

Massport struggling with image

Patronage was targeted in wake of 9-11 hijackings

By Steve LeBlanc
The Associated Press

BOSTON — When acting Gov. Jane Swift vowed to stamp out patronage at Logan International Airport, she brought a unique insight to the problem.

Swift was once a political appointee at the Massachusetts Port Authority, the agency in charge of the airport that became a launching pad for the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

In the aftermath of the hijackings, Swift pledged to quash the agency's reputation as a dumping ground for failed candidates, former aides and the politically wired.

She didn't have far to look.



AP PHOTO

American Airlines employees gather for a moment of silence Wednesday at Logan Airport.

The head of the agency, Virginia Buckingham, was a former press aide and chief of staff to governors William Weld and Paul Cellucci. The agency's safety director, Joseph Lawless, was Weld's former state police driver.

Buckingham's two predecessors, Peter Blute and Stephen Tocco, were also political appointees with little or no direct experience running an airport.

Identifying a problem was one thing. Rooting out a cherished perk enjoyed by Massachusetts' political elite proved harder.

Swift appointed a six-member commission to conduct a top to bottom review of the agency.

Although the commission noted the hijackers did not break any laws before boarding the planes, it labeled patronage a "four-headed monster" and said the practice "eroded public confidence in Massport."

Their solution? Hire a hard-charging CEO with a strong aviation experience and insulate him from political intimidation by offering four-year contracts.

"We protected him from the horrible Massachusetts political history and networks ... so he doesn't serve at the whim of Beacon Hill," said Marshall Carter, the head of the commission.

Equally important was creating detailed descriptions for other Massport jobs as a bulwark against pressure to hire unqualified but politically connected candidates.

Please see **MASSPORT / A11**



Two-alarm fire 'total' Cleghorn apt. building

A staff report

FITCHBURG — The state fire marshal is investigating a two-alarm fire that gutted a notorious Cleghorn apartment building scheduled for demolition.

Fire broke out around 2:30 this morning in the three-story building at 85 Plymouth St., at the corner of Blais Court. Three or four neighbors called the Fire Department, said Deputy Fire Chief Jim Belliveau, and because of the number of calls the department sent more engines than usual to a first alarm.

Belliveau said there was "heavy fire" when the first crews arrived, and he immediately struck a second alarm.

Almost the entire building was in flames, Belliveau said. He called the building "totaled."

The deputy said the apartment



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Firefighters were on scene at Plymouth St., Fitchburg shortly after 6 this morning.

building was only recently

Just after 6 a.m. this morning, crews were still attacking the building, Belliveau said.

Please see **FIRE / A5**

INSIDE TODAY'S SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE



SENTINEL & ENTERPRISE JULIA CHENG

Fitchburg State College senior Lolita Colson takes notes as she looks at Cleve Overton's '8:45 9-11-2001,' part of a mixed-media exhibit on view through Dec. 29 at the Fitchburg Art Museum.

LOCAL NEWS

Exhibit focuses on 9-11 / **A3**

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Mostly clear tonight, low 50 to 55. / **A2**

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Economic impact: Worst may be over here

By Benjamin Cole
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FITCHBURG — After what was an already struggling economy was worsened by the events of Sept. 11, 2001, people across the country are still feeling the effects.

Some familiar with the region, however, are optimistic that things are looking up in North Central Massachusetts.

There were already signs of economic slowdown in the manufacturing sector during the summer of 2001, said North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce Vice President Todd

'When Sept. 11 hit, tourism was affected, and as a result the country took a double-barrel hit.'

Todd Shimkus, vice president North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce

Shimkus. Much of this slowdown was attributed to utility rates that "skyrocketed" and led to an energy crisis being declared in the region, Shimkus said.

According to Shimkus, energy spending is second only to labor costs for a company, and in the summer of 2001 the energy crisis led to a reduction in manufacturing jobs. The events of Sept. 11 magnified what was already a problem, Shimkus said.

"When Sept. 11 hit, tourism was affected, and as a result the country took a double-barrel hit," Shimkus said.

Shimkus noted that just after Sept. 11, figures showed the number of people visiting the Johnny Appleseed Visitor's Center in Lancaster dropped significantly.

