

Groton Daily Independent

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Thursday, August 14

Senior Menu: Swiss steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans, fruit, whole wheat bread.
Groton Lions Club Meeting, 6 p.m., 104 N Main

Friday, August 15

Senior Menu: Baked fish, au gratin, California blend, strawberry ambrosia, whole wheat bread.
Boys soccer at Custer, 5 p.m.

Saturday, August 16

Boys Soccer at Hot Springs, 11 a.m.
Girls Soccer at Sioux Falls Christian, Noon

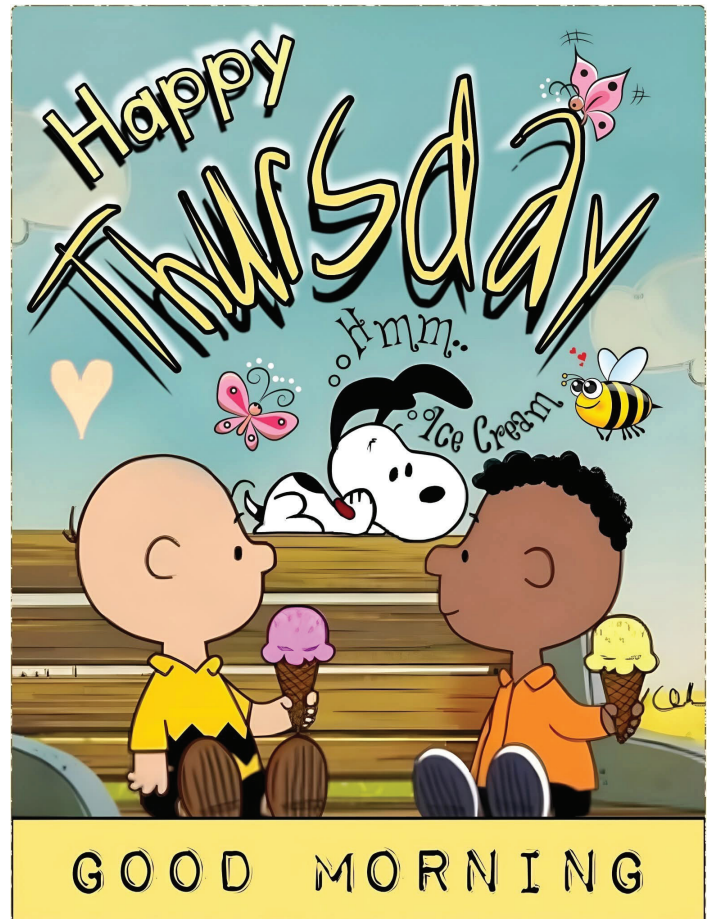
Sunday, August 17

United Methodist: Worship 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 with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion 11 a.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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



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.

Monday, Aug. 18

Senior Menu: Tater tot hot dish, green beans, mixed fruit, whole wheat bread.

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

Senior Citizens meet at Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

Groton Area Staff Development Day

Boys Golf at Meadow Creek Golf Course at Sioux Valley Invitational, 10 a.m.

Open House at Groton Area Elementary and MS/HS, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Sixth Graders meet at 4:30 p.m. in the Gym.

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1440

Why 1440? The printing press was invented around the year 1440, spreading knowledge to the masses and changing the course of history. More facts: In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. We're here to make each one count.

Amazon Grocery Expansion

Amazon announced yesterday that it has expanded same-day grocery delivery to more than 1,000 US cities, with plans to reach more than 2,300 by the end of the year. Prime members get free delivery for orders \$25 and up (with a \$2.99 fee for smaller orders).

Amazon's gross sales last year topped \$100B from more than 150 million US customers. However, the company lags behind Walmart in grocery sales, with Walmart able to make same-day deliveries to more than 90% of the country. With stagnant growth in its cloud computing business, Amazon has redoubled efforts to capture more of the US grocery delivery market, which it values at \$800B, experimenting with storing fresh food at delivery hubs. Amazon has also expanded offerings in recent years to include prescriptions, telehealth visits, and used cars.

Shares of Instacart, DoorDash, and Walmart dropped on yesterday's news.

Juneau River Flooding

Residents in parts of Alaska's capital, Juneau, evacuated yesterday amid the threat of record flooding. The Mendenhall River along western Juneau rose 7 feet within 24 hours, cresting at a record height of 16.7 feet.

The flooding is tied to the retreat of a small glacier near Suicide Basin (see history, including its 2011 discovery). The bedrock valley accumulates annually with meltwater, with nearby Mendenhall Glacier serving as an ice dam. When enough water accumulates, the water breaches the glacier, releasing outburst floods into the Mendenhall River. Roughly 15 billion gallons of water (enough for more than 22,000 Olympic pools) were released in last year's flood.

Last month, officials finished erecting 2.5 miles of emergency flood barriers along the most populated areas of the Mendenhall riverbank. The barriers consist of rock-filled steel cages and sandbags, designed to raise the riverbank and protect homes from up to 18 feet of flooding. A longer-term solution is expected to take years.

Shifting Alcohol Attitudes

Only 54% of US adults say they drink alcohol, the lowest rate Gallup has recorded since tracking began in 1939. The 2025 poll, released yesterday, also found a record high 53% of Americans view drinking as harmful to health.

The drinking rate hovered in the low to mid 60s from 1997 to 2023, before falling to 58% in 2024. Analysts attribute the ongoing decline largely to adults aged 18 to 34, whose drinking rate has dropped 9% in two years. Two-thirds of this group say even moderate drinking—one or two drinks a day—is harmful, up from 34% in 2018. Concerns among older adults have also increased, though less sharply.

The trend follows growing research about alcohol's health impacts. In January, the US surgeon general called for warning labels on alcoholic beverages over cancer risks. Federal guidelines currently recommend that men limit their daily intake to two drinks and women to one.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

President Donald Trump announces 2025 Kennedy Center honorees, including KISS, Sylvester Stallone, George Strait, Gloria Gaynor, and Michael Crawford; says he was involved in selection, will present awards in December.

University of Kansas receives \$300M gift from US businessman David Booth, thought to be among the largest single donations in college sports history.

The 77th Emmy Awards winners announced in select categories; Beyoncé wins first Emmy for costume design for Netflix's "Beyoncé Bowl" NFL halftime special.

Science & Technology

US officials embed GPS trackers in various shipments of advanced AI chips to monitor illegal diversions of shipments to China, reports suggest.

Passively powered flying devices can reach 45 miles above Earth, allowing researchers to study the mesosphere; atmospheric layer is too high for weather balloons but too low for satellites.

Physicists use sound waves to store quantum information; new approach can store quantum memory for 30 times longer than conventional techniques

Business & Markets

US stock markets close up (S&P 500 +0.3%, Dow +1.0%, Nasdaq +0.1%); S&P 500 notches record high as investors bet on potential interest rate cuts.

CoinDesk owner Bullish shares close up more than 83% in NYSE debut, valuing the cryptocurrency exchange at roughly \$10B; Bullish launched in 2021 and is backed by tech billionaire Peter Thiel.

US tariff revenue reaches fresh monthly record of nearly \$28B in July, up from \$8B a year ago; US budget deficit grew to \$291B last month.

Politics & World Affairs

Germany and allies pledge up to \$500M in military aid to Ukraine via new NATO supply line.

President Donald Trump tells Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European leaders he will push for a ceasefire in tomorrow's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska.

Prosecutors seek retrial for a rape charge in Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein's New York sex crimes case, leaving Sept. 30 sentencing for a separate sexual assault charge in limbo.

Air Canada suspends most flights through Saturday due to an ongoing labor dispute with its flight attendant union; cancellations are expected to impact approximately 130,000 passengers each day (More)

Leaf Spot Fungi attacking the Lilac bushes

There have been reports of leaves on Lilac bushes turning brown. Leaf Spot Fungi is on the attack of these bushes and there is nothing you can do about it right now.

According to Aaron Kiesz, Aberdeen City Forester, "We're seeing a lot of sickly Lilacs." He said that the Leaf Spot Fungi is common during warm, humid, rainy growing seasons. He said the bushes will be fine in the spring. There is a preventive chemical (fungicide) that can be used in the spring, but he said that is not necessary unless the bushes go two years with the fungi. He would recommend a treatment if they get the fungi two years in a row so the plants do not get so stressed out.



This row of Lilac bushes across the alley from the high school parking lot has a severe case of the Leaf Spot Fungi. The leaves have turned brown and are dropping. It may look bad now, but the bushes will spring back to life in the spring. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

The following is from Google AI:

Lilac leaf spot, primarily caused by the fungus *Pseudocercospora*, manifests as brown or black spots on leaves, leading to yellowing, twisting, and eventual leaf drop. While not usually fatal, repeated infections can weaken lilacs, potentially causing branch dieback. Management focuses on sanitation, air circulation, and potentially fungicide application

Causes:

Fungal pathogen: *Pseudocercospora* is a common culprit, but other fungi like *Septoria* can also cause similar symptoms.

Weather conditions: High humidity and moderate temperatures, especially in spring, favor fungal growth.

Spore spread: Fungal spores overwinter on fallen leaves and can be splashed onto new foliage in spring.

Management:

Sanitation: Rake and dispose of fallen leaves, as they can harbor fungal spores. Avoid composting infected leaves.

Pruning: Improve air circulation by pruning back old, crowded branches and removing dead wood.

Fungicides: In severe cases, preventative fungicide applications in spring (when leaves emerge) may be necessary. Always follow label instructions carefully.

Resistant cultivars: Consider planting lilac varieties known for their resistance to leaf spot diseases.

Improve drainage: If your soil is poorly drained, consider amending it with organic matter or improving drainage.

South Dakota Mosquito



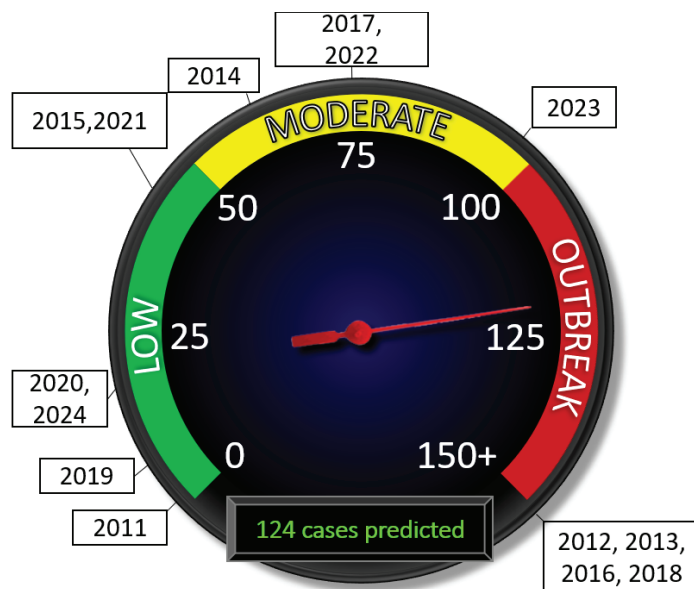
SD WNV (as of August 13):

22 human cases (Beadle, Brookings, Brown, Codington, Grant, Hamlin, Hand, Lawrence, Lincoln, Marshall, Miner, Minnehaha, Sanborn, Spink, Walworth) and 2 deaths

4 human viremic blood donors (Brookings, Brown, Minnehaha)

7 counties with positive mosquito pools (Beadle, Brown, Brookings, Codington, Hughes, Lincoln, Minnehaha)

US WNV (as of August 12): 219 cases (AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, GA, IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MN, MO, MS, ND, NE, NM, NY, OH, OK, PA, SC, SD, TN, TX, VA, WI, WY)



WNV Prediction Model – Total Number of Cases Projected for 2025, South Dakota (as of August 13)

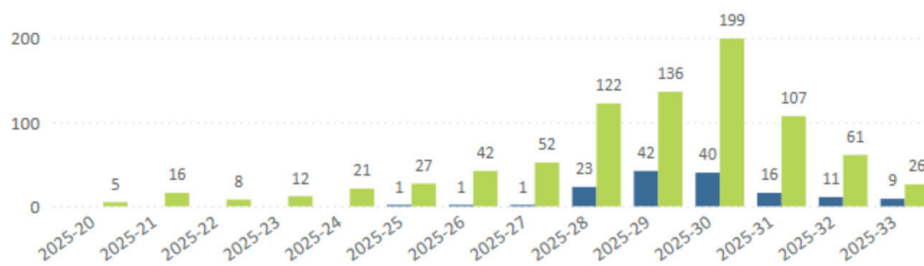
Total sites collecting mosquitoes: 57

Total mosquito pools tested: 978

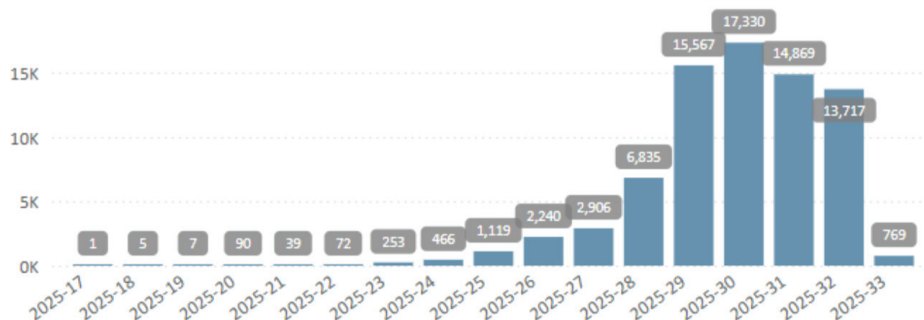
% positivity: 14.72%

Number of Mosquito Pools Tested by MMWR Week and Status

Test Status: ● Positive ● Negative



Culex Mosquitoes Collected by MMWR Week





Some South Dakota counties getting younger

By Melissa Avelino

South Dakota News Watch

Melissa Avelino is a data journalism student at Augustana University. In this series, she looks at the changing face of South Dakota using U.S. Census data.

College towns and high birth rates have increased the average number of young people in some South Dakota counties, even as 17.3% of the state's residents are 65 or older, according to U.S. Census data.

In 2010, the age group of 15-19 was the third most common in South Dakota and by 2024 had increased to first place. According to the latest estimates by the U.S. Census, this group now makes up 6.9% of the population.

"You have higher birth rates in (Indian) reservation counties in general, and that's probably the bigger driver there," said Jared McEntaffer, CEO of the Dakota Institute.

For example, this trend is evident in Buffalo County, home to the Crow Creek reservation. In 2010, the most common age group in the county was 25-34 years old, making up 13% of the county population. In 2024, the most prevalent age group was 10-14, representing 10.9% of the population.

In Oglala Lakota County, part of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, 10.8% of the population are children 10-14 years old.

Another reason for the statewide trend is the presence of colleges and universities, which attract young adults and influence state age trends, McEntaffer said. With 22.3% of its population in the age group of 20-24 years old, Clay County – home to the University of South Dakota in Vermillion – has one of the youngest average ages nationwide.

Rural communities have a predominance of older age groups. For example, Fall River has 10.7% of its population in the age group of 65-69 years old.

The data

The latest U.S. Census data estimates indicated that the median age of South Dakotans was 38.5 in 2024. McEntaffer explains that it is the result of the aging of the overall population.

"We've got fewer young people being born, young people moving away," he said. "When people move back, they tend to be older. So all of those things combine to raise that."

The following county-level map shows the median age in each of South Dakota's counties in 2023, highlighting the younger populations near reservations and universities and older populations in rural areas.

Rural communities are aging

While some counties are getting younger, rural communities generally have an aging population.

"Kids have moved out of the state or, more likely in some cases, to other population centers in the state," McEntaffer said.

Campbell and McPherson counties exemplify these trends, he said. In both counties, the most common age group is 65-69 years old, 11% in Campbell and 9% in McPherson.

"These counties along the north, the kids might have moved into North Dakota and gotten into the oil industry," he said. "So the younger people are leaving the farms, moving to the towns."

Universities are driving the young growth

People aged 20-24 make up 6.7% of South Dakota's population, the third largest age group in the state, according to the U.S. Census.

"The presence of college students is going to influence the young age groups around the state," McEntaffer said.

The couple began to date during Jackson's freshman year, and they got married in Sioux Falls in early

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summer 2025 and decided to stay in South Dakota to start their new life.

One of the reasons they have decided to stay in South Dakota is because of the benefits of living in the state, with better taxes and job opportunities.

"There are a lot of job opportunities. Maybe it's not always the job you want, but there are jobs here," Anna Dircks said. "Having the colleges here helps, like I said, I mean, it just makes it more age-friendly."

Other reasons why the couple calls South Dakota home include the parks and recreation activities and that they are well-organized and cared for.

Looking to the future

The Dircks, like many young adults around the state, are not sure if they will stay or leave South Dakota in the future.

"I could see myself living here forever and we retire here," Jackson Dircks said. "But I could also see us moving in the near future if something popped up."

The couple has some hopes and goals for the following years, which include moving to a townhome and being happy with their careers. They feel South Dakota is the right place for young people to start their lives.

"South Dakota is one of the best states for business friendliness. So it's nice," Anna Dircks said. "There's a lot more opportunity here than, say, where my hometown is."

