

Groton Daily Independent

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Justin Hanson, Field Marketer
justin.hanson@titanmachinery.com
605-380-1120

Two bedroom apartment in the Rix Apartments (former city apartments) at 407 N Garfield

FOR RENT

Attached garage.

Major appliances included.

\$700 per month

Roger: 605/397-7118

Thursday, December 11

School Breakfast: Breakfast bagel, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Mini corn dogs, baked beans, carrots and dip, fruit.

Senior Menu: Chili, cornbread, coleslaw, lime pear Jell-O

Anniversary: Dave & Connie Nilsson

4:00pm: JHGBB at Ipswich (7th at 4 pm, 8th at 5 pm)

6:30pm: GBB at Ipswich

6:30pm: Groton Lions Club meet at Dakota Brush

Friday, December 12

School Breakfast: Pancake on stick, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Taco salad, seasoned tots, fruit.

Senior Menu: Hot turkey combination, mashed potatoes and gravy, 7 layer salad, peach sauce.

Birthdays: Brittany Ronning • Jason Warrington • Robert Meister • Alan Nierman

5:30pm: JHGBB hosts Redfield-Doland (7th at 5:30, 8th at 6:30)

Saturday, December 13

Robotics at Rapid City Stevens Tourney

UDFL Debate at Watertown

Birthdays: Jon Vedvei • Jessica Adler • Blake Fliehs • Gabriella Merkel • Melissa Gilbert

10:00am: Wrestling at LaMoure

12:00pm: Santa Day at Groton Community Center

2:00pm: BB Doubleheader at Frederick (JVGBB at 2 pm, JVBBB at 3 pm, Varsity girls at 4:30, Varsity boys at 6:00)

4:30pm: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Mass

The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **OPEN**

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is back at 10 East Railroad Ave. Don't forget, there is also a dumpster at the city shop for aluminum cans with the proceeds going to the pool.

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Coffee Cup League

Team Standings: Ten Pins 36, Jungle Lanes 26.5, Farm Girls 26.5, Ken's 24.5, James Valley 24, Golden Girls 18.5.

High Games: Vickie Kramp 189, Penny Stolle, 183, Joyce Walter 180.

High Series: Vickie KRamp 523, Joyce Walter 488, Penny Stolle 469.

Conde National

Team Standings: Giants 21.5, Mets 20.5, Colts 17.5, Pirates 16.5, Braves 16, Cubs 16.

Men's High Games: Cliff Kuckelburg 238, 207, 192; Bryce Dargatz 180, Lance Frohling 180, Charlie Dirks 179.

Women's High Games: Joyce Walter 198, 190, 183; Breanna Kuckelburg 194, 182, 179; Mary Larosn 176.

Men's High Series: Cliff Kuckelburg 637, Bryce Dargatz 525, Lance Frohling 480.

Women's High Series: Joyce Walter 571, Breanna Kuckelburg 555, Mary Larson 482.



Santa is Coming to Groton

Saturday, Dec. 13

Noon to 2 p.m.

Groton Community Center

Classifieds

Apartments For Rent

ONE AND TWO bedroom apartment for rent. HDS subsidized. Rent includes utilities and heat. No smoking. Pets okay. Contact Darlene Daly at 605/397-8131.

Apartment for Rent

One bedroom apartment for rent. Main Street. Ground level. Washer, dryer and dishwasher. Big walk-in closet. \$550 includes utilities. \$400 if you pay your own utilities. Call Chris Kassube at 605-395-7111.

Help Wanted

Wheatcrest Hills - New Wage Scale - is hiring for PT and FT CNA positions. We are looking for caring compassionate individuals to join our team. CNA certification training class to start in December and January, benefit packages available. Please stop in for application or contact Kristin at 605/448-2251. (1209.1216)

Thurston charged with marijuana

Less than two months after the Groton City Council granted Tim Thurston with a liquor license, Thurston was taken into custody Tuesday night after a search of his farm and business netted 7 pounds of marijuana, small bags and electric scales. The sign of the Red Dragon Salon was removed from the front of the business yesterday.

According to an article appearing in the Aberdeen American News:

Timothy S. Thurston, 44, of Groton has been charged with possession of with intent to distribute 1 to 10 pounds of marijuana, said Ross Erickson, Brown County Sheriff's Office investigator and representative on the local drug task force. The charge is a felony. Thurston is the owner of Thirsty's Lodge and Suites in Groton. During a brief court appearance Wednesday, his bond was set at \$20,000.

The estimated street value of the marijuana found Tuesday is more than \$50,000, Erickson said. That works out to approximately \$50 for one-tenth of an ounce. Marijuana is commonly sold in one-tenth ounce bags, also known as "dime bags."

Much of the marijuana was packed in six vacuum seal bags that were approximately 6 inches wide and 14 to 16 inches long, Erickson said. The rest was already packed into smaller bags for distribution. There was approximately \$12,000 cash found on the farm 5 miles northwest of Groton.

Police believe that Thurston brought the marijuana in from



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out of state, Erickson said. There were empty vacuum seal bags found on the property, leading police to believe he had already sold some of the pot he originally brought. Thurston was the only person arrested Tuesday, but law enforcers believe he had assistants distributing.

The Brown County Sheriff's Office, Groton Police Department, Aberdeen Police Department and the drug task force all participated in the search that began at 7 p.m., Erickson said. Police searched the property and Thirsty's Lodge on Main Street in Groton for about four hours. A small amount of marijuana and a scale were found at the bar.

Thurston's next scheduled court date is Dec. 22.

Groton Prairie Mixed

Team Standings: Jackelopes 21, Chipmunks 17, Foxes 14, Coyotes 12, Pocket Gophers 11, Killer Chihuahuas 9

Women's High Games: Angie Carlson 176, Vicki Walter 171, Darci Spanier 166

Men's High Games: Brad Waage 220, 204, Mike Siegler 210, Rick Carlson 189

Women's High Series: Sue Stanley 470, Vicki Walter 465, Angie Carlson 445

Men's High Series: Brad Waage 591, Mike Siegler 544, Rick Carlson 539

Baker graduates from basic training

Air Force Airman Allen C. Baker graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, San Antonio, Texas.

The airman completed an intensive, eight-week program that included training in military discipline and studies, Air Force core values, physical fitness, and basic warfare principles and skills.

Airmen who complete basic training earn four credits toward an associate in applied science degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

Baker is the son of Mayme and Keith Baker of Groton, S.D. He is also the grandson of Rodney Clark of Hermosa, S.D., Mona Gormon of Canton, S.D., and Karen Wolter of Groton, S.D.

The airman is a 2013 graduate of Groton Area High School, Groton, S.D.

AAA Busts Insurance Myths

What You Don't Know About Your Coverage Can Hurt You.

