

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 1 of 81

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- Harry Implement Ad](#)
- [5- Name Released in Charles Mix County Fatal Crash](#)
- [5- Witte Exteriors Ad](#)
- [6- Groton Jr Teeners Claw Back, But Fall Just Short Against Clark Area](#)
- [6- Groton Jr Teeners Loses Despite Out Hitting Clark Area](#)
- [7- Groton Post 39 Stymied By Reno A's](#)
- [7- Groton Post 39 Lose To Mpls Northside Legion 2024](#)
- [8- Photos from Jr. Teener Game](#)
- [9- SD News Watch: Access to health care limited in SD rural and reservation areas](#)
- [18- Groton Transit Fundraiser Ad](#)
- [19- That' Life by Tony Bender: That Dad Thing](#)
- [20- Dacotah Bank Ad](#)
- [21- Dept. of Veterans Affairs Column: New Laws Impacting Veterans](#)
- [22- Groton City Council Agenda](#)
- [23- SD SearchLight: 'Somebody has to pay, ultimately': Legislative committee begins study of rising property taxes](#)
- [24- SD SearchLight: Republican state attorneys general oppose new gag order in Trump documents case](#)
- [26- SD SearchLight: Makerspace, new businesses bring hope for former 'Skid Row of the Plains'](#)
- [30- Weather Pages](#)
- [34- Daily Devotional](#)
- [35- Subscription Form](#)
- [36- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [37- News from the Associated Press](#)

Tuesday, June 18

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, biscuit, vegetable Catalina blend, pears, tapioca pudding.
Legion at Battle of Omaha, Neb.
U12 B/W at Aberdeen 11, 5:30 p.m. (2)
U10 W/R at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (2)
U8 R/B at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (4)
SB hosts Claremont (U8 at 5 p.m. (1), U10 Gld at 6 p.m. (1), U12 at 7 p.m. (1))

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
The Pantry at Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.
Olive Grove Ladies League, 6 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday, June 19

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, mixed vegetables, sunset salad, whole wheat bread.
Legion at Battle of Omaha, Neb.
U12 W/R hosts Watertown, 5:30 p.m. (2)
U10 R/B hosts Milbank, 6 p.m. (2)
SB at Warner (U8 at 5:30 p.m. (1), U10 Blk at 6:30 p.m. (1), U12 at 7:30 p.m. (1))
Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.
Groton CM&A: Family Fun Night, 7 p.m. (Julia (Grenz) and Jordan Kroll will be sharing their message)
Olive Grove Men's League

© 2024 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 2 of 81

1440

In partnership with **smartasset**[™]

Putin in North Korea

Russian President Vladimir Putin arrives in North Korea today to meet with the country's leader, Kim Jong Un, as the two seek to strengthen and expand their relationship. The two-day visit marks Putin's first trip to North Korea in 24 years and comes after he hosted Kim in the Russian Far East last year.

US and South Korean officials believe North Korea has sold Soviet-era artillery, rockets, and other military equipment to aid Russia in its war against Ukraine—now in its 27th month—since the first year of the conflict. The sales reportedly include as many as 10,000 shipping containers holding nearly 5 million artillery shells. Both countries have denied the accusations. In exchange, Russia is believed to have provided economic aid to North Korea, whose economy has contracted every year since 2020, with a gross domestic product per capita of around \$1K.

Separately, Russia's espionage trial against jailed Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich is set to begin June 26 and will be closed to the public.

Celtics Clinch Title

The Boston Celtics won the NBA championship last night at home, defeating the Dallas Mavericks 106 to 88 in Game 5 of the finals. The victory is Boston's first title since 2008 and the team's overall 18th title. The Celtics now hold the record for the most NBA championships won, surpassing the Los Angeles Lakers' 17 wins.

Yesterday's win was powered by 26-year-old Jayson Tatum and 27-year-old Jaylen Brown. Tatum finished with 31 points, 11 assists, and eight rebounds, while Brown finished with 20 points, eight rebounds, and six assists. Brown was also named the NBA Finals MVP. Additionally, Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla, 35, became the youngest head coach to win a championship since Bill Russell in 1969.

The Boston Celtics were founded in 1946 as one of eight original teams of the Basketball Association of America, a predecessor to the NBA.

Warning: Social Media

US Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy called on Congress yesterday to require warning labels on social media platforms, like those for tobacco and alcohol, to highlight their potential harm to children's mental health.

In a New York Times op-ed, Murthy identified social media as a major factor in the mental health crisis among adolescents, citing a 2019 study that linked over three hours of daily social media use to a doubled risk of anxiety and depression—teens average 4.8 hours per day. He argued previous research shows warning labels can raise awareness and influence parental behavior. The op-ed follows his May 2023 advisory recommending limits on social media use, such as phone-free schools and restricting access until after middle school.

A Surgeon General's warning requires legislation from Congress. More than a dozen states have passed laws limiting adolescent social media use, but several have been blocked in court. A trade group said the responsibility should fall on parents and not the government or tech companies.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 3 of 81

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler headlines Team USA men's golf squad for the 2024 Paris Olympics. Team USA swimming Olympic trials also underway.

Scooter Braun retires as a manager after 23 years of managing artists like Justin Bieber and Ariana Grande; Braun notably acquired rights to Taylor Swift's first six albums, which led to Swift's "Taylor's Version" rerecordings.

Country singer George Strait breaks record for largest-ever ticketed concert in the US with 110,905 people in attendance.

The Florida Panthers look to win their first Stanley Cup as they take on the Edmonton Oilers tonight (8 pm ET, ABC) with a 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven series.

Science & Technology

Apple battery supplier TDK claims to have developed a solid-state battery with 100 times higher energy density than those used in typical consumer electronics.

Beetle study reveals the evolution of complex chemical defenses millions of years ago allowed the bugs to diversify and spread worldwide; the 400,000 known beetle species represent about one-quarter of all discovered lifeforms.

Engineers develop noninvasive device to target and modulate specific brain regions; approach may provide new therapies for neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +0.8%, Dow +0.5%, Nasdaq +1.0%); S&P 500 ends at another record, Dow snaps four-day losing streak.

Photoshop maker Adobe sued by Federal Trade Commission for allegedly pushing consumers toward expensive subscription plan without disclosing cancellation fee.

IRS to target loopholes involving sophisticated transactions used by complex partnerships that result in lowered or no taxes; IRS estimated to collect \$50B over 10 years.

Money management firm Fisher Investments agrees to sell up to \$3B minority stake to private equity firm Advent International and sovereign wealth fund of Abu Dhabi.

Politics & World Affairs

President Joe Biden expected to announce new policy today protecting undocumented spouses of US citizens from deportation, allowing them to apply for work permits, and easing their path to legal residency.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dissolves War Cabinet after two former centrist generals resigned last week; Netanyahu to form smaller forum of advisers to strategize on Israel-Hamas war.

Indian national Nikhil Gupta is extradited to the US, pleads not guilty to charges of plotting to assassinate a New York City-based Sikh separatist leader, who seeks an independent state in northern India.

Cub Cadet®

YOUR BEST YARD AWAITS.



CC30H RIDING MOWER

- 10.5 HP† Briggs & Stratton engine
- 30" mowing deck
- Hydrostatic transmission

\$2,239*

Ultima™ ZT1 42 ZERO-TURN

- 21.5 HP†† Kawasaki® FR691V V-twin OHV engine
- 42" stamped twin-blade deck
- Dual Hydro-Gear® EZT-2200™ transmission

\$3,299*

Ultima™ ZTS1 50 ZERO-TURN

- 24 HP†† Kohler® KT7000 V-twin OHV engine
- 50" AeroForce™ fabricated triple-blade deck
- Sealed ball bearing maintenance-free spindles
- 1" - 4.5" cutting height / dial-control knob deck lift w/ 15 quarter-inch height adjustments

\$4,899*

FOR FULL PRODUCT SPECS **Cub Cadet** VISIT CUBCADET.COM

HARRY IMPLEMENT INC.
109 CENTER ST
FERNEY, SD 57439
www.harrysinc.com
605-395-6421

*Actual retail prices are set by dealer and may vary. Taxes are additional and vary by location. Freight and PDI charges may be additional and vary by dealer. Models subject to limited availability. Images may not reflect dealer inventory and/or unit specifications. † As rated by Kohler, all power levels are stated in gross horsepower at 3600 RPM per SAE J1940 as rated by engine manufacturer. †† As required by Kawasaki, horsepower tested in accordance with SAE J1995 and rated in accordance with SAE J2723 and certified by SAE International. **See operator's manual for warranty details and information. Certain restrictions apply. Kohler® is a registered trademark of Kohler Co. Kawasaki® is a registered trademark of KAWASAKI JUKOGYO KABUSHIKI KAISHA.
© 2024 Cub Cadet

Name Released in Charles Mix County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash
Where: 401st Ave and 290th Street, five miles south of Delmont, SD
When: 7:16 a.m. Friday, June 14, 2024

Driver 1: Hadley William Wallace, 19-year-old male from Alexandria, SD, fatal injuries
Vehicle 1: 2012 Ford Escape
Seatbelt Use: No

Charles Mix County, S.D.- A 19-year-old man died Friday morning in a single-vehicle crash near Delmont, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Hadley W. Wallace, the driver of a 2012 Ford Escape, was traveling southbound on 401st Ave near 290th Street. For an unknown reason, the vehicle left the roadway, vaulted over a field approach and rolled, ejecting Wallace, who was found deceased at the scene.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

WITTE



EXTERIORS LLC

Specializing in Asphalt and Wood Shingles

Call for an estimate

Zack Witte ~ 605-695-7874

Webster, SD

No Contracts!

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 6 of 81

Groton Jr Teeners Claw Back, But Fall Just Short Against Clark Area

By GameChanger Media

Groton Jr Teeners 14U's effort to come back from down five runs in the fourth inning came up just short, as they fell 10-8 to Clark Area on Monday. Groton Jr Teeners closed the gap by scoring on a single, a ground out, a ground out, a double, and a balk.

Groton Jr Teeners lost despite out-hitting Clark Area eight to three. Ethan Kroll led Groton Jr Teeners with two hits.

Clark Area got on the board in the top of the first inning after Kaden Wookey walked, Miles Olson walked, Charlie Luvaas was struck by a pitch, and Clark Area scored on a passed ball, each scoring one run.

Clark Area added one run in the second after Olson walked.

Clark Area added to their early lead in the top of the third inning after Maverick Clausen grounded out, and Cade Gaikowski walked, each scoring one run.

Groton Jr Teeners tied the game in the bottom of the sixth thanks to a ground out by TC Schuster, a double by Zach Flihs, and a balk.

In the top of the seventh, Clark Area broke up the tie when Luvaas doubled, scoring one run. Then a walk by Benny Pommer followed to extend the lead to 10-8.

Gaikowski earned the win for Clark Area. They surrendered one hit and three runs (two earned) over two innings, striking out three and walking three. Kroll pitched five innings in relief for Groton Jr Teeners 14U. The righty surrendered two hits and three runs while, striking out one and walking six. Jordan Schwan took the loss for Groton Jr Teeners 14U. The starting pitcher went two innings, allowing seven runs (five earned) on one hit, striking out three and walking eight. Olson stepped on the hill first for Clark Area. The right-handed pitcher surrendered seven hits and five runs (three earned) over five innings, striking out four and walking six.

Kroll seized on their opportunities, leading Groton Jr Teeners with three runs batted in from the number seven spot in the lineup. They went 2-for-4 on the day. Groton Jr Teeners had patience at the plate, amassing nine walks for the game. Braeden Flihs, Shaydon Wood, and Kason Oswald led the team with two bases on balls each. Groton Jr Teeners ran wild on the base paths, collecting seven stolen bases for the game. Groton Jr Teeners turned one double play in the game.

Isaac Johnson, Luvaas, and Clausen each collected one hit for Clark Area. Olson, Luvaas, and Clausen each drove in one run for Clark Area. Clark Area had a strong eye at the plate, accumulating 14 walks for the game. Gaikowski and Pommer led the team with three walks each. Wyatt Schlagel, Gaikowski, Clausen, and Pommer each stole multiple bases for Clark Area. Clark Area ran wild on the base paths, amassing 11 stolen bases for the game.

Groton Jr Teeners Loses Despite Out Hitting Clark Area

By GameChanger Media

Groton Jr Teeners fell 9-7 to Clark Area on Monday despite out-hitting them eight to seven. TC Schuster, Ethan Kroll, and John Bisbee each collected two hits for Groton Jr Teeners 14U.

Clark Area opened the scoring in the first after Miles Olson drew a walk, scoring one run.

A dropped third strike extended the Clark Area lead to 3-0 in the top of the second inning.

Groton Jr Teeners flipped the game on its head in the bottom of the third, scoring five runs on three hits to take a 5-3 lead. The biggest blow in the inning was a single by Kroll on an 0-2 count that drove in three.

Clark Area took the lead in the top of the fifth inning after Logan Foster singled, Benny Pommer singled, Foster scored after tagging up, Ethan Zemlicka walked, and Cade Gaikowski grounded out, each scoring one run.

Maverick Clausen earned the win for Clark Area. The reliever gave up three hits and zero runs over one and one-third innings, striking out two and walking none. Braeden Flihs took the loss for Groton Jr Teeners 14U. They went one-third of an inning, surrendering four runs (three earned) on two hits, striking out none and walking one. Schuster stepped on the bump first for Groton Jr Teeners 14U. The righty gave up

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 7 of 81

five hits and five runs (three earned) over four and one-third innings, striking out five and walking seven. Jaden LaPlante stepped on the mound first for Clark Area. They gave up five hits and seven runs (three earned) over three and two-thirds innings, striking out five and walking five.

Kroll went 2-for-3 at the plate as they led the team with two runs batted in.

Kaden Wookey led Clark Area with two hits in three at bats. Isaac Johnson, Foster, and Carson Kelly each drove in one run for Clark Area. Zemlicka paced Clark Area with three walks. Overall, the team had patience at the plate, collecting eight walks for the game. Kelly stole two bases. Clark Area ran wild on the base paths, amassing six stolen bases for the game.

Groton Post 39 Stymied By Reno A's

By GameChanger Media

Groton Post 39 couldn't keep up with Reno A's and fell 12-2 on Monday in the Battle of Omaha Tournament.

Reno A's got on the board in the first inning after Keenan Dolan doubled, scoring two runs.

Reno A's added one run in the second. Durst Jaxsyn doubled, making the score 3-0.

Reno A's added one run in the third. Nate Lemieux scored after tagging up, making the score 4-0.

Wade Huntsman earned the win for Reno A's. They gave up three hits and two runs over five and one-third innings, striking out 10 and walking none. Nick Morris took the loss for Groton Post 39. The reliever went two and one-third innings, giving up four runs on five hits, striking out two and walking two. Ryan Groeblichhoff stepped on the hill first for Groton Post 39. The righty gave up nine hits and eight runs over three and two-thirds innings, striking out two and walking two.

Dillon Abeln and Brevin Flihs were a force together in the lineup, as they each collected two hits for Groton Post 39 while hitting back-to-back. Bradin Althoff and Abeln were a one-two punch in the lineup, as each drove in one run for Groton Post 39.

Reno A's tallied 14 hits in the game. Kyle Glenn led Reno A's with three runs batted in. The second baseman went 2-for-4 on the day. Dolan led Reno A's with three hits in four at bats. Dalton Pingree, Jaxsyn, and Nate Lemieux each collected multiple hits for Reno A's. Reno A's were sure-handed in the field and didn't commit a single error. Aiden Cruz had the most chances in the field with seven.

Groton Post 39 Lose To Mpls Northside Legion 2024

By GameChanger Media

Groton Post 39 fell to Mpls Northside Legion 2024 5-3 on Monday in the Battle of Omaha Tournament.

Groton Post 39 jumped out to the lead in the top of the first inning after Nik Nordeen induced Bradin Althoff to hit into a fielder's choice, but one run scored, and Colby Dunker homered to left field, scoring two runs.

Mpls Northside Legion 2024 made the score 5-3 in the bottom of the fifth after Dillon Abeln induced Lewis Kvan to hit into a fielder's choice, but three runs scored, and an error scored one run.

Nordeen earned the win for Mpls Northside Legion 2024. The righty allowed four hits and three runs over seven innings, striking out nine and walking two. Abeln took the loss for Groton Post 39. They went six innings, giving up five runs (two earned) on seven hits, striking out six and walking none.

Dunker provided pop in the middle of the lineup, and led Groton Post 39 with two runs batted in. The right-handed hitter went 1-for-3 on the day. Abeln, Dunker, Jarret Erdmann, and Teylor Diegel each collected one hit for Groton Post 39.

Kvan led Mpls Northside Legion 2024 with one run batted in. Leadoff hitter Luis Gutierrez led Mpls Northside Legion 2024 with three hits in four at bats. Mpls Northside Legion 2024 turned one double play in the game.

Next up for Groton Post 39 is a game at American Legion Post 77 19U on Tuesday.

Copyright © 2024 GameChanger Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Any reuse or republication of this story must include the preceding attribution and is subject to the Dick's Sporting Goods, Inc. Terms of Use, License Agreement, and Privacy Policy.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 8 of 81



Starting pitcher TC Schuster against a Clark Junior Teeners batter in the second game of Monday's double header. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Zach Flihs scores on a TC Schuster's deep hit into left field. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Braeden Flihs pitching in relief in 5th inning in second game. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Shaydon Wood batting in the 5th. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)

Access to health care limited in SD rural and reservation areas

Bart Pfankuch

South Dakota News Watch

SISSETON, S.D. – All it took in spring 2024 was two small, unrelated medical service interruptions to put women's health at risk and expose the fragility of the health care system in rural and reservation communities across South Dakota.

First, the local public hospital in Sisseton, the Coteau des Prairies Health Care System, cut back its OB/GYN program and stopped delivering babies due to relocation of its obstetrician, high expenses and because a low number of annual deliveries raised concerns over the expertise level of existing medical personnel.

Meanwhile, the Indian Health Service hospital in Sisseton, a reservation community of 2,400 people in the northeast corner of South Dakota, for a time did not have anyone certified to operate its mammogram machine.

While the public hospital and IHS took steps to minimize the disruptions, it became more difficult for female tribal members to get screened for breast cancer. And any pregnant woman who wants a hospital delivery will now have to drive an hour to Watertown or to Fargo, North Dakota, to give birth.

"When it comes to obstetrics in northeastern South Dakota, we're in a maternity care desert here right now," said Sara DeCoteau, tribal health coordinator for the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate tribe.

Similarly, in the far northwest corner of South Dakota, when a physician who worked for 15 years at a Horizon Health clinic in Bison moved to Sioux Falls to be closer to his grandchildren, it took nine months to find a replacement doctor.

While Horizon expanded use of telehealth services and brought in providers when possible to see patients in Bison, there was no question that patient care in the remote, rural ranching area was disrupted during the absence.

"That's a one-provider practice. And when one thing breaks in the chain, it creates this question all of a sudden of, 'Now what do we do?'" said Wade Erickson, CEO of Horizon Health. "We've got to get creative and think outside the box because everybody, regardless of where you live, work or raise your family, deserves access to primary health care. And you shouldn't have to sacrifice health care if you choose to raise your family in a rural setting."



The Indian Health Services clinic on March 23, 2024, in Fort Thompson, S.D., on the Crow Creek Indian Reservation. Like many medical facilities in rural South Dakota, it does not provide care on nights, weekends or holidays. The nearest emergency room is 40 minutes away. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota News Watch)



The small Coteau des Prairies hospital on April 29, 2024, in Sisseton, S.D., ended its OB/GYN birthing program in March, meaning women now have to drive an hour to have a hospital delivery. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South

Dakota News Watch)

And yet, many rural and reservation residents in South Dakota and other states are suffering devastating, often preventable, negative health outcomes due to a variety of barriers to obtaining health care in their communities.

Long driving distances, a shortage of medical staff in Indian Country and farm country and the expense of maintaining medical facilities in low-population areas all prevent the estimated 46 million Americans who live in rural areas from getting the health care they need to live healthy lives.

Major findings of a News Watch project

As part of a fellowship granted by the University of Southern California Annenberg Center for Health Journalism, News Watch spent several weeks conducting interviews, examining data and traveling the state to learn about the barriers to health care across rural areas of South Dakota.

Here are four major findings:

1. A variety of barriers do exist to obtaining preventive, primary, emergency and specialist health care in rural and reservation communities across South Dakota. And those barriers are leading to higher prevalence of disease and illness and overall increased mortality rates.
2. The health care system now in place in those regions of South Dakota — while staffed and led by caring providers who expend great energy, innovation and compassion to provide patient care — still faces significant challenges and is quite fragile in that one small interruption or deficiency can lead to a host of new negative outcomes.
3. The barriers to health care access in rural and reservation communities is not unique to South Dakota and can be primarily split into two major categories: barriers that prevent providers from helping as many people that they would like and barriers on the patient side of the equation that can slow or even block access to needed health care.
4. Solutions to the problems are not easy to come by. But increased focus by the health care industry, state and national policymakers and the public has led to potentially replicable successes that can improve a complicated yet well-intended system that seeks to keep people healthy.

Data reveal deep health disparities

Multiple national and state reports and data sets show that rural and reservation residents are suffering poor health outcomes compared to their urban counterparts.

According to a recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the death rate in rural areas of the U.S. was 21% higher than in urban areas in 2019, and the mortality disparity grew larger over the past decade despite major improvements in medical care and technology.

Death rates in rural areas were higher than urban areas for heart disease, cancer, injuries, respiratory disease, stroke, diabetes, suicide and other causes, the study found.

So-called social determinants of health, which include poverty, lack of education and job opportunities, and limited access to healthy food play a role in why some people are healthier and live longer than others.

However, experts said, a lack of access to health care remains a major factor in that equation. And nowhere is that barrier larger than in rural and reservation regions of the U.S.

"Rural health is America's health, and we need policymakers to understand that the American Medical Association (AMA) is deeply concerned about the ever-widening health disparities between urban and rural communities," Bruce A. Scott, M.D., president-elect of the AMA, said in a recent online conference attended by News Watch.

"I worry that the health outcomes in rural America will continue to decline even faster ... where so many of the systems and the physicians are already teetering on the brink."

Problems 'magnified' on reservations

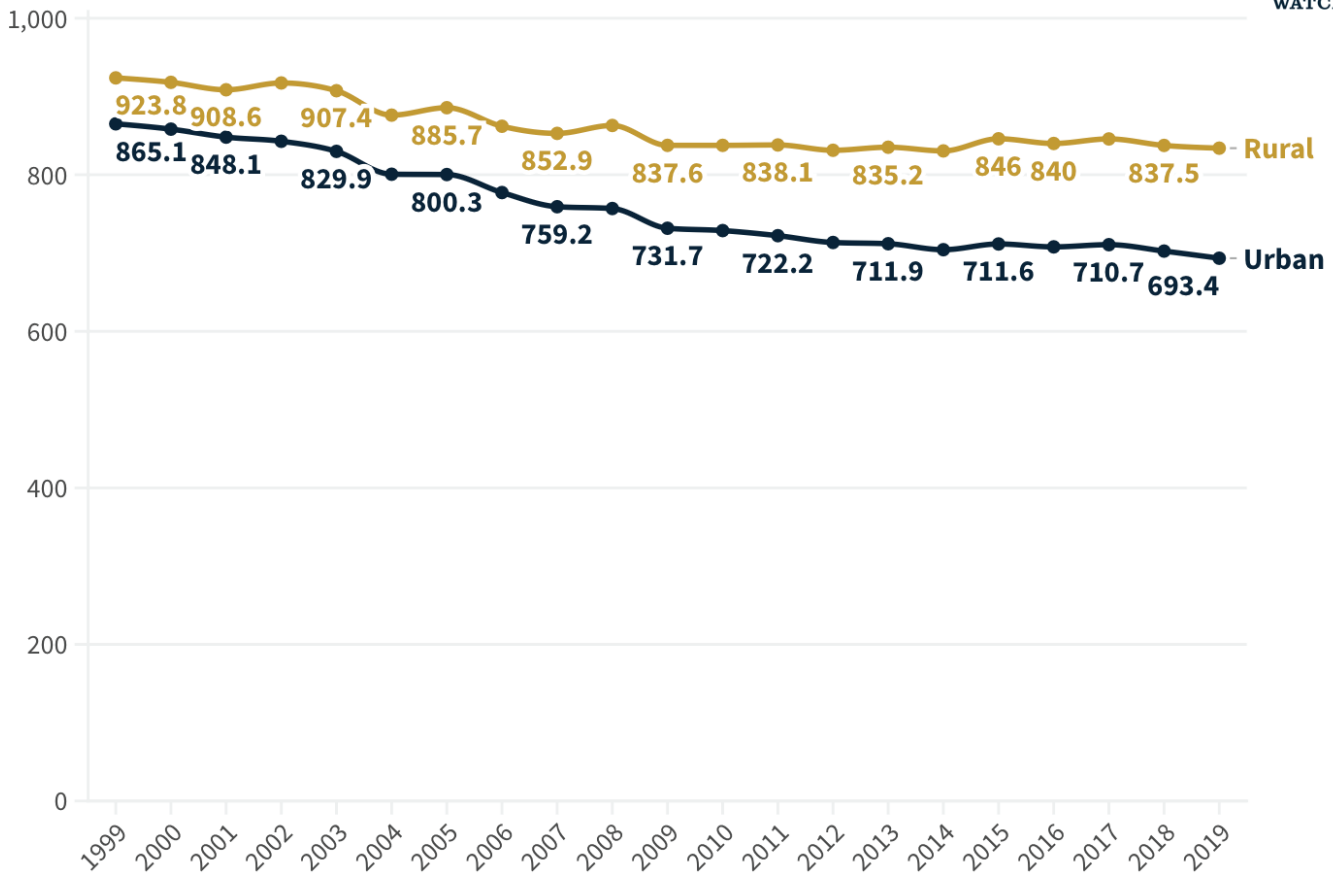
When asked by News Watch about barriers to health care in indigenous communities, Scott said the health disparities that exist between urban and rural residents are even worse among Indigenous populations.

"The problems that I mentioned are all at play here, but they're manifest and magnified" in Native populations, he said.

Data from the South Dakota Department of Health (DOH) illustrate the depth of the health care disparities between Native and non-Native residents of the Rushmore State.

The DOH reports that while 50% of white South Dakotans will die before the age of 80, half of all Na-

Death rates higher in rural areas of US



Source: [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) • Graphic: Michael Klinski / South Dakota News Watch

Note: Per 100,000 people



Wade Erickson, CEO of Horizon Health, paid a visit on May 13, 2024, to his system's health clinic in Martin, S.D. Erickson believes all residents of South Dakota deserve quality health care regardless of where they choose to live. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota

News Watch)

tive Americans in the state will die before the age of 58.

According to IHS, residents of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in southwestern South Dakota face far higher mortality rates than non-Native state residents, including from diabetes (800% higher rate), alcoholism (550% higher rate), cervical cancer (500% higher rate) and infant mortality (300% higher rate). In South Dakota overall, Native American infant mortality (17.2 deaths per 1,000 births) is three times higher than the state population, and more than four times higher than for white infants (3.9 deaths per 1,000 births.)

A 2022 report by the American Hospital Association said access to health care in non-urban areas has worsened due to the closure of 136 rural hospitals in the U.S. between 2010 and 2021, including a record 19 closures in 2020.

That report cited factors that are playing out regularly in South Dakota, including low Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement rates, staffing shortages, increasing costs for provid-

ers, regulatory hurdles and low patient volumes.

Scott added that the health care industry must also acknowledge, and work to overcome, barriers that some Native Americans face due to distrust of the medical system due to racism and historical trauma as well as hesitancy to engage with providers who often do not share their culture or backgrounds.

"We have to recognize, and the AMA is acknowledging upfront, the years of discrimination and racism that these populations have faced," he said. "The AMA is working through our Center for Health Equity to eliminate those inequities and to face those inequities up front."

State launches mobile health program

State officials in South Dakota are aware that some areas are woefully underserved with health care.

