

Old Guard to lead debt panel

By Paul Kane and Felicia Sonmez
Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Old Washington hands will be the dominant force in Capitol Hill's next drama, officially dubbed the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. Congressional leaders, rather than embracing the anti-Washington environment gripping the nation following the 2010 midterms, have turned almost exclusively to veterans, including Sen. Jon Kyl of Arizona, to try to produce a bipartisan deal to ease the govern-

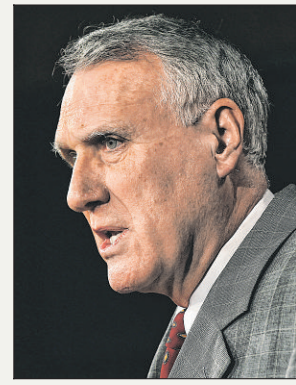
ment's debt crisis and possibly rewrite the tax code. Their deadline is basically Thanksgiving.

The committee will comprise 12 members. Of the nine announced so far, eight voted for the debt-ceiling deal that rescued the country from the brink of default, which suggests at least the possibility that the panel will be able to reach a bipartisan agreement on future spending cuts. The one announced delegate who opposed the debt compromise is Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa.

See DEBT PANEL, Page A5

Kyl says panel faces challenges

Sen. Jon Kyl, R-Ariz., selected Wednesday to serve on the bipartisan committee charged with creating a deficit-reduction plan, says reaching a deal with Democrats may be tough. "Whatever we do, we've got to be careful that we don't hurt the prospects for economic recovery and job creation," he says. And taxes, he says, hinder job creation. **A5**



GETTY IMAGES

FINANCIAL MARKETS

U.S., EUROPEAN STOCK MARKETS TAKE A DIVE

The Dow Jones industrial average drops 520 points, or 4.6 percent, erasing its big rebound from Monday's free fall. Markets in Europe, amid a debt crisis there, also fall. **A4**

GOLD KEEPS CLIMBING, TOPS \$1,800 AN OUNCE

As the stock market continues to wane, gold continues to shine. Prices reach their third consecutive day of record highs. **Business, D1**

2011 ARIZONA WILDFIRE SEASON

Nearly 1 million acres of forest and grassland have been charred, surpassing 2005 as the worst year on record



Ranchers from eastern Arizona and the White Mountains gather at Luna Lake to talk about the Wallow Fire that burned through the area earlier this summer. The 2011 fire season is the worst on record in terms of acres burned. PHOTOS BY JACK KURTZ/THE REPUBLIC

Record year for blazes

By Connor Radnovich
The Arizona Republic

Arizona set a dubious record Wednesday when a blaze near the Grand Canyon pushed total acreage blackened by wildfires this year to an all-time high of 981,748, surpassing the previous mark of 975,178 acres in 2005.

The 2011 fire season stands unrivaled in its destruction of wildlands due to an early-summer combination of extremely dry weather and windy conditions that fed several monster fires that tore through hundreds of thousands of acres of forest and grasslands. Since then, mostly monsoon-storm-sparked fires have added to the tally, though they have been less destructive because of humidity and moisture from the storms.

"As early as last fall, we were saying conditions were consistent with some of the largest fire seasons of the past 30 to 50

See WILDFIRES, Page A8



A line of green low on the hills marks where the fires stopped outside of Alpine, one of many scars left by the Wallow Fire.

Ariz. asks high court to rule on SB 1070

By Ginger Rough
The Arizona Republic

Attorneys for Gov. Jan Brewer on Wednesday asked the U.S. Supreme Court to rule on the constitutionality of Senate Bill 1070 and said they were optimistic the nation's highest court would agree to hear the case, given the national debate over illegal immigration and states' rights vs. federal supremacy.



Jan Brewer

"It's going to be pretty hard for the federal government to deny these are issues of primary importance," said Paul Clement, a Washington, D.C., attorney hired by Brewer to prepare Wednesday's petition. "It's not like immigration is an area of absolutely exclusive federal control, and with Arizona bearing such a dispropor-

See SB 1070, Page A8

THE PRICE OF PRISONS

2010 escape at Kingman an issue for MTC's bid

By Bob Ortega
The Arizona Republic

Critics and supporters of the private company that runs the Kingman prison agree that last year's escapes don't give the complete picture about Management and Training Corp.

It's the rest of the picture on which they differ.