Does driving a red car raise your insurance rates? Does your landlord's insurance cover your apartment and belongings? AAA is taking on these and other common misconceptions that may lead to risky decisions when it comes to preparing for the worst.

"Insurance can seem complex and intimidating, and many people go by hearsay instead of asking their insurance company questions," said Marilyn Buskohl, spokeswoman for AAA South Dakota. "Spending a little time now learning about what's covered and what's not can help you avoid costly and emotionally draining consequences later."

For a variety of reasons, many consumers don't have adequate insurance coverage to deal with potential losses. "That's why it's so important to separate fact from fiction," said Buskohl. "AAA wants to make sure accurate information about these myths gets out so informed decisions can be made about the different types of insurance coverage."

Here are some common insurance myths and the facts from AAA Insurance experts:

I have a home insurance policy, so I have all the coverage I need. – FALSE

Many policies don't have a high enough limit to rebuild the home in case of complete destruction. Some homeowners will find themselves short tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars if their home is destroyed by fire or other disaster.

My home insurance covers all disasters likely to happen in my area. – FALSE

Standard home insurance covers disasters such as fire, lightning, theft, vandalism and damage from smoke, water or wind. It does NOT cover damage caused by a flood or earthquake. Flood and earthquake coverage can be purchased in separate policies.

All of my valuables will be covered in the event of a burglary. – FALSE

There are limits on the amount of coverage you can receive for valuables such as jewelry, antiques, business property and art, but you can purchase endorsements that will add extra protection.

The color of my car affects my auto insurance rate. – FALSE

Many factors including a vehicle's model, make, year, and the driver's experience and age may impact your auto insurance rate, but the color of a vehicle is not one of them.

A stay-at-home spouse does not need life insurance. – FALSE

A spouse who stays at home may take care of children, chores, and transportation. In the unfortunate event of their death, these would become expenses that could be offset by the proceeds from a life insurance policy.

I don't need renters insurance because my landlord is covered. – FALSE

Your landlord's insurance typically covers the building; it does not cover your personal property. You may also be liable for any structural and/or water damage that you cause. Renters insurance also covers your liability in case a guest in your home or apartment is injured.

It is possible your homeowners insurance coverage limit is too high. – TRUE

This is rare and prohibited by law, but some mortgage companies try to require new homeowners to purchase insurance for the entire loan amount, which can be more than the replacement cost of your home. It is only necessary to cover the replacement cost of the home; land does not need to be insured.

AAA is North America's largest motoring and leisure travel organization with more than 54 million members. A not-for-profit, fully tax-paying organization, AAA South Dakota serves its 91,300 South Dakota members with emergency assistance on the road, auto travel counseling and a wide range of personal insurance, travel, financial and automotive services through branch offices, a regional operations center and online at AAA.com.

Are Apples the Key to Fresh Breath?

Breath Appeal, manufactured by All USA Direct, LLC, has a patent protecting its formula which features the mild, natural acid found in apples. Dr. Bob Kross, a biochemist who has been developing oral health-care products since the 1980s, invented the Breath Appeal formula.

"Unlike most bad breath products, Breath Appeal not only destroys the sulfurous oral malodorants but kills putrefying anaerobic bacteria in the oral cavity, the source of bad breath," Dr. Kross says.

All of us have bacteria in the mouth – that's normal and indeed necessary. Food particles, soft tissue debris and the warm, dark, moist environment of the mouth allow bacteria to thrive. Most are washed via saliva into the stomach, but those that remain, many trapped in the low-oxygen nooks and crannies of the mouth, continually feed and grow, digesting the trapped food and cell products creating a bacteria imbalance. The waste products of these putrefying anaerobic bacteria are the smelly gas molecules which can make one's breath range from mildly unpleasant to absolutely disgusting.

Anaerobic bacteria are non-oxygen breathing bacteria, and will die instantly in presence of oxygen. "We needed to create an oxidizing system that was both palatable and powerful enough to remain in solution long enough to reach all areas of the mouth," says Dr. Kross, adds that "because the powerful oxidizing capacity of the activated Breath Appeal solution is short-lived, it's impossible to distribute the solution in a single bottle. So combining two solutions, just before each use, is necessary to create the needed oxidizing action," he says.

"We use a proprietary mix of both the apple acid (malic) and naturally-occurring lactic acid to activate sodium chlorite," Kross says. "Using Breath Appeal as directed provides a strongly oxidizing solution that not only eliminates odor molecules but lasts long enough to destroy the bacteria that create them."

Most products do not improve the oral bacteria imbalance; in fact, they may either temporarily cover mouth odor or, in some cases, just degrade the odor-causing molecules but not the responsible bacteria. And some products may even make matters worse by drying the mouth. Brushing and flossing only reach 25 percent of mouth surfaces, so the vast majority of the trapped bacteria are unaffected. Adding a freshly-activated oxidizing rinse to your daily oral routine can correct an anaerobic bacteria imbalance. Kross says, "Scientists agree that a mouth without this imbalance is a mouth with fresh breath."

About Dr. Bob Kross

Dr. Bob Kross is a biochemist associated with All USA Direct, (www.breathappeal.com), producer of Breath Appeal products. Many of Kross' 40 U.S. patents reflect his interest in biomedical areas, including oral antimicrobials and associated conditions and diseases.

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The Public Forum Team of Keri Pappas and Kelsey Iverson placed first at the Just Maas Debate Tournament at Milbank on December 9th. Iverson and Pappas were undefeated. Caroline Graf also competed for GHS at Lincoln Douglas debate.



Lily Cutler, a junior at GHS, earned a Superior Rating in Storytelling at the SDHSAA State Oral Interp Festival in Huron this past weekend. Storytelling is a new event in 2014. The subject for the storytelling this year was Grimm's Fairy tales. Also competing at the State Festival from Groton were Cutler, Devon Poppen, Kaite Miller, Keri Pappas, Erin Smith, and Jenifer Fjelstad in Readers Theater and Cutler in Poetry Reading.

Today in Weather History

1932 - Very cold weather prevailed along the West Coast. San Francisco received 0.8 inch of snow, and at the airport the temperature dipped to 20 degrees. At Sacramento CA, the mercury dipped to 17 degrees to establish an all-time record low for that location. Morning lows were below freezing from the 9th to the 15th at Sacramento, and the high on the 11th was just 34 degrees. The cold wave dealt severe damage to truck crops and orange groves in the Sacramento Valley. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Low pressure over southwestern Ontario, Canada, brought snow and gusty winds to the North Central U.S. Winds gusted to 62 mph at Riverton WY. Snow and high winds in eastern North Dakota reduced visibilities to less than one hundred feet at times. Warm weather prevailed across the Southern Plains Region. Half a dozen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Del Rio TX with a reading of 89 degrees. Laredo TX and Kingsville TX tied for honors as hot spot in the nation with afternoon highs of 92 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Arctic cold invaded the central and eastern U.S. Sault Ste Marie MI reported a record low of 14 degrees below zero, and International Falls MN was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 25 degrees below zero. Temperatures remained below zero all day over parts of eastern Upper Michigan and northern New England. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Strong Santa Ana winds developed across southern California and parts of central California.

