

# Baltimore Examiner

## Business



Longshoremen try their hands at farm, construction machines

Case Construction trainer Jonathan Hume instructs longshoreman Robert Blackwell in the use of an excavator at the Roll On/Roll Off Rodeo. – Kristine Buls/Examiner

Andrew Cannarsa, The Examiner  
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### **BALTIMORE -**

This was far from an everyday, cattle-lassoing “rodeo.”

At the Port of Baltimore’s 12th annual Roll On/Roll Off Rodeo on Wednesday, there weren’t horses and bulls, but there were massive tractors, excavators, man lifts and semi trucks roaming a large port lot.

Roll on/roll off — “ro/ro” for short — is any cargo that can be driven on and off a ship. More than 200 longshoreman learned to operate the large, multiton pieces of farm and construction equipment during the training exercises Tuesday and Wednesday.

The longshoremen learned how to start and operate more than 20 vehicles distributed by John Deere & Co., CNH, AGCO and other cargo manufacturers.

“It might seem like a lot’s going on, but this is real life,” Bill Reeve, safety training manager for the Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore, said as he watched the heavy machinery in action. “This is what the longshoremen deal with on the port.”

The Port of Baltimore handles more ro/ro cargo than any other U.S. port, according to the Maryland Port Administration.

“This is big money to us,” said Reeve, noting that most of the vehicles cost \$300,000 to \$500,000. “This is our livelihood. If we lost a contract like John Deere, we’d be in trouble.”

Standing on a man lift, used to lift workers and materials at construction sites, Marty Warrick, district service manager for manufacturer JLG, helped Randallstown resident Samuel Ware operate the machine.

“From our perspective, the guys need to know how to operate the machinery and get it safely on the boat,” Warrick said.

Ware has been working at the port for about 15 years, but he said it’s always good to know how to operate as many pieces of equipment as possible.

“Safety is the big thing,” Ware said. “That’s what it’s all about.”

Jon Hume, product specialist for CASE Construction, watched longshoremen operate an excavator and drive the machine up a ramp as if they were loading the equipment on a boat.

“All of these machines have different controls,” Hume said, “but as long as you’re careful, you’ll be all right.”

# Inside

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## Rapper wins round

Judge vacates \$1.5M default judgment for mother of DMX's child.  
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## Government

Md. to recover less than half of what airlines undercharged.  
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## Market in brief

May 21, 2008

### Dow Jones Industrials

-227.49  
12,601.19

### Standard & Poor's 500

-22.69  
1,390.71

### Nasdaq

-43.99  
2,448.27

## PORT OF BALTIMORE



SARAH BECK

Workers at the Port of Baltimore learned how to use, park and drive large equipment that must be loaded onto the ships at Wednesday's 'Ro-Ro Rodeo.' 'Ro-Ro' is the term for cargo that is rolled on and rolled off cargo ships.

## GOVERNMENT

# Flexible leave act to be signed

### Business groups worried about workplace intrusion

BY ANDY ROSEN



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Gov. Martin O'Malley is expected to sign a bill Thursday that requires many employers that offer paid leave to make earned time off available immediately if workers have a sick-family member.

A list of nearly 150 bills for O'Malley's final bill signing after this year's General Assen-

business community.

The bill applies to companies with 15 or more employees, and only covers companies that already have leave policies in place. It does not require companies to offer any time off when they do not already do so. It was introduced before the session began and passed on the final day as lawmakers came to a compromise about which family members

## ENERGY

# Come June, all businesses will pay more

### PSC will be implementing one statewide standard.

BY DANIELLE ULMAN

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The number of businesses that bid for their electricity every quarter will swell on June 1, along with the bills of all non-residential customers.

Last week, the Maryland Public Service Commission announced that to avoid price spikes for those businesses transitioning from "Type I" to "Type II" customers, their bills would be capped from June through August at no more than 15 percent higher than what they paid in 2007. Instead of sticking utilities with the cost of capping the bills, the PSC said all other non-residential customers would pay the balance.

Type I business customers get their electricity through one- or two-year contracts. They are usually businesses that use less energy during peak hours, like a Bank of America branch. Type II customers bid on electricity every three months. They are not always large companies, but they use more electricity during peak hours, like single grocery stores that use a lot of refrigeration.

Some members of the Maryland Retailers Association will benefit from the 15 percent price cap, but others will have to pay more when they weren't supposed to have bill increases, said Tom Saquella, the group's president.

