

Yellow ribbon sales rise

By Joann Loviglio
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILADELPHIA — Sales are booming for yellow ribbons, as people across the nation are reviving the traditional show of hope for American combat troops' safe return, retailers and manufacturers said Tuesday.

As yellow ribbons began popping up on trees, poles and homes in communities of all sizes, the nation's largest ribbon manufacturer has added shifts to keep up with demand.

"Yellow — by far — is No. 1 right now," said Nancy Schott of Berwick Industries in central Pennsylvania. She said the ribbons are selling six times faster than the No. 2 red-white-and-blue striped variety.

Sales of yellow ribbons have doubled at Paper Mart, a California-based distributor of paper products and office supplies, said advertising manager John Bechtold. Retailers Kmart and Wal-Mart said they have seen nationwide increases in the demand for yellow ribbon and American flags.

The custom of hanging yellow ribbons was popularized

two decades ago during the Iran hostage crisis and took hold during the Persian Gulf War.

"Every tree, every sapling, every light pole have yellow ribbons on them," said James "Jet" Truman Jr., mayor of Valley Center, Kan., whose store ran out of them in short order.

The town of 5,000 people outside Wichita is where Pfc. Patrick Miller, captured in Iraq along with four fellow troops, went to high school.

"It's our way showing our support for him, his family and the rest of the troops," Truman said. "I have a son over there, too. It's close to home for many of us."

The war is also close to many in Middletown, Del., a community of 8,000 with several residents stationed in the Middle East, Mayor Kenneth Branner Jr. said.

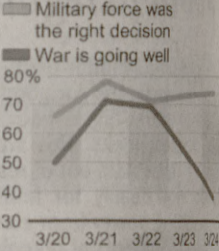
"We made around 300 (bows) and we're making more," he said. "We wanted to have it so anyone coming into town, from any direction, can see them."

Branner said the custom helps communities unite and gather strength during times of confusion and grief.

TV war changes U.S. perception

With most Americans getting news from television, the dramatic images of U.S. POWs and casualties in Iraq are having an impact on people's perception of the war.

Opinions on the war



SOURCE: Pew Research Center

"People have different opinions about the war, but we want the safe return of our troops and we wanted them to know we support what they're doing," Branner said.

Yellow ribbons adorned the front porch of the Palestine W.Va., home of Pfc. Jesse Lynch, 19, among a dozen soldiers missing from a supply convoy ambushed in southern Iraq

NEWS IN BRIEF

Former ambassador arrested

NEW YORK (AP) — Federal agents arrested the former Bosnian ambassador to the United Nations on Tuesday after his home country accused him of stealing more than \$2.4 million.

Muhamed Sacirbegovic, 46, was ordered detained without bail. He said through a court-appointed attorney he was eager to "establish his innocence."

Prosecutors said they would move for Sacirbegovic's extradition to Bosnia-Herzegovina, where a judge issued a warrant for his arrest in December 2001. Defense attorney Steven Statsinger said he planned to fight extradition because his client "has very strong ties to this country."

Sacirbegovic began serving as ambassador to the United Nations for Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 and left the office in 2000, according to papers filed

by federal prosecutors.

Jury deliberates in Tyson immigrant-smuggling trial

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (AP) — A federal jury began deliberating Tuesday in the immigrant-smuggling case against poultry giant Tyson Foods.

A Tyson attorney said the nation's largest meat producer and three managers who are co-defendants tried to follow immigration law with a voluntary employment screening program endorsed by the government. Tyson and three of its managers are accused of seeking illegal immigrants to boost production when they couldn't find Americans willing to work the \$7-an-hour jobs. Executives testified the company does not encourage the hiring of illegal workers, and the managers who did so acted against corporate policies.

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