Winds in Kern County of central California gusted to 100 mph near Grapevine. The high winds reduced visibilities to near zero in the desert areas, closing major interstate highways east of Ontario CA. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2008 - A rare snowstorm swept across parts of south Louisiana and Mississippi, blanketing the area with snow. Nearly 8 inches of snow fell over parts of Louisiana. These conditions caused schools and bridges to close and left thousands of residents without power (Associated Press). (NCDC)

2010 - The "Pineapple Express" - a meteorological event where southwest winds bring warm, moist air to the U.S. West Coast - produced record rainfall to the Pacific Northwest during December 11th-12th. Seattle experienced record daily rainfall two days in a row. The Seattle-Tacoma International Airport recorded 1.42 inches of rain on the 11th, breaking the old daily record of 1.32 inches set in 1955. The next day, 2.19 inches fell, breaking the daily record of 1.70 inches set in 1966. The Stillaguamish River in western Washington state reached 21.06 feet at Arlington, tying the record set in November 2006. Flood stage for the river is 14 feet. The storm system also brought record warmth to the area. On December 14th, the temperature at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport reached 57, breaking the old daily record of 55 set in 2004. (NCDC)

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Part-Time/Casual CNA

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- ★ Flexible Spending Accounts
- ★ Community Meal Discount Program
- ★ Paid Time Off and other Leave Programs
- ★ Employee Assistance Program (EAP)




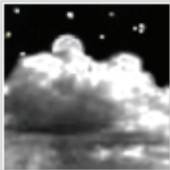

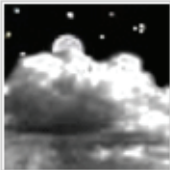

To inquire stop in 1106 N 2nd St. Groton, SD or call Michele Herr, DNS (605) 397-2365. EOE/M/F/D/V

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TODAY	TONIGHT	FRIDAY	FRIDAY NIGHT	SATURDAY	SATURDAY NIGHT	SUNDAY
						
Patchy Fog High: 35 °F	Patchy Fog Low: 28 °F	Patchy Fog High: 40 °F	Mostly Cloudy Low: 33 °F	Mostly Sunny High: 43 °F	Mostly Cloudy Low: 30 °F	Mostly Cloudy High: 36 °F



Wide Range of Temperatures

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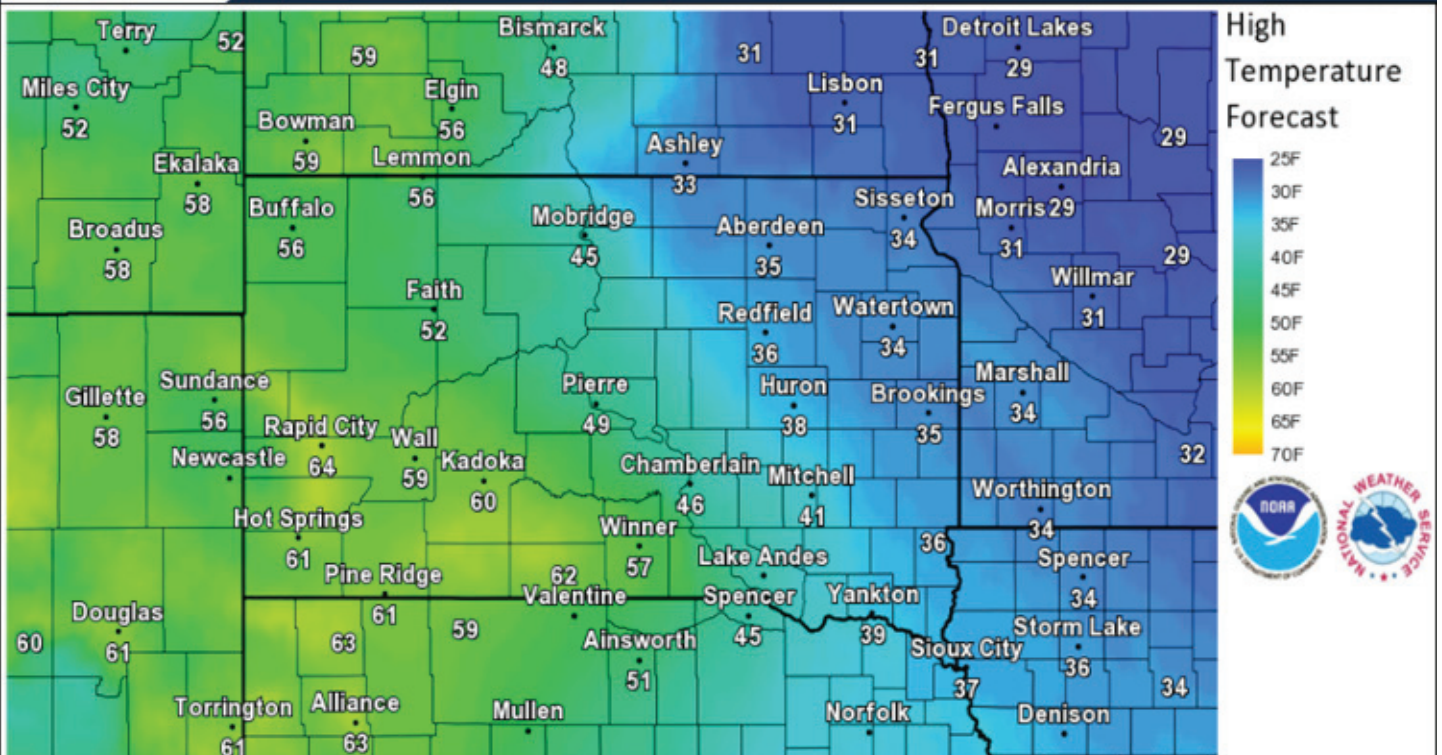
weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen



Valid ending Thursday December 11th, 2014 at 6 PM CST

Created Thursday December 11th, 2014 at 5:16 AM CST

High temperatures will vary greatly across the region today. An abundance of clouds will keep temperatures in the 30s for the eastern Dakotas and western Minnesota, while central and western South Dakota enjoy widespread 40s, 50s, and even 60s. The arrival of a stubborn and expansive area of stratus clouds has hampered expectations of mild temperatures over eastern portions of the forecast area over the next couple days, but readings will be above normal nonetheless.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 35.4 at 3:23 PM

Low: 19.5 at 8:04 AM

Wind Chill:

High Gust: 21 at 10:50 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 59° in 1939

