

Groton Daily Independent

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Community Calendar

Saturday, Sept. 12

- JH Volleyball at Matchbox Tournament, 9 a.m.
- Soccer hosts Vermillion (Girls at 1 p.m., Boys at 2:30 p.m.)
- Fall Citywide Rummage Sale

Sunday, Sept. 13

- Third Grade Basketball practice in the GHS Gym, 4 p.m.
- Sunflower Classic Couples Golf Tourney
- Carnival of Silver Skates registration, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Warming House
- Doggie Day at the Groton Pool, 3 p.m.
- St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m. and at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.
- Emmanuel Lutheran: Rally Sunday: Worship/Communion/Milestones, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Women to meet after worship.
- United Methodist: Worship with communion at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.
- 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.

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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.

Turn off the Lights

Light exposure during nighttime sleep may lead to harmful changes in the heart's structure and function, according to a study published this week.

Researchers asked 11,071 participants without cardiovascular disease to wear light and motion sensors on their wrists for seven days to measure nighttime light exposure. Possible sources included streetlights and televisions. Participants underwent cardiac MRIs three years later, and those with greater exposure had thicker heart walls and weaker heartbeats. During eight- to 10-year follow-ups, those in the highest-exposure group had a 29% higher risk of heart failure, 24% higher risk of heart attack, 33% elevated risk of stroke, and 26% increased risk of cardiovascular death than those with the least exposure.

Further research is needed to determine whether different types of light, such as LED versus fluorescent, have different effects. Future studies may also probe whether the changes stem from disrupted sleep or effects on the body's circadian rhythm.

CIA releases intelligence sent to White House before 9/11.

The CIA yesterday released 69 never-before-seen briefs warning about Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida, including one warning then-President Bill Clinton about a potential plot to "fly an explosive-packed airplane into a US city." Experts say the documents reaffirm that the US failed to respond to several warnings in the years leading up to 9/11.

US inflation accelerates and diesel prices spike as war in Iran continues.

The inflation rose 3.4% in August compared with a year ago, unchanged from July and in line with analysts' expectations. Interest-rate futures forecast about an 85% chance the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates next week, up from roughly 70% before the report. Meanwhile, diesel prices hit record highs above \$6 a gallon, which is expected to hike the cost of shipping groceries and other goods.

Iran-backed Houthis capture Red Sea island on vital oil shipping route.

The Houthi militia yesterday seized a Yemeni island at the choke point in the Red Sea, one day after taking control of a key Yemeni port. The moves tighten Iran and its allies' control of the Bab el-Mandab Strait, a vital oil shipping route. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia shut down a major oil pipeline after a drone attack it claims originated in Iraq. The Iraqi government has ordered an investigation.

Afghan woman deported in first-ever "alien terrorist" court case.

Nazira Haji Zada, a 47-year-old Afghan permanent resident living in Texas, opted yesterday to leave the US rather than continue litigating accusations that she supported an Islamic State-linked plot. She was the first person to appear before the Alien Terrorist Removal Court, which was established in 1996. The court allows the government to deport noncitizens whose case details cannot be publicly disclosed for national security reasons.

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CDC declares nation's largest-known cyclosporiasis outbreak over.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared that the outbreak ended yesterday, with a total of 12,883 lab-confirmed cases across 21 states since May. Officials identified at least one source—iceberg lettuce grown by Taylor Farms in Mexico—and are investigating at least five other potential sources.

US Open wraps this weekend.

The world's new No. 1 women's tennis player, Elena Rybakina, faces the old No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka in the women's final today at 4 pm ET. This is Rybakina's first US Open final, while Sabalenka is seeking her third straight title after winning in 2024 and 2025. Ben Shelton and Alexander Zverev will play tomorrow for the men's title.

Justin Trudeau launches film and TV production company.

The former Canadian Prime Minister is launching Hope & Hard Work with his former chief of staff, Katie Telford. The company is developing adaptations of Perry Chafe's 2023 novel, "Closer by Sea"; Uzma Jalaluddin's 2025 novel "Detective Aunty"; and more. Former President Barack Obama and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton both also started production companies after leaving office.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Cathy K. in Rescue, CA.

"It was early Sunday morning. My husband and I had spent the night in a rest stop in our travel trailer in Blythe, California, before heading into Arizona. We had driven 70 miles east before realizing he didn't have his wallet. We decided to drive back to the rest stop when I received a call from our health insurance company. They had a gentleman on the other line who had found the wallet at the rest stop. The only phone number available was on this insurance card. The insurance company connected us so that we could talk. The couple waited for us at the rest stop, still holding the wallet. We will never forget the kindness of these strangers."

EMPLOYMENT

Wanted full or part time help for harvest. Someone who can drive combine, semi or tractor. Housing available. Near Aberdeen call 605-380-4898. (0819.0909pd).
=====

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★ 52nd Annual ★ James Valley Threshing and Tractor Club Show

Heritage Quilt & Craft Show

September 11, 12 & 13, 2026

— Andover, South Dakota —

*Celebrating
the history
they protected.*



**HONORING OUR
MILITARY VETERANS
& FEATURING
MILITARY EQUIPMENT**



FEATURED QUILT TRUNK SHOW

Joy Braun – My Journey
Saturday at 10:00 a.m.



- ★ This year, the James Valley Threshing Association is featuring military equipment and honoring veterans.
- ★ Patriotic and military quilt designs are featured.
- ★ All quilts and designs are welcome.
- ★ Heritage Craft Boutique: feel free to donate fabric and notions.
- ★ Quilt vendor for the weekend: Farmhouse Quilt Shop from Hartford, SD.

QUILT & CRAFT SCHEDULE

- **Set-up and hanging of quilts:**
Thursday, September 10 at 1:00 p.m.
- **Program and trunk show:** Saturday at 10:00 a.m.
- **Take-down:** Sunday at 2:00 p.m.
- **We are grateful for our volunteers!**



★ SHOW HIGHLIGHTS ★

DAILY EVENTS (All Three Days)

- Historic Main Street Parade at 1:30 p.m.
- Steam engine demonstrations
- Daily threshing and plowing (after the parade)
- Heritage Craft & Quilt Display
- Kids Sandbox & Park
- Antique Toy Shed
- 1924 Cook Car Display
- Food trucks, ice cream & floats
- Sawmill demonstrations and more!



*History
Community
Tradition
Together*

FRIDAY SPECIAL EVENTS

- 10:30 a.m. – Steam Talk with Kory Anderson
- 8:00 p.m. (ish) – Moonlight Steam Roller Ride around town

SATURDAY SPECIAL EVENTS

- 10:00 a.m. – Heritage Craft Quilt Trunk Show
- 10:30 a.m. – Antique Tractor Pull
- 10:30 a.m. – Steam Talk with Kory Anderson
- 11:00 a.m. – Ladies of Steam Instruction

SUNDAY SPECIAL EVENTS

- 9:30 a.m. – Church Service on Historic Main Street
- 11:00 a.m. – Kids Tractor Pull

★ ★ SPECIAL RECOGNITION ★ ★

Honoring Our Military Veterans
(All branches—past & present)

FREE BUTTON to Military Veterans



For golf cart reservations call
Charlene Voss: 605-881-2920

Daily Entrance Fee: \$15
Weekend Pass: \$40
4-Day Camping Permit: \$25



For more information, visit
www.jamesvalleythreshers.com

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Groton Chamber of Commerce

September 2, 2026

12pm City Hall

- Members present: Carol Kutter, Katelyn Nehlich, Mayor Scott Hanlon (briefly), Ashley Bentz, April Abeln, and Brian Dolan
- Area IV Senior Nutrition was welcomed at the Community Center. Photos were taken at the City Park with the newly installed seesaw.
- The minutes from the previous meeting were approved by Kutter and seconded by Dolan. All members present voted aye.
- The treasurer's report was given. Dacotah Bank checking account balance is \$19,443.41 in addition to the \$10,154.59 CD that expires October 14th. The bucks account balance is \$3,349.80. The report was approved by Kutter and seconded by Abeln along with the renewal of our CD for 8 months at approximately 3.6%. All members present voted aye.
- A thank you was received from Wage Memorial Library for the Storybook Land Theatre performance donation.
- Abeln made an email motion, and Heinrich seconded the motion to sponsor GDI Live for \$1,000. Sponsorship will include being listed in the home programs and a 30 second livestream ad. Members present via email voted aye.
- Seesaw is here and installed!
- Abeln will ask about popcorn sponsorship at an upcoming athletic event.
- Motion by Nehlich and seconded by Kutter to advertise on the Groton Community Transit van for 12 months. All members present voted aye.
- Event donations were discussed.
- Abeln will reach out to Kira at the Red Horse for a business welcome.
- Dues notices will be written and mailed next meeting. 1 spot on the Hwy 12 sign will be given away to members.
- Motion by Abeln and seconded Kutter to ask the GHS Art classes to design our 2027 window cling. Winner will receive \$50 Chamber Bucks. All members present voted aye.
- Motion by Kutter and seconded by Dolan to gift GHS scholarships to three 2026-2027 seniors. All members present voted aye.
- Businesses are reminded to send their decorated storefront photos to city.april@nvc.net. The most Facebook likes wins \$50 in Chamber Bucks! Winner announced September 21.
- Next Meeting: October 7th at 12pm at City Hall

Upcoming events:

- 09/12/2026 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/13/2026 Sunflower Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 09/13/2026 9th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm
- 09/13/2026 Carnival of Silver Skates Registration 10am-2pm Warming House
- 09/14/2026 Carnival of Silver Skates Registration 4-6pm Warming House
- 09/18/2026 Homecoming Lunch & Bazaar 11am-3pm First Presbyterian Church
- 09/18/2026 Homecoming Parade

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Cyclones pull away in second half to defeat Groton Area

Groton Area battled fifth-ranked Clark/Willow Lake to a 14-14 halftime tie Friday night in Clark, but the Cyclones took control after the break and went on to post a 36-14 victory over the Tigers.

Clark/Willow Lake struck first after an unusual special teams play gave the Cyclones a second chance with the football. Their opening possession appeared to be over when they punted on fourth down, but the kick into the strong wind hung high in the air before coming down and striking a Groton player. Clark/Willow Lake recovered the loose ball at its own 47-yard line.

Three first downs later, Jory Ries connected with Talen Huber on a 19-yard touchdown pass with 8:11 remaining in the first quarter. Jakob Steen ran in the two-point conversion to give the Cyclones an 8-0 lead.

"Sometimes weird stuff happens when you're playing football," Groton Area coach Jordan Carson said of the punt. "That's kind of one of those weird things. Sometimes you just can't prepare for what happens when the lights come on."

Groton responded with a long drive that reached deep into Cyclone territory before the Tigers were stopped on fourth down. Clark/Willow Lake took over, but Asher Johnson quickly changed the momentum, intercepting a Ries pass and returning it 30 yards for a touchdown. Johnson then connected with TC Schuster for the conversion to tie the game at 8-8 with 1:11 remaining in the first quarter.

"We were in the hole, but then we turned around and answered right back with the defensive score," Carson said. "That was awesome."

Clark/Willow Lake regained the lead midway through the second quarter when Ries found Cade Gaikowski for a 16-yard touchdown pass. The conversion attempt failed, leaving the Cyclones ahead 14-8 with 6:30 remaining.

Groton then put together one of its best possessions of the night.

Starting at its own 28-yard line, the Tigers marched the length of the field on a 14-play drive that consumed nearly six minutes. With just 25 seconds remaining before halftime, Johnson connected with Anthony Tracy on a 19-yard touchdown pass. The conversion pass fell short, sending the teams into halftime tied at 14.

At halftime, statistician Tom Woods said the Tigers' ability to execute that late drive was something they had specifically worked on during the week.

"I thought a wonderful job by the coach with time management and working the ball down," Woods said. "They practiced the no-huddle all week long in a situation where they can just get to the ball, make a call, and the objective is to get out of bounds so we can huddle up. They practiced that all week long, and it worked well."

Woods said the Tigers had held their own statistically through the first two quarters against one of the top-ranked teams in Class 11B.

"Really good ball game here," Woods said. "Clark's number five rated in the state. I'm just really, really proud of the boys. They're just really working hard."

Both teams had eight first downs at halftime. Clark/Willow Lake had completed nine of 18 passes for



Anthony Tracy is looking for an opening in the Cyclone defense. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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The team was gathered in a pregame huddle. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

136 yards while Groton had completed three of five for 30 yards. The Tigers had also rushed 25 times for 88 yards in the opening half.

Woods said Groton's plan to establish the ground game was working.

"Coach's game plan was to run the ball, and it's working really well so far," Woods said. "Being in the right place at the right time and all of those things."

Johnson had 44 first-half rushing yards on 11 attempts, while Ryder Schelle had 14 yards and Kyson Kucker added 12. Woods also pointed out the contribution from some of the Tigers' younger players.

"Really proud of those last two freshmen getting in there and giving the team some effort," Woods said after noting the work of Kucker and Ryder Schwan.

Woods also provided some perspective on the long history between Groton and Clark. Friday's contest was the 76th meeting between the programs, a series dating back to 1924 when Groton won the first matchup 14-13.

Clark and Willow Lake entered their current cooperative in 2008, the same year Groton began competing as Groton Area.

Woods noted that the matchup carries a little extra meaning for him personally.

"Clark is my alma mater," Woods said. "I always like to say I was born a Garden City Green Dragon, I was raised a Clark Comet, but I'm a Groton Tiger by choice, and I thank God for all three."

Carson said the first half was about staying within striking distance of a talented Cyclone team.

"We knew that they were going to be a tough one, and we wanted to hang around and hang around as long as we could, and maybe something weird was going to happen in the end," Carson said.

He credited Clark/Willow Lake's balance and athleticism.

"They've got size, they've got speed. They can throw it, they can run it," Carson said. "They kind of have the whole package. That's a good team over there."

The Cyclones made their move after halftime.

Groton received the opening kickoff of the third quarter, but a penalty helped push the Tigers into a fourth-and-20 situation and they were forced to punt.

Clark/Willow Lake took over at its own 48-yard line and put together another scoring drive. A Groton penalty on fourth-and-four extended the possession before Ries found Huber for a 25-yard touchdown pass with 4:55 remaining in the third quarter. The conversion attempt failed, giving the Cyclones a 20-14 lead.

After another Groton punt, Clark/Willow Lake struck again. Huber capped the drive with a 17-yard touchdown run, and Steen added the conversion run to stretch the lead to 28-14 with 1:04 remaining in the third quarter.

The Cyclones added their final touchdown early in the fourth quarter when Ries connected with Gaiowski on a 22-yard scoring pass. Ries then found Bo Begeman for the conversion, making it 36-14 with 9:07 remaining.

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Jordan Schwan with the kickoff. (Photo

by Paul Kosel)

The loss dropped Groton Area to 2-2 on the season, while Clark/Willow Lake improved to 4-0. The Tigers will return home to host Elk Point-Jefferson.

Groton continued to move the football late in the game, but turnovers ended two promising possessions. The Tigers fumbled after advancing into Clark/Willow Lake territory midway through the fourth quarter. After getting the ball back with 3:10 remaining, Groton drove all the way to the Cyclone one-yard line before another fumble ended the threat with 56 seconds remaining.

Clark/Willow Lake then ran out the clock.

Groton finished with 13 first downs and rushed 42 times for 159 yards. Johnson led the Tigers with 92 yards on 20 carries. Kucker rushed nine times for 26 yards, Schelle had 18 yards on five carries and Tracy added 14 yards on five attempts.

Johnson completed seven of 13 passes for 54 yards and a touchdown. Tracy caught four passes for 45 yards and a touchdown, while Alex Abeln had two catches for 11 yards.

Defensively, Tracy and Ryder Schwan led Groton with eight tackles apiece, while Layne Johnson had six tackles. Asher Johnson recorded the interception return for a touchdown.

Clark/Willow Lake finished with 15 first downs, 168 rushing yards and 198 passing yards. Ries completed 13 of 25 passes for 198 yards and four touchdowns. Gaikowski caught three passes for 62 yards and two scores, while Huber had four receptions for 53 yards and two touchdowns. Huber also rushed for 63 yards and a touchdown.

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Groton Area

First Downs 13
Rushing: 42-159
Rushers:.....
Asher Johnson 20-92
Kyson Kucker 9-26
Ryder Schelle 5-18
Anthony Tracy 5-14
Ryder Schwan 1-7
Alex Abeln 1-2

Passing: 7-13, 54 yards
Asher Johnson 7-13, 54 yards

Receivers:.....
Anthony Tracy 4-45
Alex Abeln 2-11
Jordan Schwan 1-(-2)
.

Fumbles: had 3, lost 3
Penalties: 5-30

Defensive Leaders:.....
Anthony Tracy 8 tackles
Ryder Schwan 8 tackles
Layne Johnson 6 tackles
Asher Johnson 1 interception

Record:..... 2-2
Next game: host Elk Point-Jefferson

Scoring:

First Quarter: 8:11: CWL: Talen Huber 19 yard pass from Jory Ries Pat: Jakob Steen run 0-8
First Quarter: 1:11: G: Asher Johnson 30 yard interception return. PAT: TC Schuster from A. Johnson) 8-8
Second Quarter: 6:30: CWL: Cade Gaikowski 16 yard pass from Jory Ries. PAT: run failed 8-14
Second Quarter: 0:25: Anthony Tracy 19 yard pass from Asher Johnson. PAT: pass failed 14-14
Third Quarter: 4:55: CWL: Talen Huber 25 yard pass from Ries. PAT: pass failed 14-20
Third Quarter: 1:04: CWL: Talen Huber 17 yard run. PAT: Jakob Steen run 14-28
Fourth Quarter: 9:07: CWL: Cade Gaikowski 22 yard pass from Ries. PAT Bo Begeman pass from Ries. 14-36

Clark/Willow Lake

First Downs: 15
Rushing: 28-168, 1 TD
Rushers:
Jakob Steen 18-73
Talen Huber 3-63, 1 TD
Cade Gaikowski 4-23
Jory Ries 3-9

Passing:..... 13-25, 198 yds, 4 TD, 1 Int.
Jory Ries 13-25, 198 yds, 4 TD, 1 Int

Receivers:
Cade Gaikowski 3-62, 2 TD
Jackson Stormo 3-46
Talon Huber 4-53, 2 TD
Chris Bevers 3-37

Fumbles:..... had 0, lost 0
Penalties:..... 10-70

Defensive Leaders:
Cade Gaikowski 12 tackles
Wyatt Schagel 5 tackles
Austin Vig 5 tackles
..... Jakob Steen 5 tackles

Record:..... 4-0
Next game: at Parker.Marion

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This was a neat cluster of clouds. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Soccer

Vermillion at Groton

Saturday, Sept. 12

Girls at 1:00, Boys at 2:30



Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD

GDILIVE



YouTube

A production of the

Groton Daily Independent

For more info: GDILIVE.COM



Football Game sponsors on GDILIVE.COM are: Agtegra,
Avantara-Groton, Bierman Farm Service, BK Custom Ts,
Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank,
Farmers Union Insurance, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber,
Groton Ford, Harry Implement, Heartland Energy, Jacobson Electric,
John Sieh Agency, Jungle Lanes & Cafe, Rix Farms / R&M Farms,
S & S Lumber, The Meat House of Andover.

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Northern State University Sets Enrollment Record

ABERDEEN, S.D. — Northern State University reached its highest enrollment in university history this fall, welcoming 3,890 total students. The achievement was driven by 470 new undergraduate degree-seeking students. The freshman class numbered 370, representing a 28% increase over fall 2025, and the largest since 2013. 100 transfer students also enrolled.

Of the 370 freshmen, 36% come from Northeastern South Dakota. Across the entire degree-seeking undergraduate population, 69% are South Dakota residents, and 80% of all enrolled students call South Dakota home.

The surge is visible across campus. On-campus housing grew 12.3% this fall, with 593 students living in residence halls compared to 528 last year. Classrooms, the dining hall, parking lots, and student events all reflect a noticeably larger student body.

"This is extraordinary growth," said President Alan LaFave. "Behind every number is a student who chose Northern. What makes these results even more meaningful is that we're seeing growth in nearly every enrollment metric. New freshmen, transfer students, graduate students, and online learners all chose Northern this fall."

Strong Performance Across All Programs

The growth is not concentrated in a single program. Northern saw robust recruitment across its academic portfolio. The largest incoming cohorts enrolled in:

- Elementary Education
- Business Administration
- Nursing
- Human Performance

"Our students consistently tell us that what sets Northern apart is the people," said Eric Kline, enrollment management officer. "Whether it's a campus visit, an interaction with a faculty member, support from staff, or the welcoming culture, the Northern experience continues to make a lasting impression."

Retention Reflects Student Success

Beyond new enrollment, Northern saw encouraging performance on a critical metric: student retention. The university's 83% retention rate represents a 14% increase from fall 2025. This is Northern's highest retention rate since 2007, indicating that students who enroll at Northern are staying and succeeding.

"Northern's retention rate demonstrates that students are finding the academic support, relationships, and sense of belonging they need to succeed," said Eric Kline. "Our growth in retention reflects the dedicated work of Northern's faculty and staff."

A Regional Asset Meets Regional Need

When a university aligns its mission, programs, and culture with regional needs, students respond.

"We're grateful to our faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners who make this possible," LaFave said. "They are the reason students choose to come here. They are the reason students stay."

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Secretary of State's office reunited in South Dakota State Capitol

(Pierre, S.D.) – Secretary of State Monae L. Johnson announces that the South Dakota Secretary of State's Office is now fully reunited in one office in the State Capitol Building.

Effective immediately, the Secretary of State's Office, including the Divisions of Business Services, General Services, and Elections is located at:

South Dakota State Capitol
500 East Capitol Avenue, Suite 112
Pierre, SD 57501

The Secretary of State's Office has operated from separate locations in Pierre, with Elections and General Services located in the State Capitol and Business Services operating from a separate office on East Prospect Avenue.

Business Services and General Services began their move earlier this summer. With the completion of the move to Suite 112, all divisions of the Secretary of State's Office are located together.

"We are excited to have our entire team together in one location," said Secretary Johnson. "Bringing our divisions together in the State Capitol will make it easier for our staff to work together and, most importantly, provide a more convenient experience for the people we serve."

The move provides South Dakotans with one central location for election services, business filings, UCC filings, notary services, apostilles, concealed pistol permit services, lobbyist filings, and other services provided by the Secretary of State's Office. Office hours remain 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Central Time, Monday through Friday.

For additional information, please visit the Secretary of State's website at sdsos.gov.



