, dropping a 55-30 decision in the Group 1 title game. Eastern lost 50-36 to North Hunterdon in the Group 4 girls' state title game. In other boys' action, Woodbury fell 70-62 to New Providence in Group 1 while Kingsway lost a close 44-41 battle to Mendham in Group 3.



SCOTT ANDERSON/Courier-Post
Camden Catholic coach Jim Crawford is mobbed by his players after receiving the championship trophy.

COMPLETE VARSITY ONLINE

Get full coverage of the weekend's title games, along with a photo gallery from each game involving South Jersey teams, and much more at courierpostonline.com/varsity.

Spring break takes on new meaning in Camden



College students pull up and remove tiles in the basement of UrbanPromise's East Side building.

AVI STEINHARDT/Courier-Post

Students aid UrbanPromise kids



AVI STEINHARDT/Courier-Post
Ursinus College students Holly Smith (rear) of Cherry Hill and Kyle Bahm of Mount Laurel work at the community garden at the Center for Transformation with Andrea Ferich, director of Sustainable Initiatives.

By **WILFORD S. SHAMLIN**
Courier-Post Staff

CAMDEN

Jacob Hill had a choice of spending spring break doing community service in one of New Jersey's poorest urban cities or vacationing with his college classmates in Panama.

The 18-year-old West Virginia man passed up a chance to party in Panama City, which has a vibrant nightlife.

"I figured this would be a better use of my time," said Hill, a freshman athletic training major at Alderson-Broaddus College in West Virginia.

"It's a lot of fun. You can do good work in a community that needs it," said the Clarksburg, W.Va., resident.

He is among more than 300 college students who will spend a week participating in a spring break program in Camden overseen by UrbanPromise Ministries, a nonprofit Christian-based organization in the city.

The first group arrived in late February and the last group will leave in mid-

courierpostonline.com
WEB EXTRA

■ For more photos, click on this story on our Web site.

May. Students interviewed said they were able to afford the trip by holding fundraisers, tapping their own savings or getting financial assistance from their parents.

Calvary Baptist Church College Group, based in Kentucky, had the most student participants with 35. Also represented were large schools such as The College of William & Mary in Virginia and Pepperdine University in California and smaller institutions such as Bowdoin College and Bates College, both in Maine, and Dordt College in Iowa.

The College of New Jersey in Ewing, the only New Jersey school to participate, sent 11 students.

Each work group spends their morning in community service projects, mostly, but not entirely, on the UrbanPromise main campus at 3700 Rudderow Avenue.

See **BREAK**, Page 6A

Christie's budget to suspend rebates

Legislators: Schools, towns face loss of \$1B

By **ANGELA DELLI SANTI**
Associated Press

■ Assembly expected to vote on tax bill credit. **1B**

TRENTON

Gov. Chris Christie is preparing to introduce a budget that suspends property tax rebates, cuts more than \$1 billion in aid to schools and towns and skips a \$3 billion contribution to the state pension system, legislative leaders said Sunday.

About 25 legislators and senior staff members were briefed on the governor's plans to close an \$11 billion deficit. Several spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to discuss the \$29.2 billion budget before Christie introduces the proposal Tuesday.

The budget must be approved by the Democratic-controlled Legislature and signed by the Republican

governor by July 1, the start of the new fiscal year. This is Christie's first budget.

Under Christie's budget, no one will get a property tax rebate check this year to combat New Jersey's highest property taxes in the nation, which average \$7,300 a household. When rebates return in spring 2011, senior citizens, the disabled and low-income wage earners could get a tax credit rather than a rebate check, and could get less than they received last year.

The budget proposes an \$819 million cut in aid to school districts and a \$445 million cut in aid to towns. Christie is expected to call for a 2.5 percent spending

See **BUDGET**, Page 2A



AL SCHELL/Courier-Post file
Gov. Chris Christie will go before the Legislature on Tuesday to address the \$11 billion budget gap.

Vol. 136 No. 11
A GANNETT NEWSPAPER

INDEX

Business	48	Movies	40
Comics	6D	Obituaries	6B
Crossword	8D	Opinion	9A
Health	1D	Sports	1C
Lottery	2A	Television	5D



SOUTH JERSEY
Body, bottom line get boost at expo
Page 1B

WEATHER

South Jersey:
Breezy, periods of rain.
High 47. Low 36.

Down the shore:
Breezy, periods of rain.
High 47. Low 37. Page 2A

SOUTH JERSEY NEWS
For the latest headlines, text **COURIERPOST** to 46636 (4INFO).