Record Low: -22° in 1927, 1897

Average High: 26°F

Average Low: 7°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.18

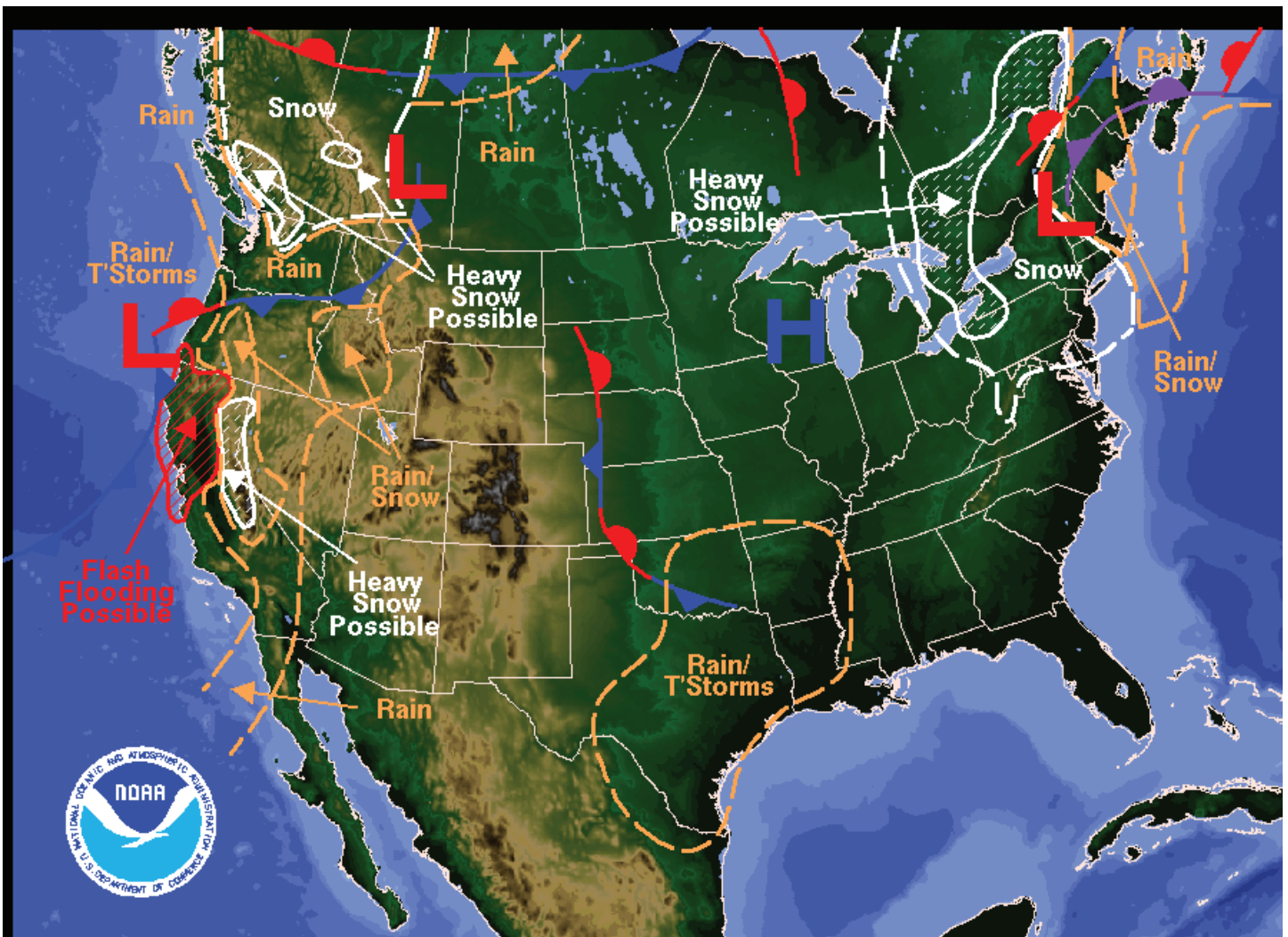
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.38

Precip Year to Date: 13.99

Sunset Tonight: 4:50 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:04 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Thu, Dec 11, 2014, issued 4:05 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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IT'S AS BIG AS WE WANT IT TO BE!

He was deeply in love with his fiancé, and saved as much money as he could to buy her a beautiful engagement ring. Finally, he took his savings to the jeweler and bought the biggest diamond he could afford.

As he presented it to her he said, "I'm sorry dear, that it is not bigger. It's all that I had."

"It's perfect!" she shouted in her excitement. "It is as big as we make it!"

What a beautiful response. Sincerity is much more important than size and thoughtfulness more than any "thing." Size had nothing to do with our salvation. Our salvation depended on someone's sacrifice.

If we want more from God, we must give more to God. That's His way. And He invites us to make His way, our way. "Give and it will be given to you," Jesus said.

When we share our time, He will increase our talents so we can do more. When we share our treasures, He will make up the difference – and then some. When we share our strength, He will enable us to reach far beyond the limits we place on ourselves. But we must give in faith, believing and trusting that He will provide for our every need in ways we never imagined.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to have enough faith to trust, knowing that You will never fail us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Colossians 3:14-25 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

Aberdeen offices return to renovated City Hall

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Aberdeen City Hall offices will be closed for the rest of the week as employees return to the renovated building.

Business will resume at city offices Monday after workers get settled in the century-old Municipal Building. They vacated the space for about a year during \$3 million renovations. Most city offices have been working out of the Aberdeen Parks, Recreation and Forestry building in the meantime.

The nearly complete renovation project updated the 1914 building to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and aimed to make better use of the space. Public Works Director Robin Bobzien says most of the work is completed and contractors will work to finish the project over the next few days.

SD man gets 1 year in graduation party brawl case

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota man has been sentenced to one year in prison for striking a man with his pickup truck following a graduation party brawl.

U.S. Attorney Brendan Johnson says 22-year-old Diego Ramon Lara was also ordered to one year of supervised release. Lara earlier pleaded guilty to assault by striking, beating and wounding.

Authorities say Lara on May 24 got into a verbal argument with people who attended a party in Cherry Creek. He left the party, but later returned to the area with his pickup.

Prosecutors say Lara stopped at an intersection in front of partygoers, exchanged words and gestures with a man, accelerated and struck the man. The victim suffered injuries to his leg and ankle.

Lara is under the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service.

Tie-down roper Ohl ties NFR record for wins

KEITH FREEMAN, Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Tie-down roper Cody Ohl tied the National Final Rodeo record for career wins in a single event with his 51st after tying for the victory in round seven on Wednesday night.

Ohl matched the record previously set by saddle bronc rider Billy Etbauer as he tied defending world champion Tuf Cooper for the win with a time of 7.3 seconds.

"Every one of them (round wins) is special," said Ohl, of Hico, Texas. "I just can't wait until I get that record, and it's

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going to be very special. It's all my kids talk about, and it's going to be awesome."