Korbin Kucker lowered the flag at the City Park for remembrance of 9-11. (Photo by

Paul Kosel)

Data as of 9/09/2026

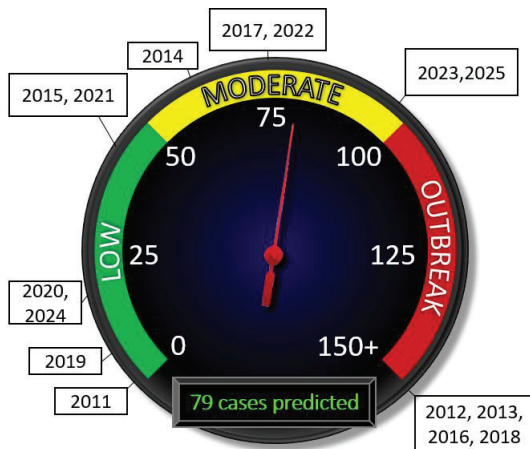
Division of Disease Prevention and Control

South Dakota Mosquito

SD West Nile Virus

- 29 human cases reported
 - 12 non-neuroinvasive cases
 - 17 neuroinvasive cases
 - 0 deaths
- 5 human viremic blood donor detections
- 7 counties with a positive mosquito pool

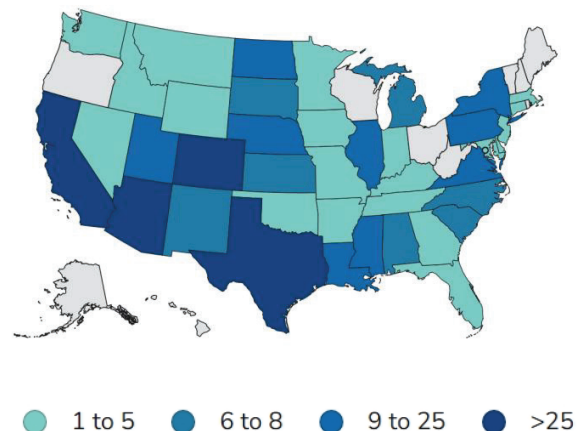
Current WNV SD Case Prediction:



US West Nile Virus

- 504 human cases reported
 - 363 of which are neuroinvasive
 - *Note: the map below may not have current SD data*

WNV Human Disease Cases Reported by State of Residence:



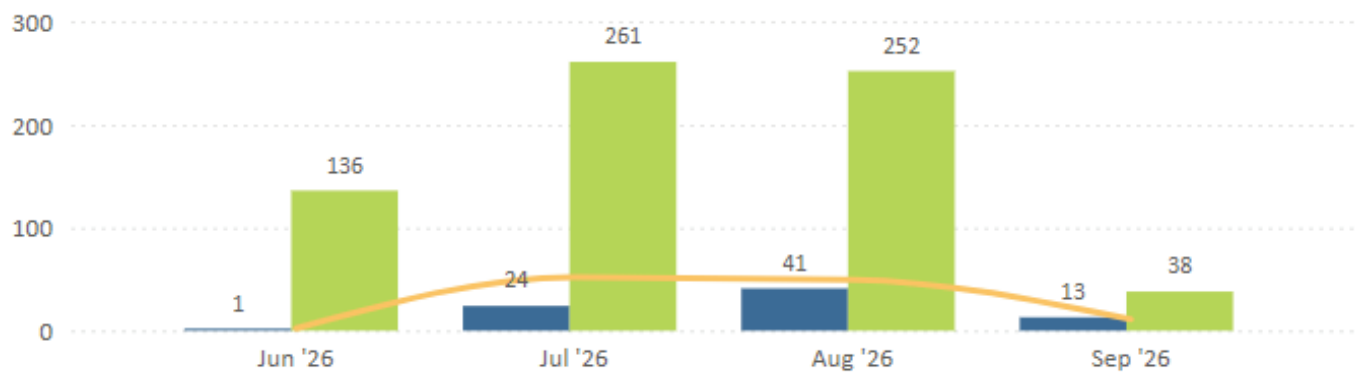
Data compiled from: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. West Nile Virus: Current Year Data and Maps. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/west-nile-virus/data-maps/current-year-data.html>

SD Mosquito Surveillance Summary for 2026

- Total sites collecting mosquitos: 59
- *Culex* Species Collected: 49,403
- Total mosquito pools tested: 766
- Percent positivity: 10.31%

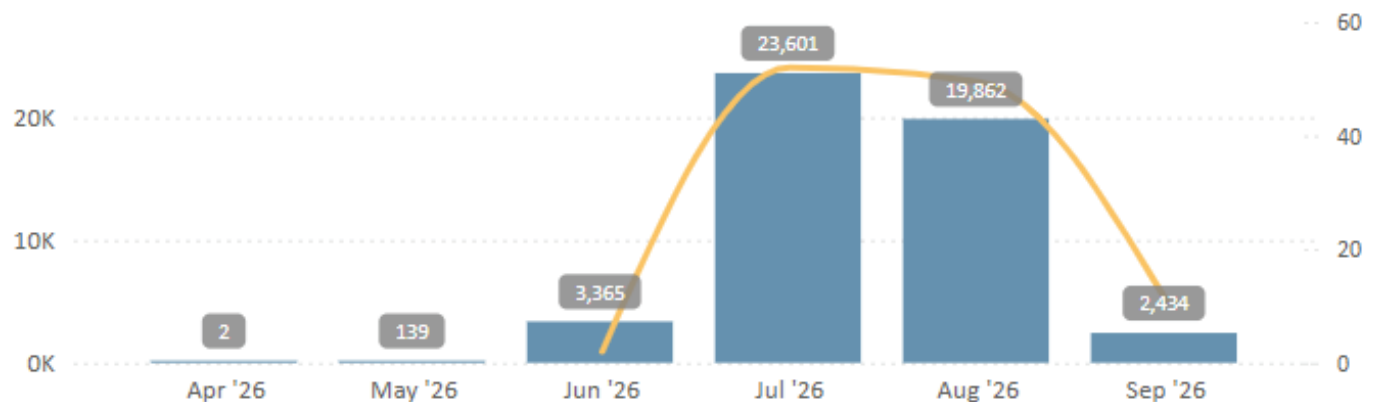
Number of Mosquito Pools Tested by Month and Status

Test Status: ● Positive ● Negative ● 5 Year Median Pool Count



Culex Mosquitoes Collected by Month

● Culex Species Collected ● 5 Year Median Pool Count



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GFP Commission Holds September Meeting

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission held their September meeting at the Holiday Inn Express in Winner.

FINALIZATIONS

Aquatic Invasive Species Regulations

The Commission added golden mussels to the current list of Aquatic Invasive Species. Currently, golden mussels have established populations in western North America and are spreading east. They have similar effects as zebra mussels. They are not in South Dakota at this time.

The Commission also excluded phragmites species from types of vegetation that can be used as blind material on boats when being launched or trailered. Phragmites can still be used as blind material, but cannot be transported from the waterbody.

Bait Regulations

The Commission removed the requirement to submit an annual summary of bait harvested for resident bait dealers. Resident bait dealers who trap their own bait are still be required to maintain daily records of bait trapped.

Muskellunge Limits

The Commission did not approve the daily and possession limit of muskellunge and northern-muskellunge (tiger) cross from catch and release to 1 daily, 2 in possession with a 45-inch minimum length limit for inland waters. Muskellunge fishing will remain catch and release for all sizes.

Fish Pathogens

The Commission updated the list of fish pathogens of regulatory concern used for fish importation permit requirements. This change reduces the regulatory burden on importers and suppliers by reducing the number of pathogens that must be tested for. The changes reflect current fish health standards and disease risk assessments while maintaining safeguards to prevent the introduction of significant fish pathogens into South Dakota waters.

Paddlefish Transportation

The Commission modified the transportation requirements for paddlefish harvested during the archery season below Gavins Point Dam to allow for harvested paddlefish to be cleaned, including removal of the head, skin and tail, prior to transport.

Endangered and Threatened Species

The Commission removed the Eskimo curlew and Least tern from the list of endangered birds.

The Eskimo curlew is believed to be extinct throughout its range. The last confirmed observation occurred in Barbados in 1963, and there are no records of the species in the South Dakota Nongame Conservation Database.

The Least tern was removed from the Federal List of Threatened and Endangered Species in 2021. In South Dakota, Least terns have been monitored annually for more than 30 years, and recovery criteria have been met for multiple consecutive years, including the most recent monitoring period.

ACTION ITEMS

Custer State Park Concession Operator Recommendation

The Commission has selected Xanterra for the next concession operator of Custer State Park and authorized the Department to enter into final lease negotiations.

Lease negotiations and finalization will continue throughout the month of September and be presented for approval at the October Commission meeting in Pierre.

Custer State Parks Resorts includes operation of four major resort complexes with room and cabin lodging, food and beverage services, retail goods, wildlife viewing tours, horseback trail rides, chuckwagon suppers, and other guest services within Custer State Park.

Proposals were evaluated by a team, which included GFP staff, three GFP Commissioners, Travel South Dakota staff, and independent consultants. Proposals were evaluated based on a number of selection

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factors that ranged from maintaining resort facilities, enhancing the visitor experience, and the operators experience and background in management of resort operations. The evaluation process began in June and concluded in early September.

Final lease approval will take place at the October Commission meeting. The new lease would take effect February 1, 2027.

Public Comments Being Accepted

To hear the discussion on these topics, audio from the meeting is available through South Dakota Public Broadcasting and will soon be available on the GFP website as part of the meeting archive.

To see these topics in their entirety, visit gfp.sd.gov/commission/information.

To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and be submitted by 11:59 p.m. CDT on Oct 4.

The next GFP Commission meeting will be held in Pierre, at the State Library, Oct. 8-9.



Brian Gravatt was repairing one of the flags on Main Street this morning. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Andover Threshing Show



Bruce Babcock, Groton American Legion, and Vern Prickett, Stratford American Legion, lead the parade Friday in the Andover James Valley Threshing Show. (Photo courtesy Donna Anderson)



The 52nd Annual James Valley Threshing and Tractor show's theme was "Honoring all Veterans!" Several period military vehicles lead the show parade. There will be a parade Saturday and Sunday at 1:30pm. (Photo courtesy Donna Anderson)

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These are some highlights of the Friday's parade



The Threshing Show is enjoyed by the young and old as you can see from the smiles on their faces!



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Lawyers argue over South Dakota's notification letters to voters registered as federal-only

League of Women Voters is suing state over implementation of new law

BY MAKENZIE HUBER

SIOUX FALLS — A federal judge will decide whether South Dakota's secretary of state is violating the U.S. Constitution with allegedly misleading letters to voters registered as federal-only, and by allegedly failing to tell them how to change their status.

Judge Eric Schulte heard oral arguments Friday and said he expects to release a decision next week.

The case deals with how the state's chief elections officer is implementing legislation approved by lawmakers and signed into law by Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden in March.

The law requires new voter registrations to include proof of citizenship, which can include a birth certificate, passport, driver's license, non-driver's identification card or tribal identification card, or "any other type of acceptable documentary evidence of citizenship" permitted under federal law. Photocopies are acceptable for any documents except driver's licenses or state or tribal identification.

People who don't provide those documents are registered but receive a "federal-only" ballot, which lists only candidates for federal offices such as the president and Congress, but not state or local offices.

A separate provision, passed in 2025 and implemented in January, requires voters registering or requesting an absentee ballot with only a mail-forwarding service or post office box as their address to receive federal-only ballots unless they can provide a physical address and prove 30 days of state residency.

The lawsuit asks a judge to force the state to:

Accept photocopies of driver's licenses, tribal IDs and nondriver IDs for voter registration.

Rescind guidance requiring in-person registration for people who use such IDs as proof of citizenship.

Make sure registrants designated as federal-only are offered accurate explanations as to why they've been denied access to state and local ballots.

Offer voters registered as federal-only an opportunity to challenge the designation.

Schulte heard arguments Friday specifically about the notification letters sent to voters registered as federal-only.

The lawsuit was filed by the League of Women Voters — a nonpartisan, nonprofit group that conducts registration drives, provides voter education and lobbies on voting rights issues — and by a Sioux Falls resident, Jaysen Hill. They're suing South Dakota Secretary of State Monae Johnson and the state Board of Elections.

The Secretary of State's Office writes letters sent to new voters by county auditors informing them of their federal-only status. But those letters cite only the mail-forwarding address issue as the reason — even for voters whose status stems from failing to provide citizenship documentation, American Civil Liberties Union attorney William Hancock argued on behalf of the League.

That makes the letters inaccurate and misleading, Hancock argued, and violates the due process rights guaranteed by the 14th Amendment, which he said requires the government to give people accurate information about actions that affect them and a way to respond.

The letters have forced the League to scale back voter registration drives because volunteers can't reliably explain to new voters why they might be designated federal-only or how to fix it, Hancock said. The organization has also spent time and money investigating individual voters' federal-only status.

Members of the League's South Dakota chapter argued before the state's Board of Elections for rule

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changes earlier this summer that would have addressed the issues raised in their lawsuit. The board voted them down 5-2, ruling that the League lacked legal standing to propose them.

Hancock said one "simple fix" would include the Secretary of State's Office writing new notification letters specific to the reason for designating a voter as federal-only, including for citizenship cases, and listing how voters can remedy their status and the deadline to do so.

Hancock told the court that the Secretary of State's Office is aware the letters are imperfect and intends to fix them — but not until after the Nov. 3 general election.

Lawyers representing the state argued the League lacks standing because its claims are not specific enough to the organization and its members. Attorney Drew Driesen also cited a county-specific letter that highlighted aspects of the law that applied to Hill's situation. Hancock argued the county letter was insufficient to correct the misleading information in the secretary of state's letter.

Driesen also said the plaintiffs should have sued county auditors rather than the secretary of state because the statewide office has "very little control" over whether its guidance is followed — and because auditors, not the secretary of state, register voters.

Hancock argued that the auditors do not control the contents of the state's notification letters — the secretary of state does.

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.

COMMENTARY

Make a low-risk bet, then brag: Explaining Trump's endorsement of South Dakota's governor

by Dana Hess

In politics, as in comedy, timing is everything. That brings us to the curious timing of President Donald Trump's endorsement of Gov. Larry Rhoden.

Any of the four candidates in the Republican primary for governor would have welcomed a Trump endorsement and ridden it to victory. While the president's poll numbers are at an all-time low nationally, he has carried South Dakota with more than 60% of the vote all three times he's been on the ballot. There's little doubt that his endorsement could have influenced the outcome.

None of the four candidates were in closer proximity to Trump than U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson. His few disagreements with the MAGA party line were used against him in primary election attack ads. Despite their few differences, it sure looked like Johnson was trying to curry favor with the president when he sponsored legislation that would have allowed Trump to purchase the Panama Canal. (After all that has happened in the second Trump administration, his early statements about the pressing need to buy the canal now seem quaint.)

Yet the president kept his powder dry during a primary that saw a newcomer to politics, a Trump minime, finish first. Throughout the primary and the runoff, Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden gave off a Trumpian vibe that suggested in the vaguest of terms that his mere presence in Pierre would raise the level of competence in state government, boost the state's standard of living and enhance economic development.

During the runoff between Rhoden and Doeden, Trump once again stood by mute. Trump and Rhoden even shared the stage at the Fourth of July fireworks at Mount Rushmore. In the end, Trump made his "Complete and Total Endorsement" of Rhoden in a Truth Social post. It would have seemed so much more personal and genuine if, there in the shadow of the monument to democracy, he had just put his arm around Rhoden and declared that this is the guy who should be your next governor.

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Obviously, the best time for Trump to issue his endorsement was during the primary or the runoff. Thousands of South Dakotans suddenly became Republicans — including yours truly — because they knew that the real contest to choose the state's next governor was the Republican runoff, not the general election.

It's ironic that Trump should endorse Rhoden. In the runoff, Republican voters rejected the notion of a Trump clone in the governor's office. The word landslide comes to mind.

As heavily influential as Trump's endorsement can be, Rhoden doesn't need it to win his first full term as governor. In South Dakota, Democratic Party registrations lag behind independent and no-party-affiliation registrations by more than 21,000 and trail Republican registrations by almost 196,000. The numbers just don't add up for a victory by Democratic candidate Dan Ahlers. Against numbers like those, it's doubtful that JFK himself could get elected governor of this state.

Part of the reason for Trump's late but "Complete" endorsement of Rhoden is his high-profile hobby of endorsing candidates. According to the website VoteHub, at this writing Trump leads the league in political endorsements with 221. No one else comes close. (It's odd that there's actually a website devoted to this sort of thing.)

A New York Times analysis noted that Trump has a reputation for picking winners, but there is a method that makes his winning percentage less than stellar. Trump has a penchant for picking incumbents, like Rhoden, who are more likely to win and then bragging about the power of his influence within the Republican Party. "Superficially, the math supports his claims," the Times analysis said. "But by favoring incumbents and candidates running in uncontested races, Mr. Trump's primary wins are built largely on low-risk bets."

Perhaps the Rhoden camp should feel good about being considered a "low-risk bet." That translates into a high probability of being elected.

It's easy to wonder why Trump waited so long to make his endorsement. It's certainly something that Rhoden doesn't need at this point in the process in a safely Republican state like South Dakota. Maybe the president truly believes that Rhoden is the best man for the job. Or maybe he's just hedging his bet in order to enhance the number of winners he picks during this election season.

Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

Frustrations, remorse and pain surface on 25th anniversary of Sept. 11 attacks

BY ASHLEY MURRAY, SHALINA CHATLANI, SHAUNEEN MIRANDA AND ARIANA FIGUEROA

Powerful U.S. officials past and present faced families, survivors and first responders Friday at ceremonies to honor the 25th anniversary of the day 2,977 Americans died in terrorist attacks in Virginia, New York and Pennsylvania.

At the Pentagon, Condoleezza Rice, who was serving at the time under President George W. Bush as national security advisor, told the crowd she wanted to share something "deeply personal."

"Those of us in authority on that day did not see the nature of the danger in time to prevent the attack of 9/11. We did what we knew to do, but by definition, it was not enough. ... I will always carry deep personal remorse for the pain that you, the families of the fallen, still feel, and for the trauma that our country endured," she said.

Speakers at all three Sept. 11 milestone anniversary events recounted stories of courage and loss as people found themselves in an unimaginable circumstance.

Some also flared with frustration at what they say is a lack of justice for those who planned the attacks.

President Donald Trump and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, speaking at the memorial service for the 184 people who died when the hijacked United Airlines Flight 77 struck the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, highlighted the anniversary as a justification for their stagnant war with Iran.

That nearly seven-month-old conflict has killed 18 U.S. service members, injured over 700 more and taken the lives of thousands of civilians across the Middle East.

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"We will never, ever forget. That's why we fight today. We don't have a choice," Trump said. "There can only be victory. We fight hard. We fight to win. We will always remember the victims and the families of September 11, 2001, very famous date, unfortunately."

Hegseth told the crowd, which was only open to victims' families, survivors and their families, that Americans were "ignorant of the Islamist threat" 25 years ago.

"Every day, enemies plot to curb our power and kill our citizens, including from Islamic terrorists abroad and at home, but we are ever vigilant," he said, adding that the U.S. has killed Iran's leaders and put their Navy "at the bottom of the sea."

The deeply unpopular war has continued, despite early promises from Hegseth and Trump that it would not morph into the prolonged Middle East conflicts that followed the Sept. 11 attacks.

'No justice'

At the site in Lower Manhattan where the World Trade Center's twin towers once stood, families read names of the 2,753 victims who died inside the towers, on the ground and on the two hijacked airliners, American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175.

Terry Strada, widow of the late Tom Strada, who died in the north tower, slammed recent presidential administrations of both parties for not holding Saudi Arabia accountable for allegations that the kingdom's officials knew about the attacks.

"My husband Tom Strada, you are missed more with each year that passes. But how can it be 25 years and still we have no justice for the role that Saudi Arabia played in your murder?" she said to loud cheers from the crowd.

"For 25 years, administration after administration, including leaders in front of us here today, chose to protect the Saudis instead of standing with the 9/11 families," she said.

"President Trump can still change that. Tell the Saudis to stop lying. Tell them that if they want to be friends with the USA, they cannot continue to deny all of this, all of the pain, all of the destruction that we have all been suffering through. Vice President Vance, thank you for being here today. Please carry that message back," she said, again receiving loud cheers.

Vice President JD Vance sat in a front row at the ceremony alongside former presidents Bush, Joe Biden, Barack Obama and Bill Clinton.

Former first ladies Michelle Obama, Jill Biden and Hillary Clinton, also a former secretary of state, were seated in the row, as was former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

Neither the Embassy of Saudi Arabia nor the White House immediately responded to States Newsroom's requests for a response.

Painful memories

Families at the site in Lower Manhattan shared memories seared in their minds.

Bob Lee, 67, was a firefighter in the Bronx that day. He remembers how many first responders had to gather together to clean up the dust and debris that had settled around the city.

"When you see the people that were down here, everybody's eyes was ... full of soot and dust, and their eyes were glowing like bright red because all the stuff that was in their eyes," Lee said. "It was just a crazy scene."

Lee moved to Kansas City, Missouri, shortly after 9/11. He was 42 at the time and realized he had been exposed to a lot of toxic air.

"I told them I was retiring," Lee said recalling that he knew a lot of his colleagues would get sick. He was a union representative for his unit in the Bronx.

"I lost hundreds of those guys. You know, it's crazy ... Quite a few friends have died of cancer."

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani this week announced that his office had released around 170,000 pages of records that had been closed off over the last 25 years on the level of toxic air pollution people were exposed to in the aftermath of 9/11.

The records suggest that New Yorkers were misled about the air quality and that officials downplayed how dangerous it was to breathe the air. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

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close to 50,000 people, including first responders and survivors, developed cancer in relation to the event.

Christopher Santora, then 23, was a firefighter who responded to the attacks and was enveloped in debris as the towers fell. He lost his life trying to save people that day. His cousin Jason Roettger, 56, was chosen to read the names of people who had died during 9/11 at Friday's ceremony.

Roettger said it was an honor to be a part of the event and to represent his cousin. He said he's glad the air quality records were released.

"I think everyone that was here in the city, or even in New Jersey, everyone in this area knew the air wasn't good," Roettger said. "Even though the government said 'No, the air is fine.' I think everyone knew that that was a lie."

Wanda Hernandez, 72, lost her daughter Monique de Jesus, who was 28 at the time. She was working at the World Trade Center.

Hernandez said Friday she was focusing on all the beautiful moments she had with her daughter before that day.

"We went on vacation for my birthday before it happened, like a month before. Yeah. Yeah, we had a good time, you know, and we went to a wedding like a week before it happened," Hernandez said. "Two weeks, so that was nice. Had a good time. I was a good mother. She was a good daughter."

'A vast empty space in the side of the Pentagon'

Over a 13-minute speech Friday morning at the Pentagon, Rice, who also served as secretary of state later in the Bush administration, painted a picture of administration officials caught completely off guard by the attacks, orchestrated by the well-known anti-American extremist terror network al-Qaeda.

"I was at my desk at the White House that day when my executive assistant, a young Army officer, told me that a plane had hit the World Trade Center. 'What a strange accident,' I thought," Rice said.

"I called President Bush, who was reading to children at an education event in Florida. He too thought that it must have just been an accident. But within 17 minutes, a second plane hit the World Trade Center," she continued.

What followed, according to Rice, was a whirlwind as officials rushed to secure locations — Bush to Air Force One, Rice and Vice President Dick Cheney to a White House bunker and CIA Director George Tenet to an undisclosed location.

Then-Secretary of State Colin Powell was in Peru "and trying to get home." Those in the White House "Situation Room," Rice recalled, just heard the "ringing and ringing and ringing" of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's phone at the Pentagon, where he had been hosting a congressional breakfast.

The late Rumsfeld would end up outside assisting in rescue efforts "as his security detail begged him to flee," she said.

"I remember turning to a television screen, and the horror and the shock that I felt. There was a smoking crater, a vast empty space, in the side of the Pentagon."

Fight with hijackers

A morning observance program was also held at the Flight 93 National Memorial near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, to mark 25 years since 40 passengers and crew members died when the hijacked United Airlines Flight 93 crashed in a rural field.

Families read aloud the names of the victims during the ceremony.

Members of Flight 93 fought with hijackers over Western Pennsylvania and forced the flight to crash, which prevented the hijacked aircraft from hitting the intended destination of the U.S. Capitol.

Others expected to speak Friday afternoon included Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro and U.S. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum.

Gordon Felt, brother of Edward Porter Felt, one of the 40 people who died on Flight 93, was set to speak, along with retired United Airlines Capt. Morrie Wiener, who piloted Flight 93 prior to the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, and Jessica Bowron, acting director of the National Park Service.

Mullin ties mass deportation to Sept. 11

Outside of the Department of Homeland Security headquarters in Washington, D.C., Homeland Security

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Secretary Markwayne Mullin used the anniversary to promote the Trump administration's mass deportation campaign, and said that lack of cooperation from so-called sanctuary cities is what could lead to another 9/11.

"It's a safe haven that incubates terrorist activity and it doesn't just stay local," he said.

He specifically called out Democratic-led cities of Seattle, Boston and New York City.

"It shouldn't be political," he said. "When we start looking at the 25th anniversary, if there's anything we should agree on, it should be that. Why should the Department of Homeland Security be controversial? We're taking care of your backyard."

Immigration enforcement agencies under the department have been roiled in scandal and carried out alleged illegal orders since Trump's second term began.

The events have included allowing deportation flights to take off against a judge's order, erroneous deportations of individuals with legal protections, and the killing by immigration agents of two American citizens, Renee Good and Alex Pretti, of Minneapolis.

The latest scrutiny of the department comes after a \$20 million no-bid contract was extended in Kentucky to outfit agents with electric shock gloves.

Courage and 'selfless service'

Despite the lasting pain, speakers Friday noted that relatives of those killed in the attacks found ways to move forward and persevere.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine at the Pentagon said the milestone anniversary was not only about remembering those lost, but "it is also a story of great American courage, selfless service, and those who've made the choice to carry those memories forward."

"The courage of those extraordinary Americans in Pennsylvania, in New York, and right here on these hallowed grounds, did not end when the smoke cleared and the fires went out, because survivors and families have carried it forward through service, through sacrifice, and through remembrance," Caine told the crowd.

Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

Shalina Chatlani covers health care and environmental justice for Stateline.

Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom's Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.

Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include immigration, congressional policy and legal challenges with a focus on how those policies impact the lives of immigrants and migrants coming to the U.S.

How the US House could overturn the midterm election results

BY JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump tried to maintain power following his loss in the 2020 election by exerting pressure on state election officials to, in some cases, "find" the votes.

Loyalist Republicans in Congress then attempted to deny Joe Biden the Oval Office when lawmakers gathered to certify the Electoral College, bringing to light loopholes and deficiencies in the law that could have denied voters their choice.

Similar flaws exist for U.S. House elections.

With concern mounting among GOP lawmakers they may lose control of that chamber following November's midterm elections, it is not a stretch to imagine state officials could, once again, receive calls from the White House or powerful Republicans in Congress.

What's less understood is that the House itself has the ability to investigate and potentially overturn the results of any of its 435 races. In a House narrowly controlled by one party or the other, disputes over a handful of seats could become significant.

"The House and the Senate, they are the final judge of their own elections," explained John C. Fortier,

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senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank.

"So, in theory, if a state went through a process and counted all the votes and certified the votes and sent in the results, it still could be questioned by Congress," he added. "The House has done this in the past. It is much less common today. There was a time in the 19th century where it became extremely common."

