

Groton Daily Independent

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Sunday, July 6

United Methodist: Worship with communion at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion 11 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

Amateurs at Faulkton, 4 p.m.

Monday, July 7

Senior Menu: Goulash, corn, baked apples, breadstick.

Legion at Webster 5:30 p.m. (DH)

Jr. Teeners hosts Lake Norden, 5 p.m. (DH)

U10 B&W at Clark, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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



Softball: U12 hosts Milbank, 6 p.m. (DH); U8B at Mellette, 6 p.m. (DH)

T-Ball: Gold practice, 6 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Tuesday, July 8

Senior Menu: Meatballs, mashed potatoes with gravy, normandy blend, oranges, whole wheat bread.

Jr. Legion hosts Sisseton, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

U10 W&R at Claremont, 6:30 p.m.

U8 W&R at Claremont, 6 p.m.

Softball: U14 hosts Redfield, 5 p.m. (DH)

T-Ball: Gold at Claremont, 5 p.m.; Black hosts Andover, 6 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Council, 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

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Firecracker Golf Tourney

The annual Firecracker Golf Tournament was held at the Olive Grove Golf Course on Friday. The results are listed below. In each flight, the top three listed were the winners of the flights.

Championship Flight

- 68- Jackie and Scott Witlock
- 71- Tanner and Megan Waage
- 71- Dean and Connie Munsch
- 71- Lance and Sammy Bonn
- 72- Chad and Haley Ellingson
- 73- Suzie Souza and Mark Papstein
- 73- Kathy and Steve Onka
- 74- Scott and Sarah Vedvei
- 74- Randi and Tyler Wenbrowne
- 78- Kent and Darcy Muller

First Flight

- 75- Brad and Dar Larson
- 75- Ken Lynch and Erica Hunsted
- 76- Randy and Sue Stanley
- 76- Joe Gourneau and Jessica Hollingsworth
- 77- Ryan and Ashley Grenz
- 77- Tom and Barb Gillick
- 77- Randy Ries and Sharon Zastrow
- 77- Ty and Tevan Newman
- 78- Tom and Pat Price

Second Flight

- 80- Brand and Brenda Waage
- 80- Terry and Mark Kline
- 81- Adam and Marissa Kappes
- 82- Skip Kettering and Suzi Easthouse
- 82- Jessica Gouornaueu and Levi Logan
- 82- LuAnne and Ryan Cunningham
- 83- Rick and Tami Zimney

Third Flight

- 78- Rick and Katie Koehler
- 82- Lance and Cindy Frohling
- 83- Steve and Betty Dunker
- 84- Jonathan and Mandilyn Fliehs
- 84- Lorin and Julie Fliehs
- 84- Cory and Amber Wipf
- 85- Jon and Jerrie Vedvei

Fourth Flight

- 84- Torre and Denise Raap
- 89- Nathan Wieg and Allison Jung
- 89- Austin and Deb Schuelke
- 89- Spencer and Kellie Locke
- 90- Larry and Shirlee Frohling
- 91- Chad and Michelle Johnson
- 93- Bob and Mavis Rossow
- 97- Alec and JoAnne Paulson
- 98- Amy and Jeff Ringgenberg

Ladies Invitational Golf Tournament

The Ladies Invitational Golf Tournament was held June 26 at the Olive Grove Golf Course. The scores for each flight are listed below. The top two are the winners for each flight.

Championship Flight

- 74- Carissa Drackley and Jen Little
- 75- Collette Quam and Joan Bosanko
- 80- Hayley Ellingson and BRooke Bierman
- 82- Terri Holmes and Ellen Renner
- 82- Sharon Zastrow and Cyndy Larson
- 87- LuAnn Cunningham and Michelle Haaland

First Flight

- 86- Lori Kulesa and Madonna Echert
- 88- Elaine Scherbenski and Suzie Souza
- 89- Clara Nolz and Mary Kay Kessler
- 89- Tami Zimney and Denise Raap
- 89- Cindy Kraft and Kristie Strivens
- 92- Sue Stanley and Brenda Waage

Second Flight

- 92- Deb Fredrickson and Michelle Johnson
- 92- Rochelle Moser and Jan Kearns
- 96- Mavis Rossow and Sharon Sombke
- 94- Carrie Slach and Erica Hunstad
- 96- Betty Dunker and Joyce Wilson
- 98- Dar Larson and Brenda Madsen
- 124- Arlowyn Spencer and Kimberly Kulesa

Pin Prizes:

- #4 Closest to Pin: Denise Raap
- #7 Longest Drive: Michelle Johnson
- #9 Longest Putt: Michelle Haaland

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Fun Day the Pool
The Fourth of July pool event was held with a very good turnout. (Photos by Kami Lipp)



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Schinkel recognized at Exchange Club of Aberdeen

Exchange Club of Aberdeen member Lee Schinkel received an award from the Dakota Territory District Exchange for the Individual Membership Award! He signed up 4 new members from July 1, 2024 to March 30, 2025! He signed up several more after that date also! Thanks for growing our club Lee! Congratulations! President-Elect Jim Ragatz presented him the award since Lee was not present at the convention to receive the award. (Photo pulled from Exchange Club of Aberdeen Facebook Page)

07/04/2025 - 5:00 PM	0.31
07/04/2025 - 5:15 PM	0.34
07/04/2025 - 5:30 PM	0.32
07/04/2025 - 5:45 PM	0.37
07/04/2025 - 6:00 PM	0.16
07/04/2025 - 6:15 PM	0.01
07/04/2025 - 6:30 PM	0.02
07/04/2025 - 6:45 PM	0.01
07/04/2025 - 7:00 PM	0.01
07/04/2025 - 7:15 PM	0.01

Storm dampens local events

A line of storms went through the area Friday night, causing many events to be postponed or cancelled. The first storm hit around 4:45 with another round 9:30. The first round dropped 1.68+ inches of rain in the area, causing the Brown County Speedway to shut down for the night. The fireworks display scheduled for Wylie Park in Aberdeen and at Stratford have both been postponed to tonight.

The table on the left shows the rain fall in 15 minute increments.

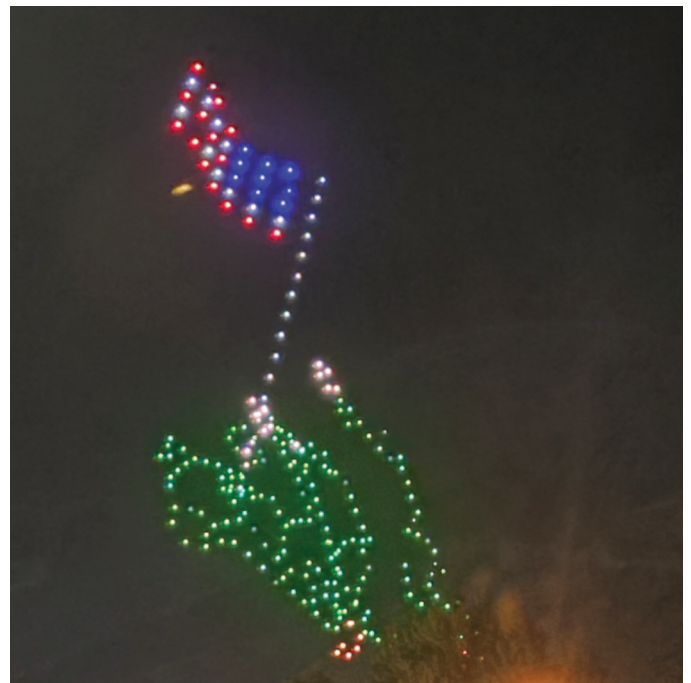
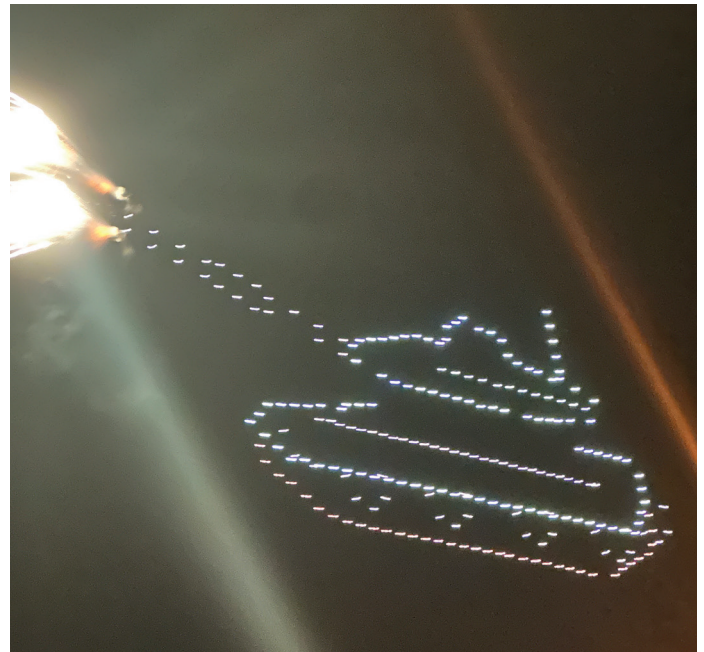
Luckily there was no strong wind associated with the storm in Groton.

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Provo Celebrations

The Fourth of July is celebrated in Provo, Utah. They had a fireworks display that went from 8 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. with the finale including a drone show. I think I read somewhere that the fireworks display is one of the largest in the United States. In the morning they had a parade that lasted nearly two hours and I have a few pictures on the next page.



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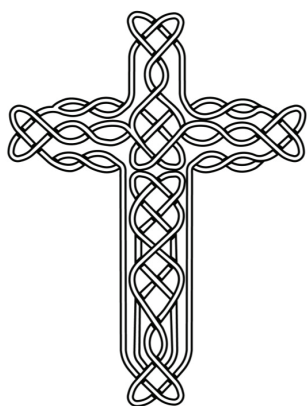
- Wheeling Back to Doland 5K Run/Walk
- Pancake breakfast
- Classic Car and Tractor Show
- Bouncy houses, splash pad, basketball, bean bag tournament
- Storybook Land Theatre
- School tours and class reunions
- Parade
- Dueling Duo Piano Entertainment

For details, find Back to Doland on Facebook or visit <https://sites.google.com/view/backtodoland2025>.

Golden Threads

“Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold; for wisdom is better than jewels.

Proverbs 8:10-11



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Ladies Luncheon

Bethesda Lutheran Church, Bristol

Wednesday, July 16, 2025

By Bethesda Women of the ELCA

Silent Auction opens at 10:30

Guest Speaker: Melinda Eikamp,
“Weaving Threads of our Heritage”

Luncheon at Noon

Tickets: \$15.00

Deadline to purchase tickets is Friday, July 11

Kay Espeland 605-492-3507

Jane Goehring 605-290-1420

Or contact any WELCA member





SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Q&A: Johnson says 'proof is in the pudding' to those challenging his conservative credentials

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JULY 4, 2025 11:38 AM

U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson's entry into the 2026 race for South Dakota governor launches him into a Republican primary in which a competitor is making allegiance to President Donald Trump a main issue.

Johnson announced his candidacy Monday with a pledge to focus on "addition and multiplication" rather than division and anger. That same day, a political action committee issued a statement accusing Johnson of being insufficiently loyal to Trump.

"Dusty Johnson is South Dakota's Never-Trumper-In-Chief," said Drew Dennert, chairman of Dakota First Action.

The group was founded by Toby Doeden, an Aberdeen businessman who announced his candidacy for the Republican nomination for governor in May. On Tuesday, some

South Dakotans received a large postcard from Doeden's campaign featuring a photo of a bloody Trump after an assassination attempt, with the headline "Will you answer President Trump's call?"

