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Money 'mules' snared at border, feds say

■ 14 accused of trying to smuggle \$3.1 million into Mexico by bus

By DANE SCHILLER
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

One bus passenger claimed a stranger approached her in a laundromat and offered \$700 if she took a suitcase full of clothes to Mexico.

Another man accepted an offer of \$500 in a plan hatched at a Latino night club.

And still another gave a similar account for why he and his daughter were among 14 travelers arrested on the same bus at the Texas-Mexico border, accused of trying to smuggle \$3.1 million south.

Some riders were recruited in the Atlanta area, traveled through Texas and got busted in Hidalgo. The bizarre Sunday seizure — the largest single cash catch by Customs and Border Protection in the United States this year — was made public Wednesday.

It comes as agents turn more attention to an international pipeline even more valuable than the one that pumps illegal narcotics into the United States: the one that pulls cash proceeds back to Mexico.

CBP Commissioner Alan Bersin called the takedown a "magnificent achievement" and said it validated new efforts to snare contraband headed for Mexico.

A total of \$39.2 million was seized headed south in 2009, compared to \$29.4 million in 2008, according to CBP.

Of 41 passengers on the bus stopped Sunday in Hidalgo, 14 were arrested. Seven

Please see **BUS**, Page A18

NEW COURSE CHARTED FOR NASA

House OKs bill that puts moon in rearview, sets agency's sights on Mars, asteroids

ARCHDIOCESE OF GALVESTON-HOUSTON



JAMES NIELSEN PHOTOS: CHRONICLE

LABOR OF LOVE: Martin Pasi painstakingly created every pipe in the Opus XIX, and despite months of tuning and tweaking, he is nervous about the sounds that will come out of them.

CO-CATHEDRAL'S MUSICAL HEART

ORGAN NOTES COST **\$2.2 MILLION** PIPES **5,499** LARGEST PIPE **32 FEET** SMALLEST PIPE **HALF INCH**



BREATHTAKING SIGHT: What began as an architectural problem — how to fit such a large organ in the co-cathedral — ended up a blessing as it was built to straddle the 40-foot Resurrection window.

A massive organ, built over five years from 100,000 handcrafted pieces, makes a Houston church whole

By TARA DOOLEY
ARTS WRITER

FOR nearly five years, Martin Pasi has been enveloped in the art and craft of creating his Opus XIX, the new organ at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

With a team of five metal and wood workers, Pasi handcrafted the instrument's more than 100,000 pieces in his studio near Seattle and trucked them halfway across the country. For the past eight months, he settled in Houston to fine-tune the instrument in its new downtown home.

The Opus XIX will make its official debut Saturday, and Pasi is more than a little nervous about the sounds that will come out of the 5,499 pipes he painstakingly created.

"That's the whole point of doing this, to hear the results," he said. "That is always the goal in my head; otherwise it seems monotonous to build organs."

Pasi's Opus XIX is the final piece of the

Please see **ORGAN**, Page A15

By STEWART M. POWELL
WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON — The United States on Wednesday officially abandoned nearly 50 years of pursuing manned moon missions — the galvanizing symbol of space exploration — to lay down a new roadmap calling for NASA to catapult astronauts to distant asteroids and Mars.

The course correction came in a 304-118 House vote at 10:35 p.m. Wednesday adopting a 108-page White House-Senate compromise that officially scrapped the last vestiges of Bush-era plans to return astronauts to the moon by 2020.

The deal authorized \$1.3 billion over the next three years for commercial spacecraft companies to begin ferrying cargo and astronauts to the orbiting space station, freeing NASA to pour billions of dollars into developing heavy lift rockets and crew capsules suitable for deep space exploration.

The compromise, in the making for months, was crafted by Sens. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Dallas, and Bill Nelson, D-Fla., and now heads to President Barack Obama's desk for signature into law.

Officials said any return to the moon under the revised blueprint for manned space exploration would depend upon foreign nations' chipping in up to \$2 billion a year for a joint effort with the United States — a scenario that's considered unlikely.

The compromise brought together Texas Democrats and Republicans who have little in common on hot but-

Please see **NASA**, Page A18

STAR

FASHION SEQUEL



Gordon Gekko's character in the *Wall Street* sequel still exemplifies what the power suit should be.