0 40901 01301 3

Break/Students spend time off helping kids in Camden

Continued from Page 1A

"We rely on these students who do the everyday maintenance that you would expect would be needed," said Jim Cummings, director of the Work-Group Program for Urban Promise.

"Even if you paid these students at minimum wage, you could easily figure that it comes to thousands of dollars to the ministry to offset the cost of maintenance, allowing us to work with the kids," he said.

Urban Promise operates two schools for K-12 students, after-school and fine arts programs, summer camp and offers training for older teens who can serve as counselors, coaches and mentors for younger children.

There are seven buildings — from new construction to aging facilities — on the main campus and all are in need of maintenance, especially following an unusually harsh winter, Cummings said.

The college work groups will help with refurbishing one of its after-school programs, doing mostly demolition work: tearing down ceilings and ripping up old tiles. Urban Promise has cut back on full use of the site — even limiting enrollment — while renovations continue.

Once temperatures rise, work groups will do landscaping work, prepare a butterfly garden, wash and clean Urban Promise's vehicle fleet, clean out gutters and paint trim on buildings.



Alderson-Broaddus College freshman Jacob Hill, 18, cranks out water on a bicycle-powered pump as Andrea Ferich of the Center for Transformation waters plants.

In the afternoon, all groups assist with Urban Promise's after-school program, helping children with homework and supervising recreational activities. They officiated and judged the annual Spring Olympics, which puts children from different parts of the city on the same team and pits them against each other in friendly competition.

Drew Domitrovits, 20, of Haymarket, Va., who made the five-hour drive to Camden from The College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Va., said the Olympics helped unify children from different parts of the city.

Domitrovits, a junior majoring in international relations, said he volunteered so he could experience an unfamiliar place.

"The environment I live in all the time is completely different than it is here. It's really good to get insight of

what it's like living in other places," he said.

The trip is proving to be educational for Domitrovits, who is finding that there are a multitude of potential solutions for urban problems. For example, many

problems can be traced back to a lack of access to quality education in public schools, he said.

In order to make a difference, Domitrovits believes there needs to be a shift in individual attitudes and the overall culture and community programs must provide positive role models.

Cummings said he has deep respect for students who sacrificed their spring break in the service of others. He recalled using college spring break to indulge himself.

"I'm inspired to meet young people of this generation so committed to serving and learning. It gives you a great sense of hope and future. In a city like Camden, these signs of hope and inspiration are so necessary," Cummings said.

While volunteering, many students realized the urban problems facing

Camden residents had little to do with the residents themselves.

And, many walk away with the sense that they do "have some responsibility to Camden and other places like it," Cummings said.

About noon Thursday, Hill broke for lunch after toiling in a fallow community garden near Fourth and Jasper streets in South Camden. He was part of a small group that tilled soil and checked new irrigation lines that will water the entire garden at the root level.

Hill applauded Urban Promise for spreading its Christian-based message through its after-school programs, which help keep

young people off the street and out of trouble.

Holly Smith, 18, a freshman politics major at Ursinus College in Collegeville, Pa., chose to participate in the program because she "wanted to have a meaningful spring break."

"It's awesome because I know I'm changing people's lives," said Smith, who grew up in Cherry Hill.

She said the community service work opened her eyes to the impoverished conditions of Camden.

"It's really a reality check," she said.

Reach Wilford S. Shamlin at (856) 486-2475 or wshamlin@courierpostonline.com

WEATHER

TRI-COUNTY FOUR-DAY FORECAST

Today	Tomorrow	Wednesday	Thursday
47/38 Breezy, periods of rain	57/37 Partly to mostly sunny	59/40 Mostly sunny	61/40 Mostly sunny

SOUTHERN JERSEY SHORE FORECAST

Today	Tomorrow	Wednesday	Thursday
47/37 Breezy, periods of rain	50/35 Partly to mostly sunny	51/39 Mostly sunny	54/40 Mostly sunny

LOCAL Breezy with periods of rain today. Highs, upper 40s. Chance of showers early tonight. Lows, mid-30s.

MARINE Forecast for Delaware Bay, north of East Point, N.J.: Periods of rain. Winds north at 15 to 20 knots. Waves 2 to 3 feet.

POCONOS Breezy with rain and snow likely today. Highs, near 40. Chance of rain or snow showers tonight. Lows, upper 20s.