The other declared Republican candidate for governor is the speaker of the state House of Representatives, Jon Hansen, who announced in April. Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden — who is serving the remainder of Kristi Noem's term after she resigned for a post in the Trump administration — has not announced whether he's running.

Johnson said accusations that he's not supportive of Trump "are not criticisms I generally hear these days."

"We're in a political environment where people love to level accusations. And the reality is, I kind of reject the labels," Johnson said. "I'm just a conservative who's trying to get things done. And clearly, that means working with President Trump, and we've got a great working relationship. He's had me down in Mar-a-Lago. He's had me at the Super Bowl. We talk regularly about policy."

Johnson, 48, is a married father of three from Mitchell who is currently serving his fourth term as South Dakota's lone member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The following conversation with Johnson has been edited for length and clarity.



U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, announces his 2026 campaign for governor during an event on June 30, 2025, at the David Lust Accelerator Building in Rapid City.

(Seth Tupper/South Dakota Searchlight)

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Why do you want to be South Dakota's governor instead of its congressman?

I love the state. I think the next 20 years for South Dakota could be the best in our history, but I don't think that's a sure thing. I think to realize that future, we need a real plan. I think we need real leadership, and I'm excited to be the person who pulls together that plan and pulls together that team.

In many respects, I think the challenges facing South Dakota right now are the right fit for my skill set. Some Republicans claim you are not a "real" conservative. How will you address that?

The proof is in the pudding. Ultimately, the Republican voters get a say. The Republican voters like the job I do, they understand the conservative and pragmatic worldview that I bring to my work, and they like it.

You voted to certify the 2020 election and voted against Trump's border wall emergency declaration during his first term. How will you address accusations that you don't support the president?

Those are not criticisms I generally hear these days. I mean, I think if you were to ask Chat GPT to gather up all of the political articles of the last two years, I think one narrative would be that Dusty Johnson is just too close to Donald Trump.

I don't try to be any particular type of Republican. I just try to be a conservative who gets things done.

The whole label conversation is kind of ridiculous. It maybe tells you what a dysfunctional age we're in that I can be an architect of some of the major successes of the House in the last seven months — securing the border, cutting spending and reforming welfare — and somehow, for some people, that's not enough.

Trump's cuts to the federal government have resulted in South Dakota's state government losing \$24 million thus far, according to the state Bureau of Finance and Management. You've been generally supportive of those cuts. How would you address that lost funding as governor?

Anytime the federal government cuts anything, there is a narrative that the sky is falling. And clearly, some of these cuts are uncomfortable, and I don't want to be cavalier about them. I mean, these are real programs that matter. And yet, \$24 million out of a \$7 billion state budget is about one-third of 1% of the state budget.

South Dakotans are resilient enough. We're resourceful enough to be able to tighten our belt and still get the important things done, even in the face of a federal government that absolutely must move toward fiscal responsibility.

I'm proud of those fiscally responsible votes that I've taken. I know they're not always easy, but if we don't take care of business, our country will go bankrupt.

What areas of state government would you first look at when considering cuts?

Number one, we do need to cut property taxes. And unlike some, I think we need to do it in a responsible way that protects those core services and roads, bridges, cops and schools.

Number two, we need to make college and technical school more affordable. And we need to double down on the programs and the research that really moves South Dakota forward.

In K-12, we need to be relentless about student achievement. We are not talking enough about student achievement. We need to set real goals, we need to use real data. We can't be afraid to lead.

We need to focus more on drugs and addiction if we want safer communities. We need new interdiction teams, and we need smarter training and treatment within the walls of our prisons.

And we need to grow this economy so we can keep taxes low. That's going to come from new small businesses, new energy production, dairy expansion and bringing high-tech jobs home to South Dakota.

How would you go about cutting property taxes?

I think we need to focus our property tax relief on the owner-occupied residential, and really, the farmer-managed ag property.

We have plenty of out-of-staters who own plenty of property in South Dakota, and I'm just not as interested in giving them a tax break.

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Several failed bills last legislative session in Pierre aimed to create some form of school vouchers using public funds to support non-public educational options. Would you support legislation to establish a voucher program?

I'm a big supporter of educational choice and properly funding our public schools.

I've got three sons who are products of public schools, and our Mitchell schools have done an incredible job with my boys.

We're very involved parents. We spend a lot of time focusing on what they're learning. And I think the quality of the education is excellent. And I think, as long as we are properly funding our public school systems, then I think we're allowed the flexibility to ask if there are other educational opportunities that we can invest in as well.

Last legislative session, lawmakers passed and Gov. Larry Rhoden signed a bill banning eminent domain — a legal process for obtaining land access — for carbon dioxide pipelines. As governor, how would you have navigated that?

It's not my interest in re-litigating every decision that the last administration has done. Fundamentally, this has got to be a forward-looking campaign. And so I just don't know that there's any benefit in me being critical of anything that Governor Rhoden has done.

South Dakota has long struggled with workforce shortages in health care and child care. How would you address these chronic issues?

First off, let's put this into context: This is not a South Dakota problem. It's a problem in South Dakota, but it's a problem everywhere. Literally, every one of the 50 states has chronic and severe workforce shortages in child care and health care.

So, I think we need to be honest with ourselves that this is going to take a multi-year, focused effort to solve. This is, in part, closing the skills gap. I think we need to identify people who can go into those fields and do a better job of getting them the education they need.

There is no silver bullet. It will be 100 solutions that address this problem, not one big one.

President Trump has deployed military forces on U.S. soil during protests without state consent, attempted to redefine birthright citizenship by executive order, fired independent inspectors general, deported people allegedly without due process, threatened to annex Canada and Greenland, and intimidated dissenting media. What do you say to protesters in South Dakota worried that America is moving toward authoritarianism?

We have to care about the rule of law. And so, what does the rule of law mean? That means that you only get to do those things that are lawful exercises of power.

Here's what we know: The federal judiciary has said that the way the president handled the birthright citizenship case is permissible for now; they have said that his use of the National Guard is permissible for now; the firing of independent inspectors general was also permissible.

And so, it's an interesting allegation for people to say that the president is being an authoritarian when he is following court orders. He has won in these court cases.

I feel like it would be inappropriate for him to ignore a federal court order, but he hasn't. He's been winning these things, so it's an odd accusation for them to make that he's the one who is violating the rule of law.

Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

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On the Fourth of July, Trump signs his 'big, beautiful bill' into law

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA AND JANE NORMAN - JULY 4, 2025 5:36 PM

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump signed into law Friday evening his massive spending cut and tax break package to fulfill his domestic policy agenda on immigration and defense and overhaul American energy production.

The "big, beautiful bill," which Trump signed on Republicans' self-imposed Fourth of July deadline, will make permanent the 2017 tax cuts from his first term and provide billions to carry out his plans of mass deportations, an immigration crackdown and increased defense spending.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that the bill could add \$3.4 trillion to deficits over the next 10 years, according to its most recent analysis.

"America is winning, winning, winning like never before," said Trump, speaking to military families at a

Fourth of July picnic on the White House lawn prior to the bill signing. Military aircraft including a B-2 bomber flew over the White House as the national anthem was sung.

Trump saluted 150 airmen and their families at the event from Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri, where the B-2s that bombed Iran in June originated their flights.

But he also attacked Democrats who opposed his legislation, including House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., who gave a speech on the floor in opposition on Wednesday that broke a House record for its length.

Members of the Cabinet were present for the bill-signing as well as Speaker of the House Mike Johnson and House Majority Leader Steve Scalise of Louisiana, House Majority Whip Tom Emmer of Minnesota, Sens. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee and Mike Crapo of Idaho and other top GOP members of Congress.

The president signed the bill seated at a desk in front of the picnic-goers, with lawmakers and Cabinet members surrounding him. Johnson presented Trump with the gavel that Johnson said he used when the vote closed to pass the "big, beautiful bill." Trump pounded on the desk with the gavel and handed out pens to those gathered around him.



President Donald Trump holds up the "big, beautiful bill" that was signed into law as during a Fourth of July military family picnic on the South Lawn of the White House on July 4, 2025 in Washington, D.C. (Photo by Alex Brandon – Pool/Getty Images)

Medicaid slashed

In order to fulfill priorities in the tax and spending cut bill, congressional Republicans scaled back spending on Medicaid, food assistance for low-income people and clean energy programs.

Democrats objected to the cuts to Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, and other provisions. But because Republicans have unified control of Congress, the GOP was able to pass the bill through a complex process known as reconciliation, skirting the Senate's 60-vote threshold.

The Senate passed its version of the bill after Vice President JD Vance cast the tie-breaking 51-50 vote

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Tuesday. The House managed Thursday to pass the new version of the bill after two chaotic days negotiating with far-right members who initially objected to the bill and later acquiesced, with a vote of 218-214.

The only Republicans to object in the Senate were Maine's Susan Collins, Kentucky's Rand Paul and North Carolina's Thom Tillis. The House GOP members who voted with Democrats were Kentucky's Thomas Massie and Pennsylvania's Brian Fitzpatrick.

Also tucked into the bill is a provision that raises the country's debt ceiling by \$5 trillion, which has brought objections from Republican fiscal hawks like Paul.

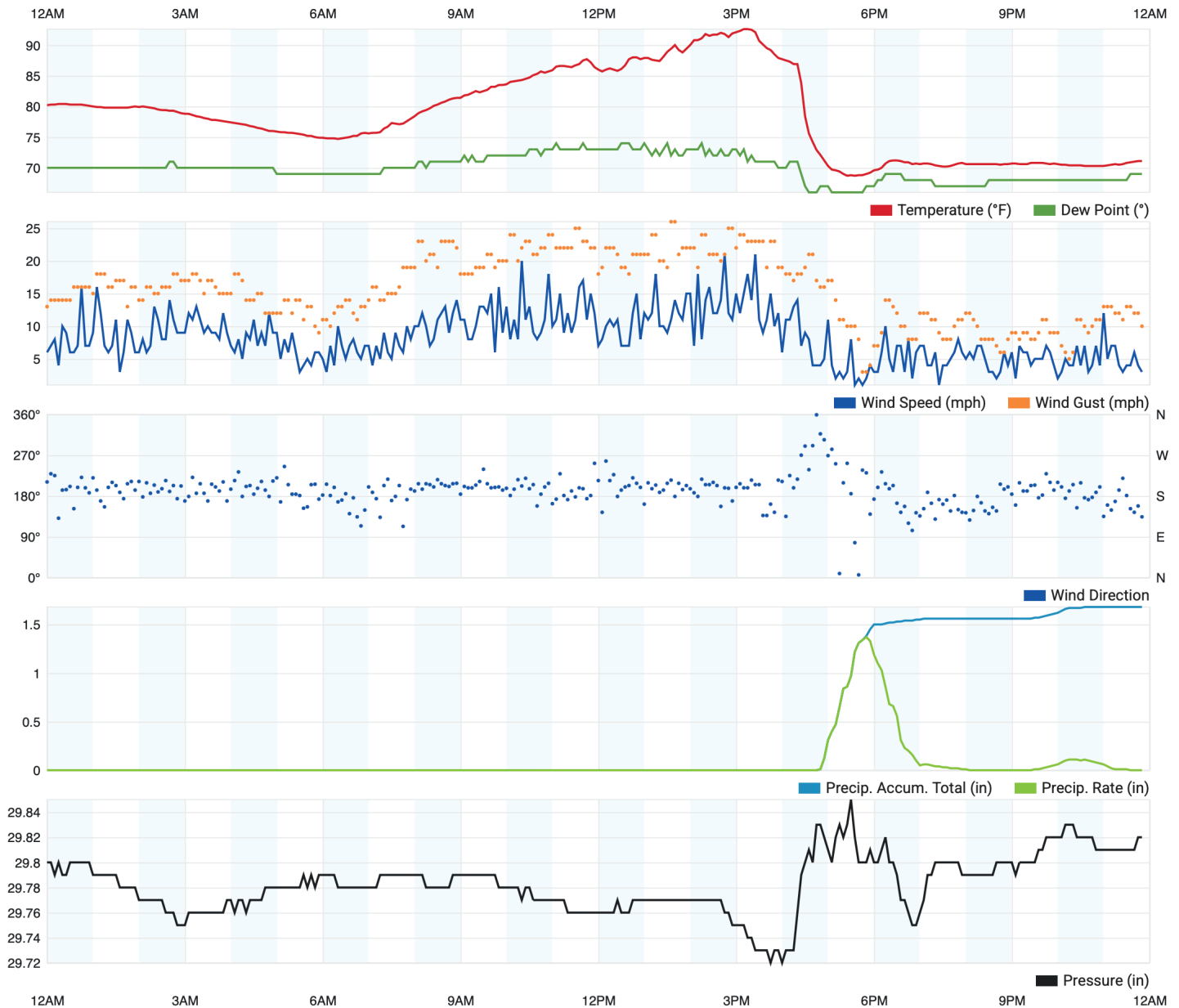
Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.