Critics express astonishment that, less than a year after two of the Kingman escapees allegedly murdered an Oklahoma couple, MTC is a finalist for a contract to provide up to 5,000 more private-prison beds to Arizona's Depart-

See PRISONS, Page A6

GOODYEAR WORRIES: Safety fears arise over Geo Group prison plan. **B3**

NATION & WORLD

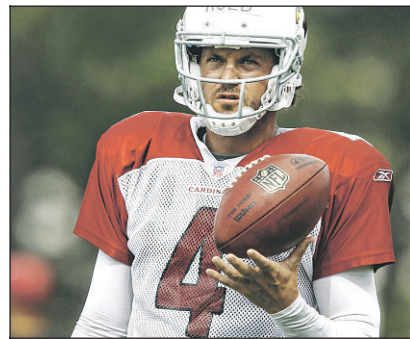
Taliban who shot copter are killed

The U.S. military says the Taliban insurgents responsible for shooting down a U.S. helicopter and killing 38 U.S. and Afghan forces have been killed. Marine Corps Gen. John Allen defends the decision to send in the special-operations forces who died. **A7**

SPORTS

Cards' preseason game may be ugly

When the Cardinals play the Raiders tonight, they are likely to look a bit disjointed. Just five Cardinal offensive starters from last year are in the same positions. Others such as quarterback Kevin Kolb (right) have only a week's experience in the system. **C1**



VALLEY & STATE

Murder charges in footlocker case: The Maricopa County attorney says he will seek first-degree murder charges against family members accused of killing a Phoenix girl in a footlocker. **B1**

BUSINESS

Avnet boosts profit: The Phoenix-based technology company reports a 27 percent jump in quarterly profits but warns of a possible slowdown in sales because of a weak economy. **D1**

THINGS TO DO

KDKB turns 40 years old: Rock radio station KDKB kicks off its celebration of its 40th anniversary with a weekend reunion of some of its popular DJs and a Saturday concert by the Tubes. **E1**

High 103 Low 84
Evening thunderstorms. **B8**

Astrology . . . **E12**
Comics . . . **E10, 11**
Dear Abby . . . **E12**

Lottery **B2**
Obituaries **B7**
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Wildfires

Continued from A1

years," said Chuck Maxwell, meteorologist with the Southwest Coordination Center, a multiagency emergency task force. "So, the fact that this became the top (year) is not a big surprise."

The story is not quite as gloomy in terms of property damage and loss of life.

The Rodeo-Chediski Fire of 2002 destroyed nearly 500 structures, among them 465 homes. By comparison, this year's blazes — chiefly the huge Wallow Fire in eastern Arizona and the Monument Fire near Sierra Vista — destroyed far fewer: 181 structures, including 98 residences.

And unlike some years, there have been no reported fatalities in 2011.

Nonetheless, public debate over the causes and effects of this year's monsters — the Wallow Fire grew to be the state's largest ever at 538,049 acres — is likely to reverberate well into the future.

In Eagar, U.S. Reps. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., and Steve Pearce, R-N.M., held a community meeting Wednesday night at which about 150 residents and ranchers vented concerns about how the federal government has managed forests and wildlands.

Gosar said everyone, from lawmakers in Congress to residents, were partly responsible for the Wallow Fire.

"The moment we all admit we're part of the problem, we can move forward to a solution," Gosar said.

Those attending, including some from New Mexico, expressed frustration with the federal government for not allowing counties to impose their own fire-prevention measures.

Gosar and Pearce urged revival of logging to help thin forests. The congressmen pointed to thinning operations near Alpine and Nutrioso, which likely saved homes in those towns, as prime examples of the good they can do.

Pearce compared crowded trees fighting for nutrients to starving children, saying tree thinning keeps forests healthy.

Both congressmen also encouraged counties to take more control of land management decisions.

"Washington, D.C., doesn't have a cornerstone on good ideas," Gosar said. "In fact, last I checked, they didn't have many."

This year will be remembered as the year of the massive blazes, with three among the state's top 10:

» The Wallow Fire, the state's largest.

» The Horseshoe Two Fire, fourth-largest at 222,954 acres.

» The Murphy Complex Fire, ninth-largest at 68,078 acres.

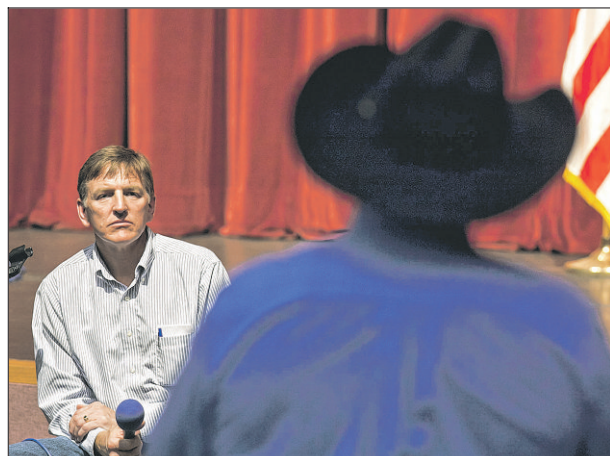
All three reared up in May, followed soon after by the Monument Fire of 30,526 acres in mid-June, pushing firefighting resources toward a point of exhaustion.

"We were approaching that point, but we never made it," fire information officer Mary Zabinski said, crediting some good timing and the arrival of the monsoon for keeping resources from running out. Whenever Arizona was having an increase in blazes, she noted, other states like Texas saw slower fire activity, allowing resources to be redistributed.

