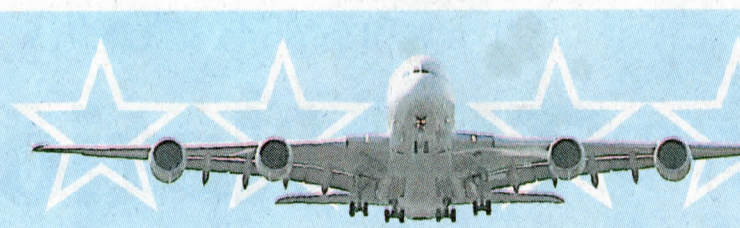




Calm hero

Boy, 8, saves stricken father
City & Region B1



FOUR-STAR AIRPLANES

The prosperous transform private jets into flying palaces
Business & Innovation C1

VOLUME 267
NUMBER 122

50 cents
75 cents beyond
30 miles from Boston

The Boston Globe

MONDAY, MAY 2, 2005

BLOSSOM, WET SOME

TODAY: Breezy with some sun; p.m. shower likely. Highs to 64.
TOMORROW: Partly sunny, less wind. Highs to 62, lows to 42.
HIGH TIDE: 6:30 a.m., 7:18 p.m.
FULL REPORT: PAGE D14



AP PHOTO/KHALID MOHAMMED

Iraqis and US soldiers responded to a car bomb attack on a US Army convoy yesterday in western Baghdad.

At least 116 dead in Iraq in 4 days

Some 25 killed in funeral blast

By Antonio Castaneda
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD — A car bomb obliterated a tent packed with mourners at the funeral of a Kurdish official in northern Iraq yesterday, killing about 25 people and wounding more than 50 in the single deadliest attack since insur-

gents started bearing down on Iraq's newly named government late last week.

The blast capped four violent days in which at least 116 people, including 11 Americans, were killed in a storm of bombings and ambushes attributed to Iraqi insurgents, believed largely populated by members of the disaffected Sunni Arab minority.

The Sunnis were dominant for decades under Saddam Hussein,

but were mainly shut out of the new government announced Thursday. Some view the escalating violence since then as a response to political developments that the United States and the Shi'ite-dominated power structure had hoped would tamp down the bloodshed.

Despite the surge in violence, Iraq's national security adviser said yesterday that the fledgling government was making progress

against the insurgents.

"There is no shadow of doubt in my mind that by the end of the year, we would have achieved a lot," Mowaffaq al-Rubaie said in an interview with CNN's "Late Edition." "Probably the back of the insurgency has already been broken."

Iraqi militants also released a video purporting to show the insurgents' latest foreign hostage, an

IRAQ, Page A7

Snelgroves come first, Menino says

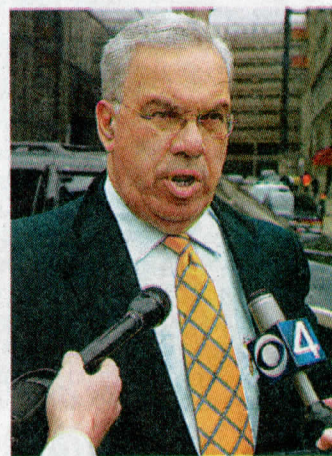
As settlement nears, family given priority

By Donovan Slack and Suzanne Smalley
GLOBE STAFF

With Boston poised to pay out one of the largest wrongful death settlements in its history for the police shooting of Emerson College student Victoria Snelgrove, Mayor Thomas M. Menino said yesterday that his top priority is the well-being of the Snelgrove family.

"Money will never bring back this young woman's life," said Menino, who said the settlement of between \$4 million and \$7 million will come from taxpayers. "I'm praying for [the family] that they can come through this."

Snelgrove, a 21-year-old junior from East Bridgewater, died last year after she was struck in the eye by a pepper-pellet projectile shot by Boston police trying to quell surging crowds celebrating the Red Sox' American League championship victory Oct. 21. The attorney for the Snelgrove family declined to comment yesterday about the settlement, which is expected to be paid as early as this week.



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO/TOM HERGENROTTER

Mayor Thomas Menino spoke yesterday in Copley Square.

The Internal Affairs Division of the Boston Police Department meanwhile, has been investigating at least one officer for actions in connection with Snelgrove's death, a police spokesman confirmed.

One officer is under scrutiny for telling fellow officers after the shooting that he intended to try to secure a certification for his commander to use the FN303 pepper pellet guns that killed Snelgrove, although the commander hadn't earned one, according to two law enforcement officers familiar with the probe who spoke on condition they not be identified.