Cooper, the two-time world champion from Decatur, Texas, remained first in the world standings with a time of 64.60 for seven rides. Ohl, a six-time world champion, is fifth in the world standings, but first in NFR earnings in his event.

Matt Shiozawa of Chubbuck, Idaho, remained in first place in the aggregate standings with a time of 64.10 for seven rides despite not placing in the top six with a time of 9.3.

Other winners in round seven included Spencer Wright (saddle bronc riding), Sage Kimzey and Elliot Jacoby (bull riding), Lisa Lockhart (barrel racing), Richmond Champion (bareback riding), Curtis Cassidy and Dakota Eldridge (steer wrestling), and Dustin Bird and Paul Eaves (team roping).

Wright of Milford, Utah, won his second NFR round with an 85 on Pretty Boy and remained in first place in the NFR aggregate standings with a score of 564.5 points for seven rides.

"I didn't come down here thinking it was going to be bad, but it definitely has been a great trip so far," Wright said. "I feel like I'm riding well and I've been lucky, too."

Cort Scheer of Elsmere, Nebraska, who finished second with an 80.5 on Spur Strap, moved up to first in the saddle bronc world standings. Heith DeMoss of Heflin, Louisiana, dropped to second after posting a sixth-place score of 77 on Awesome.

Kimzey of Strong City, Oklahoma, had an 86.5 on Haunted Mesa and is the only bull rider to cover six of his seven bulls. His score was matched by Elliot Jacoby of Fredericksburg, Texas, on Cactus Juice.

Kimzey leads both the world standings and the aggregate standings after recording 499 points for six rides. He also leads all NFR competitors earnings of \$96,391.

Lockhart of Oelrichs, South Dakota, had a time of 13.73 to win and is now second in both the barrel racing world standings and the aggregate standings with a time of 103.14 for seven rides.

"I'm such a focused, stay-grounded person and I try not to let those things (the standings) come into play," Lockhart said. "In the end, they are going to pay the person who went and did their job the best. So I am just going to try and focus on that, ride my horse the best I can and stay consistent."

Fallon Taylor of Whitesboro, Texas, was second with a time of 13.89 and increased her lead in both the world standings and the NFR aggregate standings. She has a time of 103.08 for seven rides.

Champion of The Woodlands, Texas, picked up his second bareback riding win of the 2014 NFR by finishing first with an 86 on Angel Eyes.

Three-time world champion Kaycee Feild of Spanish Fork, Utah, remained in first place in the world standings after tying for fourth with an 81.5 on American Trip. Four-time world champion Bobby Mote of Culver, Oregon, remained the leader in the aggregate standings with 572 points for seven rides after tying for fourth with an 81.5 on Red Bandana.

Cassidy and Eldridge had times of 3.4, with Cassidy getting his second NFR win and Eldridge his first.

"I try to go for it (the win), and I had a good steer tonight and I was fortunate to get a great time," said Eldridge, of Elko, Nevada.

Four-time world champion Luke Branquinho of Los Alamos, California, tied for third in 3.9 and held onto first place in both the world and NFR aggregate standings. Branquinho, who was sidelined with a right arm injury from July 18 until the opening round here, is now only \$16,068 from becoming the eighth individual to win \$1 million in career earnings at the NFR.

In team roping, heard Bird of Cut Bank, Montana, and heeler Eaves of Lonedell, Missouri, notched their second win of this year's NFR with a time of 3.70.

Header Clay Tryan of Billings, Montana, and heeler Jade Corkill, of Fallon, Nevada, were eighth with a time of 10.6, but remained first in the world standings and moved into the top spot in the NFR aggre-

gate standings with a time of 54.90 for seven rides. The defending world champions are the only pair to make seven successful rides.

Birthday girl asks for animal food to help shelter

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Rather than ask for the latest gadgets or clothes for her birthday, a Sioux Falls girl put animal food on her list.

Taylor Spomer can't have any pets herself because she's allergic, but that didn't stop her from helping dogs and cats in need. So for her 12th birthday she put out the word to family and friends that she wanted donations for an animal shelter.

KSFY-TV reports (<http://bit.ly/1z6yiT3>) the effort yielded more than 200 pounds of cat, dog and bird food that Taylor delivered to the Sioux Falls Area Humane Society.

She says workers at the shelter were overjoyed with the gift.

SD field bean yields likely down from 2013

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The U.S. Department of Agriculture anticipates South Dakota's dry edible bean production in 2014 will be down 16 percent from last year.

The department said on Wednesday that it anticipates 2014's statewide yield will be 1,500 pounds per acre, which is a drop of 500 pounds per acre from 2013. That's despite a 1,400-acre uptick in harvested area from 2013.

The National Agricultural Statistics Service anticipates the total crop will be 194,000 hundredweight in 2014.

Flap over sage grouse spurs Congress to intervene

MATTHEW BROWN, Associated Press

BILLINGS, Montana (AP) — Congress is poised to make an end-run around the Endangered Species Act with a legislative rider on a massive spending bill that would delay protections for several struggling bird populations in the Western U.S.

The rider blocks the Interior Department from spending money on rules to protect greater sage grouse and three related birds.

The chicken-sized sage grouse has been on a collision course with oil and gas companies, agriculture and other industries in recent years. The Obama administration was up against a September 2015 deadline to either turn around the bird's fading fortunes, or propose protections that could mean severe restrictions on industry.

Worries about a potential endangered species listing for sage grouse already prompted the deferral of sales on more than 8 million acres of potential federal oil and gas leases.

The sage grouse rider was tucked deep within the 1,603-page spending package at the behest of Western lawmakers. The bill faces a Thursday House vote after leaders of both parties came to agreement on the \$1.1 trillion measure to fund much of the federal government through the next fiscal year.

Critics said the rider would hasten the sagebrush-dependent bird's demise, by forestalling work to shore up its population across a range that spans 11 states and two Canadian provinces.

Their hopes that the rider could be stripped out of the spending bill were bolstered when some Democrats came out in opposition to the bill's environmental provisions.

But U.S. Rep. Cory Gardner, a Colorado Republican set to join the Senate in January, said the rider was

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likely to stay intact — and even get carried over for future years.

“Once you have a policy rider that’s been approved in legislation, the odds of it remaining significantly increase,” said Gardiner, who sponsored unsuccessful stand-alone legislation to delay sage grouse protections.

The spending package was billed a compromise measure.

Interior spokeswoman Jessica Kershaw said that the agency will continue working with state and local governments to craft conservation measures. Those will provide “predictability” for ranchers, energy companies and others operating in greater sage grouse territory, she said.

Federal biologists said protections were warranted for greater sage grouse under the Endangered Species Act in 2010. But the Fish and Wildlife Service didn’t act, citing other priorities and a shortage of funds.