As the Washington Bureau Chief of States Newsroom, Jane directs national coverage, managing staff and freelance reporters in the nation's capital and assigning and editing state-specific daily and enterprise stories. Jane is a veteran of more than three decades in journalism.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 81 °F

Decreasing
Clouds

Tonight



Low: 57 °F

Partly Cloudy

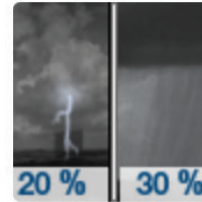
Sunday



High: 77 °F

Chance
T-storms

Sunday Night



Low: 58 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms then
Chance
Showers

Monday



High: 84 °F

Slight Chance
Showers then
Slight Chance
T-storms

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Scattered Severe Storms
possible

TIMING

Through the Overnight
Hours into Sunday

PRIMARY THREATS



DAMAGING
WIND

SECONDARY THREATS

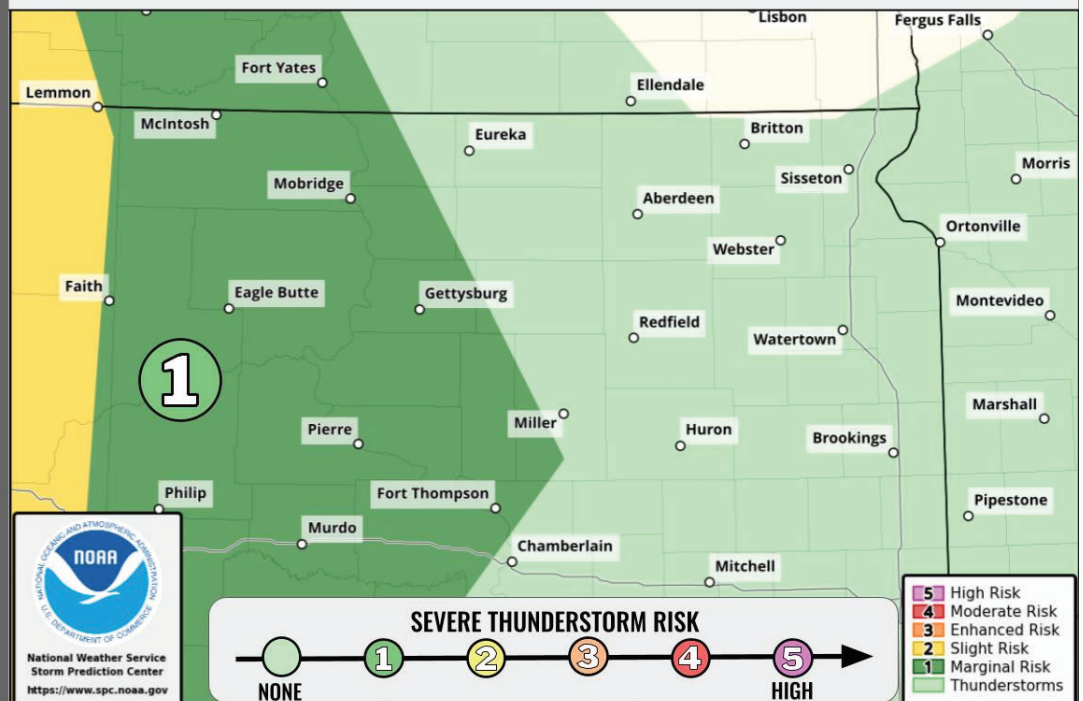


SMALL HAIL



HEAVY RAIN

SEVERE STORMS Possible Overnight into Sunday



There is a Marginal risk (level 1 of 5) for severe storms mainly over central SD overnight tonight into Sunday morning. The main threat will be strong wind gusts up to 60 mph, with secondary threats of heavy rainfall and some hail.

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Weekend Outlook

Today



Highs: 76-85°F

Lows: 60-68°F

Showers and storms over far northeastern SD moving out during the morning.

Sunday



Highs: 75-80°F

Lows: 55-60°F

Showers and storms move in over central SD overnight into early Sunday morning.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 93 °F at 3:12 PM

Heat Index: 103 °F at 3:15 PM

Low Temp: 69 °F at 5:26 PM

Wind: 26 mph at 1:34 PM

Precip: : 1.68 (+.03 since midnight)

Day length: 15 hours, 36 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 108 in 1936

Record Low: 35 in 1915

Average High: 84

Average Low: 59

Average Precip in July.: 0.47

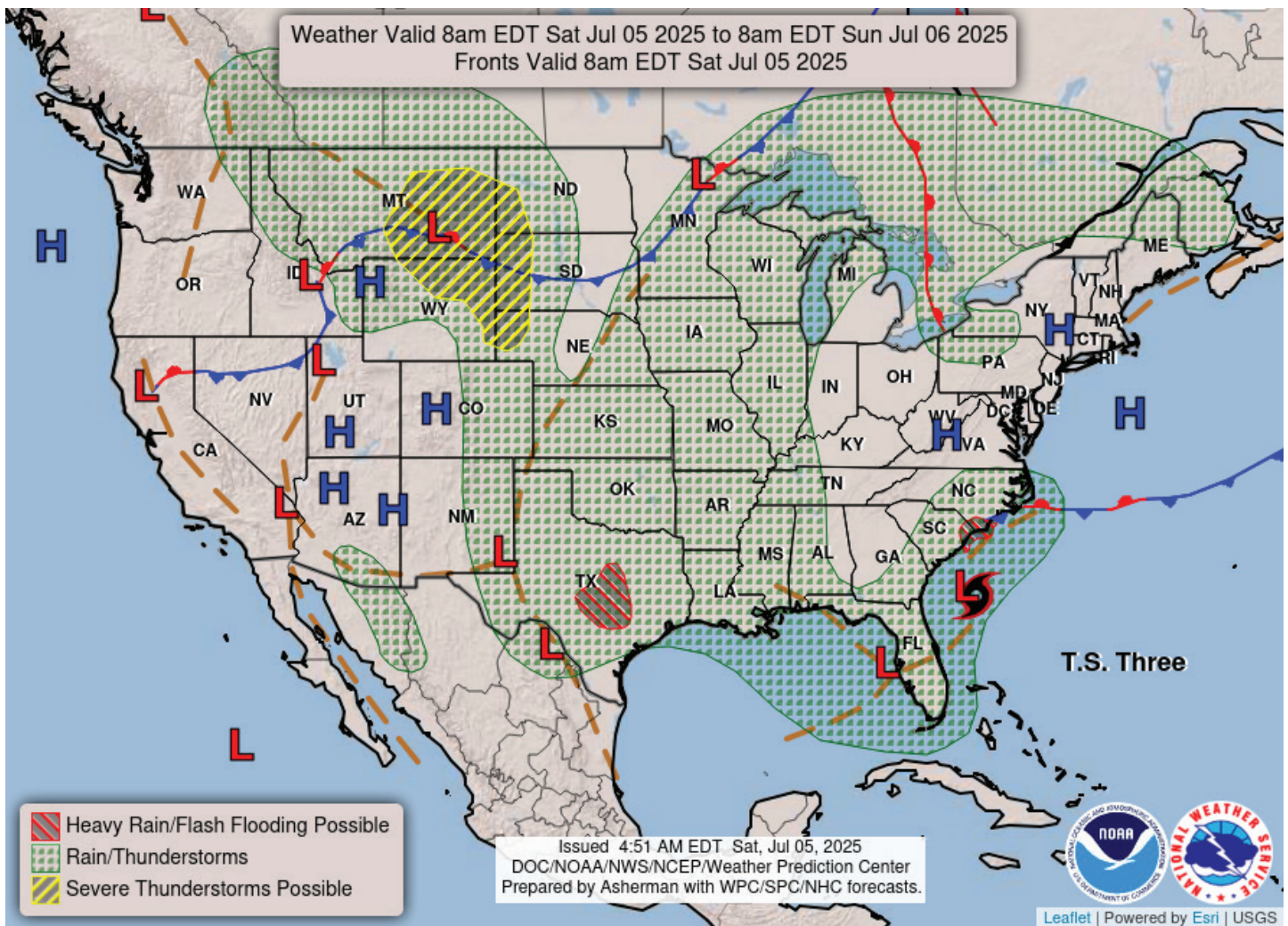
Precip to date in July: 1.68

Average Precip to date: 11.60

Precip Year to Date: 11.04

Sunset Tonight: 9:25:14 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:49:43 am



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Today in Weather History

July 5, 1936: Three record high temperatures were set on this day. Near Gann Valley, the temperature reached 120 degrees, setting the state record. The state record was tied on July 15, 2006, at 17 miles WSW of Fort Pierre. Other record highs on this date include 119 degrees in Kennebec and 116 degrees in Murdo. The record highs near Gann Valley, Kennebec, and Murdo are all-time highs for each location.

July 5, 1996: A powerful thunderstorm packing over 100 mph winds and grapefruit-sized hail tracked from Belle Fourche Reservoir to Wall. The storm caused an estimated \$4.5 million in crop damage, killed numerous livestock, and stripped vegetation bare.

1891 - Sixteen horses were killed by hail, and many more have to be put to death due to injuries from a hailstorm at Rapid City, SD. (The Weather Channel)

1900 - A spectacular three day fire began when a bolt of lightning struck a refinery in Bayonne NJ. (David Ludlum)

1916 - A hurricane produced 82 mph winds, an 11.6 foot tide, and a barometric pressure of 28.92 inches at Mobile, AL. (David Ludlum)

1925: A large hailstone weighing a half pound fell at Plumstead, just outside of London, England. This hailstone was the heaviest hailstone ever recorded in the United Kingdom.

1937 - The temperature at Medicine Lake, MT, soared to 117 degrees to establish a state record. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1937 - Midale and Yellow Grass in Saskatchewan hit 113 degrees to establish an all-time record high for Canada that same day. (The Weather Channel)

1970 - The morning low at Death Valley CA was 103 degrees, and the high that afternoon was 120 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1980: The "More Trees Down" started in western Iowa and tracked eastward affecting several states along its path before dissipating in eastern Virginia.