STORY ON PAGE E1

29-95

THE BEER IS HERE

You don't need to fly to Germany to enjoy Oktoberfest.

STORY ON PAGE F20



BP's new chief says safety will be Job 1

■ Dudley, who takes over Friday, outlines plans for staff worldwide

By MONICA HATCHER
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Almost three years after his predecessor Tony Hayward announced a massive overhaul of BP's corporate structure, incoming chief executive Bob Dudley unveiled Wednesday his plans to do it all over again.

Dudley, who on Friday officially takes the reins from Hayward, will focus on reshaping the company around a new safety and risk management regime he said was now BP's most urgent priority.

But whether the ambitious plan is enough to restore confidence in BP following deadly mishaps and the world's worst accidental oil spill remains to be seen and will come only after years of accident-free performance, analysts said.

"Here in Houston, there

Please see **BP**, Page A15

Bumpy roads are sure to get a lot rougher

■ City's streets ranked among worst, and budget shortfall not likely to help

By ALLAN TURNER
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

It's a sunny morning, and traffic jounces up North Shepherd, a cracked, patched, pocked washboard of a street that city officials admit is one of Houston's roughest rides. For the luckless, this tattered stretch of asphalt approaching Washington Avenue is the land of blown tires, bent rims and lost loads.

Stretches of North Main and Broadway are nearly as bad, and, under the state's jurisdiction, segments of U.S. 290 and Texas 225 between Loop 610 and Beltway 8 are little less than hell on wheels.

A new survey of road con-

ditions in America's biggest cities ranked Houston as the 28th worst, with up to a quarter of its highways and major roads in poor condition. Dallas-Fort Worth placed 20th, with more than a third of its major roadways in poor shape; San Antonio is worse still, placing 16th with 39 percent.

Produced by the Washington, D.C., transportation nonprofit The Road Information Program using 2008 data, the study of 75 of the nation's largest cities found that, on average, 34 percent of the major roadways could be classified as good. The organization is sponsored by, among others, businesses involved

Please see **ROADS**, Page A18

INSIDE

Business... **D1** Lottery... **A2**
Comics... **E6** Markets... **D3**
Crossword... **E5** Movies... **F34**
Directory... **A2** Obituaries... **B5**
Editorials... **B8** TV... **E4**



WE RECYCLE

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PHOTO GALLERY: See more images of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart's Opus XIX at chron.com

ORGAN: 'A whole orchestra'



JAMES NIELSEN : CHRONICLE

'TRIUMPH': Co-cathedral organist Crista Miller says playing the Opus XIX rivals her experience playing some of the finest instruments from New York to Paris. "It is a real triumph, this instrument."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston's \$49 million co-cathedral. The building project started with a ground-breaking ceremony in January 2005. The co-cathedral was consecrated in April 2008.

The \$2.2 million organ was included in the project to enhance the worship experience for co-cathedral parishioners and Catholics throughout the city, said the Very Rev. Lawrence W. Jozwiak, the rector. But Jozwiak also wants the new organ to be an inspiration and educational resource for all music fans.

"Our hope is that the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart will become a center for music appreciation and education for the archdiocese but also for the city of Houston," Jozwiak said.

Even before completion, the new instrument has stirred interest among organ players, said the co-cathedral's music director and organist, Christopher Popelka.

"It plays like a very fine, well-crafted machine," he said, with a laugh. "It's like driving a really expensive car."

Earlier this month, co-cathedral organist Crista Miller gave a sneak-peak performance of the new instrument at a concert by the Houston Chamber Choir directed by Robert Simpson, canon for music at the Episcopal Christ Church Cathedral.

"It doesn't duplicate something that is already in the city," Simpson said. "It is a brand-new builder and a brand-new sound. With the wonderful acoustics in the cathedral, the organ just makes a tremendous impression."

The Opus XIX presented challenges from the start, Pasi said. Co-cathedral officials wanted a large instrument with enough range to accommodate any genre of music. But the biggest problem was architectural: The instrument had to straddle the 40-foot Resurrection

window above the choir loft.

"Right from the beginning, we had to think about making the organ in a non-traditional way and divide it into two parts," Pasi said.