The legislative rider also delays protections for the closely-related Gunnison sage grouse of Utah and Colorado and for two subspecies of greater sage grouse in Washington state, Nevada and California.

Population estimates for greater sage grouse range from 100,000 to 500,000 birds. They occupy 290,000 square miles of sage brush habitat in California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Croplands, home development, wildfires and oil and gas drilling consumed more than half that habitat over the past century.

A pair of legal settlements that were approved by a federal judge resulted in the September 2015 deadline to propose protections.

However, the settlements with the groups WildEarth Guardians and the Center for Biological Diversity gave the government leeway to miss the deadline if unforeseen circumstances arise. As a result, little can be done if the bill becomes law, said Noah Greenwald of the Center for Biological Diversity.

Wyoming Audubon executive director Brian Rutledge characterized the move by Congress as “misguided intervention.” He said it could slow momentum within states trying to balance protections for the sage grouse with continued economic development.

“It seems to me a backward approach,” Rutledge said. “We don’t want to stop the Fish and Wildlife Service from working toward a decision because right now we’re headed in the right direction.”

5 things to know on SD pieces in fed spending plan

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The massive \$1.1 trillion federal spending bill under debate in Washington contains key provisions that benefit the state, members of South Dakota’s congressional delegation said Wednesday.

Federal lawmakers are expected take up on Thursday the measure to fund government through Sept. 30, 2015. Included in the 1,603-page omnibus spending bill, which funds nearly every government agency and contains dozens of policy provisions, is water project financing, research funding and environmental regulation prohibitions that South Dakota lawmakers say will be a boon to the Mount Rushmore State.

Here’s a look at five things to consider about South Dakota-specific initiatives in the spending plan:

SAGE GROUSE

A policy provision in the funding bill would delay protections for a greater sage grouse that have been on a collision course with the energy industry and western South Dakota ranchers. Republican Rep. Kristi Noem said a measure she backed prevents the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from spending any

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money next year on rules to protect the ground-dwelling bird.

Republican Sen. John Thune called the prohibition an "important win" for ranchers in western South Dakota, adding that an endangered species listing would also affect land use and energy development in the state.

Wildlife advocates have said delaying protections could have irreversible impacts across the bird's 11-state range.

JOHN 'LEADBETTER' THUNE

A Thune-backed measure in the spending bill would block the Environmental Protection Agency from banning lead in ammunition and fishing gear. A leader in the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, Thune said the bipartisan provision would stop the agency from "trying to get its tentacles into this area," dramatically increasing costs and pricing out hunting and fishing enthusiasts. Thune said state agencies already regulate ammo and tackle.

LEWIS AND CLARK

The Lewis and Clark Regional Water System will be one of six projects vying for a \$31 million pot for rural water development built into the spending bill. That's on top of \$2.4 million in funding for Lewis and Clark included in the plan. The system will serve more than 300,000 people in a tri-state area the size of Connecticut once it is completed, executive director Troy Larson said.

Outgoing Democratic Sen. Tim Johnson in a statement praised funding for the project as good news tucked into the bill, and Noem said the system came out of negotiations with "an even better hand."

SANFORD LAB

The Sanford Underground Research Facility is currently searching for mysterious dark matter — and it maintained its federal funding level as part of the spending plan. The federal aid amounts to \$12.5 million in fiscal year 2015 after the money is routed to the lab through the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory from the U.S. Department of Energy. Noem said she counted preserving the funding level for one of South Dakota's priorities as a significant win.

CATTLE EMISSIONS

Republicans again in this bill won concessions exempting livestock producers from regulations on greenhouse gases. The plan prevents the Environmental Protection Agency from forcing cattle operations to get greenhouse gas permits under the Clean Air Act and would also block funding to require the reporting of gas emissions.

Cattle operations are already heavily regulated without the emissions controls, South Dakota Cattle-men's Association executive director Jodie Anderson said.

Ring dropped with note in Salvation Army kettle

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — A sad love story for one man may end up brightening some people's days this holiday season in South Dakota.

The man dropped a 14-karat gold, half-carat diamond engagement ring along with a note in a Salvation Army kettle outside a sporting goods store in Mitchell. The ring and note were taped to a \$10 bill.

The note partially reads: "This ring made me the happiest man in the world when she said yes, and the saddest when she returned it." The man added that he hopes the ring can be used "to make some kids happy."

Salvation Army office manager Sheena Loudner says the ring has been valued at \$1,200. She says the group is going to try to get some bids on the ring and sell it.

Thune noncommittal on 2016 presidential bid

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — U.S. Sen. John Thune says he's keeping his options open for a 2016 presidential bid, but right now the South Dakota Republican says he's not exploring a run.

Thune on Wednesday said he's focused on his work in the U.S. Senate, where he'll assume the chairmanship of the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee in 2015. Politico recently listed Thune among potential contenders for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination.

Thune says he is "not anxious to be on lists."

A popular Republican elected in 2004, Thune will be South Dakota's senior U.S. senator when Republicans assume control of the chamber. If he decides to take on another Senate term, Thune will be up for re-election in 2016.

Thunderbirds to highlight Ellsworth air show

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Air Force's premier aerial demonstration team will perform at the annual summer celebration at Ellsworth Air Force base in South Dakota.

The Thunderbirds are scheduled to headline the base's Dakota Thunder 2015 air show and open house next Aug. 15-16. The show also will feature the base's B-1 bombers.

Last year's Dakota Thunder show was canceled due to federal budget cuts.

SD snowmobile trails scheduled to open Monday

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota snowmobile trails are scheduled to open Monday, but officials are still waiting for snow.

Black Hills trails district supervisor Shannon Percy says the Black Hills has seen minimal snowfall so far this season. He adds that grooming operations will be limited until the snowfall accumulation increases.

Eastern South Dakota trails are also experiencing a snow shortage. Officials say snow conditions have deteriorated since trails in the area saw significant accumulations in November. State trails program specialist Tony Schmitt says higher temperatures have left many areas along the trail systems without snow, and trails won't be groomed until four or five inches of snow accumulate.

Snowmobile clubs in eastern South Dakota groom and maintain more than 1,200 miles of trails through an agreement with the state.

SD officials attending outdoors show in Las Vegas

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Representatives of eight communities and an energy company are joining officials with the South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development at an outdoors show in Las Vegas.

The Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade Show is Jan. 20-23. Gov. Dennis Daugaard says the SHOT Show a good opportunity to showcase the benefits of doing business in South Dakota. State officials have attended the annual show for more than a dozen years.

Representatives from Aberdeen, Huron, Madison, Pierre, Sturgis, Vermillion, Yankton, Black Hills Power of Rapid City, and Britton/Glacial Lakes Area Development will be the South Dakota booth.

Officials say the show attracts businesses from every state and more than 100 countries.