This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit organization. Read more stories and donate at sdnewswatch.org and sign up for an email to get stories when they're published. Melissa Avelino dos Santos is a student from Rio Branco, Acre, Brazil, at Augustana University in Sioux Falls. She is a summer 2025 intern at SDNW with support from the Nonprofit Newsroom Internship Program created by The Scripps Howard Fund and the Institute for Nonprofit News. Contact Melissa: melissa.avelino@sdnewswatch.org.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Ukrainian family in SD awarded extension of temporary legal status

Rep. Dusty Johnson's office facilitates expedited application process

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

Ilona Biliaze refreshed a government website on her phone in late July, checking for updates on her immigration case again and again.

Biliaze, her husband and two teenage children are displaced Ukrainians living in Watertown under a temporary legal status known as humanitarian parole after they fled the Russian invasion in 2022. She watched as the updates changed: Their decision was a month away. Then it was three weeks, then two months, then three months.

Watching the time grow was defeating, after she'd done everything she could think of to keep her family in their home. They were denied asylum, another temporary legal status; they shared their story to local news outlets and on social media; they tried reaching out to their congressional delegates. Their parole status was scheduled to expire Aug. 17.

She applied for the parole extension in June, and the office of U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, helped the family seek an expedited extension after they called his office in July. But the wait time on a decision kept increasing.

"I felt so bad," Biliaze said. "It was too long, too late."

Then, on July 28, it changed: Case approved.

She called her husband and sponsor family to share the news. Her sponsor, Susan Buhler, started crying on the phone, relieved her adopted family could stay. They shared hugs in the Biliazes' driveway and marveled over the phone screen. The official documents arrived in the mail last week.

The two parents and their teenage children can live and work in the United States through August 2027. Their 10-month-old son is an American citizen, because he was born in Watertown.

"We feel safe here. This is our home," Biliaze said.

The Biliazes are among 117,000 Ukrainians who came to the United States through Uniting for Ukraine (U4U). The humanitarian parole program is carried out under the U.S. Homeland Security secretary's authority to allow noncitizens into the country with a sponsor on a temporary, case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons.

Johnson told South Dakota Searchlight his office was able to help by walking the Biliazes through the paperwork and flagging it for federal workers to understand its urgency.



The Biliaze family, including parents Ilona and Valerii, sit at their kitchen table on May 12, 2025, in Watertown. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

"Most South Dakotans understand how important it is that when people are here legally, fleeing terrible, dangerous situations, that we have legal mechanisms to remain until they can safely return home," Johnson said.

Johnson's office has worked on 535 constituent cases so far this year, ranging from the Biliazes' immigration case to helping other South Dakotans navigate the Interval Revenue Service, Social Security and Veterans Affairs. Fifty-three cases involved the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

South Dakota's lone U.S. representative said that many Americans believe their congressional delegates only engage in political work, but constituent casework is where "nonpartisanship still reigns."

"That's our job: We're supposed to advocate for South Dakotans, and that's what we do," Johnson said.

The Biliazes hope to make South Dakota their home permanently and plan to apply for green cards, realizing how fast two years pass by. Congress has not offered a special pathway to legal permanent residency specifically for Ukrainian parolees, like the one for Cubans.

Johnson said opening up a citizenship pathway for families like the Biliazes or those on other temporary visa programs would be politically difficult, but possible.

"When the southern border was in crisis, there was a limited appetite in Washington to talk about more legal pathways to residency in America," Johnson said. "Now that we've regained operational control, there's more of an opportunity to have those conversations."

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.

10 South Dakota inmates paroled for deportation, governor says

BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF

A state board has approved the parole transfer of 10 inmates who are in the country without legal permission, according to South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden.

The governor said Wednesday that the inmates will be transferred to federal custody for deportation proceedings.

"South Dakota taxpayers should not have to foot the bill for illegal alien criminals," Rhoden said in a news release.

The inmates were chosen by the Department of Corrections based on their immigration status, low-risk classification and closeness to the end of their sentence, the news release said. Each case was reviewed by the South Dakota Board of Pardons and Paroles.

The inmates came from Mexico, Sudan, Liberia, Canada, Somalia, Cuba and Ethiopia. Their crimes included burglary, possession of controlled substances, theft, assault and rape, among others.

The action comes on the heels of the Department of Corrections pursuing an agreement to assist the federal government with immigration enforcement, as part of an initiative Rhoden has dubbed Operation Prairie Thunder. The Highway Patrol and Division of Criminal Investigation have similar agreements.



Cells at the South Dakota State Penitentiary. (Courtesy of South Dakota Department of Corrections)

South Dakota lawmakers endorse more video livestreaming, hear update on Capitol water damage

BY: SETH TUPPER

A committee of South Dakota lawmakers endorsed a proposal Tuesday to provide more video livestreaming of the legislative process and heard how water-damaged technology could affect a special legislative session next month.

South Dakota Public Broadcasting — which is part of state government — already provides video livestreaming of state House and Senate floor sessions, as well as meetings of the Legislature's Appropriations Committee. Other committee rooms are only equipped for audio livestreaming.

The Legislature's Executive Board, which met Tuesday at the Capitol in Pierre, endorsed a \$36,442 plan to put video livestreaming equipment in the other five committee rooms. The proposal will go to the full Legislature as part of a supplemental budget bill this winter.

House Speaker Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids, the chairman of the committee, advocated for the plan.

"For the transparency that it brings to this process, to be able to look and see the people presenting, to look at the presentations that are being presented, and also just the awareness of what's going on in this building during the legislative session, I think it's great," Hansen said, "and I think it'll only enhance that."

Public broadcasting cuts discussed

Senate Majority Whip Randy Deibert, R-Spearfish, asked whether South Dakota Public Broadcasting will have the capacity to handle the additional responsibility. The organization is considering budget cuts and layoffs after it lost about \$2 million of annual support — roughly 20% of its budget — when Congress and President Donald Trump defunded the Corporation for Public Broadcasting last month.

Elijah Rodriguez, chief information technology officer for the Legislative Research Council, said he has assurances from South Dakota Public Broadcasting that it will be able to handle the additional video archiving and management of video livestreams on its SD.net website and YouTube, "regardless of whether they have staff cuts or not."

House Majority Leader Scott Odenbach, R-Spearfish, asked about the possibility of the Legislative Research Council taking over video livestreaming and archiving duties. The council's director, John McCullough, said it would require the council to purchase equipment and hire additional staff.

"It could be absorbed," McCullough said. "It would just cost money."

Water leaks damage House technology

Rodriguez updated the committee on damage caused by water leaks this summer in the House chamber's technology equipment closets. He said the leaks occurred during large rainstorms in May and June while the roof was undergoing repairs. There was about \$185,000 worth of damage, he said, which he hopes insurance will cover.

But there's a four-month lead time on replacement equipment, which is all custom-built. Because of that, a Sept. 23 special session to consider a prison construction plan could be affected. Rodriguez said



South Dakota Public Broadcasting livestreams state Senate floor debate on Jan. 21, 2025. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

the electronic board that displays roll-call vote results in the House might not be available, and some representatives' voting buttons at their desks might not work.

"We are building a contingency plan to have a workaround and still be able to operate in the House just in case that equipment isn't fully functional," Rodriguez said.

Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

Trump in court ruling allowed to hold back foreign aid funds approved by Congress

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — A federal appeals court on Wednesday overturned a lower court's ruling that had required the Trump administration to spend foreign aid dollars approved by Congress.

But instead of addressing the central argument of the lawsuit — that a president cannot refuse to spend money approved by lawmakers, who hold the power of the purse — the Circuit Court in a potentially significant decision said the organizations that filed the case didn't have the authority to do so.

Judge Karen LeCraft Henderson wrote in her 33-page opinion that only the comptroller general, who leads the Government Accountability Office, has the power to bring lawsuits when a president impounds, or refuses to spend, congressionally approved funds. The GAO is an independent, non-partisan watchdog agency that works for Congress.

"Because the grantees lack a cause of action, we need not address on the merits whether the government violated the Constitution by infringing on the Congress's spending power through alleged violations of the 2024 Appropriations Act, the ICA and the Anti-Deficiency Act," Henderson wrote. The ICA is the Impoundment Control Act, which is the legal mechanism through which the president can delay or withhold funds.

Henderson was nominated to the Circuit Court in 1990 by President George H.W. Bush, a few years after President Ronald Reagan nominated her as a federal district judge in 1986.

Henderson wrote that she and Judge Gregory G. Katsas, who was nominated by President Donald Trump, concluded "the district court abused its discretion in granting a preliminary injunction" for several reasons.

Both Republican and Democratic state attorneys general filed amicus briefs in the case, with Republicans siding with the Trump administration. The case originated when Trump signed an order on Inauguration Day freezing certain foreign aid spending.

Henderson wrote that "within weeks, the State Department and USAID suspended or terminated thousands of grant awards."



President Donald Trump holds up an executive order after signing it during an indoor inauguration parade at the Capital One Arena on Jan. 20, 2025 in Washington, D.C. (Photo by Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images)

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'It is our responsibility to check the president'

Judge Florence Y. Pan, who was nominated by President Joe Biden, issued a 46-page dissenting opinion, arguing the ruling from her two colleagues was "procedurally and substantively flawed."

"It is our responsibility to check the President when he violates the law and exceeds his constitutional authority," Pan wrote. "We fail to do that here."

Pan wrote she disagreed with the majority's opinion that Trump withholding certain foreign aid funding was "a mere violation of the Impoundment Control Act that should be addressed by the Comptroller General."

"In this case, the President's violation of the Impoundment Control Act is a sideshow," Pan wrote. "That statute provided a mechanism for the President to lawfully attempt to impound the funds, and his failure to follow its prescribed procedures is evidence that he was, in fact, refusing to obligate the funds in defiance of Congress."

Public media funding targeted

The Trump administration has used the Impoundment Control Act one time this year, when it requested Congress cancel \$9.4 billion in funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and various foreign aid programs.

The House voted mostly along party lines to approve the full request in mid-June.

Senate Republicans approved the bill in July after preserving full funding for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR.

House GOP lawmakers then cleared the bill for Trump's signature just before a 45-day clock ran out.

Trump administration sees 'big win'

Several members of the Trump administration, including Office of Management and Budget Director Russ Vought and Attorney General Pam Bondi, cheered the Circuit Court's ruling in social media posts.

"In a 2-1 ruling, the DC Circuit lifted an injunction ordering President Trump to spend hard-earned taxpayer dollars on wasteful foreign aid projects," Bondi wrote. "We will continue to successfully protect core Presidential authorities from judicial overreach."

Vought wrote the ruling was a "Big win!"

An OMB spokesperson wrote in a statement the ruling represented a victory for the White House.

"Radical left dark-money groups have been using the court system to seize control of U.S. foreign policy," the spokesperson wrote. "Today's decision stops these private groups from maliciously interfering with the President's ability to spend responsibly and administer foreign aid in a lawful manner and in alignment with his America First policies."

Lauren Bateman, attorney at Public Citizen Litigation Group and lead counsel on the suit, wrote in a statement that the court's ruling represented "a significant setback for the rule of law and risks further erosion of basic separation of powers principles."

"We will seek further review from the court, and our lawsuit will continue regardless as we seek permanent relief from the Administration's unlawful termination of the vast majority of foreign assistance. In the meantime, countless people will suffer disease, starvation, and death from the Administration's unconscionable decision to withhold life-saving aid from the world's most vulnerable people."

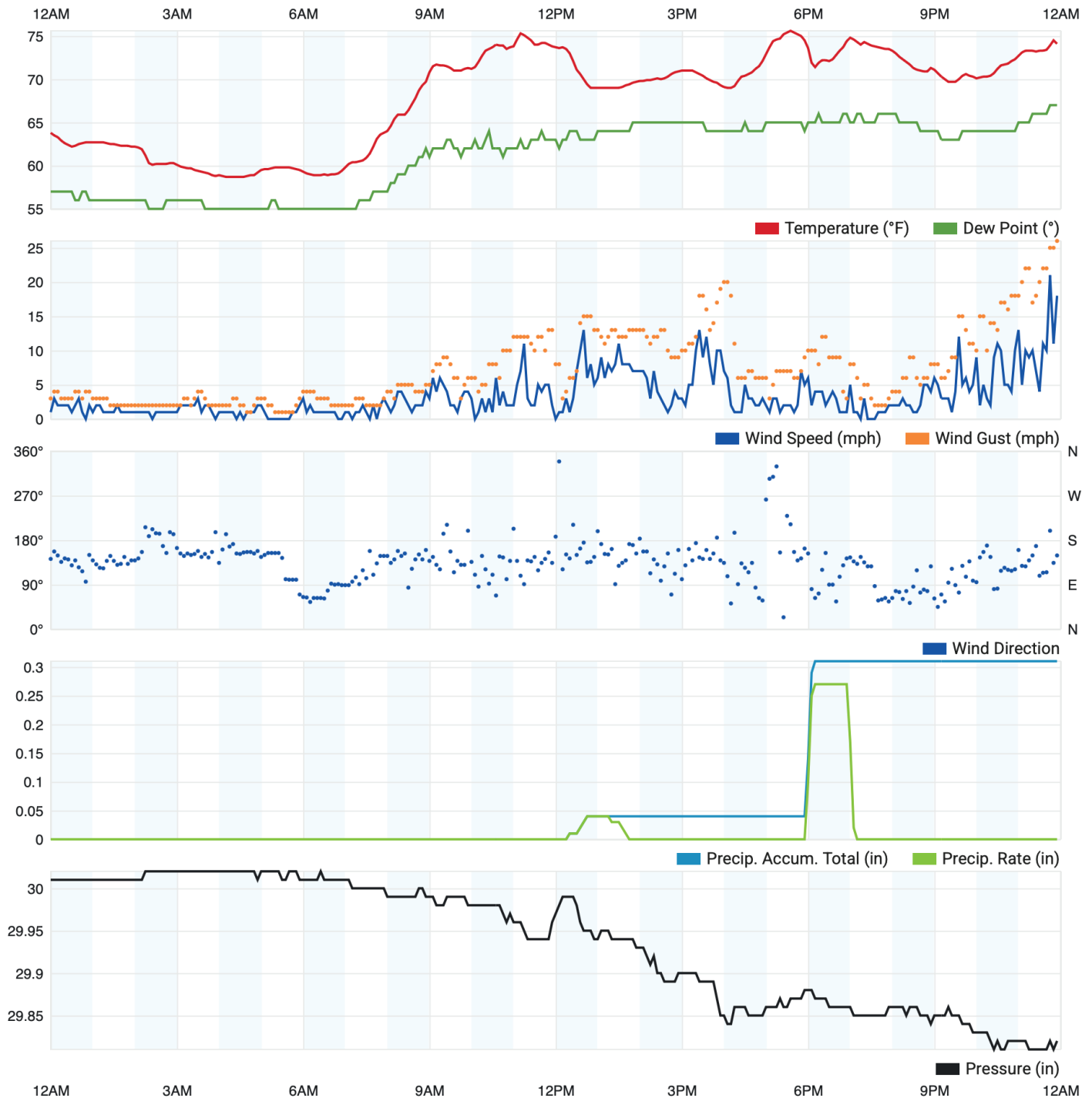
Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 13, 2025



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Thursday



High: 89 °F

Becoming
Sunny

Thursday
Night



Low: 66 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms

Friday



High: 83 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms

Friday Night



Low: 64 °F

Chance
T-storms

Saturday



High: 81 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

2

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Isolated to Scattered Severe
Storms Possible

TIMING

**By Early This Evening
Through The Overnight**

PRIMARY THREATS



DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS IN
EXCESS OF 60+
MPH



LARGE HAIL

SECONDARY THREATS



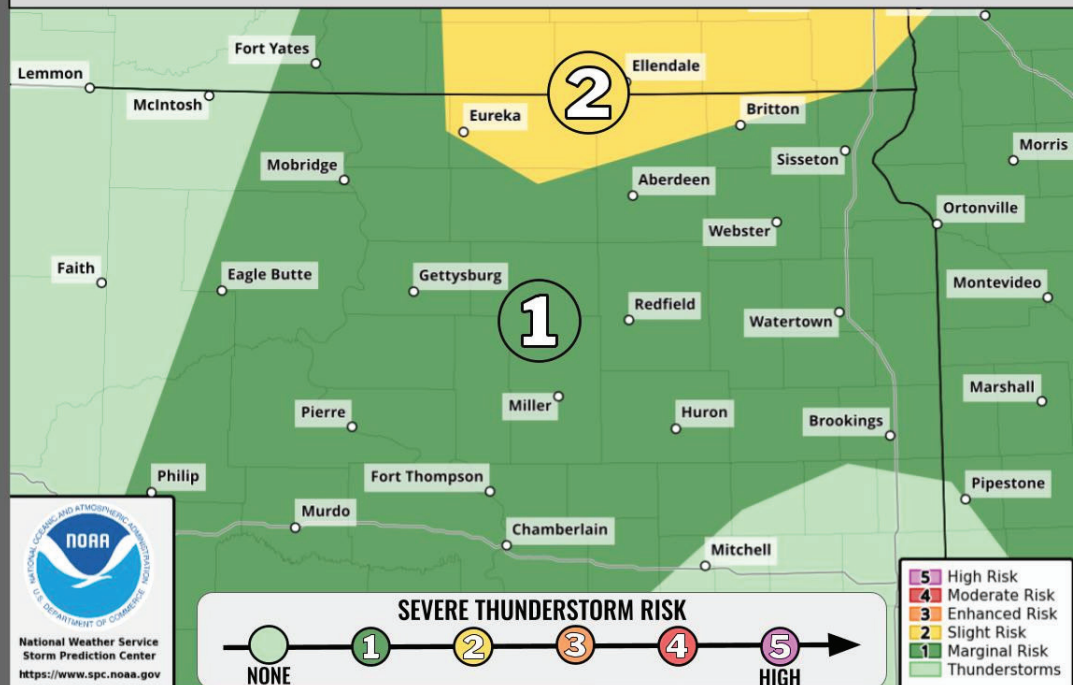
TORNADO(ES)
POSSIBLE



HEAVY
RAIN



Severe Storms Possible By Early This Evening



There is a Slight risk (level 2 out of 5) for severe storms this evening into the overnight hours. This mainly impacts northeastern SD along the ND/SD border. Other parts of central, north central and northeast SD are in a Marginal risk (level 1 out of 5). The main threats will be wind gusts of 60 mph and 1 inch diameter hail, although a brief tornado or two cannot be ruled out.