1987 - Severe thunderstorms raked south central Kansas for the second morning in a row. Thunderstorm winds again gusted to 80 mph at Clearwater, and in the Wichita area reached 100 mph. Twenty-five persons were injured at a trailer park at El Dorado Lake. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms spawned eleven tornadoes in Montana and three in North Dakota. Baseball size hail was reported at Shonkin, MT, and wind gusts to 85 mph were reported south of Fordville, ND. Twenty cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Fargo ND with a reading of 106 degrees. Muskegon, MI, equalled their July record with a high of 95 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Moisture from what once was Tropical Storm Allison triggered thunderstorms over the Middle Atlantic Coast Region, which deluged Wilmington, DE, with a record 6.83 inches of rain in 24 hours, including 6.37 inches in just six hours. Up to ten inches of rain was reported at Claymont, northeast of Wilmington. July 1989 was thus the wettest month in seventy years for Wilmington, with a total of 12.63 inches of rain. Alamosa CO reported an all-time record high of 94 degrees, and Pierre, SD, hit 113 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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There can be no doubt about the significance of work in the eyes of God. It is a theme that we find throughout His Word. Work glorifies God and is a way to demonstrate our obedience to His plan for our lives as well as a way to worship and honor Him.

Consider Paul. He was a tentmaker by trade but a minister of the gospel, theologian, philosopher, warrior, legal expert, missionary, and author of Scripture under the direction of God. In fact, he instituted a rule with the church of the Thessalonians.

This rule was blunt and to the point: "For when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work he shall not eat."

One does not need a degree in Biblical exegesis to understand that. Solomon addressed two points of view about work: "He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment."

Willing workers will be blessed and have all their needs met. God will see to that.

God, however, has another rule: if we know of someone in need, who honestly cannot work or find work, we who are Christians are obligated to help them.

Those who chase fantasies lack judgment, referring to delusional thinking. They are the ones who chase an easy way of living by devising schemes to take advantage of others. They want to receive life's rewards without hard work and riches from rackets, not righteousness.

And yes, they may have their day. But in the end, they lack judgment that comes from following God's way and His wisdom—and ultimately, face His judgment.

Today's Prayer: Sound judgment, wise decisions, and eternal rewards, Lord, come from obedience to Your Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment." Proverbs 12:11

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.04.25

17 20 24 41 42 24

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$70,000,000

NEXT DRAW: Stay Tuned

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.02.25

8 19 20 21 39 7

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,550,000

NEXT DRAW: 22 Hrs 12 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.04.25

9 26 27 30 46 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: Stay Tuned

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.02.25

1 6 20 25 27

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$46,000

NEXT DRAW: 22 Hrs 27 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.02.25

10 18 21 37 40 10

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 22 Hrs 56 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.02.25

7 19 21 54 63 21

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$190,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 22 Hrs 56 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

03/22/2025 Spring Vendor Fair at the GHS Gym 10am-2pm
03/29/2025 Men's Singles Bowling Tournament at the Jungle 10am, 1pm & 4pm
04/05/2025 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39, 6-11:30pm
04/06/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp
04/12/2025 Groton Firemens Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
05/12/2025 High School Girls Golf Meet at Olive Grove
05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
06/07/2025 Day of Play
06/13/2025 SDSU 4 Person Scramble at Olive Grove
06/21/2025 Groton Triathlon
06/23/2025 Ladies 2 Person Scramble at Olive Grove
07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
07/11-13/25 2025 VFW 12U Class B State Baseball Tournament
07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
07/16/2025 Men's Pro Am Golf at Olive Grove
07/25/2025 Ferney Open Scramble Golf at Olive Grove
08/01/2025 Wine on Nine Fundraiser at Olive Grove
08/09/2025 2nd Annual Celebration in the Park/Rib Cook-Off 1-9:30pm
08/14/2025 Family Fun Fest, Downtown Main Street 5:30-7:30pm (2nd Thursday)
08/23/2025 Glacial Tournament at Olive Grove
09/05/2025 Homecoming Parade 1pm
09/6-7/25 Fly in/Drive in at Groton Municipal Airport
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
09/07/2025 Sunflower Classic Couples Scramble at Olive Grove
10/10/2025 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
10/11/2025 Pumpkin Fest 10am-3pm City Park
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1:30pm
11/30/2025 Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.
12/06/2025 Olive Grove Holiday Party and Silent Live Auction Fundraiser

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Desperate search for two dozen missing girls from summer camp after Texas floods kill at least 24

By HANNAH FINGERHUT and JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

KERRVILLE, Texas (AP) — Crews searched through the dark early Saturday for two dozen children from a girls camp and many others still missing after a wall of water rushed down a river in the Texas Hill Country during a powerful storm that killed at least 24 people. The death toll was certain to rise.

The destructive fast-moving waters along the Guadalupe River rose 26 feet (8 meters) in just 45 minutes before dawn Friday, washing away homes and vehicles. The danger was not over as more heavy rains were expected Saturday and flash flood warnings and flood watches remained in effect for parts of central Texas.

Searchers used helicopters and drones to look for victims and rescue people stranded. The total number of missing was not known but one sheriff said about 24 of them were girls who had been attending Camp Mystic, a Christian summer camp along the river.

Frantic parents and families posted photos of missing loved ones and pleas for information.

"The camp was completely destroyed," said Elinor Lester, 13, one of hundreds of campers at Camp Mystic. "A helicopter landed and started taking people away. It was really scary."

A raging storm woke up her cabin just after midnight Friday, and when rescuers arrived, they tied a rope for the girls to hold as they walked across a bridge with floodwaters whipping around their legs, she said.

At a news conference late Friday, Kerr County Sheriff Larry Leitha said 24 people were confirmed dead. Authorities said about 240 people had been rescued.

The flooding in the middle of the night on the Fourth of July holiday caught many residents, campers and officials by surprise. Officials defended their preparations for severe weather and their response but said they had not expected such an intense downpour that was, in effect, the equivalent of months' worth of rain for the area.

One National Weather Service forecast this week had called for only between three and six inches (76 to 152 millimeters) of rain, said Nim Kidd, the chief of the Texas Division of Emergency Management.

"It did not predict the amount of rain that we saw," he said.

Helicopters, drones used in frantic search for missing

One river gauge near Camp Mystic recorded a 22 foot rise (6.7 meters) in about two hours, said Bob Fogarty, meteorologist with the National Weather Service's Austin/San Antonio office. The gauge failed after recording a level of 29 and a half feet (9 meters).

"The water's moving so fast, you're not going to recognize how bad it is until it's on top of you," Fogarty said.

On the Kerr County sheriff's office Facebook page, people posted pictures of loved ones and begged for help finding them.

At least 400 people were on the ground helping in the response, Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick said. Rescue teams, helicopters and drones were being used, with some people being rescued from trees.

'Pitch black wall of death'

In Ingram, Erin Burgess woke to thunder and rain in the middle of the night Friday. Just 20 minutes later, water was pouring into her home directly across from the river, she said. She described an agonizing hour clinging to a tree and waiting for the water to recede enough to walk up the hill to a neighbor's home.

"My son and I floated to a tree where we hung onto it, and my boyfriend and my dog floated away. He was lost for a while, but we found them," she said.

Of her 19-year-old son, Burgess said: "Thankfully he's over 6 feet tall. That's the only thing that saved me, was hanging on to him."

Matthew Stone, 44, of Kerrville, said police came knocking on doors but that he had received no warn-

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ing on his phone.

"We got no emergency alert. There was nothing," Stone said. Then "a pitch black wall of death."

'I was scared to death'

At a reunification center set up in Ingram, families cried and cheered as loved ones got off vehicles loaded with evacuees. Two soldiers carried an older woman who could not get down a ladder. Behind her, a woman clutched a small white dog.

Later, a girl in a white "Camp Mystic" T-shirt and white socks stood in a puddle, sobbing in her mother's arms.

Barry Adelman, 54, said water pushed everyone in his three-story house into the attic, including his 94-year-old grandmother and 9-year-old grandson. The water started coming through the attic floor before finally receding.

"I was horrified," he said. "I was having to look at my grandson in the face and tell him everything was going to be OK, but inside I was scared to death."

'No one knew this kind of flood was coming'

The forecast had called for rain, with a flood watch upgraded to a warning overnight for at least 30,000 people.

The lieutenant governor noted that the potential for heavy rain and flooding covered a large area.

"Everything was done to give them a heads up that you could have heavy rain, and we're not exactly sure where it's going to land," Patrick said. "Obviously as it got dark last night, we got into the wee morning of the hours, that's when the storm started to zero in."

Asked about how people were notified in Kerr County so that they could get to safety, Judge Rob Kelly, the county's chief elected official, said: "We do not have a warning system."

When reporters pushed on why more precautions weren't taken, Kelly said: "Rest assured, no one knew this kind of flood was coming."

Popular tourism area prone to flooding

The area is known as "flash flood alley" because of the hills' thin layer of soil, said Austin Dickson, CEO of the Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country, which was collecting donations to help nonprofits responding to the disaster.

"When it rains, water doesn't soak into the soil," Dickson said. "It rushes down the hill."

River tourism industry is a key part of the Hill Country economy. Well-known, century-old summer camps bring in kids from all over the country, Dickson said.

"It's generally a very tranquil river with really beautiful clear blue water that people have been attracted to for generations," Dickson said.

Russia launches largest missile and drone barrage on Kyiv since war in Ukraine began

By HANNA ARHIROVA By Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Waves of drones and missiles targeted Kyiv overnight in the largest aerial assault since Russia's invasion of Ukraine began more than three years ago, officials said Friday, amid a renewed Russian push to capture more of its neighbor's land.

Hours after the barrage that killed one person and wounded at least 26 others, including a child, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he had a "very important and productive" phone call with U.S. President Donald Trump.

The two leaders discussed how Ukrainian air defenses might be strengthened, possible joint weapons production between the U.S. and Ukraine, and broader U.S.-led efforts to end the war with Russia, according to a statement by Zelenskyy.

Asked Friday night by reporters about the call, Trump said, "We had a very good call, I think."

When asked about finding a way to end the fighting, Trump said: "I don't know. I can't tell you whether

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or not that's going to happen."

The U.S. has paused some shipments of military aid to Ukraine, including crucial air defense missiles. Ukraine's main European backers are considering how they can help pick up the slack. Zelenskyy says plans are afoot to build up Ukraine's domestic arms industry, but scaling up will take time.

The seven-hour bombardment of Kyiv caused severe damage across multiple districts of the capital in a seven-hour onslaught, authorities said. Blasts lit up the night sky and echoed across the city as air raid sirens wailed. The blue lights of emergency vehicles reflected off high-rise buildings, and debris blocked city streets.

"It was a harsh, sleepless night," Zelenskyy said.

Russia has been stepping up its long-range attacks on Ukrainian cities. Less than a week ago, Russia launched what was then the largest aerial assault of the war. That strategy has coincided with a concerted Russian effort to break through parts of the roughly 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, where Ukrainian troops are under severe pressure.

Russia launched 550 drones and missiles across Ukraine during the night, the country's air force said. The majority were Shahed drones, but Russia also launched 11 missiles in the attack.

Alya Shahlai, a 23-year-old Kyiv wedding photographer, said that her home was destroyed in the attack.

"We were all in the (basement) shelter because it was so loud, staying home would have been suicidal," she told The Associated Press. "We went down 10 minutes before and then there was a loud explosion and the lights went out in the shelter, people were panicking."

Five ambulances were damaged while responding to calls, officials said, and emergency services removed more than 300 tons of rubble.

Trump, Zelenskyy talks

In Friday's call, Zelenskyy said he congratulated Trump and the American people on Independence Day and thanked the United States for its continued support.