DOH recently launched a new program, called Wellness on Wheels, to provide mobile health services to rural communities across the state, particularly those "facing socioeconomic barriers and social determinants of health."

DOH Secretary Melissa Magstadt told News Watch in an interview that the mobile clinics, which will provide immunizations, testing for sexually transmitted diseases, and birthing and parental services, will bridge gaps caused by geography and lack of available services in rural areas.

"The minute we make the challenging system more difficult than it already is by adding one more barrier, it becomes harder for people to do the right thing even when they want to," Magstadt said. "Those barriers may seem small to many of us, but if you're a single mother with four children, or you have to work or don't have a way to travel an hour, it becomes less likely for them to get health care and I don't blame them one bit."

The vehicles, equipment and staffing for the five mobile clinics were paid for with one-time federal funds given to South Dakota during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the state used some money from its federal Women, Infants and Children program allocations to also aid in finding, Magstadt said.

One of the five mobile health buses will primarily serve Sioux Falls and another in Rapid City, while the other three will travel the rest of the state based on population and need, Magstadt said. Her next goal

is to forge partnerships with existing health care providers to allow the mobile clinics to set up where people are already receiving necessary services, which could include working with rural grocers so families can get food and basic health care at the same time.

"It's literally returning to the roots of taking health care out to the patients," Magstadt said.

Long-term worker shortage worsening

A significant and worsening challenge in health care everywhere is a shortage of physicians, nurses and other providers. And the problem is the worst in rural and reservation areas.

In South Dakota, only 15 of 66 counties did not have a shortage of primary health care providers in January, according to the state Office of Rural Health. The vast majority of the underserved areas are outside urban centers.

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) recently estimated that the U.S. will see a shortage of 87,000 physicians nationwide by 2036, due in part to mass retirement of aging doctors and a lack of medical school graduates to replace them.

In recent publications, the AAMC and AMA pointed to several factors that make the shortage worse in rural areas:

- Massive student debt accumulated by medical students makes it less likely they will practice in rural or reservation areas, where pay is often lower than in cities.
- Rural providers often work alone or without direct supervision, and training opportunities are limited for providers who want to develop a speciality or advance their skill set.
- Rural patients tend to be older and have more complicated health problems.
- By nature, rural and remote areas provide fewer social opportunities, shopping, recreational and restaurant amenities, or employment options for spouses of medical workers.

According to the National Rural Healthcare Association, for every 10 physical specialists in urban areas, there is on average one physician specialist in rural areas of America.

"The worsening health care worker and physician shortage of primary care and specialists, particularly in the rural areas, are exacerbating these (health) concerns and creating health care trends that are simply unacceptable," Scott said.

The state DOH has two programs in place to encourage new health care workers to begin their careers in areas of medical provider shortages. One program, The Rural Healthcare Facility Recruitment Assistance Program, gives certain providers a \$10,000 payment if they work for three years in a community of under 10,000 population.

Long distances, limited service hours

The issue of geographical challenges and the need to travel to get preventative, emergency or specialist care has hampered health care access in rural areas for generations.



This sign stands outside a youth center on March 23, 2024, in Lower Brule, S.D., refers to the ultimate goal of health care across South Dakota. The Wani Wacin are people trained to help youths and adults on the Lower Brule Indian Reservation obtain needed medical and behavioral health services. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch

/ South Dakota News Watch)

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 14 of 81



“When it comes to obstetrics in northeastern South Dakota, we're in a maternity care desert here right now.”

Sara DeCoteau, tribal health coordinator
for the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate tribe

The problem is particularly acute in reservation communities where poverty rates are far higher than average and owning or obtaining transportation for a local medical appointment, let alone a specialist visit in a city far away, can be daunting.

“We complain about not having enough services in our bubble in Rapid City, but what about having to drive an hour or two for help,” Michelle Comeau, a wellness navigator with the Great Plains Tribal Leaders' Health Board, said at a recent community meeting in Rapid City. “But outside of here, a gas card can be the difference between life and death.”

On two small reservations in central South Dakota and in many small towns

across the state, primary medical care is available only during daytime hours on weekdays.

On the Crow Creek Indian Reservation and the Lower Brule Indian Reservation just across the Missouri River, both home to main cities with about 1,000 population, primary health care is administered at IHS clinics that are open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Horizon Health also operates a clinic in a small building in Fort Thompson that is open only during daytime hours on weekdays.

In those communities and many others across the state, someone with an emergency or a pressing health care need is told to call 911 or a local ambulance service, many of which face their own set of staffing and financial issues.

In Fort Thompson or Lower Brule, that would require wait time for an ambulance, then a 30-mile ride mostly on winding two-lane roads to the Sanford Chamberlain Medical Center, where a 24/7 emergency room awaits.

In Faith, a ranching town of 600 in west-central South Dakota, medical care is also available only during daytime hours Monday through Thursday at a Horizon clinic staffed by a family nurse practitioner.

If the clinic is closed or in-person specialist care or surgery is needed, patients might need to make a 250-mile round trip journey on two-lane roads to Monument Health Rapid City Hospital.

Boy's death reveals rural health barriers

The limitations of IHS services and challenges in travel during a health emergency had tragic consequences in 2022 for Honor Beauvais, a 12-year-old boy living on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation who suffered from asthma.

In a previous interview with News Watch, Honor's grandmother recounted how he was taken to the IHS emergency room in Rosebud on Dec. 14, 2022, with flu symptoms and breathing difficulties. He was evaluated, given medicine and released. He stopped breathing the next day and died, with massive snowdrifts preventing an ambulance from reaching the family's ranch until it was too late.

Honor's grandmother contends that her grandson should have been held at the hospital rather than released due to severe weather and the probability that follow-up care would be needed. The family is pursuing a lawsuit, including against IHS, which refused to comment for that News Watch article or for this one.

Health secretary: holistic approach needed

Providing health care is only one part of the larger equation that leads to a healthy life and greater life expectancy, said DOH Secretary Magstadt. Medical care access is only about 20% of the overall health spectrum, which also includes living environment, personal choices in terms of diet, exercise and habits,

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 15 of 81

Magstadt said. One third of the equation is due to social determinants of health, which includes education level, employment, transportation options and access to healthy foods.

Magstadt said the state can take steps to provide greater access to public health initiatives that reach a wide range of people, including through efforts to increase access to immunizations, education on child development and safe sleeping, and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. The state's new Wellness on Wheels initiative is one example of improving public health, she said.

But it will take wider efforts, Magstadt said, to reduce the impacts of social determinants of health in rural and reservation areas, including by improving public health, increasing job opportunities, encouraging development of affordable quality housing, creating more safe places for children to play and learn, improving transportation options, and finding ways to offer more healthy food to people in remote areas.

"The socio-economic and social determinants of health have been an under-evaluated piece of the equation that we in health care haven't taken fully into account," she said. "If you don't have those things in place, then it's impossible for people to do the healthy behaviors that are part of the 80% of a healthy life that takes place outside the health care system."

To make more people aware of challenges in indigenous health care, the DOH publishes a web page called the American Indian Health Data Book that includes a variety of data showing the health disparities between Native Americans and white residents of South Dakota. The agency has also undertaken a wide-ranging analysis of the rural health care system in the state and hopes to have a final report, with recommendations for improvements, completed by the end of 2024.

Magstadt said her department is also highly focused on working in partnership without other entities to make holistic improvements in communities, including in reservation areas.

"If we're only tied into what health care can do, we can feel very discouraged," she said. "But if you come to this with a greater aperture of what we can all do together, we can start to pull the levers that will lead to positive outcomes."

Better health care, stronger communities

On a recent weekday afternoon, Erickson, the CEO of Horizon Health, strolled through his system's clinic in Martin, in southwest South Dakota, and was proud to show a visitor the range of services provided.

The small clinic has an X-ray machine, offices for patient consultations or minor procedures, telehealth equipment and a small laboratory that looks more like a kitchen counter in an apartment than a modern medical lab. A physician and two mid-level providers split time to serve patients on an 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. basis on weekdays.

Erickson said Martin, a farm and ranch city of 950 people located 120 miles southeast of Rapid City, is fortunate in that it is home to the Horizon clinic, an IHS clinic and the Bennett County Hospital, which has



This small clinic in Fort Thompson, S.D., population 1,000, shown on March 23, 2024, is one of two medical facilities on the Crow Creek Indian Reservation, where health care is only available during daytime hours on weekdays. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota News Watch)

an emergency room and 24/7 care options.

Erickson said even though Horizon clinics have limited hours of operation, all clinics provide emergency phone access at anytime for patients who need to speak to a provider when clinics are closed.

He also explained how telehealth services can provide patients in remote areas with a range of services from behavioral health, to diagnosis of ear, nose or throat illnesses to analysis of blood work or vital signs by a remote physician or specialist.

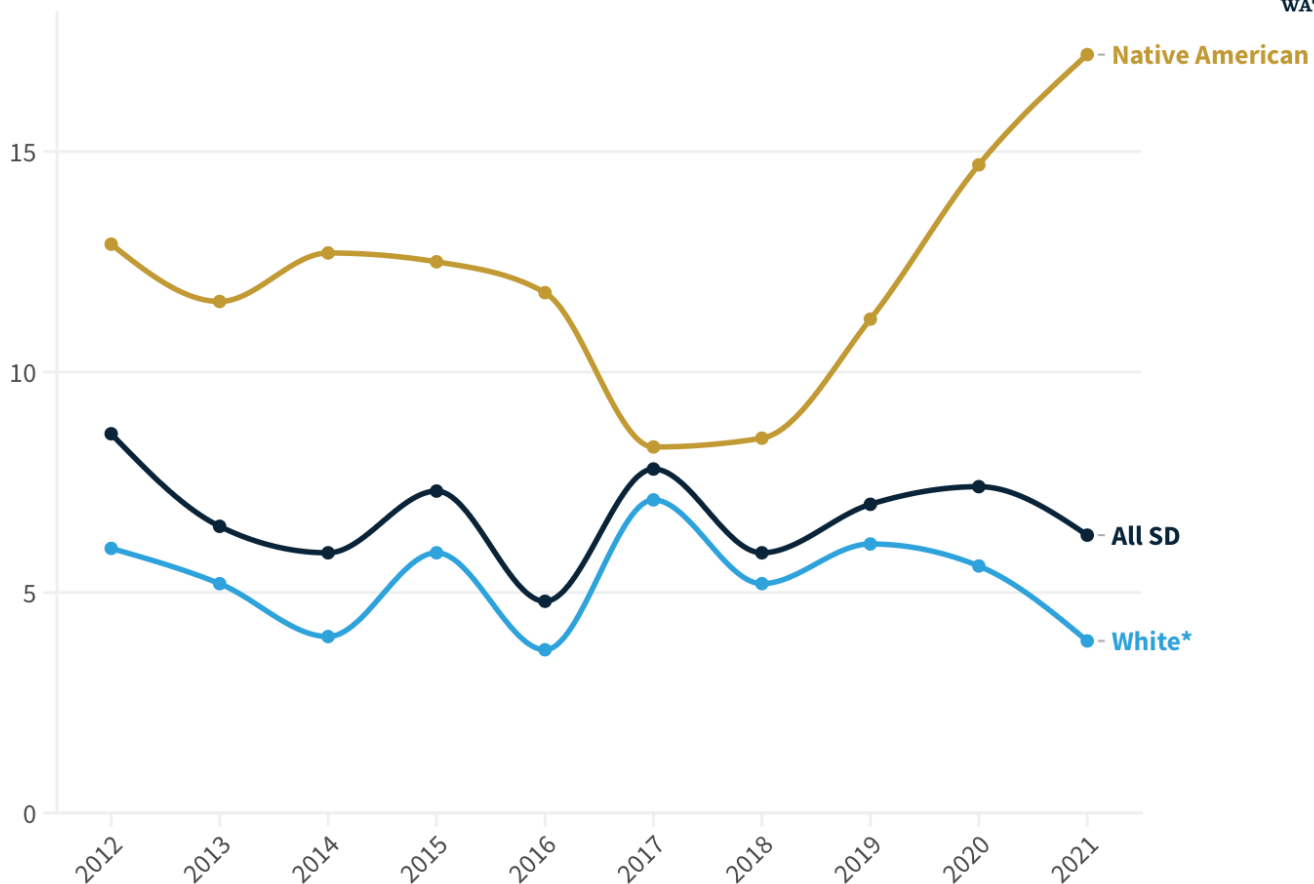
Horizon, based in Howard, plays a critical role in filling the gaps in rural and reservation health care in South Dakota.

The not-for-profit health system has 31 health or dental clinics in 22 communities, covering a 28,000 square-mile service area with nearly 30,000 patients undergoing 100,000 clinic visits a year. Horizon operates on six of the nine American Indian reservations in the state.

Erickson said Horizon clinics seek to provide patients with primary and preventative care that will stave off more serious medical conditions and then triage patients who need more help and set them on a course to obtain more invasive care elsewhere.

He sees his clinics as necessary for human health but also to help keep rural and reservation communities viable and thriving.

Infant mortality for Native Americans rising in SD



Source: [South Dakota Department of Health](#) • Graphic: Michael Klinski / South Dakota News Watch

* White includes non-Hispanic or Latino

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 17 of 81

"There's certain things that younger families need and want within their communities, so you've got your gas stations, grocery stores, your Main Street business, your school district, your churches and your health care," he said.

"In South Dakota, west of the (Missouri) river, it's an hour between every community, so if you don't have health care, it's two hours or more to get to the next level of care. And without some health care access in those towns, how are we going to keep our rural communities sustainable?"

Despite its extensive network in mostly underserved areas, Erickson acknowledged that a better, more comprehensive system of health care is needed to ensure quality patient care throughout rural South Dakota.

Stronger relationships and greater cooperation among rural clinics, small-town hospitals and major health providers in Sioux Falls and Rapid City are one way to reduce barriers to rural health, he said.

"It's not OK as it is. And we have to figure out a way to fix that because people don't just get sick from 8 to 5," he said.

"Having a rural hospital is such a key piece of the equation because if a patient has stroke symptoms or they're having chest pain, being an-hour-and-a-half to two hours from the closest hospital might be too far. And that might not turn out well."

This article was produced by South Dakota News Watch as a project for the USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism's 2023 Impact Fund for Reporting on Health Equity and Health Systems. News Watch, a nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization, is online at sdnewswatch.org, where readers can sign up for an email every few days to get stories as soon as they're published. News Watch reporter Stu Whitney contributed to this report. Contact Bart Pfankuch at bart.pfankuch@sdnewswatch.org.



Rural health care in South Dakota is often practiced in small clinics staffed by a rotating group of providers. This small clinic in Timber Lake, S.D., shown on April 30, 2024, is run by Mobridge Regional Hospital.

(Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota News Watch)

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 18 of 81

Groton Transit Fundraiser

Thursday, June 20th, 2024

5:00 pm - 7:00pm at

Groton Community Center

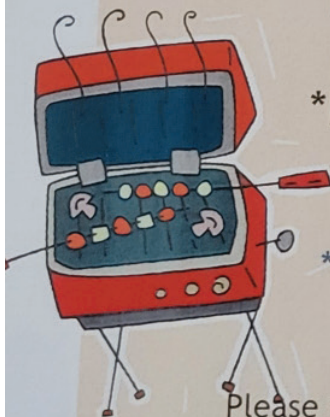
***109 N 3rd Street-One block East of Groton
Transit***

Let us do the cooking for you!!

Burgers, Brats, Beans,
Watermelon, Chips and the
Famous Mini Donuts!!

*Food*Fun*Door Prizes*

FREE WILL DONATION



Please join us & Help support Groton Transit!!

That' Life by Tony Bender: That Dad Thing

In the three-plus decades I've been writing columns, I wonder if I've ever written a Fathers Day column before the holiday. Well, why mess with tradition?

Maybe it's the writer gene in me, but I was born an observer, and I saw the differences in the way my grandparents parented, how my father learned from them, and me from him. They loved their kids but any shows of affection were understated. But each generation evolves.

I have a sense that Dad was a bit spoiled, or at least didn't want for much. He had cars! I had to carjack our '67 Chevy station wagon. It had a 396, laid rubber, and though sluggish off the line, could take most of the sports cars in town.

I was the first of six kids. Before we go on, it's my observation that kids are who they're going to be when they're born, so my folks would have been better off if the eldest was someone civilized and smart like my sister Sherry. Instead they got a respectful renegade—a psychiatric term, I'm sure.

I was going to break the rules, accept the punishment—often two weeks of being grounded—and then I'd do it again. My parents were horrified at the thought of having six of me, but they needn't have worried, only Joel, the second to last, was a rebel. Such a snotty teenager he even managed to offend me. I think part of the reason he got away with more is because they were flat-out pooped by then.

I think if I had been a young father when Dylan was born, I think I would have gone the drill sergeant way. However, it was obvious very early that he was, as the Lakota call them, Heyoka, a contrarian. Dylan sometimes makes an attempt to contradict that description to which I respond, "Dylan, you crawled backwards!" He was noisy and energetic, a typical boy in that regard, and he tallied so many stitches, I once got a call from Child Protective Services after Dylan had smacked his forehead on the kitchen counter overhang at full speed. They wanted an explanation. "He's a boy," I said.

The standard discipline tact—"Because I said so."—wouldn't have worked on Dylan. Reason worked. A conversation, an explanation, did.

Now, India... sweet, little, smiley India, was a different case. Defiant. Stubborn. Petulant. If I ever won a match it could be attributed to her benevolence. She still scares me.

I wonder about the strategies and genetics of those who preceded us. Grandpa Bender was easy-going, good-humored and rarely lost his temper. Grandpa Spilloway was stoic but when he was unhappy with you, his steely gray Russian eyes demanded attention.

Years ago, when I was working radio, a sometimes tense occupation, I threw a recorded "cart" against the wall that was advertising something that had already happened, and as tape unfurled like a New Years celebration, I stomped out of the studio spewing expletives. Everyone scattered. Even the General Manager ducked into his office.

"Curious," I thought, as I strode back into the studio and caught my reflection in the glass. Those eyes. That steely Russian look. I was looking at my grandpa. Ah. I'll confess that I've used that look as necessary ever since. It moves mountains. Slays dragons.

Sometimes I hear my father if I snort when I laugh. It's hard to believe I'm older than he ever got to be. The dynamic of fathers and sons changes, and I regret that I lost him when we were just becoming friends, a relationship that was man-to-man. I remember especially one day we cruised the backroads looking at towering cornstalks, just talking, laughing, and getting to know sides of each other that had been hidden.

I doubt he knew how much of him was in me, in the way I approached the world. Like all fathers do, he worried about me, my willingness to take career chances, my defiance.

"Sometimes you have to put up with some s—t," he told me once.

"Oh, yeah," I responded, "When exactly did you ever do that?"

For better or worse, my kids will take the lessons I didn't even know I was teaching and build on them. They'll be better at parenting than I've been. Exactly as it should be.

When I congratulate a new father I invariably say, "It's the best job in the world."

GROTON CUSTOMER APPRECIATION



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26

← DACOTAH BANK →[®]

New Laws Impacting Veterans

The 2024 Legislative Session is a wrap! There were 550 bills, commemorations, and resolutions introduced this year.

As an advocate for veterans, it is the responsibility of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs to review all bills that will impact veterans. This year, the department introduced two bills and monitored 29 pieces of proposed legislation.

Here's a look at veteran related legislation that was approved and will become law July 1:

- State tuition assistance benefit for the airmen and soldiers of the South Dakota National Guard was expanded to allow them to utilize this benefit at an in-state private, nonprofit post-secondary university;
- March 25 has been designated as a state Medal of Honor Recognition Day;
- Veterans that are eligible for a disabled veteran plate and the benefits that accompany the issuance of the plate, but do not wish to have to have the designation of being disabled, now have the option to receive the same fee schedule for regular plates on their vehicle;
- The exempt value of property tax relief for disabled veterans and surviving spouses was increased to \$200,000. This will apply for the 2025 assessment for taxes payable in 2026;
- A special motor vehicle license plate is now available for recipients of the Legion of Merit award;
- Residency requirements for admission to the State Veterans Home were removed; and,
- Counties and tribes who encounter prolonged veterans service officer vacancies can contract with the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs to provide those services.

As always, we encourage all veterans to visit their county or tribal veterans service officers (CTVSO's) to learn more about all benefits. These men and women have worn the boots, walked the trenches, conducted maneuvers, commanded troops, sustained missions, and protected our freedoms. Who better to have on your team? To locate the CTVSO nearest you visit: <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx>

Now, more than ever, we need to continue to deliver on our promise to take care of our veterans. We will keep our sleeves rolled up and work collectively to ensure our veterans have a successful journey after their service.

Greg Whitlock, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



Greg Whitlock,
Secretary
South Dakota
Department of
Veterans Affairs

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 22 of 81

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

June 18, 2024 – 7:00pm
City Hall – 120 N Main Street

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Darrell Hillestad - Airport Discussion
4. May Finance Report
5. Minutes
6. Bills
7. City Offices Closed – Juneteenth – June 19, 2024
8. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
9. Clarification of Ordinance No. 775 – Summer Salaries
10. Adjournment



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

'Somebody has to pay, ultimately': Legislative committee begins study of rising property taxes

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JUNE 17, 2024 4:53 PM

Total property tax payments during the last decade in South Dakota have increased by nearly 60% for homes, 47% for commercial property and 28% for agricultural property.

Some legislators hope to address those trends during the next legislative session, and some legislative candidates are running on a pledge to curb rising taxes.

Lawmakers created the Study Committee on Property Tax Assessment Methodology to recommend legislation for next year's legislative session, which starts in January. This is the second study committee regarding property taxes in two years.

"I look forward to working all together to make sure we have a fair and equitable process for a property tax system in South Dakota," said co-chair of the committee Rep. Drew Peterson, R-Salem. The committee met Monday in Pierre.

South Dakotans paid over \$1.6 billion in property taxes in 2023, with about 56% going to schools, 27% to counties, 13% to cities and the rest to various other local taxing entities, according to the state Department of Revenue.

South Dakota has the third-highest effective property tax rate among its neighbors, according to a WalletHub analysis reviewed by the committee. WalletHub determined each state's effective rate by dividing median real-estate tax payments by median home prices. South Dakota's effective rate of 1.31% exceeds all of its neighboring states except Nebraska and Iowa, at 1.73% and 1.57%, respectively. The lowest rate among surrounding states is Wyoming's at 0.61% (Wyoming and South Dakota are also the only two states in the comparison that lack an income tax).

Owner-occupied homes accounted for about 40% of South Dakota property taxes paid in 2014, but they now account for about 43%, while commercial property has remained at about 30% and agriculture has decreased from 25% in 2014 to 22% in 2023.

There are two reasons why the property tax burden shifted toward owner-occupied homes, according to



A house is listed for sale in southeastern Sioux Falls in June 2024. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 24 of 81

Department of Revenue Secretary Michael Houdyshell: increasing sale prices and “tremendous” growth — especially in the Black Hills and Sioux Falls areas.

That leads to higher valuations and a bigger tax base, Houdyshell said. Local governments can increase property tax collections by 3% or the rate of inflation, whichever is less, plus an increase accounting for the percentage of new growth.

“We hear it all the time: Property taxes are too high,” Houdyshell said. “You know, I’ve worked at the Department of Revenue for almost 13 years and I’ve heard pretty much since day one that property taxes are too high.”

Houdyshell told legislators there are three ways to reduce property taxes for owner-occupied properties: Cutting budgets for schools, counties and other local governments to reduce the need for funding.

Finding alternative revenue sources, such as increasing sales taxes (which only the state and cities currently receive), reallocating general funds or finding new tax types.

Shifting the burden to another class of property.

When exemptions to a property tax system are made or caps are put on a property class, that will shift the burden onto other property taxpayers. Exemptions can include religious exemptions or relief programs for elderly South Dakotans.

“At the end of the day, unless you are reducing the need of those local units of government, you still need to generate the same amount of money to provide services,” Houdyshell told lawmakers. “Somebody has to pay, ultimately.”

Rep. Kirk Chaffee, R-Whitewood, told lawmakers the reduced burden on agricultural property taxes is “not by accident.” The state switched from a market value assessment system for agricultural land to a productivity-based model in 2008.

Chaffee chaired the Ag Land Assessment Task Force from 2021 through 2023, which oversees and guides the state Department of Revenue productivity-based assessment system.

“More and more production ag is being put into subdivisions,” Chaffee said, referencing examples in Meade County. “For each house being built, that equates to about 200 acres of ag land taxes. As new land is developed and more owner-occupied houses are being brought into the system, it’s only natural to see that percentage of ag in the total tax pie come down.”

Commercial and owner-occupied properties are assessed on their market value.

Committee members heard an in-depth presentation Monday about how properties across the state are assessed, including presentations from the Pennington County and Brookings County directors of equalization.

The summer study committee plans to meet two to three more times before November. The group will hear from more county directors of equalization, the state Department of Education, agricultural groups, retailers and realtors. The group will also hear public testimony regarding property taxes in the state.

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She’s spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.

Republican state attorneys general oppose new gag order in Trump documents case

BY: MICHAEL MOLINE, FLORIDA PHOENIX - JUNE 17, 2024 4:01 PM

Twenty-four Republican state attorneys general — including South Dakota’s — have interceded in the classified-documents prosecution of Donald Trump, opposing special counsel Jack Smith’s request that the trial judge bar Trump from making hostile statements against federal law enforcement.

In a 27-page amicus brief filed by Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody, the states complain that Smith’s motion to amend the former president’s bail conditions amounts to interference in the presidential election.

“The free-speech right is at its strongest when it protects political speech,” the brief says.

“Yet special prosecutor Jack Smith, on behalf of the United States, asks this court to curtail that right

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 25 of 81

by ordering a prior restraint on President Trump's constitutionally protected speech. Such an order is presumptively unconstitutional," the document continues.

Republican AGs in Iowa, West Virginia, Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming have joined Moody's brief.

"If granted, this request would prevent the presumptive Republican nominee for president of the United States from speaking out against the prosecution and the criminal trial process that seek to take away his liberty," the brief reads.

"That prosecution, of course, is led by a department that President Trump's political opponent controls," it adds, referring to Joe Biden and the U.S. Department of Justice.

"Once again, we are witnessing a prosecutor seek to keep the presumptive Republican nominee for president from speaking in the midst of an election. The First Amendment, at its core, is designed to protect political speech, and I along with my colleagues will not stand idly by and watch the Biden administration trample the free speech of a Florida citizen," Moody said in a written statement.

Trump stands accused of willfully retaining national defense information, conspiring to obstruct justice, and destroying evidence in the case before U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon in Fort Pierce, a Trump appointee.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Supreme Court is considering Trump's claim for presidential immunity from federal criminal charges of plotting to overturn the 2020 presidential election. A trial on racketeering and conspiracy charges arising from his alleged attempt to interfere with the election is on hold in Georgia state court.