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THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:

Isolated severe storms
possible.

TIMING

By Evening into Early
Overnight

PRIMARY THREATS



DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS



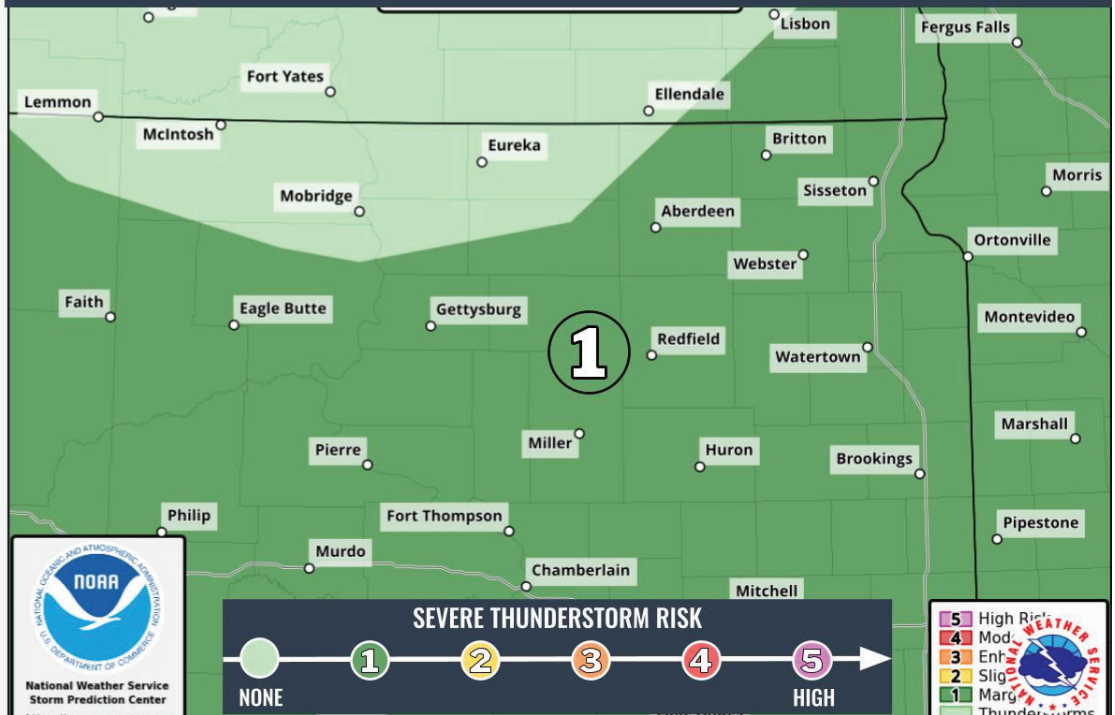
LARGE HAIL

SECONDARY THREATS



HEAVY
RAINFALL

SEVERE STORMS POSSIBLE FRIDAY



There is a marginal risk (level 1 out of 5) for severe storms Friday evening into the overnight hours. The main threats with these storms will be 60 mph wind gusts and 1 inch diameter hail. Heavy rainfall will be a secondary threat.



Heat Index Forecast Thursday

August 14, 2025
3:49 AM

→ Heat indices ranging from 100°F to over 105°F over central and south central South Dakota

◆ Heat indices in the 90s across north central into portions of northeast South Dakota as well

Staying Safe in the Heat

- ☀ Limit Outdoor Activities
- ☀ Drink Plenty of Water
- ☀ Avoid Alcohol
- ☀ Wear Light Clothing
- ☀ Wear Sunscreen
- ☀ Work Outdoors Early or Very Late in the Day

weather.gov/heat

National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

Maximum Heat Index Forecast (°F)

	8/14 Thu																	8/15 Fri	
	8am	9am	10am	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm	11pm	12am	1am	Maximum
Aberdeen	68	70	75	77	83	86	90	92	94	94	96	93	91	84	76	75	73	71	96
Britton	66	68	73	76	82	86	86	88	92	92	92	90	87	78	75	73	72	72	92
Chamberlain	71	73	78	85	91	95	99	102	103	105	104	104	100	91	87	85	79	79	105
Clark	67	68	71	72	75	78	79	84	88	89	90	88	85	77	76	74	73	73	90
Eagle Butte	65	67	74	79	85	87	91	92	93	94	92	91	89	83	78	75	73	71	94
Eureka	66	69	73	78	84	86	89	91	93	93	92	91	88	78	75	73	72	70	93
Gettysburg	65	69	73	77	84	88	93	95	96	96	96	93	90	83	76	75	73	71	96
McIntosh	63	67	73	79	85	88	90	91	92	90	89	88	85	77	73	70	69	68	92
Millbank	67	69	72	74	77	82	86	88	89	90	90	88	84	76	74	73	73	72	90
Miller	69	72	76	79	85	89	93	96	97	98	97	95	92	85	78	76	74	74	98
Mobridge	66	70	75	79	86	90	92	94	96	94	94	92	89	82	76	74	72	71	96
Murdo	67	70	75	82	87	93	96	99	100	101	101	96	92	86	83	81	78	76	101
Pierre	69	73	78	83	89	95	100	104	106	106	106	101	97	91	86	83	79	76	106
Redfield	69	70	75	78	84	88	90	93	95	96	96	94	91	84	78	76	75	73	96
Sisseton	68	70	74	76	78	83	84	86	87	89	88	87	85	77	75	74	74	73	89
Watertown	66	67	70	73	76	79	83	88	88	89	89	87	85	77	75	74	74	73	89
Webster	66	68	72	73	76	79	82	84	87	87	87	86	85	77	76	74	74	74	87
Wheaton	66	69	73	74	77	77	79	84	86	87	87	86	85	77	76	75	74	73	87

Created: 3 am CDT Thu 8/14/2025 | Values are maximums over the period beginning at the time shown.

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Today is looking particularly warm with heat index values near or above 100°F over much of central and south central SD. Heat index values in the 90s are possible across north central into portions of northeast SD as well. Those sensitive to heat may wish to take precautions. For tips on heat safety see www.weather.gov/safety/heat

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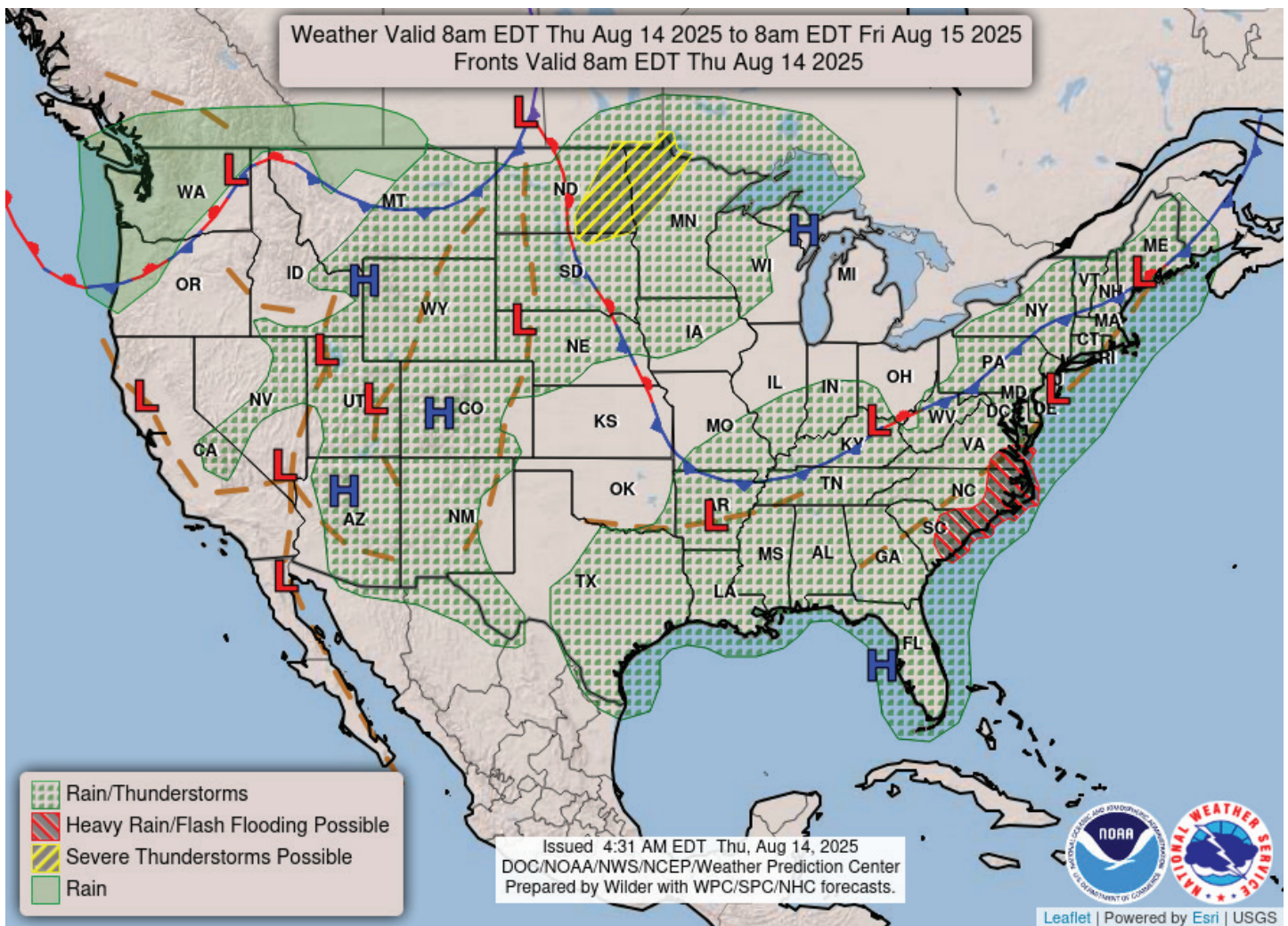
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 76 °F at 5:32 PM
Heat Index: 77 °F at 5:30 PM
Low Temp: 59 °F at 4:07 AM
Wind: 22 mph at 11:06 PM
Precip: : 0.31

Day length: 14 hours, 11 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 104 in 1952
Record Low: 38 in 1968
Average High: 83
Average Low: 57
Average Precip in August.: 1.01
Precip to date in August: 1.74
Average Precip to date: 15.11
Precip Year to Date: 16.80
Sunset Tonight: 8:42:48 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:32:22 am



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Today in Weather History

August 14, 1898: A deadly, estimated F4 tornado moved southeast from 12 miles northwest of Clear Lake, passing 7 miles north of town and ending about 4 miles west of Gary. Deaths occurred on two farms. One man was killed when the kitchen of his farm house was torn off. Five members of one family were killed along with two labors on another farm as every building was swept away. Buildings suffered massive damage on eight farms. This tornado was one of the earliest, estimated F4 tornadoes on record for South Dakota.

August 14, 2008: Several severe thunderstorms developed along a cold front across parts of central and northeast South Dakota. Large hail, some flash flooding, and a couple of weak tornadoes occurred with these storms. An EF0 tornado touched down briefly at the Brown County Fairgrounds, blowing over several tents and awnings. Another EF0 tornado touched down briefly in an open field causing no damage north of Stephan in Hyde County.

August 14, 2009: A warm front brought severe thunderstorms with large hail up to the size of golf balls along with sixty mph winds to parts of north central and northeast South Dakota. Also, very heavy rain fell across western Brown County with 2 to 4 inches of rain reported. This heavy rain brought flash flooding conditions. Numerous county roads and area fields were overrun with flowing water. The water level on Richmond Lake rose nearly a foot the next day after the event from high inflows. This rapid rise in the lake level resulted in numerous boat and fishing docks being submerged. Several boats were also trapped under lift canopies due to the high water. There were reports of several boats breaking free of their mooring and floating toward the spillway.

1898 - A deadly, estimated F4 tornado moved southeast from 12 miles northwest of Clear Lake, South Dakota, passing 7 miles north of town and ending about 4 miles west of Gary. Deaths occurred on two farms. One man was killed when the kitchen of his farm house was torn off. Five members of one family were killed along with two labors on another farm as every building was swept away. Buildings suffered massive damage on eight farms. This tornado was one of the earliest, estimated F4 tornadoes on record for South Dakota.

1936 - Temperatures across much of eastern Kansas soared above 110 degrees. Kansas City MO hit an all-time record high of 113 degrees. It was one of sixteen consecutive days of 100 degree heat for Kansas City. During that summer there were a record 53 days of 100 degree heat, and during the three summer months Kansas City received just 1.12 inches of rain. (The Kansas City Weather Almanac)

1953: Hurricane Barbara hits North Carolina as a Category 2 hurricane. Damage from the storm was relatively minor, totaling around \$1.3 million (1953 USD). Most of it occurred in North Carolina and Virginia from crop damage. The hurricane left several injuries, some traffic accidents, as well as seven fatalities in the eastern United States; at least two were due to electrocution from downed power lines. Offshore Atlantic Canada, a small boat sunk, killing its crew of two.

1969: Hurricane Camille, a powerful, deadly, and destructive hurricane formed just west of the Cayman Islands on this day. It rapidly intensified, and by the time it reached western Cuba the next day, it was a Category 3 hurricane. Hurricane Camille was spawned on August 5th by a tropical wave off the coast of Africa. The storm became a tropical disturbance four days later on the 9th and a tropical storm on the 14th with a 999-millibar pressure center and 55 mph surface winds.

1975: In London, England, a localized torrential downpour known as The Hampstead Storm, drops 6.72 inches of rain in 155 minutes at Hampstead Heath. One died in the storm. The water floods the Underground and forces sewer covers up.

1953 - Hurricane Barbara hits North Carolina as a Category 2 hurricane. Damage from the storm was relatively minor, totaling around \$1.3 million (1953 USD). Most of it occurred in North Carolina and Virginia from crop damage. The hurricane left several injuries, some traffic accidents, as well as seven fatalities in the eastern United States; at least two were due to electrocution from downed power lines. Offshore Atlantic Canada, a small boat sunk, killing its crew of two.

1989 - Afternoon thunderstorms in Illinois soaked the town of Battendorf with 2.10 inches of rain in thirty minutes. Evening thunderstorms in Montana produced wind gusts to 66 mph at Hobson. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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LIVING THE WORD

"Papa, what do you want more than anything else in the entire world?" asked my grandson, Keller.

We had been watching a commercial on his hand-held tablet during a football game, and he hadn't blinked once during the entire advertisement. My first thought was that he wanted to know what was important to me. But, suddenly, the words of Jesus came to my mind: "For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of."

"Well, Keller," I said, "most of all I want to be like Jesus, and then I'd also like to be the best Papa I can be. That's very important to me, and other than being like Jesus, I want to be a good example for you."

Not long ago, I read a story of a man in a foreign country who wanted to "Be like Jesus." So, he decided to memorize the New Testament and made it through the Beatitudes. One day, he ran into the missionary who led him to the Lord and baptized him. Immediately, he told him about his goal and began reciting the Beatitudes. After he heard him recite them, he said, "Good. Now put them into practice."

A few weeks later, he met the missionary again and said, "You know I tried doing what you said, and it didn't work out. I got confused. So, I started over with just the first one, and it worked better. Now I'm working on the second. I want to live what I know."

Knowing the Bible is one thing. Living it is very different. The Psalmist said, "Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying Your decrees."