Experts and officials interviewed by States Newsroom pointed to several circumstances that could occur. State officials could hold back an election certificate, a member-elect could seek to block another member-elect from taking the oath, or legitimate challenges could occur under a federal law dealing with contested elections.

States act first

The first step after votes are counted, or in some cases recounted, is for a state's top election official, typically a secretary of state, to certify the results and send the certificates of election to the U.S. House clerk.

But that doesn't always happen.

New York state election officials held back Republican Rep. Claudia Tenney's ability to join the House following the 2020 elections amid a legal battle in an extremely close race.

It wasn't until a state Supreme Court justice ruled in Tenney's favor that she took her oath of office in February 2021, more than three months after the election.

Fortier detailed another particularly messy example of a disputed House race in North Carolina's 9th Congressional District following the 2018 election.

The state board of elections opted not to quickly certify either Democrat Dan McCready or Republican Mark Harris as the winner given concerns about mail-in ballots.

It took until late February, nearly four months after Election Day, for the board to call for a new election after Harris testified during a hearing that "his political operative orchestrated a fraudulent absentee ballot scheme," according to an article from NC Newsline.

That September, Republican Rep. Dan Bishop won a special election over McCready.

And while the House didn't step in at the time, it could have. "They essentially deferred and kind of waited it out," Fortier said.

Neither of those holdups determined control of the House, but a few state officials deciding not to send certificates to the clerk later this year could have an impact come January.

State officials are not exempt from political influence from Washington, something that was on full display beginning in 2025 when Trump and Republicans in Congress called on state legislatures to redistrict to give them an advantage in this fall's elections. The results have rolled out even through September.

House members can try blocking members-elect

Another potential roadblock emerges on the first day of a new Congress when any member-elect can try to block another member-elect from being sworn in.

That happened in 2021 when Texas Republican Rep. Chip Roy objected to lawmakers from Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin taking their oaths. The Democratic-controlled House voted 371-2 to approve a resolution directing the speaker to swear in everyone.

The House has two additional options should a member-elect challenge another member-elect taking the oath.

The first is to "provisionally or conditionally" seat that person and refer the case to the House Administration Committee for investigation. The second is to vote to not seat anyone and refer the dispute to the panel to determine who is entitled to it, according to a report from the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service.

The report notes that "it would be under only the most exceptional circumstances for the House to refuse to seat, even provisionally, a Member holding valid election credentials from the state, and it appears that this third option has happened since 1933 only two times on the first day of the new Congress, and once during the Congress concerning a special election."

The House voting not to seat anyone "would effectively nullify a certificate of election that was previously

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issued by the executive authority of the state," according to CRS.

How the House can probe election results

The Federal Contested Elections Act of 1969 provides another avenue for lawmakers on the House Administration Committee to investigate any election once a complaint is filed, typically by the losing party.

This has happened dozens of times throughout the decades, including in December 2020, when Iowa Democratic candidate Rita Hart asked the House to decide whether Republican Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks actually won the race, triggering a months-long investigation.

The FCEA allows the committee to "impound records, ballots, tally sheets, ballot stubs, poll books, ballot boxes, voting machines or other electronic voting systems, and irregular or defective paper and absentee ballots," according to CRS.

The committee has the option to use the vote count sent by the state or "conduct its own recount and make its own determinations and findings," the CRS report states.

House members conducting a probe can even instruct states how to handle ballots.

"Where state law requires destruction of ballots after an election, the committee may notify the state election officials to preserve the ballots despite the state law," the report says.

The panel would eventually make a recommendation and the House would decide by a simple majority vote which candidate to seat or whether to declare the seat vacant.

That vote is the final decision "regardless of whether or not the Member-elect had been sworn in on the first day of the new Congress," says the report.

Decisions about how to decide any contested elections would be made by the new House that will convene in early January, not the one that will return to Capitol Hill during the lame-duck session that's set to last several weeks in November and December.

"It's not as if the outgoing Congress could just make a decision as to who's contested and who won the election," Fortier said. "It's the new Congress that would do that."

But not just anyone can file a contest with the House.

The person who challenges the results "must show that but for the voting irregularities or acts of fraud, the results of the election would have been different and the contestant would have prevailed," according to CRS.

Those investigations typically take months. The Iowa case of Hart v. Miller-Meeks began in December 2020 when Hart, the Democrat, filed her contest.

The Administration Committee held a hearing in March 2021 after Miller-Meeks tried to dismiss the case. Then-Chairwoman Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., argued against those efforts, saying "the American people deserve to know who actually won this election. And the people of Iowa's 2nd Congressional District deserve to be represented by that person."

The case ended several weeks later after Hart withdrew her challenge.

'As far as someone's willing to burn it'

Casey Burgat, legislative affairs program director and associate professor at George Washington University, said while any member-elect can challenge another member-elect's ability to take the oath on the first day of the new Congress, it is somewhat unlikely a genuine attempt is made to do that next year.

But that comes with a caveat.

"I think the prospect for the tit-for-tat or the brinkmanship goes up exponentially if it is a close majority," he said. "That just creates an opportunity for parties to see majority status and find reasons to not seat the other side."

Whether any potential challenge is taken seriously would likely be determined by who makes it.

"If it's just a flamethrower, a Chip Roy-type person, I think that'll be discounted more than if it's led by someone like a Mike Johnson or someone in leadership or Steve Scalise," Burgat said. "I've had conversations with a lot of these members and staff of like, how far can this go. And my response to them is often, as far as someone's willing to burn it."

Sarah A. Binder, senior fellow in governance studies at Brookings, said it's unlikely that any Republican

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could successfully challenge a Democratic member-elect taking the oath if Democrats have a true majority and have elected their speaker.

"There have been some years where the member-elect whose seat is being challenged is prior to that told to sit down, not to stand when the rest are to be sworn in," she said. "But other times they actually swear in everybody because your winning seat could still be contested after the swearing in."

Then there's the rogue clerk theory

In addition to the possibility a state official holds back an election certificate, a member-elect seeks to block another member-elect from taking the oath and legitimate challenges occur under the Federal Contested Elections Act, some Democrats have raised concerns about the clerk of the House.

The nonpartisan official's office assembles the list of members-elect once they receive a certificate of election from a state official. And that list determines who votes for speaker, which takes place on the first day of the new Congress before any of the 435 members are actually sworn in.

The House cannot move on to any other business until a speaker is elected.

AEI's Fortier said the clerk's authority is ministerial and that whoever holds that office doesn't really have discretion over who to add to the member-elect list once the state sends in the certificate of election.

The clerk going rogue during the vote for speaker also is highly improbable, he said.

"I think it is not a very likely scenario, even though I think people are thinking about it. I am not even sure it's realistic," Fortier said. "I think this is very difficult to imagine."

Burgat from GWU had a similar assessment that the House clerk doesn't hold the authority to disregard election certificates once they arrive or to try to meddle in who can vote for speaker.

"The minute that the secretary of state or its equivalent certifies the election and transmits to the clerk, a nonpartisan position, it goes on the roll," he said. "The politics comes in after that fact."

The clerk's office wrote in a statement that it "receives and verifies Certificates of Election from every state, placing on the Roll of Representatives-elect only those

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.

Trump plan to limit mail voting hinders Democrats more than GOP, analysis finds

BY JACOB FISCHLER

President Donald Trump has, at times, justified his campaign against mail-in voting in explicitly partisan terms, claiming Republicans' electoral chances hinge on whether the practice is allowed.

A new analysis from a Democratic-aligned voting rights group, shared first with States Newsroom, shows he may be right: Eliminating mail-in voting would be more disruptive to Democratic voters than Republicans.

Fair Fight Action, a Georgia-based advocacy group founded by Democratic former state Rep. Stacey Abrams, analyzed vote-by-mail data in seven 2024 swing states and potential battlegrounds for the 2026 midterm elections.

Records indicated that Democrats voted by mail more often than Republicans.

The partisan differences didn't swing any battleground states in the 2024 presidential election, all of which Trump won.

But if Trump succeeds in restricting mail voting in the 2026 midterms, which he is attempting through a contentious executive order directing the U.S. Postal Service to enforce new requirements, it could help Republicans win key House and Senate seats as each party seeks a narrow path to a majority in either chamber.

Dems' mail voting edge

For example, in Michigan, one of the toss-up U.S. Senate races that will determine control, more than 2 million voters cast mail ballots in 2024, according to the Fair Fight analysis.

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Nearly half came from Democrats, while Republicans sent 39%, a difference of about 200,000 votes in Democrats' favor. That gap represents a smaller number of votes than the margin of victory for the winner of the state in the last three presidential elections.

In North Carolina, another state with a close U.S. Senate race in 2026, Democrats voting by mail outnumbered Republicans by about eight percentage points in 2024, though mail ballots accounted for only about 5% of all votes, according to the data.

In a Friday statement to States Newsroom, Fair Fight Action CEO Lauren Groh-Wargo blamed Trump for undermining trust in vote-by-mail and encouraged voters to view mail voting as a viable method.

"Trump is a desperate loser who has spent years lying to his supporters about mail voting 'fraud' – as a result many stopped using a method they once trusted," she said. "Voting by mail is secure, convenient, and accessible. Whether voting by mail, early, or on Election Day, make your plan to vote now and see it through."

In a statement, White House spokeswoman Lauren Bis portrayed the rule on mail ballots as a "commonsense" election security measure.

"If securing America's elections – through commonsense methods like voter ID and proof of citizenship – would make it harder for Democrats to win elections, perhaps they should reconsider the methods they're using to 'win,'" Bis wrote.

The Fair Fight analysis shows the partisan gap narrows in states with more mail-in voting.

In Arizona, where 83% of voters cast mail ballots in 2024, Republicans held a 5-point margin in mail voting, roughly the same as Trump's 5.5-point victory in the state. And in Nevada, where 44% of ballots were cast by mail, the mail-in vote was almost evenly split among Democrat, Republican and "other" voters.

Mail voting history

Until 2020, mail voting enjoyed broad bipartisan support.

An April 2020 study published by Stanford University's Institute for Economic Policy Research found that in the six Western states — Oregon, Washington, Colorado, Hawaii, Utah and California — that had started implementing a system of mailing ballots to every registered voter, the policy did not help either party while modestly boosting turnout.

"Vote-by-mail does not have meaningful partisan effects on election outcomes," the authors wrote.

But as states ramped up mail voting in the 2020 election as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the issue turned more partisan, with Democrats more likely to stay away from in-person voting.

Trump, then running for reelection, cast unfounded doubts on vote-by-mail's integrity and warned of dire effects for Republicans.

"MAIL-IN VOTING WILL LEAD TO MASSIVE FRAUD AND ABUSE," he tweeted in May 2020. "IT WILL ALSO LEAD TO THE END OF OUR GREAT REPUBLICAN PARTY. WE CAN NEVER LET THIS TRAGEDY BEFALL OUR NATION."

After several cycles of roughly equal rates of mail voting, Democratic mail voters nearly doubled Republicans, 60% to 32%, in 2020. The gap narrowed in 2024, with Democratic voters outpacing Republicans 37% to 24%.

Trump's claims

While the Postal Service is now arguing in court its rule based on Trump's March 31 executive order is not an election regulation but only includes "modest" technical specifications for mail, other statements by Trump show the purpose is directly tied to election administration.

Trump's order justified new regulations on mail ballots to maintain "public confidence in election outcomes" and "enhance election integrity."

He previewed the effort in an August 2025 social media post saying he would "lead a movement to get rid of MAIL-IN BALLOTS" that again made the issue explicitly about partisan advantage.

"WE WILL BEGIN THIS EFFORT, WHICH WILL BE STRONGLY OPPOSED BY THE DEMOCRATS BECAUSE THEY CHEAT AT LEVELS NEVER SEEN BEFORE, by signing an EXECUTIVE ORDER to help bring HONESTY

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to the 2026 Midterm Elections," he wrote. "Democrats are virtually Unelectable without using this completely disproven Mail-In SCAM. ELECTIONS CAN NEVER BE HONEST WITH MAIL IN BALLOTS/VOTING."

The U.S. Supreme Court is expected to rule soon on whether the rule can be in effect for this year's midterms.

Jacob covers federal policy and helps direct national coverage as deputy Washington bureau chief for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

Keeping the story of Flight 93 alive, as living memories become fewer

How is the legacy of the passengers and crew who fought back taught to new generations?

BY PETER HALL

A pair of blue baseball-patterned boxer shorts takes the center of a display case at the Flight 93 National Memorial museum.

If the underwear seems out of place, not far from where the airliner came to earth Sept. 11, 2001, near Shanksville, Somerset County, that's part of the point.

It tells a story from the life of passenger Lauren Catuzzi Grandcolas, who persuaded her colleagues at PricewaterhouseCoopers to wear brightly colored shorts over their business suits to a boardroom meeting with execs from whimsical underwear maker Joe Boxer.

Her move convinced the company's CEO that Grandcolas' team understood their products and won them the job.

"I can't think of anything that you could put in there that would make her more proud," her husband Jack Grandcolas later told National Park Service staff.

Betsy Keene, curator at the memorial and three other NPS sites in western Pennsylvania, said that made Grandcolas' shorts a clear choice to include in one of several new displays at the memorial.

They feature personal effects of the 40 passengers and crew who fought to keep the hijacked Boeing 757 — which investigators believe the four attackers aboard planned to crash into the U.S. Capitol — from becoming another weapon against the United States on 9/11.

"I just want people to see something that will help them relate to the story, that will tie them in," Keene said of the selections in the cases, which are the first official expansions of the museum's exhibits since it opened in 2015.

Twenty-five years after the attack on the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and the crash of United Airlines Flight 93 into a reclaimed coal mine in Stonycreek Township, the memory of the day is still strong with those who lived through it.

But for around 100 million Americans born after 9/11, and millions more born in the years shortly before, that day that shifted the nation's course is an abstract day in history.

Stephen Clark, superintendent of the Flight 93 memorial, said that aspect sets it apart from other memorials in the national park system.

"I like to use the word raw," he said. "It's as if it just happened yesterday."

And despite that, it tends to be the 9/11 site that's overlooked amid replays of the abject horror of the twin towers — beacons of the nation's financial might — and the headquarters of its military afire and collapsing, Clark said.

"This is real, and our rangers, and our staff, and our ambassadors come in contact on a daily basis with people who are part of this story of 9/11," he added.

Increasingly, the memorial's role is to teach, in addition to commemorating, how the passengers and flight crew made a desperate decision to fight for their lives and succeeded in preventing an attack on American democracy itself.

Even newer members of the federal law enforcement and intelligence communities, with whom the park

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staff work regularly, sometimes don't have vivid memories of 9/11, Clark said.

"I want them to come here and feel this place, and understand what happened here and the bravery aboard that airplane, to motivate them for their entire career to ensure that they do everything they can to never have another 9/11," he said. "It's a daunting task."

The mission to educate visitors happens every day, Clark said, but on Friday the Flight 93 memorial will host its observance of the 25th anniversary of the attacks. Each year it begins at the Wall of Names with a reading of the 40 names timed to coincide with the moment the plane crashed at 9:03 a.m.

At 1 p.m. a public ceremony will begin featuring music by the Somerset County Youth Chorus and remarks by retired United Airlines Capt. Morrie Weiner, who flew Flight 93's Newark to San Francisco run for a decade before retiring 10 days before the attacks; Gordon Felt, whose brother Edward Felt was a passenger; Gov. Josh Shapiro and U.S. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum.

Keeping Flight 93 stories alive

Every year since 2003, Scott Marsh has led a trip for eighth grade students at Mechanicsburg Middle School in western Ohio, where he teaches social studies, to the Flight 93 memorial and then on to Washington, D.C.

"Those kids had that memory," Marsh said of the first students he took on the trip more than two decades ago. "And as every year went by, [his students] remembered less because we were moving away from that time."

Now, when Marsh brings his classes to the memorial, concepts like love and sacrifice and courage are what bind them to the story of Flight 93. Marsh said he can see when the story's significance clicks into place.

"They get really quiet and then they look at you. I mean, they stare right at you as you're telling the story, or you're telling them what I want from them and why it's important," he said. "And you know, usually eighth grade kids are kind of all over the place. But they are totally locked in."

Marsh said his students find it particularly impactful to learn Grandcolas was pregnant and to find the almost ghostly inscription "and unborn child" carved in the wall of names beside hers.

At least 40 states have either required or suggest that public schools teach students about 9/11, according to the Associated Press. Pennsylvania passed a law in 2024 that requires schools to hold a moment of silence each anniversary and requiring the state Department of Education to provide a model curriculum on 9/11.

On an August morning, Diana Bigwood of Greencastle, Franklin County, strolled the memorial plaza overlooking the wildflower-filled field where the impact of Flight 93 is marked with a red-hued boulder. She spoke softly to her great-grandson Ryker as they walked.

"There's too many of his little friends that when we say we're going to the Flight 93 memorial, they don't even know what you're talking about," she said.

Bigwood said the memorial is an emotional place. She said she cries every time she visits and can no longer stand to listen to recordings of the passengers' last messages left via the plane's on-board AirFones.

If youngsters like Ryker don't learn the stories of 9/11, the nation risks losing pride in its first responders and the vigilance to stop another attack, she said.

"I'm so proud of the people that yes, they lost their lives, but look how many more people, had they went to their destination in D.C., ... could have died that day," she said.

David Beamer, father of Flight 93 passenger Todd Beamer, said he shares concerns that young people aren't learning about the actions of his son and fellow passengers. Todd Beamer was one of a handful of passengers able to make a phone call after the plane was hijacked.

He relayed information about the hijacking and the passengers' and flight attendants' plan to fight back to a telephone operator, who he also asked to pray with him. She later relayed his final words, "Are you guys ready? Okay. Let's roll," as they advanced toward the cockpit. His words became a slogan of national resolve in the days and weeks that followed.

"I believe that plane was headed to the nation's capital, and the damage and the loss of life would have been another big big win for our enemies," David Beamer said. "It didn't happen because regular people became soldiers that day ... The blessing is they had the opportunity to fight back, and they did."

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Beamer said he used to fly around the country speaking to school groups. At 84, he's cut back on travel but still speaks at church events. He noted there are a number of groups including the 9:57 Project, founded by veterans and educators to connect with young people and carry on the legacy of Flight 93.

This Sept. 11, Beamer said he will attend the ceremony at the memorial for the first time and read his son's name.

"We've been to the memorial many times, but we choose to go on quieter days," he said. "I determined this time I'm going to read. I'm gonna say Todd Beamer, and it's the time in the program that we're remembering each individual, so I felt like I wanted to do it this year."

Teaching 9/11

Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial was founded in 2009 to keep the story and the memorial meaningful and relevant for generations to come, Executive Director Donna Gibson said. It works hand-in-hand with the National Park Service to provide programming and volunteers.

For several years the organization has held the National Day of Learning to Teach to Remember 9/11, which has now evolved into two weeks of programs, curriculum and lessons for teachers.

In June, Gibson said, it held a symposium for educators from around Pennsylvania where teachers were placed in groups and asked to create lesson plans.

"We found that we were coming to this point where you had people who had the lived experience that really didn't know how to manage their emotions in the classroom because it was such a horrific day for them, and they didn't want to scare their students by being upset," she said.

From that event, two lesson plans were selected to be made available to educators across the country. One has students design a military-style challenge coin depicting on one side what defines them as a person — community, environment and education, for example — and then research a passenger or crew member and do the same for them on the other side.

A second lesson has students create a passport for people enmeshed in the Flight 93 story by researching their lives and finding connections to other passengers, crew or family members. The feedback from teachers has been positive, she said.

"They were surprised, one, their students never heard of Flight 93," Gibson said. "And two, how engaged they were with the whole project, learning about the passenger, learning about the person that was in their passport."

Beyond the challenges of time, distance and teachers' comfort levels with the subject matter, impressing the significance of 9/11 as a world-changing event presents a challenge of making it immediately relevant to students' lives, said Adam Shaffer, a Shanksville native and chief of interpretation and education at the memorial.

"First is connecting with other relevant, significant world and national events that have directly impacted them, because that's something that they all have at least some level of exposure to," Shaffer said, noting that many have family members who served in Iraq or Afghanistan during the Global War on Terror.

Another touchstone he said is relatable for some students is the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's just a 'you know where you were at whenever it happened,' kind of a moment," Shaffer said.

Park rangers also use current events to show the effects of 9/11 are still echoing through society, Shaffer said, noting that a victim of the World Trade Center attack was identified last month.

He added that some of those responsible for the attacks are still facing trials. A trial for one of the men who plotted the attacks was, last month, scheduled to begin in June 2028.

"There are still pieces of the 9/11 story 25 years ago that are still here and tangible and very real in the world that they're growing up with, and I think it's those connecting points that draw them into wanting to understand more than about that day," he said.

Today's students, who don't know a world without smartphones, also engage with the communications aspects of the Flight 93 story and how different it was in 2001.

Because Flight 93 took off from the Newark, New Jersey, airport late, the passengers learned about the planes that had struck the World Trade Center and realized the hijackers aboard their plane didn't intend

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to land safely. They did so using credit card-activated seatback AirFones that many airliners had before cellphones were ubiquitous.

"While they didn't have the supercomputer that we have in our hands right now ... the passengers and crew were just also able to do that using the technology of that time," Shaffer said.

New connections to the passengers and crew

Among the exhibits in the visitor center museum is a simple white cordless phone with an answering machine, doubtless similar to those where some of the passengers left their final words to loved ones.

That's one of tens of thousands of items in the park's collection, most of which have never been displayed.

Through a \$2.3 million donation to the National Park Foundation specifically for enhancing visitors' experiences at the memorial before the anniversary, the park service was able to purchase several new display cases to allow some of those artifacts to be shown for the first time.

They include paper, textile and leather objects recovered from the crash site that are too fragile to be exposed to the light of day that will be housed in cabinets with special electronic light-blocking glass. One item is passenger Nicole Miller's driver's license that became fused with a piece of the fuselage in the heat and violence of the crash.

"It's a very, very personal object because it's a driver's license, but also it reflects that violence, and so it's a remarkable sort of thing that does both parts of that story at once," Keene said.

Others include clothing and personal effects from the lives the passengers and crew had hoped to return to on their flight. In one case, the freshly dry cleaned uniform of flight attendant Lorraine G. Bay stands next to the wrinkled field jacket of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Richard J. Guadagno, who was returning from a trip to visit family in New Jersey.

Beneath it, Guadagno's day planner, yellowed with age, is open to Sept. 11, 2001, with the annual leave he used for the trip penciled in.

"It's actually a 'Far Side' calendar, which always makes me chuckle," she said, referring to the absurd science and animal themed comic strip popular in the 1990s. "Again it's one of those little details that sort of twinkle at you that help you get drawn in."

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Peter Hall has been a journalist in Pennsylvania and New Jersey for more than 20 years, most recently covering criminal justice and legal affairs for The Morning Call in Allentown. His career at local newspapers and legal business publications has taken him from school board meetings to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and many points of interest between. He earned a degree in journalism from Susquehanna University.

'You still live in my heart':

Families mark 9/11 25th with stories, calls for justice

Somber ceremony follows familiar pattern, with tight security and strong emotion

BY LILO H. STAINTON

Federal, state and local officials joined thousands of family members in lower Manhattan Friday to honor the victims of 9/11 and celebrate those who responded, 25 years after the terrorist attack that shocked the world and changed how Americans view the vulnerability of their nation, and even each other.

The event marks the day hijackers commandeered two commercial airlines and flew them into the twin towers on a bright Tuesday morning in 2001. The attack killed nearly 3,000 people from 27 states and more than 90 counties. More than 700 hailed from New Jersey.

Another 165 people, including several Garden State residents, lost their lives the same day in a similar attack on the Pentagon and when a third hijacked plane crashed in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

"We come every year because this is where they are. Their souls are here," said Freyda Markow, of Brooklyn, who lost her cousin, New York City Firefighter George Cain, on Sept. 11, 2001.

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Markow carried Cain's picture and wore a sash decorated with at least a dozen mass cards honoring other responders who have died since that day of cancers and other related health issues. "They lost their lives here. Maybe they didn't die here, but they lost their lives," she said.

"Our responders deserve better," Markow said. "We were promised more."

In addition to the scores of family members, friends and first responders, Friday's ceremony included Vice President JD Vance, former presidents Joe Biden, Barack Obama and Bill Clinton and their spouses, including former Secretary of State and Senator Hillary Clinton, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, current and former governors of New York and New Jersey, and dozens of local and state officials representing the region. President Donald Trump was set to attend a ceremony at the Pentagon Friday.

A statement from the White House noted an entire generation has no "living memory" of 9/11. "The passage of time must never dim what will forever burn bright in the conscience of our Nation. Amid the ashes of Ground Zero, we made a solemn vow to Never Forget — a vow that must be renewed in every American heart, taught in every classroom, and honored in every community across our land," it read.

New Jersey Gov. Mikie Sherrill arrived around 8 a.m. On Thursday, she had issued an executive order calling for U.S. and New Jersey flags to be flown at half-staff today to mark the anniversary. In a statement, she praised those who responded to the attack.

