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the nation

Crackdown to expose mail crooks and swindlers

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The U.S. Postal Service, citing a \$500 million mail fraud loss to consumers each year, said Wednesday it will begin a new program to expose and publicize mail crooks.

"The con men who use the mails are few in number, but they have been so successful that their very existence stains the good reputation of the mail order industry," said Postmaster General William Bolger.

Bolger said mail fraud investigators with experience in thefts from consumers will be stationed in 18 cities where the service has its headquarters offices.

They will work with consumer protection groups and other investigative agencies "tracing closer than ever before the activities of the fly-by-night swindler to better inform the public," he told a news conference. "They'll make sure that any operation that smacks of mail fraud comes quickly to the attention of the public over the entire nation."

House objects to floor on foreign grain sales

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The House Tuesday rejected a proposal to place a price floor on grain sales to Russia and other nations as a gesture to show the world that the United States is the "OPEC in grain."

Rep. James Weaver, D-Ore., lost by a voice vote in his proposal to peg prices of wheat, corn and soybean exports at 80 percent of parity. He said this would end a practice of exporting grain cheap while U.S. consumers "pay dear."

Chairman Thomas Foley, D-Wash., of the House Agriculture Committee, said Weaver's idea that this country can do with wheat and corn what OPEC has done with oil is "sophisticated nonsense."

The House also rejected a proposal to limit exports of hides to 56 percent of total U.S. production in a move to protect the leathergoods industry.

House leaders joined members from the West and Midwest in denouncing the proposed restriction on hides exports. The measure was condemned as protectionist, de-

signed to help the leather goods producers at the expense of cattle growers and the consumer. It was defeated 186-218.

The sponsor, Rep. James M. Shannon, D-Mass., said the cattle industry will export 24 million of the 34 million hides it produces this year, leaving only 10 million for a domestic market that needs 19 million.

Without protection, Shannon said, the price of shoes will fall while jobs of 400,000 leathergoods workers may become threatened.

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Plan misworded from start Miami voters defeat tax cut

United Press International
MIAMI — Greater Miami's novel form of metropolitan government survived another crisis Tuesday when voters overwhelmingly rejected a property tax cut proposal that would have impoverished county operations.

The proposal was a mistake from the time it was conceived more than a year ago by Harry L. Wilson, a retired pet supplies salesman disgruntled at rising property taxes on

his Coral Gables home. He worded his petition to cut taxes by 99.95 percent instead of the 50 percent he intended and no one caught the error until too late.

Nearly 37 percent of Dade County's registered voters cast ballots. They defeated the proposal, by a 65-35 percentage.

With all but the 4,000 absentee ballots tabulated from Dade's 462 precincts, the count showed 165,140 votes against the tax cut and

89,200 in favor.

Leaders across the spectrum of Miami life — labor union, churches, professionals, business and industry — banded together with politicians from Gov. Bob Graham on down in unprecedented unity to fight the tax cut. They raised nearly \$300,000 and spent most of it in a final week advertising blitz.

The 58-year-old Wilson, at last report, had spent less than \$2,500 on his petition. That translates to only cents tax per \$1,000 assessed.

Instead, he mistakenly wrote "four mills per \$1,000 valuation" on his petition. That translates to only cents tax per \$1,000 assessed.

The metro county commission and courts refused Wilson's requests to rewrite the proposal after he had collected 15,000 certified signatures of voters.

If Wilson's proposal had passed Tuesday, officials estimated the county would have collected \$91,000 from property taxes for operations, instead of the \$173 million that has been budgeted.

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