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Sioux Falls cornerback named AFCA All-American

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — University of Sioux Falls defensive back Solomon St. Pierre is an All-American.

The junior from Wagner has been named to the American Football Coaches Association Division II All-America Team.

St. Pierre this past season had 10 interceptions, the most in Division II and a school record. The cornerback had the most interception return yards in the nation and tied for most interception touchdown returns, with two. He helped lead the Cougars to an 11-1 record, and is a nominee for the Cliff Harris Award for the top defensive player in Division II. The winner will be announced later this month.

St. Pierre is Sioux Falls' first AFCA first-team All-American since the school made the transition to the Division II ranks in 2011.

10 Things to Know for Today

The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. AP INVESTIGATION: WASHINGTON INFILTRATED CUBA'S HIP-HOP SCENE

The U.S. Agency for International Development sought to turn Cuban youths against the government through the underground music scene.

2. THE AGENCY STRIKES BACK, STEPS UP CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT TORTURE REPORT

The CIA and several of its past leaders are fighting findings in the document that point to harrowing investigation techniques.

3. DISPUTE OVER WHAT KILLED PALESTINIAN CABINET MEMBER

The Palestinians' pathologist says the minister died from a blow to his body in an anti-Israeli demonstration, while Israel's says a blockage of a coronary artery caused his death.

4. HONG KONG POLICE ARREST PROTESTERS

After trying to clear the main protest site in the business hub, officers detain demonstrators who are refusing to leave, locking arms and lying on the ground to resist them.

5. APP DEVELOPED FOR 'DRIVING WHILE BLACK' MOTORISTS

Developers want to give drivers of all races some common sense advice on how to react when police stop them on the road.

6. WHAT THE TEA PARTY AND THE DEMOCRATS NOW HAVE IN COMMON

Both sides are critical of the \$1.1 trillion spending bill that is needed to avoid a government shutdown.

7. WHERE 120 SYRIAN REFUGEES ARE HEADING

The small number of displaced families will soon find homes in Uruguay, 7,400 miles away from their homeland and worlds away from their former lives.

8. COMEDY FINDS SHELTER IN GLOBES

The genre, which is often edged out by serious films at the Oscars, gets as many awards as drama at the Golden Globes.

9. HOW MCDONALD'S INTENDS TO BOOST ITS BRAND

As U.S. sales continue to slip, the company is making changes aimed at persuading health-minded customers that it doesn't serve junk food.

10. NFL OWNERS OK CHANGES IN PLAYER CONDUCT RULES

A special counsel will be hired to oversee investigations and initial discipline - though Commissioner Goodell will still rule on any appeals.

AP News in Brief

US agency infiltrated Cuba's underground hip-hop scene to turn youth against the government

HAVANA (AP) — For more than two years, a U.S. agency secretly infiltrated Cuba's underground hip-hop movement, recruiting unwitting rappers to spark a youth movement against the government, according to documents obtained by The Associated Press.

The idea was to use Cuban musicians "to break the information blockade" and build a network of young people seeking "social change," documents show. But the operation was amateurish and profoundly unsuccessful.

On at least six occasions, Cuban authorities detained or interrogated people involved in the program; they also confiscated computer hardware, and in some cases it contained information that jeopardized Cubans who likely had no idea they were caught up in a clandestine U.S. operation. Still, contractors working for the U.S. Agency for International Development kept putting themselves and their targets at risk, the AP investigation found.

They also ended up compromising Cuba's vibrant hip-hop culture — which has produced some of the hardest-hitting grassroots criticism since Fidel Castro came to power in 1959. Artists that USAID contractors tried to promote left the country or stopped performing after pressure from the Cuban government, and one of the island's most popular independent music festivals was taken over after officials linked it to USAID.

The program is laid out in documents involving Creative Associates International, a Washington, D.C., contractor paid millions of dollars to undermine Cuba's communist government. The thousands of pages include contracts, emails, preserved chats, budgets, expense reports, power points, photographs and passports.

Big electoral win could give Japanese Prime Minister Abe room to pursue nationalist goals

TOKYO (AP) — A projected landslide victory for Japan's ruling party in Sunday's parliamentary elections could give Prime Minister Shinzo Abe political breathing space to push forward with his long-held nationalist agenda.

While Abe has put the economy at the center of the campaign, the platform of his Liberal Democratic Party also promises to revise Japan's constitution and actively protest what it calls "wrongful accusations" about the country's wartime past. Media polls pointing to a larger-than-expected victory have raised right-wing hopes that Abe could hold onto power for four more years, giving him time to try to tackle their more controversial goals.

"I must emphasize that a stable majority, as the media projects, makes constitutional revision a realistic option," Satoru Mizushima, a leader of a nationalist group told viewers of a right-wing satellite and Internet TV channel. "Japan has been stuck with a U.S.-imposed constitution. In order to change the postwar regime, we must change the constitution. The upcoming election is a chance."

How far Abe can get is another question. Constitutional change is a divisive issue in Japan, and a focus on nationalist issues is one reason cited for Abe's downfall in a short-lived earlier stint as prime minister in 2006-07. Economic issues top voter concerns in polls, and an emphasis on his "Abenomics" policies has helped keep his popularity relatively high since he regained power in December two years ago.

The constitution was drafted by American forces that occupied Japan after its defeat in World War II,

and has been interpreted to allow a military only for defensive purposes. What constitutes defensive purposes has been expanded over the years, most recently in July by a Cabinet reinterpretation of the constitution that allows the military to defend an ally, such as the U.S., in limited conditions under a concept known as "collective self-defense."

Hong Kong police make arrests, tear down tents within main pro-democracy protest camp

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong police on Thursday took away demonstrators who refused to leave the main pro-democracy protest camp and tore down their tents in a final push to retake streets occupied by activists for two and a half months.

The first person arrested was carried away by four officers by her arms and legs.

The students and other activists have been protesting Beijing's restrictions on the first election for Hong Kong's leader, though the movement's momentum has been fading in recent weeks.

Many protesters had heeded police warnings to leave the protest zone in Hong Kong's city center, but dozens of students, pro-democracy lawmakers and others, including middle-aged and elderly supporters, remained Thursday afternoon. The students at the front lay down and locked arms.

Earlier Thursday, workers carrying out a court order removed barricades on the edge of the protest site before officers moved in and dismantled tents. They had warned protesters that they faced arrest if they did not leave.

Rain hits Northern California as powerful storm moves inland; will slowly head south

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A storm predicted to bring torrential rains and hurricane force winds pushed across parts of Northern California early Thursday, after residents stocked up on supplies, schools canceled classes, and communities prepared for possible emergencies.

Moderate rain and gusty winds began hitting the area north of San Francisco late Wednesday with heavier rain expected in coming hours across the across the region, the National Weather Service said.

As much as 8 inches of rain could fall on coastal mountains over a 24-hour period starting late Wednesday, the weather service said.

