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GOP's loss in 8th District makes Roth regret leaving

By Desires Hicks
Green Bay Press-Gazette

WASHINGTON — With the loss of the 8th Congressional District to the Democrats, Rep. Jim Roth, R-Wis., says he regrets leaving the GOP to join the Democrats in 1994. Roth, who served in the House for 10 years, all but two of them representing Wisconsin's 8th District, is scheduled to be sworn in as a member of the minority party in January.

Roth, 58, says he regrets leaving the GOP to join the Democrats in 1994. Roth, who served in the House for 10 years, all but two of them representing Wisconsin's 8th District, is scheduled to be sworn in as a member of the minority party in January.

Although the firm is based in Washington, Roth said he will quit time between Washington and the Appleton-Green Bay area. Roth has a residence in the area and has a business in the area. Roth is expected to be sworn in as a member of the minority party in January.

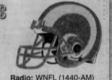
On-line mania

From shopping to planning vacations to working, readers have found many uses for the Internet.



GREEN BAY PACKERS vs. ST. LOUIS RAMS

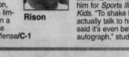
Today, 7 p.m. at Trans World Dome



Rison unlikely to get much time on field

Reggie White won't see much action in his first game with the Packers.

Talking with Reggie beats an autograph



Parade watchers go under cover

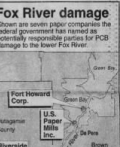


Taking shelter: Linda Drewiske and daughters Michelle, 2 left, and Jennifer, 3, watch the Green Bay Holiday Parade from inside a tent they set up along Jefferson Street to protect themselves from the cold and snow.

Feds' role in Fox cleanup stirs trouble

Forcing mills to pay could threaten relationship, jobs

A federal plan to assess millions of dollars of damage to the Fox River by paper mills during the 1980s and 90s is moving forward — making some who oppose the plan to sue the federal government.



ValuJet pilot turns plane back

Emergency landing made due to strong electrical smell. The pilot had reported a strong electrical smell, first in the cockpit then in the rest of the plane, but on inspection of the DC electrical system, no problem was found.

Panel criticizes FAA's

Panel criticizes FAA's safety record. The panel found that the FAA's safety record is poor and that the FAA is not doing enough to ensure the safety of the nation's airspace.

Deer opener not much of a bang

Tracking good, but gun season off to slow start. Wisconsin wildlife managers are predicting this year's hunt would top the 200,000 deer taken by gun hunters in 1995, but many are not hunting in traditional areas.

Wagon County — a T-town area. "It was really slow — I only saw three deer all day," said Duane Babbs, a 15-year-old Polk High School student who was hunting in the third year near Grant.

Successful hunt: Coonito firefighter Vernon Warrichait

Successful hunt: Coonito firefighter Vernon Warrichait, left, tags a buck for Todd Peterson at the registration station outside the Coonito Municipal Building.

You won't go hungry while shopping at the Mall of America. The 4.2 million-square-foot mall is in Bloomington, Minn., featuring 85 eateries, ranging from the Tasty City Grill to Planet Hollywood.

INDEX WEATHER LOTTERIES MONEY HOME & TRAVEL

Cleanup

eight responsible parties for a billion dollars," he said. "Imagine what happens to smaller paper companies, imagine what happens to Fort Howard — the economic impact would be absolutely devastating."

Municipalities could be affected

State Department of Natural Resources Secretary George Meyer said that if done incorrectly, the assessment could seriously harm not only the targeted companies, but municipalities.

"There are many potentially responsible parties, including publicly owned waste water treatment facilities in the area," he said. "This isn't just an issue for the companies — it's also an issue for the municipalities and their treatment plants."

Sewage plants' role in treating and discharging much of the paper mill's waste means they legally could be added to the list. But Meyer said that in negotiations to date with the Fish and Wildlife Service there has been no talk of naming them.

Settled deep in the sediments of the Fox are the chief culprits in the debate: polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs. They are potentially cancerous byproducts of carbonless copy paper processes used from 1957 until they were banned in 1971.

An estimated 80,000 pounds of the chemical compound are spread over 39 miles of the Lower Fox, much of it concentrated in "hot spots" along the route. The danger is exacerbated when the natural flow of the river scoops up the soils PCBs cling to and carries them into the bay and Lake Michigan.