Please see **ECONOMY / A11**

Artists respond to terrorist attacks



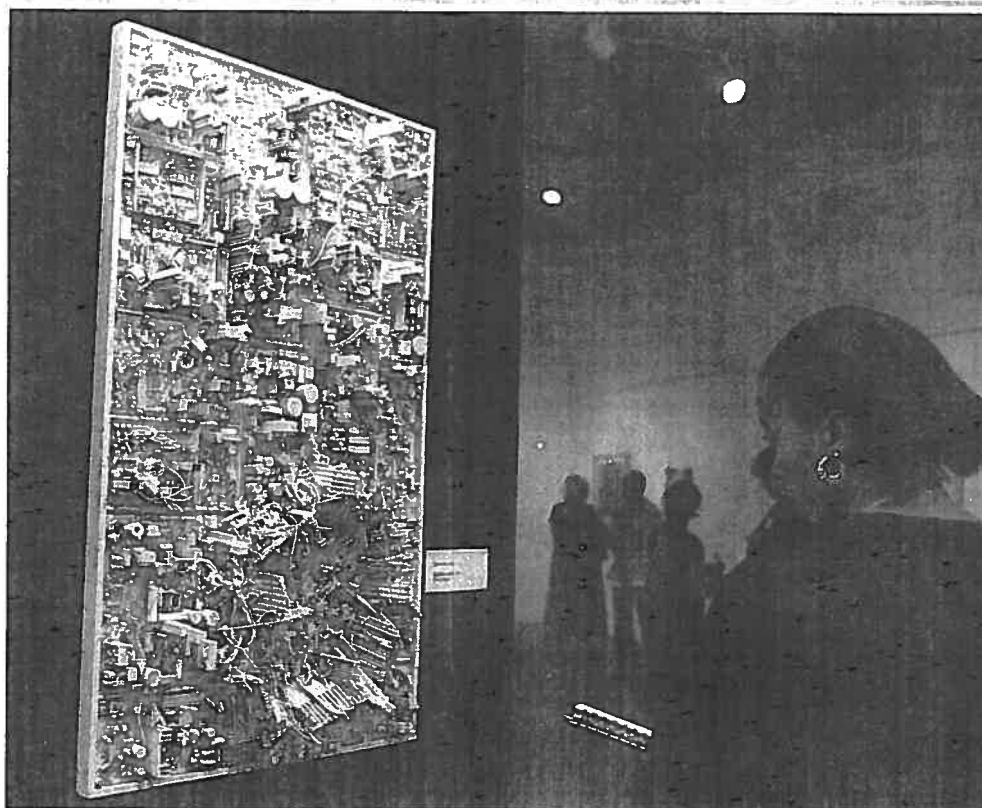
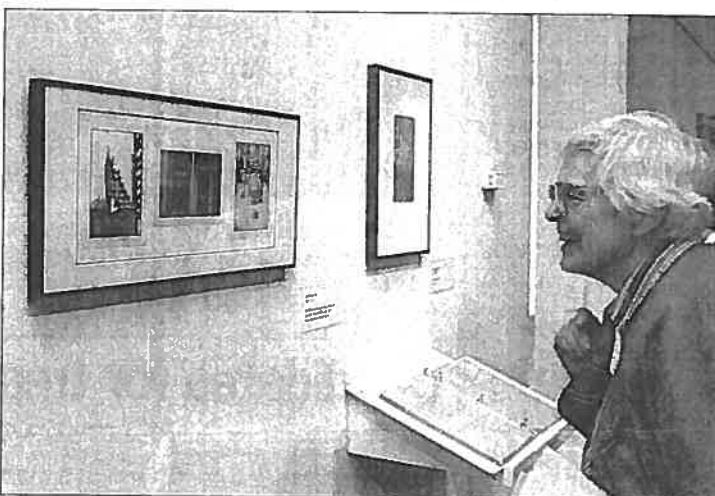
'A Nation Mourns and Artists Respond' is on display at the Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St., until Dec. 29. The show features work from more than 25 artists, presented in diverse media.

Above, Paul McGuirk's 'Model for an Outdoor Sculpture' comprises plexiglass and paper.

Top right, Elizabeth Hammond of Bedford looks at an untitled work by Gary O'Connor.

Above right, Eliza McFadden looks at exhibit of gelatin silver prints by Jeff Demer of Leominster.

At right, Fitchburg State College senior Lolita Colson takes notes as she looks at Cleve Overton's '8:45 9-11-2001' mixed media exhibit.



Boy Scouts help with crafts fair

By Michelle Carter
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TOWNSEND — When 16-year-old John Giunta thinks of the annual Townsend Historical Society Crafts Fair, he thinks of hot dogs, chicken barbecues and sleeping under the stars.

That's because Giunta is one of the roughly 30 boys from Townsend Boy Scout Troop 81 who will be providing food and refreshments to the two-day fair's patrons and vendors this weekend.

The food court is the troop's largest fundraiser. With no financial support from Boy Scouts of America, the boys are responsible for raising all the money needed to repair tents and other supplies, and cover the costs of fees for different events they boys attend throughout the year.

Ranging in age from 12 to 16, the boys will start by serving breakfast Saturday morning, and will continue serving food until the fair ends Sunday evening. On Saturday, hamburgers, hot dogs, and sausage and onion sandwiches will be served, followed by a chicken barbecue with home made pasta salad on Sunday.

Everything they do, from organizing who works when, to setting up and arranging for supplies, is done by the scouts themselves, with minimal help from adults. Giunta, the senior patrol leader, is in charge, with assistant senior patrol leader Austin Chenelle helping out.

Giunta's mother, Anita, said serving food and raising money isn't the only things on the scouts' agenda.

"Some of the boys will spend Saturday night on the common," she said. "Many of the vendors leave their things set up overnight, and the boys help keep an eye on them."

Anita Giunta said all the scouts perform community service on a regular basis, such as organizing food drives during the holidays, or helping to set up for community events. One eagle scout built a sandbox and benches at a local playground, while another helped repaint the flagpole at the Veterans of Foreign Wars building.

The twenty-first annual Townsend Historical Society Fall Arts and Crafts Fair is this Saturday and Sunday, on Townsend Common.