"As a young Naval Officer that day, I witnessed our country confront unimaginable tragedy, but I also saw the extraordinary courage of the first responders and service members who answered the call. We made a promise to never forget those we lost, and New Jersey will always keep that promise," Sherrill said in the statement.

The event began under a cloudy sky, with a drum corps and a choral performance of the Star Spangled Banner by the Brooklyn Youth Chorus. Attendees gathered around a podium near the North Tower and strolled throughout the park, many hoisting placards with pictures of their loved ones lost that day. Other families wore matching T-shirts with the names and faces of those who died.

Germano Riviera, a survivor of the attack, carried an American flag with the names of all the victims. He said he has attended all but two ceremonies at Ground Zero over the past two and a half decades; during the other years, he went to events in Florida, where he now lives.

"Something I can never forget is the stench," Riviera said, adding that he spent some seven months volunteering to help recover remains at Ground Zero. The boots he wore during this time are now part of the collection at the memorial museum, he said.

The crowd grew throughout the morning, as the clouds drew back, revealing sun and a blue sky behind the skyscrapers that have risen since that day. FBI, police and other armed security personnel ringed the site and were stationed throughout the city, at subway stations, bridges and other potential targets, another legacy of the attacks.

The ceremony included what has become an annual tradition of reading the names of those killed in the 9/11 attacks, as well as the victims of the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, which killed six people and injured more than one thousand. Music by cellist Yo-Yo Ma and others accompanied the reading.

'One betrayal after another'

The names are recited by loved ones, with pauses for seven, one-minute silences to mark the time each tower was struck, when each fell, and when the planes crashed in D.C. and then Pennsylvania. The seventh minute of silence honors those who have died in the 25 years since.

Many of the readers were children and young adults who were not born when 9/11 occurred. "Even though I didn't know you or Grandma Ruth, you still live in my heart and I love you," said one of the readers, who honored his grandfather.

While most people then living in the metropolitan area, and many others around the country, can tell you where they were when the towers were hit, some 100 million Americans have been born since 9/11, according to the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, which was founded to honor those who were killed and hosts the annual ceremony.

The memorial created a digital toolkit with information about other events and ceremonies dedicated to

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keeping their memory alive.

"We never got to meet you, we'll always remember you," said another child whose grandfather died in the attacks before he was born. "You blessed us with the Knicks and this year we got our first championship," the boy said.

The readings feature snippets of personal memories, prayers, updates on family news, promises to honor their loved one's legacy and, occasionally, a political message. Terry Sholty Strada, national chair of the 9/11 Families United, drew cheers during her reading when she called for justice, something many family members say has eluded them more than two decades later.

"It's been one betrayal after another," said Strada, whose husband Thomas, was a partner at financial firm Cantor Fitzgerald and worked on the 104th floor of the North Tower. She decried leaders who "chose to protect the Saudis instead of standing with Americans," and urged the Trump administration to take action.

"You can't protect yourself going forward if you don't know the real truth," Strada, a Florida resident who lived in Chatham, New Jersey, at the time of the attack, told reporters later. Strada said readers were told not to share any political messaging from the podium, but she decided to speak up anyway.

The lack of answers angers Strada, she said, especially as the nation celebrates its 250th anniversary this year. "For a tenth of our country's existence the victims' families have been fighting for justice. Think about that," she said.

While the FBI has closed its investigation, investigators in the U.S. and abroad say they have amassed evidence that could connect the Saudi Arabian government to the hijacking of the planes that day. The alleged "mastermind" of the attack, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who was born in Kuwait and has been held in Guantanamo Bay since 2006, and several co-conspirators are set to face trial in June 2028.

Today the World Trade Center site is a memorial park where white oak trees surround the museum and the two square, black granite-clad pools where the twin towers once stood.

Names of the victims are etched on the bronze panels at the edge of the pools, where water smoothly cascades into what were once the buildings' foundations. The letters form mini-vases where visitors leave bright flowers. On Friday, the panels were also bedecked with small American flags.

The names include dozens of victims from Monmouth, Middlesex and Bergen counties, but also Patricia Cody from Brigantine, in Atlantic County, Deepa Pakkala of Stewartsville, in Warren County, and a handful of residents from Burlington, Gloucester and Sussex counties. New Jerseyans from 17 of 21 counties lost their lives on 9/11.

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Lilo H. Stainton has covered New Jersey for more than two decades, much of it with Gannett newspapers and NJ Spotlight News, reporting on policy, politics, and breaking news, including the 9/11 attack on lower Manhattan. Most recently she has focused on public health and racial disparities in care. Lilo also served as press secretary to Gov. Jon S. Corzine and led a nonprofit coalition's successful advocacy for more than \$60 billion in federal funding for environmental resilience projects in the wake of Hurricane Sandy.

Sen. Rounds' senior staffer posts image of obscene gesture after report about ethics concerns

Politico story raises questions about adviser's simultaneous role as state-level lobbyist

BY JOSHUA HAIAR

After allegations surfaced that his work as a state-level lobbyist is a conflict of interest, a senior staffer for a U.S. senator from South Dakota went to social media and posted an image of an actor with a raised middle finger.

The senator's office has not addressed questions about the post.

Rob Skjonsberg, of Fort Pierre, is a senior adviser and former chief of staff for Republican Sen. Mike

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Rounds and has worked on Rounds' campaigns. Politico published a news story Sept. 4 about Skjonsberg's simultaneous work in South Dakota as a lobbyist on behalf of companies including Meta, the parent company of Facebook. Rounds, who serves as co-chair of the Senate Artificial Intelligence Caucus, has been involved in legislation and policy discussions that could affect the company.

Shortly after the Politico story was published, Rounds' sole opponent in the Nov. 3 election, independent candidate Brian Bengs, called on Rounds to support a ban on government staffers and campaign staffers lobbying for corporations and special interests.

"South Dakotans deserve to know that the people who work for them aren't using public service as a revolving door to lucrative lobbying jobs," Bengs said in a news release.

Skjonsberg responded that same evening by posting an image on X(formerly Twitter) of an actor posing with a raised middle finger.

"Like you, the nonsense will be forgotten @BrianBengs," Skjonsberg wrote in the X post, using Bengs' X username.

Lobbying and ethics

Records maintained by the South Dakota Secretary of State's Office show Skjonsberg has been lobbying in the state since at least 2023 and is registered on behalf of 14 clients this year, ranging from Meta Platforms to farm groups, equipment manufacturers and mining interests, among others.

Experts from ethics watchdog groups quoted by Politico said it's inappropriate and a conflict of interest for a U.S. senate staffer to simultaneously work as a lobbyist. Rounds' Senate spokesperson Dezmond Ward told Politico the senator's general counsel "consulted with the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Ethics, which provided guidance to make certain there was and is no conflict of interest." Politico also quoted Ward saying "Senate Ethics guidance continues to be followed today."

Ward sent similar statements to South Dakota Searchlight, adding that "over four years ago, our general counsel worked with Senate Ethics to establish a structure to avoid any potential conflicts of interest," and Rounds' office "also implemented additional safeguards beyond what was recommended by Senate Ethics." Ward did not respond to follow-up questions from Searchlight seeking further information about the structure and additional safeguards he referenced.

X post questions

Searchlight sent Ward multiple messages including questions about whether Rounds condones Skjonsberg's X post. Ward's responses did not address the questions about the post. Instead, Searchlight received a reply from Skjonsberg.

"I did not clear the X with anyone. I can defend myself," wrote Skjonsberg, who often misspells "Bengs" as "Bangs" in his communications. "Bangs has a habit of bullying people and he picked a fight with the wrong guy."

Skjonsberg offered no examples to support the bullying allegation.

A Democrat, Julian Beaudion, was nominated to run in the Senate race against Rounds and Bengs but withdrew last month while accusing Bengs of being part of a coordinated effort — with a group of Democrats who were pessimistic about Beaudion's chances of success — to push Beaudion out of the race. Bengs denied that accusation at the time, saying "I entirely reject the notion that there was some behind-the-scenes conspiracy."

Big tech ties

Bengs issued another news release Monday morning calling further attention to the Politico reporting and also to about \$200,000 of campaign contributions — later verified by Searchlight — to the Rounds campaign from people and political action committees with ties to tech companies such as Meta, OpenAI, Anthropic and Alphabet (owner of Google), and to tech-company investors.

Rounds has been active in legislation affecting the tech industry, including being a sponsor or cosponsor of bills that would promote artificial intelligence innovation in the financial services industry, prevent smuggling of American-made semiconductors into China, and boost American manufacturing of robotics.

Bengs accused Rounds of being too closely affiliated with big tech firms, including companies attempt-

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ing to build data centers.

"He will claim that he represents us, but the money tells a different story," Bengs said at a press conference where he released the information.

When Searchlight asked the Rounds campaign for a response to Bengs' statements about Rounds' ties to big tech, Skjonsberg replied with a written message saying Bengs' announcement "stinks of hypocrisy and big government socialism." Skjonsberg also said, in part, "the governor and the Legislature have already put strict guidelines on data centers in South Dakota, and the top of that list is local control."

Skjonsberg was referencing a new state law that allows the Public Utilities Commission to assess data center companies the cost of regulatory reviews related to their projects, and another new law that preserves local data center regulations while protecting against excessive water use for data center cooling and data-center-caused rate increases for other electric customers.

Skjonsberg additionally defended Rounds.

"I've known Mike for almost half my life," Skjonsberg said. "He is a man of character and faith."

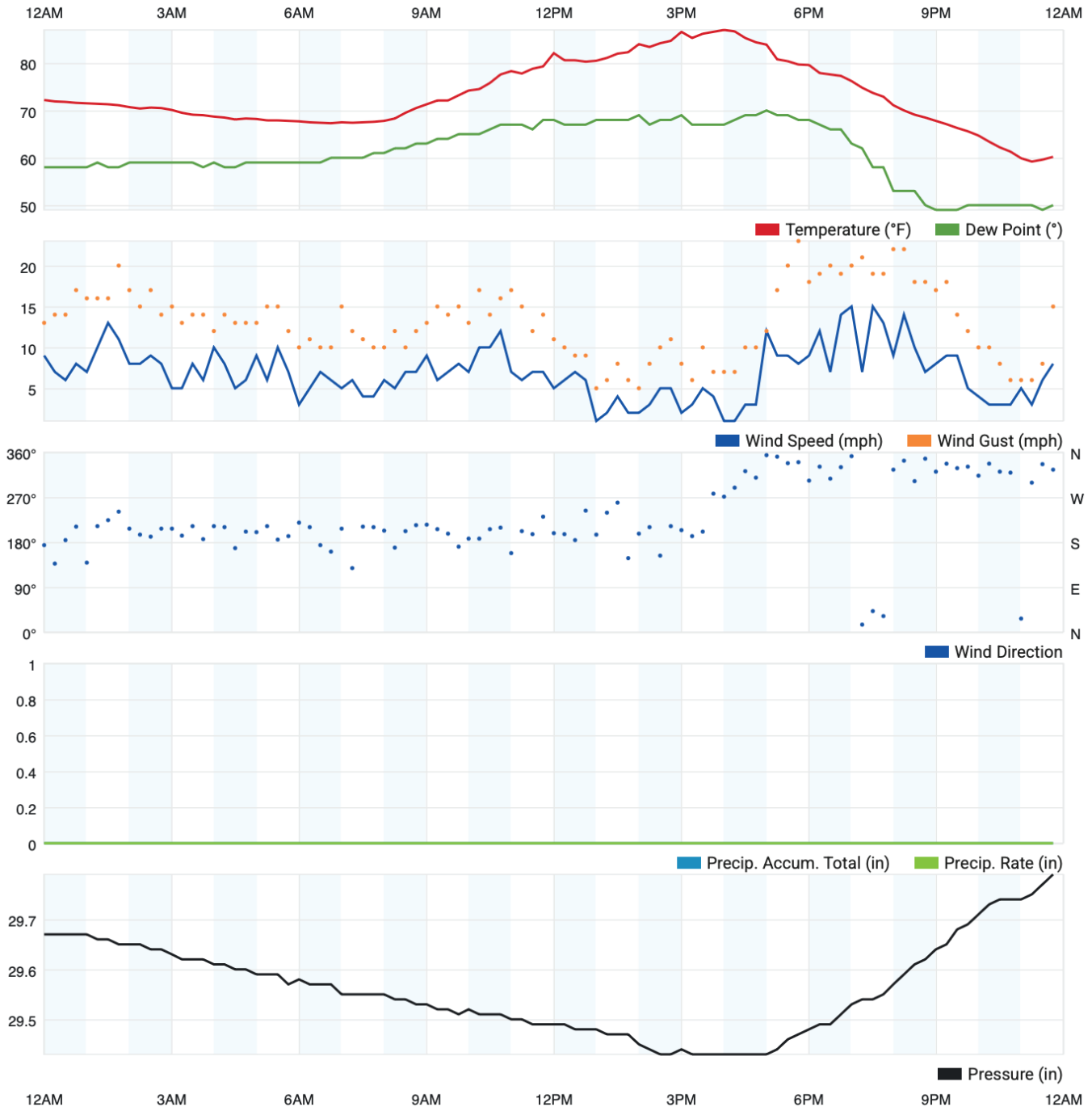
Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked as a multimedia specialist and journalist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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

September 11, 2026



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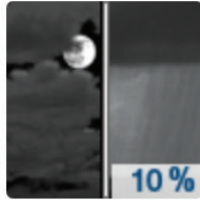
Today



High: 68 °F

Mostly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 50 °F

Mostly Cloudy
then Slight
Chance
Showers

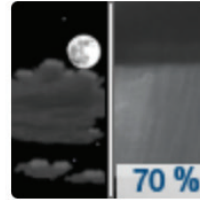
Sunday



High: 67 °F

Becoming
Sunny

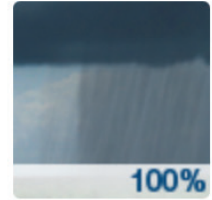
Sunday Night



Low: 51 °F

Partly Cloudy
then Showers
Likely

Monday



High: 70 °F

Showers and
Breezy



7 Day Outlook - Across The Region

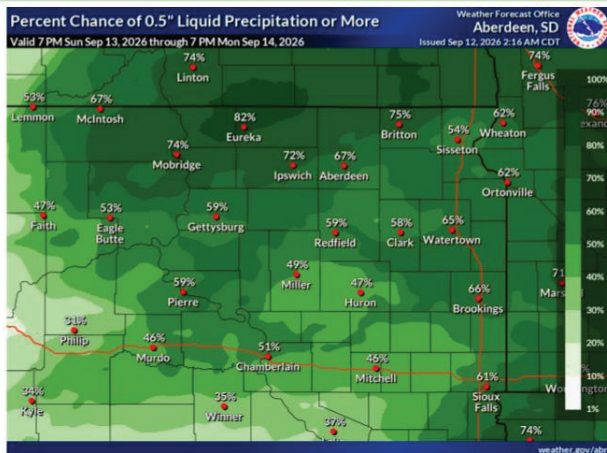
September 12, 2026

2:48 AM CDT

Cooler Than Normal Until Thursday; Best Rain Chances Sunday, Monday and Wednesday

Key Messages

- Jet stream flattens out this week, allowing for several fast moving low pressure systems to bring rain chances to the area.
- Cooler and less humid conditions will be in place this weekend into the first half of the upcoming week.
- 40 to 80+ percent chance of at least 0.50in of rainfall between 7 PM CDT Sunday and 7 PM CDT Monday.



Maximum Temperature (°F) & Maximum Probability of Precipitation (%) Forecast

	9/12 Sat	9/13 Sun	9/14 Mon	9/15 Tue	9/16 Wed	9/17 Thu	9/18 Fri
Aberdeen							
Max Temp	68	67	71	69	70	74	77
Rain Chances	15	15	95	0	30	10	10
Miller							
Max Temp	70	66	75	68	70	73	77
Rain Chances	5	35	90	5	25	15	15
Mobridge							
Max Temp	65	67	75	68	71	74	78
Rain Chances	20	15	95	0	45	10	15
Murdo							
Max Temp	73	68	79	70	75	76	80
Rain Chances	20	25	90	5	35	15	15
Ortonville							
Max Temp	72	65	65	67	66	71	74
Rain Chances	5	15	100	0	25	10	10
Pierre							
Max Temp	72	69	78	70	74	76	81
Rain Chances	20	30	90	5	30	15	15
Sisseton							
Max Temp	69	66	65	68	67	73	75
Rain Chances	5	20	100	5	25	10	10
Watertown							
Max Temp	70	66	67	68	68	73	75
Rain Chances	5	35	100	5	25	10	10



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

The region is going to take a break from the summer-like temperatures and humidity for the next few days. High temperatures will struggle to reach "climatology norms". Today and Sunday, isolated to widely scattered light rain showers will happen from time to time. The better chance for moderate rainfall appears to align with Sunday night through Monday, when numerous to widespread showers with some embedded thunder are expected to move east-northeast through the region. Then, after a brief break in rain potential Tuesday, the chance for precipitation returns heading into Wednesday.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 87 °F at 4:03 PM

Low Temp: 59 °F at 11:15 PM

Wind: 23 mph at 5:41 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 97 in 1931

Record Low: 24 in 1902

Average High: 77

Average Low: 48

Average Precip in Sept.: 0.82

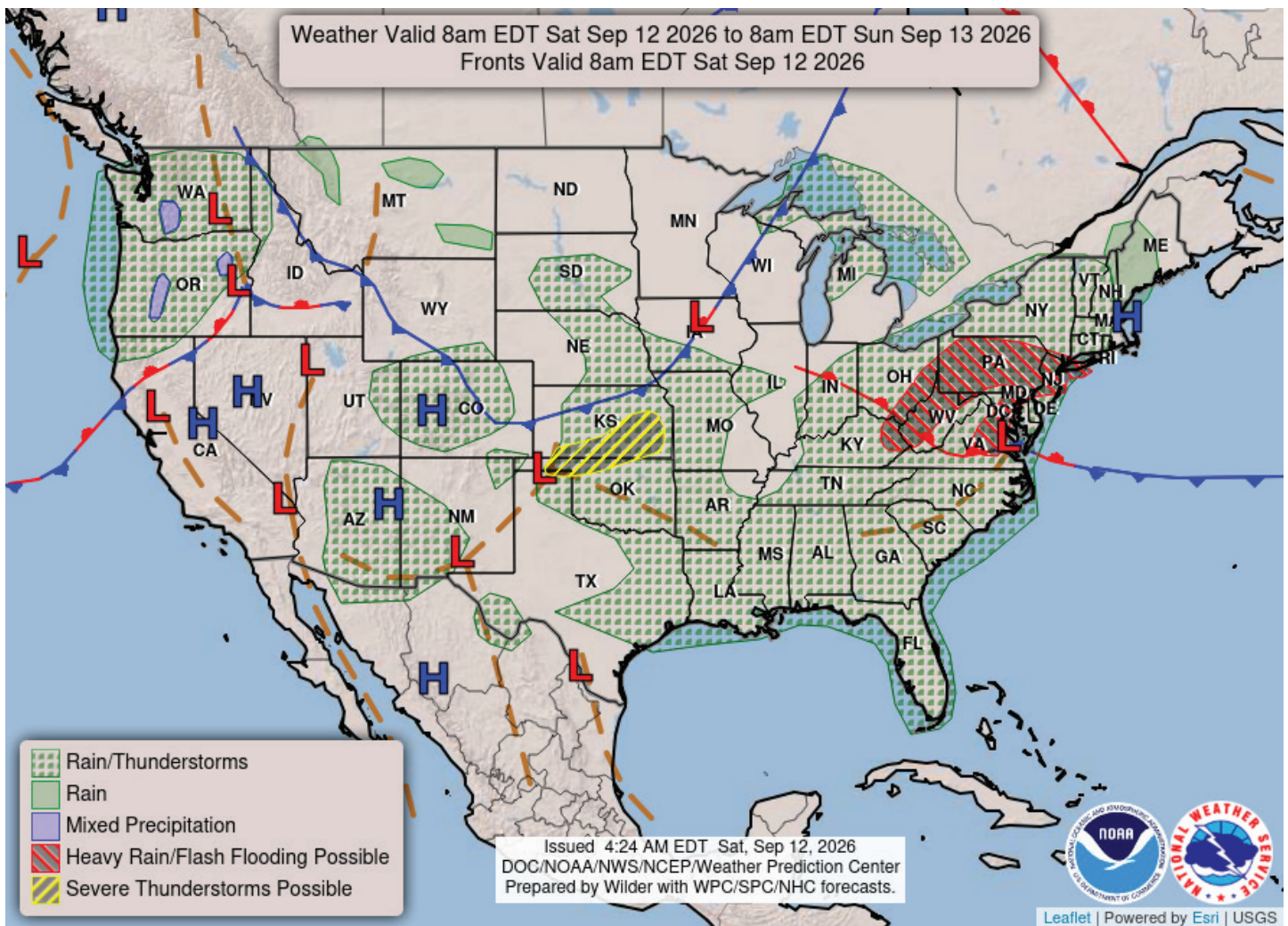
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 17.16

Precip Year to Date: 20.06

Sunset Tonight: 7:50 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:08 am



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Today in Weather History

September 12, 1931: On this day in 1931, near-record or record heat came to an end across central and northeast South Dakota as well as west-central Minnesota. From September 9th through the 12th, many record highs were set at Aberdeen, Kennebec, Mobridge, Timber Lake, Watertown, and Wheaton. High temperatures during these four days ranged from 95 degrees to 109 degrees. Aberdeen rose to 107 degrees on the 10th, Kennebec rose to 109 on the 9th, Mobridge rose to 105 on the 9th, Timber Lake's high was 106 on the 9th, Watertown rose to 104 on the 10th, and Wheaton rose to 108 degrees on the 10th.

1857: The SS Central America sinks during a hurricane, killing 425 lives. Fourteen tons of gold was aboard the ship as well.

1882 — Hot and dry winds caused tree foliage in eastern Kansas to wither and crumble. (David Ludlum)

1950: A hailstorm struck southern parts of Oklahoma City on this day. The storm damaged about 4,000 homes, 300 businesses, and 750 cars, resulting in a loss estimated at \$987,000.

1961: Super Typhoon Nancy was an incredibly powerful tropical cyclone of the 1961 Pacific typhoon season. The system had possibly the strongest winds ever measured in a tropical cyclone and caused extensive damage and at least 173 deaths and thousands of injuries in Japan and elsewhere. A reconnaissance aircraft flying into the typhoon near its peak intensity on September 12 determined Nancy's one-minute sustained winds to be 215 mph. If these values are reliable, they would be the highest wind speeds ever measured in a tropical cyclone. However, it was later discovered that measurements and estimations of wind speeds from the 1940s to 1960s were excessive. Thus, Nancy's winds may be lower than its official best-track value.

1963: President Kennedy gave his, "We choose to go to the moon" speech at Rice University.

1977 — Thunderstorms deluged the Kansas City area with torrential rains in the early morning hours, and then again that evening. Some places were deluged with more than six inches of rain twice that day, with up to 18 inches of rain reported at Independence MO. Flooding claimed the lives of 25 persons. The Country Club Plaza area was hardest hit. 2000 vehicles had to be towed following the storm, 150 of which had to be pulled out of Brush Creek, which runs through the Plaza area. (The Kansas City Weather Almanac)

1979 — Hurricane Frederick smashed into the Mobile Bay area of Alabama packing 132 mph winds. Winds gusts to 145 mph were reported as the eye of the hurricane moved over Dauphin Island AL, just west of Mobile. Frederick produced a fifteen foot storm surge near the mouth of Mobile Bay. The hurricane was the costliest in U.S. history causing 2.3 billion dollars damage. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Showers and thunderstorms produced heavy rain which caused flooding in North Carolina, West Virginia, Virginia and Pennsylvania. Parts of Virginia received 3 to 4 inches of rain in just two hours early in the day. Later in the day, three to five inch rains deluged Cumberland County of south central Pennsylvania. Evening thunderstorms produced seven inches of rain at Marysville PA, most of which fell in three hours time. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — An afternoon tornado spawned a tornado which skipped across northern sections of Indianapolis IN damaging roofs and automobiles. It was the first tornado in central Indiana in September in nearly forty years of records. Hurricane Gilbert plowed across the island of Jamaica, and by the end of the day was headed for the Cayman Islands, packing winds of 125 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1999: Hurricane Floyd, a Category 4 storm with top winds of 145 mph, was making residents along the U.S. East Coast very nervous as it steamed steadily westward. Floyd was once forecast to strike Florida but turned away. Instead, Floyd hit the Bahamas at peak strength, causing substantial damage. It then paralleled the East Coast of the United States, causing massive evacuations and costly preparations from Florida through the Mid-Atlantic States.

2006: Major flash flooding occurred in a matter of minutes after torrential rain starting pounding the city of Evansville, Indiana. A total of about 250 occupied structures sustained some degree of damage. Over 30 water rescues were conducted from cars stalled in floodwaters.

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Daily Devotion

Confidence in Prayer

The Lord calls us to pray according to His will, and He gives us His Spirit for guidance.