SNELGROVE, Page E

Catholic Church withers in Europe

By Charles M. Sennott
GLOBE STAFF

DUBLIN — The cavernous, cinderblock construction of the Church of the Most Precious Blood, built in 1954 in a solidly working-class neighborhood here, reflects an era when Ireland's priests could marshal one of the world's most devout Roman Catholic flocks for Mass each Sunday and on other days of obligation.

A half-century later, the massive church was nearly empty during Mass on a recent Sunday — its cold, cement walls echoing with the thin coughs of elderly women, who seem to make up the majority of parishioners in many Irish parishes.

Here and across Europe, Catholicism is withering after decades of steady erosion from the forces of secularism, consumer culture, and the fallout from priest sex abuse scandals.

In some of Catholic Europe's largest dioceses in Germany,

CATHOLICS IN EUROPE SINCE 1970

Change in percentage of population identifying themselves as Roman Catholic, 1970-2005

■ Increase ■ Decrease
□ Small Roman Catholic population (less than 2%)

Ireland
1970: 91%
2005: 90%
Weekly church attendance dropped from 85% in 1980 to less than 50% today.

France
1970: 88% 2005: 76%
Weekly church attendance dropped from 15% in 1980 to 12% in 2000.

Italy
1970: 94%
2005: 97%
Weekly church attendance dropped from 35% in 1980 to 30% today.

Germany
1970: 36% 2005: 33%
Weekly church attendance dropped from 35% in 1980 to 13% today.

Poland
1970: 88%
2005: 92%
Weekly church attendance dropped from 68% in 1990 to 62% in 2000.

NOTE: Church attendance statistics tend to be high, according to sociologists who have found a tendency among those polled to say they are going to church even when they do not.

SOURCES: World Christian Database, Center for the Study of Global Christianity; Georgetown University Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA); Famiglia Cristiana; Irish and German church officials

KRT/GLOBE STAFF GRAPHIC

Private-equity firms Hub's 'new expertise'

Locals control billions worldwide

By Charles Stein
GLOBE STAFF

A relatively obscure part of the local investment community has been going gangbusters lately, buying brand-name companies for billions of dollars, raising billions more for other deals, and even trying to buy a major sports league.

With a Boston-based private-equity firm's purchase of Toys "R" Us in March, the city's private-equity community can boast that it owns major stakes in some leading US companies. Other holdings include Domino's Pizza, Burger King, record company Warner Music, publisher Houghton Mifflin, and two of America's leading

makers of mattresses, Simmons and Tempur-Pedic.

"This is the new Boston expertise," said Howard Anderson, a local venture capitalist.

Private-equity firms raise money from endowments, pension funds, and wealthy individuals. They use that money, plus money that they borrow, to buy companies. The goal is to make the acquired businesses more profitable. That happens by replacing managers, cutting costs, expanding into new markets, or buying more companies in the same field. Eventually the private-equity firms sell the business or take it public.

In the past two months, Banc Capital, Governor Mitt Romney's former employer, participated in a \$6.6 billion deal to buy Toys "R" Us.

FIRMS, Page A1

EUROPE, Page A6

Business & Innovation

Classified C5

THE BOSTON GLOBE MONDAY, MAY 2, 2005

PIMP MY PLANE

Corporations and the super-rich spend millions to turn private jets into palaces with everything from gold-plated plumbing to antiques



By Keith Reed
GLOBE STAFF

Forget first class.

If you think spending a few hundred dollars for a worn-out leather seat, bottled water, and a few extra inches of legroom is luxury, then you don't know what luxury is.

Try sinking \$40 million into a private aircraft, and then spending another \$10 million to \$30 million for plush carpets, rare woods, intricate entertainment systems, and palatial bedrooms to outfit it before it ever rolls down a runway.

Welcome to the real mile-high club, where only the wealthy can afford the cover charge.

Like a teenager shelling every penny to soup up his first set of wheels, corporations and the super-rich are sparing no

expense to make their private jets every bit as luxurious as the homes, hotels, and offices they are accustomed to. And the demand has fueled the growth of an exclusive group of "completion centers" — airborne versions of the custom car and motorcycle shops that are featured in hit TV shows like "Pimp My Ride" — that are reinventing what it means to fly private.

"You're really trying to turn it into your home," said Flo Ciobotaru, president of Aircraft Industry Management Solutions International Inc., a Montreal company that specializes in custom private jet interiors. "If you're going to sit in it for 12 hours or 14 hours, you want to be comfortable."

Considering the airborne cattle cars in which most peo-

LUXURY JETS, Page C4

Elaborate plane interiors include (above, left to right) a service area, lounge, and bathroom.

In medical devices, a jobs boom is forecast

New products bring plans to boost hiring

By Ross Kerber
GLOBE STAFF

Boston-area medical device companies foresee a hiring boom in coming years, a strikingly optimistic outlook compared with other parts of the Massachusetts economy.