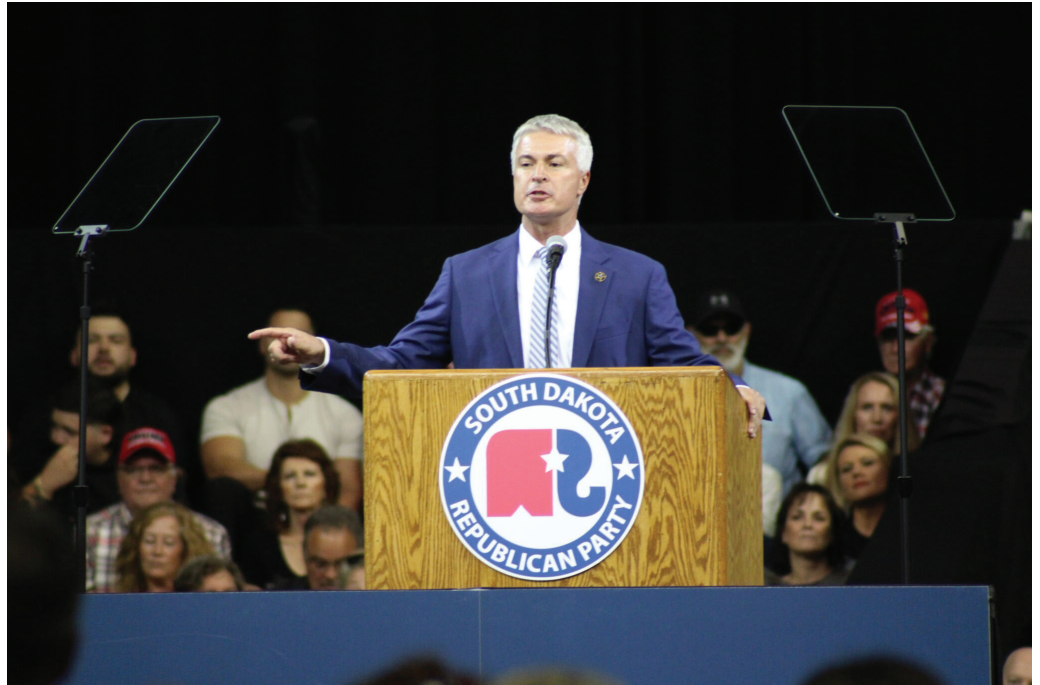
On May 30, Trump was found guilty of 34 felony counts of falsifying business records to cover up hush money payments to a porn star to influence the outcome of the 2016 presidential election.

'Significant, imminent, and foreseeable danger'

On May 24, Smith filed a motion to alter Trump's conditions of release "to make clear that he may not make statements that pose a significant, imminent, and foreseeable danger to law enforcement agents participating in the investigation and prosecution of this case."

Trump and his supporters made "several intentionally false and inflammatory statements," Smith argued, "that distort the circumstances under which the Federal Bureau of Investigation planned and executed the search warrant at Mar-a-Lago," during which federal agents seized the classified documents at issue.

Trump and others cited a wording in the search warrant reiterating the FBI's "standard and unobjection-



Attorney General Marty Jackley speaks during a rally featuring former President Donald Trump on Sept. 8, 2023, at The Monument in Rapid City. (Seth Tupper/South Dakota Searchlight)

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 26 of 81

able language setting out the Department of Justice's use-of-force policy, which prohibits the use of deadly force except "when the officer has a reasonable belief that the subject of such force poses an imminent danger of death or serious physical injury to the officer or to another person," Smith's motion says.

It notes that agents coordinated with Trump's Secret Service detail and entered when Trump was away from his home.

"Trump, however, has distorted the standard inclusion of the policy limiting the use of deadly force by mischaracterizing it as a claim that the FBI 'WAS AUTHORIZED TO SHOOT ME,' was 'just itching to do the unthinkable,' and was 'locked & loaded ready to take me out & put my family in danger,'" the document continues.

"Those statements create a grossly misleading impression about the intentions and conduct of federal law enforcement agents — falsely suggesting that they were complicit in a plot to assassinate him — and expose those agents, some of whom will be witnesses at trial, to the risk of threats, violence, and harassment.

"The court has an independent obligation to protect the integrity of this judicial proceeding and should take steps immediately to halt this dangerous campaign to smear law enforcement."

Campaign 'in full swing'

Attorneys for Trump, in a brief filed Friday, cited Smith's "most recent shocking display of overreach and disregard for the Constitution."

It accuses Smith of seeking "to restrict President Trump's campaign speech as the first presidential debate approaches at the end of this month. Smith's motion goes one step further in his efforts to interfere in the 2024 presidential election and assist President Biden, by seeking improper restrictions on President Trump's core protected speech that would continue through the Republican National Convention in July, and thereafter, until this case is dismissed for one or more of the myriad reasons we have identified."

Moody's brief argues that restricting Trump's speech would require showing of a "clear and present danger to the administration of justice." She's a Republican who has been an ardent supporter of the former president, filing numerous legal proceedings supporting him and attacking President Biden.

"The special prosecutor cannot make that showing because he has not demonstrated that President Trump's comments have threatened law enforcement or that his comments have resulted in threats to law enforcement," her latest brief says.

"[T]he presidential campaign is in full swing. As Americans turn their attention to the upcoming presidential election, courts should take special care to ensure voters can judge the candidates on their own merits. A prior restraint that might limit a candidate's ability to campaign must meet exacting standards. The proposed order here would not meet those standards," the brief adds.

Michael Moline has covered politics and the legal system for more than 30 years. He is a former managing editor of the San Francisco Daily Journal and former assistant managing editor of The National Law Journal. He also is a former editor of the Florida Flambeau in Tallahassee.

Makerspace, new businesses bring hope for former 'Skid Row of the Plains'

Calls about disturbances in Whiteclay are way down, and alcohol-related accidents haven't materialized

BY: PAUL HAMMEL - JUNE 17, 2024 8:15 AM

WHITECLAY, Nebraska — Art has replaced alcohol at one of the once-notorious buildings in this dusty village on the Nebraska-South Dakota border.

In the back room of the former Arrowhead beer store, Jessi Bean spreads out colorful fabric on a broad table as she works to make an ornate Native American "ribbon dress."

The brightly lit workspace is part of the Whiteclay Makerspace, which converted the old liquor store

into an area where local artisans can produce homemade crafts using the space's specialized equipment and supplies.

Star quilts, ribbon dresses

In one room, huge quilting machines and sewing machines are used to produce prized "star quilts" and ribbon dresses. In another room, a machine can use photographs to duplicate the image on T-shirts. Tools to make leather goods or do woodworking are also available.

The Makerspace has an in-house supply store, so crafters can obtain fabric, beads and ribbons without the 90-minute drive to Rapid City, South Dakota, or an hour's trip to Chadron, Nebraska. There's a retail store out front where visitors can purchase goods produced at the building.

The goal is to give artisans a place to produce sellable goods to supplement their income or establish a business.

But the founder of the Makerspace said it has also helped to turn around the image of Whiteclay, which, before the four beer-only liquor stores were closed in 2017, was inhabited by street people who openly drank, urinated and defecated along the highway that runs through town to the Oglala Sioux reservation, just across the border to the north.

Back then, Whiteclay was blamed for contributing to the rampant alcoholism and alcohol-related problems on the Pine Ridge Reservation, where sales and possession of alcohol are officially banned and where poverty levels are at or near a national high.

"There's a lot of people who feel the old Whiteclay is in the back of their minds now. And that's not a bad thing," said Jon Ruybalid, a Nebraska-based entrepreneur who converted the old liquor store into the Makerspace.

Dramatic change

Dramatic changes were evident on a recent visit to the unincorporated village, which has a cluster of businesses and a couple of homes along Nebraska Highway 87, in the far northwest corner of Nebraska near the scenic Pine Ridge.

There are now two discount stores in town, a Dollar General and a Family Dollar, along with a new tax preparation business. A steady stream of traffic pulls into two long-running stores, the Whiteclay Grocery and Abe's General Store. And up the highway, the tribal-owned Oglala Sioux Lakota Nursing Home has



Jessi Bean strings ribbons on a "ribbon skirt" she is working on at the Whiteclay Makerspace, located in a renovated beer store in Whiteclay. (Paul Hammel/Nebraska Examiner)

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 28 of 81

expanded, adding a 12-bed memory care wing a couple of years ago.

Gone are the dozen or more intoxicated people who lay against buildings, drank cans of high-alcohol beer and harassed and panhandled shoppers. Also gone are the piles of beer cans and trash and the smell of urine on the street.

Once called "The Skid Row of the Plains," there's a new attitude in Whiteclay.

"It's been a big change," said Alberta Miller, who drove from Porcupine, South Dakota, to shop at the grocery store. "There's more business. People feel safe."

Sheridan County Sheriff Jeff Brewer said calls for service in Whiteclay are way down, allowing local deputies to better patrol other roads in the rural ranching area.

Not the 'highway of death'

Predictions that closing the Whiteclay beer stores would just shift the street people, beer purchases and alcohol problems to Rushville, 23 miles to the south — leading to a surge in drunken driving accidents — haven't come true, Brewer said.

During his five years as sheriff, he said, there have been two fatality accidents along Highway 87, and one was due to a sober motorist not seeing a pedestrian wearing dark clothing on the roadway. It was unclear if the other fatality was alcohol related, he said.

"It's not the highway of death that they said it was going to be," said Brewer, who worked several decades with the Gordon Police Department before becoming sheriff.

Instead, the rural county is saving some money, he said, because they get fewer calls for disturbances at Whiteclay, along with fewer cases to prosecute and fewer people to jail.

"There was a lot of money put into that," Brewer said. "To me, the benefit was to a handful of people who were making money, and the rest of us were paying for it."

Still in the plans for Whiteclay is a wellness center proposed two years ago by a tribal entity, the Thunder Valley Community Development Corp.

Some problems have shifted

Despite the closing of the Whiteclay beer stores, substance-abuse problems on the reservation — whose residents bought up to 4 million cans of beer a year in Whiteclay — persist, those interviewed said.

Some of the problems have shifted.

Instead of high-alcohol content beer from Whiteclay, bootleggers are selling vodka in plastic bottles. There are stories of rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer being mixed in, too.

Drugs, particularly methamphetamines, have increased as a problem, according to Brewer, and his deputies are encountering more guns during traffic stops, as well as high-speed pursuits.

Representatives of the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council did not respond to phone messages left in recent days, nor did representatives of the tribal police department, which is seeking a new chief.

But at least two members of the tribe said the street people once visible in Whiteclay can now be found in Pine Ridge, the reservation city just two miles across the border, or in Rapid City.

Cast a different light

Meanwhile, at the Whiteclay Makerspace, Jessi Bean sings the praises of having a large, well-equipped facility to pursue her sewing. A teacher at a tribal school, Bean said the summer allows her more time to make ribbon skirts, and she jokes that her students give her a hard time if she's not wearing one.

"It's nice to have a place where you can come together as a community and collaborate," Bean said, adding that she's learned a thing or two from others working at the makerspace.

Nearby, Jack Conroy, a former North Dakota oil field worker, sews a bag to carry pieces used in a Native American sport called "Handgame." It's a guessing game, he said, that sometimes involves gambling and sometimes spawns expensive tournaments.

Conroy also runs a marijuana dispensary in Porcupine. Four years ago, tribal members voted to legalize

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 29 of 81

recreational marijuana, although the reservation remains “dry” concerning alcohol.

He said the makerspace has helped cast “a different light” on Whiteclay.

Holly Albers, who manages the facility, said the goal is to allow tribal and non-tribal members from the area to expand their crafts and make some extra money, and, in some cases, help them create a business.

Many tribal members, Albers said, live paycheck to paycheck, so the extra money from making leather goods, star quilts or artwork helps.

“This isn’t so much about professional artists but for crafters, to make their money back,” she said.

State support lacking

It costs \$3 a day to use the makerspace, or \$20 a month, and the program posts some of the goods produced on the internet to help market them. The facility also conducts workshops on making products and managing bank accounts.

“Believe. Dream. Imagine.” says a sign on the wall.

Ruybalid said the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the nearby tribe to post guards at the reservation’s borders, pushed back progress at the makerspace, but now, he said, “we’re just about to hit our stride.”

He said he was able to purchase and convert the old liquor store with the help of a U.S. Department of Agriculture community development grant, as well as getting financial and volunteer support from Rotary clubs in nearby Hot Springs, South Dakota, and Rapid City.

He lamented that not as much support as expected has come from the State of Nebraska.

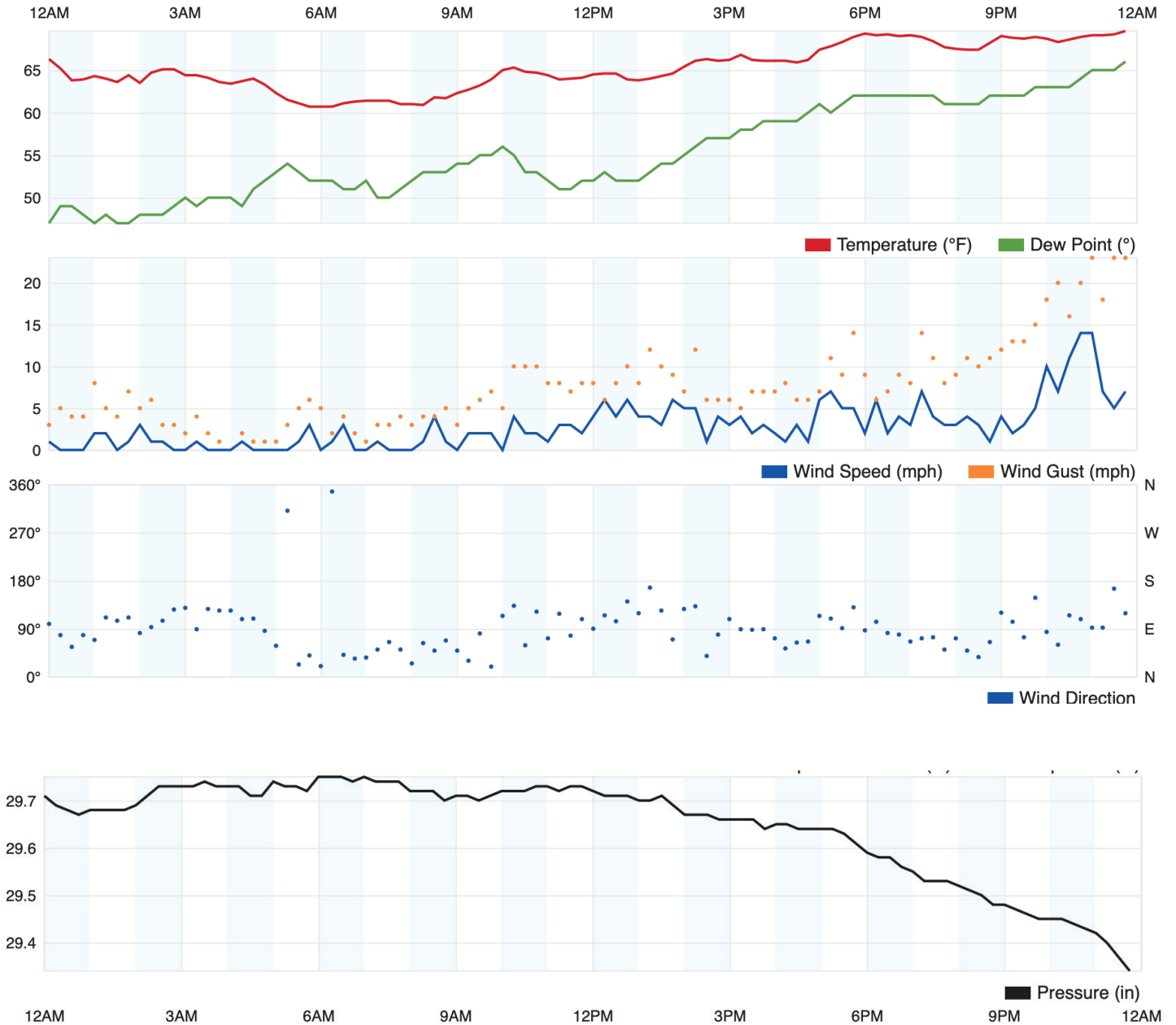
“I can’t say that Nebraska has rallied behind us, which would be encouraging, because we got rid of a black eye,” Ruybalid said. “Now we have an opportunity to make it thrive.”

Senior Contributor Paul Hammel covered the Nebraska state government and the state for decades. Previously with the Omaha World-Herald, Lincoln Journal Star and Omaha Sun, he is a member of the Omaha Press Club’s Hall of Fame. He grows hops, brews homemade beer, plays bass guitar and basically loves traveling and writing about the state. A native of Ralston, Nebraska, he is vice president of the John G. Neihardt Foundation. Hammel retired in April but continues to contribute to the Nebraska Examiner.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 30 of 81

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 31 of 81

Tuesday



High: 76 °F

Chance
T-storms then
Mostly Cloudy
and Breezy

Tuesday Night



Low: 48 °F

Partly Cloudy

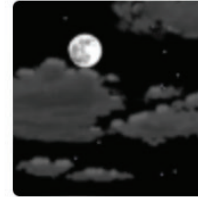
Juneteenth



High: 72 °F

Mostly Sunny

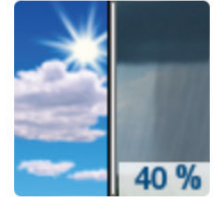
Wednesday
Night



Low: 51 °F

Partly Cloudy

Thursday



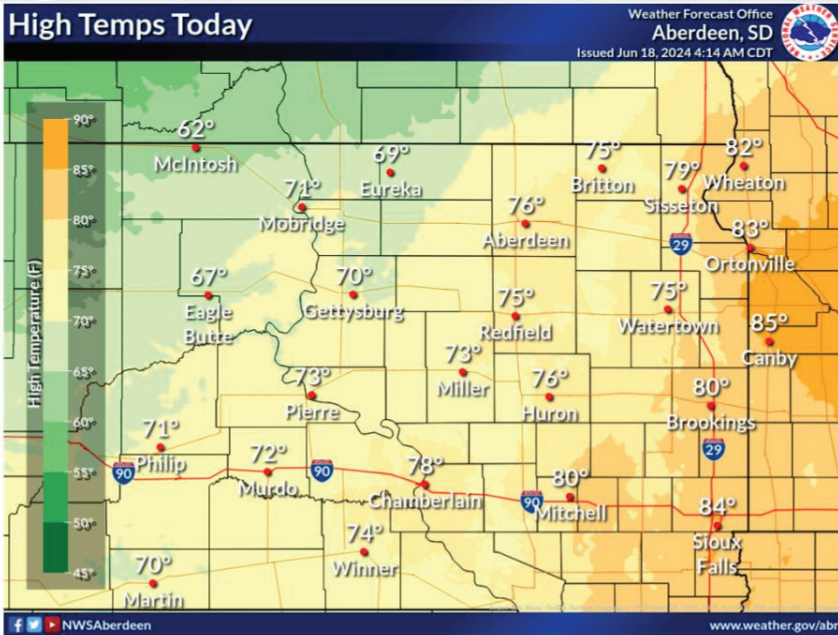
High: 73 °F

Mostly Sunny
then Chance
Showers



Today's Forecast

June 18, 2024
4:32 AM



Probability of Precipitation Forecast (%)

	6/18 Tue					Maximum
	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	
Aberdeen	50	30	15	5	5	52
Britton	60	50	10	10	5	62
Brookings	10	15	35	35	15	35
Chamberlain	30	5	0	0	0	29
Clark	30	30	10	10	5	32
Eagle Butte	5	5	5	5	5	5
Ellendale	50	35	15	5	5	48
Eureka	30	5	5	5	10	32
Gettysburg	45	5	0	5	0	44
Huron	20	25	5	5	5	25
Kennebec	35	0	0	5	0	33
McIntosh	10	15	5	15	15	15
Milbank	35	30	30	25	15	33
Miller	50	15	0	5	0	48
Mobridge	15	5	5	5	5	16
Murdo	25	0	0	5	0	25
Pierre	35	5	0	5	0	36
Redfield	40	25	5	5	0	42
Sisseton	70	45	25	15	10	72
Watertown	25	25	25	15	10	26
Webster	60	40	10	10	5	58
Wheaton	70	35	45	35	15	72



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Showers and thunderstorms will continue this morning, tapering off west to east across the region today. High pressure moves in behind the system keeping the weather quiet tonight and through the day on Wednesday. Cooler temps today with highs in the 60s and 70s.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 32 of 81

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 70 °F at 6:03 PM

Low Temp: 61 °F at 5:47 AM

Wind: 23 mph at 11:01 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 44 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 108 in 1933

Record Low: 38 in 1902

Average High: 81

Average Low: 56

Average Precip in June.: 2.16

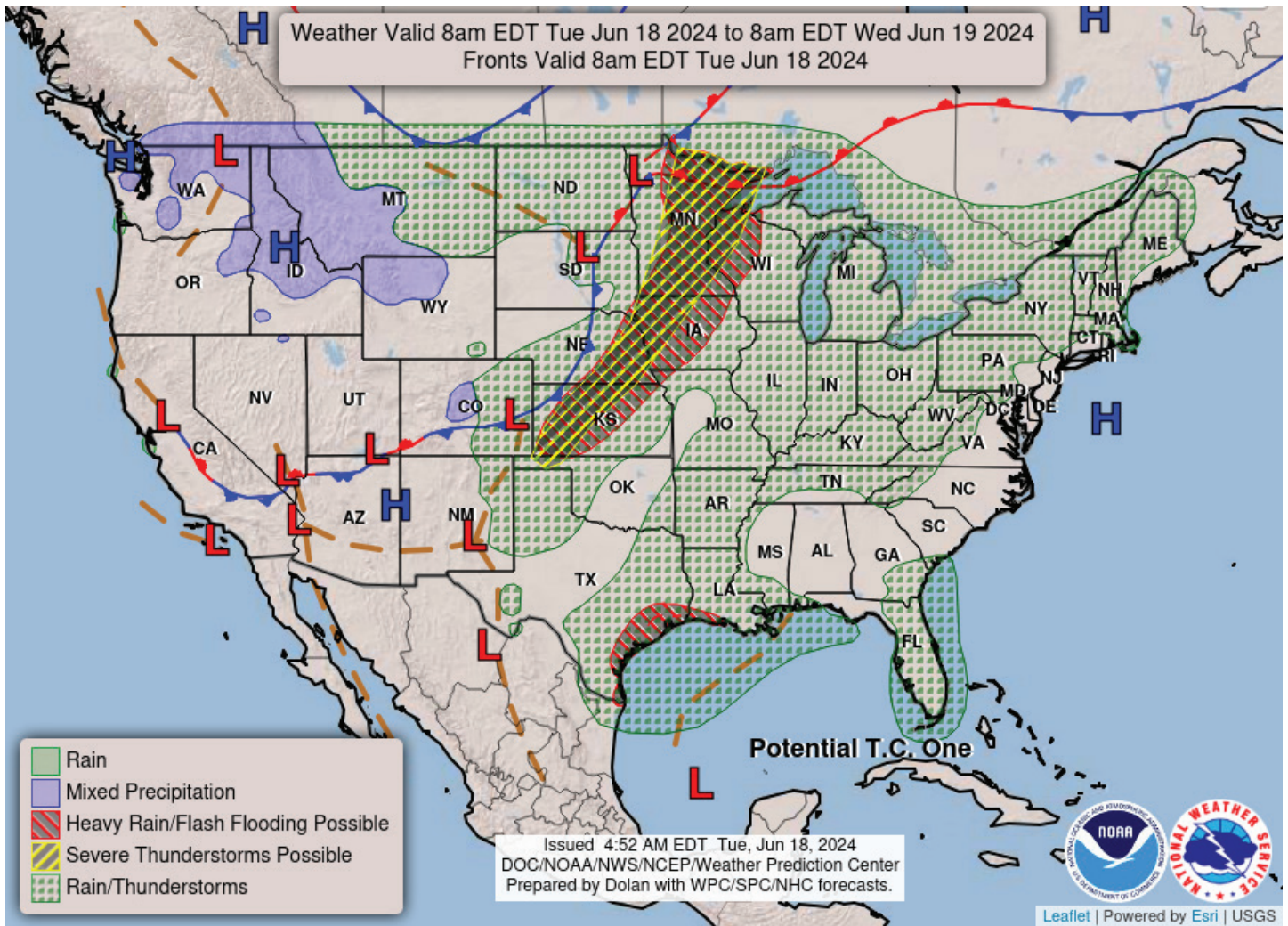
Precip to date in June: 0.50

Average Precip to date: 9.41

Precip Year to Date: 7.57

Sunset Tonight: 9:25:47 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:41:49 am



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 33 of 81

Today in Weather History

June 18, 1964: A tornado moved from SSW to NNE damaging three farmsteads between Hoven to 8 NNW of Bowdle. This tornado was estimated to have F2 strength. An estimated five inches of rain fell in three hours near Bowdle causing soil erosion just before the tornado hit.

Another storm moved from south to north and intensified as it moved northward. Winds between 50 and 100 mph were reported. The highest damage was in McPherson County where an estimated 2 million dollars in crop damage occurred. Heavy rain was also observed on this day. Some storm total rainfall includes; 6.73 inches in Eureka, 4.28 in Roscoe, 3.75 in Leola, 2.68 in Shelby, 2.45 in Britton, and 2.31 inches in Ipswich.

June 18, 1991: Large hail up to 2 inches in diameter broke windows and produced widespread tree damage in Watertown and vicinity. Extensive damage was caused to surrounding soybean and corn fields. Approximately 25,000 acres of crops were destroyed. Thunderstorm winds of 55 mph uprooted trees and downed power lines primarily on the Reville area. Trees fell on cars, and an apartment complex was damaged.

1875 - A severe coastal storm (or possible hurricane) struck the Atlantic coast from Cape Cod to Nova Scotia. Eastport ME reported wind gusts to 57 mph. (David Ludlum)

1958 - Hailstones up to four inches in diameter killed livestock as a storm passed from Joliet to Belfry in Carbon County MT. (The Weather Channel)

1970 - Wind and rain, and hail up to seven inches deep, caused more than five million dollars damage at Oberlin KS. (The Weather Channel)

1972: Hurricane Agnes was one of the most massive June hurricanes on record. The system strengthened into a tropical storm during the night of the 15th and a hurricane on the 18th as it moved northward in the Gulf of Mexico.

1987 - It was a hot day in the Upper Great Lakes Region. Nine cities in Michigan and Wisconsin reported record high temperatures for the date. The high of 90 degrees at Marquette, MI, marked their third straight day of record heat. Severe thunderstorm in the Northern and Central High Plains Region spawned half a dozen tornadoes in Wyoming and Colorado. Wheatridge, CO, was deluged with 2.5 inches of rain in one hour. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Severe thunderstorms in eastern North Dakota and northern Minnesota produced hail three inches in diameter and spawned four tornadoes in Steele County. Thunderstorms also produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Clearbrook MN. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Unseasonably hot weather prevailed in the southwestern U.S. In Arizona, afternoon highs of 103 degrees at Winslow, 113 degrees at Tucson, and 115 degrees at Phoenix were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 34 of 81

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

MASTER MODEL

All of her life Melissa wanted to be a school teacher. It was a dream come true when she enrolled in college and actually began to prepare for a life of teaching. She wanted to be the best teacher any pupil ever had.

She decided to write Thomas Carlyle, a world famous historian, and ask his advice. She wrote, "Tell me, sir, what is the secret of successful teaching?"

His reply was simple, "Be what you would have your pupils to be. All else is unblessed mockery!"

What a reminder for Christians. Though our words are important, our life is a much stronger lesson about who Christ is and what He can do than anything we can ever say. Said Paul to Timothy, "Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith and your purity."

Timothy was a young pastor and under much scrutiny. Paul knew the pressure that he faced and wanted him to be an example to his church in everything that he said or did. Wisely, Paul warned him that only those who lived lives that were modeled after Christ would be worthy examples and effective teachers of the Good News.

And if we read Paul's words carefully, we will notice that every aspect of life is mentioned: speech, behavior, love, faith as well as pure thinking and living.

Prayer: We often forget, Lord, that we are always Your model for the world to see. May our faith be strong, our thoughts pure and our lives modeled after Your Son. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith and your purity. 1 Timothy 4:12



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 35 of 81

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- Black & White \$48.99/year
- Colored \$79.88/year
- Colored \$42.60/6 months
- E-Weekly* \$31.95/year

* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- 1 Month \$15.98
- 3 Months..... \$26.63
- 6 Months..... \$31.95
- 9 Months..... \$42.60
- 12 Months..... \$53.25

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail _____

Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul





WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.14.24

1 25 26 31 65 2

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$61,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 6 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.17.24

3 12 28 29 35 3

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$3,320,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 21 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.17.24

15 26 32 38 46 3

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 36 Mins 46 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.15.24

2 10 19 25 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 36 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.17.24

30 41 42 67 68 16

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 5 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.17.24

30 48 53 58 66 9

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$56,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 5 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Biofuel groups envision ethanol-powered jets. But fueling the effort has not been easy

By JACK DURA and JOSH FUNK Associated Press

MENOKEN, N.D. (AP) — Some day, the passenger jets that soar 35,000 feet (10.6 kilometers) over Dan McLean's North Dakota farm could be fueled by corn grown on his land and millions of other acres across the Midwest.