Prayer: Lord, help us to keep it simple but steady as we grow into the likeness of Your Son, our Savior. Teach us to walk one step at a time in strength. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying Your decrees. Psalm 119:5

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: 08.12.25

1 8 31 56 67 23

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$198,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 6 Mins
50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.13.25

17 23 27 45 52 3

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,150,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 21 Mins
50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.13.25

13 23 30 31 38 2

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 36 Mins 51
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.13.25

3 8 11 23 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$93,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 36
Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.13.25

29 33 41 50 54 23

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 5 Mins
51 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.13.25

4 11 40 44 50 4

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$565,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 5 Mins
50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

08/09/2025 Groton Legion 30th Anniversary Celebration
08/07/2025 Groton Firemen Summer Splash in the GHS Parking Lot 7:30-8:30pm
08/11/2025 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 3:30-6pm
08/23/2025 Glacial Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
09/05/2025 Homecoming Parade 1pm
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
09/06-07/25 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
09/07/2025 Couples Sunflower Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
09/07/2025 9th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm
10/10/2025 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
10/11/2025 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
10/31/2025 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/15/2025 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving 11:30am-1:30pm Community Center (Thanksgiving)
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

Spartan Emergency Response Breaks Ground on \$20 Million Facility Expansion to Increase Production

BRANDON, S.D.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Aug 13, 2025--

Spartan Emergency Response, a brand of REV Group Inc. subsidiary Spartan Fire LLC and a leading manufacturer of fire apparatus, broke ground on a facility expansion today with South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden offering his support. This comes after REV Group announced a \$20 million investment in the facility during its second-quarter earnings call on June 4.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20250813983601/en/>

Spartan Emergency Response Groundbreaking Ceremony for \$20 Million Expansion to increase production of fire apparatus by 40%. L-R: Benjamin Ready, Southeast Regional Director from the Office of United States Senator John Thune; South Dakota Lieutenant Governor Tony Venhuizen; Spartan Emergency Response GM Chad Knigge; South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden; REV Specialty Vehicles Segment President Mike Virnig; REV Group CFO Amy Campbell; REV Group General Counsel Steve Zamansky; City of Brandon Mayor Harry Buck

The investment marks a major milestone in efforts to increase production capacity by 40% for its fully custom Spartan Emergency Response apparatus as well as its high-performance, semi-custom fire trucks that can be completed and delivered in under a year. The expansion will also increase the facility's painting and fabrication process capabilities across the Brandon campus.

"We are delighted to host our groundbreaking ceremony today to announce our plans for expansion. This investment will double our manufacturing footprint and help us meet the rising demand from fire departments across the nation by allowing us to build more fire apparatus and deliver it faster," said Mike Virnig, President, REV Specialty Vehicles Segment.

The expansion will also bring lasting economic benefits to the Brandon and Sioux Falls region:

Creation of 50 new jobs, with an estimated \$1.8 million increase in annual payroll
Estimated \$85,000 increase in annual property tax contributions
Addition of 56,000 square feet to the existing facility

"Thank you to Spartan Emergency Response for your heart of service and for your heart to provide a quality product to protect people and to serve people which in most cases is on their worst day," said South Dakota Gov. Rhoden during the groundbreaking presentation, who also shared his service as a volunteer firefighter.

Other officials and guests who attended included:

South Dakota Lieutenant Governor Tony Venhuizen
City of Brandon Mayor Harry Buck
Chad Krier, Constituent Services Representative at the Office of United States Senator Mike Rounds
Benjamin Ready, Southeast Regional Director from the Office of United States Senator John Thune
Landon Hanson, Military and Veteran Services Representative for Congressman Dusty Johnson

Israel announces West Bank settlement that rights groups say could imperil Palestinian state

MAALE ADUMIM, West Bank (AP) — Israel's far-right finance minister announced a contentious new settlement construction in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Thursday which Palestinians and rights groups worry will scuttle plans for a future Palestinian state by effectively cutting the West Bank into two separate parts.

The announcement comes as many countries said they would recognize a Palestinian state in September.

"This reality finally buries the idea of a Palestinian state, because there is nothing to recognize and no one to recognize," said Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich. "Anyone in the world who tries today to recognize

a Palestinian state – will receive an answer from us on the ground,” he said.

Development in E1, an open tract of land east of Jerusalem, has been under consideration for more than two decades, but was frozen due to U.S. pressure during previous administrations. On Thursday, Smotrich praised President Donald Trump and U.S. ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee as “true friends of Israel as we have never had before.”

The E1 plan has not yet received its final approval, which is expected next week. The plan includes around 3,500 apartments to expand the settlement of Maale Adumim, Smotrich said. While some bureaucratic steps remain, if the process moves quickly, infrastructure work could begin in the next few months and construction of homes could start in around a year.

Rights groups swiftly condemned the plan. Peace Now called it “deadly for the future of Israel and for any chance of achieving a peaceful two-state solution” which is “guaranteeing many more years of bloodshed.”

The announcement comes as the Palestinian Authority and Arab countries condemned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s statement in an interview on Tuesday that he was “very” attached to the vision of a Greater Israel. He did not elaborate, but supporters of the idea believe that Israel should control not only the occupied West Bank but parts of Arab countries.

Man accused of faking his death to avoid rape charges is found guilty of sexual assault in Utah

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A Rhode Island man accused of faking his death and fleeing the United States to evade rape charges was found guilty Wednesday of sexually assaulting a former girlfriend in his first of two Utah trials.

A jury in Salt Lake County found Nicholas Rossi guilty of a 2008 rape after a three-day trial in which his accuser and her parents took the stand. The verdict came hours after Rossi, 38, declined to testify on his own behalf. He will be sentenced in the case on Oct. 20 and is set to stand trial in September for another rape charge in Utah County.

First-degree felony rape carries a punishment in Utah of five years to life in prison, said Salt Lake County District Attorney Sim Gill.

“We are grateful to the survivor in this case for her willingness to come forward, years after this attack took place,” Gill said in a statement Wednesday night. “We appreciate her patience as we worked to bring the defendant back to Salt Lake County so that this trial could take place and she could get justice. It took courage and bravery to take the stand and confront her attacker to hold him accountable.”

Utah authorities began searching for Rossi, whose legal name is Nicholas Alahverdian, when he was identified through a decade-old DNA rape kit in 2018. He was among thousands of rape suspects identified and later charged when the state made a push to clear its rape kit backlog.

Months after he was charged in Utah County, an online obituary claimed Rossi had died on Feb. 29, 2020, of late-stage non-Hodgkin lymphoma. But police in his home state of Rhode Island, along with his former lawyer and a former foster family, cast doubt on whether he was dead. He was arrested in Scotland the following year while receiving treatment for COVID-19 after hospital staff in Glasgow recognized his distinctive tattoos from an Interpol notice.

Rossi was extradited to Utah in January 2024 while insisting he was an Irish orphan named Arthur Knight who was being framed. Investigators say they identified at least a dozen aliases Rossi used over the years to evade capture.

He appeared in court this week in a wheelchair, wearing a suit and tie and using an oxygen tank.

Throughout the trial, prosecutors painted a picture of an intelligent man who used his charm to take advantage of a vulnerable young woman. She was living with her parents and recovering from a traumatic brain injury when she responded to a personal ad Rossi posted on Craigslist. They began dating and were engaged within about two weeks.

On Monday, the woman described being asked to pay for their dates, cover Rossi’s car repairs, lend him

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\$1,000 so he wouldn't be evicted from his apartment and take on debt to buy their engagement rings. He grew hostile soon after their engagement and raped her in his bedroom one night after she drove him home, she testified.

The woman said dismissive comments from her parents convinced her not to go to the police at the time. She came forward a decade later after she saw him in the news and learned he was accused of another rape from the same year.

Rossi's lawyers sought to convince the jury that his accuser built up years of resentment after he made her foot the bill for everything in their monthlong relationship. They argued she accused him of rape to get back at him years later when he was getting media attention.

Attorneys for Rossi did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment after the verdict Wednesday night.

Rossi's accuser in the Utah County case did, however, go to the police at the time. She took the stand Tuesday to testify about her own experiences with Rossi — though he will not stand trial for that rape charge until next month.

Rossi is accused of attacking the second woman, another former girlfriend, at his apartment in Orem in September 2008 after she came over to collect money she said he stole from her to buy a computer. When police initially interviewed Rossi, he claimed she had raped him and threatened to have him killed.

Rossi grew up in foster homes in Rhode Island and had returned there before allegedly faking his death. He was previously wanted in the state for failing to register as a sex offender. The FBI has said he also faces fraud charges in Ohio, where he was convicted of sex-related charges in 2008.

Trump's friendly-to-frustrated relationship with Putin takes the spotlight at the Alaska summit

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump's summit with Vladimir Putin in Alaska on Friday could be a decisive moment for both the war in Ukraine and the U.S. leader's anomalous relationship with his Russian counterpart.

Trump has long boasted that he's gotten along well with Putin and spoken admiringly of him, even praising him as "pretty smart" for invading Ukraine. But in recent months, he's expressed frustrations with Putin and threatened more sanctions on his country.

At the same time, Trump has offered conflicting messages about his expectations for the summit. He has called it "really a feel-out meeting" to gauge Putin's openness to a ceasefire but also warned of "very severe consequences" if Putin doesn't agree to end the war.

For Putin, Friday's meeting is a chance to repair his relationship with Trump and unlatch the West's isolation of his country following its invasion of Ukraine 3 1/2 years ago. He's been open about his desire to rebuild U.S.-Russia relations now that Trump is back in the White House.

The White House has dismissed any suggestion that Trump's agreeing to sit down with Putin is a win for the Russian leader. But critics have suggested that the meeting gives Putin an opportunity to get in Trump's ear to the detriment of Ukraine, whose leader was excluded from the summit.

"I think this is a colossal mistake. You don't need to invite Putin onto U.S. soil to hear what we already know he wants," said Ian Kelly, a retired career foreign service officer who served as the U.S. ambassador to Georgia during the Obama and first Trump administrations.

Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, a longtime Russia hawk and close ally of Trump's, expressed optimism for the summit.

"I have every confidence in the world that the President is going to go to meet Putin from a position of strength, that he's going to look out for Europe and Ukrainian needs to end this war honorably," Graham wrote on social media.

A look back at the ups and downs of Trump and Putin's relationship:

Russia questions during the 2016 campaign

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Months before he was first elected president, Trump cast doubt on findings from U.S. intelligence agencies that Russian government hackers had stolen emails from Democrats, including his opponent Hillary Clinton, and released them in an effort to hurt her campaign and boost Trump's.

In one 2016 appearance, he shockingly called on Russian hackers to find emails that Clinton had reportedly deleted.

"Russia, if you're listening," Trump said, "I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing."

Questions about his connections to Russia dogged much of his first term, touching off investigations by the Justice Department and Congress and leading to the appointment of special counsel Robert Mueller, who secured multiple convictions against Trump aides and allies but did not establish proof of a criminal conspiracy between Moscow and the Trump campaign.

These days, Trump describes the Russia investigation as an affinity he and Putin shared.

"Putin went through a hell of a lot with me," Trump said earlier this year. "He went through a phony witch hunt where they used him and Russia. Russia, Russia, Russia, ever hear of that deal?"

Putin in 2019 mocked the investigation and its ultimate findings, saying, "A mountain gave birth to a mouse."

'He just said it's not Russia'

Trump met with Putin six times during his first term, including a 2018 summit in Helsinki, when Trump stunned the world by appearing to side with an American adversary on the question of whether Russia meddled in the 2016 election.

"I have great confidence in my intelligence people, but I will tell you that President Putin was extremely strong and powerful in his denial today," Trump said. "He just said it's not Russia. I will say this: I don't see any reason why it would be."

Facing intense blowback, Trump tried to walk back the comment a full 24 hours later. But he raised doubt on that reversal by saying other countries could have also interfered.

Putin referred to Helsinki summit as "the beginning of the path" back from Western efforts to isolate Russia. He also made clear that he had wanted Trump to win in 2016.

"Yes, I wanted him to win because he spoke of normalization of Russian-U.S. ties," Putin said. "Isn't it natural to feel sympathy to a person who wanted to develop relations with our country?"

Trump calls Putin 'pretty smart' after invasion of Ukraine

The two leaders kept up their friendly relationship after Trump left the White House under protest in 2021.

After Putin invaded Ukraine in 2022, Trump described the Russian leader in positive terms.

"I mean, he's taking over a country for \$2 worth of sanctions. I'd say that's pretty smart," Trump said at his Mar-a-Lago resort. In a radio interview that week, he suggested that Putin was going into Ukraine to "be a peacekeeper."

Trump repeatedly said the invasion of Ukraine would never have happened if he had been in the White House — a claim Putin endorsed while lending his support to Trump's false claims of election fraud.

"I couldn't disagree with him that if he had been president, if they hadn't stolen victory from him in 2020, the crisis that emerged in Ukraine in 2022 could have been avoided," he said.

Trump also repeatedly boasted that he could have the fighting "settled" within 24 hours.

Through much of his campaign, Trump criticized U.S. support for Ukraine and derided Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as a "salesman" for persuading Washington to provide weapons and funding to his country.

Revisiting the relationship

Once he became president, Trump stopped claiming he'd solve the war in Ukraine in 24 hours. In March, he said he was "being a little bit sarcastic" when he said that.

Since the early days of Trump's second term, Putin has pushed for a summit while trying to pivot from the Ukrainian conflict by emphasizing the prospect of launching joint U.S.-Russian economic projects, among other issues.

"We'd better meet and have a calm conversation on all issues of interest to both the United States and

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Russia based on today's realities," Putin said in January.

In February, things looked favorable for Putin when Trump had a blowup with Zelenskyy at the White House, berating him as "disrespectful."

In late March, Trump still spoke of trusting Putin when it came to hopes for a ceasefire, saying, "I don't think he's going to go back on his word."

But a month later, as Russian strikes escalated, Trump posted a public and personal plea on his social media account: "Vladimir, STOP!"

He began voicing more frustration with the Russian leader, saying he was "Just tapping me along." In May, he wrote on social media that Putin "has gone absolutely CRAZY!"

Earlier this month, Trump ordered the repositioning of two U.S. nuclear submarines "based on the highly provocative statements" of the country's former president, Dmitry Medvedev.

Trump's vocal protests about Putin have tempered somewhat since he announced their meeting, but so have his predictions for what he might accomplish.

Speaking to reporters Monday, Trump described their upcoming summit not as the occasion in which he'd finally get the conflict "settled" but instead as "really a feel-out meeting, a little bit."

"I think it'll be good," Trump said. "But it might be bad."

DC residents protest as White House says federal agents will be on patrol 24/7

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST and ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Residents in one Washington, D.C., neighborhood lined up Wednesday to protest the increased police presence after the White House said the number of National Guard troops in the nation's capital would ramp up and federal officers would be on the streets around the clock.

After law enforcement set up a vehicle checkpoint along the busy 14th Street Northwest corridor, hecklers shouted, "Go home, fascists" and "Get off our streets." Some protesters stood at the intersection before the checkpoint and urged drivers to turn away from it.

The action intensified a few days after President Donald Trump's unprecedented announcement that his administration would take over the city's police department for at least a month.

The city's Democratic mayor walked a political tightrope, referring to the takeover as an "authoritarian push" at one point and later framing the infusion of officers as boost to public safety, though one with few specific barometers for success. The Republican president has said crime in the city was at emergency levels that only such federal intervention could fix — even as District of Columbia leaders pointed to statistics showing violent crime at a 30-year low after a sharp rise two years ago.

For two days, small groups of federal officers had been visible in scattered areas of the city. But more were present in high-profile locations Wednesday and troops were expected to start doing more missions in Washington on Thursday, according to a National Guard spokesman who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe the planning process.

On Wednesday, agents from Homeland Security Investigations patrolled the popular U Street corridor. Drug Enforcement Administration officers were seen on the National Mall, while National Guard members were parked nearby. DEA agents also joined Metropolitan Police Department officers on patrol in the Navy Yard neighborhood, while FBI agents stood along the heavily trafficked Massachusetts Avenue.

Hundreds of federal law enforcement and city police officers who patrolled the streets Tuesday night made 43 arrests, compared with about two dozen the night before.

D.C. Councilmember Christina Henderson downplayed the arrest reports as "a bunch of traffic stops" and said the administration was seeking to disguise how unnecessary this federal intervention is.

"I'm looking at this list of arrests and they sound like a normal Saturday night in any big city," said Henderson.

Unlike in other U.S. states and cities, the law gives Trump the power to take over Washington's police

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for up to 30 days. Extending his power over the city for longer would require approval from Congress, and that could be tough in the face of Democratic resistance.

Trump suggested he could seek a longer period of control or decide to call on Congress to exercise authority over city laws his administration sees as lax on crime. "We're gonna do this very quickly. But we're gonna want extensions. I don't want to call a national emergency. If I have to, I will," he said.

Later, on his Truth Social site, Trump reiterated his claims about the capital, writing, "D.C. has been under siege from thugs and killers, but now, D.C. is back under Federal Control where it belongs."

Henderson, who worked for Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York before running for the D.C. Council, said she was already in touch with "friends on the Hill" to rally opposition for any Trump extension request. She added, "It's Day Three and he's already saying he's going to need more time?"

Targeting a variety of infractions

The arrests made by 1,450 federal and local officers across the city included those for suspicion of driving under the influence and unlawful entry, as well as a warrant for assault with a deadly weapon, according to the White House. Seven illegal firearms were seized.

There have now been more than 100 arrests since Trump began beefing up the federal law enforcement presence in Washington last week, White House spokeswoman Taylor Rogers said. "President Trump is delivering on his campaign promise to clean up this city and restore American Greatness to our cherished capital," she said.

The president has full command of the National Guard and has activated up to 800 troops to support law enforcement, though exactly what form remains to be determined.

Neither Army nor District of Columbia National Guard officials have been able to describe the training backgrounds of the troops who have so far reported for duty.

While some members are military police, others likely hold jobs that would have offered them little training in dealing with civilians or law enforcement.