There have been fewer than 1,500 fires so far this year in Arizona. By comparison, there were more than 4,000 fires in 2005, among them the Cave Creek Complex Fire, Arizona's third largest at 248,310 acres.

Maxwell said "ridiculous winds" from winter 2010 into early summer this year likely were the key factor in pushing this year's blazes to epic proportions, creating drier conditions and fanning the flames once a blaze was sparked.

The day in late May when the Wallow Fire ig-



Rep. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., listens to constituents speak about the federal government's management of forests and wildlands at a town-hall meeting in Round Valley Auditorium in Eagar on Wednesday. JACK KURTZ/THE REPUBLIC

Record season: See slide shows from the latest wildfires around the state and watch video from this year's biggest blazes online at wildfires.azcentral.com.

As early as last fall, we were saying conditions were consistent with some of the largest fire seasons of the past 30 to 50 years."

CHUCK MAXWELL
Meteorologist with the Southwest Coordination Center

nited in the White Mountains, high-wind and extreme low-humidity warnings were in effect. The combination turned what was a small, human-caused fire into a fast-running beast that spread into New Mexico. It eventually burned for more than a month, forcing nearly 11,000 people from homes in Alpine, Nutrioso, Greer, Eagar, Springerville and other communities.

Were it not for the Wallow Fire, Zabinski said, the 2011 fire season would not

have been nearly as remarkable.

"You had one fire that ate up all the acreage," she said. "There were other years that seemed to be busier statewide."

Smaller blazes have continued to burn throughout the state, among them the lightning-caused New Water Fire south of the Grand Canyon in northwest Arizona. It began Aug. 3, eventually burning about 9,800 acres and ensuring the 2011 fire season was the worst on record.

SB 1070

Continued from A1

tionate burden (of the immigration problem), a one-size-fits-all solution doesn't make sense."

The state's petition essentially asks the justices to overturn a lower court's injunction that blocked key portions of the state's tough immigration law from taking effect last year.

"For too long, the federal government has turned a blind eye as this problem has manifested itself in the form of dropouts in our neighborhoods and crime in our communities," Brewer said Wednesday in a statement. "SB 1070 was Arizona's way of saying that we won't wait patiently for federal action any longer."

After Brewer signed SB 1070 into law in April 2010, the Department of Justice asked U.S. District Judge Susan Bolton to enjoin the law until the courts could review the full case. Bolton issued an injunction that kept parts of the law from taking effect.

The bill reignited a national debate, and about two dozen states this year considered similar immigration measures. Most failed, but Alabama recently passed a law that, among other things, makes it illegal for undocumented immigrants to apply for work, requires law-enforcement authorities to determine the legal status of people they arrest and tasks public schools with determining students' citizenship status.

The Department of Justice last week sued to block the legislation.

The U.S. Department of Justice on Wednesday de-

clined to comment on Arizona's petition to the Supreme Court; it has 30 days to file a response.

It probably will be late fall before the Supreme Court decides whether to hear oral arguments.

Brewer and Attorney General Tom Horne announced in April that they intended to take their case directly to the high court after a three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals refused to reverse Bolton's injunction.

In filing Wednesday's petition, Brewer and Horne bypassed a full "en banc" review by the entire 9th Circuit court with the goal of having a speedier resolution. They also have said they believe they will have more luck with the high court, given its more conservative makeup.

Brewer signed SB 1070 on April 23, 2010, making it a state crime to be in the country illegally.

The day before it was scheduled to go into effect on July 29, 2010, Bolton issued the injunction, saying immigration matters are the jurisdiction of the federal government.

The state appealed to the 9th Circuit, which upheld Bolton's decision.

The injunction blocked four parts of the law, including:

» A portion that requires an officer to make a reasonable attempt to determine the immigration status of a person stopped, detained or arrested if there is reasonable suspicion that person is in the country illegally. This portion also requires law enforcement to check the immigration status of people arrested and to hold them indefinitely until the

status is determined.

» A portion creating the crime of failure to apply for or carry "alien-registration papers."

» A portion allowing for a warrantless arrest of a person if there is probable cause to believe the person committed a public offense that makes him or her removable from the U.S.

» A portion making it a crime for illegal immigrants to solicit, apply for or perform work.

Bolton did allow portions of the law to stand. Those portions require local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration laws to the fullest extent, make it a crime to transport or harbor an illegal immigrant and make it a crime to pick up a day laborer in a roadway if it impedes traffic.

If the high court lifts the injunction, SB 1070 would go into effect in its entirety. But it's more likely the court will go through the provisions one at a time, as the district and Circuit Court judges did, and could lift portions of the stay.

If, however, the Supreme Court upholds the entire injunction or refuses to hear an appeal, SB 1070 will return to Bolton's court.

"This legal battle is not just about Arizona," Brewer said in her statement. "It's about the bedrock constitutional principle of federalism, under which states have inherent authority to protect the safety and welfare of their citizens."



Tom Horne



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