It's a vision the U.S. airline industry embraces and agricultural groups see as a key to ensuring strong future sales of ethanol, a fuel that consumes more than one-third of the nation's corn crop and offers a cleaner-burning alternative for the nation's airlines.

But making that dream a reality hasn't been easy, in part because even as farmers would benefit from a huge new market for corn, the plan relies on federal tax credits triggered by capturing carbon dioxide at refineries and then moving the gas hundreds of miles through pipelines that would snake across the Midwest, including beneath farmers' fields.

Some of those farmers, along with environmentalist and property rights groups, have gone before regulatory authorities in several Midwest states to oppose the lines, and frequently they have succeeded in at least slowing the process. A key decision is expected soon in Iowa.

"This whole thing is private industry -- rich private industry -- getting tax money, strictly tax money to bury this stuff," said McLean, who opposes a line that would cross his farmland east of Bismarck. "That tax money is coming out of everybody's pocket, and they're going to walk away from it, and we're going to be left with a big poisonous pipe running across the country."

Supporters have faced such criticism for years as they seek approval of pipelines and tax credits. The credits would mean profits for refineries and help make the cost of the new fuel competitive with traditional jet fuel. But opponents see the pipelines as an expensive and potentially dangerous effort that tramples on property rights and fails to reduce greenhouse gases.

Gaining approval of pipelines has proved arduous.

Several companies have dropped their pipeline plans in the face of opposition and delay. The leading remaining company is Summit Carbon Solutions, which is seeking to build a 2,000-mile (3,200-kilometer) pipeline system through five Midwestern states — North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota and Iowa — with carbon dioxide emissions ultimately buried underground in North Dakota.

North Dakota regulators last year denied a siting permit for Summit but later agreed to reconsider. South Dakota regulators in September rejected Summit's application, but company officials said they would file again.

Summit must seek approval from individual counties in Nebraska, and one county earlier this year denied a permit. In Minnesota, regulators are doing an environmental review with future hearings planned.

An upcoming decision by the Iowa Utilities Board about whether to grant a pipeline permit and approve Summit's eminent domain requests will be key to the larger effort throughout the Midwest. Iowa is the nation's leader in corn and ethanol production.

To the renewable fuels industry, failure to gain approval of the pipelines could jeopardize a giant new aviation fuel market they believe would continue decades into the future, even as electric vehicles gradually replace gas-powered cars and traditional vehicles get more efficient.

"There's a lot at stake here. We have a market that we can open up that can really underpin rural prosperity for the next two or three decades," said Monte Shaw, executive director of the Iowa Renewable Fuels Association.

Essential to their efforts is a complicated formula that regulators established to approximate how much each ethanol plant contributes to global warming. Ethanol production already produces less carbon than gasoline production, but the industry must reduce that further to qualify for tax credits that require biofuel

have a carbon score at least 50% lower than gasoline.

The Treasury Department recently tweaked that formula, taking into account the role farming practices, like planting cover crops and using no-till techniques, play in reducing carbon production. However, the rules require farmers to take all those steps so it will still likely be hard for ethanol to qualify without either carbon pipelines or a combination of several other expensive measures, like ensuring an ethanol plant is powered by renewable energy or biogas.

That's why many in the biofuels industry argue that carbon capture pipelines are the best option to obtaining tax credits.

Without the sustainable aviation fuel market, Shaw and others contend corn prices could ultimately collapse in future years as demand from motorists wanes.

Currently, the roughly 200 U.S. ethanol plants have the capacity to produce 18 billion gallons of ethanol annually, though some are idle so the industry produces about 15 billion gallons a year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Passenger jets now burn about 25 billion gallons a year and that is expected to grow to 35 billion gallons annually by 2050.

And whereas most gasoline is now blended with 10% ethanol, sustainable aviation fuel would use a 50% blend of ethanol. It also requires about 1.7 gallons of ethanol for every gallon of jet fuel.

"We refer to carbon capture and sequestration as the key that unlocks the sustainable aviation fuel market," Shaw said.

Ethanol trade groups estimate that federal tax credits for sustainable aviation fuel, combined with the existing credit for renewable fuels, can provide between \$1.85 and \$2.25 per gallon depending on the carbon intensity of the each ethanol plant. California, Minnesota and Illinois also have separate tax credits that can be added to the federal credits for fuel sold in those states.

With one of the biggest state tax credits of \$1.50 in Minnesota or Illinois, some sustainable aviation fuel could receive nearly \$4 per gallon in tax credits.

There is also a separate federal tax credit available for carbon sequestration but the rules won't allow producers to claim it simultaneously with the main federal credit for sustainable aviation fuel, resulting in a smaller total tax credit.

The biggest ethanol trade groups — the Renewable Fuels Association and Growth Energy — say all tax credits combined would help make sustainable aviation fuel competitive with traditional jet fuel that has been selling for about \$2.5 to \$3 a gallon. And costs could drop if ethanol plants start producing the jet fuel on a large scale.

One small plant in Georgia is now producing 10 million gallons a year of sustainable aviation fuel from ethanol, but Geoff Cooper, president of the Renewable Fuels Association, said he expects the industry's capacity to grow over the next five years to close to 800 million gallons annually.

Agricultural economists have estimated farmers would receive about \$441 million more by 2050 if sustainable aviation fuel boosts ethanol demand from the current current 15 billion gallons to 28.5 billion gallons.

An anti-abortion group in South Dakota sues to take an abortion rights initiative off the ballot

By JACK DURA Associated Press

An anti-abortion group in South Dakota has sued to block an abortion rights measure from the November ballot.

In its complaint filed Thursday, Life Defense Fund alleged various wrongdoing by the measure's supporters, as well as invalid signatures and fraud. The group seeks to disqualify or invalidate the initiative.

In May, Secretary of State Monae Johnson validated the measure by Dakotans for Health for the Nov. 5 general election ballot. The measure's supporters had submitted about 54,000 signatures to qualify the ballot initiative. They needed about 35,000 signatures. Johnson's office deemed about 85% of signatures as valid, based on a random sample.

Life Defense Fund alleged Dakotans for Health didn't file a required affidavit for petition circulators'

residency, and that petitioners didn't always provide a required circulator handout and left petition sheets unattended. Life Defense Fund also objected to numerous more signatures as invalid, and alleged petitioners misled people as to what they were signing.

"The public should scrutinize Dakotans for Health's comments and carefully consider its credibility. In the end, the Court will determine whether such unlawful conduct may result in the measure being included on the ballot," Life Defense Fund attorney Sara Frankenstein said in an email Monday.

Dakotans for Health called Life Defense Fund's lawsuit "a last-ditch effort to undermine the democratic process."

"They have thrown everything they could, and now the kitchen sink, to stop the voters from weighing in this November. We are confident that the people of South Dakota are going to be able to make this decision, not the politicians, come this November," co-founder Rick Weiland said in a statement Friday.

The measure would bar the state from regulating "a pregnant woman's abortion decision and its effectuation" in the first trimester, but it would allow second-trimester regulations "only in ways that are reasonably related to the physical health of the pregnant woman."

The constitutional amendment would allow the state to regulate or prohibit abortion in the third trimester, "except when abortion is necessary, in the medical judgment of the woman's physician, to preserve the life or health of the pregnant woman."

South Dakota outlaws abortion as a felony crime, except to save the life of the mother, under a trigger law that took effect in 2022 with the U.S. Supreme Court's Dobbs decision that overturned the constitutional right to an abortion under Roe v. Wade.

The measure drew opposition from South Dakota's Republican-controlled Legislature earlier this year. The Legislature approved a resolution officially opposing the measure, and it passed a law allowing petition signers to withdraw their signatures from initiative petitions. The latter is not expected to affect the measure going before voters.

Life Defense Fund is also seeking to ban Dakotans for Health and its workers from sponsoring or circulating petitions or doing ballot initiative committee work for four years.

South Dakota is one of four states – along with Colorado, Florida and Maryland – where measures to enshrine abortion rights into the state constitution will come before voters in November. There are petition drives to add similar questions in seven more states.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade and ended the nationwide right to abortion two years ago, there have been seven statewide abortion-related ballot measures, and abortion rights advocates have prevailed on all of them.

Biden's Title IX law expanding protections for LGBTQ+ students is dealt another setback

By BRUCE SCHREINER Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) — The Biden administration's effort to expand protections for LGBTQ+ students hit another roadblock Monday, when a federal judge in Kentucky temporarily blocked the new Title IX rule in six additional states.

U.S. District Judge Danny C. Reeves referred to the regulation as "arbitrary in the truest sense of the word" in granting a preliminary injunction blocking it in Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. His ruling comes days after a different federal judge temporarily blocked the new rule from taking effect in Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi and Montana.

Attorneys general in more than 20 Republican-led states have filed at least seven legal challenges to President Joe Biden's new policy. Republicans argue the policy is a ruse to allow transgender girls to play on girls athletic teams. The Biden administration said the rule does not apply to athletics.

Still under consideration is a request for a preliminary injunction filed by the Republican attorneys general of Arkansas, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. The Education Department has asked a judge to deny the request.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 40 of 81

Set to take hold in August, the rule expands Title IX civil rights protections to LGBTQ+ students, expands the definition of sexual harassment at schools and colleges, and adds safeguards for victims. Title IX, passed in 1972, is a law that bars sex discrimination in education.

The ruling Monday in Kentucky was applauded by the state's Republican attorney general, Russell Coleman, who said the regulation would undermine equal opportunities for women.

"The judge's order makes clear that the U.S. Department of Education's attempt to redefine 'sex' to include 'gender identity' is unlawful and beyond the agency's regulatory authority," Coleman said in a statement.

The Education Department said it would "continue to fight for every student" as it reviews the ruling.

"Title IX guarantees that no person experience sex discrimination in a federally funded educational environment," the agency said in a statement. "The department crafted the final Title IX regulations following a rigorous process."

In his ruling, Reeves noted that Title IX was intended to "level the playing field" between men and women in education but said the department was seeking to "derail deeply rooted law" with the new policy.

"At bottom, the department would turn Title IX on its head by redefining 'sex' to include 'gender identity,'" he said. "But 'sex' and 'gender identity' do not mean the same thing. The department's interpretation conflicts with the plain language of Title IX and therefore exceeds its authority to promulgate regulations under that statute."

At a minimum, students of both sexes would "experience violations of their bodily privacy by students of a different sex" if the rule took effect, the judge said.

The rule would mandate that schools "permit biological men into women's intimate spaces, and women into men's, within the educational environment based entirely on a person's subjective gender identity," he said. "This result is not only impossible to square with Title IX but with the broader guarantee of education protection for all students."

The new rule also has "serious First Amendment implications," the judge said.

"The rule includes a new definition of sexual harassment which may require educators to use pronouns consistent with a student's purported gender identity rather than their biological sex," Reeves wrote. "Based on the 'pervasive' nature of pronoun usage in everyday life, educators likely would be required to use students' preferred pronouns regardless of whether doing so conflicts with the educator's religious or moral beliefs. A rule that compels speech and engages in such viewpoint discrimination is impermissible."

The ruling by Reeves, who was appointed to the federal bench by Republican President George W. Bush, was the latest setback for the new protections, which were praised by civil rights advocates but drew backlash from opponents who say they undermine the spirit of Title IX.

The decision was blasted by the Fairness Campaign, a Kentucky-based LGBTQ+ advocacy group. Chris Hartman, its executive director, said the ruling "ignores basic truths about the transgender community and further places in the crosshairs transgender kids, who are among our smallest and most vulnerable populations."

David Walls, executive director of The Family Foundation, a socially conservative, "faith-based" public policy organization in Kentucky, praised the judge for temporarily halting the Biden administration's "radical redefinition of 'sex' that would reverse opportunities that women and girls have enjoyed for 50 years under Title IX."

Several GOP states have laws forbidding transgender girls from competing on girls sports teams. Those states argue that the new policy would open the door to allowing it. The Biden administration has proposed a separate rule that would forbid such blanket bans, but said the newly finalized rule does not apply to athletics.

More than 100 South Dakota primary ballots shouldn't have been rejected, elections official says

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — More than 100 absentee ballots in one of South Dakota's least conservative counties should not have been rejected after being challenged by the leader of a group that has raised doubts about the state's voting system, an elections official said.

Jessica Pollema, president of the conservative group SD Canvassing, challenged absentee ballots in two Minnehaha County precincts that were cast in the state's June 4 primary election. She alleged that voter registration forms were either incomplete or listed addresses that weren't where voters actually lived, in violation of state and federal law, according to her letter to the county.

One precinct board denied her challenge, but the other rejected 132 of 164 challenged ballots, County Auditor Leah Anderson confirmed. South Dakota is one of the country's most conservative states, but that precinct is in a legislative district represented by all Democrats. In the 2020 presidential election, Minnehaha County, which includes the state's largest city, Sioux Falls, voted for Donald Trump by a much smaller margin than the state as a whole.

Pollema declined to comment to The Associated Press. Her group supports petition efforts to prohibit ballot tabulating machines and move to hand counting, among other goals, such as banning mail-in voting. The group's challenges come amid broader Republican challenges to voter rolls in presidential battleground states — of which South Dakota isn't one.

The South Dakota Secretary of State's Office was made aware of the challenge and rejected ballots, and had advised a Minnehaha County official as to what state law deemed as challengeable, though "what was being challenged didn't fall into those parameters," said Rachel Soulek, director of the office's elections division.

"This is a county level matter that we are closely watching, but we are deeply concerned and care about the voting right of all eligible voters," she said.

Anderson said the precinct board made an effort to contact the voters who were challenged, but only had until 7 p.m. on Election Day to reach them.

"After that time, they are no longer officially the precinct board, so they did the best they could to reach out to the voters," Anderson said.

Minnehaha County State's Attorney Daniel Haggar didn't immediately respond to a Monday request for comment.

About 13,000 ballots were cast in Minnehaha County in the June 4 election, which is about 10% of registered voters there, according to the secretary's website.

Half a million immigrants could eventually get US citizenship under new plan from Biden

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is taking an expansive, election-year step to offer relief to potentially hundreds of thousands of immigrants without legal status in the U.S. — aiming to balance his own aggressive crackdown on the border earlier this month that enraged advocates and many Democratic lawmakers.

The White House announced Tuesday that the Biden administration will, in the coming months, allow certain spouses of U.S. citizens without legal status to apply for permanent residency and eventually, citizenship. The move could affect upwards of half a million immigrants, according to senior administration officials.

To qualify, an immigrant must have lived in the United States for 10 years as of Monday and be married to a U.S. citizen. If a qualifying immigrant's application is approved, he or she would have three years to apply for a green card, and receive a temporary work permit and be shielded from deportation in the meantime.

About 50,000 noncitizen children with a parent who is married to a U.S. citizen could also potentially qualify for the same process, according to senior administration officials who briefed reporters on the proposal on condition of anonymity. There is no requirement on how long the couple must have been married, and no one becomes eligible after Monday. That means immigrants who reach that 10 year mark any time after June 17, 2024, will not qualify for the program, according to the officials.

Senior administration officials said they anticipate the process will be open for applications by the end of the summer, and fees to apply have yet to be determined.

Biden will speak about his plans at a Tuesday afternoon event at the White House, which will also mark the 12th anniversary of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, a popular Obama-era directive that offered deportation protections and temporary work permits for young immigrants who lack legal status.

White House officials privately encouraged Democrats in the House, which is in recess this week, to travel back to Washington to attend the announcement.

The president will also announce new regulations that will allow certain DACA beneficiaries and other young immigrants to more easily qualify for long-established work visas. That would allow qualifying immigrants to have protection that is sturdier than the work permits offered by DACA, which is currently facing legal challenges and is no longer taking new applications.

The power that Biden is invoking with his Tuesday announcement for spouses is not a novel one. The policy would expand on authority used by presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama to allow "parole in place" for family members of military members, said Andrea Flores, a former policy adviser in the Obama and Biden administrations who is now a vice president at FWD.us, an immigration advocacy organization.

The parole-in-place process allows qualifying immigrants to get on the path to U.S. permanent residency without leaving the country, removing a common barrier for those without legal status but married to Americans. Flores said it "fulfills President Biden's day one promise to protect undocumented immigrants and their American families."

Tuesday's announcement comes two weeks after Biden unveiled a sweeping crackdown at the U.S.-Mexico border that effectively halted asylum claims for those arriving between officially designated ports of entry. Immigrant-rights groups have sued the Biden administration over that directive, which a senior administration official said Monday had led to fewer border encounters between ports.

Paris gets into the groove for historic

Olympic opening ceremony, adapted to its iconic cityscape

By THOMAS ADAMSON and JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

SAINT-DENIS, France (AP) — The Paris Olympics are getting into the groove for the historic opening ceremony on the River Seine.

Dancers who'll jazz up the July 26 show under the artistic direction of prize-winning French theater director Thomas Jolly are putting finishing touches on a high-octane performance that will combine urban, contemporary, classic, and break dancing, complete with stomps, shouts, and body rolls.

The Associated Press got a behind-the-scenes look of one of their rehearsals, providing an advance peek into preparations for the opening show that is largely shrouded in secrecy. Dance director Maud Le Pladec instructed around 50 dancers on their twists and turns at a warehouse in the northern Parisian suburb of Saint-Denis. She spoke with pride of the rich cultural mix of her melting-pot troupe, declaring: "It represents the part of France I love."

"We're in France but we're talking to the whole world," she said, "which means we have different identities, bodies, ages."

The grandiose open-air ceremony will be held during sunset and is expected to last nearly four hours, transforming the heart of Paris and its iconic landmarks into a giant stage for Jolly's artistic talents but also requiring a massive security effort.

"An opening ceremony has never been held outside of a stadium. There is no model, it's absolute creation," Jolly said in an interview published Tuesday by Le Parisien newspaper.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 43 of 81

Detailing how he's had to revisit some of his ideas to fit the urban environment, Jolly said he'd imagined having a giant ballet with 200 dancers on one of the bridges that span the Seine but, after a study was done, "we were told that everyone doing the same step at the same time would endanger the bridge's solidity."

He also said: "I wanted to build an upside-down Eiffel Tower. I thought it would be pretty for lighting the Olympic flame. But it wasn't doable."

The initial overall concept for the ceremony has had to be adapted "so that the dream and the reality meet," he added.

For security services, the unprecedented decision to parade thousands of Olympians on boats along a 6-kilometer (3.7-mile) stretch of the Seine, from Pont d'Austerlitz to Pont d'Iéna, in front of a 320,000-strong crowd is a huge challenge. About 45,000 security force members will be deployed and the airspace and all airports within a 150-kilometer (90-mile) radius around Paris will be closed for the extravaganza.

Tickets will be free for about 220,000 invited and security-screened spectators watching from upper tiers of the river's banks. About 100,000 paying spectators, including lavish hospitality packages, will watch from the lower riverside and around the Trocadéro plaza — where the parade will end looking across to the Eiffel Tower.

Organizers hope the show will leave an indelible imprint on the massive global television audience and demonstrate French can-do and say it will aim to showcase France's heritage, history and creativity.

"It was, of course, a very audacious decision not to go into a stadium but into the city. It will mark the history of our country for quite a long time," said Tony Estanguet, head of the Paris Games organizing committee, who attended the dance rehearsal.

Organizers say a total of 3,000 dancers will feature in the opening and closing ceremonies for the July 26-Aug. 11 Olympics and the Paralympics that follow from Aug. 28 to Sept. 8.

Dancer Sharlyne Say, 22, described the prospect of performing on a global stage as a "dream come true." "It will be crazy," she added, "because I'm not used to dancing outside."

Thailand's Senate overwhelmingly approves a landmark bill to legalize marriage equality

BANGKOK (AP) — Thailand's Senate voted overwhelmingly on Tuesday to approve a marriage equality bill, clearing the last legislative hurdle for the country to become the first in Southeast Asia to enact such a law.

The bill passed its final reading with the approval of 130 of the 152 members of the Senate in attendance, with 4 voting against it and 18 abstaining.

The bill now needs the pro forma endorsement of King Maha Vajiralongkorn, followed by its publication in the Government Gazette, which will set a date within 120 days when it becomes effective.

Thailand will become the third place in Asia, after Taiwan and Nepal, to allow same-sex marriage. The marriage equality bill, which grants full legal, financial and medical rights for marriage partners of any gender, sailed through the House of Representatives right before the previous parliamentary session concluded in April with the approval of 400 of the 415 members who were present.

The timing of the Senate's vote on Tuesday, the first day of the current parliamentary session, suggested the urgency in getting the bill passed. The legislation will amend the country's Civil and Commercial Code to replace gender-specific words such as "men and women" with gender-neutral words such as "individual."

But it was not approved without a hitch. One member of the Senate, retired army Gen. Worapong Sangnaret, argued that the gender-specific terms should still be included in the law along with the gender-neutral terms. He said excluding them would be a severe "subversion of the institution of family" in Thailand.

The government, confident of the bill's passage, announced several days ago it would host a celebration of the occasion later Tuesday at Government House.

Passing the law is a "a triumph for justice and human rights," said Mookdapa Yangyuenpradorn of the human rights organization Fortify Rights.

"The Thai government must now focus on ensuring swift and effective implementation of this law to

safeguard LGBTI+ rights," she said. "Marriage equality is fundamental to human dignity, and it is essential that Thailand protects these rights without delay or discrimination."

Thailand has a reputation for acceptance and inclusivity but has struggled for decades to pass a marriage equality law. Thai society largely holds conservative values, and members of the LGBTQ+ community say they face discrimination in everyday life.

The government and state agencies are also historically conservative, and advocates for gender equality have had a hard time pushing lawmakers and civil servants to accept change.

The government led by the Pheu Thai party, which took office last year, has made marriage equality one of its main goals. It made a major effort to identify itself with the annual Bangkok Pride parade earlier this month, in which thousands of people celebrated in one of Bangkok's busiest commercial districts.

Celtics win 18th NBA championship with 106-88 Game 5 victory over Dallas Mavericks

By KYLE HIGHTOWER AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Jayson Tatum put his hands behind his head, with TD Garden fans standing on their feet cheering around him, and took it all in.

Walking to the bench, he wrapped both arms around Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla.

The journey was complete.

The Boston Celtics again stand alone among NBA champions.

Tatum had 31 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds, and the Celtics topped the Dallas Mavericks 106-88 on Monday night to win the franchise's 18th championship, breaking a tie with the Los Angeles Lakers for the most in league history.

Boston earned its latest title on the 16th anniversary of hoisting its last Larry O'Brien Trophy in 2008. It marks the 13th championship won this century by one of the city's Big 4 professional sports franchises.

"It means the world," Tatum said on stage after the team received the trophy from NBA Commissioner Adam Silver. "It's been a long time. And damn I'm grateful."

Jaylen Brown added 21 points, eight rebounds and six assists, and was voted the NBA Finals MVP.

"I share this with my brothers and my partner in crime Jayson Tatum," Brown said after the 107th career playoff game he and Tatum have played together — the most for any duo before winning a title.

Jrue Holiday finished with 15 points and 11 rebounds. Center Kristaps Porzingis also provided an emotional lift, returning from a two-game absence because of a dislocated tendon in his left ankle to chip in five points in 17 minutes.

They helped the Celtics cap a postseason that saw them go 16-3 and finish with an 80-21 overall record. That .792 winning percentage ranks second in team history behind only the Celtics' 1985-86 championship team that finished 82-18 (.820).

Mazzulla, in his second season, at age 35 also became the youngest coach since Bill Russell in 1969 to lead a team to a championship.

"You have very few chances in life to be great," Mazzulla said.

Luka Doncic finished with 28 points and 12 rebounds for Dallas, which failed to extend the series after avoiding a sweep with a 38-point win in Game 4. The Mavericks had been 3-0 in Game 5s this postseason, with Doncic scoring at least 31 points in each of them. He said the chest, right knee and left ankle injuries he played through during the finals weren't an excuse for Dallas struggling throughout the series.

"It doesn't matter if I was hurt, how much was I hurt. I was out there," he said. "I tried to play, but I didn't do enough."

Kyrie Irving finished with just 15 points on 5-of-16 shooting and has lost 13 of the last 14 meetings against the Celtics team he left in the summer of 2019 to join the Brooklyn Nets.

Irving thinks better things are ahead for the Mavs.

"I see an opportunity for us to really build our future in a positive manner, where this is almost like a regular thing for us and we're competing for championships," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 45 of 81

NBA teams are now 0-157 in postseason series after falling into a 3-0 deficit.

Mavs coach Jason Kidd believes Doncic and his team will grow from this NBA Finals experience.

"I think the first step is just to be in it. I think that's a big thing," he said. "Yes, we lost 4-1, but I thought the group fought against the Celtics and just, unfortunately, we just couldn't make shots when we had to, or we turned the ball over and they took full advantage of that."

Boston never trailed and led by as many as 26, feeding off the energy of the Garden crowd.

Dallas was within 16-15 early before the Celtics closed the first quarter on a 12-3 run that included eight combined points by Tatum and Brown.

The Celtics did it again in the second quarter when the Mavericks trimmed what had been a 15-point deficit to nine. Boston ended the period with a 19-7 spurt that was capped by a half-court buzzer beater by Payton Pritchard – his second such shot of the series – to give Boston a 67-46 halftime lead.

Over the last two minutes of the first and second quarters, the Celtics outscored the Mavericks 22-4.

The Celtics never looked back.

Russell's widow, Jeannine Russell, and his daughter Karen Russell were in TD Garden to salute the newest generation of Celtics champions.

They watched current Celtics stars Tatum and Brown earn their first rings. It was the trade that sent 2008 champions Kevin Garnett and Paul Pierce to Brooklyn in 2013 that netted Boston the draft picks it eventually used to select Brown and Tatum third overall in back-to-back drafts in 2016 and 2017.

The All-Stars came into their own this season, leading a Celtics team that was built around taking and making a high number of 3-pointers, and a defense that rated as the league's best during the regular season.

The duo made it to at least the Eastern Conference finals as teammates four previous times.

They finally reached the finish line in their fifth deep playoff run together.

After both struggling at times offensively in the series, Tatum and Brown hit a groove in Game 5, combining for 31 points and 11 assists in the first half.

It helped bring out all the attributes that made Boston the NBA's most formidable team this postseason – spreading teams out, sharing the ball, and causing havoc on defense. And even chipping a tooth, like Derrick White did after he was landed on by Dereck Lively II.

"I'll lose all my teeth for a championship," White said.

And it put a championship bow on a dizzying stretch for the Celtics, that saw them lose in the finals to the Golden State Warriors in 2022 and then fail to return last season after a Game 7 home loss to the Miami Heat in the conference finals.

Tatum vowed that night to erase the sting of those disappointments.

Standing in a sea of confetti Monday night he was reminded by his 6-year-old son, Deuce, of what he'd accomplished.

"He told me that I was the best in the world," Tatum said. "I said, 'You're damn right I am.'"

Before his summit with North Korea's Kim, Putin vows they'll beat sanctions together

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin thanked North Korea for supporting his actions in Ukraine and said their countries will cooperate closely to overcome U.S.-led sanctions as he headed to Pyongyang on Tuesday for a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Putin's comments appeared in an op-ed piece in North Korean state media hours before he was expected to arrive for a two-day visit as the countries deepen their alignment in the face of separate, intensifying confrontations with Washington.

Putin, who will be making his first trip to North Korea in 24 years, said he highly appreciates its firm support of his invasion of Ukraine. He said the countries would continue to "resolutely oppose" what he

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 46 of 81

described as Western ambitions "to hinder the establishment of a multipolarized world order based on mutual respect for justice."

Putin also said Russia and North Korea will develop trade and payment systems "that are not controlled by the West" and jointly oppose sanctions against the countries, which he described as "unilateral and illegal restrictive measures."

North Korea is under heavy U.N. Security Council economic sanctions over its nuclear weapons and missile programs, while Russia is also grappling with sanctions by the United States and its Western partners over its aggression in Ukraine.