They discussed a possible future meeting between their teams to explore ways of enhancing Ukraine's protection against air attacks, Zelenskyy said.

He added that they talked in detail about defense industry capabilities and direct joint projects with the U.S., particularly in drone technology. They also exchanged views on mutual procurement, investment, and diplomatic cooperation with international partners, Zelenskyy said.

Peace efforts have been fruitless so far. Recent direct peace talks have led only to sporadic exchanges of prisoners of war, wounded troops and the bodies of fallen soldiers. No date has been set for further negotiations.

Ukrainian officials and the Russian Defense Ministry said another prisoner swap took place Friday, though neither side said how many soldiers were involved. Zelenskyy said most of the Ukrainians had been in Russian captivity since 2022. The Ukrainian soldiers were classified as "wounded and seriously ill."

'I'm very disappointed'

The attack on Kyiv began the same day a phone call took place between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Asked if he made any progress during his call with Putin on a deal to end the fighting in Ukraine, Trump said: "No, I didn't make any progress with him today at all."

"I'm very disappointed with the conversation I had today with President Putin because I don't think he's there. I don't think he's looking to stop (the fighting), and that's too bad," Trump said.

According to Yuri Ushakov, Putin's foreign affairs adviser, the Russian leader emphasized that Moscow will seek to achieve its goals in Ukraine and remove the "root causes" of the conflict.

"Russia will not back down from these goals," Ushakov told reporters after the call.

Russia's army crossed the border on Feb. 24, 2022, in an all-out invasion that Putin sought to justify by falsely saying it was needed to protect Russian-speaking civilians in eastern Ukraine and prevent the country from joining NATO.

Zelenskyy has repeatedly called out Russian disinformation efforts.

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Constant buzzing of drones

The Ukrainian response needs to be speedy as Russia escalates its aerial attacks. Russia launched 5,438 drones at Ukraine in June, a new monthly record, according to official data collated by The Associated Press. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said earlier this week that Russia also launched more than 330 missiles, including nearly 80 ballistic missiles, at Ukrainian towns and cities that month.

Throughout the night, AP journalists in Kyiv heard the constant buzzing of drones overhead and the sound of explosions and intense machine gun fire as Ukrainian forces tried to intercept the aerial assault.

"Absolutely horrible and sleepless night in Kyiv," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha wrote on social media platform X. "One of the worst so far."

Ukraine's Economy Minister Yuliia Svyrydenko described "families running into metro stations, basements, underground parking garages, mass destruction in the heart of our capital."

"What Kyiv endured last night, cannot be called anything but a deliberate act of terror," she wrote on X.

Kyiv was the primary target of the countrywide attack. At least 14 people were hospitalized, according to Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko.

Zelenskyy called the Kyiv attack "cynical." In Moscow, the Defense Ministry claimed its forces targeted factories producing drones and other military equipment in Kyiv.

Russia strikes 5 Ukrainian regions

Ukrainian air defenses shot down 270 targets, including two cruise missiles. Another 208 targets were lost from radar and presumed jammed.

Russia successfully hit eight locations with nine missiles and 63 drones. Debris from intercepted drones fell across at least 33 sites.

In addition to the capital, the Dnipropetrovsk, Sumy, Kharkiv, Chernihiv and Kyiv regions also sustained damage, Zelenskyy said.

Emergency services reported damage in at least five of Kyiv's 10 districts.

Texas families plead for information on at least 23 girls missing from summer camp after floods

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM and JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

KERRVILLE, Texas (AP) — Texas parents frantically posted photos of their young daughters on social media with pleas for information as at least 23 campers from an all-girls summer camp were unaccounted for Friday after floods tore through the state's south-central region overnight.

At least 24 people were dead and many missing after a storm unleashed nearly a foot of rain just before dawn Friday and sent floodwaters gushing out of the Guadalupe River, Kerr County Sheriff Larry Leitha told reporters Friday evening. The flood-prone region known as Hill Country is dotted with century-old summer camps that draw thousands of kids annually from across the Lone Star State.

State officials said 23 to 25 girls from Camp Mystic, a riverside Christian camp in Hunt, Texas, still were unaccounted for. They declined to estimate how many people were missing across the region but said a massive search was underway, with 237 rescued so far.

"I'm asking the people of Texas, do some serious praying," Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick said. "On-your-knees kind of praying that we find these young girls."

Rescuers evacuate some campers by helicopter

Texas Game Wardens said Friday afternoon that they had arrived at Camp Mystic and were starting to evacuate campers who had sheltered on higher ground.

Elinor Lester, 13, said she was evacuated with her cabinmates by helicopter after wading through floodwaters. She recalled startling awake around 1:30 a.m. as thunder crackled and water pelted the cabin windows.

Lester was among the older girls housed on elevated ground known as Senior Hill. Cabins housing the younger campers, who can start attending at age 8, are situated along the riverbanks and were the first

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to flood, she said.

Campers in lower cabins sought shelter up the hill. By morning, they had no food, power or running water, she said. When rescuers arrived, Lester said they tied a rope for the girls to hold as they walked across a bridge with floodwaters whipping up around their calves and knees.

"The camp was completely destroyed," she said. "It was really scary. Everyone I know personally is accounted for, but there are people missing that I know of and we don't know where they are."

Her mother, Elizabeth Lester, said her son was nearby at Camp La Junta and also escaped. A counselor there woke up to find water rising in the cabin, opened a window and helped the boys swim out. Camp La Junta and another camp on the river, Camp Waldemar, said in Instagram posts that all campers and staff there were safe.

Elizabeth Lester sobbed when she finally saw her daughter, who was clutching a small teddy bear and a book. She said a friend's daughter, who was a counselor for the younger children at Camp Mystic, was among the missing.

"My kids are safe, but knowing others are still missing is just eating me alive," she said.

Families of missing campers worry

Dozens of families shared in local Facebook groups that they received devastating phone calls from safety officials informing them that their daughters had not yet been located among the washed-away camp cabins and downed trees.

Camp Mystic said in an email to parents of the roughly 750 campers that if they have not been contacted directly, their child is accounted for.

At an elementary school in nearby Ingram that was being used as a reunification center, more than a hundred people stood around a courtyard Friday afternoon with hopes of seeing their loved ones emerge from buses dropping off those who had been evacuated. One young girl wearing a Camp Mystic T-shirt stood in a puddle in her white socks, sobbing in her mother's arms.

Many families hoped to see loved ones who had been at campgrounds and mobile home parks in the area.

Camp Mystic sits on a strip known as "flash flood alley," said Austin Dickson, CEO of the Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country, a charitable endowment that is collecting donations to help nonprofits responding to the disaster.

"When it rains, water doesn't soak into the soil," Dickson said. "It rushes down the hill."

State officials began warning of potential deadly weather a day earlier. The National Weather Service had predicted 3 to 6 inches of rain in the region, but 10 inches fell.

The Guadalupe River rose to 26 feet within about 45 minutes in the early morning hours, submerging its flood gauge, Patrick said.

Decades prior, floodwaters engulfed a bus of teenage campers from another Christian camp along the Guadalupe River during devastating summer storms in 1987. A total of 10 campers from Pot O' Gold Christian camp drowned after their bus was unable to evacuate in time from a site near Comfort, 33 miles (53 kilometers) east of Hunt.

Flood turns Camp Mystic into a horror story

Chloe Crane, a teacher and former Camp Mystic counselor, said her heart broke when a fellow teacher shared an email from the camp about the missing girls.

"To be quite honest, I cried because Mystic is such a special place, and I just couldn't imagine the terror that I would feel as a counselor to experience that for myself and for 15 little girls that I'm taking care of," she said. "And it's also just sadness, like the camp has been there forever and cabins literally got washed away."

Crane said the camp, which was established in 1926, is a haven for young girls looking to gain confidence and independence. She recalled happy memories teaching her campers about journalism, making crafts and competing in a camp-wide canoe race at the end of each summer. Now for many campers and counselors, their happy place has turned into a horror story, she said.

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What's in the tax and spending bill that Trump has signed into law

By KEVIN FREKING and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Friday signed the tax and spending cut bill Republicans muscled through Congress this week, turning it into law by his own self-imposed Fourth of July deadline.

At nearly 900 pages, the legislation is a sprawling collection of tax breaks, spending cuts and other Republican priorities, including new money for national defense and deportations.

Democrats united against the legislation, but were powerless to stop it as long as Republicans stayed united. The Senate passed the bill Tuesday, with Vice President JD Vance casting the tiebreaking vote. The House passed an earlier iteration of the bill in May with just one vote to spare. It passed the final version Thursday 218-214.

Here's the latest on what's in the bill and when some of its provisions go into effect.

GOP bill includes reductions for businesses and new tax breaks

Republicans say the bill is crucial because there would be a massive tax increase after December when tax breaks from Trump's first term expire. The legislation contains about \$4.5 trillion in tax cuts.

The existing tax rates and brackets would become permanent under the bill, solidifying the tax cuts approved in Trump's first term.

It temporarily would add new tax deductions on tip, overtime and auto loans. There's also a \$6,000 deduction for older adults who earn no more than \$75,000 a year, a nod to his pledge to end taxes on Social Security benefits.

It would boost the \$2,000 child tax credit to \$2,200. Millions of families at lower income levels would not get the full credit.

A cap on state and local deductions, called SALT, would quadruple to \$40,000 for five years. It's a provision important to New York and other high tax states, though the House wanted it to last for 10 years.

There are scores of business-related tax cuts, including allowing businesses to immediately write off 100% of the cost of equipment and research. Proponents say this will boost economic growth.

The wealthiest households would see a \$12,000 increase from the legislation, and the bill would cost the poorest people \$1,600 a year, mainly due to reductions in Medicaid and food aid, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office analysis of the House's version.

GOP bill funds the border wall, deportations and a missile shield

The bill would provide some \$350 billion for Trump's border and national security agenda, including for the U.S.-Mexico border wall and for 100,000 migrant detention facility beds, as he aims to fulfill his promise of the largest mass deportation operation in U.S. history.

Money would go for hiring 10,000 new Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers, with \$10,000 signing bonuses and a surge of Border Patrol officers, as well. The goal is to deport some 1 million people per year.

To help pay for it, immigrants would face various new fees, including when seeking asylum protections.

For the Pentagon, the bill would provide billions for ship building, munitions systems, and quality of life measures for servicemen and women, as well as \$25 billion for the development of the Golden Dome missile defense system. The Defense Department would have \$1 billion for border security.

Medicaid, SNAP face deep cuts to fund bill's tax breaks and spending

To help partly offset the lost tax revenue and new spending, Republicans aim to cut back on Medicaid and food assistance for people below the poverty line.

Republicans argue they are trying to rightsize the safety net programs for the population they were initially designed to serve, mainly pregnant women, the disabled and children, and root out what they describe as waste, fraud and abuse.

The package includes new 80-hour-a-month work requirements for many adults receiving Medicaid and food stamps, including older people up to age 65. Parents of children 14 and older would have to meet the program's work requirements.

There's also a proposed new \$35 co-payment that can be charged to patients using Medicaid services.

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More than 71 million people rely on Medicaid, which expanded under Obama's Affordable Care Act, and 40 million use the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Most already work, according to analysts.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that 11.8 million more Americans would become uninsured by 2034 if the bill became law and 3 million more would not qualify for food stamps, also known as SNAP benefits.

Republicans are looking to have states pick up some of the cost for SNAP benefits. Currently, the federal government funds all benefit costs. Under the bill, states beginning in 2028 will be required to contribute a set percentage of those costs if their payment error rate exceeds 6%. Payment errors include both underpayments and overpayments.

