



Ambush in the schoolyard

More coverage of the shootings, Pages 9A, 10A, 11A.

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5 dead at Jonesboro

Two camouflage-clad boys arrested in schoolyard shootings

Did suspects spell trouble? Opinions split

BY JOE STUMPE
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE
JONESBORO — Teachers and students split over the reputations of two boys arrested in the shooting of 15 people near the city Tuesday.

"The students I have heard are suspected of this are not trouble-makers," Pamela Carlisle, a sixth-grade reading teacher at Westside Middle School near Jonesboro, said in a voice that sounded weary from crying. "They'd say, 'Yes, ma'am, no ma'am,' and never get in trouble for doing more than talking too much."

But students said at least one of the boys, whose names weren't released by authorities Tuesday, had a reputation as a trouble-maker.

Amber McBroome and Sherri VanHorn, both 12 and sixth-graders at the school, said the older suspect had gotten into trouble Monday for pulling a knife at the school and threatening to kill his ex-girlfriend and a teacher. It was unclear whether the youth had been suspended or otherwise punished.

"He'd been in a lot of trouble," Amber said.

Law enforcement authorities said two boys, armed with rifles and dressed in camouflage, lay in wait on a wooded slope near the school as students filed out of the school after a false fire alarm was sounded.

Then the pair opened fire, fatally wounding four students and a teacher and injuring nine more students and a teacher, police said.

Police captured the two boys about 200 yards behind the school as they ran toward a white van that held more ammunition, authorities said. No charges were filed against the two as of Tuesday.

Students said the older suspect's ex-girlfriend, Candace Porter, and a teacher, Sara Thetford, were among those wounded.

A Westside Middle School student told reporters that one of the suspects was upset after breaking up with his girlfriend, but authorities did not confirm that at a news conference Tuesday afternoon.

But a student said the breakup of two of her classmates did occur. "This one boy, the boy who supposedly I guess framed it all, had said that 'nobody ever broke up with me,'" Jennifer Nightingale said. "He told me after seventh period (Monday) that he was never going to see me again and I would-"

See ARRESTS, Page 10A



Football coach Steve Williams and a woman grieve Tuesday after gunfire at Westside Middle School near Jonesboro killed four students and a teacher and wounded

10 others in the schoolyard. "Everybody was falling, screaming and crying," said Jennifer Nightingale, 13, who saw a friend fall dead. "Blood was everywhere."

'I never dreamed it would happen here'

False fire alarm led pupils, staff into gunfire

BY KEN HEARD
KRISTEN EVERETT
SETH BLOMELEY
AND OLIVIER UYTENBROUCK
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Several teachers and staff members at Westside Middle School were interviewed Tuesday afternoon about the shootings earlier in the day that killed four students and one teacher and injured 10 other people. Here are their stories.

"All the years I've taught here, I thought it was the safest school in the nation," said Debbie Pelley, who has taught English there for 24 years. "This year, the middle

school had the best atmosphere and best-behaved students."

Pelley said that when she heard the fire alarm ring Tuesday afternoon, she led students out the south entrance and heard shots. The children began screaming and running toward the neighboring gymnasium, she said.

Pelley attended a female student who had been shot in the arm.

"The kids were crying and shaking," she said. "This is the most horrendous thing I've ever heard. I never dreamed it would happen here."

See INTERVIEWS, Page 11A



Emergency workers rush an injured student to an ambulance Tuesday at Westside Middle School near Jonesboro, where authorities said as many as 27 shots were fired at children and teachers outside because a fire alarm had sounded.

WEATHER

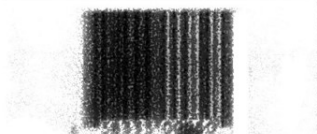
Little Rock: Skies will become partly cloudy after morning clouds. Highs will be in the mid-70s. Partly cloudy and mild conditions tonight. Lows from the mid-50s.

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Privilege claim kindles debate, GOP rebuke

BY TERRY LEMONS
AND JANE FULLERTON
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

WASHINGTON — Legal observers and Republican leaders on Tuesday picked at President Clinton's decision to invoke executive privilege to block prosecutors from questioning Hillary Rodham Clinton and White House aides about the Monica Lewinsky case.

The White House reportedly filed sealed documents last week invoking the privilege claim to keep independent counsel Kenneth Starr from questioning longtime Arkansas aide Bruce Lindsey and other White House advisers.

However, several experts believe the effort to keep the presidential conversations secret is legally weak, and they were even

See DEBATE, Page 8A

Presidential welcome



President Clinton joins the celebration Tuesday as Ugandan children welcome him to the Kisowers School in the village of Mukono. Clinton promised new friendship and help for Africa. Article, 7A

Federal highway bill giving Arkansas 35% more clears House committee

BY SUSAN ROTH
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

WASHINGTON — Arkansas could get an extra \$124 million in federal money for road projects under a highway funding bill that cleared a House committee Tuesday.

The bill authorizing \$218 billion in national highway and transportation spending for the next six years is expected to pass the House next week. Then, it will have to be reconciled with the Senate's version in a conference committee of the two houses.

Under the latest figures distributed Tuesday, the House measure would provide Arkansas an average of \$390 million a year, a 35 percent increase over the state's average allocation of \$289 million for the past six years.

On top of that, the extra \$124 million in one-time funds would go to specific projects already in the works and set as high priorities of the state Highway and Transportation Department.

"I really believe this markup is good for Arkansas," said Rep. Asa Hutchinson, R-Ark., and a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee that passed the measure.

"It's a significant increase in highway funding for the state, and it will allow continuing development of our new corridors," said



Asa Hutchinson

Hutchinson, whose Northwest Arkansas district would receive an extra \$40 million for projects under the bill.

Those projects include construction of a connector access road for the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport, at a cost of \$16 million, and design of U.S. 71 through Fort Chaffee, for \$5 million.

Rep. Vic Snyder, D-Ark., said the extra \$18 million for his central Arkansas district was a bit higher than he expected and will help the projects, particularly \$7 million for the North Belt Freeway off Interstate 40 in North Little Rock.

The measure also includes authorization for the riverfront rail line planned to connect Little Rock. See ROADS, Page 9A