Putin said the countries will also expand cooperation in tourism, culture and education.

Before heading to North Korea, Putin earlier on Tuesday traveled to Yakutsk, a city in eastern Russia, where he was reportedly planning to meet the local governor, Aisen Nikolayev, and receive briefings on the region's technology and defense-related projects.

In Pyongyang, streets were decorated with Putin's portraits and Russian flags. A banner hung on a building said: "We warmly welcome the President of the Russian Federation."

Putin's visit comes amid growing concerns about an arms arrangement in which Pyongyang provides Moscow with badly needed munitions to fuel Russia's war in Ukraine in exchange for economic assistance and technology transfers that would enhance the threat posed by Kim's nuclear weapons and missile program.

Military, economic and other exchanges between North Korea and Russia have sharply increased since Kim visited the Russian Far East in September for a meeting with Putin, their first since 2019.

U.S. and South Korean officials have accused the North of providing Russia with artillery, missiles and other military equipment to help prolong the war in Ukraine, possibly in return for key military technologies and aid. Both Pyongyang and Moscow have denied accusations about North Korean weapons transfers, which would violate multiple U.N. Security Council sanctions Russia previously endorsed.

Along with China, Russia has provided political cover for Kim's continuing efforts to advance his nuclear arsenal, repeatedly blocking U.S.-led efforts to impose fresh U.N. sanctions on the North over its weapons tests.

In March, a Russian veto at the United Nations ended monitoring of U.N. sanctions against North Korea over its nuclear program, prompting Western accusations that Moscow is seeking to avoid scrutiny as it buys weapons from Pyongyang for use in Ukraine. U.S. and South Korean officials have said they are discussing options for a new mechanism for monitoring the North.

Earlier this year, Putin sent Kim a high-end Aurus Senat limousine, which he had shown to the North Korean leader when they met in September. Observers said the shipment violated a U.N. resolution banning the supply of luxury items to North Korea.

John Kirby, spokesperson of the U.S. National Security Council, said the deepening relationship between Moscow and Pyongyang is concerning, "not just because of the impacts it's going to have on the Ukrainian people, because we know North Korean ballistic missiles are still being used to hit Ukrainian targets, but because there could be some reciprocity here that could affect security on the Korean Peninsula."

"We haven't seen the parameters of all of that right now, certainly haven't seen it come to fruition. But we're certainly going to be watching that very, very closely," he said.

Lim Soosuk, spokesperson of South Korea's Foreign Ministry, said Seoul has been stressing to Moscow that any cooperation between Russia and North Korea must not "proceed in a direction that violates U.N. Security Council resolutions or undermines peace and stability in the region."

Tensions on the Korean Peninsulas are at their highest point in years, with the pace of both Kim's weapons tests and the combined military exercises between the United States, South Korea and Japan intensifying in a cycle of tit-for-tat. The Koreas have also engaged in a Cold War-style psychological warfare that involved North Korea dropping tons of trash on the South with balloons and the South broadcasting anti-Korean propaganda broadcasts with its loudspeakers.

South Korea's military said soldiers fired warning shots to repel North Korean soldiers who temporarily crossed the rivals' land border Tuesday for the second time this month. The South's military said North Korea has been increasing construction activity in frontline border areas, such as installing suspected

anti-tank barriers, reinforcing roads and planting land mines.

Putin has continuously sought to rebuild ties with Pyongyang as part of efforts to restore his country's clout and its Soviet-era alliances. Moscow's ties with North Korea weakened after the 1991 Soviet collapse. Kim Jong Un first met with Putin in 2019 in Russia's eastern port of Vladivostok.

After North Korea, the Kremlin said Putin will also visit Vietnam on Wednesday and Thursday for talks that are expected to be focused on trade. The United States, which has spent years strengthening ties and accelerating trade with Vietnam, criticized Putin's planned visit.

"As Russia continues to seek international support to sustain its illegal and brutal war against Ukraine, we reiterate that no country should give Putin a platform to promote his war of aggression and otherwise allow him to normalize his atrocities," a U.S. Embassy spokesperson in Vietnam said in a statement.

South Korean soldiers fire warning shots after North Korean troops intrude for a 2nd time this month

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean soldiers fired warning shots to repel North Korean soldiers who temporarily crossed the rivals' land border Tuesday for the second time this month, South Korea's military said.

The South's military observed increased North Korean construction activities along their heavily armed border to install suspected anti-tank barriers, reinforce roads and plant land mines. The work has gone on uninterrupted despite several explosions caused by mines that killed or injured an unspecified number of North Korean soldiers, said the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff.

According to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, around 20 to 30 North Korean soldiers, while engaging in unspecified construction work on the northern side of the border, briefly crossed the military demarcation line that bisects the countries as of 8:30 a.m. It said the North Korean soldiers retreated after the South broadcasts warnings and fired warning shots and the South's military didn't spot any suspicious activity after that.

The South also fired warning shots on June 11 after another group of North Korean soldiers briefly crossed the MDL. The Joint Chiefs of Staff said that Tuesday's incident occurred in a different area along the central frontline region. It said it doesn't believe the North Korean soldiers intruded the border intentionally and that the North did not return fire.

The South's military has said the border area is dense with overgrown trees and plants that may have obscured the visibility of North Korean soldiers and caused them to cross the border.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff said it suspects North Korea will expand its border construction activities, which started around April and is possibly aimed at making it harder for North Korean civilians or soldiers to defect to the South as Pyongyang's leadership attempts to strengthen its control over its people.

"Our military is closely monitoring North Korean military activities in the frontline area while guarding against accidental situations," the Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement.

The border intrusions come as tensions rise between the war-divided rivals, who in recent weeks have engaged in Cold War-style psychological warfare and made it clear they are no longer bound by their landmark military agreement in 2018 to reduce tensions.

The Koreas' heavily fortified border, referred to as the Demilitarized Zone, has occasionally been a site of bloodshed and violent confrontations between the rivals. The military demarcation line marks the border between the two Koreas within the DMZ, which is 248 kilometers (154 miles) long and 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) wide. The zone is strewn with an estimated 2 million mines and also guarded by barbed wire fences, tank traps and combat troops on both sides. It's a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War, which ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty.

Undersea explorers mark a tragic day. Things to know about the Titan disaster anniversary

By PATRICK WHITTLE and HOLLY RAMER Associated Press
PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — A year after an experimental submersible imploded en route to the Titanic, unanswered questions linger — with no immediate answers.

Tuesday marks one year since the Titan vanished on its way to the historic wreckage site. After a five-day search that captured the world's attention, officials said the craft had been destroyed and all five people on board killed.

The U.S. Coast Guard quickly convened a high-level investigation into what happened. Concerns leading up to the investigation included the Titan's unconventional design and its creator's decision to forgo standard independent checks.

A look at the one-year anniversary of the Titan tragedy:

The investigation is taking longer than expected Coast Guard officials said in a statement last week that they would not be ready to release the results of their investigation by the anniversary. A public hearing to discuss the findings won't happen for at least two more months, they said.

Investigators "are working closely with our domestic and international partners to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the incident," Marine Board of Investigation Chair Jason Neubauer said, describing the inquiry as a "complex and ongoing effort."

The Titan was owned by a company called OceanGate, which suspended its operations last July, not long after the tragedy. OceanGate declined to comment.

The Titan made its last dive on June 18, 2023, a Sunday morning, and lost contact with its support vessel about two hours later. When it was reported overdue that afternoon, rescuers rushed ships, planes and other equipment to the area, about 435 miles (700 kilometers) south of St. John's, Newfoundland. The Transportation Safety Board of Canada said Monday that there are other submersibles operating within Canadian waters, some of which are not registered with any country.

In addition to OceanGate co-founder Stockton Rush, the implosion killed two members of a prominent Pakistani family, Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman Dawood; British adventurer Hamish Harding; and Titanic expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet.

Remembering those who died David Concannon, a former adviser to OceanGate, said he will mark the anniversary privately with a group of people who were involved with the company or the submersible's expeditions over the years, including scientists, volunteers and mission specialists.

Harding and Nargeolet were members of The Explorers Club, a professional society dedicated to research, exploration and resource conservation.

"Then, as now, it hit us on a personal level very deeply," the group's president, Richard Garriott, said in an interview last week.

Garriott said there will be a remembrance celebration for the Titan victims this week in Portugal at the annual Global Exploration Summit.

The tragedy won't stop deep-sea exploration The Georgia-based company that owns the salvage rights to the Titanic plans to visit the sunken ocean liner in July using remotely operated vehicles, and a real estate billionaire from Ohio has said he plans a voyage to the shipwreck in a two-person submersible in 2026.

Several deep-sea explorers told The Associated Press that the Titan disaster shook the worldwide community of explorers, but it remains committed to continuing its missions to expand scientific understanding of the ocean.

Garriott believes the world is in a new golden age of undersea exploration, thanks to technological advances that have opened frontiers and provided new tools to more thoroughly study already visited places. The Titan tragedy hasn't tarnished that, he said.

"Progress continues," he said. "I actually feel very comfortable and confident that we will now be able to proceed."

Veteran deep-sea explorer Katy Croff Bell said the Titan implosion reinforced the importance of following industry standards and performing rigorous testing. But in the industry as a whole, "the safety track record for this has been very good for several decades," said Bell, president of Ocean Discovery League, a nonprofit organization.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 49 of 81

Tens of millions in the US remain under dangerous heat warnings

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Extreme heat alerts continued for tens of millions of people in the United States on Tuesday as cities including Chicago broke records at the start of a week of sweltering weather.

States in the Midwest started to bake Monday in what the National Weather Service called a dangerous and long duration heat wave that was expected to stretch from Iowa to Maine into at least Friday.

On Monday, Chicago broke a 1957 temperature record with a high of 97 degrees Fahrenheit (36.1 degrees Celsius). Hot and muggy conditions will continue this week with peak heat indexes near 100 F (37.7 C) at times, the National Weather Service in Chicago said in a post on social platform X.

The heat didn't stop people in Chicago's Grant Park from ordering the hottest dishes off the menu at the food truck where Emmanuel Ramos is a cook, WBBM-TV reported.

"They be ordering the hottest stuff on the hottest day," he said. "They order ramen, corn — they just want everything hot. I don't know why," said Ramos. "Right now, something that would be good is the smoothies."

The U.S. last year saw the most heat waves, consisting of abnormally hot weather lasting more than two days, since 1936. Officials warned residents to take precautions.

Much of the Midwest and Northeast were under heat warnings or watches with officials announcing the opening of cooling centers and urging people to limit outdoor activities when possible and to check in with family members and neighbors who may be vulnerable to the heat.

The heat has been especially dangerous in recent years in Phoenix, where 645 people died from heat-related causes in 2023, which was a record. Temperatures there hit 112 F (44.4 C) on Saturday. Weather service forecasters say the first two weeks of June in Phoenix were the hottest start to the month on record there.

A meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Phoenix, Ted Whittock, advised reducing time outdoors between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., staying hydrated and wearing light, looser fitting clothing. More than 100 cooling centers were open in the city and surrounding county, including two new overnight ones.

In Southern California, firefighters increased their containment of a large wildfire in mountains north of Los Angeles on Monday after a weekend of explosive, wind-driven growth along Interstate 5.

The warming temperatures come amid growing concern about the effects of extreme heat and wildfire smoke. The nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity on Monday sent a petition to the Federal Emergency Management Agency asking it to recognize extreme heat and wildfire smoke as major disasters.

The agency did not immediately issue a specific response to the petition. A FEMA spokesperson for the western U.S. states said there was nothing that would preclude an emergency declaration for extreme heat, but noted that there would need to be an immediate threat to life and safety that local authorities could not respond to.

While much of the U.S. swelters, late-season snow was forecast for the northern Rockies on Monday into Tuesday. Parts of Montana and north-central Idaho were under a winter storm warning. As much as 20 inches (51 centimeters) was predicted for higher elevations around Glacier National Park.

Meanwhile, a fresh batch of tropical moisture was bringing an increasing threat of heavy rain and flash flooding to the central Gulf Coast.

Hurricane season this year is forecast to be among the most active in recent memory.

When colleges close, students are left scrambling.

Some never go back to school

By MICHAEL RUBINKAM and MARYCLAIRE DALE Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Katherine Anderson trekked from Texas to Philadelphia last year for a college program she couldn't find anywhere else, combining the music business, entrepreneurship and technology. Two weeks ago, she received the startling news the university would be shutting down within days.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 50 of 81

The closure of the University of the Arts has left her and 1,300 other students scrambling to find somewhere to go or something to do.

By the time the school announced its closure, many colleges had already cut off admissions for the fall. Anderson was accepted into the music industry program at nearby Drexel University, which she said wasn't a perfect match, but "the next best thing, I guess."

"Because of all that's going on, I felt very pressured to make a decision as fast as possible," Anderson said. She is now suing the University of the Arts.

More colleges around the country have been closing as they cope with steep declines in enrollment, a consequence of both changing demographics and the effects of the pandemic. The closures in recent years have left tens of thousands of students in limbo — and at increased risk of never finishing their degrees at all.

Nationwide, private colleges have been closing at a rate of about two per month, according to the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association.

Before announcing it would close, UArts, as it's often called, had trained musicians and artists, dancers and designers in Philadelphia for nearly 150 years. The school had suffered from plunging enrollment and said it was confronted with "significant, unanticipated expenses" that forced its closure. Several state and local investigations are underway into how the university ran out of money so suddenly.

"We have yet to receive the answer to that question," Lynette Kuhn, a high-ranking official in the Pennsylvania Department of Education, said Friday in an online information session for University of the Arts parents and students. Kuhn was responding to one of several questions posed by frustrated students about what university officials knew of its precarious finances — and what they did about it.

"We understand that you students ... face an impossible set of circumstances, with frustration that expands beyond measure," Heather Perfetti, president of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, an accrediting agency, said at the same session. "We all believe that no academic journey should include this kind of severe and abrupt disruption."

Drummer Adam Machado, 18, came to the University of the Arts from New York's Hudson Valley so he could study a range of styles, including jazz and contemporary, in a major city. He had a \$32,000-a-year scholarship, and it's unclear if any other schools will match that. But he also wonders if he'll find the same curriculum, sense of community and ability to pursue gigs in both New York and Philadelphia, where he performed Wednesday night with a band called "Kids That Fly."

He grieves for "not only me, but 1,000 other artists (who) are without a home."

Like many classmates who went through the draining college search process just a year ago, he's not sure what he'll do next.

"You don't really know where to start," said student Cyrus Nasib, 18.

"It's very numbing," said Nasib, a theater major who had just signed a lease for an apartment near the college campus, since his parents are moving from the Philadelphia suburbs to the West Coast. "It kind of just saps your motivation to do anything."

Enrollment at the University of Arts had dropped by nearly half since 2009. Nationwide, the number of college students in the U.S. had already been steadily decreasing for years before the pandemic led to a sharp drop in enrollment. Schools' financial woes have been complicated further by the botched rollout of a new federal financial aid form, which has raised fears that hundreds of thousands of students will forgo college entirely.

The University of the Arts has made arrangements with a half-dozen colleges and universities to take in UArts students and help them complete their degrees. Formal agreements with a half-dozen other schools are under review by the school's accrediting agency.

But the disruptions created by college closures have a history of derailing students' educations.

Nationally, as many as half of students whose campuses close don't resume their studies, according to the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, whose data surveys both nonprofit and for-profit schools, including two-year colleges. Other students lose credits or have to spend more to enroll elsewhere.

Democratic state lawmakers held a hearing Monday on the University of the Arts shutdown, while the Philadelphia city council plans its own hearing for later this month.

"It throws so many red flags up," said Councilman Mark Squilla. "How can the board not be aware of the financial situation and then say, 'We just found out last minute we couldn't get any money.' Were they already leveraged to the hilt? Did they have a line of credit that they can no longer borrow from? Did the banks shut them off? You know, all these questions, nobody's answering."

Film major Ian Callaghan-Kenna, who commuted by bus to the University of the Arts, has been coping with bouts of intense anxiety — not least because the college already has thousands of dollars of his federal aid for the fall term. He has joined a potential class-action lawsuit against the school.

He said he's most upset by how quickly it happened.

"The fact that they acted like everything was normal and that we were a thriving institution just a couple weeks ago, and now they're just all the sudden \$40 million in the tank, having to shut down," he said, referring to one estimate of the shortfall, "it's just very, very upsetting."

Shooter who killed 5 at a Colorado LGBTQ+ club set to plead guilty to federal hate crimes

By COLLEEN SLEVIN Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Anderson Lee Aldrich, who killed five people and injured 19 others at an LGBTQ+ night-club in Colorado Springs, is prepared to plead guilty to federal hate crime charges as well as gun charges Tuesday following new evidence of anti-gay slurs and weapons purchases before the mass shooting.

Aldrich, now 24, is already serving life in prison after pleading guilty to state charges last year. Aldrich also pleaded no contest to hate crimes in that case. Federal prosecutors have focused on proving that the attack at Club Q — a sanctuary for LGBTQ+ people in the mostly conservative city — was premeditated and fueled by bias.

The sentencing agreement between the prosecution and defense would allow Aldrich to avoid the death penalty in exchange for pleading guilty to 50 hate crime as well as gun charges, and instead get multiple life sentences in addition to a 190-year sentence. U.S. District Judge Charlotte Sweeney, the first openly gay federal judge in Colorado, will decide whether to accept it.

Less than a month before the shooting, Aldrich coordinated a spam email campaign against a former work supervisor who is gay, according to recent court filings by prosecutors. They also accuse Aldrich of disseminating someone else's manifesto, which included racist and antisemitic statements and falsely claimed being transgender is a mental illness.

Aldrich spent over \$9,000 on weapons-related purchases from at least 56 vendors between September 2020 and the attack on Nov. 19, 2022, according to new evidence cited by prosecutors.

Investigators found a hand drawn map of Club Q with an entry and exit point marked was found inside Aldrich's apartment, evidence that was also presented in state court. There was also a black binder of training material entitled "How to handle an active shooter."

Defense attorneys in the state case, who said their client is nonbinary and uses they/them pronouns, argued that Aldrich was drugged up on cocaine and medication at the time.

In a series of phone calls from jail with The Associated Press last year, Aldrich didn't answer directly when asked whether the attack was motivated by hate, saying only, that's "completely off base." Aldrich did not reveal a motivation to the AP or in state court and declined to speak during that sentencing.

That Aldrich is nonbinary is a claim rejected by some of the victims as well as the district attorney who prosecuted Aldrich in state court, who called it an effort to avoid hate crime charges.

They include Ashtin Gamblin, who worked the front door that night and remains in physical therapy after being shot nine times. A true member of the LGBTQ+ community would know about the discrimination and the mental health challenges they face and wouldn't attack its members in such a sanctuary, she said.

"To come into the one safe place to do that, you're not part of the community. You just wanted the community gone," Gamblin said. She's among the survivors expected to speak during the hearing about

how the attack still affects their lives.

Aldrich visited the club at least eight times before the attack, including stopping by an hour and a half before the shooting, according to prosecutors. Just before midnight, Aldrich returned wearing a tactical vest with ballistic plates and carrying an AR-15 style rifle and started firing immediately. Aldrich killed the first person in the entryway, shot at bartenders and customers at the bar and then moved onto the dance floor, pausing to reload the rifle's magazine.

The shooting was stopped by a Navy officer who grabbed the barrel of the suspect's rifle, burning his hand, and an Army veteran who helped subdue Aldrich until police arrived, authorities have said.

There had been a chance to prevent such violence: Aldrich was arrested in June 2021, accused of threatening their grandparents and vowing to become "the next mass killer" while stockpiling weapons, body armor and bomb-making materials. But Aldrich's mother and grandparents refused to cooperate, and prosecutors failed to serve subpoenas to family members that could have kept the case alive, so the charges were eventually dismissed.

A felony conviction in the case would have prevented Aldrich from legally buying more firearms. But District Attorney Michael Allen pointed out that most of the gun components used in the shooting were untraceable ghost gun parts that did not require Aldrich to pass a background check to acquire. Two guns seized from Aldrich in the 2021 case were still held by the sheriff's office at the time of the Club Q shooting, he said.

Justifying the proposed sentence, prosecutors wrote: "The horrors that the victims and survivors experienced at the hands of the defendant cannot be overstated. The victims and survivors, who were celebrating Transgender Day of Remembrance, were attacked when they least suspected it by someone who had stood in their presence mere hours before."

Aldrich, who will be returned to state prison after the hearing, is being sentenced federally under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which expanded federal law in 2009 to include crimes motivated by sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

Gamblin wanted the death penalty as an acknowledgement of how many people's lives have been harmed. She said some friends don't want to go out to events anymore and others struggle to keep jobs that involve working with the public.

"We want nothing more to go back to normal, but we know it's not going to happen," she said.

When violence and trauma visit American places, a complex question follows: Demolish, or press on?

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Last week in Parkland, Florida, wrecking equipment began demolishing the building at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School where a gunman's rampage in 2018 ended with 17 people dead. As the rumble of destruction echoed, people in the community set to explaining exactly why ripping the building down was so meaningful — and so crucial.

From former student Bryan Lequerique: "It's something that we all need. It's time to bring an end to this very hurtful chapter in everyone's lives." And Eric Garner, a broadcasting and film teacher, said: "For 6½ years we have been looking at this monument to mass murder that has been on campus every day. ... So coming down, that's the monumental event."

Parkland. Uvalde. Columbine. Sandy Hook. A supermarket in Buffalo. A church in South Carolina. A synagogue in Pittsburgh. A nightclub in Orlando, Florida. When violence comes to a public place, as it does all too often in our era, a delicate question lingers in the quiet afterward: What should be done with the buildings where blood was shed, where lives were upended, where loved ones were lost forever?

Which is the appropriate choice — the defiance of keeping them standing, or the deep comfort that can come with wiping them off the map? Is it best to keep pain right in front of us, or at a distance?

How different communities have approached the problem This question has been answered differently over the years.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 53 of 81

The most obvious example in recent history is the decision to preserve the concentration camps run by Nazi Germany during World War II where millions of Jews and others died — an approach consistent with the post-Holocaust mantras of “never forget” and “never again.” But that was an event of global significance, with meaning for both the descendants of survivors and the public at large.

For individual American communities, approaches have varied. Parkland and others chose demolition. In Pittsburgh, the Tree of Life synagogue, site of a 2018 shooting, was torn down to make way for a new sanctuary and memorial.

But the Tops Friendly Markets in Buffalo, New York, and the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, where racist mass shootings happened, both reopened. And Columbine High School still stands, though its library, where so much bloodshed occurred, was replaced after much impassioned debate. “Finding a balance between its function as a high school and the need for memorialization has been a long process,” former student Riley Burkhart wrote earlier this year in an essay.

What goes into these decisions? Not only emotion and heartbreak. Sometimes it’s simply a question of resources; not all school districts can afford to demolish and rebuild. Sometimes it’s about not wanting to give those who might support the shooter a place to focus their attention.

“Denying such opportunities for those who celebrate the persecution and deaths of those different from themselves is a perfectly sound reason to tear down buildings where mass killings occurred,” Daniel Fountain, a professor of history at Meredith College in North Carolina, said in a email.

Perhaps the most significant driving force, though, is the increasing discussion in recent years about the role of mental health.

“There are changing norms about things like trauma and closure that are at play that today encourage the notion of demolishing these spaces,” said Timothy Recuber, a sociologist at Smith College in Massachusetts and author of “Consuming Catastrophe: Mass Culture in America’s Decade of Disaster.”

For many years, he said, “the prevailing idea of how to get past a tragedy was to put your head down and push past it. Today, people are more likely to believe that having to return to the scene of the crime, so to speak, is liable to re-inflict harm.”

In Pittsburgh’s Squirrel Hill neighborhood, a fence masks the site where the Tree of Life synagogue stood until it was razed earlier this year, more than five years after a gunman killed 11 people in the deadliest antisemitic attack in U.S. history.

David Michael Slater grew up across the street from the synagogue. He understands the ambivalence that can come with choosing whether to knock down.

“It’s easy to see why decision-makers might have chosen one path or the other. And to me, it seems presumptuous for anyone not part of, or directly affected by, the choice to quibble with it,” said Slater, who retired this month after 30 years of teaching middle and high school English. “That said, the decision to demolish such sites, when seen in the context of our escalating culture of erasure, should raise concern.”

The power of memory cuts both ways. From World War II to 9/11, the politics of American memory are powerful — and nowhere more intricate than in the case of mass shootings. The loss of loved ones, societal disagreements over gun laws and differing approaches to protecting children create a landscape where the smallest of issues can give rise to dozens of passionate and angry opinions.

To some, keeping a building standing is the ultimate defiance: You are not bowing to horror nor capitulating to those who caused it. You are choosing to continue in the face of unimaginable circumstances — a robust thread in the American narrative.

To others, the possibility of being retraumatized is central. Why, the thinking goes, should a building where people met violent ends continue to be a looming — literally — force in the lives of those who must go on?

It stands to reason, then, that a key factor in deciding the fates of such buildings coalesces around one question: Who is the audience?

“It’s not a simple choice of should we knock it down or renovate or let it be,” said Jennifer Talarico, a psychology professor at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania who studies how people form personal memories of public events.

"If we're interested in the memories of the people who directly experienced the event, that physical space will serve as a specific and powerful reminder. But if we're talking about remembering or commemorating an event for other people, those who did not experience it, that's a slightly different calculus," Talarico said. "Remembering and forgetting are both powerful forces."

Ultimately, of course, there is a middle ground: eliminating the building itself but erecting a lasting memorial to those who were lost, as Uvalde and other communities have chosen. In that way, the virtues of mental health and memory can both be honored. Life can go on — not obliviously, but not impeded by a daily, visceral reminder of the heartbreak that once visited.

That approach sits well with Slater, who has contemplated such tragedies both from the standpoint of his hometown synagogue and the classrooms where he spent decades teaching and keeping kids safe.

"Like every problem in life that matters, simple answers are hard to come by," Slater said. "If what replaces the Tree of Life, or Parkland, or the next defiled place of worship or learning or commerce, can be made to serve both as proof of our indomitable spirit and as memorialized evidence of what we strive to overcome, perhaps we can have the best of both worst worlds."

The politics of memes:

How Biden and Trump are fighting each other on the internet

By MEG KINNARD and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Whether it's a grinning Joe Biden as "Dark Brandon" or Donald Trump's face superimposed onto a scene from HBO's "Game of Thrones," both presidential campaigns this year have embraced digital memes, the lingua franca of social media.

The campaigns of the Democratic president and Republican former president enthusiastically create and share content trying to shape the narratives around both men. Biden's campaign even recently posted a job seeking a manager of meme pages.

With tens of millions of people using social media as a primary information source, the battle of memes could affect who wins in November. Many Americans say they're not excited about a Biden-Trump rematch and growing digital habits make it harder to reach people through traditional spaces for political advertising like print publications or television.

Memes can be an edgier, faster way to get a political point across than a block of text or a lengthy video. But online misfires have hurt candidates and created major controversies.

Here's a look at how memes are shaping presidential politics.

First: What is a meme? Memes have been around longer than you think.

The term "meme" was coined in 1976 by British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, who used it to refer to a piece of information that is imitated and shared, be it a slogan, a behavior, an idea.

With the rise of internet culture, digital memes have skyrocketed in popularity. They often take the form of visual content like an image or a video with some kind of message that speaks to people who get it because of some knowledge they have or membership in a particular group. Memes don't have to be funny or satirical, but that makes them more likely to be shared widely. And while politicians these days work to deliberately create and share memes, some of the most well-known ones were unintentionally sparked.

One of the earliest memes of the modern era was former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean's enthusiastic scream the night of the Iowa caucuses, with videos and images of the Democrat's guttural shriek being widely shared, drawing ridicule and damaging his already struggling presidential bid.

When President Barack Obama was moving into the White House in 2009, the photos of outgoing President George W. Bush with the text, "Miss me yet?" were broadly shared by Bush's supporters.