But the Senate bill temporarily delays the start date of that cost-sharing for states with the highest SNAP error rates. Alaska has the highest error rate in the nation at nearly 25%, according to Department of Agriculture data. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, had fought for the exception. She was a decisive vote in getting the bill through the Senate.

The 'big beautiful' bill slashes clean energy tax credits

Republicans are proposing to dramatically roll back tax breaks designed to boost clean energy projects fueled by renewable sources such as energy and wind. The tax breaks were a central component of President Joe Biden's 2022 landmark bill focused on addressing climate change and lowering health care costs.

Democratic Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden went so far as to call the GOP provisions a "death sentence for America's wind and solar industries and an inevitable hike in utility bills."

A tax break for people who buy new or used electric vehicles would expire on Sept. 30 of this year, instead of at the end of 2032 under current law.

Meanwhile, a tax credit for the production of critical materials will be expanded to include metallurgical coal used in steelmaking.

The bill creates 'Trump Accounts' — and funds a national hero garden

A number of extra provisions reflect other GOP priorities.

The bill creates a new children's savings program, called Trump Accounts, with a potential \$1,000 deposit from the Treasury.

The Senate provided \$40 million to establish Trump's long-sought "National Garden of American Heroes."

There's a new excise tax on university endowments and a new tax on remittances, or transfers of money that people in the U.S. send abroad. The tax is equal to 1% of the transfer.

A \$200 tax on gun silencers and short-barreled rifles and shotguns was eliminated.

One provision bars for one year Medicaid payments to family planning providers that provide abortions, namely Planned Parenthood.

Another section expands the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, a hard-fought provision from GOP Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri, for those impacted by nuclear development and testing.

Billions would go for the Artemis moon mission and for the exploration of Mars, while \$88 million is earmarked for a pandemic response accountability committee.

Additionally, a provision would increase the nation's debt limit, by \$5 trillion, to allow continued borrowing to pay already accrued bills.

State AI regulations cut from bill after a GOP uproar

The Senate overwhelmingly revolted against a proposal meant to deter states from regulating artificial intelligence. Republican governors across the country asked for the moratorium to be removed and the Senate voted to do so with a resounding 99-1 vote.

A provision was thrown in at the final hours that will provide \$10 billion annually to rural hospitals for five years, or \$50 billion in total. The Senate bill had originally provided \$25 billion for the program, but that number was upped to win over holdout GOP senators and a coalition of House Republicans warning that reduced Medicaid provider taxes would hurt rural hospitals.

The amended bill also stripped out a new tax on wind and solar projects that use a certain percentage of components from China.

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Final price tag: GOP bill could add \$3.3 trillion to deficit

Altogether, the Congressional Budget Office projects that the bill would increase federal deficits over the next 10 years by nearly \$3.3 trillion from 2025 to 2034.

Or not, depending on how one does the math.

Senate Republicans are proposing a unique strategy of not counting the existing tax breaks as a new cost because those breaks are already "current policy." Republican senators say the Senate Budget Committee chairman has the authority to set the baseline for the preferred approach.

Under the alternative Senate GOP view, the bill would reduce deficits by almost half a trillion dollars over the coming decade, the CBO said.

Democrats say this is "magic math" that obscures the true costs of the tax breaks. Some nonpartisan groups worried about the country's fiscal trajectory are siding with Democrats in that regard. The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget says Senate Republicans were employing an "accounting gimmick that would make Enron executives blush."

Trump signs his tax and spending cut bill at the White House July 4 picnic

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump signed his package of tax breaks and spending cuts into law Friday in front of Fourth of July picnickers after his cajoling produced almost unanimous Republican support in Congress for the domestic priority that could cement his second-term legacy.

Flanked by Republican legislators and members of his Cabinet, Trump signed the multitrillion-dollar legislation at a desk on the White House driveway, then banged down a gavel gifted to him by House Speaker Mike Johnson that was used during the bill's final passage Thursday.

Against odds that at times seemed improbable, Trump achieved his goal of celebrating a historic — and divisive — legislative victory in time for the nation's birthday, which also was his self-imposed deadline for Congress to send the legislation to his desk. Fighter jets and stealth bombers streaked through the sky over the annual White House Fourth of July picnic.

"America's winning, winning, winning like never before," Trump said, noting last month's bombing campaign against Iran's nuclear program, which he said the flyover was meant to honor. "Promises made, promises kept, and we've kept them."

The White House was hung with red, white and blue bunting for the Independence Day festivities. The U.S. Marine Band played patriotic marches — and, in a typical Trumpian touch, tunes by 1980s pop icons Chaka Khan and Huey Lewis. There were three separate flyovers.

Trump spoke for a relatively brief 22 minutes before signing the bill, but was clearly energized as the legislation's passage topped a recent winning streak for his administration. That included the Iran campaign and a series of U.S. Supreme Court rulings he's fought for.

After dark, chants of "USA, USA" rose from the picnic crowd on the South Lawn when Trump and the first lady, Melania, appeared on the Truman Balcony to watch the fireworks. They danced to "Y.M.C.A." and waved goodbye to the crowd before they left for their home in New Jersey.

The budget legislation is the president's highest-profile win yet. It includes key campaign pledges like no tax on tips or Social Security income. Trump, who spent an unusual amount of time thanking individual Republican lawmakers who shepherded the measure through Congress, contended "our country is going to be a rocket ship, economically," because of the legislation.

Big cuts to Medicaid and food stamps

Critics assailed the package as a giveaway to the rich that will rob millions more lower-income people of their health insurance, food assistance and financial stability.

"Today, Donald Trump signed into law the worst job-killing bill in American history. It will rip health care from 17 million workers to pay for massive tax giveaways to the wealthy and big corporations, amounting to the country's largest money grab from the working class to the ultra-rich," AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler

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said in a statement. "Every member of Congress who voted for this devastating bill picked the pockets of working people to hand billionaires a \$5 trillion gift."

The legislation extends Trump's 2017 multitrillion-dollar tax cuts and cuts Medicaid and food stamps by \$1.2 trillion. It provides for a massive increase in immigration enforcement. Congress' nonpartisan scorekeeper projects that nearly 12 million more people will lose health insurance under the law.

The legislation passed the House on a largely party-line vote Thursday, culminating a monthslong push by the GOP to cram most of its legislative priorities into a single budget bill that could be enacted without Senate Democrats being able to block it indefinitely by filibustering.

It passed by a single vote in the Senate, where North Carolina Republican Thom Tillis announced he would not run for reelection after incurring Trump's wrath in opposing it. Vance had to cast the tie-breaking vote.

In the House, where two Republicans voted against it, one, conservative maverick Tom Massie of Kentucky, has also become a target of Trump's well-funded political operation. No Democrats voted for the bill.

The legislation amounts to a repudiation of the agendas of the past two Democratic presidents, Barack Obama and Joe Biden, in rolling back Obama's Medicaid expansion under his signature health law and Biden's tax credits for renewable energy.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates the package will add \$3.3 trillion to the deficit over the decade and 11.8 million more people will go without health coverage.

Democrats vow to make bill a midterm issue

Democratic National Committee Chair Ken Martin on Friday called the bill "devastating" and said in a statement that Trump's signature on the legislation "sealed the fate of the Republican Party, cementing them as the party for billionaires and special interests — not working families."

He predicted Republicans would lose their majority in Congress over it. "This was a full betrayal of the American people," Martin said.

Trump complained Friday about Democrats opposing the bill, "and we knew that because their hatred of either the country or me or both is so great they didn't vote at all and it's terrible."

He said their "standard line" is to say Republican legislation is "dangerous" or "everybody's going to die" and "we can't let them get away with it." With his bill, Trump said, "it's actually just the opposite, everybody's going to live."

"And I just want you to know, if you see anything negative put out by Democrats, it's all a con job," Trump said, defending a package that now is law.

Speaking in Iowa on Thursday night, Trump said Democrats "hate Trump — but I hate them, too."

The package is certain to be a flashpoint in next year's midterm elections, and Democrats are making ambitious plans for rallies, voter registration drives, attack ads, bus tours and even a multiday vigil, all intended to highlight the most controversial elements.

Upon his return to Washington early Friday, Trump described the package as "very popular," though polling suggests that public opinion is mixed at best.

For example, a Washington Post/Ipsos poll found that majorities of U.S. adults support increasing the annual child tax credit and eliminating taxes on earnings from tips, and about half support work requirements for some adults who receive Medicaid.

But the poll found majorities oppose reducing federal funding for food assistance to low-income families and spending about \$45 billion to build and maintain migrant detention centers. About 60% said it was "unacceptable" that the bill is expected to increase the \$36 trillion U.S. debt by more than \$3 trillion over the next decade.

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Hamas says it has given a 'positive' response to the latest ceasefire proposal in Gaza

By WAFAA SHURAF, BASSEM MROUE and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

DEIR al-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Hamas said Friday it has given a "positive" response to the latest proposal for a ceasefire in Gaza but said further talks were needed on implementation.

It was not clear if Hamas' statement meant it had accepted the proposal from U.S. President Donald Trump for a 60-day ceasefire. Hamas has been seeking guarantees that the initial truce would lead to a total end to the war, now nearly 21 months old. Trump has been pushing hard for a deal to be reached, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is due to visit the White House next week to discuss a deal.

The Hamas statement came as Israeli airstrikes killed 15 Palestinians in Gaza early Friday, while a hospital said another 20 people died in shootings while seeking aid.

The U.N. human rights office said it has recorded 613 Palestinians killed within the span of a month in Gaza while trying to obtain aid. Most were killed while trying to reach food distribution points run by an Israeli-backed American organization, while others were massed waiting for aid trucks connected to the United Nations or other humanitarian organizations, it said.

Efforts ongoing to halt the war

Trump said Tuesday that Israel had agreed on terms for a 60-day ceasefire in Gaza, during which the U.S. would "work with all parties to end the war." He urged Hamas to accept the deal before conditions worsen.

In its statement late Friday, Hamas said it "has submitted its positive response" to Egyptian and Qatari mediators.

It said it is "fully prepared to immediately enter into a round of negotiations regarding the mechanism for implementing this framework." It did not elaborate on what needed to be worked out in implementation.

A Hamas official said the ceasefire could start as early as next week but he said talks were needed first to work out how many Palestinian prisoners would be released in return for each freed Israeli hostage and to specify the amount of aid that will enter Gaza during the truce. Hamas has said it wants aid to flow in greater quantities through the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss the response with the press.

The official also said that negotiations would start from the first day of the truce on a permanent ceasefire and full withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza in return for the release of remaining hostages. He said that Trump has guaranteed that the truce will be extended beyond 60 days if needed for those negotiations to reach a deal. There has been no confirmation from the United States of such a guarantee.

Previous rounds of negotiations have run aground over Hamas demands of guarantees that further negotiations would lead to the war's end, while Netanyahu has insisted Israel would resume fighting to ensure the destruction of the militant group.

"We'll see what happens. We're going to know over the next 24 hours," Trump told reporters on Air Force One late Thursday when asked if Hamas had agreed to the latest framework for a ceasefire.

20 killed Friday while seeking aid

Officials at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis said at least three Palestinians were killed Friday while on the roads heading to food distribution sites run by the Israeli-backed the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation in southern Gaza.

Since GHF began distributions in late May, witnesses have said almost daily that Israeli troops open fire toward crowds of Palestinians on the roads leading to the food centers. To reach the sites, people must walk several kilometers (miles) through an Israeli military zone where troops control the road.

The Israeli military has said previously it fires warning shots to control crowds or at Palestinians who approach its troops. The GHF has denied any serious injuries or deaths on its sites and says shootings outside their immediate vicinity are under the purview of Israel's military.