The federal agency found during the first phase of the damage study in 1984 that the river's high PCB concentrations threaten natural resources such as surface water, sediments, fish and wildlife.

The next step: determining the

amount of damage, tracing it to the sources and determining the cost of restoration.

David Allen, assessment manager for the Fish and Wildlife Service's Green Bay office, said other companies may be named as sources as the assessment moves forward.

"Just because we haven't named a company as a potentially responsible party doesn't mean there couldn't be others," he said.

Federal plan irks coalition

Meanwhile, the agency's perceived strong-arm tactics in the face of paper mills' voluntary cleanup efforts through the Fox River Coalition have many crying foul.

The coalition, an alliance that includes local industry, governments, sewerage districts and the DNR formed in 1982

"This could be the biggest thing that happens to the region in this decade because of the economic impact."

— Daniel Alesch, sewerage district commissioner

to tackle the PCB problem in the Fox and has studied the problem extensively. Last summer the group received a \$500,000 federal grant for a pilot cleanup of a 3-acre site near Kimberly, 27 miles upstream of the river's mouth.

Green Bay MSD Commissioner Kathryn Hasselblad said her biggest fear is that companies participating in the coalition will back out

now that their hand is being forced. The federal government's renewed punitive attitude toward industry is reminiscent of the late 1960s and '70s when environmental regulation took hold, she said.

"In the past, everybody wanted to demonize each other," Hasselblad said. "But in the last couple years there's been a really positive collaborative effort; we've moved to outcomes instead of blaming each other."

"What they're proposing is really regressive . . . to be on the verge of destroying that very fragile fabric of trust among the participants of the coalition is not worth it," Alesch said the river ultimately will lose. The federal process will hand both sides in court and drag

out the Fox cleanup another 20 years or more, he predicted.

The Green Bay Metropolitan Sewerage District plans to send a letter to the Fish and Wildlife Service expressing its concerns, as does the Heart-of-the-Valley Metropolitan Sewerage District in the Fox Valley, where most of the named paper mills are concentrated.

Cleanup costs discussed

Meyer, the Natural Resources secretary, said the Fox River Coalition has arrived at a dollar figure for the river cleanup and is now negotiating a voluntary settlement.

The coalition's work has been stepped up because the Fish and Wildlife Service is pushing for a damage assessment claim to be filed by March in order to meet the federal statute of limitations, he said.

Meyer, who wouldn't disclose the dollar amount for the proposed cleanup, said he's "cautiously optimistic" an agreement can be reached among members of the coalition by the March deadline.

Allen wouldn't speculate on what

the federal damage assessment might establish as the potential cleanup cost. Federal Natural Resource Damage Assessment settlements have ranged from \$100 million for smaller cleanups to \$1 billion for the catastrophic 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound off the Alaskan coast.

Meanwhile, there's no reason the coalition can't continue its work in tandem with the agency's assessment, Allen said.

The goal is to clean up the river as quickly as possible, not to punish the polluters, he said.

"One of the largest misconceptions of this process is that we're punishing people for what was legal at the time," Allen said. "That completely misses the point of restoration and compensation. We're trying to compensate the public for what they've lost from those legal activities."

Cliff Bowers, spokesman for Fort Howard Corp., said the company has no plans to leave the Fox River Coalition and is encouraged by the federal government's apparent

interest in working with the coalition and the DNR.

"There appears to be an effort on the part of Fish and Wildlife to go forward on this in an innovative fashion, to include the DNR and the affected companies — and that's positive," he said.

Jo Mercurio, the DNR's representative on the coalition, said the state declined to join the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Oneida Tribe of Indians and the Menominee Indian Tribe as a co-trustee in the federal damage assessment process. The state believes a cooperative

local approach would bring the specialist resolution, she said.

Still, the coalition has been criticized by some for moving too slowly.

Mercurio said the coalition's work in the past few years has focused on gathering data and modeling the potential impacts of cleaning up certain sites along the Fox.

"That has always been the approach, to take the time necessary to put that information together and make decisions not based on emotions, but based on scientific facts," she said. "That's the process and it just takes time."

CORRECTION

The Northwest Fabrics ad published in today's Holiday Hints Gift Guide was incorrect. The ad should have stated the 40% store closing sale is at their East Town Mall location only.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

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