The federalization push also includes clearing out encampments for people who are homeless, Trump has said. U.S. Park Police have removed dozens of tents since March, and plan to take out two more this week, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt has said. People are offered the chance to go to shelters and get addiction treatment, if needed, but those who refuse could be fined or jailed, she said.

City officials said they are making more shelter space available and increasing their outreach.

Violent crime has dropped in the district

The federal effort comes even after a drop in violent crime in the nation's capital, a trend that experts have seen in cities across the U.S. since an increase during the coronavirus pandemic.

On average, the level of violence Washington remains mostly higher than averages in three dozen cities analyzed by the nonprofit Council on Criminal Justice, said the group's president and CEO, Adam Gelb.

Police Chief Pamela Smith said during an interview with the local Fox affiliate that the city's Metro Police Department has been down nearly 800 officers. She said the increased number of federal agents on the streets would help fill that gap, at least for now.

Mayor Muriel Bowser said city officials did not get any specific goals for the surge during a meeting with Trump's attorney general, Pam Bondi, and other top federal law enforcement officials Tuesday. But, she said, "I think they regard it as a success to have more presence and take more guns off the street, and we do too."

She had previously called Trump's moves "unsettling and unprecedented" while pointing out he was within a president's legal rights regarding the district, which is the seat of American government but is not a state.

For some residents, the increased presence of law enforcement and National Guard troops is nerve-racking.

"I've seen them right here at the subway ... they had my street where I live at blocked off yesterday, actually," Washington native Sheina Taylor said. "It's more fearful now because even though you're a law-abiding citizen, here in D.C., you don't know, especially because I'm African American."

New river barriers prevented severe flood damage from a glacial outburst in Alaska, officials say

By CEDAR ATTANASIO and GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

New sandbag-style barriers installed along a river in Alaska's capital city held back record levels of flooding and prevented widespread damage after an ice dam at the nearby Mendenhall Glacier released a massive amount of rainwater and snowmelt downstream, officials said Wednesday.

Water pooled on several streets, in some yards and in some homes in Juneau after the Mendenhall River crested earlier in the day. But the water receded and by late afternoon officials had reopened affected areas to residents, many of whom evacuated ahead of peak water levels. There were no damage reports similar to the last two years, when flooding was rampant and some homes washed away.

The barriers have been a point of contention, with some homeowners in the flood zone objecting to their cost and suggesting officials should pursue a longer-term fix. But they "really have protected our community," Juneau City Manager Katie Koester told a news conference.

"If it weren't for them, we would have hundreds and hundreds of flooded homes," she said.

The Mendenhall Glacier is about 12 miles (19 kilometers) from Juneau, home to 30,000 people in southeast Alaska, and is a popular tourist attraction due to its proximity and easy access on walking trails. Homes on the city's outskirts are within miles of Mendenhall Lake, which sits below the glacier, and many front the Mendenhall River, into which the glacial outburst flowed.

Juneau, which is accessible only by boat and plane, is 570 miles (917 kilometers) southeast of Anchorage, Alaska's largest city. The flooding won't impact Friday's summit in Anchorage between President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Basin flooding is a yearly worry

Flooding from the basin has become an annual concern since 2011 and has gotten worse in recent years. It happens because a smaller glacier near Mendenhall Glacier retreated — a casualty of the warming climate — and left a basin that fills with rainwater and snowmelt each spring and summer, dammed by the glacier.

When the water builds up enough pressure, it forces its way under or around the ice dam, enters Mendenhall Lake, and flows down the Mendenhall River.

The city saw successive years of record flooding in 2023 and 2024, with flooding extending farther into the Mendenhall Valley.

Last year, nearly 300 residences were damaged.

A large outburst can release some 15 billion gallons of water, according to the University of Alaska Southeast and Alaska Climate Adaptation Science Center. That's the equivalent of nearly 23,000 Olympic-size swimming pools. During last year's flood, the flow rate in the Mendenhall River was about half that of Niagara Falls, the researchers say.

Barriers are installed

City officials responded to concerns from property owners this year by working with state, federal and tribal entities to install a temporary levee along roughly 2.5 miles (4 kilometers) of riverbank in an attempt to guard against widespread flooding. The 10,000 "Hesco" barriers are essentially giant, reinforced sandbags intended to protect more than 460 properties, said emergency manager Ryan O'Shaughnessy.

The Juneau Assembly required homeowners in the flood zone to cover 40% of the cost — about \$6,300 each over 10 years. Additionally, a handful of homeowners were asked to chip in \$50,000 toward reinforcing the river bank. About one-quarter of the residents formally objected, not enough to torpedo the project.

Two homeowners have sued, complaining that the government was taking their property to erect the barriers without compensating them.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, some water seeped into yards through drains that had been installed under the barriers. In other spots, trees floating down the river struck and damaged the barriers, officials said.

Ann Wilkinson Lind, who lives on the banks of the Mendenhall River, said water seeped through small culverts under the barrier in her backyard and reached knee-deep in her home's crawl space. The damage wasn't catastrophic, but it was still disturbing after the installation of features intended to protect against

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flooding, she said.

"I felt confident that the barriers had a chance," she said. "I never, ever, ever thought about the culverts ... and I was just shocked and bowled over by it."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is at the start of what's expected to be a yearslong process of studying conditions in the region and examining options for a more permanent solution, such as a levee. The timeline has angered some residents, who say it's unreasonable.

Outburst floods are expected to continue as long as the Mendenhall Glacier acts as an ice dam to seal off the basin, which could span another 25 to 60 years, according to the university and science center researchers.

How to get kids back on a sleep schedule for the school year

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — After a summer of vacations and late nights, it's time to set those back-to-school alarms.

A good night's sleep helps students stay focused and attentive in class. Experts say it's worth easing kids back into a routine with the start of a new school year.

"We don't say 'get good sleep' just because," said pediatrician Dr. Gabriela Dixon with Children's National Hospital. "It really helps kids learn and it helps them function throughout the day."

The amount of sleep kids need changes as they age. Preschoolers should get up to 13 hours of sleep. Tweens need between nine and 12 hours. Teenagers do best with eight to 10 hours of shut-eye.

Set an earlier bedtime

Early bedtimes can slip through the cracks over the summer as kids stay up for sleepovers, movie marathons and long plane flights. To get back on track, experts recommend setting earlier bedtimes a week or two before the first day of school or gradually going to bed 15 to 30 minutes earlier each night.

Don't eat a heavy meal before bed and avoid TV or screen time two hours before sleep. Instead, work in relaxing activities to slow down like showering and reading a story.

"You're trying to take the cognitive load off your mind," said Dr. Nitun Verma, a spokesperson for the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. "It would be like if you're driving, you're slowly letting go of the gas pedal."

Parents can adjust their back-to-school plans based on what works best for their child. Nikkya Hargrove moves her twin daughters' bedtimes up by 30 minutes the week before school starts.

Sometimes, her 10-year-olds will negotiate for a few extra minutes to stay up and read. Hargrove said those conversations are important as her children get older and advocate for themselves. If they stay up too late and don't have the best morning, Hargrove said that can be a learning experience too.

"If they're groggy and they don't like how they feel, then they know, 'OK, I have to go to bed earlier,'" said Hargrove, an author and independent bookstore owner from Connecticut.

In the morning, soaking in some daylight by sitting at a window or going outside can help train the brain to power up, Verma said.

Squash back-to-school sleep anxiety

Sleep quality matters just as much as duration. First-day jitters can make it hard to fall asleep no matter how early the bedtime.

Dixon says parents can talk to their kids to find out what is making them anxious. Is it the first day at a new school? Is it a fear of making new friends? Then they might try a test run of stressful activities before school starts to make those tasks feel less scary — for example, by visiting the school or meeting classmates at an open house.

The weeks leading up can be jam-packed and it's not always possible to prep a routine in advance. But kids will adjust eventually so sleep experts say parents should do what they can. After all, their kids aren't the only ones adjusting to a new routine.

"I always say, 'Take a deep breath, it'll be OK,'" Dixon said. "And just start that schedule."

CDC shooting marks latest in a string of hostility directed at health workers. Many aren't surprised

By JEFF MARTIN, HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — A barrage of bullets launched at the headquarters of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention last week by a man authorities say was angry over COVID-19 vaccinations is the latest attack directed at health care workers amid hostility lingering from the pandemic.

Some public health care workers say the shooting that killed a police officer and rattled the CDC campus shouldn't be surprising in the face of ongoing misinformation and animosity about the safety of immunizations.

"All of us, anybody who stands up for science or vaccines, will at some level get hate mail or a phone call that's unnerving or a death threat," said Paul Offit, the co-inventor of a rotavirus vaccine.

Just four years ago, while hospitals overflowed with unvaccinated patients, school board members, local leaders and doctors were regularly confronted in public with taunts comparing them to the Taliban, Nazis and leaders of Japanese internment camps. Sometimes the conflicts descended into violence and harassment.

The distrust and anger that grew since then has been amplified by U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., said Offit, who heads the vaccine education center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Kennedy has been a leading voice in spreading false information about vaccines, scientists and public health leaders, often using heated rhetoric that says they have caused mass death and injury. People he describes in such language have said his comments have led to threats, intimidation and even violence.

Kennedy denounces violence but criticizes CDC's work

Kennedy, who toured the CDC campus on Monday, said no one should face violence while working to protect the health of others and called political violence wrong. But he went on to criticize the agency's pandemic response.

"One of the things that we saw during COVID is that the government was overreaching in its efforts to persuade the public to get vaccinated, and they were saying things that are not always true," Kennedy said during a television interview with Scripps News later in the day.

A spokesperson for Kennedy blasted any notion that blamed vaccine misinformation for Friday's attack.

"This narrative is pure fiction, built on anonymous complaints and a willful disregard for the facts," said Andrew Nixon of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Secretary Kennedy is not advancing an 'anti-vaccine agenda' — he is advancing a pro-safety, pro-transparency, and pro-accountability agenda."

Authorities have said that 30-year-old Patrick Joseph White had written about his discontent with the COVID-19 vaccine before he opened fire on the CDC.

White also had verbalized thoughts of suicide, which led to law enforcement being contacted several weeks before the shooting, according to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. White died at the scene of a self-inflicted gunshot wound on Friday after killing DeKalb County Police Officer David Rose.

Shooting rattles CDC campus

Following the attack, CDC employees were asked to scrape off old CDC parking decals from their vehicles. But even before that, some workers had taken steps to become less visible, including not wearing their public health service uniform, said Yolanda Jacobs, a union leader who represents some CDC workers.

The CDC's new director told employees this week that no act of violence can diminish their mission to protect public health.

"We know that misinformation can be dangerous. Not only to health, but to those that trust us and those we want to trust," Dr. Susan Monarez told employees during an "all-hands" meeting Tuesday, her first since the attack capped her first full week on campus as director.

The federal agency, tasked with tracking diseases and responding to health threats, has been hit by widespread staff cuts, key resignations and heated controversy over long-standing CDC vaccine policies

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upended by Kennedy.

"What happened on Friday is a direct result of that misinformation," said Sarah Boim, a former CDC worker whose job was targeted for elimination earlier this year. "Health Secretary Kennedy is one of the biggest pushers of misinformation."

The shooting, she said, left her in tears.

"My friends and family still work in those buildings," she said. "My mom works in one of those buildings."

In the aftermath, officials are assessing security and encouraging staff to report any new threats, including those based on misinformation about the CDC and its vaccine work.

Anti-vaccine tension has been building

Despite its prominence since the pandemic, anti-vaccine rhetoric leading to harassment and violence took root before then.

In 2019, an anti-vaccine activist assaulted California state Sen. Richard Pan, streaming it live on Facebook, after Pan sponsored a bill to make it more difficult to get a vaccine exemption. Another threw blood at Pan and other lawmakers.

The attacks came after Kennedy spoke outside the California Capitol, two large posters behind him featured Pan's image, with the word "LIAR" stamped across his face in blood-red paint.

Pan, a pediatrician, blames Kennedy for what happened then and now at the CDC.

"And you wonder why someone would go shoot up the CDC," Pan said. "Because he basically told them that those are the people you should hurt."

Mother, father and child killed by fallen tree in Tennessee heavy rains and flooding

By JONATHAN MATTISE and SARAH BRUMFIELD Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A mother, father and child were killed when a tree fell on their car during heavy rain and flooding in Tennessee, where submerged roads also led to dramatic rescues of people trapped in their cars, authorities said Wednesday.

The three were killed when saturated ground caused a large tree to fall in the Chattanooga suburb of East Ridge just after midnight, Hamilton County Office of Emergency Management spokesperson Amy Maxwell said.

Additionally, authorities found a body Wednesday while searching for a man who was swept away when he ran past firefighters and a barricade blocking a flooded road Tuesday, according to the Chattanooga Fire Department. The local police and medical examiner will determine the cause of death.

The flooding prompted rescues of people stuck in homes and swamped vehicles.

At a news conference Wednesday, officials said they didn't expect so much rain and flooding to hit so quickly.

At one point, there were 60 vehicles on the flooded interstate, said Chris Adams, director of emergency management for Hamilton County. Some first responders were carrying people on their backs who couldn't move well through the water, and placed them on the raised highway divider, Adams added.

"We all know to 'turn around, not drown,' but when you look at it and it's 2 inches deep, and then next thing you know it's 4 feet deep, that's something you've never seen before," Adams said.

There were so many calls for help that 911 calls were "holding in every minute of every hour for about three hours straight," with more than 940 calls between 6 p.m. and midnight, said Barbara Loveless, director of operations for Hamilton County 911.

Troy Plemons, a communications systems technician for EPB, Chattanooga's electricity and telecommunications utility, said he was stuck in traffic on an interstate in his bucket truck for two to three hours Tuesday evening.

Then Plemons said he saw the flood water lift an SUV, and when he and two Lawson Electric workers encouraged a woman inside to get out, she threw up her hands because she didn't know if she could. Plemons moved to the bed of a truck next to him to try to get closer, but the water was rising to her chest.

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"I didn't think there was any time," he said. "I tried my best."

Plemons said the water was reaching neck level for the woman in the SUV when he used a boring bit offered by the Lawson Electric workers to break the window and helped the woman get out.

"It was a rush for sure. I felt like I was pretty calm until I broke the window," Plemons said. "I was doing everything I could to get her out because the water was rising pretty quick."

There were several rescues of people whose cars were overwhelmed by water in the area until the water receded about two to three hours later and traffic began to move again, Plemons said.

"I felt like I was there at the right time," he said. "I'm thankful I was there to help that lady."

Lawson Electric said its workers, Austin Camp and Brandon Shadwick, coordinated for hours with Plemons as well as authorities to help move between 25 and 35 people.

"From babies to seniors, we just kept moving. We didn't talk to each other," Shadwick said in a news release. "We just worked as hard and as fast as we could to move people to safety."

Anderson Stout watched it unfold from his truck.

"As soon as he pulled her out of that vehicle, I'm not joking, in maybe three minutes, her vehicle was almost completely submerged under the water," Stout said.

The National Weather Service issued a flood watch for much of middle Tennessee through Wednesday night, warning of scattered flash flooding with tropical-like heavy rainfall and the possibility of training storms, especially over already saturated areas.

Chattanooga's airport recorded more than 6.4 inches (about 16 centimeters) of rain Tuesday, marking the second-wettest day recorded for the city dating back to 1879, according to a social media post by the National Weather Service in Morristown. The highest single-day total was nearly 9.5 inches (24 centimeters) in September 2011 from the remnants of Tropical Storm Lee, the weather service said.

Chattanooga Fire crews rescued people trapped in vehicles and residents stuck in their homes, fire department officials said. Flooding closed parts of Interstate 24 in the area, but it reopened once floodwaters receded.

Swiftwater rescue teams rescued residents of three East Ridge homes trapped by rising floodwaters, according to the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office.

Wamp, the mayor, toured East Ridge on Wednesday. He said that though there was a tragic loss of life, the property and infrastructure damage was "not as bad as I thought it would have been based on the way things looked last night."

Wildfires kill at least 3 and displace thousands across southern Europe

By DEREK GATOPOULOS and LLAZAR SEMINI Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Wildfires intensified across southern Europe on Wednesday with a round-the-clock battle to protect the perimeter of Greece's third-largest city and at least three deaths reported in Spain, Turkey and Albania.

Outside the Greek port city of Patras, firefighters struggled to protect homes and agricultural facilities as flames tore through pine forests and olive groves. Tall columns of flames rose behind apartment blocks on the outskirts of the city, while dozens of vehicles were torched as flames swept through a nearby impound lot.

"Today is another very difficult day with the level of fire risk remaining very high across many parts of the country," Fire Service spokesman Vassilis Vathrakoyiannis said. At least 15 firefighters were hospitalized or received medical attention for burns, smoke inhalation or exhaustion, he added.

As water-dropping planes and helicopters swooped overhead, residents joined the effort, beating back flames with cut branches or dousing them with buckets of water.

After heatwaves, resources stretched thin

Firefighting resources were stretched thin in many affected countries as they battled multiple outbreaks

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following weeks of heat waves and temperature spikes across the Mediterranean region. On the Greek island of Chios, exhausted firefighters slept on the roadside following a night-long shift.

Aircraft rotated between blazes on the western Greek mainland, the Patras area and the island of Zakynthos. Athens also sent assistance to neighboring Albania, joining an international effort to combat dozens of wildfires. An 80-year-old man died in one blaze south of the capital, Tirana, officials said Wednesday.