On Friday, in reaction to the U.N. rights agency's report, it said in a statement that it was investigating reports of people killed and wounded while seeking aid. It said it was working at "minimizing possible friction between the population" and Israeli forces, including by installing fences and placing signs on the routes.

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Separately, witnesses have said Israeli troops open fire toward crowds of Palestinians who gather in military-controlled zones to wait for aid trucks entering Gaza for the U.N. or other aid organizations not associated with GHF.

On Friday, 17 people were killed waiting for trucks in eastern Khan Younis in the Tahliya area, officials at Nasser Hospital said.

Three survivors told the AP they had gone to wait for the trucks in a military "red zone" in Khan Younis and that troops opened fire from a tank and drones.

It was a "crowd of people, may God help them, who want to eat and live," said Seddiq Abu Farhana, who was shot in the leg, forcing him to drop a bag of flour he had grabbed. "There was direct firing."

Airstrikes also hit the Muwasi area on the southern end of Gaza's Mediterranean coast, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians driven from their homes are sheltering in tent camps. Of the 15 people killed in the strikes, eight were women and one was a child, according to the hospital.

Israel's military said it was looking into Friday's reported airstrikes. It had no immediate comment on the reported shootings surrounding the aid trucks.

U.N. investigates shootings near aid sites

The spokeswoman for the U.N. human rights office, Ravina Shamdasani, said the agency was not able to attribute responsibility for the killings. But she said "it is clear that the Israeli military has shelled and shot at Palestinians trying to reach the distribution points" operated by GHF.

In a message to The Associated Press, Shamdasani said that of the total tallied, 509 killings were "GHF-related," meaning at or near its distribution sites.

In a statement Friday, GHF cast doubt on the casualty figures, accusing the U.N. of taking its casualty figures "directly from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry" and of trying "to falsely smear our effort."

Shamdasani, the U.N. rights office spokesperson, told the AP that the data "is based on our own information gathering through various reliable sources, including medical, human rights and humanitarian organizations."

Rik Peeperkorn, representative of the World Health Organization, said Nasser Hospital, the biggest hospital operating in the south, receives dozens or hundreds of casualties every day, most coming from the vicinity of the food distribution sites.

The International Committee of the Red Cross also said in late June that its field hospital near one of the GHF sites has been overwhelmed more than 20 times in the previous months by mass casualties, most suffering gunshot injuries while on their way to the food distribution sites.

Also on Friday, Israel's military said two soldiers were killed in combat in Gaza, one in the north and one in the south. Over 860 Israeli soldiers have been killed since the war began, including more than 400 during the fighting in Gaza.

The Israeli military also issued new evacuation orders Friday in northeast Khan Younis in southern Gaza and urged Palestinians to move west ahead of planned military operations against Hamas in the area. The new evacuation zones pushed Palestinians into increasingly smaller spaces by the coast.

The Health Ministry in Gaza said the number of Palestinians killed in the territory has passed 57,000. The ministry does not differentiate between civilians and combatants in its count, but says more than half of the dead are women and children. The ministry is run by medical professionals employed by the Hamas government, and its numbers are widely cited by the U.N. and international organizations.

The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking roughly 250 hostages.

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How people are celebrating, protesting and traveling for July Fourth

By BEN FINLEY and JAIMIE DING Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Recent polls will tell you there's been a drop in national pride among Americans, particularly Democrats in the Trump era, with some questioning whether to celebrate July Fourth at all this year.

But Scott Allen, a registered Democrat in Southern California, isn't one of them. He planned to commemorate the nation's 249th birthday with a politically mixed group of neighbors who will grill out and light off fireworks.

He'll be thinking of his U.S. Marine father, and about how proud he is that "we have the freedom to do all the things we do."

"We can have protests. We can have free speech," said Allen, 60, who lives in Lakewood, just south of Los Angeles.

This Independence Day may feel different for many Americans. Around the country, there are protests planned against Trump's policies, and in places like Southern California, where immigration raids have rattled communities, some July Fourth celebrations were canceled.

Fireworks retailers are also dealing with tariffs. But at the same time, holiday travel is expected to break records.

Here's what to know about July Fourth this year:

California celebrations canceled

Several communities in the Los Angeles area have canceled Independence Day festivities due to safety concerns over Trump administration's immigration crackdown.

The raids have triggered weeks of protests across the city and led Trump to deploy National Guard troops and Marines.

The Los Angeles neighborhood of El Sereno canceled its parade after 90% of participants dropped out.

Organizer Genny Guerrero said the majority Latino community is "very patriotic." But many people are avoiding events out of fear of immigration agents.

"The fact that they're taking anyone that is brown, regardless of citizenship, that puts everyone in jeopardy," Guerrero said.

A downtown block party, which drew 20,000 people last year, was postponed. Suburbs in southeastern Los Angeles, such as Bell Gardens, have canceled celebrations altogether.

Events planned in protest

Meanwhile, Independence Day events are scheduled in protest of Trump's policies, including slashes to Medicaid, said Tamika Middleton, managing director of Women's March.

The group had organized the Women's March on Washington in 2017, the day after Trump's first inauguration. This year's events will range from low-key pot lucks to rallies in large cities.

For instance, a gathering will be held at a naturalization ceremony in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to show support for new citizens. But there will be larger protests in bigger cities, including one outside Houston's City Hall.

"We're inviting folks to envision what a truly free America looks like," Middleton said.

Tariffs and fireworks

The vast majority of fireworks in the U.S. are made in China, said Julie Heckman, executive director of the American Pyrotechnics Association.

As the trade war with China escalated, tariffs on Chinese-made fireworks reached 145% in April, Heckman said. Trump issued a 90-day pause in May, leaving current tariffs on Chinese fireworks at 30%.

The tariffs will have little impact on city fireworks shows because the shells were purchased months ago, Heckman said. She's hearing from retailers who sell the backyard fireworks that they're not passing on the 30% tariffs to consumers.

But it'll be a different story next year, Heckman said, because 30% tariffs — or anything higher — are

not sustainable for business. The industry is casting a wary eye toward 2026.

"Every small town in America is going to want a special firework display to honor America's 250th," Heckman said.

Record-breaking holiday travel

Auto club AAA expected more than 72 million people to travel at least 50 miles (80 kilometers) from home. AAA's forecast includes two weekends to better reflect the holiday travel.

Nearly 62 million people will travel by car, a 2.2% bump over 2024, making it the highest volume on record, AAA said. Drivers have seen some price increases at the pump, but summer gas prices are still the lowest they've been since 2021.

Meanwhile, nearly six million people will fly — 4% more than last year, AAA said. The Federal Aviation Administration said this will be the busiest July Fourth week in 15 years.

Strike by French air traffic controllers causes flight delays and cancellations

By OLEG CETINIC Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A strike by French air traffic controllers seeking better working conditions brought chaos at the height of Europe's summer travel season after around 40% of flights to and from Paris were canceled on Friday.

Disruptions started hitting airports across France on Thursday. These intensified Friday as the national civil aviation authority asked airlines to cancel 40% of flights at Charles de Gaulle, Orly and Beauvais airports serving Paris, half of flights in Nice and 30% of flights in Marseille, Lyon and some other cities.

Despite the preventive cancellations, the authority warned in a statement that "disruptions and long delays are to be expected at all French airports."

Paris airports' departure boards were showing a long list of flight delays and cancellations for destinations across France, Europe, North Africa and beyond.

Ryanair was among the airlines that announced widespread disruptions, saying in a statement that it had canceled more than 400 flights affecting 70,000 passengers. The company said the strike affects all its flights over French airspace as well as traffic in and out of French airports, and urged the European Union to reform air traffic rules.

One of the two unions leading the strike, UNSA-ICNA, said in a statement there are not enough employees to handle surging air travel and that inflation is eating away at salaries. The unions are also protesting new reform measures aiming to more tightly monitor their work, prompted by a near-collision at the Bordeaux airport.

Transport Minister Philippe Tabarot called the unions' demands — and their decision to strike just as French schools close for the summer and many families head on vacation — "unacceptable."

Mariano Mignola, from Naples, Italy, travelling with his wife and children, had his flight back from Paris cancelled. "Last night, when we checked in, we realized something was wrong. We went to the airport's website and discovered the sad news," he said. "We came here hoping to find a solution, that the company would provide us with accommodation. But instead, nothing."

"We have to do everything on our own, but it's impossible" in the midst of holiday departures, Mignola said. "There's nothing available, not even a car to drive back."

Parisian Patrick Haus had planned to attend a meeting in Nice, in southern France, but his flight was cancelled. "In a way, I stand in solidarity with the strikers. It's important to know that people don't strike for fun," he said.

Joey Chestnut reclaims title in Nathan's Famous hot dog eating contest, wins 17th Mustard Belt

By SUSAN HAIGH Associated Press

Famed competitive eater Joey "Jaws" Chestnut reclaimed his title Friday at the Nathan's Famous Fourth of July hot dog eating contest after skipping last year's gastronomic battle in New York for the coveted Mustard Belt.

Chestnut, 41, consumed 70 1/2 hot dogs and buns in 10 minutes, falling short of his 2021 record of 76 wieners and buns. It marked the 17th win in 20 appearances for the Westfield, Indiana, eater at the internationally televised competition, which he missed last year over a contract dispute.

"I wish I ate a couple more. Sorry guys," a smiling Chestnut told the crowd, many chanting his name. "I'll be back next year."

Defending champion in the women's division, Miki Sudo of Tampa, Florida, won her 11th title, downing 33 dogs, besting a dozen competitors. Last year, she ate a record 51 links. She also was apologetic for her performance.

"I feel like I let the fans down a little bit. I heard people in the crowd saying, 'Go for 52,'" Sudo told ESPN. "Obviously, I'm always setting my goals high, but the hot dogs weren't cooperating. For some reason, the buns felt larger today."

A large crowd, peppered with foam hot dog hats, turned out to witness the annual eat-a-thon, held outside the original Nathan's Famous restaurant in Coney Island, Brooklyn, since 1972. Many fans showed up to see Chestnut's much-awaited return to an event he has called "a cherished tradition, a celebration of American culture, and a huge part of my life."

Chestnut bested 14 fellow competitors from across the U.S. and the world, including Australia, the Czech Republic, Ontario, England and Brazil. Last year's winner, Patrick Bertoletti of Chicago, came in second place after gobbling up 46 1/2 hot dogs and buns, falling short of the 58 he ate to earn the 2024 men's title.

"I love being here," Chestnut told ESPN after his win. "As soon as I found out I was coming, my body — it was easy to train. I love doing it. And love pushing myself and beating the heck out of people."

Last year, Major League Eating event organizer George Shea said Chestnut would not be participating in the contest due to a contract dispute. Chestnut had struck a deal with a competing brand, the plant-based meat company Impossible Foods.

Chestnut told The Associated Press last month that he had never appeared in any commercials for the company's vegan hot dogs and that Nathan's is the only hot dog company he has worked with. But Chestnut acknowledged he "should have made that more clear with Nathan's."

Last year, Chestnut ate 57 dogs — in only five minutes — in an exhibition with soldiers, at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas. He said that event was "amazing" and that he was pleased to still have a chance to eat hot dogs — a lot of them — on July Fourth.

"I'm happy I did that, but I'm really happy to be back at Coney Island," he said.

North Korean man crosses the heavily fortified border to South Korea

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — An unidentified North Korean man crossed the heavily fortified land border separating the two Koreas and is in South Korean custody, the South's military said Friday.