A 2011 photo of then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton wearing sunglasses and staring at her phone became a popular meme the following year, "Texts from Hillary," purporting to show her sending snarky texts to politicians and celebrities.

"If you do it well, you tap into something that the group agrees upon or is feeling suspicious about; you tap into something that connects with the audience," said Rebecca Ortiz, an associate professor of

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 55 of 81

advertising at Syracuse University who has researched the influence of memes around political identity. How do the two candidates approach memes? Biden's campaign has created its own stockpile of photos and videos for distribution on official Biden-related accounts. According to a Biden campaign official, advisers are also looking to partner with third-party creators in the coming months, with the hopes of reaching the followings of users who already seem aligned with a pro-Biden message.

By developing relationships with outside creators, campaign officials hope that some undecided or as-yet unpersuaded voters will glom onto Biden's message if they receive it from another account they're already following.

"We're trying really hard to run a digital program that is authentic to our candidate, who is probably not spending all his time on Twitter — actually, he definitely is not," said Clarke Humphrey, senior adviser for digital persuasion for the Biden campaign. "So I think we just have been really creative about how to leverage all the corners of the internet so that he can be where he needs to be without him actually having to go to those places necessarily."

Trump, a prolific user of social media even before he ran for president, has long embraced memes and shared them, as have his very-online political aides and some of his adult children. His oldest son, Donald Trump Jr., shares them frequently and refers to himself on Instagram as a "Meme Wars General."

The campaign did not offer any details about its digital team or its use of memes. Spokesperson Steven Cheung issued a statement calling out Biden's videotaped flubs of speeches and moments of apparent confusion.

"Joe Biden is a walking, talking meme every time he shuffles into public view," Cheung said.

What are some examples of their content? Biden's team has embraced "Dark Brandon," reappropriating a right-wing conspiracy meme that depicted the president as a menacing force and used a nickname, "Brandon," that became an in-joke among conservatives for insulting him.

While "Dark Brandon" originally depicted Biden as a shadowy threat, Democrats adopted it, using the image as a meme to mock conspiracy theories about Biden's purported influence on events like the Super Bowl and portraying him as a powerful force to tout his accomplishments.

Now, the campaign sells signs, mugs, baby onesies and even coffee bags portraying Biden as "Dark Brandon" with red laser eyes.

Trump and his staff regularly share memes that glorify him in over-the-top ways, such as depicting him to be leading a band of dancing Bollywood soldiers.

In April, right before the total solar eclipse swept across North America, Trump shared a meme video on his Truth Social media account that featured clips of people staring up at the sky wearing eclipse glasses and cheering as the sky darkened, before cutting to an image of the sun with a large silhouette of Trump's head blocking it out as people cheer.

And both the Biden and Trump campaigns quickly clip potentially embarrassing videos of their opponent and post them online within minutes, injecting those moments into the social media bloodstream and often driving traditional news coverage.

When have the memes gone wrong? Trump and his campaign often share content created by outside meme-makers — often geared to his base supporters — and sometimes disavow content that stirs outrage later.

In 2016 when he shared a meme about Clinton that appeared to depict the Star of David atop a pile of cash, evoking an antisemitic trope. Trump deleted the image but called it "a basic star, often used by sheriffs."

Last month, Trump drew backlash for sharing a video meme on Truth Social that included references to a "unified Reich" among hypothetical news headlines if he wins the election in November.

The "unified Reich" meme was created by an outside group of meme makers that The New York Times reported has collaborated with the Trump campaign. The Dilley Meme Team describes itself as "America's greatest MAGA Members" and "Trump's Online War Machine" with their creations sometimes shared by Trump himself.

The campaign said the video was shared by a staffer who saw it online and did not see the reference.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 56 of 81

Trump's campaign denied it coordinates with the group but said it appreciates the effort of outside creators.

Brenden Dilley, who leads the Dilley Meme Team, did not respond to emailed questions about the group's work but posted a reply on X saying he would grant an interview in January 2025, after the next presidential inauguration.

Whose memes are going furthest? It's hard to say. Both candidates have tens of millions of followers across social media networks, as do their campaign accounts, but it's difficult to track the number of times any particular meme is shared, or remixed and shared again.

Trump has more social media followers than Biden on Instagram, TikTok, Truth Social (Trump's social media network) and X, though the former president has only used X once since his account on the site, then known as Twitter, was locked after the Jan. 6 insurrection.

Trump's lone post since then was to post his mug shot. It, too, has become a meme.

Majority of Americans favor forgiving medical debt, AP-NORC poll finds

By CORA LEWIS and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Janille Williams wants to buy a house someday — but first, he has to pay down tens of thousands of dollars in medical debt.

"I was hospitalized for a blood infection for three months more than ten years ago, and the bill was for more than \$300,000," said Williams, 38, a Fairbanks, Alaska, resident who works as a retail sales manager for AT&T. "I was in the middle of changing jobs, the only time in my life I haven't had health insurance."

When the bill went to collections, the debt was eventually lowered to about \$50,000, he said, an amount that was still not feasible for him to pay.

Medical debt forgiveness, a priority for some lawmakers and advocates, would make a substantial difference to Williams' credit report and stop the calls from collections agencies.

"They don't give you a choice in the hospital. 'If you leave, you'll die,' they told me. I didn't feel like dying," Williams said. "I don't think anyone should have to go into financial ruin to live."

Many Americans agree, according to a new poll from the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. According to the survey, about half of Americans say it's extremely or very important for the U.S. government to provide debt relief for those who have yet to pay off medical treatments.

Especially since the pandemic, an increasing number of cities and states — including Connecticut, New York City, New Orleans and Chicago — are implementing their own versions of medical debt forgiveness. The Biden administration recently announced a proposed rule that would wipe consumer medical debt off most credit reports.

The poll found that support for medical debt forgiveness is particularly high in cases where a patient experienced health care fraud. About two-thirds of U.S. adults support medical debt forgiveness if the individual has, for example, been wrongfully billed for services. But majorities of Americans favor relief in other situations, too, such as when the patient has made on-time payments toward an existing loan for 20 years, has large amounts of medical debt compared to their income, or is experiencing financial hardship.

About 6 in 10 people with debt from medical bills favor medical debt forgiveness if the person has large amounts of debt compared to their income, compared to about half of people without medical debt.

Denise Early, 65, an Independent in Omaha, Nebraska, who favors medical debt forgiveness, said she experienced an injury on the job that eventually led to several surgeries she believes should have been covered by workers' compensation claims, but were not. The costs eventually pushed her to declare bankruptcy.

Early worked as a custodian at a post office, she said, when she suffered an accident. After initial hospital visits and treatments were ineffective, Early eventually received knee and ankle surgeries to address ongoing difficulties.

"I still get bills every day," Early said. "Forgiveness would help clear a lot of my debts."

Early said she also currently has more than \$100,000 in unpaid student loan debt.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 57 of 81

Although reducing student loan debt has been a focus for President Joe Biden, the poll found that Americans are more likely to say medical debt relief should be a government priority. About 4 in 10 U.S. adults said that it's extremely or very important for the U.S. government to provide student debt relief.

Lesley Turner, an associate professor of public policy at the University of Chicago, who helped craft the poll, said the survey captures a divide regarding who deserves debt relief.

"If you need to go to the emergency room because of a major health issue, that is much less of an active choice than the decision to go to college," she said. "Even though, given today's economy, going to college is in many ways a very important if not essential route to economic mobility and stability."

Overall, Democrats, Republicans, and Independents are all similarly likely to support clearing medical debt if the person experienced fraud, the AP-NORC poll found, though Democrats are more supportive than Republicans in cases where the person is experiencing financial hardship or if the person has large amounts of medical debt compared to their income.

Ed Kane, a 71-year-old Republican from Chicopee, Massachusetts, believes medical debt forgiveness should not be an option. He's survived multiple medical emergencies — including heart attacks and cancer — and credits his employer health insurance for providing good coverage that kept him out of debt.

"We are starting to become a nation that gives away everything. And I'm tired of it," Kane said. "I've worked hard all my life. I worked two jobs. I had great medical insurance because of it. Everybody can do it; there's no reason that people can't reach a higher level than they do."

Medical debt forgiveness is also a higher priority for Democrats. According to the poll, about two-thirds of Democrats say it's extremely or very important for the U.S. government to provide medical debt relief, compared to about 3 in 10 Republicans.

Matt Haskell, 24, of Englewood, Florida, a Republican who said he supports debt forgiveness, also has firsthand experience with high medical bills for an unexpected emergency.

Haskell said he was working on cars, some of which were rusty, at the time of his accident. One afternoon, what seemed like a piece of dust got into his eye.

"It turned out it was a metal flake embedded in my cornea," Haskell said. "I didn't know for five days. I went to the ER when I could no longer open my eyes."

From the visit, Haskell said he incurred more than \$4,500 in debt.

"I generally think it's never anybody's fault when they have a medical condition," he said. "If they get cancer or a tumor or have an episode from undiagnosed diabetes — it's not someone's fault if they develop something and now they're thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt."

Over 75 million people in the US are under heat alerts.

Go indoors and hydrate

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Over 75 million people in the United States were under extreme heat alerts Monday as a heat wave moved eastward, and the mid-Atlantic and New England were likely to see highs in the 90s as the week progresses. Excessive humidity will make it feel even more oppressive.

The U.S. last year saw the most heat waves, consisting of abnormally hot weather lasting more than two days, since 1936. Officials again warned residents to take precautions.

Much of the Midwest and Northeast were under heat warnings or watches.

The heat has been especially dangerous in recent years in Phoenix, where 645 people died from heat-related causes in 2023, which was a record. Temperatures there hit 112 degrees Fahrenheit (44.4 Celsius) on Saturday. Weather service forecasters say the first two weeks of June in Phoenix have been the hottest start to the month on record there.

A meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Phoenix, Ted Whittock, advised reducing time outdoors between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., staying hydrated and wearing light, looser fitting clothing. More than 100 cooling centers were open in the city and surrounding county, including two new overnight ones.

In neighboring New Mexico, the high in Roswell was expected to hit 107 F (41.6 C) on Monday, while

temperatures in southern Colorado were expected to surpass 100 degrees (37.7 C).

In Southern California, firefighters increased their containment of a large wildfire in mountains north of Los Angeles on Monday after a weekend of explosive, wind-driven growth along Interstate 5.

The warming temperatures come amid growing concern about the effects of extreme heat and wildfire smoke. The nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity on Monday sent a petition to the Federal Emergency Management Agency asking it to recognize extreme heat and wildfire smoke as major disasters.

The agency did not immediately issue a specific response to the petition. A FEMA spokesperson for the western U.S. states said there was nothing that would preclude an emergency declaration for extreme heat, but noted that there would need to be an immediate threat to life and safety that local authorities could not respond to.

While much of the U.S. swelters, late-season snow was forecast for the northern Rockies on Monday and Tuesday. Parts of Montana and north-central Idaho were under a winter storm warning. As much as 20 inches (51 centimeters) was predicted for higher elevations around Glacier National Park.

Meanwhile, a fresh batch of tropical moisture was bringing an increasing threat of heavy rain and flash flooding to the central Gulf Coast.

Hurricane season this year is forecast to be among the most active in recent memory.

Muslims in Asia celebrate Eid al-Adha with sacrifice festival and traditional feast

By NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Muslims in Asia on Monday celebrated Eid al-Adha, or the Feast of Sacrifice, with food and prayers for people in Gaza suffering from the Israel-Hamas war.

One of the biggest Islamic holidays, the occasion commemorates Prophet Ibrahim's test of faith through slaughtering livestock and animals and distributing the meat to the poor. It's a joyous occasion for which food is a hallmark where devout Muslims buy and slaughter animals and share two-thirds of the meat with the poor and it's a revered observance that coincides with the final rites of the Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia.

Much of Asia, including Indonesia, Malaysia, India and Bangladesh, observed Eid al-Adha on Monday, while Muslims in other parts of the globe, including Saudi Arabia, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen celebrated the holiday on Sunday.

On Monday, worshippers shoulder-to-shoulder joined in communal prayers in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta. Preachers in their sermons called on people to pray for Muslims in Gaza and Rafah.

"Our prayers and thoughts are with our brother and sisters who are now suffering in Palestine," worshipper Adi Prasetya said after praying at a field in southern Jakarta. "There are many opportunities for us now to channel our help through charities."

"May Allah give strength to those ravaged by war... may those who are divided can live in peace again," said another devotee, Berlina Yustiza.

Although Indonesia has more Muslims than any other country in the world, its traditions to mark Eid al-Adha have been influenced by other religions.

Residents in Yogyakarta, an ancient center of Javanese culture and the seat of royal dynasties going back centuries, believe that if they manage to catch the crops arranged in the form of a cone-shaped pile called "gunungan" that is paraded from the royal palace to the Kauman Grand Mosque, it can bring them good luck. They scrambled to grab various food offerings, made of fruit, vegetables and traditional snacks.

A day before the sacrifice festival, people in East Java's Pasuruan city expressed their gratitude and respect for the sacrificial animals by dressing them as beautiful as a bride. The sacrificial cow is wrapped in a seven-fold garland, a shroud, turban and prayer mat and paraded in a tradition called "manten sapi," or bride cow, before being handed to the sacrificial committee.

Villagers in Demak, a town in Central Java province, celebrated the holiday with a procession of livestock called "apitan" as a form of gratitude for the food and harvest. They bring food in bamboo containers to

the town's square where they eat together after praying. Locals believe the procession will provide prosperity and that disaster would come if it was abandoned.

Eid al-Adha commemorates the Quranic tale of Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice Ismail as an act of obedience to God. Before he could carry out the sacrifice, God provided a ram as an offering. In the Christian and Jewish telling, Abraham is ordered to kill another son, Isaac.

In Malaysia, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim joined thousands of congregants, including foreign tourists, and offered morning prayers at a mosque near his office in Putrajaya, south of the capital Kuala Lumpur.

Meanwhile at a wholesale market in Selayang, just outside the capital, Muslim workers there knelt on mats placed on a large piece of white cloth laid outside the market to perform their prayers.

In his message, Anwar said the opportunity to go on the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca is one of God's great gifts and should make one more ascetic and simpler.

"I invite Muslims to live the message of simplicity that is preached in Hajj, to always be humble and not be mesmerized by the attraction of temporary worldly riches," Anwar said, "Let's not deviate from this goal. The world should be a bridge to the eternal land."

Muslims in India, where they comprise 14% of the population, celebrated Eid al-Adha on Monday across the country.

In New Delhi, thousands offered prayers at the historic Jama Masjid, a 17th century mosque. Families assembled early in the morning and many people shared hugs and wishes after the prayers. Numerous merchants with goats gathered on the streets leading to the mosque where people bargained with them for the best price.

Devotees across Bangladesh, a Muslim-majority nation of over 170 million people, on Monday marked the festival in open fields and mosques where many prayed for a better world free from war.

More than 400,000 devotees, the country's largest congregation, offered their prayers at a field in Kishoreganj district in the morning.

In the capital, Dhaka, a prominent imam led a gathering on the Supreme Court grounds where 35,000 men and women participated.

Millions of cattle were slaughtered across the country to celebrate the day.

Mexico's incoming president says surveys show support for controversial judicial reforms

By MARIANA MARTÍNEZ BARBA Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — In a move reminiscent of her political mentor, incoming Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum on Monday displayed a series of surveys commissioned by her political party that she said show a wide majority approve of controversial judicial changes.

Sheinbaum said the surveys were just "informational." She said the polling was done over the weekend and included face-to-face interviews of thousands of eligible voters across Mexico.

Everyone should do "their own analysis of the results," she said.

The polls, which are not binding in any way, are a page from the playbook of her political mentor, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who will be succeeded by Sheinbaum on Oct. 1.

Critics have questioned the use of the public surveys, calling them more of a public relations ploy to help build momentum to pass legislation.

López Obrador carried out one of his own campaign promises six years ago when he submitted a partially built \$13 billion Mexico City airport project to a national consultation between his own election and taking office. That survey also came down on his side and he cancelled the project upon becoming president.

In another survey, respondents overwhelmingly supported his pet project, the Maya Train, which now carries tourists around the Yucatan Peninsula.

When the National Electoral Institute conducted a national referendum in 2021 on whether former presidents should be prosecuted for wrongdoing, voter turnout was so low that it didn't approach the level necessary to make it binding.

López Obrador has said he would pursue 20 constitutional changes after his Morena party won a two-thirds majority in Congress in the June 2 elections. They include making all judges run for election and enshrining a series of unfunded benefit mandates in Mexico's constitution.

The country's judiciary has blocked several of Lopez Obrador's previous reforms, ruling them unconstitutional.

Sheinbaum's surveys were conducted through private Mexican pollsters Enkoll and De Las Heras Demotecnia, in addition to her party's own commission of surveys. She said Morena did not intervene in any way with the different methodologies, giving them autonomy to conduct surveys throughout the country.

Each poll was based on between 1,000 and 1,500 face-to-face interviews conducted between June 14 and 16. They had margins of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

The surveys asked five questions, including whether participants knew the party is proposing judicial changes and whether they believe there is corruption within the judicial system.

According to Morena, the surveys say nearly nine in 10 participants want the creation of an independent organization that would investigate and hold accountable judges in any act of corruption.

The U.S. has signaled concern about judiciary changes in Mexico.

Last week, Brian Nichols, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs, urged that there be transparency in Mexico's judicial overhaul, particularly concerning any impact the changes could have on U.S. investors and companies. The U.S. ambassador to Mexico, Ken Salazar, said last week that a strong judicial system was important, but it was up to Mexicans to decide on the changes.

Biden will announce deportation protection and work permits for spouses of US citizens

By STEPHEN GROVES, SEUNG MIN KIM and REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is planning to announce a sweeping new policy Tuesday that would lift the threat of deportation for hundreds of thousands of people married to U.S. citizens, an aggressive election-year action on immigration that had been sought by many Democrats.

Biden will announce the new program at a White House event to celebrate the Obama-era "dreamers" directive that offered deportation protections for young undocumented immigrants, according to three people briefed on the White House plans.

The policy will allow roughly 490,000 spouses of U.S. citizens an opportunity to apply for a "parole in place" program, which would shield them from deportations and offer them work permits if they have lived in the country for at least 10 years, according to two of the people briefed. They all spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the announcement publicly.

The White House on Monday declined to comment on the announcement.

The announcement will be a significant marker for Biden. He opened his presidency with promises to fight for widespread relief for the millions of immigrants who live in the country without permanent legal status. But as the number of migrants reached historic levels and he prepares for a reelection contest against Donald Trump, Biden earlier this month enacted a border clampdown that critics say is similar to those pursued by his predecessor.

The White House's decision earlier this month to implement a restrictive proposal that essentially halted asylum processing at the U.S.-Mexico border angered many of Biden's political allies.

However, Rep. Nanette Barragán, D-Calif., who chairs a Democratic group of lawmakers called the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, said she expected the policy announcement Tuesday would cause "tears of joy paired with some sighs of relief" from the families of those who stand to benefit.

Families who would potentially benefit from Biden's actions were expected to attend the White House event Tuesday afternoon.

For some time, administration officials have been deliberating various options to offer protections for immigrants who lack legal status in the U.S. but have longstanding ties. The authority Biden is invoking not only gives deportation protections and work permits, but removes a legal barrier to allow qualifying

immigrants to apply for permanent residency and, eventually, U.S. citizenship. It's a power that's already been used for other categories of immigrants, such as members of the U.S. military or their family members who lack legal status.

"Today, I have spoken about what we need to do to secure the border," Biden said at a June 4 event at the White House, when he rolled out his order to suspend asylum processing for many migrants arriving now to the U.S. "In the weeks ahead — and I mean the weeks ahead — I will speak to how we can make our immigration system more fair and more just."

Biden was also expected to announce a policy of making recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program eligible for visas, rather than the temporary work authorization they currently receive, according to two of the people briefed.

Immigration advocates praised the policy expected to benefit the spouses of U.S. citizens, saying on a conference call Monday that it is often impossible for the spouses to gain legal status even though they have deep ties in the country.

"This is a defining moment in history, and we need to meet this moment," said Ashley DeAzevedo, the president of American Families United, which advocates for U.S. citizens married to foreign nationals.

Still, Biden's use of the authority could come under legal challenge, just as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program has faced. The White House on Tuesday afternoon is marking the 12th anniversary of that program, which was created by then-President Barack Obama to protect young immigrants who lacked legal status, often known as "dreamers."

In recent weeks, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus has called on Biden to act to shield the spouses of U.S. citizens from deportation as well as to consider a policy making work visas available to graduates of U.S. colleges who came to the country without authorization as children.

Biden's announcement was expected to receive a warm reception from Democrats, and several House lawmakers were traveling back to Washington for the announcement.

Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Calif., called Biden's action "justice" that "was long overdue for the people who have been waiting but are key to so many thriving families and communities."

Advocates also argued that the policy made political sense for Biden.

"We anticipate that immigrant and Latino voters will express their gratitude at the ballot box in November," said Gustavo Torres, the president of CASA in Action.

Trump, meanwhile, has said he will deport millions of migrants across the country if he's reelected, doubling down on anti-immigration rhetoric that fueled his previous rise to power.

Biden's policy would only apply to longtime U.S. residents, but Republicans were nonetheless critical. Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, called it a "huge magnet" for would-be immigrants, saying it was "going to attract even more people" to the border.

Judge orders railway to pay Washington tribe nearly \$400 million for trespassing with oil trains

By GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — BNSF Railway must pay nearly \$400 million to a Native American tribe in Washington state, a federal judge ordered Monday after finding that the company intentionally trespassed when it repeatedly ran 100-car trains carrying crude oil across the tribe's reservation.

U.S. District Judge Robert Lasnik initially ruled last year that the railway deliberately violated the terms of a 1991 easement with the Swinomish Tribe north of Seattle that allows trains to carry no more than 25 cars per day. The judge held a trial earlier this month to determine how much in profits BNSF made through trespassing from 2012 to 2021 and how much it should be required to disgorge.

"We know that this is a large amount of money. But that just reflects the enormous wrongful profits that BNSF gained by using the Tribe's land day after day, week after week, year after year over our objections," Steve Edwards, chairman of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, said in a statement. "When there are these kinds of profits to be gained, the only way to deter future wrongdoing is to do exactly what the

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 62 of 81

Court did today — make the trespasser give up the money it gained by trespassing.”

The company based in Fort Worth, Texas, said in an email it had no comment.

The tribe, which has about 1,400 members, sued in 2015 after BNSF dramatically increased, without the tribe's consent, the number of cars it was running across the reservation so that it could ship crude oil from the Bakken Formation in and around North Dakota to a nearby refinery. The route crosses sensitive marine ecosystems along the coast, over water that connects with the Salish Sea, where the tribe has treaty-protected rights to fish.

Bakken oil is easier to refine into the fuels sold at the gas pump and ignites more easily. After train cars carrying Bakken crude oil exploded in Alabama, North Dakota and Quebec, a federal agency warned in 2014 that the oil has a higher degree of volatility than other crudes in the U.S.

Last year, two BNSF engines derailed on Swinomish land, leaking an estimated 3,100 gallons (11,700 liters) of diesel fuel near Padilla Bay.

The tribe pointed out that a corporate predecessor of BNSF laid the tracks in the late 19th century over its objections. The tribe sued in the 1970s, alleging decades of trespassing, and only in 1991 was that litigation settled, when the tribe granted an easement allowing limited use of the tracks.

The easement limited rail traffic to one train of 25 cars per day in each direction. It required BNSF to tell the tribe about the “nature and identity of all cargo” transported across the reservation, and it said the tribe would not arbitrarily withhold permission to increase the number of trains or cars.

The tribe learned through a 2011 Skagit County planning document that a nearby refinery would start receiving crude oil trains. It wasn't until the following year that the tribe received information from BNSF addressing current track usage, court documents show.

The tribe and BNSF discussed amending the agreement, but “at no point did the Tribe approve BNSF's unilateral decision to transport unit trains across the Reservation, agree to increase the train or car limitations, or waive its contractual right of approval,” Lasnik said in his decision last year.

“BNSF failed to update the Tribe regarding the nature of the cargo that was crossing the Reservation and unilaterally increased the number of trains and the number of cars without the Tribe's written agreement, thereby violating the conditions placed on BNSF's permission to enter the property,” Lasnik said.

The four-day trial this month was designed to provide the court with details and expert testimony to guide the judge through complex calculations about how much in “ill-gotten” profit BNSF should have to disgorge. Lasnik put that figure at \$362 million and added \$32 million in post-tax profits such as investment income for a total of more than \$394 million.

In reality, the judge wrote, BNSF made far more than \$32 million in post-tax profits, but adding all of that up would have added hundreds of millions more to what was already a large judgment against the railway.

The tribe said it expects BNSF to appeal the ruling.

The Washington Post's leaders are taking heat for journalism in Britain that wouldn't fly in the US

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — New leaders of The Washington Post are being haunted by their pasts, with ethical questions raised about their actions as journalists in London that illustrate very different press traditions in the United States and England.

An extraordinary trio of stories over the weekend by The New York Times, NPR and the Post itself outline alleged involvement by Post publisher Will Lewis and Robert Winnett, his choice as a new editor, in wrongdoing involving London publications as much as two decades ago.

The Post said on Monday that it had brought back its former senior managing editor to oversee the newspaper's coverage of the matter.

Lewis took over as publisher earlier this year, with a mandate to turn around the financially-troubled newspaper. He announced a reorganization earlier this month where the Post's executive editor, Sally Buzbee, stepped down rather than accept a demotion.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 63 of 81

The coverage revealed Lewis' sensitivity about questions involving his role in a phone hacking scandal that rocked the British press while he was working there. Lewis has maintained that he was brought in by Rupert Murdoch-owned newspapers to cooperate with authorities to clean up after the scandal. Plaintiffs in a civil case have charged him with destroying evidence, which he has denied.

Differences between US and British journalism — some of them bigThe public revelation of phone hacking in 2011 led to the closure of Rupert Murdoch's News of the World tabloid and sparked a public inquiry into press practices that curbed some of the worst excesses.

The British press has long been considered freewheeling in its pursuit of scoops, willing to tolerate behavior frowned upon by its American counterparts. For example, when Lewis and Winnett worked at The Daily Telegraph in 2009, they cooperated on stories about politicians' extravagant expense-account spending. They paid for data that revealed the spending, a reporting practice that would be considered a substantial ethical breach in the U.S.

The Times reported on Saturday that both Lewis and Winnett worked on stories in the 2000s that appeared to be based on fraudulently obtained phone and business records.

Both the Times and Post reported on a 2002 story article about British politicians who had sought to buy a Mercedes-Benz vehicle described as the "Nazi's favorite limousine," based on information obtained by an actor who had faked a German accent to call a manufacturer who gave it to him.

The Post story delved into Winnett's relationship with John Ford, the actor whose "clandestine efforts" helped uncover stories that included private financial dealings by former Prime Minister Tony Blair. He was allegedly adept in "blagging," in which a person misrepresents themselves to persuade others to reveal confidential information. That's illegal under British law unless it can be shown the actions benefit the public.

Headlined "Incoming Post editor tied to self-described 'thief' who claimed role in his reporting," it was among the newspaper's most popular stories on Monday. Winnett was chosen by Lewis to take over the Post's main newsroom after the presidential election.

It was an unusually harsh story for a news organization to write about its own leadership. In announcing that Cameron Barr, who left his position last year, would supervise the reporting, the Post said that "the publisher has no involvement or influence on our reporting." Other editors, including Buzbee's temporary replacement Matt Murray, will also look over stories produced by the media team.

NPR's story details several of these issues, along with Winnett's supervision — when he worked at the Sunday Times in London — of a reporter, Claire Newell, who was hired as a temporary secretary in the U.K. Cabinet office, giving her access to sensitive documents that made their way back to the newspaper.

Is this an 'unrecoverable' situation for Post leadership?The Post said Lewis declined comment on the stories. Winnett, a deputy editor at the Telegraph in London, did not comment on the three most recent stories, and a message to the newspaper by The Associated Press was not immediately returned on Monday.