S. JERSEY SHORE Breezy with periods of rain today. Highs, upper 40s. Showers early tonight. Lows, upper 30s.

THE NATION TODAY AT NOON



All maps, forecasts and data provided by Weather.com

City	Hi/Low
Poconos	40/29
New York	47/37
Newark	47/37
Asbury Park	46/36
Trenton	47/35
Philadelphia	48/36
Cherry Hill	47/36
Wilmington	47/37
Baltimore	49/38
Washington	50/40
Medford	46/35
Beach Haven	46/39
Vineland	47/35
Atlantic City	46/39
Cape May	47/37

ALMANAC

City Hi/Low/Pcp

Cherry Hill 50/44/0.18
Trenton 52/46/0.28
Atlantic City 50/44/0.34
Cape May 51/44/0.27

Precipitation
(for Philadelphia)
Month to date: 3.38"
Year to date: 11.32"
Normal for year: 7.91"

RECORDS FOR TODAY
Philadelphia:
High 81°, 1990
Low 11°, 1993
Atlantic City:
High 83°, 1990
Low 14°, 1993

OCEAN TEMPERATURE
YESTERDAY
44° at Atlantic City

TODAY'S COMFORT INDICATORS
UltraViolet Index: 1
(1 is low, 10+ is very high)
Air Quality: Good
Wind Chill: 8 a.m. 34°; noon 39°; 4 p.m. 41°

SUN, MOON AND SKIES

Now	First	Full	Last
March 15	March 23	March 29	April 6

sunset today: 7:07 a.m.
 sunrise tomorrow: 7:10 a.m.
 mercury sets: 7:11 p.m.
 venus sets: 8:21 p.m.

Moonrise today: 6:45 a.m.
 Moonset today: 7:15 p.m.
 Mars sets: 5:11 a.m.
 Jupiter rises: 6:51 a.m.

Do you see Venus very low in the west soon after sunset? Easier to find in Mars. At the exact after dark, between the stars of the constellation Gemini and Leo. At the same time, Saturn is being spotted by the stars of Virgo.

'IDES

TODAY	HIGH		LOW	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
Atlantic City	8:02a	8:19p	1:52a	2:09p
Beach Haven	10:10a	10:28p	4:23a	4:38p
Interlaken	8:03a	8:21p	2:01a	2:16p
Longtown	3:51a	4:10p	10:57a	11:19p
Longtown	2:58a	3:17p	10:30a	10:52p
London	2:13a	2:32p	9:01a	9:23p
Maple	8:25a	8:43p	2:05a	2:20p
Marlinton	2:24a	2:43p	9:20a	9:42p
Maple	12:20a	12:38p	8:18a	8:39p
Gloucester City	1:57a	2:16p	8:44a	9:06p
Beach City	8:45a	9:04p	2:43a	2:58p
Beach City, Md.	8:04a	8:17p	1:53a	2:12p
Brookdale	4:58a	5:17p	11:39a	—
Shelburne, Del.	8:19a	8:32p	2:01a	2:20p
Alam	12:11p	—	6:27a	6:48p
Andy Hook	8:23a	8:41p	2:22a	2:37p
Stone Harbor	8:57a	9:15p	2:59a	3:14p
Newton	3:57a	4:16p	11:22a	11:44p
W. Wildwood	9:07a	9:25p	2:53a	3:08p
Woodbury	1:52a	2:11p	8:29a	8:51p

TOMORROW	HIGH		LOW	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
Atlantic City	8:36a	8:52p	2:29a	2:40p
Beach Haven	10:44a	10:59p	5:03a	5:13p
Interlaken	8:37a	8:52p	2:41a	2:51p
Barnegat	4:29a	4:49p	11:40a	11:57p
Burlington	3:36a	3:56p	11:13a	11:30p
Camden	2:51a	3:11p	9:44a	10:01p
Cape May	8:59a	9:14p	2:45a	2:55p
Cinnaminson	3:02a	3:22p	10:03a	10:20p
Deepwater	12:55a	1:14p	9:00a	9:14p
Gloucester City	2:35a	2:55p	9:27a	9:44p
Ocean City	9:20a	9:35p	3:23a	3:33p
Ocean City, Md.	8:41a	8:55p	2:32a	2:46p
Rahocoles	5:36a	5:56p	12:01a	12:22p
Shelburne, Del.	8:56a	9:10p	2:40a	2:54p
Salem	12:28a	12:47p	7:09a	7:23p
Sandy Hook	8:57a	9:12p	3:02a	3:12p
Stone Harbor	9:31a	9:46p	3:39a	3:49p
Trenton	4:35a	4:55p	12:05p	—
W. Wildwood	9:41a	9:56p	3:33a	3:43p
Woodbury	2:30a	2:50p	9:12a	9:29p

Gannett New Jersey writer Jason Method contributed to this report.