The South's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the military identified and tracked the individual near the central-west section of the military demarcation line and conducted a "guiding operation" before taking the person into custody Thursday night.

It said authorities plan to investigate the border crossing and did not immediately say whether they view the incident as a defection attempt.

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The Joint Chiefs said it notified the U.S.-led United Nations Command about the incident and had not detected any immediate signs of unusual military activity by the North.

According to the Joint Chiefs, a South Korean military team approached the unarmed North Korean man after detecting him and, after identifying themselves as South Korean troops, guided him safely out of the mine-strewn Demilitarized Zone that divides the two Koreas.

Border tensions have flared in recent months as the two Koreas traded Cold War-style psychological warfare, with North Korea sending thousands of trash-filled balloons toward the South and South Korea blasting anti-Pyongyang propaganda through loudspeakers.

Since taking office last month, South Korea's new liberal President Lee Jae Myung has made efforts to rebuild trust with North Korea, halting the frontline loudspeaker broadcasts and moving to ban activists from flying balloons carrying propaganda leaflets across the border.

In April, South Korean troops fired warning shots to repel about 10 North Korean soldiers who briefly crossed the military demarcation line. The South's military said the soldiers returned to North Korean territory without incident and that the North didn't return fire.

In June last year, North Korean troops crossed the border three times, prompting South Korea to fire warning shots. Experts suggested these crossings may have been accidental, occurring as North Korean troops added anti-tank barriers, planted mines and carried out other work to bolster border defenses amid escalating tensions between the Koreas.

Diplomacy between the war-divided Koreas has derailed since the collapse of denuclearization talks between Washington and Pyongyang in 2019, which prompted North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to accelerate the expansion of his military nuclear program and threaten nuclear conflict toward Washington and Seoul. South Korea's previous conservative government responded by strengthening its combined military exercises with the United States and Japan, which the North condemned as invasion rehearsals.

A volunteer finds the Holy Grail of abolitionist-era Baptist documents in Massachusetts

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

GROTON, Mass. (AP) — Jennifer Cromack was combing through the American Baptist archive when she uncovered a slim box among some 18th and 19th century journals. Opening it, she found a scroll in pristine condition.

A closer look revealed the 5-foot-long (1.5-meter-long) document was a handwritten declaration titled "A Resolution and Protest Against Slavery," signed by 116 New England ministers in Boston and adopted March 2, 1847. Until its discovery in May at the archives in Groton, Massachusetts, American Baptist officials worried the anti-slavery document had been lost forever after fruitless searches at Harvard and Brown universities and other locations. A copy was last seen in a 1902 history book.

"I was just amazed and excited," Cromack, a retired teacher who volunteers at the archive, said. "We made a find that really says something to the people of the state and the people in the country. ... It speaks of their commitment to keeping people safe and out of situations that they should not be in."

The document offers a glimpse into an emerging debate over slavery in the 19th century in the Northeast. The document was signed 14 years before the start of the Civil War as a growing number of religious leaders were starting to speak out against slavery.

Split over slavery

The document also shines a spotlight on a critical moment in the history of the Baptist church.

It was signed two years after the issue of slavery prompted southern Baptists to split from northern Baptists and form the Southern Baptist Convention, the nation's largest Protestant denomination. The split in 1845 followed a ruling by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society prohibiting slave owners from becoming missionaries. The northern Baptists eventually became American Baptist Churches USA.

"It comes from such a critical era in American history, you know, right prior to the Civil War," said the Rev. Mary Day Hamel, the executive minister of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts.

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"It was a unique moment in history when Baptists in Massachusetts stepped up and took a strong position and stood for justice in the shaping of this country," she said. "That's become part of our heritage to this day, to be people who stand for justice, for American Baptists to embrace diversity."

A risky declaration

Deborah Bingham Van Broekhoven, the executive director emerita of the American Baptist Historical Society, said many Americans at the time, especially in the North, were "undecided" about slavery and weren't sure how to respond or were worried about speaking out.

"They thought it was a southern problem, and they had no business getting involved in what they saw as the state's rights," Van Broekhoven said. "Most Baptists, prior to this, would have refrained from this kind of protest. This is a very good example of them going out on a limb and trying to be diplomatic."

The document shows ministers had hoped "some reformatory movement" led by those involved in slavery would make their action "unnecessary," but that they felt compelled to act after they "witnessed with painful surprise, a growing disposition to justify, extend and perpetuate their iniquitous system."

"Under these circumstances we can no longer be silent," the document states. "We owe something to the oppressed as well as to the oppressor, and justice demands the fulfillment of that obligation. Truth and Humanity and Public Virtue, have claims upon us which we cannot dishonor."

The document explains why the ministers "disapprove and abhor the system of American slavery."

"With such a system we can have no sympathy," the document states. "After a careful observation of its character and effects and making every deduction with the largest charity can require, we are constrained to regard it as an outrage upon the rights and happiness of our fellow men, for which there is no valid justification or apology."

Who signed the document?

The Rev. Diane Badger, the administrator of the American Baptist Church of Massachusetts who oversees the archive, teamed up with the Rev. John Odams of the First Baptist Church in Boston to identify what she called the "Holy Grail" of abolitionist-era Baptist documents. Her great-grandfather was an American Baptist minister.

Since its discovery, Badger has put all the ministers' names on a spreadsheet along with the names of the churches where they served. Among them was Nathaniel Colver, of Tremont Temple in Boston, one of the first integrated churches in the country, now known as Tremont Temple Baptist Church. Another was Baron Stow, who belonged to the state's anti-slavery society.

Badger also is working to estimate the value of the document, which is intact with no stains or damage, and is making plans to ensure it is protected. A digital copy could eventually be shared with some of Massachusetts' 230 American Baptist churches.

"It's been kind of an interesting journey and it's one that's still unfolding," Badger said. "The questions that always come to me, OK, I know who signed it but who didn't? I can go through my list, through my database and find who was working where on that and why didn't they sign that. So it's been very interesting to do the research."

The Rev. Kenneth Young — whose predominantly Black Calvary Baptist Church in Haverhill, Massachusetts, was created by freed Blacks in 1871 — called the discovery inspiring.

"I thought it was awesome that we had over hundred signers to this, that they would project that freedom for our people is just," Young said. "It follows through on the line of the abolitionist movement and fighting for those who may not have had the strength to fight for themselves against a system of racism."

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A classical drive: Road rumble strips play Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in UAE emirate of Fujairah

By GABE LEVIN Associated Press

FUJAIRAH, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The humble road rumble strip, used around the world to alert drifting drivers to potential hazards or lane departures, can play Beethoven on a mountain highway in the far reaches of the United Arab Emirates.

For nearly a kilometer (a half mile) along the E84 highway — also known as the Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Road — motorists in the right-hand lane coming into the city of Fujairah can play Ludwig van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony where the rubber meets the road.

"The 'Street of Music,' of course, is an art project that exists in some countries ... but we wanted this project to be in our country," said Ali Obaid Al Hefaiti, the director of Fujairah Fine Arts Academy, which recently wrapped up the project in collaboration with local authorities.

"I think that the project is focused on spreading the art culture. The combination of music in our lives and our normal lives," he added.

For drivers coming into Fujairah, the rumble strip initially looks like a larger, rectangular version of the dash lines separating the three-lane highway. That's until you hit the first block, and the grooves of the road combine with the speed of the vehicle to make music.

Driving over each block sounds out the best-known parts of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony — the final movements known commonly as the tune "Ode to Joy," or in its more modern form, the official anthem of the European Union. Al Hefaiti recommended motorists hit the blocks at around 100 kph (60 mph) to get the tune just right.

The road has become a social media sensation, bringing visitors to one of the lesser-known emirates in the UAE along its eastern coast with the Gulf of Oman.

Drivers have been spotted slowing down to experience the musical road as they come into the city. Passers-by can get the same effect from standing on the side of the road, though motorists often come in quickly.

The concept isn't new — there have been so-called "singing shoulders" deployed in other countries including across the Persian Gulf in Iran. But Al Hefaiti believes this is the first one in the Arab world. Beyond it going viral, Al Hefaiti thinks it will bring classical music into everyday life and "raise awareness about the importance of art culture."

As for why an Emirati fine arts school picked a European composer born in the 18th century to represent Fujairah, Al Hefaiti said that he always encourages his students to explore different cultures.

Today in History: July 5

Dolly the sheep born in cloning breakthrough

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, July 5, the 186th day of 2025. There are 179 days left in the year.

Today in History:

On July 5, 1996, Dolly the sheep, the first mammal cloned from an adult somatic cell by scientists at the Roslin Institute at the University of Edinburgh, was born.

Also on this date:

In 1687, Isaac Newton first published his Principia Mathematica, a three-volume work setting out his mathematical principles of natural philosophy.

In 1811, Venezuela became the first South American country to declare independence from Spain.

In 1852, Frederick Douglass delivered his speech "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" at Corinthian Hall in Rochester, New York.

In 1865, the Secret Service Division of the U.S. Treasury Department was founded in Washington, D.C.,

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with the mission of suppressing counterfeit currency.

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the National Labor Relations Act.

In 1937, Hormel introduced a canned meat product called Spam; more than 9 billion cans have been sold since.

In 1940, during World War II, Britain and the Vichy government in France broke off diplomatic relations.

In 1943, the Battle of Kursk began during World War II; in the weeks that followed, the Soviets were able to repeatedly repel the Germans, who eventually withdrew in defeat.

In 1946, the modern bikini, designed by Frenchman Louis Reard, was first modeled in Paris.

In 1947, Larry Doby made his debut with the Cleveland Indians, becoming the first Black player in the American League three months after Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in the National League.

In 1954, Elvis Presley recorded his first single, "That's All Right," at Sun Studio in Memphis, Tennessee.

In 1971, President Richard Nixon certified the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which lowered the minimum voting age from 21 to 18.

In 1975, Arthur Ashe became the first Black man to win a Wimbledon singles title, defeating Jimmy Connors.

In 1977, Pakistan's army, led by General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, seized power from President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (ZUL'-fih-kahr ah-LEE' BOO'-toh).

In 1980, Bjorn Borg became the first male player to win five consecutive Wimbledon singles titles.

In 1994, Amazon was founded by Jeff Bezos as an online marketplace for books.

In 2011, a jury in Orlando, Florida, found Casey Anthony, 25, not guilty of murder, manslaughter and child abuse in the 2008 disappearance and death of her 2-year-old daughter, Caylee.

In 2013, Pope Francis cleared two of the 20th Century's most influential popes to become saints in the Roman Catholic church, approving a miracle needed to canonize Pope John Paul II and waiving Vatican rules to honor Pope John XXIII.

Today's Birthdays: Julie Nixon Eisenhower is 77. Rock star Huey Lewis is 75. Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher Rich "Goose" Gossage is 74. NFL Hall of Fame receiver James Lofton is 69. Cartoonist Bill Watterson (Calvin and Hobbes) is 67. Singer-songwriter Marc Cohn is 66. Actor Edie Falco is 62. Actor Jillian Armenante is 61. Actor Kathryn Erbe (er-BEE') is 60. Actor Michael Stuhlbarg (STOOL'-bahrg) is 57. Rapper RZA (RIH'-zuh) is 56. Author Gary Shteyngart is 53. R&B singer Joe is 52. Rapper Royce da 5'9" is 48. International Tennis Hall of Famer Amelie Mauresmo is 46. Actor Ryan Hansen is 44. Country musician Dave Haywood (Lady A) is 43. Actor Danay Garcia is 41. Retired soccer player Megan Rapinoe is 40. Actor Jason Dolley is 34. Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher and designated hitter Shohei Ohtani is 31.