Similarly silent: Jeff Bezos, the billionaire owner of the Post, who will ultimately decide whether this is a public relations and internal morale storm that he and the institution can weather.

Not everyone is sure that he can, or should.

"The Washington Post is a great, great, great paper, and its greatness pushes the rest of us in the media world to do a better job," New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof wrote on X Monday. "Yet its leadership is now tainted in ways that are unrecoverable; time won't heal the injury but let it fester."

Lewis, a former publisher of The Wall Street Journal who is also vice chairman of the board at The Associated Press, has spent the past week trying to assure Post staff members that he understands and will live up to the ethical standards of American journalism.

Through connection to their land, Tarahumara runners are among Mexico's most beloved champions

By MARÍA TERESA HERNÁNDEZ Associated Press

CHIHUAHUA, México (AP) — Miguel Lara was born to run. It's in his blood, his people's history and tied to the land he calls "home."

"That's what we do," said the 34-year-old ultramarathoner near his cabin in Porochoi, an Indigenous community in the remote Tarahumara mountains of northern Mexico.

"Tarahumara means 'the light-footed,'" Lara said. "Long before marathons existed, the Tarahumara people were already running."

Deep in the mountain range, along the Mexican states of Chihuahua, Durango and Sonora, live about 56,000 Indigenous people. Though they are mostly known as Tarahumaras, they identify themselves as Rarámuris.

Lacking vehicles, paved roads and basic services such as clinics and telephone lines, communities got used to running to cope with long distances, scarcity and isolation.

"When we got married, we used to head to Urique (24 miles or 39 kilometers away) to get food," said Maribel Estrada, Lara's wife and mother to their 3- and 11-year-old children.

"It's a four- or five-hour walk, but running takes less, like three."

With no vehicles at hand, she runs to pick up her children from school, to attend Mass and to visit her mother, who lives 160 miles (nearly 260 kilometers) away.

"When one runs, one is happy," she said, her feet wrapped in rubber sandals with white leather laces.

Like her, Lara and fellow Tarahumaras get used to running long distances with no manuals or coaches. They listen to their bodies' needs; they skip food supplements, smart watches and sportswear.

"We run because we love to," said Lara, who has caught sports brands' attention, but has rejected any sponsorship. "We, the Tarahumara, don't wish to make money; we do this for the thrill of running."

And so he runs. He gets lost in the mountains by himself. He crosses paved roads, rocky terrain and dusty slopes. He sometimes runs for 12 or 20 hours non-stop.

"It's part of our culture," Lara said. "When I was a kid, I watched the elders running for hours and I wondered: How can they endure for so many kilometers? Couldn't I do the same?"

Among his people, running is almost sacred. Local communities organize competitions as part of their religious ceremonies and bet clothing, money and livestock, which inspire runners to run not for themselves, but for their people.

"That's the goal," Lara said. "You make a commitment to win for the entire community."

One of these spiritual celebrations — Yúmari — took place recently in the town of Cuiteco, where dozens of Tarahumaras danced and prayed for good crops and safety.

Between prayers, 13-year-old Evelyn Rascón competed with one of the women's teams.

"I started running as soon as I entered primary school, when I was 6," said Rascón, dressed in a bright, violet skirt. "My aunt taught me. She used to run a lot and loved it."

Shyly, the young runner said that "professionally" she has only run half marathons — around 13 miles — in "no less" than an hour and a half. Average runners rarely travel that distance faster than two hours, but Rascón wishes to break her own record and works hard for her dream.

"When they send me out to pick up something, I run," Rascón said. "And when I head back home from school, I also run through the slopes."

Although Rascón jogs in sneakers, her stepmother Teresa Sánchez — the fastest runner during the Yúmari in Cuiteco — never abandons her rubber sandals with leather straps.

"I always run in sandals," Sánchez said. "I wear them every day and they last up to 2 or 3 years."

Sánchez's mother — a runner, of course — inspired her as a child, but she achieved speed and resistance by working her land. "By walking through the mountain, taking care of the crops and watching my goats," she said.

In her community, the land is what identifies the people as Rarámuri.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 65 of 81

"The Earth is our mother because she provides us with everything," said Candelaria Lechuga, an Indigenous woman who placed a bet during the Cuiteco race. "Everything around us connects us. The air, the sun, the trees, the plants."

Living simply, close to their land, is inherent to the local culture, said Michael Miller, an American ultramarathoner who treasures the lessons he has learned from the Tarahumaras and works at True Messages, an organization that supports local runners.

"They've dealt with centuries of challenges — cartel violence, logging, drought — and they still have their connection to the Earth," Miller said. "That's the wisdom that we, outsiders, have to understand and appreciate."

A few decades ago, his friend Michael Randall Hickman — another American athlete better known as "Micah"— met some Tarahumara runners at a race in Colorado. He soon fell in love with their culture, moved to the mountains and spent the rest of his life among the locals.

"I knew him well," said Lara, who has won several White Horse Ultramarathons, the annual race founded by Hickman, who died in 2012. "He told me: You have to compete with yourself, to break your own record."

His advice touched his heart. Since then, Lara has run side-by-side with the best ultramarathon runners in the world.

Yet he always yearns to come back home. "I've never thought about moving to another country," he said. "We, the Tarahumaras, are not used to the cities."

When he's not racing against international champions, Lara does construction work in nearby villages and raises crops that feed his family. This is the land where his mother — the only coach he has had — became a runner and shared her wisdom with him.

"She didn't tell me how many kilometers to run," Lara said. "She taught me what I would feel while running, what I would suffer."

At the beginning, his mother told him: You're going to be fine, but after two or three hours, you'll get hungry and thirsty. Eight or nine hours later, she said, when the cramps hit you, you will need to ignore them, because if you sit and cool down, they will hit harder.

"It's all about enduring," Lara said. "You have to finish the race no matter how long it takes."

He has no rituals or special pre-race routines prior, but he always turns to God. "I ask him to take care of me, to allow me to get safely to the finish line even if I don't win".

Injuries are common among long-distance runners, Lara said, which makes him hesitate to encourage his youngest admirers to follow in his footsteps.

He asks his children, ages 3 and 11, to be patient, to grow up a bit more before becoming long-distance runners like their ancestors. They nonetheless wait near the finish line at the local races he usually wins.

"They feel the thrills and run the last five, 10 kilometers with me," Lara said. "And not just them. When their classmates watch them running with me, they run too. We call them 'The Little Horses.'"

And so, during those sunny, magical days, Lara, his children and a dozen Tarahumara kids, cross the finish line as one.

"They tell me they feel the emotion, and I tell them that's okay," Lara said.

"Maybe one day, if they like to run, they will be champions too."

Tobacco-like warning label for social media sought by US surgeon general who asks Congress to act

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN AP Business Writer

The U.S. surgeon general has called on Congress to require warning labels on social media platforms and their effects on young people's lives, similar to those now mandatory on cigarette boxes.

In a Monday opinion piece in the The New York Times, Dr. Vivek Murthy said that social media is a contributing factor in the mental health crisis among young people.

"It is time to require a surgeon general's warning label on social media platforms, stating that social media is associated with significant mental health harms for adolescents. A surgeon general's warning

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 66 of 81

label, which requires congressional action, would regularly remind parents and adolescents that social media has not been proved safe," Murthy said. "Evidence from tobacco studies show that warning labels can increase awareness and change behavior."

Murthy said that the use of just a warning label wouldn't make social media safe for young people, but would be a part of the steps needed.

Social media use is prevalent among young people, with up to 95% of youth ages 13 to 17 saying that they use a social media platform, and more than a third saying that they use social media "almost constantly," according to 2022 data from the Pew Research Center.

"Social media today is like tobacco decades ago: It's a product whose business model depends on advertising kids. And as with cigarettes, a surgeon general's warning label is a critical step toward mitigating the threat to children," Josh Golin, executive director at Fairplay, an organization that is dedicated to ending marketing to children, said in a statement.

Actually getting the labels on social media platforms would take congressional action — and it's not clear how quickly that might happen, even with apparent bipartisan unity around child safety online. Lawmakers have held multiple congressional hearings on child online safety and there's legislation in the works. Still, the last federal law aimed at protecting children online was enacted in 1998, six years before Facebook's founding.

"I am hoping that would be combined with a lot of other work that Congress has been trying to do to improve the safety and design and privacy of social media products," said Dr. Jenny Radesky, a developmental behavioral pediatrician at the University of Michigan and leader at the American Academy of Pediatrics. "Those two things would have to go hand in hand, because there's so much that Congress can do to follow the steps of the United Kingdom and the European Union in passing laws that take into account what kids need when they're interacting with digital products."

Even with Congressional approval, warning labels would likely be challenged in the courts by tech companies.

"Putting a warning label on online speech isn't just scientifically unsound, it's at odds with the constitutional right to free speech," said Adam Kovacevich, CEO of the tech industry policy group Chamber of Progress. "It's surprising to see the U.S. Surgeon General attacking social media when teens themselves say it provides an important outlet for social connection."

Last year, Murthy warned that there wasn't enough evidence to show that social media is safe for children and teens. He said at the time that policymakers needed to address the harms of social media the same way they regulate things like car seats, baby formula, medication and other products children use.

To comply with federal regulation, social media companies already ban kids under 13 from signing up for their platforms — but children have been shown to easily get around the bans, both with and without their parents' consent.

Other measures social platforms have taken to address concerns about children's mental health can also be easily circumvented. For instance, TikTok introduced a default 60-minute time limit for users under 18. But once the limit is reached, minors can simply enter a passcode to keep watching.

Murthy believes the impact of social media on young people should be a more pressing concern.

"Why is it that we have failed to respond to the harms of social media when they are no less urgent or widespread than those posed by unsafe cars, planes or food? These harms are not a failure of willpower and parenting; they are the consequence of unleashing powerful technology without adequate safety measures, transparency or accountability," he wrote.

In January the CEOs of Meta, TikTok, X and other social media companies went before the Senate Judiciary Committee to testify as parents worry that they're not doing enough to protect young people. The executives touted existing safety tools on their platforms and the work they've done with nonprofits and law enforcement to protect minors.

Murthy said Monday that Congress needs to implement legislation that will protect young people from online harassment, abuse and exploitation and from exposure to extreme violence and sexual content.

"The measures should prevent platforms from collecting sensitive data from children and should restrict

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 67 of 81

the use of features like push notifications, autoplay and infinite scroll, which prey on developing brains and contribute to excessive use," Murthy wrote.

Sens. Marsha Blackburn and Richard Blumenthal supported Murthy's message Monday.

"We are pleased that the Surgeon General — America's top doctor — continues to bring attention to the harmful impact that social media has on our children," the senators said in a prepared statement.

The surgeon general is also recommending that companies be required to share all their data on health effects with independent scientists and the public, which they currently don't do, and allow independent safety audits.

Murthy said schools and parents also need to participate in providing phone-free times and that doctors, nurses and other clinicians should help guide families toward safer practices.

While Murthy pushes for more to be done about social media in the United States, the European Union enacted groundbreaking new digital rules last year. The Digital Services Act is part of a suite of tech-focused regulations crafted by the 27-nation bloc — long a global leader in cracking down on tech giants.

The DSA is designed to keep users safe online and make it much harder to spread content that's either illegal, like hate speech or child sexual abuse, or violates a platform's terms of service. It also looks to protect citizens' fundamental rights such as privacy and free speech.

Officials have warned tech companies that violations could bring fines worth up to 6% of their global revenue — which could amount to billions — or even a ban from the EU.

Murthy's focus is on teens and social media, but Radesky noted that adults could use a warning label too.

"What we've heard from teens is that they want their parents to be on social media less and on their devices less," she said. "That's another behavior change we hope that parents will reflect on and think about — 'where could I cut down or create some boundaries to create more family time or sleep time?' — and not only hyper-focusing on what teens are doing, but really what all of us as a society are doing in terms of healthy relationships with technology."

Netanyahu dissolved his war Cabinet. How will that affect cease-fire efforts?

By JULIA FRANKEL and JACK JEFFERY Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu disbanded his war Cabinet Monday, a move that consolidates his influence over the Israel-Hamas war and likely diminishes the odds of a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip anytime soon.

Netanyahu announced the step days after his chief political rival, Benny Gantz, withdrew from the three-member war Cabinet. Gantz, a retired general and member of parliament, was widely seen as a more moderate voice.

Major war policies will now be solely approved by Netanyahu's security Cabinet — a larger body that is dominated by hard-liners who oppose the U.S.-backed cease-fire proposal and want to press ahead with the war.

Netanyahu is expected to consult on some decisions with close allies in ad-hoc meetings, said an Israeli official who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media.

These closed-door meetings could blunt some of the influence of the hard-liners. But Netanyahu himself has shown little enthusiasm for the cease-fire plan and his reliance on the full security Cabinet could give him cover to prolong a decision.

Here's key background about the war Cabinet, and what disbanding it means for cease-fire prospects:

Why did Gantz join and then quit the war Cabinet? The war Cabinet was formed after the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel when Gantz, an opposition party leader, joined with Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in a show of unity.

At the time, Gantz demanded that a small decision-making body steer the war in a bid to sideline far-right members of Netanyahu's government.

But Gantz left the Cabinet earlier this month after months of mounting tensions over Israel's strategy

in Gaza.

He said he was fed up with a lack of progress bringing home the dozens of Israeli hostages held by Hamas. He accused Netanyahu of drawing out the war to avoid new elections and a corruption trial. He called on Netanyahu to endorse a plan that — among other points — would rescue the captives and end Hamas rule in Gaza.

When Netanyahu did not express support for the plan, Gantz announced his departure. He said that “fateful strategic decisions” in the Cabinet were being “met with hesitancy and procrastination due to political considerations.”

How will Israel’s wartime policies likely be changed? The disbanding of the war Cabinet only further distances Netanyahu from centrist politicians more open to a cease-fire deal with Hamas.

Months of cease-fire talks have failed to find common ground between Hamas and Israeli leaders. Both Israel and Hamas have been reluctant to fully endorse a U.S.-backed plan that would return hostages, clear the way for an end to the war, and commence a rebuilding effort of the decimated territory.

Netanyahu will now rely on the members of his security Cabinet, some of whom oppose cease-fire deals and have voiced support for reoccupying Gaza.

After Gantz’s departure, Israel’s ultranationalist national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, demanded inclusion in a renewed war Cabinet. Monday’s move could help keep Ben-Gvir at a distance, but it cannot sideline him altogether.

The move also gives Netanyahu leeway to draw out the war to stay in power. Netanyahu’s critics accuse him of delaying because an end to the war would mean an investigation into the government’s failures on Oct. 7 and raise the likelihood of new elections when the prime minister’s popularity is low.

“It means that he will make all the decisions himself, or with people that he trusts who don’t challenge him,” said Gideon Rahat, chairman of the political science department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. “And his interest is in having a slow-attrition war.”

Biden’s Title IX law expanding protections for LGBTQ+ students is dealt another setback

By BRUCE SCHREINER Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) — The Biden administration’s effort to expand protections for LGBTQ+ students hit another roadblock Monday, when a federal judge in Kentucky temporarily blocked the new Title IX rule in six additional states.

U.S. District Judge Danny C. Reeves referred to the regulation as “arbitrary in the truest sense of the word” in granting a preliminary injunction blocking it in Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. His ruling comes days after a different federal judge temporarily blocked the new rule from taking effect in Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi and Montana.

Attorneys general in more than 20 Republican-led states have filed at least seven legal challenges to President Joe Biden’s new policy. Republicans argue the policy is a ruse to allow transgender girls to play on girls athletic teams. The Biden administration said the rule does not apply to athletics.

Still under consideration is a request for a preliminary injunction filed by the Republican attorneys general of Arkansas, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. The Education Department has asked a judge to deny the request.

Set to take hold in August, the rule expands Title IX civil rights protections to LGBTQ+ students, expands the definition of sexual harassment at schools and colleges, and adds safeguards for victims. Title IX, passed in 1972, is a law that bars sex discrimination in education.

The ruling Monday in Kentucky was applauded by the state’s Republican attorney general, Russell Coleman, who said the regulation would undermine equal opportunities for women.

“The judge’s order makes clear that the U.S. Department of Education’s attempt to redefine ‘sex’ to include ‘gender identity’ is unlawful and beyond the agency’s regulatory authority,” Coleman said in a statement.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 69 of 81

The Education Department said it would "continue to fight for every student" as it reviews the ruling. "Title IX guarantees that no person experience sex discrimination in a federally funded educational environment," the agency said in a statement. "The department crafted the final Title IX regulations following a rigorous process."

In his ruling, Reeves noted that Title IX was intended to "level the playing field" between men and women in education but said the department was seeking to "derail deeply rooted law" with the new policy.

"At bottom, the department would turn Title IX on its head by redefining 'sex' to include 'gender identity,'" he said. "But 'sex' and 'gender identity' do not mean the same thing. The department's interpretation conflicts with the plain language of Title IX and therefore exceeds its authority to promulgate regulations under that statute."

At a minimum, students of both sexes would "experience violations of their bodily privacy by students of a different sex" if the rule took effect, the judge said.

The rule would mandate that schools "permit biological men into women's intimate spaces, and women into men's, within the educational environment based entirely on a person's subjective gender identity," he said. "This result is not only impossible to square with Title IX but with the broader guarantee of education protection for all students."

The new rule also has "serious First Amendment implications," the judge said.

"The rule includes a new definition of sexual harassment which may require educators to use pronouns consistent with a student's purported gender identity rather than their biological sex," Reeves wrote. "Based on the 'pervasive' nature of pronoun usage in everyday life, educators likely would be required to use students' preferred pronouns regardless of whether doing so conflicts with the educator's religious or moral beliefs. A rule that compels speech and engages in such viewpoint discrimination is impermissible."

The ruling by Reeves, who was appointed to the federal bench by Republican President George W. Bush, was the latest setback for the new protections, which were praised by civil rights advocates but drew backlash from opponents who say they undermine the spirit of Title IX.

The decision was blasted by the Fairness Campaign, a Kentucky-based LGBTQ+ advocacy group. Chris Hartman, its executive director, said the ruling "ignores basic truths about the transgender community and further places in the crosshairs transgender kids, who are among our smallest and most vulnerable populations."

David Walls, executive director of The Family Foundation, a socially conservative, "faith-based" public policy organization in Kentucky, praised the judge for temporarily halting the Biden administration's "radical redefinition of 'sex' that would reverse opportunities that women and girls have enjoyed for 50 years under Title IX."

Several GOP states have laws forbidding transgender girls from competing on girls sports teams. Those states argue that the new policy would open the door to allowing it. The Biden administration has proposed a separate rule that would forbid such blanket bans, but said the newly finalized rule does not apply to athletics.

How to navigate the end of your pet's life

By MARY CONLON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Dr. Lisa Walling's first house call of the day was with a particularly fluffy hospice patient — a 13-year-old Newfoundland named Rugby.

Rugby happily licked a plate of peanut butter as Walling inserted needles along her back; acupuncture and a ketamine injection to help with pain and mobility problems.

As an end-of-life care veterinarian, Walling considers both pet and owner to be her patients. She's there to make sure animals are as comfortable as possible in their final days, and help humans through the difficult decision of knowing when it's time to say goodbye.

"I find a lot of the time, the biggest part of my job is helping the owners," said Walling. When it came time to euthanize Rugby at a later visit, the whole family was there.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 70 of 81

There are a number of options available to help aging pets and their caregivers, including hospice and palliative care, at-home euthanasia and a growing number of so-called pet death doulas. But navigating decisions around the end of their life can still feel overwhelming. Here are some ways you can take care of your pet and yourself.

How can I make my elderly pet more comfortable? Hospice and palliative care veterinarians like Walling specialize in home visits, which can be a good option if transporting your pet to the vet's office becomes too difficult.

The International Association for Animal Hospice and Palliative Care maintains a directory of its members.

Vets can prescribe medication to treat infections, pain and chronic conditions, and help with diet changes. But there are simple things owners can do themselves around the house to make their pet more comfortable.

As dogs age and their limbs become stiffer, slippery floors like hardwood and tile become difficult to walk on. Try putting carpet runners or yoga mats where your pet walks, and especially where they stand to eat. For breeds with longer hair, you can trim the fur off the bottom of their paws to give their pads more grip.

"We had to take all of the area rugs and patchwork our kitchen," said Rugby's owner, Sam Boege.

For larger dogs that need help getting up or going outside, Walling recommends a special harness that has front and rear handles.

Cats don't struggle with slippery floors as much, but they do get arthritis. If your cat is having trouble stepping up into their litter box, it might be a good idea to get one that's lower to the ground.

For both dogs and cats, try raising the food and water bowls so they don't have to bend down as much.

How do you know when it's time to say goodbye to your pet? If medication and pain management aren't relieving your pet's suffering and you're trying to decide if it may be time to let them go, look for signs like loss of appetite and difficulty breathing — and check with your vet.

"There is a spectrum of time when a euthanasia is an appropriate decision," said Dr. Dani McVety, a veterinarian who founded Lap of Love, the country's largest network of at-home euthanasia providers.

Lap of Love provides resources on its website that can be used to evaluate your animal's quality of life.

Planning for at-home euthanasia can be a good choice for pets who aren't experiencing immediate medical emergencies. It's smart to prepare ahead of time and understand how the procedure works so you can focus on your pet in their last days.

"You're not shortening their life, you're shortening their death," Walling said.

Where to turn for emotional support at the end of your pet's life? You don't have to go through the end of your pet's life alone.

The Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement provides information on its website to help pet owners understand euthanasia and grief. Lap of Love offers pet loss support groups several times a week. There are also pet loss counselors, grief specialists and animal chaplains who offer one-on-one support.

Animal end-of-life doulas, or "death doulas," offer emotional, spiritual and informational support around the time of death. They aren't required to have medical training, but may work with veterinary providers. A doula can help owners process feelings of grief and loss or assist with practical steps like planning for final days.

"Everybody's different," said Lauren Seeley, a death doula based in New York City. "What I find is most people aren't ready to deal with it until it's already happened."

Tens of thousands of Marylanders receive pardons for marijuana convictions

By BRIAN WITTE Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — Maryland Gov. Wes Moore ordered more than 175,000 pardons for marijuana convictions on Monday, saying the "most sweeping state-level pardon in any state" will help reverse harms from the past caused by the war on drugs.

During a news conference, Moore said the executive order will affect "tens of thousands of Marylanders"

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 71 of 81

convicted of misdemeanors. Some may have had more than one conviction pardoned through the process. "We are taking actions that are intentional, that are sweeping and unapologetic, and this is the largest such action in our nation's history," Moore, a Democrat, said.

Though the pardons will not result in anyone being released from incarceration — and nor will they result in having past convictions automatically expunged from a person's background check — advocates praised the move as a way of removing barriers to housing, employment, or educational opportunities based on convictions for conduct that is no longer illegal.

Heather Warnken, executive director of the University of Baltimore School of Law Center for Criminal Justice Reform, described the pardons as "a win for thousands of Marylanders getting a fresh start to pursue education, employment, and other forms of economic opportunity without the stain of a criminal conviction."

Recreational cannabis was legalized in Maryland in 2023 after voters approved a constitutional amendment in 2022 with 67% of the vote. Maryland decriminalized possession of personal use amounts of cannabis on Jan. 1, 2023. Now, 24 states and the District of Columbia have legalized recreational cannabis.

"This is about changing how both government and society view those who have been walled off from opportunity because of broken and uneven policies," Moore said.

Moore said "legalization does not turn back the clock on decades of harm that was caused by this war on drugs."

He continued: "It doesn't erase the fact that Black Marylanders were three times more likely to be arrested for cannabis than white Marylanders before legalization. It doesn't erase the fact that having a conviction on your record means a harder time with everything, everything, from housing, to employment to education."

Shiloh Jordan, who lost his job on his second day at work after a minor cannabis conviction appeared in a background check by his employer, attended the news conference. Moore noted that even though Jordan went back to college and now works for the Center for Urban Families in Baltimore, he still had the cannabis conviction on his record.

"Well today, that ends," Moore said.

Jordan said he was thankful that his experience could be used as a testimony "and offer a lot of change for the people of Maryland."

"It means a lot, because I know a lot of people that have been convicted for petty cannabis charges, and it really affected their whole way of life and their whole way of thinking," Jordan said.

Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown, who attended the news conference, said the action was "long overdue."

"As a nation, we have taken far too long to correct the injustices of a system that is supposed to be just for all."

The attorney general also noted the magnitude of the governor's actions, and he said it was about equity.

"It's about racial justice. While the order applies to all who meet its criteria the impact is a triumphant victory for African Americans and other Marylanders of color who were disproportionately arrested, convicted and sentenced for actions yesterday that are lawful today."

More than 150,000 misdemeanor convictions for simple possession of cannabis will be affected by the order, which also will cover more than 18,000 misdemeanor convictions for use or possession with intent to use drug paraphernalia, according to a summary by the governor's office.

Now that Moore has ordered the pardons, the Maryland Judiciary will ensure each individual electronic docket is updated with an entry indicating the conviction has been pardoned by the governor, a process that should take about two weeks, the governor's office said.

The governor's order also directs the state corrections department to develop a process to indicate a pardon in an individual's criminal record, a process expected to take about 10 months to complete.

The pardons absolve people from the guilt of a criminal offense, and individuals do not need to take any action to receive the pardon.

A pardon is different from an expungement. Although the Judiciary will make a note on the record that the offense has been pardoned, it will still show on the record. Expungement is a process that lets a person ask the court to remove certain kinds of court and police records from public view.

A year after the Titan's tragic dive, deep-sea explorers vow to pursue ocean's mysteries

By PATRICK WHITTLE and HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — The deadly implosion of an experimental submersible en route to the deep-sea grave of the Titanic last June has not dulled the desire for further ocean exploration, despite lingering questions about the disaster.

Tuesday marks one year since the Titan vanished on its way to the historic wreckage site in the North Atlantic Ocean. After a five-day search that captured attention around the world, authorities said the vessel had been destroyed and all five people on board had died.

Concerns have been raised about whether the Titan was destined for disaster because of its unconventional design and its creator's refusal to submit to independent checks that are standard in the industry. The U.S. Coast Guard quickly convened a high-level investigation into what happened, but officials said the inquiry is taking longer than the initial 12-month time frame, and a planned public hearing to discuss their findings won't happen for at least another two months.

Meanwhile, deep-sea exploration continues. The Georgia-based company that owns the salvage rights to the Titanic plans to visit the sunken ocean liner in July using remotely operated vehicles, and a real estate billionaire from Ohio has said he plans a voyage to the shipwreck in a two-person submersible in 2026.

The Titan dove southeast of Newfoundland. The Transportation Safety Board of Canada said Monday that there are other submersibles operating within Canadian waters, some of which are not registered with the country or any other.

Numerous ocean explorers told The Associated Press they are confident undersea exploration can continue safely in a post-Titan world.

"It's been a desire of the scientific community to get down into the ocean," said Greg Stone, a veteran ocean explorer and friend of Titan operator Stockton Rush, who died in the implosion. "I have not noticed any difference in the desire to go into the ocean, exploring."

OceanGate, a company co-founded by Rush that owned the submersible, suspended operations in early July. A spokesperson for the company declined to comment.

David Concannon, a former adviser to OceanGate, said he will mark the anniversary privately with a group of people who were involved with the company or the submersible's expeditions over the years, including scientists, volunteers and mission specialists. Many of them, including those who were on the Titan support ship Polar Prince, have not been interviewed by the Coast Guard, he said.

"The fact is, they are isolated and in a liminal space," he said in an email last week. "Stockton Rush has been vilified and so has everyone associated with OceanGate. I wasn't even there and I have gotten death threats. We support each other and just wait to be interviewed. The world has moved on ... but the families and those most affected are still living with this tragedy every day."

The Titan had been chronicling the Titanic's decay and the underwater ecosystem around the sunken ocean liner in yearly voyages since 2021.

The craft made its last dive on June 18, 2023, a Sunday morning, and lost contact with its support vessel about two hours later. When it was reported overdue that afternoon, rescuers rushed ships, planes and other equipment to the area, about 435 miles (700 kilometers) south of St. John's, Newfoundland.