Budget/State to skip pension fund

Continued from Page 1A

cap for schools and towns, but that constitutional amendment would have to be approved by voters and wouldn't likely take effect until 2012. If approved, spending above the cap would require voter approval.

Christie's budget spares the state's 65,000 union workers from layoffs and includes the 3.5 percent pay raise they are due July 1.

Under a contract former Gov. Jon S. Corzine renegotiated with the unions in late 2008, state workers agreed to defer a 3.5 percent pay raise due last July 1 and take 10 furlough days in exchange for a no-layoff pledge through 2010. In addition to the scheduled raise in July, the workers are due a deferred raise on Jan. 1.

During the gubernatorial campaign, Christie vowed to undo that deal. Last week, he said Corzine handcuffed him and acknowledged he was bound to honor the renegotiated contract. However, on Friday he left open the possibility of handing out pink slips to some of the 9,700 workers and 5,000 part-timers and temps who do not have union protection. Not all the positions are layoff-eligible and others are federally funded.

Christie's budget would again skip the state's annual contribution to the pension system for public workers. The state pension fund is underfunded by \$46 billion and at risk of eventually becoming insolvent unless fixes are made. Corzine skipped a \$2.5 billion pension payment this year and allowed municipalities to defer half of their scheduled contribu-



DOUGLAS M. BOVITT/Courier-Post file
Assemblyman Louis D. Greenwald says there are no easy answers to balancing the budget.



AVI STEINHARDT/Courier-Post file
State Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney says the government needs to be restructured.

tion. The proposal assumes \$50 million in savings from the privatization of unspecified services. Christie last week assigned a task force to study privatization and gave them three months to report back.

Higher education also takes a hit under Christie's proposal. Aid would diminish about \$170 million, including the disappearance of state support for independent colleges and trims to programs such as Tuition Aid Grants and the Educational Opportunity Fund for economically and educationally disadvantaged students. County colleges would lose \$19 million under Christie's proposal.

Christie is shying away from the budget maneuvers of his predecessors. He campaigned on not raising taxes.

"The hole is just so big," lamented Michael Riccards of the nonpartisan Hall Institute, a think tank in Trenton. "I don't see how one can balance the budget without massive cuts."

A source said the state expects revenues to total \$28.3 billion, some \$547 million more than the current fiscal year. In addition, \$1 billion

in federal stimulus is expected.

On Thursday, Christie appointed a task force to look at privatizing government services and lamented the fact that as the state struggles to provide help to local governments, those governments had hired 11,300 new workers last year as the private sector continued to bleed jobs.

Christie has taken aim at the state's 700 independent authorities and commissions and vowed to review if they should remain.

The state treasurer, and later legislative leaders, discussed changing pension benefits for current state and local workers in an effort to trim an annual pension need that has grown to \$3.1 billion. Meanwhile, NJ Transit plans higher fares and service cuts.

In recent years, the state faced budget gaps of \$3 billion to \$5 billion. To help solve it, governors largely skipped the payments to fund the pension system, saving billions in one swoop.

The state kept its aid to local government and

schools flat. Yet in many instances, property taxes rose to cover the gaps.

After that, the problems were solved with some cuts, a fee increase here, or a sales or income tax hike there.

But in many areas, government costs have increased along with pension and health care obligations. At the same time, the financial crisis has pummeled state tax revenues.

Total state tax collections in the fiscal year that begins in July are projected to total \$28.3 billion, sources say, only \$55 million more than in fiscal year 2010.

Leading Democrats struck a conciliatory tone late last week.

"I think they have, over the last couple of weeks, really reached out to the Legislature," Assemblyman Louis D. Greenwald, D-Camden, said Friday. "He's now up to his eyeballs in this now, and he's realizing that, like other governors before him, that there are no easy answers, and a lot of decisions have been made to avoid property tax increases and to protect the most vulnerable."

"We're all in this together," he added. State Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney said that he agrees with Christie that "we need to restructure government." Still, privatizing services or changing civil service rules won't make much difference, he said.

"I'm in favor of squeezing every penny, but it won't help this budget," Sweeney said. "It's that bad."