The facade of the organ is made of white oak with decorative wood carvings gilded in gold-plated leaf. It is built into what looks like the walls of the choir loft with the window in the middle of its two sides. Behind the walls are three stories of pipes, woodwork, electronics and bellows. A new technology that uses electromagnetic key action allowed Pasi to divide the organ pipes into sections on either side of the window. The organ's four keyboards, foot pedals and 75 knobs, or stops, are fitted into a console on the left side of the window.

"The organ is such a powerful instrument because it can be controlled by one person, but it is also a whole orchestra," Pasi said.

Pasi became interested in organs as an altar boy and singing in the choir of his church in Austria, he said. The instrument was the primary draw for his devotion.

"I went to the church to hear the organ every day before school," Pasi said.

Once he had a look inside the church instrument, he found his calling, he said.

After working in Austria and in the United States, Pasi set up his own studio, Pasi Organ Builders, in 1990 in a former school building in Roy, Wash.

The Opus XIX was first crafted in Pasi's studio. Then it was disassembled and loaded onto two trucks for the drive to Houston.

The pieces arrived Jan. 18. Since then, he has remained in town to assemble the organ. In the past few months, the main task has been making sure the complex instrument sounds balanced and in tune in its new home.

For about the past 10 days Miller and Robert Bates, organ professor at the University of Houston, have played the instrument, often late into the night. Using their feedback, Pasi has tweaked the organ's intonation or keyboard action. For Miller, playing the Opus XIX rivals her experience playing some of the finest instruments from New York to Paris, she said.

"It is a real triumph, this instrument," she said.

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HEAR THE INSTRUMENT

The new organ at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, 1111 St. Joseph Parkway, will be one of the largest in the city. Here are some opportunities to hear the new instrument.

■ **Dedication:** A dedication and vespers service starts at 4:30 p.m. Saturday with a blessing by Cardinal Daniel DiNardo. It is followed by an organ interlude and a Mass at 6 p.m. celebrated by Archbishop Joseph Fiorenza. Crista Miller, Robert Bates and Christopher Popelka will play the organ.

■ **Community Choral Festival:** The University of Houston's Moores School Concert Choir, the Houston Masterworks Chorus and CANTARE Houston perform at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

■ **Organ Recital:** David Higgs, chairman of the organ department at the Eastman School of Music, performs at 8 p.m. Oct. 8. Tickets cost \$25.

■ **CANTARE Houston:** The group performs Rachmaninoff's Vespers at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 12. Tickets cost \$25.

■ **Organ recital:** Philippe Lefebvre, organist at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, performs at 8:30 p.m. Oct. 29.

■ **Organ recital:** Robert Bates, organ professor at the University of Houston's Moores School of Music, performs at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 7.

■ **Free lunch recitals:** Organ students at the University of Houston perform free recitals at about noon the first Friday of every month starting in January 2011.

■ **Organ recital:** Co-cathedral organist Crista Miller performs at 7 p.m. Jan. 18.

■ **Information:** www.opusxix.org

ORGAN BASICS

The Opus XIX in the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart is a large and complex instrument. Here are a few basics.

■ **The Divisions:** The instrument is divided into five divisions of pipes. The three basic divisions are great, positive and swell. Each is operated by its own keyboard. The other two divisions are the grand choir and the pedal division. The grand choir division has a keyboard, and the pedal division is operated by foot pedals.

■ **Pipes:** The Opus XIX has 5,499 pipes. The pipes for the great, positive and swell divisions are on the left side of the co-cathedral's Resurrection Window. The pipes for the grand choir and the pedal divisions are on the right side of the window.

■ **Façade:** White oak and decorative woodwork gilded with 23-carat gold leaf.

■ **Materials:** The pipes are primarily made of alloys of tin and lead. The keyboard is covered in cow bone and ebony. Woods used include maple, rosewood, tulip poplar, redwood, basswood, walnut and Douglas fir.

■ **Stops:** The Opus XIX has 75 knobs or stops. Each stop controls a set of pipes, allowing the organist to determine the tone of a note, making it sound like a violin, a trumpet or an entire choir, for example. "Pulling out all the stops" is organ talk for making the organ as loud as possible.

