



LIVE BLOG: THE DEBATE
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The State News

2008 ELECTION
 Debate Preview

INFLUENCE OF DEBATES ON UNDECIDED DISPUTABLE

By Zack Colman
 THE STATE NEWS

Tonight's third and final presidential debate is a must-win for Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz. — but students and experts disagreed on the type of impact it might have on voters.

Students said the final debate will be a crucial factor in persuading undecided voters, while experts said it would have a marginal effect.

Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., held a 7.5 percentage point lead above McCain as of Tuesday, according to www.realclearpolitics.com. The poll is an average of several national polls.

One thing the candidates must address to win voters is the financial crisis, experts said.

McCain will need to assuage Americans' fears about the economy if he is to make any gains in the race, said Bernie Porn, president of EPIC-MRA, a Lansing-based polling company.

"He's got an uphill climb," Porn said. "He's been there for 26 years and he needs to do more than just state in the debate, 'I can fix this, I can do this,' and assume people are going to trust him."

MSU Debate Team head coach William Repko said the economy has decreased the debates' momentum shift potential, as the Republican Party has faced criticism for policies that many believe might have led to the financial crisis.

He said both candidates should use the debate as a stage to promote their economic policies to the public.

History junior Scott Pangrazzi said he is an undecided

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2008 ELECTION

'Green' talk overshadowed

As Obama, McCain campaigns go forward, energy plans put on back burner

By Kayla Habermehl
 THE STATE NEWS

Independence from foreign oil. Alternative and renewable energy resources. Climate change. These terms have been heard in the news, come up in conversation and have been tossed around by presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama. But despite the rhetoric, the environment has been overshadowed by issues such as the economy, fuel prices and the war in Iraq, according to a Gallup poll.

"I think people's concerns about the economy and a lot of misunderstanding about energy and climate change is leading to the environment not getting maybe as much critical and detailed attention that it deserves," said Dr. Joseph Arvai, the associate director of the environmental science and policy program at MSU.

The discussion the candidates have devoted to environmental and energy issues has been difficult to sort through, said Ellen Bornhorst, a bio-systems engineering junior and co-president of Eco.

"They say a lot of things, but it's hard to know what they'll do," she said. "Both say that they will work towards more alternative energy, but they haven't said a way to achieve that."

One area many Americans are concerned with is the rising cost of fuel prices. Although both candidates support domestic oil drilling, they also are pushing alternative fuels such as biofuels, hybrid and electric technology.

Obama wants to have 1 million plug-in hybrid cars in the hands of consumers by 2015. Current hybrids run on electric motors at low speeds and gas at higher speeds. Newer models charge by being plugged into the wall, said Dr. Dennis Miller, a chemical



Georgia Rhodes/The State News
Krishna Sai, a second-year chemical engineering doctoral student, works Tuesday on a transesterification reaction to make biodiesel fuel in the Engineering Building.

engineering professor who researches the production of fuels and chemicals from renewable resources.

"There will be electric cars available in two years, like GM's Volt in 2010," Miller said. "The technology for hybrids is here."

McCain is pushing the Clean Car Challenge, which will provide automakers with a \$5,000 tax credit for each zero-emission car sold. He

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Candidates' environmental plans

Greenhouse gas emissions

McCain: Reduce 60 percent by 2050
Obama: Reduce 80 percent by 2050

Foreign oil

McCain: Strategic independence by 2025
Obama: Eliminate imports from the Middle East and Venezuela

within 10 years

Clean automobile technology

McCain: Clean Car Challenge will give a \$5,000 tax credit for each zero-carbon-emission car sold
Obama: A \$7,000 tax credit for buying advanced vehicles

SOURCE: WWW.BARACKOBAMA.COM, WWW.JOHNMCMAIN.COM

CRIME

Arsonist could have prison time reduced

By Abby Lubbers
 THE STATE NEWS

A man involved in the 1999 New Year's Eve arson at Agriculture Hall could serve a reduced prison sentence after Assistant U.S. Attorney Hagen Frank recognized the man's assistance in ongoing eco-terrorism investigations.

Frank Brian Ambrose traveled outside Michigan seven times and recorded 178 undercover conversations with targets, according to an Associated Press report.

He started working with the FBI in 2007, when his connection to eco-terrorism was uncovered. Ambrose had thrown away a gas mask, personal records and an explosive in a trash bin near Detroit.

A man looking for scrap cardboard found the items and called police, tipping off authorities.

A sentencing hearing for Ambrose is scheduled for Monday at the U.S. District Court in Grand Rapids.

Ambrose's attorney, Michael Brady, declined to comment on the case.

Frank, in a court filing, asked a federal judge in western Michigan to reduce Ambrose's sentencing from a potential 20 years in prison to eight to 10 years.

Ambrose's cooperation has helped investigators in solving other cases, Frank said in the court filing.

"(His help) has been nothing short of remarkable, both in terms of the time and effort he put into it and in terms of its value to federal law enforcement," Frank said in the filing.

Frank could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Ambrose set fire to offices of the Agriculture Biotechnology Support Project, or ABSP, in protest of research on genetically modified crops at MSU.

In March, Ambrose pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit the MSU arson, and another incident involving commercial logging equipment near Mesick, Mich. Both arsons were tied to an environmental group called the Earth Lib-

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EAST LANSING

City Council works on new building code

By Allison Bush
 THE STATE NEWS

The East Lansing City Council continued its discussion on possible future requirements for the city's buildings at its work session Tuesday.

The council received an update on the planning process for a citywide form-based code, which would call for buildings to comply with features such as height, window location and style.

"Probably sooner than later, we are going to have to look

at getting a consultant," said Darcy Schmitt, planning and zoning administrator for the city of East Lansing.

According to the timeline, the form-based code should be complete by February 2012.

The city approved its first encounter with conditional rezoning at its Oct. 7 meeting, which com-

bined features from two different zoning codes, allowing what would normally be a four-story building to contain five stories.

This was a step toward implementing a form-based code — one of the city's goals

listed in its comprehensive plan, Councilmember Kevin Beard said. The comprehen-

"They both give us a little more flexibility and we're not always confined to the rigid categories we have with conventional zoning."

Roger Peters, council member

sive plan outlines goals for the city over a period of time.

"They both give us a little more flexibility and we're not always confined to the rigid categories we have with conventional zoning," Councilmember Roger Peters said.

Peters said he would like

to see various members of the community, in addition to the city's boards and commissions members, involved in order to get a wide range of opinions.

The council also approved

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Beard



Peters

TRAVELIN'

Michigan will issue new licenses that double as passports to Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean, page 3A.



Weather

Showers

High 64° | Low 47°

Three-day forecast, page 2A