

POWER BLACKOUTS-WINTER FORECAST

Report: Texas still at risk of winter power blackouts

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A group that oversees the reliability of the nation's electrical sector says Texas is again at risk of blackouts this winter because of extreme weather like the catastrophic February storm that buckled the state's electricity grid. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation issued a report Thursday saying Texas could have a nearly 40% shortfall in available power to meet demand in the event of another severe winter storm. The warnings come as Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and the new leadership of the state's embattled grid signal their confidence that the lights will stay on this time. Forecasters say that although another extreme weather event isn't highly likely, it can't be ruled out.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE-FRAUD

Scant fraud reported among U.S. rental assistance programs

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Unemployment agencies across the country were bombarded with fraudulent claims during the pandemic. But so far states have reported few fraud attempts among their rental assistance programs. Congress has approved \$45 billion to help eligible tenants pay their rent during the pandemic. More than \$10 billion has been spent through the end of September. California officials say they caught 1,800 fraudulent applications out of nearly 500,000. Utah says only about 1% of its applications have been fraudulent. Other states like Texas and Florida won't say if they have had any fraud. They argue revealing it would harm their security.

AP-US-SUPREME-COURT-ABORTION

Texas abortion ban stays in force as justices mull outcome

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's been more than two weeks since the Supreme Court's extraordinarily rushed arguments over Texas' unique abortion law, and still no word from the justices. They raised expectations of quick action by putting the case on a rarely-used fast track. The court's silence means that women in Texas cannot get an abortion after about six weeks of pregnancy. That's before some women know they're pregnant and long before high court rulings dating to 1973 that allow states to ban abortion. There's been no signal on when the court might act and no formal timetable for reaching a decision.