Residents of four villages were evacuated in central Albania near a former army ammunition depot. In the southern Korca district, near the Greek border, explosions were reported from buried World War II-era artillery shells. Authorities said dozens of homes were gutted in a central region of the country.

Deaths in Spain and Turkey

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez expressed condolences after the death of a firefighting volunteer in the hard-hit Castile and León region north of the capital, Madrid, where thousands have been displaced by evacuations.

"The wildfire situation remains serious, and taking extra precautions is essential," Sánchez wrote in an online post. "Thank you, once again, to all those working tirelessly to fight the flames."

Evacuation centers were filled to capacity in parts of central Spain, with some spending the night outdoors on folding beds. The most severe fires pushed northward into more rural areas, where some residents hosed the walls of their homes to try and protect them from fire.

Services along a high-speed rail link between Madrid and the northwestern Galicia region were suspended after fires got close to some sections of the tracks, state rail company Renfe said.

In Turkey, a forestry worker was killed Wednesday while responding to a wildfire in a southern region, officials said. The Forestry Ministry said the worker died in an accident involving a fire truck that left four others injured.

Turkey has been battling severe wildfires since late June. A total of 18 people have been killed, including 10 rescue volunteers and forestry workers who died in July.

In France, which is recovering from massive recent fires in the southern regions, temperatures of up to 42 degrees Celsius (108 Fahrenheit) were expected for the third consecutive day. Officials issued weather alerts giving local authorities discretion to cancel public events and cordon off areas with high fire risks.

Lightning storms and farming practices cited as possible causes

Authorities across European countries have cited multiple causes for the massive fires, including careless farming practices, improperly maintained power cables and summer lightning storms.

Law enforcement officials in North Macedonia also cited indications of arson, motivated by rogue developers. Firefighters struggled to contain a blaze at a nature reserve outside the capital, Skopje, on Wednesday.

The European Union has rushed aid to fire-hit countries, including non-member states, with ground crews and water-dropping aircraft. Much of the recent effort was concentrated on Montenegro, where major wildfires continued to burn in rugged areas near the capital, Podgorica.

"Natural disasters know no borders," Ljuban Tmusic, head of Montenegro's civil protection agency said. "In Montenegro, the resources we have ... are clearly not enough."

Wall Street ticks higher after a rally wrapped around the world

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks ticked higher on Wednesday after a rally spurred by hopes for lower U.S. interest rates wrapped around the world.

The S&P 500 rose 0.3%, coming off its latest all-time high. The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 463 points, or 1%, while the Nasdaq composite added 0.1% to its own record set the day before.

Treasury yields eased in the bond market as expectations reached a virtual consensus that the Federal Reserve will cut its main interest rate for the first time this year at its next meeting in September. Lower rates can boost investment prices and the economy by making it cheaper for U.S. households and businesses to borrow to buy houses, cars or equipment, though they risk worsening inflation.

Stock indexes in Asia jumped in their first trading after Tuesday's better-than-expected report on U.S.

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inflation triggered a jump in bets that a cut to interest rates is coming. Hong Kong's Hang Seng leaped 2.6%, Japan's Nikkei 225 rallied 1.3% and South Korea's Kospi climbed 1.1%.

Indexes also rose in Europe, though the moves were more modest after they already had the chance to trade on the U.S. inflation data the afternoon before. Germany's DAX returned 0.7%, and France's CAC 40 rose 0.7%.

On Wall Street, stocks of companies that could benefit most from lower interest rates helped lead the way. PulteGroup climbed 5.4%, and Lennar rose 5.2% as part of a broad rally for homebuilders and others in the housing industry. Lower rates could make mortgages cheaper to get, which could spur more buying.

The hopes for lower interest rates are helping to drown out criticism that the U.S. stock market has broadly grown too expensive after its big leap since hitting a low in April.

One way companies can make their stock prices look less expensive is to deliver strong growth in profits, and Brinker International rose 1.6% after becoming the latest to report stronger results for the latest quarter than analysts expected. The company behind the Chili's brand said it saw more customers coming to its restaurants, and it's also making more profit off each \$1 in sales.

"Chili's is officially back, baby back!" CEO Kevin Hochman said.

HanesBrands climbed 3.7% after it agreed to sell itself to Gildan Activewear for \$2.2 billion in cash and Gildan stock. The deal would combine North Carolinas' HanesBrands with Canada's Gildan, and Gildan's stock that trades in the United States rose 11.8%.

Bullish soared in its debut on the New York Stock Exchange and rose 83.8% in its first day of trading. The cryptocurrency exchange's CEO is Tom Farley, who used to be president of the NYSE Group.

On the losing end of Wall Street were grocery stores and delivery companies, which fell after Amazon said it will offer fresh groceries to customers in more than 1,000 cities and towns through same-day delivery. Kroger fell 4.4%, and DoorDash dropped 3.8%, while Amazon rose 1.4%.

Cava Group sank 16.6% after the Mediterranean restaurant chain reported weaker revenue for the latest quarter than analysts expected, though its profit topped forecasts. It also cut its 2025 forecast for an important underlying measure of restaurant sales.

CoreWeave lost 20.8% after the company, whose cloud platform helps customers running artificial-intelligence workloads, reported a larger loss for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 20.82 points to 6,466.58. The Dow Jones Industrial Average jumped 463.66 to 44,922.27, and the Nasdaq composite added 31.24 to 21,713.14.

In the bond market, Treasury yields eased as expectations built for coming cuts to interest rates by the Fed.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.23% from 4.29% late Tuesday and from 4.50% in mid-July. That's a notable move for the bond market.

President Donald Trump has angrily been calling for cuts to help the economy, often insulting the Fed's chair personally while doing so.

But the Fed has been hesitant so far because of the possibility that Trump's tariffs could make inflation much worse. Lowering rates would give inflation more fuel, potentially adding oxygen to a growing fire. That's why Fed officials have said they wanted to see more data come in about inflation before moving.

On Thursday, a report will show how bad inflation was at the wholesale level across the United States. Economists expect it to show inflation accelerated a touch to 2.4% in July from 2.3% in June.

Environmental concerns could halt construction at Florida's 'Alligator Alcatraz' immigration jail

By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The fate of a makeshift immigrant detention center in the Florida Everglades dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz" hung in the balance on Wednesday as a federal judge considered whether building on sensitive wetlands violated environmental laws.

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Last week, U.S. District Judge Kathleen Williams ordered a 14-day halt on additional construction at the site while witnesses testified at a hearing, part of a lawsuit seeking to halt operations and further construction. The temporary order doesn't include any restrictions on law enforcement or immigration enforcement activity.

The judge concluded a multi-day hearing on Wednesday without making an immediate decision on whether to issue a preliminary injunction.

President Donald Trump toured the facility last month and suggested it could be a model for future lockups nationwide as his administration races to expand the infrastructure necessary for increasing deportations.

Environmental groups and a Native American tribe have sued over the facility, saying it was hastily set up without the environmental impact considerations needed for all federal projects, even though it deals with immigration, a federal matter.

"It just flies in the face of what NEPA requires," said Paul Schwiep, an attorney for the environmental groups, referring to the National Environmental Policy Act.

Florida and the Trump administration argue that the state is building and operating the detention center, so those rules about an environmental review don't apply. Adam Gustafson, an attorney for the federal government, said during the hearing's closing arguments Wednesday that the federal government only plays an advisory role at the facility.

The judge last week said the center was, at a minimum, a joint partnership between the state and federal government.

The first phase of "Alligator Alcatraz" opened in July atop a lightly used, single-runway training airport. Less than 1,000 detainees were being held there as of last week, and it's designed to eventually hold up to 3,000 people.

Inside the compound's large white tents, rows of bunkbeds are surrounded by chain-link cages. People held there say worms turn up in the food, toilets don't flush and flood floors with fecal waste, while mosquitoes and other insects are everywhere. At times the air conditioners abruptly shut off in the sweltering heat. Detainees are said to go days without showering or getting prescription medicine, and can only speak to lawyers and loved ones by phone.

Gov. Ron DeSantis has said the location in the rugged and remote Everglades was meant as a deterrent against escape, much like the island prison in California that Republicans named it after. The detention center has an estimated annual cost of \$450 million, according to a public database.

When asked by the judge why a detention facility needed to be located in the middle of the Everglades, Jesse Panuccio, an attorney representing the state of Florida, referred to government officials' statements that the remote location and existing runway made it ideal for immigration detention. Williams pointed out many other detention centers were operated safely and effectively in urban areas.

"Florida is lousy with airports," the judge said. "Why in the middle of the Everglades?"

Witnesses for the environmental groups have testified that at least 20 acres (8 hectares) of asphalt have been added to the site since the Florida Division of Emergency Management began construction. They said additional paving could lead to an increase in water runoff to the adjacent wetlands, spread harmful chemicals into the Everglades and reduce the habitat for endangered Florida panthers.

Chris Ajizian, an attorney for the Miccosukee Tribe, said that neither the state nor federal government gave the tribe any notice of their plans for a detention facility, despite legal obligations and the tribe's incontrovertible connection to the Everglades.

"It is the life blood of their community, their history and their identity," Ajizian said during the hearing's closing.

The lawsuit was being heard as DeSantis' administration was apparently preparing to build a second immigration detention center at a Florida National Guard training center in the state's north.

A second lawsuit claims detainees' constitutional rights are being violated because they are barred from meeting lawyers, are being held without any charges, and a federal immigration court has canceled bond hearings. Over the weekend, a federal judge gave the state until late September to prepare arguments

against an effort to get the civil rights litigation certified as a class action.

Israeli gunfire kills at least 25 in Gaza as Netanyahu says he will allow Palestinians to leave

By MELANIE LIDMAN and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israeli gunfire killed at least 25 people seeking aid in Gaza on Wednesday, health officials and witnesses said, while Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu again called for what he refers to as the voluntary migration of Palestinians from the war-ravaged territory.

Netanyahu wants to realize U.S. President Donald Trump's vision of relocating much of Gaza's population of over 2 million people through what he refers to as "voluntary migration" — and what critics have warned could be ethnic cleansing.

"Give them the opportunity to leave! First, from combat zones, and also from the strip if they want," Netanyahu said in an interview aired Tuesday with Israeli TV station i24 to discuss the planned offensive in areas that include Gaza City, where hundreds of thousands of displaced people shelter. "We are not pushing them out but allowing them to leave."

Witnesses and staff at Nasser and Awda hospitals, which received the bodies, said people were shot on their way to aid distribution sites or while awaiting convoys entering Gaza.

Efforts to revive ceasefire talks

Efforts to revive ceasefire talks have resumed after apparently breaking down last month. Hamas and Egyptian officials met Wednesday in Cairo, according to Hamas official Taher al-Nounou.

Israel has no plans to send its negotiating team to talks in Cairo, Netanyahu's office said.

Israel's plans to widen its military offensive against Hamas to parts of Gaza it does not yet control have sparked condemnation at home and abroad, and could be intended to raise pressure on Hamas to reach a ceasefire.

The militants still hold 50 hostages taken in the Oct. 7, 2023 attack that sparked the war. Israel believes around 20 are still alive. Families fear a new offensive endangers them.

When asked by i24 News if the window had closed on a partial ceasefire deal, Netanyahu responded that he wanted all hostages back, alive and dead.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty told reporters that Cairo is still trying to advance an earlier proposal for an initial 60-day ceasefire, the release of some hostages and an influx of humanitarian aid before further talks on a lasting truce.

Hamas says it will only release the remaining hostages in return for the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel, a lasting ceasefire and an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. The militant group has refused to disarm.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority and Arab countries condemned Netanyahu's remark to i24 News that he was "very" attached to the vision of a Greater Israel. He did not elaborate, but supporters of the idea believe that Israel should control not only the occupied West Bank but parts of Arab countries.

South Sudan calls reports of resettlement talks baseless

Israel and South Sudan are in talks about relocating Palestinians to the war-torn East African nation, The Associated Press reported Tuesday.

The office of Israel's deputy foreign minister, Sharren Haskel, said she was arriving in South Sudan for meetings in the first visit there by a senior Israeli government official, but she did not plan to broach the subject of moving Palestinians.

South Sudan's ministry of foreign affairs in a statement called reports that it was engaging in discussions with Israel about resettling Palestinians baseless.

The AP previously reported that the United States and Israel have reached out to officials of three East African governments to discuss using their territories as potential destinations for Palestinians uprooted from Gaza.

Killed while seeking aid

Among those killed while seeking aid were 14 Palestinians in the Teina area approximately 3 kilometers

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(1.8 miles) from a food distribution site run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, according to staff at Nasser hospital.

Hashim Shamalah said Israeli troops fired toward them as people tried to get through. Many were shot and fell while fleeing, he said.

Israeli gunfire killed five other Palestinians while trying to reach another GHF distribution site in the Netzarim corridor area, according to Awda hospital and witnesses. The Israeli military said it wasn't aware of any casualties from Israeli fire in that area.

GHF said there were no incidents at or near its sites Wednesday.

The U.S. and Israel support GHF, an American contractor, as an alternative to the United Nations, which they claim allows Hamas to siphon off aid. The U.N., which has delivered aid throughout Gaza for decades when conditions allow, denies the allegations.

Aid convoys from other groups travel within 100 meters (328 feet) of GHF sites and draw crowds. An overwhelming majority of violent incidents over the past few weeks have been related to those convoys, the GHF said.

Israeli fire killed at least six other people waiting for aid trucks close to the Morag corridor, which separates parts of southern Gaza, Nasser hospital said.

Israel says it killed a Hamas militant who took hostages

The Israeli military said Wednesday that it killed last week a Hamas militant who took part in the 2023 attack that started the war. It blamed Abdullah Saeed Abd al-Baqin for participating in the abduction of three Israeli hostages.

The Hamas-led attack abducted 251 people and killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians. Israel's air and ground offensive has since displaced most of Gaza's population, destroyed vast areas and pushed the territory toward famine. The offensive has killed more than 61,700 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were fighters or civilians but says around half were women and children.

The ministry is part of the Hamas-run government and staffed by medical professionals. The U.N. and independent experts consider it the most reliable source on war casualties. Israel disputes its figures but has not provided its own.

Palestinian fatally shot in West Bank violence

An Israeli settler shot dead a Palestinian on Wednesday in the occupied West Bank, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

The Israeli military said dozens of Palestinians hurled rocks toward an off-duty soldier and another person carrying out "engineering works" near the village of Duma, lightly wounding them. It said the soldier initially fired warning shots, then opened fire in self-defense.

The Health Ministry identified the deceased as Thamin Dawabshe, 35, a distant relative of a family targeted in a 2015 firebombing in the village by a settler. That attack killed a toddler and his parents. The attacker was convicted and handed three life sentences.

The West Bank has seen a rise in settler violence as well as Palestinian attacks since the start of the war in Gaza, and the Israeli military has carried out major military operations there. Rights groups and Palestinians say the military often turns a blind eye to violent settlers or intervenes to protect them.

Trump warns of 'severe consequences' if Putin does not agree to stop war after summit

By GEIR MOULSON and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — President Donald Trump warned Wednesday that there will be "very severe consequences" if Russian President Vladimir Putin does not agree to stop the war against Ukraine after the two leaders meet for a summit later this week in Alaska.

Trump made the comment in response to a question from a reporter after announcing this year's Kennedy Center Honors recipients in Washington. He did not say what the consequences might be.

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The remark came soon after Trump consulted with European leaders, who said the president assured them he would make a priority of trying to achieve a ceasefire in Ukraine when he speaks with Putin on Friday in Anchorage.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy joined several of Kyiv's main allies in the virtual meeting with the U.S. leader, and Zelenskyy told the group that Putin "is bluffing" ahead of the planned summit about Russia's ability to occupy all of Ukraine and shake off sanctions.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said afterward that "important decisions" could be made in Alaska, but he stressed that "fundamental European and Ukrainian security interests must be protected."

Merz convened Wednesday's meeting in an attempt to make sure European and Ukrainian leaders are heard ahead of the summit.

He stressed that a ceasefire must come at the beginning of negotiations. He told reporters that Trump "also wants to make this one of his priorities" in the meeting with Putin.

At a separate appearance in France, French President Emmanuel Macron said Trump "was very clear" that the U.S. wants to achieve a ceasefire at the summit.

Following Friday's summit, Macron added, Trump will "seek a future trilateral meeting" — one involving Trump, Putin and Zelenskyy. He said he hoped that it could be held in Europe "in a neutral country that is acceptable to all parties."

Merz, who described Wednesday's conversation as "constructive and good," said the Europeans made clear that "Ukraine must sit at the table as soon as there are follow-up meetings."

European allies have pushed for Ukraine's involvement in any peace talks, fearful that discussions that exclude Kyiv could otherwise favor Moscow.

The Ukrainian president, who traveled to Berlin to join the meeting alongside Merz, has repeatedly cast doubt on whether Putin would negotiate in good faith. He said Wednesday that he hoped an immediate ceasefire will be "the central topic" in Alaska, but also argued that Putin "definitely does not want peace."

Zelenskyy said Putin "is trying to apply pressure ... on all sectors of the Ukrainian front" in an attempt to show that Russia is "capable of occupying all of Ukraine." Putin is also bluffing that sanctions "do not matter to him and are ineffective," he added. "In reality, sanctions are very helpful and are hitting Russia's war economy hard."