■ **The console:** Consists of four keyboards, the foot pedals and the stops. It sits to the left of the Resurrection window.

■ **Bellows:** An organ works like a really complicated whistle. Sound is made as air flows across the mouths of the pipes. The bellows store the air under pressure so it will blow over the pipes. The Opus XIX has six bellows and five electric blowers that supply air to the bellows.

■ **Technology:** Because the organ pipes are divided by the Resurrection window, builder Martin Pasi used a new technology that is electro-magnetic to control the grand choir and pedal divisions of the organ, the two far away from the console. The rest of the organ is operated manually.

BP: Dudley aims to regain trust of the global public

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

is going to be a continuing sentiment for some time that we've heard all this before," said Rob Moore, director of Grant Thornton's corporate advisory and restructuring services practice. With memories of the 2005 Texas City refinery still fresh, people may think, "isn't this what Mr. Hayward was going to do three years ago?"

Initiatives outlined

In a departure from Hayward's emphasis on improving the London-based company's financial performance, Dudley outlined several initiatives Wednesday aimed at building its safety culture and regaining the trust of customers, employees, governments and the global public in the wake of the Macondo blowout in April that killed 11 and spilled nearly 5 million barrels of oil into the Gulf.

"Our response to this incident needs to go beyond deep-water drilling," Dudley said in memo to BP's worldwide staff on Wednesday. "There are lessons for us related to the way we operate, the way we organize our company and the way we manage risk."

Among the changes is the resignation of Andy Inglis, BP's chief executive of exploration and production business and the division that oversaw Deepwater Horizon operation. Inglis will leave the company at year's end. His job will be divided into three new functional divisions — exploration, development and production — in a bid to rein in what had become a kind of maverick unit and provide better checks and balances, according to Phil Weiss, an analyst with Argus Research.

The division chiefs will report directly to Dudley.

"In theory, (the new structure) gives the CEO more insight into day-to-day opera-

"There are lessons for us related to the way we operate, the way we organize our company and the way we manage risk."

BOB DUDLEY, incoming chief executive of BP

tions of what each division is doing, but it's hard to say how that will ultimately affect performance and safety," said Matti Teittinen, senior equity analyst at IHS Herold.

In addition, the company will also create a new Safety and Operational Risk division. With personnel embedded in each of BP's units company-wide, the new division will have sweeping authority to oversee and audit BP's activities globally and ensure compliance with safety rules. The company's safety engineers will report to Mark Bly, who led BP's internal investigation into the causes of the Deepwater Horizon incident and will head the new unit.

Seemingly taking a dig at its partners in the Macondo, BP said it would launch a rigorous review of how it manages third-party contractors. BP has laid some blame for the Deepwater Horizon accident on decisions made by rig owner and driller Transocean and Halliburton, which provided cementing services for the well. Both companies deny BP's claims.

Bonuses due hard looks

Dudley said the company would also take a hard look at the way it ties bonuses to financial performance, with a view to encouraging better safety and risk management. Teittinen said the review was likely aimed at addressing criticism from Congress that the company cut numerous corners to improve returns while drilling the Macondo.

Lamar McKay, who works in BP's Houston offices, will

keep the position of president and chairman of BP America and assume the lead of the company's Gulf Coast Restoration Organization. BP employs about 7,300 people from its North American headquarters here. A spokesman said BP had not determined whether any of the new division chiefs would be based out of BP offices in Houston's energy corridor.

Seizing an opportunity

While also furthering a standardization of the safety practices put in place after the Texas City blast, Hayward's restructuring plan in 2007 for the most part emphasized eliminating redundancies, reducing costs and improving efficiencies to better its margins that lagged those of its integrated oil peers, according to Weiss.

In retrospect and in light of the Macondo incident, it appears Hayward's reorganization may have set the company up for more potential exposure to disaster rather than less, said Moore. However, as incoming chief executive, Dudley appears to be seizing a prime opportunity to make an impact on the corporate culture.

"His commentary that these are urgent steps and rebuilding the trust and all of all the whose trust he believes they needs to be regain — it strikes me as the right kind of message," Moore said.

Chronicle reporter Tom Fowler contributed to this report.

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