1 John 5:14-15 : 14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

Throughout Scripture, we are encouraged to pray. In Matthew 7, Jesus tells His disciples to keep asking, seeking, and knocking while trusting the heavenly Father to give His children what is good (Matthew 7:7-11). And in Philippians 4:6, Paul urges us to respond to anxiety in this way: Pray about everything.

Today's passage assures us that the Lord hears and answers our prayers. However, this promise is accompanied by an important stipulation: We must ask according to His will. Much of God's will is clearly revealed in Scripture, but what are we to do when an issue is not directly addressed in the Bible? Though we'd like to feel confident that the Lord will answer, at times we may feel uncertain whether our prayers align with His purposes.

If we want to pray effectively, our goal should not be to offer up quick, thoughtless, or self-willed prayers in hopes of receiving speedy answers. Instead, we must learn to pray wisely and wait patiently. Along with voicing our concerns and requests to God, we should also offer ourselves up in submission to our Father, as Jesus did in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39).

When we are yielded and obedient to the Lord, His Spirit will guide us and provide the wisdom needed for praying according to His will.

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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The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.11.26

5 8 20 50 52 2

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 13 Hrs 11 Mins 42 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.11.26

3 30 33 53 62 22

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$227,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.09.26

3 4 44 47 49 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$4,160,000

NEXT DRAW: 12 Hrs 11 Mins 42 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.09.26

3 12 14 15 17

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$52,000

NEXT DRAW: 12 Hrs 26 Mins 42 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.09.26

32 33 58 62 69 18

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 12 Hrs 55 Mins 41 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.09.26

9 40 42 55 65 23

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$232,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 12 Hrs 55 Mins 41 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Aberdeen Christian def. Spearfish, 22-25, 25-18, 25-19, 25-12
Cody-Kilgore, Neb. def. Takini, 25-12, 20-25, 25-20, 25-8
Sturgis Brown High School def. Riggs, 25-27, 25-14, 25-11, 25-16
Southwest Minn. Challenge Tournament=
Bloomington Jefferson, Minn. def. Brandon Valley, 17-25, 25-23, 19-17
Brandon Valley def. Stillwater, Minn., 25-13, 25-21
Champlin Park, Minn. def. Sioux Falls Christian, 25-16, 25-23
Fergus Falls, Minn. def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-22, 22-25, 15-12
Marshall, Minn. def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-8, 25-4

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

PREP FOOTBALL

Alcester-Hudson 41, Canistota 0
Bennett County 20, Jones County 14
Beresford 42, Flandreau 6
Bon Homme 40, Garretson 8
Brandon Valley 54, Rapid City Central 0
Bridgewater-Emery/Ethan 22, Sioux Falls Lutheran 14
Britton-Hecla 63, Florence-Henry 8
Burke 63, Sunshine Bible Academy 18
Canton 28, Dell Rapids 21
Castlewood 64, Waverly-South Shore 0
Chamberlain 36, Miller 0
Chester 46, Gayville-Volin High School 26
Clark-Willow Lake 36, Groton 14
Dell Rapids St Mary's 50, Colman-Egan 0
Deubrook 34, Iroquois-Lake Preston 12
Deuel 26, Aberdeen Roncalli 0
Elk Point-Jefferson 42, Dakota Valley 7
Elkton-Lake Benton 38, Estelline-Hendricks 12
Faulkton 20, Herried-Selby 18
Freeman 56, Avon 34
Gregory 40, TDAACDC 6
Hamlin 56, DeSmet 20
Hitchcock-Tulare 34, Gettysburg 0
Huron 20, Brookings 0
Ipswich 41, Leola-Frederick High School 14
Kimball-White Lake 28, Corsica/Stickney 14
Lemmon High School 20, North Central 7
Lennox 39, Tri-Valley 0
Lower Brule 50, Walthill, Neb. 12
Lyman 45, Kadoka 26
Madison 50, Belle Fourche 0
Mahpíya Lúta 34, Lakota Tech 12

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McCook Central-Montrose 27, Sioux Valley 26
Milbank 20, Vermillion 9
Mobridge-Pollock 24, WWSSC 0
Northwestern 16, Wilmot 6
Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 52, Arlington 14
Philip 19, New Underwood 0
Pine Ridge 58, St. Francis Indian 16
Rapid City Christian 54, Custer 0
Redfield 20, Webster 8
Riggs 42, Aberdeen Central 18
Scotland/Menno 34, Hanson 32
Sioux Falls Christian 28, West Central 0
Spearfish 48, Rapid City Stevens 21
St Thomas More 35, Winner 20
Tea 28, Watertown 21
Timber Lake 50, Hill City 7
Viborg-Hurley 52, Irene-Wakonda 0
Wagner 27, Parker/Marion 0
Wall 44, Harding County 12
Warner 51, Wolsey-Wessington 27
Waubay/Summit 52, Sisseton 0
White River 28, Tiospa Zina 0
Yankton 41, Sturgis Brown High School 9

Some high school football scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

BRICS leaders voice concern over Middle East, condemn unilateral sanctions at India summit

By SHEIKH SAALIQ and AIJAZ HUSSAIN Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — The BRICS group of emerging economies on Saturday expressed concern over rising tensions in the Middle East and condemned the use of sanctions not authorized by the U.N., as the leaders met in New Delhi to strengthen their position in global affairs seen as dominated by the West.

The meeting, which included Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, voiced concern over “deliberate attacks” on civilian infrastructure and peaceful nuclear facilities under the U.N. atomic energy agency’s safeguards, saying nuclear safety and security must be protected during armed conflicts. The statement was seen as indirect criticism of U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities.

The leaders also took aim at unilateral sanctions not authorized by the U.N. Security Council. They did not name any countries, but Russia, one of the founding members of BRICS, has faced Western sanctions following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

“We call for the elimination of such unlawful measures, which undermine international law and the principles and purposes of the U.N. Charter,” the joint statement said.

Wars in Ukraine and the Middle East challenge BRICS unity

BRICS was founded in 2006 by Brazil, Russia, India and China, with South Africa joining in 2010. It has since expanded to 11 members, representing about half the world’s population and a significant share of global economic output. The group has increasingly called for greater representation for developing countries in global institutions.

It has sought to raise its profile by promoting alternatives to Western-dominated financial institutions and positioning itself as the voice of developing nations and emerging economies.

India is hosting this year’s summit, attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi

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Jinping, Pezeshkian and counterparts from the other eight BRICS members.

Concerns have grown that the Iran war, triggered by U.S.-Israeli strikes on Feb. 28, may expand as fighting escalated between Saudi Arabia and Yemen's Houthi rebels. Wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, along with rising U.S.-China tensions, are also testing the bloc's ability to find common ground among countries with competing geopolitical interests.

Modi stresses BRICS is not a counter to West

In his address, Modi sought to ease concerns that BRICS was intended to counter Western-led alliances. "BRICS is not against anyone," he said, adding that the bloc had reached a "coming of age" moment in which the Global South must evolve into a "rule-shaper" in global governance.

"It is time for us to translate our unity and consensus in BRICS into concrete outcomes," he said.

Modi also proposed a BRICS seafarers' network to strengthen the safety and welfare of maritime workers, particularly as disruptions to maritime trade from the war in Iran have heightened risks for mariners.

Russia and China seek to expand influence

China and Russia see BRICS as a way to reduce Western dominance, particularly that of the United States, while strengthening cooperation among developing economies.

Putin called for expanding the U.N. Security Council to give greater representation to Asia, Africa and Latin America, saying it would improve the body's effectiveness, Russian state news agency Interfax reported Saturday.

Speaking at the summit, Putin said the shift toward a multipolar world was facing resistance from countries "accustomed to thinking in colonial categories," accusing them of using tariffs, sanctions and "brute force" to contain rising competitors.

He said the tensions were undermining the international system but stressed that Russia still viewed the U.N. Charter as the foundation of international law.

Iran has also pushed for mechanisms that could reduce the bloc's reliance on Western financial systems and shield members from economic pressure, as Tehran faces sweeping sanctions and a U.S. blockade.

"One of the most important steps is to expand the use of national currencies in trade among the members," Pezeshkian told reporters on Friday.

China, meanwhile, is leveraging the grouping to deepen its influence within the bloc and position it as a counterweight to U.S. power.

Speaking at the summit, Xi said China will work with BRICS members in playing its "due role" to forge peace in the Middle East, according to Chinese state broadcaster CCTV.

BRICS countries should "serve as vanguards for maintaining peace and stability" and "oppose violations of other countries' sovereignty," Xi said.

India balances strategic partnerships

For India, the summit highlights its effort to maintain strategic ties with Russia and Iran while deepening relations with the U.S. and Europe. New Delhi has sought to balance its longstanding partnerships with Moscow and Tehran with efforts to expand economic, defense and technology ties with Washington and other Western nations.

India has maintained close ties with both Moscow and Tehran despite the war in Ukraine and tensions between Iran and the U.S., while calling for dialogue and diplomacy to resolve conflicts. Modi met Putin and Pezeshkian separately in New Delhi on Friday ahead of the summit.

India is also hoping the forum will help ease its longstanding strained ties with China. Modi and Xi are expected to hold talks later Saturday, a meeting that could help consolidate a diplomatic thaw between the two countries after border tensions escalated in 2020.

In May, BRICS foreign ministers failed to agree on a joint statement over the Iran war, forcing India to issue a chair's summary instead.

Iraq races to contain fallout after local Iran-backed militias accused of attacking Saudi pipeline

By JULIA FRANKEL and QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's government raced Saturday to contain the fallout after local Iran-backed militias were accused of attacking and shuttering a key Saudi pipeline.

Though an umbrella group of Iran-backed militias in Iraq denied their involvement, Iraq's government confirmed the attacks had originated from its territory. The government pledged to investigate and dismissed two senior officials.

The country is under mounting pressure to prevent local militias from aiding other Iran proxy groups across the region. The Iraqi government has set a Sept. 30 deadline for nonstate groups to disarm, but several of the most powerful militias have said they will not comply.

Pressure to disarm the militias is especially acute as the Iran-backed Houthi rebels make an advance across Yemen's west coast in a major setback to the Saudi-backed coalition that risks escalating the war in the region. The Houthis on Friday seized an island in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a key shipping lane through which around 12% of global trade passes.

Their virtual control of the strait could send global oil prices — already inflated by the six-month Iran-U.S. war — spiraling. The strait has become a vital commercial lane for Saudi oil ever since the Iran war disrupted shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.

Asked about the region Saturday while speaking to reporters in Dublin, U.S. President Donald Trump said Iran was "probably" responsible for the pipeline attack, but tried to calm concerns.

He said his administration has "had discussions" with the Houthis, though he did not specify when those talks occurred and the White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the timing of the discussions. The administration engaged in at least one round of talks with the group in May 2025.

"The Houthis called us, and they don't want to fight with us," Trump said. "They would much prefer not having us involved, and they're letting most ships go through."

Iraq to investigate attack on Saudi pipeline

A group of Iran-backed militias in Iraq denied they were responsible for the attacks on the east-west Saudi oil pipeline in a statement Saturday, while praising the Houthis for their "ongoing battlefield victories against Saudi forces."

The group said it would cooperate with the Iraqi government's investigation.

Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi said earlier Saturday that he'd ordered an investigation into the operations command of Maysan province, along the border with Iran, and dismissed the province's commander. His office later said the provincial police chief was also dismissed.

Saudi Arabia shut down the major, cross-country oil pipeline on Friday, saying it was a "precautionary measure" after the pipeline came under drone attack. It blamed the attacks on several drones that came from Iraq, but said the kingdom would not retaliate, to give the Iraqi government "an opportunity to take the necessary measures."

Several Arab countries on Saturday, including Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Egypt, condemned the attack, according to the Saudi state news agency.

Built in the 1980s, the East-West pipeline has played an important role in Saudi Arabia's ability to export oil following the disruption of the Strait of Hormuz during the Iran war. By early June, Saudi Arabia had more than doubled oil exports from the Red Sea port at the pipeline's end to more than 5 million barrels per day, according to the International Energy Agency.

Tehran-backed Iraqi militias have carried out strikes on U.S.-linked targets both inside and outside of Iraq since the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran on Feb. 28, and have coordinated with Yemen's Houthi rebels to attack Saudi Arabia.

Iraq closes two border crossings with Iran

In a move possibly linked to the investigation of the Saudi pipeline attack, Iraq closed two key border crossings with Iran, Iraq's state-run news agency reported Saturday.

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The report said that Iraqi officials were at the border, investigating previous "violations and infractions" at the crossings.

Valiollah Hayati, the deputy governor of Iran's southwestern Khuzestan province, said Shalamchah and Chazabeh were the two crossings closed. They are among the main official border crossings between Iran and Iraq.

Iranian state media said the measure would halt all passenger and commercial traffic through the two crossings until further notice.

Saudi Arabia and the United States bombed Iranian-backed militias in Iraq in July after blaming them for drone attacks on Saudi oil facilities that had been claimed by the Houthis. Regional officials told The Associated Press that the Houthis helped the Iraqi militias plan and execute the attacks.

The fighting threatens to reignite Yemen's civil war

The escalating fighting threatens to end a fragile truce that had largely halted Yemen's civil war since 2022. At stake are 40 million people in the Arab world's poorest country. The conflict killed 150,000 and brought many others to the brink of famine.

The surge in fighting in the past week has sent over 46,000 people fleeing, the U.N. migration agency said Friday.

The Houthis have been at war with Yemen's government since 2014, when the rebels seized much of northern and central Yemen and the capital, Sanaa. Saudi Arabia entered the war the following year on the government's side.

Trump says he'd like to see a unified Ireland as he visits for golf at his Doonbeg course

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

DUBLIN (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump said Saturday that a unified Ireland would be "fantastic," wading into a complex and politically charged subject during a weekend visit to a major tournament at his Irish golf course.

At a meeting with Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin in Dublin, Trump said he would love to see the reunification of the Republic of Ireland with the U.K.'s Northern Ireland.

"I don't want to cause any problems but I'd love to see it unified," Trump offered when asked for his opinion on the issue by a reporter. "It's going to happen eventually. It may as well happen now.

"I think it would be a fantastic thing," he said, adding that "the U.K. will have something to say about it, obviously."

The Irish unity debate is heated

Competing visions of Northern Ireland — whether it's Irish or British — drove decades of violence in Northern Ireland that left some 3,600 people dead. Previous American presidents have avoided commenting directly on the subject, even those, like Joe Biden, with strong emotional ties to Ireland.

When Ireland, long dominated by its bigger neighbor Britain, became a self-governing Roman Catholic-majority country a century ago, a six-county region in the north with a Protestant majority remained part of the United Kingdom.

Northern Ireland was split between two main communities: nationalists — most of them Catholic — who desired union with the rest of Ireland, and largely Protestant unionists, who wanted to stay British. Tensions eventually exploded in the Troubles: three decades of violence involving paramilitary groups on both sides and British troops.

A 1998 peace accord that the U.S. was instrumental in striking largely ended the violence, but left Northern Ireland's ultimate status unresolved.

The peace accord allows for a vote on unification if it appears likely a majority of people would vote for it. U.K. Prime Minister Andy Burnham said Wednesday that "I am not aware that there is majority public support for another referendum, and until that changes, there will not be one."

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Trump also talked about the Falkland Islands issue

Trump again raised the prospect of conflict between the U.K. and Argentina over the Falkland Islands. Argentina's President Javier Milei, a Trump ally, has recently restated Argentina's claim to the islands, a British overseas territory that Argentina calls Las Malvinas.

Trump has previously said Washington could reconsider its neutral stance on the islands' sovereignty. On Saturday he expressed skepticism that Britain would be able to retake the South Atlantic islands as they did after Argentina invaded in 1982.

"I'm sure I'll be called into that potential disaster, but if they do, I'll probably be able to settle, settle it out," he said.

A meeting with the Irish president who criticized Trump

Trump also held talks Saturday in Dublin with his Irish counterpart Catherine Connolly and will address U.S. and Irish business leaders at the U.S. ambassador's official residence in Dublin, before traveling to his oceanfront golf club in Doonbeg, on the other side of the country, to watch the Irish Open.

Connolly is a left-wing politician who was among those who protested when Trump visited Ireland in 2019, during his first term in office. She is now Ireland's elected, largely ceremonial head of state. A supporter of the Palestinian cause, she in the past has criticized U.S. policy in the Middle East and called Trump a "bully."

The Irish president met Trump at the end of a red carpet at her official residence. They shook hands and chatted before going inside. He emerged alone a few minutes later and saluted as an Irish Defence Forces band played the U.S. national anthem and inspected an Irish Army honor guard.

Trump visit irks some Dubliners

Police put up a cordon around Dublin's 1,750-acre (700-hectare) Phoenix Park, where he met Connolly at her residence, Áras an Uachtaráin. He met Martin, the taoiseach, at the government's Farmleigh state guesthouse and stopped by Deerfield, the U.S. ambassador's residence.

Some residents expressed annoyance over the disruption.

"He's causing mayhem in this city because he wants to go down to Doonbeg and play golf," said taxi driver Christopher Fox, emphatically not a fan of Trump. "The world's in turmoil and this fella's down playing golf."

University student Mina Petrovski said Trump's "attitudes toward women, toward immigrants, toward minority communities in general are abhorrent." She said it's "shameful that the Irish government is welcoming him with open arms."

Separately, a collection of left-leaning opposition parties, anti-military groups, pro-Palestinian organizations, environmentalists and others plan to demonstrate against Trump in Dublin on Saturday.

Eric Trump defends family's presence in Ireland

Trump's son, Eric, says the family is loved in Ireland, despite the protests planned over his father's visit.

Speaking to Irish national broadcaster RTE on Friday in Doonbeg, home to the Trump International golf resort, Eric Trump said the course is the largest employer in the area.

"Go down to Morrissey's tavern in Doonbeg and hear from a real Irish person as to whether or not they like President Trump and the Trump family, go have them attest to what we've done for the country and what we've invested in the country and the love and respect that our family has always shown them," he said.

Trump's visit is the latest example of blending his official duties and personal interests.

Trump plays golf just about every weekend at clubs he owns in Florida, New Jersey and Virginia. His attendance at the Irish Open continues his trend of appearing at high-profile sporting events — and having a hand in organizing some of them in ways that benefit his family business. His clubs in Doral, Florida, and Bedminster, New Jersey, have each hosted professional golf tournaments this year.

The Irish Open is the second European Tour event to be held at a Trump property this year. The Nexo Championship was held last month at Trump's golf course in Aberdeen, Scotland.

Last year, Trump went to Scotland for five days to play golf at his club in Turnberry and later inaugurated a new Trump golf course in Balmedie, Aberdeenshire. During that visit, he held talks with the British prime minister and the president of the European Commission.

Saudi Arabia has few options as it faces mounting threats from Iran and its allies

By ELENA BECATOROS and JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

A lightning advance by Houthi rebels threatens a crucial Red Sea shipping route. Drone attacks blamed on Iraqi militias have forced the closure of a major pipeline, and Iran is still disrupting the Strait of Hormuz. It's a nightmare scenario for Saudi Arabia, and it has sent jitters through global markets.

The Saudis' most essential ally, the United States, has been unpredictable and sometimes unreliable. U.S. President Donald Trump seems reluctant to widen an already unpopular and stalemated Mideast war ahead of congressional elections. For Iran, the rebels' advance and closure of the pipeline ramp up global economic pressure as its grip over the Strait of Hormuz has been loosened.

Michael Ratney, a former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia, said the latest developments are "incredibly frustrating" for the kingdom.

"Despite their antipathy for the Iranians, this is a war they had never asked for, they had great trepidation about. And once it started, all of their ... worst-case scenarios started coming true."

The Saudi government did not respond to a request for comment. But a Saudi official, who was not authorized to brief media and spoke on condition of anonymity, said the kingdom would defend itself and work with partners, including the United States, to ensure freedom of navigation in the Red Sea.

Saudi hopes for a new Mideast have gone up in smoke

Saudi Arabia's crown prince and de facto ruler, Mohammed bin Salman, has spent years trying to build a very different Middle East, with wide-ranging social and economic changes aimed at transforming the ultra-conservative kingdom into a global business hub in a more prosperous and integrated region.

Those efforts suffered major setbacks after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attack on Israel, which triggered one war after another. When the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran on Feb. 28, it responded with missile and drone attacks on Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, and effectively shut down the Strait of Hormuz, bottling up their oil and gas exports and jolting the world economy.

Saudi Arabia escaped some of the worst effects by piping its oil across the Arabian Peninsula to the Red Sea, where it could be exported to Europe via Egypt's SUMED pipeline and the Suez Canal, or to Asia via a route running through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, and toward the Indian Ocean.

But tensions reignited with the Houthis in July, leading the rebels to declare a blockade of Saudi shipping and resume large-scale attacks for the first time in four years.

Over the last two days, the Houthis have seized the port city of Mokha and a Red Sea island from Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces, enhancing the rebels' ability to block Saudi shipments through the Bab el-Mandeb.

On Friday, Saudi Arabia said it shut down the pipeline leading from major oil fields in the east to the Red Sea in the west because of drone attacks originating in Iraq, where Iran supports powerful militias. Regional officials recently told The Associated Press that the Houthis have helped the Iraqi militias carry out attacks.

Houthi attacks have already caused a plunge in Saudi oil exports to Asia, from around 3.4 million barrels a day in June to just 128,000 in August, though they had recovered somewhat this month to 700,000, according to figures compiled by Kpler, a global trade monitor.

The Saudis have few options

Saudi Arabia fought against the Houthis for years beginning in 2015, but its allies made little progress on the ground. The conflict killed an estimated 150,000 people and at times pushed Yemen to the brink of famine before a 2022 ceasefire.

"Saudi Arabia has spent several years trying to move beyond the Yemen conflict and focus on economic transformation and regional stability," said Neil Quilliam, a Middle East expert at Chatham House.

"Recent Houthi gains increase pressure on Riyadh to respond, but every available option carries significant costs and uncertain outcomes."

The Saudis could step up their military response and try to dislodge the Houthis, but that would prolong

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the conflict and lead to even heavier Houthi attacks on Saudi energy infrastructure, said Sherwan Hindreen Ali, Middle East research manager at ACLED, a conflict monitoring group.

"The kingdom already faced this in the past, but Houthi weaponry is more sophisticated now than it was back then, and the Saudis likely have less interceptor missiles available as a result of the U.S.-Iran conflict," he said.

The Saudis could also seek a diplomatic solution with either the Houthis or their patrons in Tehran.

But the Houthis have demanded the lifting of a Saudi-led blockade, which would allow them to grow much stronger over the long term, and Iran has little interest in stabilizing the region without securing major U.S. concessions.

US help may not be forthcoming

For decades, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states have relied on U.S. security guarantees. Those have eroded under Trump, who did not respond during his first term when a 2019 attack claimed by the Houthis temporarily knocked out half of Saudi Arabia's oil supply.

In February, the U.S. joined Israel in attacking Iran without consulting its Gulf allies, and since then it has struggled to defend them from Iranian attacks.

Trump launched an air campaign against the Houthis last year in response to earlier attacks on Red Sea shipping linked to the war in Gaza. But this time, U.S. forces are heavily deployed around the Strait of Hormuz, where they are blockading Iran and trying to prevent attacks on shipping there.

The fighting has visibly strained the U.S. military and drawn down supplies of sophisticated interceptors.

The war is also deeply unpopular and has eroded Trump's support after he had promised to keep the U.S. out of Mideast wars. Launching another military campaign in Yemen could compound the struggles of fellow Republicans in tight House and Senate races.

The White House did not respond to a request for comment on whether it plans to intervene in Yemen.

Speaking more broadly about the war with Iran on Thursday, Trump shrugged aside the idea of increasing military pressure, as some U.S. hawks have suggested. "Maybe I don't do that because of the election," he told Fox News' "The Ingraham Angle."

Ratney, the former U.S. ambassador, said it would be difficult for the Saudis to achieve their objectives without consistent U.S. support, which they had at previous times while fighting the Houthis.

"My understanding at this point is the White House is not enthusiastic about getting involved," he said.

The last non-European to win a men's tennis major says Shelton can end the drought

By ERIC NÚÑEZ AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Ninety Grand Slam tournaments have passed since Andy Roddick defeated Juan Carlos Ferrero in the 2003 final at Flushing Meadows. Since then, no other U.S. male player has managed to win the U.S. Open on home soil or any of the other three majors.

Apart from Argentina's Juan Martín del Potro at the 2009 U.S. Open and his compatriot Gastón Gaudio at the 2004 French Open, every champion across the world's four major tournaments has been European.

On Friday night, Ben Shelton won in four sets the all-American U.S. Open semifinal with Frances Tiafoe and now will attempt to end the long wait for another men's Grand Slam champion from the United States. Shelton will play Alexander Zverev in the final.

"You know the history; it was the era of the 'Big Three' (Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic) — something unmatched," Del Potro told media ahead of the Shelton-Tiafoe semifinal. "But American tennis has the potential to break this pattern. There are so many good players now with the potential to be Grand Slam champions, and I sincerely believe Tiafoe or Shelton can do it."

As the last Grand Slam champion born outside of Europe, Del Potro takes pride in walking the grounds of the U.S. Open.

