

Busline workers to 'walk away' Day-care changes endorsed

United Press International
EL PASO — Striking Greyhound workers are planning a massive "walk away" from their jobs Monday as part of a nationwide "show of force" by the union, a local chairman of the Amalgamated Transit Union said Thursday.

Greyhound Lines Inc. officials have told strikers they will not return to work until noon Monday to say if they intend to work. If not, he company says it will hire replacements and be back in operation on a limited basis by the middle of next week.

The strike by 12,500 workers, including 80 in El Paso, entered its eighth day Thursday against one of the nation's largest transportation firms.

The strike began Nov. 2 after employees refused a company proposal that included a 9.5 percent cut in wages and additional cuts in benefits.

Greyhound spokeswoman Leslie White said many strikers accepted the offer. Tom Jeser, a local chairman of the union, said very few strikers

are expected to go back to work without a contract settlement.

"We plan to get our entire membership down at the station Monday morning to show our force," Jeser said. "Then we plan at about 10 minutes after 12 noon just to turn around and walk away from them, to tell them that we don't need them."

Jeser said "walk-aways" are being planned for every Greyhound station in the nation. The action is to be peaceful, he said.

Two national union officials are expected to be in El Paso Friday night for a meeting with strikers, Jeser said. They are Ray Golden of Kansas City, Mo., and Gary Atkinson of Phoenix, Ariz.

Union executive E. B. Franklin lashed out at the company's decision to cut insurance benefits to 6,000 Greyhound retirees during the strike. The benefits were restored when the union threatened to sue Greyhound in federal court, he said.

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AUSTIN — The quality of child day-care centers could be improved if they were placed under jurisdiction of the Texas Education Agency, a teachers union official says.

Testifying before a House study committee on Thursday, John Cole, president of the Texas Federation of Teachers, said the Legislature should provide full funding for the state's kindergarten programs.

Jail cook faces pot charges

United Press International

EL PASO — Jail cook Gilberto Tapia has been arrested on charges he smuggled marijuana into the county jail.

El Paso County Sheriff Mike Davis said he is questioning Tapia, 30, to find out if "this was a profit-making venture." The cook was arrested when he came to work on the noon shift.

Sheriff's deputies said they had been investigating Tapia for more than two weeks.

Cole said that TEA, rather than the state welfare agency, would be better equipped to regulate day-care centers.

"Public schools presently function in the pre-school arena in kindergarten, early childhood classes, Head Start and certain other programs," he said.

"Requirements for child-staff ratios, facilities, curriculum and other such activities exist, and could easily be applied to child care facilities."

Cole said day-care facilities will continue to have a difficult time hiring qualified staffers as long as salaries are low.

"Moreover, screening out the incompetent worker will always be difficult as long as the industry relies upon minimum wage level employees," he said.

Cole said he endorses stricter licensing standards for day-care centers.

"We read only occasionally of cases where day-care personnel

are accused of neglect or abuse, but occasionally is far too often," he said.

Mary Young, director of the Austin Family Center, said she advocates a voucher program where parents would receive a subsidy from their employer or from the government to help pay child care costs.

Under such a program, she said, parents would pay on a sliding scale that is tied to the amount of money they earn.

The voucher program was

also endorsed by G.K. Sprinkle, president of the Texas chapter of the National Organization for Women.

Sprinkle said day care was once viewed as a "necessary evil," but is crucial now because of the divorce rate, the number of one-parent families and the number of two wage-earner families.

"We need quality child care for all families to work and we need affordable child care," she said.

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Oil boat sinks near rig, 6 lost

United Press International
CORPUS CHRISTI — An oil company crew boat with six people on board sank 10 miles off Tagorda Island early Thursday, and rescuers have found no survivors.

Lt. Commander James J. Brokenik of the Coast Guard said the 155-foot Lavernebert was owned by Gulf International, based in Houma,

Brokenik said the boat, which was dispatched out of Port Conner, sank sometime after midnight Thursday near an oil rig operated by Amoco.

The Coast Guard and Navy patched rescue vessels and helicopters to search for survivors, he said.

Civilian helicopters also

aided in the search, and Gulf International brought company divers to the scene, reportedly to enter the sunken vessel.

Brokenik said the boat sank in 60 feet of water, and its bow was discovered protruding above the surface early Thursday by another vessel, the K.C. Chouest.

Crew members on the Chouest reported seeing a survivor clinging to the sunken vessel, but he slipped below the surface before they could reach him, Brokenik said.

The Coast Guard received its first report of the missing boat at 7:58 a.m. Thursday, but it was not known when it sank. Communications between the boat and the rig were lost just after midnight, he said.

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