The stakes for Europe

Trump has said he wants to see whether Putin is serious about ending the war, now in its fourth year, describing Friday's summit as "a feel-out meeting" where he can assess the Russian leader's intentions.

Yet Trump has disappointed allies in Europe by saying Ukraine will have to give up some Russian-held territory. He has also said Russia must accept land swaps, although it was unclear what Putin might be expected to surrender.

Trump on Monday ducked repeated chances to say that he would push for Zelenskyy to take part in his discussions with Putin, and the president was dismissive of Zelenskyy and his need to be part of an effort to seek peace. Trump said that following Friday's summit, a meeting between the Russian and Ukrainian leaders could be arranged, or that it could also be a meeting with "Putin and Zelenskyy and me."

The Europeans and Ukraine are wary that Putin, who has waged the biggest land war in Europe since 1945 and used Russia's energy might to try to intimidate the European Union, might secure favorable concessions and set the outlines of a peace deal without them.

The overarching fear of many European countries is that Putin will set his sights on one of them next if he wins in Ukraine.

Merz said that "if there is no movement on the Russian side in Alaska, then the United States and the Europeans should and must increase the pressure" on Moscow.

Land concessions a non-starter for Kyiv

Zelenskyy said Tuesday that Putin wants Ukraine to withdraw from the remaining 30% of the Donetsk region that it still controls as part of a ceasefire deal, a proposal the Ukrainian leader categorically rejected.

Zelenskyy reiterated that Ukraine would not give up any territory it controls, saying that would be un-

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constitutional and would serve only as a springboard for a future Russian invasion.

He said diplomatic discussions led by the U.S. focused on ending the war have not addressed key Ukrainian demands, including security guarantees to prevent future Russian aggression and ensuring that Europe is included in negotiations.

Three weeks after Trump returned to office, his administration took the leverage of Ukraine's NATO membership off the table — something Putin has demanded — and signaled that the EU and Ukraine must handle security in Europe now while America focuses its attention elsewhere.

Senior EU officials believe Trump may be satisfied with simply securing a ceasefire in Ukraine and that he is probably more interested in broader U.S. interests and great power politics, aiming to ramp up business with Russia and rehabilitate Putin.

Russian advances in Donbas

Russian forces on the ground in Ukraine have been closing in on a key territorial grab around the city of Pokrovsk, in the eastern Donbas region that comprises Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, which Putin has long coveted.

Military analysts using open-source information to monitor the battles have said Ukraine's ability to fend off those advances could be critical. Losing Pokrovsk would hand Russia an important victory ahead of the summit and could complicate Ukrainian supply lines to the Donetsk region, where the Kremlin has focused the bulk of military efforts.

Trump names Stallone and Kiss for Kennedy Center Honors and says he'll host the awards show

By ANNIE MA and HILLEL ITALIE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the new chairman of the Kennedy Center, President Donald Trump added a highly personal stamp to this year's announcement of the recipients of the annual honors, whom he named as country music star George Strait, "Rocky" actor Sylvester Stallone, singer Gloria Gaynor, the rock band Kiss and actor-singer Michael Crawford.

Instead of the Kennedy Center revealing the names through a press release as usual, Trump announced the honorees himself during a Wednesday press conference at the site, where he was flanked by American flags and photo stands for each of the entertainers that were initially covered by red drapes. Unlike in his first term, when he didn't even attend the honors ceremony, he announced that he would be hosting it later this year and that he had been deeply involved with the selection process. He also suggested he might choose himself for a future award.

The spectacle marked a new era for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, which Trump has taken over by installing himself as chair and replacing the board of trustees with loyalists. He has even hinted he'd like to see the venue renamed the Trump/Kennedy Center.

Trump has made revamping the Kennedy Center — and what he calls its "woke" agenda — the center of an ongoing push to overhaul such cultural institutions as the National Endowment of the Humanities and the Smithsonian museums.

A bipartisan history

The Kennedy Center Honors were established in 1978 and have been given to a broad range of artists. Until Trump's first term, presidents of both major political parties traditionally attended the annual ceremony, even when they disagreed politically with a given recipient.

Prominent liberals such as Barbra Streisand and Warren Beatty were honored during the administration of Republican George W. Bush, and a leading conservative, Charlton Heston, was feted during the administration of Democrat Bill Clinton.

At least some of this year's winners have a history of backing Trump. Stallone is a prominent supporter who has called Trump "the second George Washington" and was named by the president, along with Jon Voight and Mel Gibson, as a Hollywood special ambassador. Founding Kiss member Ace Frehley endorsed Trump in 2020, calling him "the strongest leader we've got." Meanwhile, fellow Kiss musician Paul Stan-

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ley has often criticized the Republican president, notably his resistance to accepting his election loss to Democrat Joe Biden in 2020.

"After numerous audits, debunked claims of rampant voter tampering, dead people voting & the countless cases thrown out by Trump appointed judges & others ... When is not getting the hoped for result accepted?? Biden won," Stanley tweeted at the time.

The Kennedy Center informs honorees in advance, and all four original Kiss performers, who also include Gene Simmons and Peter Criss, issued statements through a band publicist.

"The prestige of the Kennedy Center Honors cannot be overstated and I accept this on behalf of the long legacy of Kiss and all of the band members who helped create our iconic band," Stanley said.

Kiss and the other nominees have had substantial, even iconic, careers. Stallone's portrayals of the underdog boxer Rocky Balboa and Vietnam veteran John J. Rambo are fixtures in popular culture. Strait's dozens of chart-topping hits, including "Check Yes or No" and "I Cross My Heart," have led to his nickname the King of Country Music. Few bands have sold more records or more famously covered their faces in makeup than Kiss, members of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Crawford is a celebrated stage actor who won a Tony for his starring role in "The Phantom of the Opera," and Gaynor is a leading star from the 1970s disco era whose "I Will Survive" is a feminist anthem.

Breaking with longtime tradition, none of the honorees was from the fields of dance, jazz or classical music.

This year's Kennedy Center Honors ceremony will take place on Dec. 7 and will air on CBS and stream on Paramount+.

A personal approach

Historically, a bipartisan advisory committee selects the recipients, who over the years have ranged from George Balanchine and Tom Hanks to Aretha Franklin and Stephen Sondheim. Trump said Wednesday that he was "about 98% involved" in choosing the honorees and conferred with such handpicked Kennedy Center officials as Ric Grenell and Sergio Gor. He said he "turned down plenty" of names, saying those individuals were "too woke" or too liberal. He described the artists he announced Wednesday as "great people" and quipped upon unveiling an image of the 73-year-old Strait: "Good looking guy. I hope he still looks that way."

Besides naming himself chairman and remaking the board, Trump has indicated he'd take over decisions regarding programming at the center and vowed to end events featuring performers in drag. In choosing himself as the host of December's gathering, he takes on a role once filled by Caroline Kennedy, daughter of the late President John F. Kennedy, the center's namesake.

The steps have drawn further criticism from some artists. In March, the producers of "Hamilton" pulled out of staging the Broadway hit musical in 2026, citing Trump's aggressive takeover of the institution's leadership.

House Republicans added an amendment to a spending bill Trump signed into law in July to rename the Kennedy Center's Opera House after first lady Melania Trump, but that venue has yet to be renamed. Maria Shriver, a niece of JFK and a longtime Democrat, has criticized as "insane" a separate House proposal to rename the entire center after Trump.

Trump pledged to move homeless people from Washington. What we know and don't know about his plans

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

President Donald Trump says homeless people in the nation's capital will be moved far from the city as part of his federal takeover of policing in the District of Columbia and crackdown on crime.

With his exact plans unclear, there is concern among advocates and others who say there are better ways to address the issue of homelessness than clearing encampments, as the Republican administration has pledged to do.

Washington's status as a congressionally established federal district gives Trump the opportunity to push

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his tough-on-crime agenda, though he has not proposed solutions to the root causes of homelessness or crime.

Here's a look at what we know and what questions remain about how Trump's actions will affect the city's homeless population:

How many homeless people are in Washington?

It is difficult to obtain accurate counts of homeless populations.

On one day at the end of each January, municipal agencies across the United States perform what is called a "point-in-time" count aimed at capturing the total number of people in emergency shelters, transitional housing or without any housing.

The 2025 count in the district put the total at 5,138 adults and children, a 9% decrease compared with the year before, according to Democratic Mayor Muriel Bowser.

Where will the city's homeless people be taken?

It's not entirely clear.

Trump wrote on his social media site before Monday's news conference announcing the takeover that "The homeless have to move out, IMMEDIATELY. We will give you places to stay, but FAR from the Capital."

Asked during a media briefing at the White House on Tuesday where homeless people would be relocated, press secretary Karoline Leavitt said local police and federal agencies would "enforce the laws that are already on the books," which, she said, "have been completely ignored."

Citing a city regulation that she said gives local police "the authority to take action when it comes to homeless encampments," Leavitt said homeless people "will be given the option to leave their encampment, to be taken to a homeless shelter, to be offered addiction or mental health services." Those who refuse "will be susceptible to fines or to jail time."

In the past five months, the U.S. Park Police has removed 70 homeless encampments, giving the people living in them the same options, she said. As of Tuesday, Leavitt said only two homeless encampments remained in district parks maintained by the National Park Service and would be removed this week.

What are city officials doing for the homeless?

District officials said Tuesday they were making additional shelter space available after Trump said federal agents would remove homeless people in the city.

Kevin Donahue, the city administrator, said outreach workers were visiting homeless encampments and that the city has a building available that could house as many as 200 people, if needed.

Donahue made the comments during a conversation with community advocates and Bowser. The conversation was broadcast on X.

He said the outreach would continue through the week with a "greater level of urgency."

Bowser said that when Trump sees homeless encampments in the city it "triggers something in him that has him believing our very beautiful city is dirty, which it is not."

What are people in Washington saying?

Washington residents emphasized reductions in crime in recent years and concerns over the removal of homeless encampments in interviews Tuesday criticizing the federal takeover of the city's police department.

Jeraod Tyre, who has lived in the city for 15 years, said "crime has been slowing down lately" and argued that federal troops would only escalate tensions because they do not have "relationships with the people in the community" like local police do.

Sheiena Taylor, 36, said she is more fearful as a result of the presence of federal forces in the city where she was born and raised.

Taylor said she has seen federal officers around her home and on the subway and worries about their targeting of young people and people experiencing homelessness.

"Being homeless isn't a crime," she said, emphasizing the need for solutions to the root causes of homelessness or crime rather than policing.

In several spots across the city, AP journalists talked to homeless people who were being told either by federal law enforcement officials or advocacy groups to pack up tents and belongings from parks and

other public spaces before more formal removal measures. Some expressed fear and anxiety about what might be coming.

What do we still not know?

It's not exactly clear what agents specifically will be tasked with moving homeless people to areas outside the city.

There also hasn't been detailed information about how the people will be housed or provided for in new locations.

Some advocates have raised constitutional questions about the legality of forcibly removing homeless people from the city.

Harvard and the Trump administration are nearing a settlement including a \$500 million payment

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Harvard University and the Trump administration are getting close to an agreement that would require the Ivy League university to pay \$500 million to regain access to federal funding and to end investigations, according to a person familiar with the matter.

The framework is still being sorted out with significant gaps to close, but both sides have agreed on the financial figure and a settlement could be finalized in coming weeks, according to the person who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

Harvard declined to comment.

The agreement would end a monthslong battle that has tested the boundaries of the government's authority over America's universities. What began as an investigation into campus antisemitism escalated into an all-out feud as the Trump administration slashed more than \$2.6 billion in research funding, ended federal contracts and attempted to block Harvard from hosting international students.

The university responded with a pair of lawsuits alleging illegal retaliation by the administration after Harvard rejected a set of demands that campus leaders viewed as a threat to academic freedom.

Details of the proposed framework were first reported by The New York Times.

A \$500 million payment would be the largest sum yet as the administration pushes for financial penalties in its settlements with elite universities. Columbia University agreed to pay the government \$200 million as part of an agreement restoring access to federal funding, while Brown University separately agreed to pay \$50 million to Rhode Island workforce development organizations.

Details have not been finalized on where Harvard's potential payment would go, the person said.

The Republican president has been pushing to reform prestigious universities that he decries as bastions of liberal ideology.

His administration has cut funding to several Ivy League schools while pressing demands in line with his political campaign. None has been targeted as frequently or as heavily as Harvard, the richest U.S. university with an endowment valued at \$53 billion.

More than a dozen Democrats in Congress who attended Harvard cautioned against a settlement on Aug. 1, warning the university it may warrant "rigorous Congressional oversight and inquiry." Capitulating to political demands, they said, would set a dangerous precedent across all of higher education.

What to know about the Putin-Trump summit in Alaska

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

The U.S.-Russia summit in Alaska is happening where East meets West — quite literally — in a place familiar to both countries as a Cold War front line of missile defense, radar outposts and intelligence gathering.

Whether it can lead to a deal to produce peace in Ukraine more than 3 1/2 years after Moscow's invasion remains to be seen.

Here's what to know about the meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President

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Donald Trump, the first summit in four years:

When and where is it taking place?

The summit will take place Friday at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson outside Anchorage, according to a White House official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal planning. It played a key role in the Cold War in monitoring and deterring the Soviet Union.

It's Putin's first trip to the U.S. since 2015 for the U.N. General Assembly in New York. Because the U.S. isn't a member of the International Criminal Court, which in 2023 issued a warrant for Putin on war crimes accusations, it's under no obligation to arrest him.

Is Zelenskyy going?

Both countries confirmed a meeting between only Putin and Trump, despite initial suggestions that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy might take part. The Kremlin has long pushed back against Putin meeting Zelenskyy — at least until a peace deal is reached by both sides and is ready to be signed.

Putin said last week he wasn't against meeting Zelenskyy "but certain conditions need to be created" and were "still a long way off." That raised fears about excluding Ukraine from negotiations. Kyiv and its European allies stressed that peace cannot be achieved without Kyiv's involvement.

Zelenskyy was in Berlin for virtual meetings Wednesday with Trump and European leaders to try to ensure Ukraine and its allies are heard before the summit.

The Ukrainian president told the group Putin "is bluffing" about his military might and the effectiveness of sanctions, and "is trying to apply pressure ... on all sectors of the Ukrainian front" to try to show that Russia is "capable of occupying all of Ukraine." In reality, sanctions are "hitting Russia's war economy hard," Zelenskyy said.

What's Alaska's role in Russian history?

It will be the first visit by a Russian leader to Alaska, even though it was part of the czarist empire until 1867, the state news agency Tass said.

Alaska was colonized by Russia starting from the 18th century until Czar Alexander II sold it to the United States in 1867 for \$7.2 million. When it was found to contain vast resources, it was seen by Russians as a naïve deal that generated remorse.

After the USSR's collapse, Alaska was a subject of nostalgia and jokes for Russians. One popular song in the 1990s went: "Don't play the fool, America ... give back our dear Alaska land."

Sam Greene of King's College London said on X the symbolism of Alaska as the site of a summit about Ukraine was "horrendous — as though designed to demonstrate that borders can change, land can be bought and sold."

What's the agenda?

Trump has appeared increasingly exasperated with Putin over Russia's refusal to halt the bombardment of Ukraine. Kyiv has agreed to a ceasefire, insisting on a truce as a first step toward peace.

Moscow presented ceasefire conditions that are nonstarters for Zelenskyy, such as withdrawing troops from the four regions Russia illegally annexed in 2022, halting mobilization efforts, or freezing Western arms deliveries. For a broader peace, Putin demands Kyiv cede the annexed regions, even though Russia doesn't fully control them, and Crimea, renounce a bid to join NATO, limit the size of its armed forces and recognize Russian as an official language along with Ukrainian.

Zelenskyy insists any peace deals include robust security guarantees to protect Ukraine from future Russian aggression.

Putin has warned Ukraine it will face tougher conditions for peace as Russian troops forge into other regions to build what he described as a "buffer zone." Some observers suggested Russia could trade those recent gains for territory under Ukrainian control in the four annexed regions annexed by Moscow.

Zelenskyy said Saturday that "Ukrainians will not give their land to the occupier."

But Trump said Monday: "There'll be some land swapping going on. I know that through Russia and through conversations with everybody. To the good, for the good of Ukraine. Good stuff, not bad stuff. Also, some bad stuff for both."

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Zelenskyy said Tuesday that Putin wants Ukraine to withdraw from the remaining 30% of the Donetsk region it still controls as part of a ceasefire deal, a proposal the Ukrainian categorically rejected. Kyiv won't give up territory it controls, he added, saying that would be unconstitutional and would serve only as a springboard for a future Russian invasion.

He said discussions led by the U.S. on ending the war have not addressed key Ukrainian demands, including security guarantees to prevent future Russian aggression and including Europe in negotiations.

French President Emmanuel Macron said Wednesday that Trump was "very clear" in a virtual meeting with European leaders and Zelenskyy that the U.S. wants to achieve a ceasefire. Macron added that Trump had been clear that "territorial issues relating to Ukraine ... will only be negotiated by the Ukrainian president."

What are expectations?

Trump said Wednesday there will be unspecified "very severe consequences" if Putin does not agree to stop the war after the summit.

Putin sees a meeting with Trump as a chance to cement Russia's territorial gains, keep Ukraine out of NATO and prevent it from hosting any Western troops so Moscow can gradually pull the country back into its orbit.