Talking for a living

The winner of the 2009 Open — who defeated Federer in the final to deny the Swiss star a sixth con-

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secutive title at Flushing Meadows — now works as an analyst for ESPN Latin America.

"I'm so happy to be back in this special place," the Argentine said. "It's always a pleasure to be here. They still treat me like a champion, which feels great."

His first day in this new role was grueling, featuring two men's quarterfinals: First, Tiafoe's victory over Alex Michelsen, followed by Shelton's win over Carlos Alcaraz — a match that set the record for the latest finish in tournament history, ending at 3:33 a.m. on Wednesday.

"I don't have the experience and it's not easy at all, but I'm enjoying it a lot," Del Potro said. "My first day ended at 4 a.m."

His triumph at Flushing Meadows at age 20 hinted at further major victories. However, a punishing series of injuries intervened: He underwent three surgeries on his right wrist, one on his left wrist, and four on his right knee from 2019-21.

Del Potro ultimately retired in 2022 at age 33, ending a career that included a pair of Olympic medals: Bronze in London in 2012 and silver in Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

"I'm moving better now because I'm not doing as much. I'm not playing anymore, and I'm not pushing myself hard in daily life," Del Potro said. "Whenever I wanted to accept invitations for clinics or exhibition games I had to go through a medical process with injections or anti-inflammatories. I stopped because that took a heavy toll on me in recent years."

Advice for Alcaraz

Del Potro shared his experience with injuries with Alcaraz, speaking with him during the World Cup final in July.

Alcaraz returned to action at the U.S. Open after a nearly five-month hiatus caused by a right wrist injury. The Spaniard — who has seven Grand Slam titles at age 23 — avoided surgery and opted for conservative treatment, staying off the tour and missing two majors, Roland Garros and Wimbledon.

"I told Carlitos to stay on that conservative path and not mess with his wrist," Del Potro noted. "My mistake was refusing to stop because I was fighting for ranking points in every tournament. Carlitos made the right decision; his wrist responded very well, and he played a great match against Shelton."

Saudi Arabia shuts down a pipeline as Houthis seize an island, opening a new front in the Iran war

By FATMA KHALED, SAMY MAGDY and CARA ANNA Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Saudi Arabia said Friday it shut down a major pipeline a day after it was attacked by drones, and Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels captured a strategic island at the southern entrance to the Red Sea, two officials said, opening a new front in the Iran war.

The Houthis made their biggest territorial gains in years along the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, one of the world's key shipping lanes. The advance could boost Iran's strategy of driving up world oil and gas prices to pressure the United States.

Saudi Arabia said it had shut down the East-West pipeline after it was attacked the day before. The Saudi Ministry of Energy called the shutdown "a precautionary measure."

The Saudi Foreign Ministry blamed the attack on several drones that came from Iraq. In a statement carried by the state-run Saudi Press Agency, the kingdom said it would not respond to give the Iraqi government "an opportunity to take the necessary measures."

Iraq's Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi, who is also commander-in-chief of the military, ordered an investigation into the Maysan province operations command and dismissed its commander after authorities determined that attacks targeting Saudi Arabia were launched from a site in the province, government spokesperson Sabah al-Numan said in a statement early Saturday.

Saudi Arabia and the United States bombed Iranian-backed militias in Iraq in July, after blaming them for drone attacks on Saudi oil facilities that had been claimed by the Houthis. Regional officials told The Associated Press that the Houthis helped the Iraqi militias plan and execute the attacks.

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Pipeline was built in the 1980s

Built in the 1980s, the East-West pipeline has played an important role in Saudi Arabia's ability to export oil following the disruption of the Strait of Hormuz during the Iran war. By early June, Saudi Arabia had more than doubled oil exports from the Red Sea port at the pipeline's end to more than 5 million barrels per day, according to the International Energy Agency.

The Houthis' capture of Mayun, a tiny, barren volcanic island inside the strait also known as Perim, was confirmed by a senior military official with Yemen's internationally recognized government and by a Houthi official. Both spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to journalists.

Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, has increasingly relied on the Red Sea to get its crude to market as an alternative to the Strait of Hormuz, where Iran has been striking ships. Houthi efforts to close the 28-kilometer-wide (17-mile) Bab el-Mandeb channel have made that route more complicated.

In a statement Friday, the Houthi armed forces boasted of gains along the coast without mentioning the island, Mokha or the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. They vowed "escalation for escalation" in the confrontation with Saudi Arabia, while declaring that "maritime navigation is safe for all companies except for Saudi vessels."

Still, markets are nervous, and experts have described the Houthis as highly unpredictable. Crude prices this week soared again above \$100 a barrel, giving Tehran more leverage in any talks.

Yemen's government was shocked by slow Saudi response

The Houthis have been attacking Saudi shipping on the Red Sea since declaring a blockade in July, as well as hitting oil infrastructure inside Saudi Arabia. The rebels said they acted in response to the kingdom's yearslong blockade of Houthi-held parts of Yemen.

Saudi Arabia struck the airport in the port city of Mokha after the Houthis seized it Thursday, a Houthi broadcaster said. There were no reports of damage or deaths.

A senior military official with Yemen's internationally recognized government told the AP they were stunned that the Saudi air force did not try to prevent the capture of Mokha, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) from the strait. He assessed that Saudi Arabia didn't get a green light from the U.S. to embark on a large-scale air campaign.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't allowed to speak to the media, also blamed "lack of coordination" between Yemen's army and multiple allied militias, saying it gave the Houthis "a priceless opportunity."

Shipping through the Bab al-Mandeb Strait had fallen by about 60% since the Houthis began attacking some ships there in late 2023 and expressing solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza. Shipping increased this year as Saudi Arabia sought alternatives to the Strait of Hormuz, but renewed Houthi threats have "curtailed" that activity, according to Lloyd's List Intelligence.

That has forced Saudi Arabia to find yet another alternative, sending its oil north out of the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, either via the Suez Canal or a pipeline through Egypt, a far longer route for its clients in Asia. The Houthis have threatened that route as well, striking a Saudi vessel in the north of the Red Sea in late August.

Iran calls for a return to Saudi-Houthi talks

Earlier Friday, Iran's government called for an end to Saudi Arabia's blockade of Houthi-held areas in a show of support for its ally. The Iranian Foreign Ministry also called for a return to negotiations between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis.

In a sign of the Houthis' importance to Tehran, the spokesperson for Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard on Wednesday called for any negotiated settlement with the U.S. to include Yemen, the first explicit reference to that front.

Saudi Arabia, which said it had always offered "opportunities for negotiation," also said it has the right to defend itself. The foreign ministers of Iran and Saudi Arabia spoke Thursday about diplomatic efforts to "restore stability," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on social media.

The fighting risks a return to Yemen's civil war

As the Houthis swept along the Red Sea coast toward the Bab el-Mandeb channel, Yemen's Saudi-backed government called for international support.

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In a statement Friday from a meeting the previous day, its National Defense Council said it was on the front line of defending freedom of navigation and condemned the Houthis' renewed attacks on Saudi Arabia.

The escalating fighting threatens to end a fragile truce that had largely halted Yemen's civil war since 2022. At stake are 40 million people in the Arab world's poorest country. The conflict killed 150,000 and brought many others to the brink of famine.

The surge in fighting in the past week has sent over 46,000 people fleeing, the U.N. migration agency said Friday.

People seeking safety left with "whatever they can grab," Abdusattor Esoev, mission chief in Yemen for the International Organization for Migration, said Friday. He said the number of people displaced more than doubled this week and could still rise sharply.

"You see the fears in their eyes, and people are scared," Esoev said.

Those fleeing included doctors and other medical workers. Lou Cormack, Yemen coordinator for Doctors Without Borders, said Friday that the aid group has prioritized keeping Mokha's hospital open after most of its staff left.

The Houthis have been at war with Yemen's government since 2014, when the rebels seized much of northern and central Yemen and the capital of Sanaa. Saudi Arabia entered the war the following year on behalf of the government.

US marks 25 years since the Sept. 11 attacks

By JENNIFER PELTZ and TED SHAFFREY Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Americans commemorated the 25th anniversary of 9/11 on Friday, remembering the shock, the dead and the sweeping consequences of the al-Qaida attacks on symbols of U.S. might and prosperity.

The milestone anniversary brought memorial rituals — wreath-laying, flag-flying, moments of silence, vigils and readings of victims' names — and volunteer projects in tribute to a day that about half of U.S. adults remember as the most historic event of their lifetime, according to a new poll. On Sept. 11, 2001, al-Qaida extremists hijacked four commercial jets and crashed them into New York's World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, killing nearly 3,000 people.

Elsie Caldwell carried a photograph of her son Kenny Caldwell to the trade center to hear his name and all the others read aloud Friday morning. She last spoke to him that morning a quarter-century ago.

"Mom, I just want to let you know that I love you," her son told her in a final phone call, she recalled. His remains, like those of many other victims, have never been recovered.

Trump attends Pentagon observance

The attacks brought down the World Trade Center's twin towers — icons of U.S. economic power, and among the tallest buildings on Earth — and blew a hole in the Pentagon, the U.S. military's fortresslike headquarters near Washington. The fourth plane was headed for Washington, officials concluded, but the aircraft went down in Pennsylvania after passengers and crew members stormed the cockpit and fought the hijackers.

"Sept. 11 reminded us of the terrible power of hate," President Donald Trump said Friday at the Pentagon's anniversary ceremony.

"The 25 years since have shown us the even greater power of the American spirit to endure and prevail, and to win," added the Republican, who was in his native New York on 9/11.

Former President George W. Bush, who was in office on 9/11, attended the observance at the National Sept. 11 Memorial in New York, along with former Presidents Bill Clinton, Barack Obama and Joe Biden, and current Vice President JD Vance. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick wiped away a tear as he revisited the place where the attacks killed 658 of his colleagues — including his brother, Gary Lutnick — at the investment firm Cantor Fitzgerald.

Interior Secretary Doug Burgum laid a wreath at the Flight 93 National Memorial in Pennsylvania after hailing the courage of the plane's passengers and crew: "The actions they took should inspire us all."

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At ground zero, a new tribute to those who fell ill

For Angilic Casalduc, attending the New York commemoration "helps to show you're not alone." She lost her mother, Vivian Casalduc.

"There's no timeline for grief, and unfortunately, no one can say how you can grieve, but coming here once a year makes it feel just a little bit better," she said.

Traditionally, there are no political speeches at the ground zero commemoration, where victims' relatives read aloud the long list of names and added personal messages. They thanked first responders and the military, invoked religious faith, appealed for national unity and touched on the U.S. relationship with Saudi Arabia. The kingdom was the homeland of most of the hijackers but denied any involvement in the attacks.

Mostly, relatives spoke of, and to, loved ones — whom some were too young to remember.

"You dreamed my whole life for me, and you only got eight months of it," said Trisha Pakkala, who lost her mother, Deepa Pakkala.

Kiersten Haub, who was 16 months old when the attacks killed her father, firefighter Michael Helmut Haub, said: "I carry you through every milestone."

Besides moments of silence at key points in the attack timeline, this year's ceremony added another moment to honor people who were exposed to the clouds of toxic dust released by the twin towers' fiery collapse and have since died of cancer and other illnesses. Questions remain about how many people developed health problems linked to the dust.

The impact of 9/11 endures

It's a reminder of how the attacks' long shadow has reached into many corners of life in the U.S. and beyond.

The U.S.-led global war on terrorism included invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan — the latter Washington's longest war — and detentions and harsh interrogation of terror suspects in an international network of secret CIA prisons. The U.S. found and killed al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in 2011, but the accused 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed still awaits a trial 23 years after his capture.

The attacks changed U.S. air travel, led to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, prompted new federal surveillance and intelligence-gathering powers and banking regulations and generated ongoing debate over the balance between security and freedom.

Sept. 11 engendered a culture of individual vigilance summed up by the slogan, "If you see something, say something," while a wave of patriotism propelled some Americans to join the military, fire departments and police forces.

Casey Kloepper was 4 when his father, police Officer Ronald Kloepper, was killed at the trade center. The son became an officer himself this June, wearing his dad's badge number.

"It's big footsteps to fill, but it's definitely something that I take very seriously and want to continue to honor him and be the best police officer I can," he said by phone this week.

New York's mayor comes under scrutiny

Amid the post-9/11 calls to service and appeals for national unity, the attacks also fanned mistrust, prejudice and hate crimes directed at Muslims.

In the quarter-century since, Muslim Americans have played a growing role in public life from statehouses to Congress to New York City Hall, where Zohran Mamdani is the city's first Muslim mayor. Yet he faced some criticism for attending the anniversary ceremony at ground zero.

Republican ex-Gov. George Pataki and 9/11 victims' relatives cited, among other things, past remarks that some of Mamdani's political associates have made about the attacks. Former Mayor Rudy Giuliani, a Republican, also opposed Mamdani's attendance, though the two shook hands there Friday.

Mamdani, a Democrat, said this week he loves the city and country and that he wanted the anniversary to focus on victims' families, first responders and New Yorkers who helped one another after the attacks, which he called a "horrific act of terror." The 34-year-old mayor was an elementary school student in New York on 9/11.

One victim's son and namesake, Michael Massaroli, used his time at the podium Friday to deplore people "using this tragedy to spread hate" against Muslims and others.

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"That's wrong, and that does no honor to the victims here," he said.

Times Square billboards pause advertisements

Remembrances extended far from the attack sites, including beams of light projected from New Hampshire's Mount Washington, a stair climb at Mississippi State University's football stadium and a ceremony at Honolulu's 9/11 memorial.

Sept. 11 isn't a federal holiday, but Congress has designated it both Patriot Day and a National Day of Service and Remembrance.

"One appropriate way to remember is by serving," said Jay Winuk, who lost his brother Glenn Winuk and then co-founded the organization 9/11 Day with friend David Paine. The group coordinates volunteer opportunities and this year arranged for dozens of Times Square billboards to pause their advertising at 9:11 a.m. Friday.

Instead, they simply displayed the time.

Convicted sex offender offered opening prayer at rally for GOP Senate nominee in North Carolina

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

A pastor kicked off a recent campaign stop for Michael Whatley, the Republican nominee for Senate, with a prayer that asked God to bestow "integrity and honesty" upon the event and to right wrongs "hammered down on the conservative movement."

The prayer was hardly unusual by North Carolina political standards. What was surprising was the man who delivered it. Pastor Daimon L. King is a registered sex offender, twice sentenced to prison for convictions involving children, according to state and court records.

The episode occurred with two months to go in a marquee Senate race that could help decide which party controls the chamber after the November elections. It risks undermining one of Whatley's central campaign arguments — that his Democratic opponent, former Gov. Roy Cooper, is soft on crime. And it could feed into an advertising blitz by Democrats that has targeted the Republican candidate's association with another convicted sex offender, a former GOP official.

King did not respond to messages seeking comment.

Whatley's campaign declined to make him available for an interview. In a statement, campaign spokesman DJ Griffin said Whatley did not know King and the event "was NOT planned nor organized by the Whatley campaign nor did the campaign invite any of the guests."

He emphasized that King had been "invited by the hosts," which he identified as the Craven County Republican Party.

Officials with the county party could not be reached for comment.

Whatley led state and national GOP before entering Senate race

Whatley served as chairman of the North Carolina GOP from 2019 until Trump elevated him in 2024 to lead the Republican National Committee, a post he stepped down from to pursue the Senate seat at the president's urging.

King's prayer and Whatley's association with the former GOP official Harvey L. West Jr., the other convicted sex offender, could prove particularly problematic as the Republican Senate candidate seeks to shore up support from hard-right conservatives, said Chris Cooper, a political science professor at Western Carolina University who is not related to the former governor.

Anger in Trump's base over the government's handling of the Jeffrey Epstein case pressured the president to sign legislation to release the records.

The documents, which detailed the deceased sex offender's interactions with prominent figures in politics and business, pushed suspicions about powerful people and institutions that had circulated for years on the political right into a much broader public debate.

"The far right has not coalesced behind (Whatley) and these kinds of revelations will make that problem

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even greater," Cooper said.

Pastor prayed at event featuring Whatley and a top Trump administration official

King, 60, is the leader of New Beginnings Celebration church in New Bern, a town near the North Carolina coast where the rally was held on Aug. 28. The pastor has taken on an increasingly visible role in Republican politics in recent years. He presents himself as a pro-Trump Black conservative and has served as a precinct chairman for the Craven County GOP. He has praised Trump and decried "fake news" in sermons uploaded to YouTube, delivering what he calls the "pure, uncut word of God."

The event at the Craven County GOP headquarters featured Whatley and Dr. Mehmet Oz, a former daytime TV personality who is Trump's administrator for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

King can be seen in a video posted on X, formerly Twitter, by Whatley's campaign following the event. While Whatley and Oz took turns railing against fraud in the medical system, King positioned himself conspicuously in the background, nodded along in agreement and flashed a double thumbs-up.

King took to his church's Facebook group the next day to offer a glowing assessment of the event.

"The atmosphere was charged with prayer and patriotism through the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of THE United States of America!!!" King wrote, adding that he and his church "fully support and are behind" Whatley.

Some 30 years ago, King was a marching band assistant at a high school outside Raleigh when he was charged with statutory rape and indecent liberties with a 15-year-old student, The News & Observer reported at the time. King, then 31, was convicted in 1998 and served nearly five years in prison before being paroled, according to state department of corrections records.

In 2010, he pleaded guilty to having sex with an underage female relative and served close to three years in prison, state records show.

King is required under North Carolina law to register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.

Democrats have blasted Whatley over association with another convicted sex offender

Since March, Whatley has been dogged over his ties to West, who served as a congressional district committee chair in the state GOP when Whatley was chairman.

West, a former small-town police officer, was convicted of five counts of indecent liberties with a child and served six years in prison, corrections records show.

In 2012, news outlets reported on his conviction, forcing West to step down as an alternate delegate to the Republican National Convention.

At the time, West denied he had committed the offenses and said that he had pleaded guilty to avoid the risk of spending decades behind bars, The Associated Press reported. He is no longer required to register as a sex offender.

West's conviction resurfaced in the campaign earlier this year after Republican activists publicly aired concerns about his continued role in the party. The state GOP has since banned convicted sex offenders from holding party office.

Democrats, however, continue to hammer Whatley over the issue, spending more than \$2.3 million on ads featuring a photo of Whatley and West posing together.

West says he warned GOP officials about King's convictions

In an interview, West said he has always been transparent with party leaders about his past and noted that the main job he held in the state GOP was an elected position. He acknowledged, however, that he had been appointed to other roles when Whatley was chairman.

"I'm not going to say Michael Whatley put me up there," West said. "But I wasn't taken off either."

West said he has sought to atone for his past and expressed frustration that his conviction had become a campaign issue.

"I wanted to serve as I followed my own redemption path. We have a right to be part of the political process," West said. "For 20 years, I have been upfront and open about who I am and what happened to me. Not everyone does that."

West also said he was familiar with King's convictions and warned others in the party about associating

with the pastor when he was considered for a GOP position. "I just said, 'Hey, y'all might want to take a look at this,'" said West.

Aryna Sabalenka and Elena Rybakina to meet in a US Open final between the world's top 2 players

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Aryna Sabalenka is going for a third consecutive U.S. Open title. Standing in her way is Elena Rybakina, who is taking over for her as the No. 1-ranked women's tennis player in the world.

Sabalenka and Rybakina meet in the final on Saturday, their third time playing for a Grand Slam championship and 18th head-to-head matchup of their careers. It comes with them at the top of their games and the top of the sport after Sabalenka beat Jessica Pegula in straight sets and Rybakina rallied past Coco Gauff in the semifinals.

"We're dealing with the two best players in the last couple of years on the women's side," former men's player Max Mirnyi, now part of Sabalenka's coaching team, said Friday. "Their results and their rankings and their titles speak for themselves. When they see each other across the net, I think that brings out the best in each one of them."

Sabalenka entered the U.S. Open in a bit of a rut, failing to reach the quarterfinals in each of her past three tournaments, including an exit in the round of 16 at Wimbledon. The 28-year-old has looked right at home back in Flushing Meadows, losing just one set in six matches and making another deep run in dominant fashion.

"She's in love with New York, I guess," coach Anton Dubrov said with a laugh, noting Sabalenka's strength on hard courts and calmness in the chaotic environment of Arthur Ashe Stadium. "If she's in control of (her) energy, she's pretty good."

Sabalenka has been first in the WTA rankings since Oct. 21, 2024. Regardless of the result, that changes Monday, with Rybakina ascending to that spot for the first time.

Rybakina, 27, is one victory away from her third major title and second this year. She won the Australian Open in January, beating Sabalenka in the final.

"It's an important match, and since it's a final, honestly, I feel like it doesn't matter who is on the other side," Rybakina said. "You just want to win and do your best."

Sabalenka has won 10 of her 17 matches against Rybakina, including two of three at Grand Slams. Rybakina is 4-2 when they've faced off in a final.

"She's a very aggressive player: It's difficult to play with her, mentally, physically because she has big game, big serve," Rybakina said. "I will need to come with all the energy I will have, bring my best serve against Aryna and make the right decisions in the right moment because most of the times it's (a) tight, tight score."

Mirnyi believes Sabalenka has gotten better throughout the tournament. That was evident in her making quick work of the third-ranked Pegula 7-5, 6-2, in 80 minutes to reach her fourth U.S. Open final in a row.

So much for the concerns over Sabalenka's summer struggles.

"I feel confident, and I feel mentally and physically really strong right now," Sabalenka said. "I keep the same routine. The last couple of months really teach me how to shut down the noise from outside. I think that's what's the meaning behind all of those tough lessons to finally learn how to stay focused on myself and forget about the outside noise."

Much of that noise was about being — and losing — No. 1 status. Sabalenka's coaches see a benefit in having the situation settled.

"It's extra fuel: 'I have to prove who's who,'" Dubrov said. "There's a next chapter right now. You have to chase again. It's extra motivation for you. Just go and get it."

CIA releases dozens of presidential daily briefs on bin Laden and

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al-Qaida before Sept. 11

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

Several dozen presidential briefing documents declassified Friday, the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks, detail intelligence government officials had gathered about Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida leading up to the hijackings that killed nearly 3,000 people and upended American national security.

The documents illustrate security analysts' tracking of bin Laden's movements and support system, as well as concerns about possible threats to U.S. targets. They also detail officials' understanding of his network in the United States and other countries, including how his operations were financed.

Proclaiming it "an act of exceptional transparency," CIA Director John Ratcliffe said the documents were the agency's single largest release of declassified presidential daily briefs — the highly classified briefings prepared by the nation's intelligence community for the government's most senior leaders.

The documents range from a February 1998 file — prepared for then-President Bill Clinton — titled "Terrorists seeking WMD capability" and mentioning bin Laden and other Islamic extremists to a Sept. 12, 2001, report in which a source indicated the attacks had been planned for two years and had also targeted the U.S. Capitol.

An April 1998 document described the Taliban's unwillingness to hand over bin Laden, at the time seen as their "guest" in Afghanistan, noting their "gratitude for his assistance during the Soviet occupation" was making them "reluctant to alienate him by monitoring or controlling his activities."

Briefers in July 1998 called it "plausible that Bin Ladin places a high priority on conducting attacks in the United States" and noted his "interest in conducting attacks with chemical and biological agents."

Two months later, a briefer wrote that bin Laden's "preferred option is to strike the US on its own soil in Washington," and that al-Qaida "may fly an explosive-packed airplane into a US city."

Potential hijackings were also discussed in December 1998, when a briefer described how conspirators "had evaded security checks during a recent trial run at an unidentified New York airport," and "some members of the Bin Ladin network have received hijack training."

Other documents detail bin Laden's pursuit of materials for making "dirty bombs," conventional weapons infused with radioactive material. By June 1999, according to intelligence officials, his operatives had conducted such experiments with explosives to "increase their energy output."

About two years before the attacks, intelligence officials were aware bin Laden appeared to be misleading the Taliban about his reluctance to launch an unprovoked attack on the U.S. Briefs prepared for President George W. Bush in early 2001 focused in part on bin Laden's "experimentation by crude means to make and deploy biological agents."

A report a month before the attacks indicated bin Laden's commitment "to conduct terrorist attacks in the US," noting that 1998 al-Qaida attacks on U.S. embassies "demonstrate that he prepares operations years in advance and is not deterred by setbacks."

At that time — August 2001 — officials wrote of "suspicious activity in this country consistent with preparations for hijackings or other types of attacks, including recent surveillance of federal buildings in New York," adding that the FBI was "conducting approximately 70 full field investigations throughout the US that it considers Bin Ladin-related."

Many of the documents were redacted to conceal sources' names and other identifying information. They didn't appear to break any new ground on the planning of the attacks or on U.S. officials' understanding of how they had unfolded.

In the years immediately following the attacks, a bipartisan commission highlighted a lack of information sharing among agencies such as the CIA and FBI, and issued recommendations that yielded new positions, including a centralized director of national intelligence, as well as the National Counterterrorism Center, which analyzes domestic and foreign terrorism information across different government branches.

