

## **PROSECUTORS DROP CASE AGAINST SERB**

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### **Body**

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#### TAMPA

Federal prosecutors moved Wednesday to dismiss charges against Branko Popic, accused of lying on immigration forms about his involvement in the Serb military.

The government will not seek a third trial in Popic's case. Two previous trials ended with hung juries. One jury split 11-1 in favor of convicting Popic. But the second jury split 11-1 for acquittal.

Popic, 59, was the first Serb to be tried in Tampa federal court as part of a sweep by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Department to find soldiers involved in the massacre of Srebrenica. The local defendants, who all live in St. Petersburg, aren't accused of direct participation in war crimes, but prosecutors say they may have served in units that were involved.

None of the men to stand trial so far has been convicted.

#### LARGO

Foster care task force takes comments today

People with an opinion about how foster care is run can speak today to a special task force studying the Safe Children Coalition of Pinellas and Pasco counties.

The state Department of Children and Families created the task force after a critical report about its handling of a 2-year-old foster girl who disappeared for nine months.

Authorities say her mother kidnapped her from a Lake County foster home.

It took her caseworker four months to report it to the local sheriff.

People can speak from 1 to 6 p.m. today in Room 418 of the Mary Grizzle State Office Building, 11351 Ulmerton Road, in Largo.

To schedule a specific time to speak, call Doria Moody this morning at (850) 488-6062.

#### CLEARWATER

The power's still off, but rent is going up

Residents of a mobile home park who have sweltered for the past week without power got more bad news: The rent is going up.

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Luther Moore, general manager of Southern Comfort mobile home park, said the notices have been written since early September. Rent is currently \$441 a month. The new rate will take effect Jan. 1. The notices were dated Sept. 22 to comply with state law, which requires 90 days written notice of rent increase.

The increase has nothing to do with fixing the power lines, which could cost more than \$20,000, Moore said.

Moore said electricians have been working to replace the old, burned, underground power lines that feed two rows of mobile homes.

He said he hoped to have power running by this afternoon.

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