Of the 51 companies that responded to a recent survey by the Massachusetts Medical Device Industry Council, 90 percent, or 46 of them, reported they planned to increase the number of jobs in the state over the next three years. That could translate into 5,000 more jobs over the sector's 21,000 jobs today, by one estimate.

That would be a significant upswing for an industry whose workforce has dipped in recent years. But the positive forecast shows how many device makers have reached the point where their research has paid off with new products, requiring more employees, say officials at the trade group and local executives.

One is Richard G. Ganz, chief executive of Omnisonics Medical Technologies Inc. of Wilmington. Ganz predicts a significant expansion of the company's workforce of 50 people, starting later this year, though he said it's too soon to give specifics. The venture-backed company expects to get final approval from the Food and Drug Administration to sell its acoustic devices for unclogging blood vessels.

"We're moving from being an R-and-D company to being a real company with sales," he said.

Another growing firm is Nova Biomedical Corp. in Waltham, a closely held maker of diabetes test kits and blood analysis products. It has 550 employees in Massachusetts, up from 450 in late 2003, and plans to add another 50 over the next two years, said John J. Wallace, chief operating officer.

So far, nearly all of its employees are in Waltham and Bedford, and Nova plans to keep most of the new jobs in Massachusetts, Wallace said. That's because the company needs access to the skilled labor force it finds at local colleges. Nova also wants to stay close to the hospitals that buy its blood-diagnostic equipment.

"Our product ideas are driven by what the customer is looking for," Wallace said.

New jobs in the life-sciences industries have been a longtime hope of economic-development officials. But so far, the increases haven't happened. Medical-device

MEDICAL-DEVICE MAKERS, Page C4

Today's top-of-the-line jets feature multiple kitchens, bedrooms, lavatories, and office suites; they are filled with accoutrements that range from gold-plated plumbing to state-of-the-art digital entertainment systems and antique furniture.

Super-rich make jets flying palaces

► LUXURY JETS
Continued from Page C1

ple fly, to describe Ciobotaru's work as comfortable is a huge understatement. Today's top-of-the-line jets feature multiple kitchens, bedrooms, lavatories, and office suites; they are filled with accoutrements that range from gold-plated plumbing and light fixtures to state-of-the-art digital entertainment systems and antique furniture, according to the companies that build them.

To top it off, the planes are almost always staffed with personal assistants and chefs, not to mention the regular flight crew, Ciobotaru said.

Inspired by the same pursuit of comfort, Boeing has recently undertaken a "Skyhome Project" in which it is encouraging buyers of its 737-series Boeing Business Jet to upgrade their interiors with the accoutrements of an executive's pad.

But while most of these companies happily discuss their handiwork in broad terms, they're careful to skip over details about the planes and their owners.

Edesé Doret Industrial Design Inc., a New York jet and yacht design company, estimates that about 60 percent of its clients are Fortune 500 companies, said Edesé A. Doret Jr., the company's president and founder.

The rest, he said, are heads of state.

The company's latest project is a customized version of the Airbus A380, the largest commercial aircraft in the world. Most airlines that have ordered the new plane are expected to configure the plane to carry about 500 passengers, but one Doret is working on is being fitted with three galleys, a master bedroom, master bathroom with a Jacuzzi and shower, two dining areas, and spiral staircases. The kicker: a fabricated desert oasis, complete with floor



Aircraft Industry Management Solutions International adds more than a touch of luxury to seating areas and bathrooms of a plane. "If you're going to sit in it for 12 hours or 14 hours, you want to be comfortable," says the firm's president.

pillows, low tables and a mosaic of the Sahara on the walls.

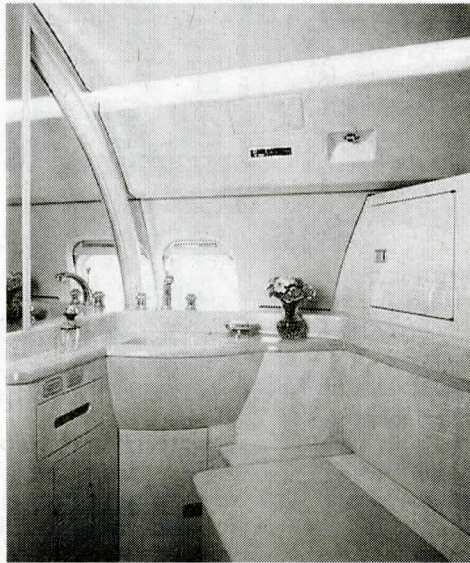
He wouldn't disclose the owner.

Doret said most clients insist that he sign a confidentiality agreement. The secrecy is for security reasons, not because clients are worried about public or employee perceptions of their planes' extravagance.