Asked for comment on the release, the White House noted the release of another batch of documents by the National Archives, also Friday. That batch, including interviews with national security officials in the Clinton and Bush administrations, was a product of the commission that probed the attacks from 2002 to 2004.

US stocks jump after oil prices ease and an inflation update comes in near expectations

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks rebounded Friday and regained much of their losses for the week after oil prices eased off their recent spurt. An update on inflation across the United States that came in close to economists' expectations, even if prices are still rising too quickly for everyone's liking, also helped calm the market.

The S&P 500 climbed 0.9% and snapped a four-day losing streak, its longest since June. The Dow Jones Industrial Average jumped 509 points, or 1%, and the Nasdaq composite rose 1%.

They got help from a pullback in oil prices, which had jumped to their highest levels since May because of the ongoing war with Iran. The price for a barrel of Brent crude, the international standard, fell 2.8% to settle at \$104.61 after getting near \$110 overnight.

That took a bit of pressure off inflation, which remains stubbornly high. A report on Friday showed that U.S. consumers had to pay prices for gasoline, food and other costs of living that were 3.4% higher last month than a year earlier.

While still high, that was close to what economists expected and what Wall Street was prepared for. The data also strengthened expectations among traders that the Federal Reserve will feel compelled to hike its main interest rate at its meeting next week.

Such moves are the typical way the Fed tries to rein in high inflation, and they work by filtering through the bond market, making it more expensive for everyone to borrow money, slowing the economy and hopefully removing fuel for further inflation.

The rising expectations for an upcoming hike to rates drove up the yield of the two-year Treasury, which moves with guesses for upcoming Fed action, to 4.62% from 4.56% late Thursday.

Longer-term Treasury yields held steadier, though. That could be a signal that investors in the bond market see upcoming hikes by the Fed as helping to keep control of inflation over the longer term. The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose more modestly to 4.97% from 4.95% late Thursday, while the 30-year yield eased to 5.36% from 5.37%.

Economists say hikes could quiet questions about the Fed's commitment to keeping inflation under control. Worries had risen earlier in the summer about its credibility and whether it would do what's needed to bring inflation down, even if it causes pain for the economy in the near term.

Federal Reserve Chairman Kevin Warsh has been adamant about not giving hints about where the Fed may take interest rates, though he did calm some concerns among investors at a speech late last month. President Donald Trump, meanwhile, has been pushing for interest rates to go lower rather than higher.

"Symbolism can trump substance, even when it comes to monetary policy," according to Brian Jacobsen, chief economic strategist at Annex Wealth Management.

It's all coming at a moment when confidence among Americans continues to sour. A preliminary report from the University of Michigan on Friday said U.S. consumer sentiment is falling, with declines for both Democrats and Republicans.

Their expectations for inflation coming in the year ahead jumped to 4.6% from 4% last month. That's the highest reading since June, and it's concerning for the Fed and for economists because it can trigger a vicious cycle of behavior that worsens inflation.

On Wall Street, Kroger rose 2.7% after the grocer reported a stronger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected. It also held firm on its forecast for profit over the fiscal year, even though it trimmed its forecast for an important underlying measure of revenue growth.

ACV Auctions, whose digital marketplace connects wholesale buyers and sellers of vehicles, soared 44.2% after Copart said it would pay \$10.50 in cash for each of the company's shares. Copart, whose online vehicle auctions sold more than 4 million units in the last year, fell 2.6%.

An early jump for Oracle faded as trading progressed after the tech giant reported stronger profit and

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revenue for the latest quarter than analysts expected. After initially leaping 8.5%, its stock swiveled between gains and losses and finished with a loss of 1.7%.

Stocks closely tied to the artificial-intelligence industry broadly became shaky this summer on worries that the AI frenzy may have sent prices too high.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 65.28 points to 7,656.98. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 509.19 to 52,573.29, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 251.31 to 26,333.04.

In stock markets abroad, indexes rose in Europe as oil prices eased. London's FTSE 100 added 0.4% after a report said the U.K. economy was stronger in July than economists expected.

Stock markets were weaker in Asia, where Japan's Nikkei 225 lost 1.9% and South Korea's Kospi fell 1.8%.

The Houthi advance in Yemen raises concerns about a key shipping choke point

By DAVID McHUGH AP Business Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — The capture of the Red Sea port of Mokha and a strategic island by Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen brings their forces to the heart of a key choke point for the global economy: the Bab el-Mandeb Strait leading out of the Red Sea.

The Houthis took Mokha on Thursday and on Friday captured Mayun, also known as Perim, off Yemen's coast, two officials said, in a swift advance that extends their reach near one of the world's key commercial lanes.

The strait had been a vital route for crude oil supplies from Saudi Arabia to Asia after shipping through the Strait of Hormuz was restricted due to threat of Iranian attack — until Houthi targeting of Saudi tankers largely ended that safety valve.

The Houthi advance is focusing renewed attention on the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and further risks to shipping there, despite efforts by the Houthis to reassure shipowners that vessels other than those covered by their embargo on Saudi-linked shipping remain safe.

Bab el-Mandeb had served a key workaround for Saudi oil exports

The Strait of Hormuz was long the main highway for Saudi oil. But when Iran choked off most ship traffic at the Strait of Hormuz, the Saudis ramped up shipments through a pipeline running across the desert to Yanbu on the Red Sea.

Oil loaded on tankers in Yanbu could head out of the Red Sea through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and then east to Asia. That helped the Saudis maintain a share of their exports to customers there.

The Saudi Ministry of Energy said Friday that it had shut down the pipeline as "a precautionary measure" after it was attacked the previous day but did not specify who carried out the attacks.

The Red Sea route helped keep global oil prices in check, along with other improvised alternatives. In recent weeks the U.S. military has guided tankers through the Strait of Hormuz in defiance of Iranian demands that ships pass through a vetting lane near the Iranian coastline. And the United Arab Emirates has used a pipeline to Fujairah on the Gulf of Oman to skirt the Strait of Hormuz.

Houthi attacks on shipping through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait started in late 2023 over Israel's war in Gaza, leading many companies to abandon the route because of safety concerns. Traffic overall remains down some 60% from levels before then, although it remains a key freight route for goods moving between Asia and Europe.

Alternate routes have helped restore much of the Middle East oil flows

In August, alternative routes helped restore some two-thirds of the roughly 15 million barrels that transited Hormuz before the war. That took some of the economic pressure off the U.S. amid politically sensitive higher gas prices ahead of the midterm elections.

However, Houthi threats have weighed heavily on Saudi oil exports in the Red Sea. In August, Red Sea oil loadings fell from 3.8 million barrels per day to 2.2 million barrels per day, according to the International Energy Agency. Overall, Saudi supply fell 2.3 million barrels per day to 6 million barrels, the lowest in three decades, according to the IEA.

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By now, "Saudi shipping has largely routed away from this risk anyway," said Richard Meade, editor-in-chief of Lloyd's List.

While the Houthi advance "doesn't change the immediate risk profile" because Saudi and Israeli shipping is already high risk, it does raise the question of whether the Houthis, who have insisted that other shipping is safe, will expand their threats if they face further attack, Meade said.

"It puts the Houthis in a strong position to take further control if they want to," he said.

Meanwhile, increased attacks on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz this week have put use of the U.S. route on hold. Iran said it attacked 10 ships there Wednesday after the U.S. hit five Iranian tankers.

The Suez Canal is a workaround for the workaround

With the Houthis threatening Bab el-Mandeb, Saudi tankers have turned northwest instead of southeast from Yanbu and headed for the Suez Canal.

Tankers that are too big to pass through the canal have offloaded oil at Ain Sokhna in Egypt to a pipeline to Sidi Kerir on the Mediterranean coast, where the oil is picked up by tanker. Some 70% of Yanbu crude exports are now heading that way, either by pipeline or by tanker, according to Lloyd's.

That, however, is a time-consuming and expensive workaround for customers in Asia, since ships must then transit the Mediterranean, pass the Strait of Gibraltar and sail around the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa. The Suez route enables the Saudis to redirect as much as 3 million barrels per day.

But that more than doubles transit time to an Asian destination like South Korea, from 24 days to 54 days, according to senior research analyst Victoria Grabenwöger at energy data firm Kpler.

That adds to the cost, given that tankers cost tens of thousands of dollars per day to charter even in normal times, while prices have risen in some cases above \$100,000 per day during the current global energy turmoil.

FACT FOCUS: A look at false and misleading claims during the Republican midterm convention

By MELISSA GOLDIN Associated Press

President Donald Trump, Vice President JD Vance and other Republican officials came together for a two-day convention this week to rally voters in advance of midterm elections in November. But in celebrating their accomplishments, they made several false and misleading claims, many of which have been stated repeatedly during Trump's second term.

They covered topics including the economy, jobs, healthcare and the 2020 election. Trump spoke both nights and Vance gave the keynote on Thursday.

Here's a closer look at the facts.

Exaggerations about jobs and the economy

VANCE: "We've created 1 million new jobs, and unlike the last administration, where most of the job growth went to illegal aliens, 100% of the job growth in the United States of America is going to American citizens."

THE FACTS: Overall, the United States has added 807,000 jobs since Trump took office for his second term, close to Vance's claim of 1 million. But by historical standards, it's not a particularly large increase.

New jobs have averaged about 80,000 a month this year. That's up from 2025's dismal rate of about 9,700 a month on average. But job creation remains well below what was seen during the Biden administration. In 2024 and 2023, 166,000 monthly jobs were the norm — and the hiring boom that followed pandemic lockdowns brought numbers closer to 491,000 a month during 2021 and 2022.

Meanwhile, Vance's claim that all jobs added under Trump have gone to American citizens is misleading and needs context. It is based on data that is highly distorted by population changes, and the Labor Department and independent economists strongly discourage using the government's figures to measure how many jobs are held by immigrants or native-born Americans.

Instead, most economists recommend looking at unemployment rates to get a sense of how native-born and foreign-born workers are faring. And since Trump's inauguration in January 2025, the unemployment

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rate for native-born Americans has risen to 4.6% from 4.3%, suggesting the economy hasn't been a boon for American citizens.

Foreign-born workers, meanwhile, have seen their unemployment rate drop sharply, from 4.6% to 3.4%, from January 2025 through August. The foreign-born population includes legal immigrants and naturalized citizens as well as undocumented immigrants.

Even those figures could be distorted by the Trump administration's immigration crackdown, which may have caused some immigrants to avoid responding to government surveys, economists say.

Several studies released in recent months have found that the sharp increase in deportations under Trump has slowed hiring and growth in the communities where they have taken place. Many immigrants have stayed home during the crackdowns to avoid being arrested, cutting into shopping and spending. And some small businesses that have lost foreign-born workers have struggled to replace them and have taken on less work.

SCOTT BESSENT, treasury secretary, speaking Wednesday: "Under this president, more Americans are working than ever before."

THE FACTS: This is true, but missing context. The economy adds jobs most months, so U.S. payrolls are continually hitting new highs. Jobs have increased in the United States in 65 of the past 80 years.

In Trump's second term, however, job growth has slowed considerably. Last year, companies, government agencies and nonprofits added just 9,700 jobs a month — the weakest hiring outside a recession since 2002. So far this year, they've been creating 92,000 jobs a month, considerably better but unimpressive by historical standards.

During President Joe Biden's four years in office, employers added an average of nearly 329,000 jobs a month. Those totals were inflated by a record-breaking hiring surge in 2021 and 2022 that followed the end of COVID-19 lockdowns. But even in Biden's last two years — 2023 and 2024 — job growth averaged 166,000 a month.

High interest rates, Trump's own immigration crackdown and the retirement of Baby Boomers are contributing to lower job growth.

TRUMP, discussing investment in the U.S.: "We have more money being spent from outside countries and companies — over \$20 trillion."

THE FACTS: Trump has cited an increasingly higher number for investments in the U.S. throughout his second term, claiming on Wednesday that the number could go up to \$25 trillion. But he has presented no evidence that he has secured this amount of funds from either foreign or domestic sources.

Based on statements from various companies, foreign countries and the White House's own website, that figure appears to be highly speculative and far higher than the actual sum.

The White House website offers a far lower number, \$11.2 trillion, and that figure appears to include some investment commitments made during the Biden administration.

MIKE JOHNSON, House speaker, on Thursday: "At the end of the first Trump administration, the inflation rate was 1.4%. Yeah. But Joe Biden came in and he reversed the policies and brought us to a 40-year high of 9.1% inflation."

THE FACTS: This is missing context. Inflation was at 1.4% in 2021 as Biden assumed the presidency, having risen from a low of 0.1% in May 2020, two months into the COVID-19 pandemic. It continued to increase steadily in the first 17 months of Biden's presidency, reaching a peak of 9.1% in June 2022.

However, it had dropped to 2.9% in December 2024 as Biden prepared to leave office. During Trump's second term so far, inflation rose to a high of 4.2% in May. As of August, it was at 3.4%.

TRUMP: "The stock market has set 80 all-time record highs."

THE FACTS: It's unclear what exact stock market measure Trump is referring to. But the S&P 500 — an

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index for the biggest public companies in the U.S. — has hit a record 66 times since the start of Trump's second term in January 2025, including 27 new highs since the start of this year, per a count from investment research firm CFRA. It's hit 76 records since the 2024 presidential election.

U.S. stocks soared to their last record on Aug. 13, as part of a broader rally driven by a surge in company profits and then-easing oil prices. But renewed fighting between the U.S. and Iran, as well as an escalation in supply chain disruptions elsewhere, has led to more market volatility since. This week, for example, the international benchmark for crude oil soared past the \$100 mark for the first time in months.

Beyond the war, some of the biggest market swings this year have resulted from the frenzy (and skepticism) around the value of artificial-intelligence technology.

The reality of healthcare costs

VANCE: "We actually took on big pharma and lowered drug costs for all of our citizens."

THE FACTS: Federal data shows that U.S. prescription drug prices fell 0.9% in July and are down 3.1% from a year ago, the steepest year-over-year drop since 1963. The White House said these plunging prices resulted from Trump's "most favored nation" drug deal with pharmaceutical firms and the TrumpRx website, which it said are "delivering real relief to American families and putting patients first."

But drug pricing experts say the real picture is more complicated, noting that other factors, including a law from Biden's time in office that allowed Medicare to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies, are potentially more significant contributors to the latest consumer price index figures. Also at play are generic and biosimilar products that have come onto the market, offering competition that drives down the prices of expensive brand-name and biologic drugs.

Plus, consumers may not see this price drop in what they pay for medication, as it reflects what pharmacies get paid for the drugs, both by insurers and consumers.

2020 election redux

TRUMP: "When I'm on the ticket, Republicans always do very well. We won the presidency three times."

THE FACTS: Trump won the presidency in 2016 and 2024, but he did not prevail in the 2020 race, despite his repeated claims otherwise.

Biden earned 306 electoral votes to Trump's 232, achieving victory by prevailing in key states such as Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Arizona and Georgia. The Democratic candidate also earned over 7 million more popular votes than Trump.

Trump's allegations of massive voting fraud have been refuted by a variety of judges, state election officials and members of his first administration who were in office during the 2020 election.

Diesel prices are hitting record highs at a bad time for many US farmers

By NICK INGRAM and SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

FOREST CITY, Mo. (AP) — The price of diesel is hitting record highs just when many U.S. farmers need it to power combines, tractors and other equipment to harvest two of the nation's largest commodities, soybeans and corn.

The spike adds to an already tough year for these farmers, who also faced higher costs for fertilizer, seeds and equipment.

Diesel hit a record price in the U.S. on Sept. 4, soaring to an average of \$5.85 a gallon for the first time as the six-month war with Iran disrupted the world's flow of fuel. It has gone even higher since then, going for an average price of \$6.05 a gallon on Friday, according to AAA.

"Those prices hurt," said Paul Mitchell, a professor of agricultural and applied economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. "And it's not just the harvesting. It's the hauling of everything, moving the grain or the silage from the field to the farm and then from the farm to wherever they're selling it."

Jason Kurtz, a corn and soybean farmer near Forest City, Missouri, said he was paying twice as much for diesel this year. His combine uses 200 gallons (760 liters) of fuel a day; he expected to run it for 30 days. He also needed diesel for a tractor and trucks.

"We have to harvest," he said in an interview at his farm about 90 miles (145 kilometers) outside Kansas City on Tuesday. "We have to run the machines. We have to use the diesel, so it cuts into our bottom line."

Kurtz, 49, said his finances were "already tight" this year after he also had to pay more for fertilizer and chemicals.

American diesel prices are now 60% higher than they were before the U.S. and Israel launched their war against Iran in late February, when the national average was about \$3.76 per gallon, according to AAA. Prices quickly climbed as the cost of crude oil — the main ingredient in diesel, as well as gasoline — skyrocketed amid disruptions to tanker traffic in the Strait of Hormuz because of the war.

"Farms that are cash strapped, they're the ones that are most having to figure out what to cut to make this work," Mitchell said. "There are a lot of farms facing that."

Kurtz, who voted for President Donald Trump, said he planned to hold off on some farm work until later, when he was hopeful diesel prices would fall.

"That's one good thing about farming," he said. "Tomorrow will be different."

Users in Houthi-held Yemen tried to develop advanced weapons with AI, Anthropic says

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Anthropic says Claude users in northern Yemen, territory controlled by Iran-backed Houthi rebels, tried to use the AI model to develop advanced missiles.

AI is already transforming warfare from Ukraine to Gaza, and its use on a rugged and remote battlefield is likely to increase concerns about its rapid spread.

Anthropic said the users of the accounts, which it blocked after identifying them, did not succeed in "fielding an operational device" but did carry out a failed test of a guided rocket. It said it knows that because the users returned to its Claude chatbot to find out why it failed.

In a report released Thursday, the company did not identify the users. But mountainous northern Yemen is controlled by Houthis, suggesting that the rebels are pursuing more sophisticated weapons at a time when they are already wielding an array of drones, missiles and other munitions in their campaign to seize more territory in Yemen and damage Saudi Arabia's oil exports.

Hazam al-Assad, a member of the Houthis' political bureau, said it is "unreasonable and illogical" that they would rely on open sources to develop and produce military capabilities.

"Our armed forces have modern, diverse and developed production capabilities and technology that it has accumulated over the period of Saudi aggression on Yemen," al-Assad said, referring to the kingdom's involvement in Yemen's 12-year civil war. He said all weapons are used for self-defense.

The report was the third put out by Anthropic since March 2025 on global misuse of its AI platforms, and it described findings from December to August, ranging from state-sponsored groups spreading propaganda to unnamed actors researching how to make biological weapons more deadly.

The Houthis may have been seeking to develop their capabilities

The developer of the prominent Claude chatbot said it identified a cell in northern Yemen pursuing three different weapons programs, including a multi-variant missile that glides at hypersonic speed and a warhead that uses mobile phone hardware to maneuver mid-course.

It said the actors in Yemen used Claude Code instead of human software engineers to develop guidance, navigation and control software. Multi-variant missiles are ones in which different warheads and guidance systems can be fit on the same base design, a more economical way to build land, sea and air weapons.

Anthropic said it had evidence that before the accounts were banned, the users had already built an offline simulation tool kit that doesn't use Claude or any other computing platforms.

Trevor Ball, a weapons analyst at Armament Research Services, said that while the Houthis "might be looking into hypersonic (missiles) by asking Claude," they have nowhere near the production or technical capabilities to actually build them. He noted that U.S. hypersonic missiles "are still in testing."

He said the Houthis already have Iranian-made anti-ship missiles with systems that allow the missiles to

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adjust guidance mid-course.

"They are probably just trying to develop their own capabilities more, so they are less reliant on Iranian shipments of weapons and components," he said in a text message.

Iran has boasted it has hypersonic missiles and claimed it had fired them at Israel last year. It denies arming the Houthis, which would be in violation of a U.N. embargo, but Iranian weapons have been found on the battlefield and seized from shipments bound for Yemen.

The Houthis are increasingly threatening key shipping routes

The Houthis have launched waves of attacks on Saudi oil facilities and tankers in the Red Sea, threatening global trade as Iran continues to disrupt shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.

The rebels have made lightning territorial gains since Wednesday in their war with Yemen's Saudi-backed government, seizing strategic territories along the Red Sea coast and in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, a key alternative to the Strait of Hormuz.

Adam Baron, a Yemen-focused researcher at the New America think tank in Washington, said the Houthis have kept up with technological development.

"There's a tendency to see the Houthis as this group of barefoot tribal fighters, and that's just not true," he said. "Whether it's things like their emergent use of Claude, their use and manipulation of social media narratives or their ability to capitalize on the transfer of Iranian and wider axis expertise, we're talking about an incredible — and deepening — amount of institutional tech savvy."

The Houthis are known to have acquired and developed a sophisticated arsenal of weapons, including Iranian-made cruise and ballistic missiles with a range of more than 2,000 kilometers (1,200 miles) and unmanned submarines used in attacks.

Anthropic said it shared its findings with private and public partners.

Trump commemorates the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks at the Pentagon

By COLLIN BINKLEY, AAMER MADHANI and MEG KINNARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump observed Friday's 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks at a ceremony at the Pentagon by commemorating the lives lost when al-Qaida militants hijacked planes and killed nearly 3,000 people in three locations and upended American foreign policy and national security.

Trump and first lady Melania Trump listened as the names of the 184 people killed at the Pentagon that day were read aloud, a bell tolling between each. In his remarks, Trump recounted the stories of several of the victims and insisted that the moment has led to a fortification of American resolve.

"We will never, ever forget," Trump said. "That's why we fight today. We don't have a choice."

Earlier, in a downpour at daybreak, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and top military officials stood outside and watched as a giant American flag was unfurled on the building struck by one of those planes a quarter-century ago.

It was the second year in a row that Trump observed the day at the Pentagon. The president, who is originally from New York, last attended the ground zero ceremony there in 2024.

Vice President JD Vance attended the New York observance alongside former presidents, while other administration officials took part in the ceremony in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Vance had planned to be in New York for the anniversary last year but instead flew to Salt Lake City to be with the family of Charlie Kirk after the conservative activist was assassinated.

Widow calls on Trump to reconsider relations with Saudis

At one point during the solemn remembrance in New York City, a woman whose husband died in the attacks criticized Saudi Arabia and called on the Trump administration to rethink the United States' tight relationship with the kingdom.

Terry Strada, who lost her husband Tom Strada on 9/11, called on Trump to "tell the Saudis to stop lying" and accused U.S. presidents of choosing "to protect the Saudis instead of standing with the 9/11 families."

Strada, who was one of the 9/11 family members who read aloud the names of victims at this year's re-

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membrance, added that the current administration should "stand with the families, stand with the survivors."

"It has been one betrayal after another. President Trump can still change that," she said before calling on Vance to "carry that message back" to Washington.

Strada is part of a group of family members of 9/11 victims embroiled in a long-running lawsuit against the Saudis. They allege a group of extremist religious leaders in Saudi Arabia gained influence in the Saudi government and aided the hijackers. Fifteen of the 19 hijackers were Saudis, but the Saudi government has long denied any involvement in the attacks.

Trump and Hegseth try to bridge 9/11 and Iran war

Trump began his remarks by recalling the sense of American unity following the attacks. "In those harrowing days after the attacks, we saw the authentic spirit of our nation," Trump said. "We were all New Yorkers that day. Every one of us. We were all New Yorkers. We were all family."

The president and his defense secretary sought to connect the events of 9/11 to the war with Iran. Trump saluted the service members "working right now to ensure the world's No. 1 sponsor of terror — the Islamic Republic of Iran — will never, ever have a nuclear weapon."

Hegseth used the moment to make the case that the U.S. military had "laid waste to the world's most prolific state sponsor of terrorism" with the war against Iran.

"Our warriors have fought an Islamic theocracy that has wished us death for nearly half a century, that cheered on 9/11, a regime that has sponsored terrorist attacks against Americans for decades, killing thousands, including our comrades in Iraq, in Afghanistan," Hegseth added.

Officials wonder if 9/11 could have been thwarted

At Friday's commemorations, there was also a measure of reflection about whether 9/11, the deadliest attack on the U.S., could have been prevented.

Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin at a ceremony at his agency's headquarters said it was a moment to consider the success of his department, which was stood up following the attacks and has "prevented it from happening again."

Still, Mullin noted that Osama bin Laden, architect of the attacks, had fired "warning shots" in the years prior to 9/11 about his intent to carry out a major strike on the U.S. The U.S. national security apparatus certainly had "failures along the way," Mullin said.

Condoleezza Rice, who was serving as White House national security adviser on 9/11, participated in Friday's commemoration at the Pentagon. In her remarks, she acknowledged that she still feels deep pain that "those of us in authority on that day did not see the nature of the danger in time to prevent the attack of 9/11."

"I will always carry deep personal remorse for the pain that you, the families of the fallen, still feel, and for the trauma that our country endured," Rice said.

A pilot of the Amazon cargo plane that careened off Miami runway warned it was coming in too fast

By JOSH FUNK AP Transportation Writer

For nearly two minutes, one of the pilots of the Amazon cargo plane that careened off a Miami runway and killed five people repeatedly warned his counterpart they were going too fast as they approached for landing and after touchdown, according to flight information released Wednesday.