"Any time you charge one customer a little less than another customer have a little less

# Longshoremen's rodeo



LLOYD FOX (SUN PHOTOGRAPHER)

The port of Baltimore holds its 12th annual RoRo Rodeo (Ro/Ro cargo is any cargo that can be driven on and off ships) where 200 longshoremen and women get a chance to train on new equipment that will be loaded onto ships as cargo. At right, Steve Hussein, a superintendent for Ceres Terminals Inc., watches one of the "ultra booms" in action.



# Senators hammer top oil officials

Crude profits decried  
as crude hits \$133

KEVIN G. HALL  
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

WASHINGTON // In what's coming a ritual in the nation's capital, top executives of oil companies received a rap of verbal abuse from lawmakers of both parties yesterday and defensively defended Congress for many of its energy woes.

While the public relations battle on in the Senate Judiciary Committee, crude oil prices hit up more than \$4 to \$133.17, another record high — on New York Mercantile Exchange.

opened by telling the five oil executives before him that "prices should not skyrocket like this in a functioning, competitive market." His committee has jurisdiction over antitrust issues such as price fixing.

Over the course of three hours, Democrats pounded away on record profits being posted by oil companies, while Republicans hammered home the point that the United States puts most of its available oil off limits to production.

Ostensibly, the hearing was to focus on legislation being considered by Congress, including a measure that would allow the United States to bring price-fixing [Please see CONGRESS, 6D]

## OIL PRICES SOAR

Crude oil prices for July delivery rose \$4.19 on the New York Mercantile Exchange before settling at a record \$133.17



ASSOCIATED PRESS

# Dow 2-day loss most since Feb.

227-point fall follows sharp drop on Monday; oil, Fed news blamed

FROM WIRE REPORTS

NEW YORK // Wall Street pitched lower for the second straight session yesterday as record-high oil prices and a bleak economic assessment from the Federal Reserve deepened investors' worry about rising costs and a shaky employment picture.

have been a big source of anxiety for investors, as many retailers and credit card companies have noticed consumers pairing back spending on discretionary items, including clothing and jewelry, to be able to afford necessities such as gasoline and groceries.

Early in the day, stocks began falling on the surging price of oil, which shot up more than \$4 and breached \$134 a barrel for the first time on the futures market. The stock market slumped further after minutes from last month's Fed meeting revealed that while policymakers expected sharply lower economic growth and higher unemployment later this year, inflationary risks are likely to keep the central bank from cutting rates again.

"If employment deteriorates dramatically, the Fed has a choice — do they worry about inflationary pressure, [Please see MARKETS, 3D]

# Flying With 1 bag? Pay \$15

American Airlines to add fee in June

FROM WIRE REPORTS

NEW YORK // For some time now, cash-strapped airlines have been doing away with once-complimentary perks such as earphones, meals and extra-legroom in exit rows.

Now American Airlines, the largest U.S. carrier, is testing the limits of passengers' willingness to pay for extras, announcing plans to start charging \$15 for what many fliers consider a downright necessity: a single checked bag.

What's next? "Pay toilets in the coach cabin, maybe," joked longtime airline consultant Mike Boyd.

Airlines around the world have been hit hard by skyrocketing jet fuel prices, up 80 percent in the past year. The higher prices have prompted them to institute a raft of fare increases, surcharges and fees for services that previously had been free.

Other airlines, including Delta and United, also have announced plans to reduce their fleets.

Still, the latest effort could be a tough sell with passengers. "It's ridiculous," said Louise Schum, a 23-year-old student from Steamboat, Colo., on a 10-hour layover at Miami International Airport. "Charging for luggage is the cutoff line."

American, based in Fort Worth, Texas, also said yesterday that it would take up to 85 aircraft out of its fleet, including jets and commuter planes, by the end of the year, one of the biggest cutbacks since the airlines culled their fleets after the September 2001 attacks. American has about 960 aircraft at the mainline airline and its American Eagle subsidiary. The announcement came during the airline's annual meeting held by its parent company, AMR Corp., in Fort Worth.

The reductions will translate to an 11 percent to 12 percent cut in service during the fourth quarter, American officials said. They said the airline would eliminate some jobs, but did not give specifics. "Our company and industry simply cannot afford to sit by hoping for industry and market conditions to improve," American's chief executive, Gerard Arpey, told shareholders.

News of American's flight reductions and gloomy outlook appeared to shake investor confidence in AMR as well as other U.S. airlines.

AMR's stock fell 24 percent to \$6.22 in trading yesterday on the New York Stock Exchange, dropping to its lowest point since May 2003, shortly after AMR restructured its finances and union contracts to avoid a trip to bankruptcy court.

AMR shares have dropped 56 percent since the first of the year and 77 percent since last year's annual meeting. [Please see AIRLINE FEES, 6D]