The U.S. Navy notified the Coast Guard that day of an anomaly in its acoustic data that was "consistent with an implosion or explosion" at the time communications between the Polar Prince and the Titan were lost, a senior Navy official later told The Associated Press. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive technology.

Any sliver of hope that remained for finding the crew alive was wiped away on June 22, when the Coast

Guard announced that debris had been found near the Titanic on the ocean floor. Authorities have since recovered the submersible's intact endcap, debris and presumed human remains from the site.

In addition to Rush, the implosion killed two members of a prominent Pakistani family, Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman Dawood; British adventurer Hamish Harding; and Titanic expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet.

Harding and Nargeolet were members of The Explorers Club, a professional society dedicated to research, exploration and resource conservation.

"Then, as now, it hit us on a personal level very deeply," the group's president, Richard Garriott, said in an interview last week. "We knew not only all the people involved, but even all the previous divers, support teams, people working on all these vessels — those were all either members of this club or well within our network."

Garriott believes even if the Titan hadn't imploded, the correct rescue equipment didn't get to the site fast enough. The tragedy caught everyone from the Coast Guard to the ships on site off guard, underscoring the importance of developing detailed search and rescue plans ahead of any expedition, he said. His organization has since created a task force to help others do just that.

"That's what we've been trying to really correct, to make sure that we know exactly who to call and exactly what materials need to be mustered," he said.

Garriott believes the world is in a new golden age of exploration thanks to technological advances that have opened frontiers and provided new tools to more thoroughly study already visited places. The Titanic tragedy hasn't tarnished that, he said.

Veteran deep-sea explorer Katy Croff Bell agrees. The Titan implosion reinforced the importance of following industry standards and performing rigorous testing, but in the industry as a whole, "the safety track record for this has been very good for several decades," said Bell, president of Ocean Discovery League, a nonprofit organization focused on making deep-sea investigation less expensive and more accessible.

Garriott said there will be a remembrance celebration for the Titan victims this week in Portugal at the annual Global Exploration Summit.

"Progress continues," he said. "I actually feel very comfortable and confident that we will now be able to proceed."

Biden's campaign announces a \$50 million advertising blitz highlighting Trump's conviction

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden's reelection campaign is spending \$50 million through the end of June, a blitz that includes its first television ad trumpeting Donald Trump's felony conviction and signals that the Democratic incumbent is seeking to make his Republican opponent's legal woes a bigger issue heading into November.

The advertising push comes with Election Day still months away. But Biden's campaign says it wants to more clearly define the choice between the candidates ahead of the first debate between them in Atlanta on June 27.

The ad campaign includes more than \$1 million geared toward media reaching Black, Hispanic and Asian American voters and a spot highlighting Trump's conviction on 34 felony counts in a New York hush money case. It will air on general market television and connected TV on streaming devices and cellphones in battleground states as well as on national cable.

Besides Trump's criminal conviction, the ad, titled "Character Matters," notes the former president also was found liable for sexual assault and financial fraud in separate proceedings. Trump also faces felony charges in three other criminal cases, none of which may go to trial before the November election.

"In the courtroom, we see Donald Trump for who he is," intones the ad's narrator. It adds over images of a Trump mug shot and Biden high-fiving supporters, "This election is between a convicted criminal who's only out for himself and a president who's fighting for your family."

Biden also has frequently talked about Trump's 34 felony convictions while decrying the former presi-

dent for claiming that the case against him was politically motivated. Biden argues that "it's reckless, it's dangerous, it's irresponsible for anyone to say this was rigged just because they don't like the verdict."

Biden's son Hunter last week was convicted in Delaware of three felony charges related to the purchase of a revolver in 2018, when, prosecutors argued, he lied on a mandatory gun purchase form by saying he was not illegally using or addicted to drugs. The president has said he would accept the outcome of the case and "continue to respect the judicial process as Hunter considers an appeal."

A central part of Biden's reelection strategy is also highlighting Trump's policy proposals for a second term and firing up disaffected Democrats and independent voters. Still, the campaign producing an ad that leans heavily into Trump's conviction and including it in such a large advertising buy indicates a renewed effort to make Trump's legal problems an election issue in ways Biden's team previously resisted.

"It's a stark contrast, and it's one that matters deeply to the American people," Biden campaign spokesperson Michael Tyler said in a statement. "And it's why we will make sure that every single day we are reminding voters about how Joe Biden is fighting for them, while Donald Trump runs a campaign focused on one man and one man only: himself."

Trump has denied any wrongdoing and has argued, without evidence, that Biden or Justice Department officials orchestrated the New York case against him for political reasons. He and his allies also have raised the prospect of prosecuting political opponents in revenge if he returns to the White House.

Trump campaign spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said that the Biden administration had "weaponized the justice system against President Trump" and that the contrast between her candidate and Biden "will be very clear on the debate stage."

Russia's Putin to visit North Korea amid international concerns over their military cooperation

By TONG-HYUNG KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin will visit North Korea for a two-day visit starting Tuesday, both countries announced, amid international concerns about their military cooperation.

Putin is expected to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un for talks as they deepen their alignment in the face of separate, intensifying confrontations with Washington. It will be Putin's first trip to North Korea in 24 years.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said Putin will pay a state visit on Tuesday and Wednesday at Kim's invitation. North Korean state media didn't immediately provide details. Russia confirmed the visit in a simultaneous announcement.

There are growing concerns about an arms arrangement in which Pyongyang provides Moscow with badly needed munitions to fuel Putin's war in Ukraine in exchange for economic assistance and technology transfers that would enhance the threat posed by Kim's nuclear weapons and missile program.

Military, economic and other cooperation between North Korea and Russia have sharply increased since Kim visited the Russian Far East in September for a meeting with Putin, their first since 2019.

U.S. and South Korean officials have accused the North of providing Russia with artillery, missiles and other military equipment to help prolong its fighting in Ukraine, possibly in return for key military technologies and aid. Both Pyongyang and Moscow have denied accusations about North Korean weapons transfers.

Any weapons trade with North Korea would be a violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions that Russia, a permanent U.N. Security Council member, previously endorsed.

Andrei Lankov, an expert on North Korea at Kookmin University in Seoul, noted that in exchange for providing artillery munitions and short-range ballistic missiles, Pyongyang hopes to get higher-end weapons from Moscow.

Lankov noted that while Russia could be reluctant to share its state-of-the-art military technologies with North Korea, it's eager to receive munitions from Pyongyang. "There is never enough ammunition in a war, there is a great demand for them," Lankov told The Associated Press.

There were signs that Kim was preparing to throw a lavish celebration for Putin as he tries to boost the

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 75 of 81

visibility of their relationship to his domestic audience. The North Korea-focused NK News website said Monday that its analysis of commercial satellite images suggest that the North is possibly preparing a huge parade at a square in the country's capital, Pyongyang.

Kim in recent months has made Russia his primary focus as he tries to strengthen his regional footing and expand cooperation with nations confronting the United States, embracing the idea of what he portrays as a "new Cold War."

During telephone talks with South Korea's vice foreign minister on Friday, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell raised concern that Putin's visit to the North would result in further military cooperation between the countries that potentially undermines stability in the region, Seoul's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"The list of countries willing to welcome Putin is shorter than ever, but for Kim Jong Un, this visit is a victory," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

"Not only does the summit upgrade North Korea's status among countries standing against the U.S.-led international order, it also helps bolster Kim's domestic legitimacy. Russia cannot replace China economically, but increasing cooperation with Moscow shows that Pyongyang has options."

Putin first visited Pyongyang in July 2000, months after his first election when he met with Kim's father, Kim Jong Il, who ruled the country then.

Moscow has said it "highly appreciates" Pyongyang's support for Russia's military action in Ukraine and mentioned its "close and fruitful cooperation" at the United Nations and other international organizations.

Russia and China have repeatedly blocked the U.S. and its partners' attempts to impose fresh U.N. sanctions on North Korea over its barrage of banned ballistic missile tests.

In March, a Russian veto at the United Nations ended monitoring of U.N. sanctions against North Korea over its nuclear program, prompting Western accusations that Moscow is seeking to avoid scrutiny as it allegedly violates the sanctions to buy weapons from Pyongyang for use in Ukraine.

During a news conference in March, South Korean Defense Minister Shin Wonsik said North Korea had already shipped about 7,000 containers filled with munitions and other military equipment to Russia. In return, Shin said that North Korea had received more than 9,000 Russian containers likely filled with aid.

Kim has also used Russia's war in Ukraine as a distraction to dial up his weapons development as he pursues a nuclear arsenal that could viably threaten the United States and its Asian allies. This prompted the U.S. and South Korea to expand their combined military exercises and sharpen their nuclear deterrence strategies built around strategic U.S. assets.

Earlier this year, Putin sent Kim a high-end Aurus Senat limousine, which he had shown to the North Korean leader when they met for a summit in September. Observers said the shipment violated a U.N. resolution aimed at pressuring the North to give up its nuclear weapons program by banning the supply of luxury items to North Korea.

Putin has continuously sought to rebuild ties with Pyongyang as part of efforts to restore his country's global clout and its Soviet-era alliances. Moscow's ties with North Korea weakened after the 1991 Soviet collapse. Kim Jong Un first met with Putin in 2019 in Russia's eastern port of Vladivostok.

After North Korea, the Kremlin said Putin will also visit Vietnam on Wednesday and Thursday. He is set to meet in Hanoi with Gen. Nguyen Phu Trong, the secretary general of the Vietnamese Communist Party, President To Lam, Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh and National Assembly Chairman Tran Thanh Man.

They plan to discuss "prospects for the continued development of a comprehensive strategic partnership between Russia and Vietnam in the trade and economy, scientific and technology, and humanitarian fields," the Kremlin said in a statement.

The United States, which has spent years strengthening ties and accelerating trade with Vietnam, criticized Putin's planned visit.

"As Russia continues to seek international support to sustain its illegal and brutal war against Ukraine, we reiterate that no country should give Putin a platform to promote his war of aggression and otherwise allow him to normalize his atrocities," a U.S. Embassy spokesperson in Vietnam said in a statement.

"If he is able to travel freely, it could normalize Russia's blatant violations of international law and in-

advertently send the message that atrocities can be committed in Ukraine and elsewhere with impunity, worsening human suffering, and prolonging the path to sustainable peace and justice," the statement said.

AI experimentation is high risk, high reward for low-profile political campaigns

By ALI SWENSON, DAN MERICA and GARANCE BURKE Associated Press

Adrian Perkins was running for reelection as the mayor of Shreveport, Louisiana, when he was surprised by a harsh campaign hit piece.

The satirical TV commercial, paid for by a rival political action committee, used artificial intelligence to depict Perkins as a high school student who had been called into the principal's office. Instead of giving a tongue-lashing for cheating on a test or getting in a fight, the principal blasted Perkins for failing to keep communities safe and create jobs.

The video superimposed Perkins' face onto the body of an actor playing him. Although the ad was labeled as being created with "deep learning computer technology," Perkins said it was powerful and resonated with voters. He didn't have enough money or campaign staff to counteract it, and thinks it was one of many reasons he lost the 2022 race. A representative for the group behind the ad did not respond to a request for comment.

"One hundred percent the deepfake ad affected our campaign because we were a down-ballot, less resourced place," said Perkins, a Democrat. "You had to pick and choose where you put your efforts."

While such attacks are staples of the rough-and-tumble of political campaigning, the ad targeting Perkins was notable: It's believed to be one of the first examples of an AI deepfake deployed in a political race in the U.S. It also foreshadowed a dilemma facing candidates in scores of state and local races this year as generative AI has become more widespread and easier to use.

The technology — which can do everything from streamlining mundane campaign tasks to creating fake images, video or audio — already has been deployed in some national races around the country and has spread far more widely in elections across the globe. Despite its power as a tool to mislead, efforts to regulate it have been piecemeal or delayed, a gap that could have the greatest impact on lower-profile races down the ballot.

Artificial intelligence is a double-edged sword for candidates running such campaigns. Inexpensive, user-friendly AI models can help them save money and time on some of their day-to-day tasks. But they often don't have the staff or expertise to combat AI-generated falsehoods, adding to fears that an eleventh-hour deepfake could fool enough voters to tilt races decided by narrow margins.

"AI-enabled threats affect close races and low-profile contests where slight shifts matter and where there are often fewer resources correcting misleading stories," said Josh Lawson, director of AI and democracy for the Aspen Institute.

National safeguards lackingSome local candidates already have faced criticism for deploying AI in misleading ways, from a Republican state senate candidate in Tennessee who used an AI headshot to make himself look slimmer and younger to Philadelphia's Democratic sheriff, whose reelection campaign promoted fake news stories generated by ChatGPT.

One challenge in separating fact from fiction is the decline of local news outlets, which in many places has meant far less coverage of candidates running for state and local office, especially reporting that digs into candidates' backgrounds and how their campaigns operate. The lack of familiarity with candidates could make voters more open to believing fake information, said U.S. Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia.

The Democrat, who has worked extensively on AI-related legislation as chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said AI-generated misinformation is easier to spot and combat in high-profile races because they are under greater scrutiny. When an AI-generated robocall impersonated President Joe Biden to discourage voters from going to the polls in the New Hampshire primary this year, it was quickly reported in the media and investigated, resulting in serious consequences for the players behind it.

More than a third of states have passed laws regulating artificial intelligence in politics, and legislation

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 77 of 81

aimed specifically at fighting election-related deepfakes has received bipartisan support in each state where it has passed, according to the nonprofit consumer advocacy group Public Citizen.

But Congress has yet to act, despite several bipartisan groups of lawmakers proposing such legislation. "Congress is pathetic," said Warner, who said he was pessimistic about Congress passing any legislation protecting elections from AI interference this year.

Travis Brimm, executive director of the Democratic Association of Secretaries of State, called the specter of AI misinformation in down-ballot races an evolving issue in which people are "still working to figure out the best way forward."

"This is a real challenge, and that's why you've seen Democratic secretaries jump to address it and pass real legislation with real penalties around the abuse of AI," Brimm said.

A spokesperson for the Republican Secretaries of State Committee did not respond to the AP's request for comment.

How do you regulate integrity? While experts and lawmakers worry about how generative AI attacks could skew an election, some candidates for state or local office said AI tools have proven invaluable to their campaigns. The powerful computer systems, software or processes can emulate aspects of human work and cognition.

Glenn Cook, a Republican running for a state legislative seat in southeastern Georgia, is less well-known and has much less campaign cash than the incumbent he is facing in a runoff election on Tuesday. So, he has invested in a digital consultant who creates much of his campaign's content using inexpensive, publicly available generative AI models.

On his website, AI-generated articles are peppered with AI-generated images of community members smiling and chatting, none of whom actually exist. AI-generated podcast episodes use a cloned version of his voice to narrate his policy positions.

Cook said he reviews everything before it is made public. The savings — in both time and money — have let him knock on more doors in the district and attend more in-person campaign events.

"My wife and I did 4,500 doors down here," he said. "It frees you up to do a lot."

Cook's opponent, Republican state Rep. Steven Sainz, said he thinks Cook "hides behind what amounts to a robot instead of authentically communicating his opinions to voters."

"I'm not running on artificially generated promises, but real-world results," Sainz said, adding that he isn't using AI in his own campaign.

Republican voters in the district weren't sure what to make of the use of AI in the race, but said they cared most about the candidates' values and outreach on the campaign trail. Patricia Rowell, a retired Cook voter, said she likes that he's been in her community three or four times while campaigning, while Mike Perry, a self-employed Sainz voter, said he's felt more personal contact from Sainz.

He said the expanded use of AI in politics is inevitable, but wondered how voters would be able to differentiate between what's true and what's not.

"It's free speech, you know, and I don't want to discourage free speech, but it comes down to the integrity of the people putting it out," he said. "And I don't know how you regulate integrity. It's pretty tough."

Local campaigns are vulnerable Digital firms that market AI models for political campaigns told the AP most of the AI use in local campaigns so far is minimal and designed to boost efficiency for tedious tasks, such as analyzing survey data or drafting social media copy that meets a certain word limit.

Political consultants are increasingly dabbling with AI tools to see what works, according to a new report from a team led by researchers at the University of Texas at Austin. More than 20 political operatives from across the ideological spectrum told researchers they were experimenting with generative AI models in this year's campaigns, even though they also feared that less scrupulous actors might be doing the same.

"Local-level elections will be so much more challenging because people will be attacking," said Zelly Martin, the report's lead author and a senior research fellow at the university's Center for Media Engagement. "And what recourse do they have to fight back, as opposed to Biden and Trump who have many more resources to fend off attacks?"

There are immense differences in staffing, money and expertise between down-ballot campaigns — for

state legislator, mayor, school board or any other local position — and races for federal office. Where a local campaign might have just a handful of staffers, competitive U.S. House and Senate campaigns may have dozens and presidential operations can balloon to the thousands by the end of the campaign.

The campaigns for Biden and former President Donald Trump are both experimenting with AI to enhance fundraising and voter outreach efforts. Mia Ehrenberg, a spokesperson for the Biden campaign, said they also have a plan to debunk AI-generated misinformation. A Trump campaign spokesperson did not respond to the AP's questions about their plans for handling AI-generated misinformation.

Perkins, the former Shreveport mayor, had a small team that decided to ignore the attack and keep campaigning when the deepfake of him being hauled into the principal's office hit local TV. He said he viewed the deepfake ad against him as a typical dirty trick at the time, but the rise of AI in just two years since his campaign has made him realize the technology's power as a tool to mislead voters.

"In politics, people are always going to push the envelope a bit to be effective," he said. "We had no idea how significant it would be."

Drug shortages keep on growing.

Older, injectable medicines are among the most vulnerable

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

Erin Fox has tracked drug shortages for more than 20 years, and she sees no easy solutions for what has become a record run.

Total active shortages hit an all-time high of 323 in this year's first quarter, according to the University of Utah Drug Information Service. That's up about 86% from a 10-year low of 174 last reached in 2017.

There were 48 new shortages recorded this year through March, according to the data, published by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists.

Still, Fox also sees positive news developing. The associate chief pharmacy officer at University of Utah Health spoke recently with The Associated Press. The conversation has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: Are there any signs that this is letting up?A: Unfortunately, no. We haven't necessarily solved some of the root causes.

We have, overall, relatively few manufacturers. (The U.S. Food and Drug Administration) halted inspections during COVID. Now they're back, at factories that maybe haven't been inspected for five or six years. They're finding some things to fix. Those fixes can take anywhere from 6 to 18 months for production to get fully back on schedule.

Meanwhile, other companies don't necessarily have the capacity to ramp up production to make up the difference.

It's not the FDA's fault. We want them to find those quality deficits. But when FDA goes out looking all at once, it can be pretty disruptive.

Q: What are the typical drugs that land on the shortage list?A: Generic, injectable hospital drugs or older drugs. They are usually pretty low cost. There's not a lot of resilience in the supply chain for another company to make up the difference.

We saw all those chemotherapy shortages last year in part because a large factory in India, (the FDA) found quality problems there. They made a large amount of the U.S. supply. The other companies were unable to quickly make up the difference.

Things have definitely improved, but that factory is still not running.

Q: What is one thing about shortages that patients underestimate?A: They shouldn't automatically assume they won't be able to get that treatment.

It might be delayed or they might have to take a capsule instead of a pill. They might have to call their insurance company to ask if they will cover the brand because sometimes (that) is available while the generic is not.

Don't panic. It's frustrating to have to do a little bit of work, but usually you will still be able to get a treatment.

Q: Is there any good news? A: Last year, Congress held four hearings on shortages. They're still very interested. People are really starting to talk about doing hard work both on the policy side but also maybe a little bit of Congressional action to really try to move this problem forward.

I've been leading our efforts to provide data on drug shortages since 2001. This is truly the most interest I've ever seen.

CLIMATE GLIMPSE:

Scorching Northern Hemisphere heat leads to deaths and wildfires

By The Associated Press Associated Press

The United States is bracing for chaotic weather this week, with the South set to experience another heat wave following a short respite from searing temperatures earlier this month. The National Weather Service expects some areas to reach temperatures so high they'll hit new daily records.

And it's not just the U.S. Across the Northern Hemisphere, in Europe and Asia, extreme temperatures are causing deadly heatstroke and early wildfires ahead of the start of the astronomical summer on Thursday.

Here's what's happening related to extreme weather and the climate right now:

— From extreme heat to unseasonable cold in the Pacific Northwest, the U.S. is facing a myriad of extremes. The Rocky Mountains may get a late bout of snow, while further south, firefighters in Los Angeles are dealing with their first major fire of the season and Phoenix will experience more days above 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43 degrees Celsius).

— With temperatures of up to 116 degrees Fahrenheit (47 degrees Celsius) in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, on Sunday, at least 14 pilgrims marking the start of Eid al-Adha died of heatstroke, according to Jordan's state-run Petra news agency. An Associated Press reporter saw several of the more than 1.8 million pilgrims collapse due to burning heat.

— Record temperatures on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus led to at least two heat-related deaths, state officials say. And over 3.2 square kilometers (1.2 square miles) of forest were scorched near the capital of Nicosia. The country has been experiencing temperatures of 104 degrees Fahrenheit (40 degrees Celsius) and higher over the past week.

— For those preparing for extreme temperatures over the next few days, Tammy Weber's guide to surviving the searing sun recommends plenty of water, loose clothing and getting into air conditioning, whether in your own home or in public spaces that would be able to provide it.

— And finally, the European Union on Monday approved a long-awaited plan to better protect nature in the bloc, known as the Nature Restoration Law. The issue saw months of protests by farmers but survived a razor-thin vote by lawmakers. It's part of the EU's European Green Deal to have the world's most ambitious climate and biodiversity targets.

QUOTE: "There really shouldn't be any outdoor activity with physical exertion during the peak of the day," said National Weather Service meteorologist Steven Freitag for in areas of extreme heat. Freitag said any physical activity should be short and during the early hours of the morning, when it's coolest.

The war between Russia and Ukraine is set to grind on as a diplomatic conference packs little punch

By HANNA ARHIROVA and DASHA LITVINOVA undefined

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia and Ukraine are set to remain locked in battle for the foreseeable future after an international gathering billed as a first step toward peace delivered no eye-catching diplomatic breakthrough that might suggest a coming end to Europe's biggest conflict since World War II.

The absence of Russia and China from the two-day conference in Switzerland on the weekend and the decision by some key countries — including India, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Mexico — not to sign the meeting's final document Sunday meant that the gathering had little to show beyond some goodwill

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 80 of 81

and pledges to keep working for peace after more than two years of war.

Meanwhile Ukraine, after being starved of ammunition due to late deliveries of promised Western military aid, is trying to hold on against a Russian onslaught in eastern parts of the country until its prospects improve.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday that the conference's outcome was "close to zero."

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who is trying to line countries up behind his version of what an eventual peace agreement should look like, said international meetings of advisers and government ministers would follow up on the talks and lay the ground for a second meeting at some future time.

Nearly 80 countries approved the final communique covering steps toward nuclear safety, food security, and the release of prisoners and deportees, including thousands of children abducted by Russia.

It did not resolve the bedrock — and seemingly intractable, for now — issue: Ukrainian land occupied by invading Russian forces.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said last Friday he would order an immediate cease-fire in Ukraine if Kyiv's forces pulled out of the four Ukrainian regions Russia illegally annexed in 2022 and Kyiv dropped its bid to join NATO.

His other conditions for ending the war included Ukraine recognizing Crimea, a peninsula in the Black Sea that Moscow illegally annexed in 2014, as part of Russia; restrictions on the Ukrainian military; and keeping Ukraine's nonnuclear status.

Kyiv rejected those proposals as "absurd."

Near Kyiv's main war memorial, city resident Nataliia Kulbaka said she supported the idea of internationally backed peace talks but remained deeply distrustful of Russia.

"Russia can make promises but tomorrow it will break those promises," she said.

Zelenskyy has previously presented a 10-point peace formula that, among other things, demands the expulsion of all Russian forces from Ukraine and accountability for war crimes. Those proposals are rejected out of hand by Moscow.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, said Putin "is unlikely to be interested in good faith negotiations for the foreseeable future," because he thinks that eventually he will win the war.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has killed or injured hundreds of thousands of people and driven millions from their homes. It has also disrupted world markets for goods such as grain and fertilizer, fueling inflation, and it has driven a wedge between the West — which has sanctioned Moscow — and Russia, China and some other countries.

The war is in a critical period.

The Ukrainian army has shown resilience in facing down one of the world's most formidable armies but it's unable to keep up the fight without Western resupply. It also faces challenges with insufficient manpower and a lack of fortifications, offering Russia the chance to make battlefield gains this summer.

Russia, after more than two years of fighting, has so far been unable to deliver a knockout punch and is looking abroad for help to fuel its war effort.

Western military analysts say Russia's army lacks quality due to losses of junior officers in the fighting. That means the Kremlin's forces have difficulty generating momentum at scale, allowing Ukraine to hold them to incremental gains for now.

Today in History:

June 18, Sally Ride becomes first American woman in space

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, June 18, the 170th day of 2024. There are 196 days left in the year. This is Father's Day.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 18, 1983, astronaut Sally K. Ride became America's first woman in space as she and four colleagues blasted off aboard the space shuttle Challenger on a six-day mission.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 358 ~ 81 of 81

On this date:

In 1778, American forces entered Philadelphia as the British withdrew during the Revolutionary War.

In 1812, the War of 1812 began as the United States Congress approved, and President James Madison signed, a declaration of war against Britain.

In 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte met defeat at Waterloo as British and Prussian troops defeated the French in Belgium.

In 1940, during World War II, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill urged his countrymen to conduct themselves in a manner that would prompt future generations to say, "This was their finest hour."

In 1971, Southwest Airlines began operations, with flights between Dallas and San Antonio, and Dallas and Houston.

In 1979, President Jimmy Carter and Soviet President Leonid I. Brezhnev signed the SALT II strategic arms limitation treaty in Vienna.

In 1986, 25 people were killed when a twin-engine plane and helicopter carrying sightseers collided over the Grand Canyon.

In 1992, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Georgia v. McCollum*, ruled that criminal defendants could not use race as a basis for excluding potential jurors from their trials.

In 2003, baseball Hall-of-Famer Larry Doby, who broke the American League's color barrier in 1947, died in Montclair, New Jersey, at age 79.

In 2010, death row inmate Ronnie Lee Gardner died in a barrage of bullets as Utah carried out its first firing squad execution in 14 years. (Gardner had been sentenced to death for fatally shooting attorney Michael Burdell during a failed escape attempt from a Salt Lake City courthouse.)

In 2011, Clarence Clemons, the saxophone player for the E Street Band who was one of the key influences in Bruce Springsteen's life and music, died in Florida at age 69.

In 2012, former baseball star Roger Clemens was acquitted in Washington, D.C. on all charges that he'd obstructed and lied to Congress when he denied using performance-enhancing drugs.

In 2018, President Donald Trump announced that he was directing the Pentagon to create the "Space Force" as an independent service branch.

In 2020, the Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, rejected President Donald Trump's effort to end legal protections for 650,000 young immigrants.

Today's Birthdays: Former Sen. Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., is 87. Sir Paul McCartney is 82. Actor Constance McCashin is 77. Actor Linda Thorson is 77. Former Sen. Mike Johanns, R-Neb., is 74. Actor Isabella Rossellini is 72. Actor Carol Kane is 72. Actor Brian Benben is 68. Rock singer Alison Moyet is 63. Rock musician Dizzy Reed (Guns N' Roses) is 61. Figure skater Kurt Browning is 58. R&B singer Nathan Morris (Boyz II Men) is 53. Actor Mara Hobel is 53. Singer-songwriter Ray LaMontagne is 51. Rapper Silkk the Shocker is 49. Actor Alana de la Garza is 48. Country singer Blake Shelton is 48. Rock musician Steven Chen (Airborne Toxic Event) is 46. Actor David Giuntoli is 44. Drummer Josh Dun (Twenty One Pilots) is 36. Actor Renee Olstead is 35. Actor Jacob Anderson is 34. Actor Willa Holland is 33.