A summary of cockpit voice recordings compiled by the National Transportation Safety Board said the fellow pilot never gave "a consistent verbal response" to the warnings. The plane touched down awkwardly, briefly attempted to take off and then smashed into a van carrying the five victims.

The Amazon plane came in fast on Sunday afternoon and then barreled roughly 1,300 feet (396 meters) past the end of the runway and smashed into a van carrying workers at a plane cleaning company before hitting a compact SUV as it slid across a public road before catching fire.

All five people who died were in the van. Five others were hurt, including two who remained in critical condition on Tuesday. The two pilots survived and were interviewed Wednesday by investigators.

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The pilots had time to correct or abandon their landing

At the point when the pilot first called out the plane was speeding, former FAA official Mike O'Donnell said the crew could have done a number of things to slow it down, including extending the spoilers, cutting the throttles and lowering the landing gear. Or the pilots could have just aborted the landing at that point and circled to try again.

"You have plenty of time to slow down, plenty of time to say, let's just do a go-around at two minutes out," said O'Donnell, who used to oversee airport safety and crash investigations.

Plane was unsteady as it approached the ground

Information from the flight data recorder that was released late Tuesday shows how unsteady the plane was as it came in to land amid strong winds, and then the pilots briefly disengaged the brakes and shoved the throttles up as if they were trying to take off again and retry the landing. But they abandoned that just four seconds later.

The cockpit audio recordings also captured a series of automated warnings from the plane about the speed of descent and the approaching terrain. O'Donnell said those terrain warnings reinforce that the plane was unsteady and suggest it may not have been configured correctly for landing.

The Amazon plane was well down the runway when its right and nose landing gear first touched down, reducing how much distance the plane had on the runway ahead of it to stop. Strong winds at the airport as storms moved in may have created a tail wind that helped propel the plane forward. Tracking site Flightradar24 estimated based on the NTSB data that the plane was nearly halfway down the 9,360-foot runway when it first touched down.

The full transcript of the cockpit conversation won't be released until later in the investigation.

Experts question how well the pilots worked together

Several experts have said the pilots should have aborted that landing while the plane was still in the air and circled around to retry it.

Former airline pilot and safety expert Steve Arroyo said the details released Wednesday show a lack of teamwork in the cockpit and suggest the pilot at the controls may have been too focused on the landing to acknowledge the speed warnings.

"Where's the coordination? Where's the leadership here in terms of managing the flight deck? And following the trained guidelines set forth in the company's flight manual?" Arroyo questioned.

Mary Schiavo, who is a former Inspector General of the Transportation Department, said she wonders if the pilot at the controls was the more senior captain while the less experienced first officer called out the warnings "and the junior pilot was not aggressive in challenging."

Investigators will consider everything that may have been a factor

The 32-year-old Boeing 767 was originally built to carry passengers and flew for several airlines in foreign countries for more than two decades before being converted to a cargo plane in 2015, according to flight-tracking site Flightradar24.

The final flight was operated by 21 Air, a cargo carrier based in North Carolina that has been flying packages for Amazon since 2024.

The jet's ownership history, weather conditions at the airport, maintenance records and operations by 21 Air were expected to be reviewed by NTSB investigators.

It's the second crash of a cargo jet in the U.S. in less than a year. A UPS plane crashed after losing its engine while accelerating down the runway at Louisville's Muhammad Ali International Airport in November. The crash killed all three pilots and 12 people on the ground. Twenty-three more were injured.

What to know about the Amazon cargo plane crash in Miami that killed 5 workers in a van

By JOSH FUNK and JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

Investigators are still trying to determine what caused an Amazon cargo jet to overshoot a runway in Miami and plow into two vehicles, killing five people on the ground.

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The Boeing 767 hit a van on Miami International Airport property on Sunday before ramming through a fence and hitting an SUV on a public street. Five people who were a part of a cleaning crew in the van died while two survived. The pilot and co-pilot also lived.

National Transportation Safety Board Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy called the scene at the airport "utter devastation."

Hundreds of flights at the Miami airport have been delayed or canceled as authorities investigate the crash site, where the jet and a mangled white van have remained. By late Tuesday, only one of the airport's four runways was still closed, raising the likelihood that the cancellations would begin to ease.

Here's what to know about the crash.

Jet spent a long time over the runway before touching down

The NTSB said the plane barreled roughly 1,300 feet (396 meters) past the end of the runway.

It was landing after a two-hour flight from Puerto Rico as storms brewed around the Miami airport.

Homendy called the scene "utter devastation," with pieces of the vehicles, air bags, destroyed navigational equipment and fencing along the plane's route. Investigators didn't have full access to the site until all the jet fuel was recovered from the plane Monday evening.

Former FAA official Mike O'Donnell said that the fact that the plane landed on its nose and right landing gear first demonstrates this was an unstable landing. He said the pilot might have been attempting a "go-around" to retry the landing approach.

Video of the landing showed the plane hovering above the runway for a long time without flaring the nose to force the wheels onto the ground. Experts said it appeared a strong tail wind propelled the plane far past the point where it was supposed to land. Air traffic controllers also had not changed the approach to the runway to allow the plane to land into a headwind. Investigators will want to know how quickly the winds shifted.

All the people killed were in a cleaning service van

Amazon said in a statement that it is cooperating with the investigation and the company's deepest sympathies go to the victims and their families.

The five people killed were all in a van owned by Professional Ocean Service Corp., a company that cleans planes. The company said it wouldn't comment on the crash out of respect for the families who lost loved ones.

"Our employees are far more than the people who work beside us each day, they are family, and they are deeply loved. Our hearts and prayers are with every employee and every family whose lives have been forever changed," the company said in a statement Tuesday.

The Miami-Dade sheriff identified the deceased as Rolando Aleman Leon, 55; Yoel Rodriguez Naranjo, 53; Julio C. Pineda, 75; Carlos Acosta Fajardo, 53; and Javierkys Reyes Quevedo, 47.

The jet started as a passenger plane before converting to cargo

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It's the second crash of a cargo jet in the U.S. in less than a year. A UPS plane crashed after losing its engine while accelerating down the runway at Louisville's Muhammad Ali International Airport in November. The crash killed all three pilots and 12 people on the ground. Twenty-three more were injured.

Miami airport lacked system to stop speeding jets

Homendy has said the NTSB will look at Miami's lack of a special system to slow and stop speeding jets at the end of runways. But investigators will examine everything that may have contributed.

About 120 airports in the U.S. have the lightweight, crushable material that the Federal Aviation Administration says has saved around 500 lives.

Even without a runway excursion system, Miami's airport appears to be compliant with federal rules

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because it has a 1,000-foot (305-meter) safety buffer at the end of its runways, experts said.

Homendy said her agency's goal is to prevent tragedies, but runway excursions continue to happen even after the board has suggested installing the systems in the past.

"Our recommendations must be implemented or we're going to be here again," she said.

No relief from inflation as Middle East clashes lifts fuel prices to painful levels

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. inflation accelerated last month as gas prices spiked in the wake of renewed fighting in the Middle East, underscoring the affordability challenges that are top of mind for many voters with midterm elections now just seven weeks away.

The consumer price index rose 3.4% last month compared with a year ago, the Labor Department said Friday, just like July. But inflation quickened month to month as costs jumped 0.4% from July, quadrupling the 0.1% registered in the previous month.

Inflation remains stubbornly elevated more than five years after prices soared as the economy emerged from the pandemic. Friday's report increases pressure on the inflation-fighters at the Federal Reserve to boost their benchmark interest rate next week, which could lift mortgage and auto loan costs in the months ahead.

Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh and other Fed officials have signaled they would need to see continuing disinflation to leave rates where they are.

"Today's August report did not deliver that," said Kathy Bostjancic, chief economist at Nationwide.

Prices rise across many goods and services

Gasoline prices are not all that is rising. Prices for appliances, car repairs, and wireless phone services also jumped last month. Yet economists worry that more expensive fuel can spill into other parts of the economy. Diesel prices have hit record highs above \$6 a gallon, which pushes up the cost of shipping for groceries and other goods.

Airline tickets rose 2.7% on a monthly basis, according to the new data, and have soared more than 23% from a year earlier.

Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core prices were 2.4% higher in August than a year ago, down slightly from July's 2.5% and the third straight decline. But on a monthly basis, core prices rose 0.3% from July to August, the largest increase since April.

The surprising monthly increases in core prices are likely embolden those Fed officials who have pushed for higher interest rates. Wall Street investors now see a more than 80% chance that the Fed will increase rates Sept. 16, according to CME Fedwatch, a 10-point jump from Thursday.

The Trump administration is seeking to counter voter concerns about high prices and rising interest rates. President Donald Trump on Wednesday promised \$5,000 payments to every American adult if the GOP keeps a majority in Congress. That would require congressional approval and could stoke inflation.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has stepped up buybacks of Treasury bonds in an effort to keep longer-term interest rates lower. The yield on the 10-year Treasury reached a nearly three-year high Thursday and traded at a still-elevated 4.9% Friday.

Chris Mitchell, 36, a customer service agent for an auto parts retailer, says he is still struggling to keep up with rent, food, and other costs, much more than before the pandemic.

Before COVID-19 struck, Mitchell remembers eating out two to three times a week and frequently going to the theater, activities he has sharply reduced since. He and his girlfriend have three cars that are roughly 20 years old.

Rent at the home he shares with her and her 12-year old jumped \$200 this year, to \$2,300. He had moved in with them so he could more easily pay bills.

"I've been hurting, I need a raise, I'm about to ask my boss for one in the coming week, actually," he said. He got a raise two years ago, "but it just doesn't go as far any more."

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What has gotten more expensive

Gas prices jumped 3.9% just from July to August, Friday's report said, leaving gas prices more than 27% higher than a year earlier. Prices at the pump have continued rising, meaning inflation is likely worsening this month. The nationwide average cost of a gallon of gas on Friday is 7% higher than a month ago at \$4.30.

In addition to rising plane ticket costs, hotel room prices climbed 2.4% just from July to August and are 3.2% more expensive than a year ago. Car repair costs rose 1.1% just last month and are up 5.2% from a year earlier.

The rising cost of services like hotel rooms and wireless plans will also unnerve many Fed officials, since they are not driven by higher energy prices.

"Analysts and the Fed had been counting on these categories of prices to moderate by now," Scott Anderson, chief U.S. economist at BMO Capital Markets, wrote in a note. "The trends coming from the August CPI report do not build confidence that inflation is continuing on its path of moderation toward the 2% target."

On Thursday, a wholesale price report showed a jump in chemical prices, likely a result of more expensive oil.

Apparel and grocery prices were unchanged from July to August, providing some relief to consumers, though eggs moved 2.9% higher last month. Egg prices are still down sharply from a year earlier.

Inflation as one-time shock or something more

Many economists and Federal Reserve officials have long considered higher gas prices one of several "one-time" shocks that are lifting inflation, along with tariffs and surging investment in AI data centers. For months, the hope has been that as the war against Iran wound down, and the effects of tariffs faded, inflation would grind lower.

Yet there are few signs of the Iran war cooling, and even Trump has said gas prices won't retreat until after the midterm elections in November. And while Trump's trade fight with Canada will impact a small number of imports, it is a reminder that tariffs remain a threat that could push up other costs.

"This is not one and done," Bostjancic said. "It's unclear when tensions in the Middle East are going to settle down. ... This seems like it could be a prolonged disruption."

Federal Reserve widely expected to lift rates

Friday's report has spurred many economists to pencil in a rate hike at the Fed's next meeting Sept. 15-16. Chair Warsh suggested he was leaning toward a rate hike in a high-profile speech two weeks ago, but he did not commit to doing so at a specific time.

Warsh has said he doesn't want to tip his hand about his next moves, leaving some uncertainty going into the meeting.

The Fed left its key rate unchanged at its last policy meeting in late July, but three officials voted in favor of hiking by a quarter point, which would have increased it to about 3.9% from 3.6%.

US diesel prices soar past \$6 a gallon, deepening strain for hauling everyday goods

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Diesel prices in the U.S. hit yet another record on Friday, soaring past \$6 a gallon on average as Washington's war with Iran disrupts the world's flow of fuel.

The national average of nearly \$6.06 is up from \$5.85 last week and almost \$3.71 this time last year, according to motor club AAA.

Higher diesel prices mean more expensive transportation for a long list of everyday goods. That's because diesel is used for many freight and delivery networks. And some businesses have already passed along steeper costs to consumers in the form of added fees on online orders and packages in the mail.

Shoppers may feel more and more sticker shock, particularly in the grocery aisle. Perishable foods, like meat and produce, face one of the most immediate strains of expensive diesel because they need to be

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hauled in and restocked frequently — or may be harvested using farm equipment powered by the fuel. It can take time for those costs to trickle down. But the surge in diesel prices doesn't appear to be going away anytime soon.

Prices at the pump for diesel and regular gasoline — which hit nearly \$4.30 on average in the U.S. Friday — closely follow that of crude oil. And oil has renewed its rise recently. This week, both Brent, the international standard, and U.S. crude surpassed \$100 a barrel for the first time in months as fighting between the U.S. and Iran escalated again.

Political ramifications may pile up in the meantime. President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly tried to downplay the effects of the war he co-launched, said that oil prices likely won't come down until after November's midterm elections.

What's driving the latest jump for diesel

American diesel prices are now over 60% higher than they were before the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran in late February, when the national average sat at about \$3.76 per gallon per AAA. Prices quickly climbed as the cost of crude oil — the main ingredient in refined fuel like diesel, as well as gasoline — soared amid supply chain disruptions across the Middle East, notably with most tanker traffic bottlenecked in the key Strait of Hormuz.

Despite some during hopes for peace earlier in the summer, oil has now renewed its climb as fighting once more escalates. And more supply disruptions are piling up. The International Energy Agency reported Friday that Saudi oil production fell to a three-decade low last month due to Houthi attacks on its energy facilities.

And elsewhere, losses in the Middle East have been amplified by the war in Ukraine, as the IEA also noted Friday. Disruptions in Russia's refining system stemming from intense Ukrainian attacks have nearly halted product exports.

When adjusted for inflation, fuel prices have been higher in the past. Ahead of the 2008 financial crisis, for example, diesel hit about \$4.74 a gallon, equivalent to \$7.20 in 2026, according to the government's latest data. And 2022's then-record of nearly \$5.82 — reached just months after Russia invaded Ukraine — would be about \$6.56 this year when accounting for inflation.

That doesn't take the pain away from today's steep prices, which are already bringing ripple effects for the economy and wider costs of living. Drivers are feeling the pain with gasoline, too.

Friday's average \$4.29 for a gallon of regular unleaded is up from \$2.98 before the Iran war, although still below the 2022 peak of nearly \$5.02 a gallon nationwide.

Diesel has been more expensive than gasoline in the U.S. for decades, and its price has risen at a faster pace before. Some reasons include less flexibility in demand and diesel's position in global commerce overall. Individual households may find ways to drive less when gas prices are high, for example, but there's fewer immediate substitutes for networks that rely on diesel to haul goods worldwide.

All eyes on food

Diesel is integral to every part of the food supply chain. It powers farm equipment and fishing boats, as well as the trains and trucks headed to grocery stores.

Fuel accounts for roughly 15% to 30% of the total cost of food, according to the Independent Grocers Alliance, a grouping of 7,500 global supermarkets. So higher diesel costs often result in more expensive groceries, although it can take a while for energy shocks to wind their way through the supply chain.

Items that need to stay refrigerated while they're transported are often the first to see prices rise, according to David Ortega, a professor of food economics and policy at Michigan State University. In July, for example, overall U.S. grocery prices were up 2.7% compared to a year prior, but seafood prices were up 7% and fresh fruit prices were up 4.9%.

Ortega cautioned other factors can be at play, too. Lettuce also faced higher transportation costs in July, but a drop in demand due to the cyclospora outbreak caused prices to fall.

Still, consumers could feel more of a squeeze the longer diesel prices remain high.

"Early on, much of the cost increase gets absorbed along the supply chain through existing freight

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contracts and retailer margins," Ortega explained last week. "But as contracts reprice and fuel surcharges take hold, more of that cost makes its way to the grocery store."

Fuel shocks range far and wide

Back in April, e-commerce giant Amazon rolled out a temporary 3.5% fuel and logistics surcharge on some third-party sellers. United Parcel Service, FedEx and the United States Postal Service also moved to add fees on some of the packages they ship earlier in the war, citing rising costs for fuel overall.

Experts warn that price hikes could mount the longer diesel remains expensive. A range of other products are also transported by diesel-powered networks, including clothing, cosmetics and furniture.

The ramifications extend beyond consumer goods. Some public transit buses and trains also run on diesel. And diesel generators are often used for backup or emergency power, if not central electricity sources in some remote parts of the world.

Experts warn the consequences could continue to deepen, particularly in African and Asian countries, which rely more on Middle East imports and have already been hit the hardest by energy shocks.

According to the latest data from Global Petrol Prices, diesel prices in Nigeria have surged over 90% since late February — followed by nearly 87% in Indonesia and 80% in Lebanon.

Price tags vary widely between countries, due to factors ranging from fuel taxes to local economic conditions. As of Monday, diesel prices in Nigeria were about \$4.95 per gallon (1,730 naira per liter) on average. Meanwhile, the highest sticker price reported by Global Petrol Prices was in Hong Kong, where diesel costs have jumped almost 26% during the war and averaged at \$17.78 a gallon (nearly 37 Hong Kong dollars per liter) Monday.

A long road of constrained supply — and perhaps higher and higher prices — could be ahead.

S&P Global Energy said Thursday it now doesn't project crude oil production in the Middle East to return to prewar levels by the end of 2027.

"The market is not returning to calm, it is adjusting to the new normal," said Jim Burkhard, VP and global head of crude oil research at S&P Global Energy, noting security and logistical challenges continue to limit oil flows.

Body camera video offers a rare look inside an immigration raid at a NY factory

By VALERIE GONZALEZ and MARK VANCLEAVE Associated Press

The sprawling snack-food factory in upstate New York appeared to be closed when a small army of immigration officers arrived after 9 a.m. Following a brief discussion of whether to force their way inside, a manager opened the front door.

Over the next several hours, body cameras were running as federal authorities from several agencies made 57 arrests, debated which files to seize and when to release employees who were U.S. citizens. They also searched for anyone in hiding.

The footage from September 2025 shows the raid at the Nutrition Bar Confectioners plant in Cato, New York, a town of 2,500 people east of Syracuse, and offers a rare glimpse inside a workplace immigration sweep. The Associated Press analyzed the video, which was part of a lawsuit filed Thursday that accuses authorities of overstepping their search warrants.

The officers ordered a manager to announce their presence over loudspeakers while they entered the building and caught employees on the production line, in the warehouse and a few in the bathroom. Officers covered all exits while others swept the interior, including homing in on locked doors.

Male officers encountered a locked bathroom and began shouting instructions in broken Spanish at female employees through the door, demanding that they come out. After about 10 seconds, officers broke through the door.

One woman was outside of a stall and another in the stall. A male officer peered through a locked stall door, and his body cam video revealed a woman sitting on the toilet.

"Miss, pull up your pants. Come out of the bathroom," he told her.

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"You have to wait. I can't come out like this, naked!" she replied.

Investigators interviewed the general manager and said they were looking into hiring practices and potential fraudulent documents. Inside and outside the building, officers checked every office, storage room and hallway for anyone who was hiding.

Employees were lined up and separated into groups of U.S. citizens and potential noncitizens. Officers asked for their immigration status, requested documents and posed questions about their entry into the U.S. Some employees were pregnant.

Some were parents and expressed concern for their children at home. Others said they would not answer questions without first speaking to their attorneys, and officers told them they would be arrested.

One employee refused to answer questions. "Will you let me talk to my attorney?" she asked the officer. He raised his voice and continued asking about her immigration status.

U.S. citizens were asked for personal information, including their phone numbers and addresses before they were allowed to leave.

A Border Patrol agent who spoke to another official wearing a camera used disparaging language about children from other countries when recounting his experience working at a South Texas immigrant detention center. He said President Joe Biden's administration allowed millions of people to enter the United States from countries where children are treated "differently" than they are by American parents.

"In other countries, kids are more of a commodity or it's more of like, I'm going to put it in those terms. It's more like an animal, right? It's not prized the way that we do it," he said.

"There's countries like Brazil and other places where they're literal street rats at a very young age who commit crimes, and then they come here. I don't know if you have kids, but they'll eat our kids for breakfast."

The Homeland Security Department said Friday that it executed a criminal search warrant at the plant as part of an investigation that is still open. Its statement did not address the contents of the video or the merits of the lawsuit.

Not all officers wore body cameras, but those who did often indicated to other officers that they were recording before they initiated a conversation.

ICE's Homeland Security Investigations unit is responsible for workplace raids, which have been relatively few and low-key compared to ICE's removal unit, which arrests people in the street, at homes and in public and also manages detention centers. The Trump administration's largest workplace raid was last year at a Hyundai electric vehicle plant in Georgia. It resulted in nearly 500 arrests and fueled diplomatic tension with South Korea.

The lawsuit against Homeland Security claims federal officers exceeded the authority of their warrants and violated workers' constitutional rights against unlawful search and seizure.

"There were no arrest warrants," said Perry Grossman, a supervising attorney at the New York Civil Liberties Union, which filed the lawsuit with the Worker Justice Center of New York.

"There was no suspicion that individual workers had committed crimes. And they seized easily 100 people for nonconsensual questioning. They arrested 57. Out of those 57 people, criminal charges were brought against only five. And the most serious charge was unlawful reentry."

Grossman said one employee got her charges dismissed after contending in a lawsuit that her Fourth Amendment rights were violated. He said he was not aware of any charges or indictments against the employers.

Officers detained about 60 people and deported some employees, including two plaintiffs who are part of Thursday's lawsuit. One plaintiff has since been allowed to reenter the country. Attorneys for the second deported plaintiff are seeking his return.

Law enforcement agencies have come under criticism for not using body cameras and for refusing to release footage when they do. ICE, in particular, has been scrutinized after a \$75 billion infusion from Congress and an expanding street presence that has led to three fatal shootings this year.

ICE's own rules on releasing video are unclear. Its policy calls for expedited release of footage after a serious injury or death in custody when doing so is determined to be in the "best interests of the agency."

The Trump administration has repeatedly promised to equip ICE field agents with body cameras, as

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required by Congress. Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin said last week that the agency was "on track" to do so by the end of September.

Today in History: September 12, Voyager 1 leaves the solar system

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Sept. 12, the 255th day of 2026. There are 110 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 12, 2013, Voyager 1, launched 36 years earlier, became the first man-made spacecraft ever to leave the solar system.

Also on this date:

In 1857, the S.S. Central America (also known as the "Ship of Gold") sank off the coast of South Carolina after sailing into a hurricane in one of the worst maritime disasters in American history; 425 people were killed and thousands of pounds of gold sank with the ship to the bottom of the ocean.

In 1940, the Lascaux cave paintings, estimated to be 17,000 years old, were discovered in southwestern France.

In 1958, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Cooper v. Aaron*, unanimously ruled that Arkansas officials who were resisting public school desegregation orders could not disregard the high court's rulings.

In 1959, the Soviet Union launched its Luna 2 space probe, which made a crash landing on the moon.

In 1962, in a speech at Rice University in Houston, President John F. Kennedy reaffirmed his support for the manned space program, declaring: "We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard."

In 1977, South African Black student leader and anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko, 30, died while in police custody, triggering an international outcry.

In 1994, truck driver Frank Eugene Corder piloted a stolen single-engine Cessna airplane into restricted airspace in Washington, D.C., and crashed it into the South Lawn of the White House. He died in the crash.

In 2003, in the Iraqi city of Fallujah, U.S. forces mistakenly opened fire on vehicles carrying police, killing eight officers.

In 2008, a Metrolink commuter train struck a freight train head-on in Los Angeles, killing 25 people.

In 2011, Novak Djokovic beat Rafael Nadal to win his first U.S. Open championship.

In 2015, at least 89 people were killed at a restaurant in central India when a cooking gas cylinder exploded and triggered a second blast of mine detonators stored illegally nearby.

In 2025, dozens of people were killed in a village north of Haiti's capital in the latest massacre carried out by powerful gangs in the troubled Caribbean country.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Linda Gray is 86. Singer Maria Muldaur is 83. Author Michael Ondaatje is 83. Actor Joe Pantoliano is 75. Photographer Nan Goldin is 73. Composer Hans Zimmer is 69. Actor Rachel Ward is 69. Actor-comedian Louis (loo-ee) C.K. is 59. Golfer Angel Cabrera is 57. Country singer Jennifer Nettles (Sugarland) is 52. Rapper 2 Chainz is 49. Singer Ruben Studdard is 48. Basketball Hall of Famer Yao Ming is 46. Singer-actor Jennifer Hudson is 45. Actor Alfie Allen is 40. Actor Emmy Rossum is 40. Los Angeles Dodgers first baseman Freddie Freeman is 37. Country singer-songwriter Kelsea Ballerini is 33. Actor Sydney Sweeney is 29. Singer Chris Grey is 25. Actor Jayla Walton is 22.