Still, he conceded that some clients have more personal reasons for discretion.

"Sometimes, depending on the customer, there's a lot of politics involved. One prince may not want to show off his father by having a larger plane than he," Doret said.

Security and privacy aren't the only considerations. Companies outfitting souped-up planes have to satisfy the whims of clients who want air palaces, while at the same



time watching the plane's weight and abiding by strict government rules that dictate what a jet can safely contain.

Designing a custom jet interior can take up to three months, a process that involves selecting ma-

terials, designing the jet's entertainment center, and calculating the plane's weight with all the new equipment installed. A consultation with the Federal Aviation Administration is also routine, said Wesley Morris, interiors manager at PATS Aircraft LLC in Georgetown, Del.

An interior installation can take another 10 months and cost between \$10 million and \$30 million, Morris said. That's on top of the \$40 million price tag that a large jet like a Boeing 737 can carry off the assembly line. Among common luxuries travelers want: plasma screen TVs and "touch panels" at every seat that control the entertainment and climate systems at the touch of a finger.

"Everyone wants the latest and greatest," he said.

That goes for amenities that can't be installed, too. Michael Fahn, an account executive in the Boston office of Blue Star Jets, an aviation charter service, said his job is to play concierge to clients as much as it is to charter travel.

In addition to requesting planes with plush seats and \$200,000 satellite TV systems, Fahn said his clients often want specialized menus of fresh lobster, crab legs, and fine wines.

Others won't take off without a manicurist or stylist onboard, he said, a perk that can come at a cost of about \$100 an hour, plus the cost of flying the personal attendant back home.

"You can't put a value on that. To not have to make another stop, just have that stuff done while you're on the plane and go, that's invaluable," Fahn said.

Keith Reed can be reached at reed@globe.com.

Device makers expect jobs boom

► MEDICAL-DEVICE MAKERS
Continued from Page C1

companies employ about 21,000 people in Massachusetts, according to the Massachusetts Medical Device Industry Council, a figure that has remained steady.

According to the forecasting firm Economy.com, at the end of March there were 13,300 manufacturing jobs in the category of medical devices and equipment, out of 312,700 manufacturing jobs in Massachusetts.

Both figures are lower than in the past. In mid-1997, for instance, medical device firms accounted for 15,400 of the state's 418,400 total manufacturing jobs. Overall, Massachusetts manufacturing has been hard hit by the technology crash and the movement of jobs overseas. Plenty of medical-device firms also retrenched.

In July 2000, for instance, stent maker Boston Scientific Corp. said it would close its Watertown plant and lay off 850 workers.

Boston Scientific says the closing helped to cover the costs of developing its drug-coated Taxus cardiac stent, a hit product that has made it the largest life-sciences company in the state. The company now has 2,085 employees in Massachusetts, up from 1,516 in 2002, and expects hiring to continue, said spokesman Paul Donovan, though he didn't provide specifics.

Boston Scientific's story fits a broader trend. Overall, high-tech manufacturing in recent surveys has outpaced traditional factory work like making autos or steel, said Brian Bethune, director of financial economics at Global Insight, the Lexington economic forecasting and consulting firm. He cautioned that all industries tend to pump up their long-term prospects, but said few other sectors would be so bullish about future hiring as the medical-device

companies.

Many types of new devices are coming to market, he said, citing all sorts of products from automated cardiac defibrillators to cardiac stents to ambulance devices.

The survey results are due to be presented by the device council at its annual meeting, scheduled for tomorrow.

To conduct the survey, the device council worked with the real-estate brokerage firm NAI Hunneman, sending inquiries to all 200 council members who either develop or manufacture medical devices; 51 of them responded.

Thomas J. Sommer, the council's president, said he had expected only half the respondents would forecast job growth. Other

findings weren't so surprising. A majority of respondents said high housing costs, labor costs, and healthcare costs all had a negative impact on their ability to expand in Massachusetts.

Fifty-nine percent rated the state's

policies to promote the medical device industry as "effective" or "very effective."

Hunneman executives Michael DiGiano and James Boudrot said the results suggest the sector might add 5,000 jobs by 2008. They see device companies starting to fill many underutilized suburban buildings first constructed for vanished electronics makers like Digital Equipment Corp.

For instance, last year they arranged a deal that put Swiss dental-implants maker Straumann AG into a building in Andover that once housed a videoconferencing firm, PictureTel Corp.

"From our perspective, this sector doesn't get a lot of play, but we feel there's a lot of good news for it," DiGiano said.

Ross Kerber can be reached at kerber@globe.com.

U.S. TRUST

Re: Investments
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Think generation-to-generation.
Together we can build
a bigger picture™

Lori Sutherland