He believes time is on his side as Ukrainian forces are struggling to stem Russian advances along the front amid swarms of Moscow's missiles and drones.

The meeting is a diplomatic coup for Putin, isolated since the invasion. The Kremlin sought to portray renewed U.S. contacts as two superpowers looking to resolve various global problems, with Ukraine being just one.

Ukraine and its European allies are concerned a summit without Kyiv could allow Putin to get Trump on his side and force Ukraine into concessions.

"Any decisions that are without Ukraine are at the same time decisions against peace," Zelenskyy said. "They will not bring anything. These are dead decisions. They will never work."

European officials echoed that.

"As we work towards a sustainable and just peace, international law is clear: All temporarily occupied territories belong to Ukraine," European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said. "A sustainable peace also means that aggression cannot be rewarded."

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said Sunday he believed Trump was "making sure that Putin is serious, and if he is not, then it will stop there."

"If he is serious, then from Friday onwards, the process will continue. Ukraine getting involved, the Europeans being involved," Rutte added.

Since last week, Putin spoke to Chinese leader Xi Jinping, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, as well as the leaders of South Africa, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, the Kremlin said.

That suggested Putin perhaps wanted to brief Russia's most important allies about a potential settlement, said pro-Kremlin analyst Sergei Markov.

Venus Williams gets a US Open wild card at age 45 and will be the oldest in singles since 1981

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Venus Williams will make her return to Grand Slam tennis at the U.S. Open after a two-year absence, receiving a wild-card invitation on Wednesday to compete in singles at Flushing Meadows at age 45.

The American will be the oldest entrant in singles at the tournament since Renee Richards was 47 in 1981, according to the International Tennis Federation.

Williams already had been given a wild-card entry by the U.S. Tennis Association for next week's mixed doubles competition. Singles matches begin in New York on Aug. 24.

She is the owner of seven major singles championships — including at the U.S. Open in 2000 and 2001

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— along with another 14 in women's doubles, all won with her younger sister, Serena, plus two in mixed doubles. Serena retired with 23 Slam singles trophies after playing at the 2022 U.S. Open.

The older Williams last participated in a Grand Slam tournament at the 2023 U.S. Open, losing in the first round. She hasn't won a singles match there since 2019.

When Williams came back to the tour last month at the DC Open for her first match anywhere in 16 months, a reporter asked whether that would be a one-time thing or if there were plans for other tournaments.

"I'm just here for now, and who knows?" she replied then. "Maybe there's more. ... But at the moment, I'm focused just on this. I haven't played in a year. There is no doubt I can play tennis, but obviously coming back to play matches, it takes time to get in the swing of things. I definitely feel I'll play well. I'm still the same player. I'm a big hitter. I hit big. This is my brand."

Last year, Williams had surgery to remove uterine fibroids and missed most of the season. In Washington this July, she competed for the first time since March 2024 at the Miami Open and became the oldest woman to win a tour-level singles match since Martina Navratilova was 47 at Wimbledon in 2004; Williams also won a doubles match at the DC Open.

In the process, Williams drew a ton of attention for her tennis, yes, but also for letting the world know she's engaged to an Italian actor and for her half-joking comments about needing to get back on court to get covered by health insurance.

"I love Venus. We're friends. I didn't really know this was something she was still wanting to do. But I also didn't know it was something she didn't want to do," said Mark Ein, the chairman of the hard-court tournament in Washington. "I was surprised. And it was a wonderful surprise."

Williams also entered the Cincinnati Open via a wild card last week, exiting in the first round of singles.

In New York, she will play in the Aug. 19-20 mixed doubles tournament with Reilly Opelka, a 27-year-old American who used to be ranked in the top 20.

Other women getting singles wild cards for the U.S. Open are Americans Clervie Ngounoue, Julieta Pareja, Caty McNally, Valerie Gluzman and Alyssa Ahn, plus France's Caroline Garcia — who'll be playing in her last Grand Slam tournament before retirement — and Australia's Talia Gibson.

Men's wild cards went to Americans Brandon Holt, Nishesh Basavareddy, Tristan Boyer, Emilio Nava, Stefan Dostanic and Darwin Blanch, and France's Valentin Royer and Australia's Tristan Schoolkate.

Why many Americans are rethinking alcohol, according to a new Gallup poll

By LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fewer Americans are reporting that they drink alcohol amid a growing belief that even moderate alcohol consumption is a health risk, according to a Gallup poll released Wednesday.

A record high percentage of U.S. adults, 53%, now say moderate drinking is bad for their health, up from 28% in 2015. The uptick in doubt about alcohol's benefits is largely driven by young adults — the age group that is most likely to believe drinking "one or two drinks a day" can cause health hazards — but older adults are also now increasingly likely to think moderate drinking carries risks.

As concerns about health impacts rise, fewer Americans are reporting that they drink. The survey finds that 54% of U.S. adults say they drink alcoholic beverages such as liquor, wine or beer. That's lower than at any other point in the past three decades.

The findings of the poll, which was conducted in July, indicate that after years of many believing that moderate drinking was harmless — or even beneficial — worries about alcohol consumption are taking hold. According to Gallup's data, even those who consume alcohol are drinking less.

The federal government is updating new dietary guidelines, including those around alcohol. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, government data showed U.S. alcohol consumption was trending up. But other government surveys have shown a decline in certain types of drinking, particularly among teenagers and young adults.

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This comes alongside a new drumbeat of information about alcohol's risks. While moderate drinking was once thought to have benefits for heart health, health professionals in recent years have pointed to overwhelming evidence that alcohol consumption leads to negative health outcomes and is a leading cause of cancer.

Growing skepticism about alcohol's benefits

Younger adults have been quicker than older Americans to accept that drinking is harmful, but older adults are coming around to the same view.

About two-thirds of 18- to 34-year-olds believe moderate drinking is unhealthy, according to the poll, up from about 4 in 10 in 2015. Older adults are less likely to see alcohol as harmful — about half of Americans age 55 or older believe this — but that's a substantial increase, too. In 2015, only about 2 in 10 adults age 55 or older thought alcohol was bad for their health.

In the past, moderate drinking was thought to have some benefits. That idea came from imperfect studies that largely didn't include younger people and couldn't prove cause and effect. Now the scientific consensus has shifted, and several countries recently lowered their alcohol consumption recommendations. Earlier this year, the outgoing U.S. surgeon general, Vivek Murthy, recommended a label on bottles of beer, wine and liquor that would clearly outline the link between alcohol consumption and cancer.

The federal government's current dietary guidelines recommend Americans not drink or, if they do consume alcohol, men should limit themselves to two drinks a day or fewer while women should stick to one or fewer.

Gallup's director of U.S. social research, Lydia Saad, said shifting health advice throughout older Americans' lives may be a reason they have been more gradual than young adults to recognize alcohol as harmful.

"Older folks may be a little more hardened in terms of the whiplash that they get with recommendations," Saad said. "It may take them a little longer to absorb or accept the information. Whereas, for young folks, this is the environment that they've grown up in ... in many cases, it would be the first thing young adults would have heard as they were coming into adulthood."

The government is expected to release new guidelines later this year, under the directive of health secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who has promised big changes. Kennedy has not hinted at how the alcohol recommendations may shift.

Drinking rates fall to decade low

Slightly more than half of Americans, 54%, report that they drink alcohol — a low in Gallup's data that is especially pronounced among women and young adults.

Young Americans' alcohol consumption has been trending downward for years, accelerating the overall decline in alcohol consumption. In sharp contrast with Gallup's findings two decades ago, when young adults were likeliest to report drinking, young adults' drinking rate is now slightly below middle-aged and older adults.

Americans' reported drinking is among the lowest since the question was first asked in 1939. For most of the last few decades, at least 6 in 10 Americans have reported drinking alcoholic beverages, only dipping below that point a few times in the question's history.

Americans who drink alcohol are consuming less

Even if concerns about health risks aren't causing some adults to give up alcohol entirely, these worries could be influencing how often they drink.

The survey found that adults who think moderate drinking is bad for one's health are just as likely as people who don't share those concerns to report that they drink, but fewer of the people with health worries had consumed alcohol recently.

About half of those who worry moderate drinking is unhealthy said they had a drink in the previous week, compared with about 7 in 10 who did not think drinking was bad for their health.

Overall, only about one-quarter of Americans who drink said they had consumed alcohol in the prior 24 hours, a record low in the survey. Roughly 4 in 10 said that it had been more than a week since they had poured a drink.

The US-Russia summit marks Putin's first trip to the West since the war in Ukraine began

By The Associated Press undefined

For most of his quarter-century rule, President Vladimir Putin visited Paris, London, Vienna and New York. Since Moscow invaded Ukraine, however, his destinations have been places like Minsk, Pyongyang, Hanoi and Beijing, as the West sought to turn Russia into a pariah.

Russia has countered Western attempts to isolate it by bolstering its ties with ex-Soviet allies and other developing countries. Putin's travel also has been limited by an International Criminal Court arrest warrant issued in 2023 that has prompted him to avoid visits to places that recognize the court's authority. The U.S. isn't a member of the court and thus doesn't have an obligation to arrest him.

The trip to Alaska will be Putin's first to the United States since 2015, when he attended the U.N. General Assembly in New York. It's also his first visit to a Western country since the start of Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Here's a look at some foreign trips Putin has made since the start of the war in February 2022:

2022

June 28-29, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan — Putin's visit to the two ex-Soviet nations was his first after launching the Ukraine war. In Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, Putin attended a summit of the Caspian Sea nations to discuss regional cooperation.

July 19, Iran — Putin met with leaders of Iran and Turkey, focusing on the situation in Syria.

Sept. 15-16, Uzbekistan — In Tashkent, he held a summit of the eight-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a group dominated by China and Russia. Putin met on the sidelines of the summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, their first encounter since the war began.

Oct. 13-14, Kazakhstan — Putin attended a conference aimed at promoting peace and security in Asia.

Nov. 23, Armenia — Visiting Yerevan, Putin attended a summit of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a Moscow-dominated group of nations that once were part of the former Soviet Union.

Dec. 9, Kyrgyzstan — Putin attended a Bishkek meeting of the Eurasian Economic Council, an economic alliance of several ex-Soviet nations.

Dec. 19, Belarus — Putin met in Minsk with President Alexander Lukashenko, Russia's neighbor and staunch ally that was a staging area for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

2023

Oct. 12-13, Kyrgyzstan — Putin returned to Bishkek for a summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States, a grouping of ex-Soviet nations.

Oct. 17-18, China — Putin attended a forum of China's Belt and Road Initiative in a trip that underscored Beijing's support for Moscow.

Nov. 9, Kazakhstan -- A visit by Putin to Astana, Kazakhstan, was part of his efforts to cement ties with the ex-Soviet neighbor and major economic partner.

Nov. 23, Belarus — Putin attended a summit in Minsk of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a Moscow-dominated security grouping of several ex-Soviet nations.

Dec. 6, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — The Kremlin leader made a working visit to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in a lightning tour intended to raise Moscow's profile as a Middle East power broker.

2024

May 16-17, China — Putin visited Beijing to emphasize Russia and China's burgeoning strategic ties and his own personal relationship with Xi as they sought to present an alternative to U.S. global influence.

May 23-24, Belarus -- Putin visited Belarus in another of several foreign tours to kick off his fifth term in office.

May 26-28, Uzbekistan -- On a visit to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Putin signed an accord for Moscow to build the Central Asian country's first nuclear power plant.

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June 18-19, North Korea — Putin made his first visit in 24 years to Pyongyang, where he and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signed a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty, a pact stipulating mutual military assistance if either country is attacked. North Korea later sent its troops to Russia to help fight an incursion by Ukrainian forces in Russia's Kursk region.

June 19-20, Vietnam — After North Korea, Putin visited Vietnam and signed a dozen deals with President To Lam, seeking to bolster ties with a Soviet-era ally.

July 3-4, Kazakhstan — Putin and Xi joined the leaders of other countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Astana, for an annual meeting of the security group created by Moscow and Beijing to counter Western alliances.

Aug. 18-19, Azerbaijan — Putin made a state visit to Baku, Azerbaijan, where he met President Ilham Aliyev to secure trade routes and retain Moscow's clout in the South Caucasus.

Sept. 2-3, Mongolia — Putin made an official visit to Mongolia, where he got a red-carpet welcome as the country — a member of the International Criminal Court — ignored calls to arrest him on a warrant for alleged war crimes stemming from Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Oct. 11, Turkmenistan — Putin visited Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, where he met Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on the sidelines of an international forum and discussed the situation in the Middle East.

Nov. 28, Kazakhstan — Putin traveled to Astana for a summit of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a Moscow-dominated security grouping of several ex-Soviet nations.

Dec. 6, Belarus — In Minsk, Putin and Lukashenko signed a security pact that for the first time put Belarus under Russia's nuclear umbrella, including the potential use of Russian tactical nuclear weapons to respond to an aggression.

2025

June 27, Belarus — Putin traveled to Minsk for a summit of the Eurasian Economic Council, an economic alliance of several ex-Soviet nations.

Typhoon Podul brings no major damage as it crosses Taiwan and heads for China

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Typhoon Podul crossed southern Taiwan, where authorities closed schools and government offices as heavy rain threatened more damage to agriculture in the island's southeast. No major damage was reported.

The storm hit Taitung county on the east coast shortly after noon, moving across the south of the island at about 36 kilometers (22 miles) per hour. By 5:00 p.m. (0900 GMT) its center was just off Taiwan's west coast, churning out into the Taiwan Strait and China, according to the Central Weather Administration.

In China, the coastal provinces of Fujian and Guangdong recalled fishing boats to port and evacuated around 15,000 people living near the coast to shelters further inland.

Taiwanese media reported one person missing on the east coast.

Typhoons like Podul typically hit Taiwan's east coast hard before losing speed and strength as they pass over the Central Mountain Range before continuing toward the Chinese coast. Podul measured 120 kilometers (75 miles) across and was expected to broaden even while losing strength as the storm moved westward.

The areas affected were well south of the capital, Taipei, along with Taiwan's main international airport and high-tech industrial base. Around a dozen flights that would have traveled south toward the path of the storm were delayed or canceled.

The counties and cities of Tainan, Kaohsiung, Chiayi, Yunlin, Pingtung and Hualien on the east coast and the island group of Penghu in the Taiwan Strait were taking the brunt of the storm.

Along with flooding, typhoons routinely damage fruit and other cash crops and bring landslides through the island's center. Much of central and southern Taiwan was badly hit by heavy rains in recent weeks that caused severe damage to crops but minimal casualties, while also knocking out electricity to rural areas that took weeks to repair.

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Today in History: August 14, FDR signs Social Security Act

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Thursday, Aug. 14, the 226th day of 2025. There are 139 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 14, 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act into law, ensuring income for elderly Americans and creating a federal unemployment insurance program.

Also on this date:

In 1936, in front of an estimated 20,000 spectators, Rainey Bethea was hanged in Owensboro, Kentucky in the last public execution in the United States.

In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill signed the Atlantic Charter, which detailed the post-war goals of the two nations.

In 1945, President Harry S. Truman announced that Imperial Japan had surrendered unconditionally, ending World War II.

In 1947, Pakistan gained independence from British rule.

In 1994, Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, the terrorist known as "Carlos the Jackal," was captured by French agents in Sudan.

In 1995, Shannon Faulkner officially became the first female cadet in the history of The Citadel, South Carolina's state military college. (However, Faulkner withdrew from the school less than a week later, citing the stress of her court fight, and her isolation among the male cadets.)

In 1997, an unrepentant Timothy McVeigh was formally sentenced to death for the Oklahoma City bombing. (McVeigh was executed by lethal injection in 2001.)

In 2009, Charles Manson follower Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, 60, convicted of trying to assassinate President Gerald Ford in 1975, was released from a Texas prison hospital after more than three decades behind bars.

In 2016, Usain Bolt became the first athlete to win the 100m dash in three consecutive Olympics, taking gold at the Summer Games in Rio.

In 2021, a 7.2-magnitude earthquake struck Haiti, turning thousands of structures into rubble; the quake left more than 2,200 people dead and injured more than 12,000 others.

Today's Birthdays: Broadway lyricist Lee Adams ("Bye Bye Birdie") is 101. College Football Hall of Famer and NFL quarterback John Brodie is 90. Singer Dash Crofts is 85. Country singer Connie Smith is 84. Comedian-actor Steve Martin is 80. Film director Wim Wenders is 80. Singer-musician Larry Graham is 79. Actor Susan Saint James is 79. Author Danielle Steel is 78. "Far Side" cartoonist Gary Larson is 75. Actor Carl Lumbly is 74. Olympic gold medal swimmer Debbie Meyer is 73. Actor Jackee Harry is 69. NASCAR Hall of Famer Rusty Wallace is 69. Actor Marcia Gay Harden is 66. Basketball Hall of Famer Earvin "Magic" Johnson is 66. Singer Sarah Brightman is 65. Actor Susan Olsen (TV: "The Brady Bunch") is 64. Actor Halle Berry is 59. Golfer Darren Clarke is 57. Actor Catherine Bell is 57. Actor Mila Kunis is 42. Actor Lamorne Morris is 42. Former NFL player Tim Tebow is 38. Actor Marsai Martin is 21.