The storm is "slowing going to be advancing toward the south through the day today," weather service meteorologist Charles Bell said early Thursday.

"We're also seeing winds pick up," he said, noting gusts of up to 50 mph were hitting some buoys off the coast.

Lawyers develop mobile app for motorists 'driving while black' for advice; join growing field

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Though the developers of the soon-to-be released "Driving While Black" smartphone application want motorists to download their product, there is a time when they definitely don't want users searching for it.

"Do not reach for your phone when you are talking to police," stressed Melvin Oden-Orr, one of two Portland lawyers creating the app.

Avoiding moves that could make police think you're reaching for a gun is just one tip included in the

app that educates drivers about how to safely deal with police during traffic stops.

Despite its attention-grabbing name, Oden-Orr said the app due for release in late December will provide common sense advice to motorists of all races and outline what civil rights you have during a stop. With the phone hopefully in a hands-free device, the app allows drivers to send an alert to friends and family that they have been pulled over. There's also a recording function to document the interaction with an officer.

The app is coming to market as protesters around the country keep attention on instances of deadly encounters with police in Ferguson, Missouri, and New York City. Similar apps also are aimed at helping people navigate interactions with police.

Palestinian, Israeli pathologists disagree on cause of death of Palestinian Cabinet member

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — Israeli and Palestinian pathologists disagreed Thursday on whether a blow to the body or a bad heart was the main cause of death of a Palestinian Cabinet minister who collapsed shortly after scuffling with Israeli troops during a West Bank protest.

Palestinian doctors said Ziad Abu Ain died from a blow, not natural causes. Israeli doctors said the 55-year-old died from a blockage of the coronary artery due to arterial bleeding that could have been caused by stress.

Abu Ain's death, followed by the Palestinian autopsy findings, could further inflame tensions between Israel and the Palestinians.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has said Abu Ain was the victim of a crime and of a "barbaric act" and decreed three days of mourning.

Anticipating Palestinian protests after Abu Ain's funeral later Thursday, the Israeli military has sent troop reinforcements to the West Bank. Earlier Thursday, several dozen Palestinian stone throwers clashed with Israeli troops in the West Bank city of Hebron.

After torture report, CIA fights to determine historical record, deter foreign prosecution

WASHINGTON (AP) — The CIA and several of its past leaders are stepping up a campaign to discredit a five-year Senate investigation into the CIA's harrowing interrogation practices after 9/11, concerned that the historical record may define them as torturers instead of patriots and expose them to legal action around the world.

The Senate intelligence committee's report doesn't urge prosecution for wrongdoing, and the Justice Department has no interest in reopening a criminal probe. But the threat to former interrogators and their superiors was underlined as a U.N. special investigator demanded those responsible for "systematic crimes" be brought to justice, and human rights groups pushed for the arrest of key CIA and Bush administration figures if they travel overseas.

Current and former CIA officials pushed back Wednesday, determined to paint the Senate report as a political stunt by Senate Democrats tarnishing a program that saved American lives. It is a "one-sided study marred by errors of fact and interpretation — essentially a poorly done and partisan attack on the agency that has done the most to protect America," former CIA directors George Tenet, Porter Goss and Michael Hayden wrote in a Wall Street Journal opinion piece.

Hayden was singled out by Senate investigators for what they said was a string of misleading or out-

right false statements he gave in 2007 about the importance of the CIA's brutal treatment of detainees in thwarting terrorist attacks. He described the focus on him as "ironic on so many levels" as any wrongdoing predated his arrival at the CIA. "They were far too interested in yelling at me," Hayden said in an email to The Associated Press.

The intelligence committee's 500-page release concluded that the CIA inflicted suffering on al-Qaida prisoners beyond its legal authority and that none of the agency's "enhanced interrogations" provided critical, life-saving intelligence. It cited the CIA's own records, documenting in detail how waterboarding and lesser-known techniques such as "rectal feeding" were actually employed.

Government-wide \$1.1T spending bill teeters amid discontent among Democrats, tea partiers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Growing opposition among Democrats and persistent opposition from the tea party Republicans has left a \$1.1 trillion government-wide spending bill teetering as many lawmakers find more in the measure to dislike than like.

Two items are particularly toxic to Democrats whose votes will be needed to pass the measure, neither of which was disclosed until late in this week's negotiations on the bill. One would weaken the regulation of risky financial instruments and another would allow rich people to flood political parties with more cash.

A provision aimed at shoring up financially weak multiemployer pension fund was drawing fire from AARP and some union allies of Democrats over a major change in labor law that would permit plans to cut the pensions of current retirees.

At the same time, tea party Republicans remained unhappy that GOP leaders didn't use the bill to try to block President Barack Obama's controversial recent moves on immigration.

Many Democrats tended to focus more on the bad than the good since the 1,603-page bill was released late Tuesday. Large swaths of Republicans praised it for cutting spending for the IRS and the Environmental Protection Agency.

A frustrated Obama tries to move forward with closing Guantanamo prison over stiff opposition

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fed up with the stalled progress toward closing the Guantanamo Bay detention center, President Barack Obama summoned top administration officials to the White House for an unusual meeting last month to make it clear he wanted action.

The president addressed the team at length, emphasizing why he wants to shut down the detention facility for terrorism suspects, according to administration officials familiar with the meeting, which wasn't on Obama's public schedule. The presidential lecture was the culmination of months of White House frustration with his own administration's inaction. Since then, the a dozen prisoners have been transferred overseas — more than all of last year and the most since 2010.

"We're working on it," Obama said at a bookstore over the Thanksgiving weekend when a shopper expressed hope Guantanamo will close.

With the sudden surge in transfers, Guantanamo is now at a turning point. The prisoner population is at 136 — down from a high of near 700 and its lowest point since shortly after it opened in January 2002 — with 68 of the prisoners cleared for transfer. Officials have said at least five more will be moved by Dec. 31.

Obama is trying to work his way toward the pledge he made on his first day in office to close the detention center at the U.S. Navy base in Cuba. But actually closing it would still either require approval from Congress, which has prohibited transferring any prisoners to the U.S., or a bold unilateral action that his opponents are warning him against but administration officials say hasn't been ruled out.

Powerful storm begins to pound Northern California

SUDHIN THANAWALA, Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A storm expected to be one of the windiest and rainiest in five years pushed across parts of Northern California early Thursday as schools canceled classes and residents stocked up on supplies.

Moderate rain and gusty winds hit the area north of San Francisco with heavier rain expected in the coming hours across the region, the National Weather Service said. The storm could also cause debris slides, especially in areas affected by this year's intense and widespread wildfires. Big waves are expected along the coast.

As much as 8 inches of rain could fall on coastal mountains over a 24-hour period, the weather service said.

"It's a short amount of time for that amount of water," forecaster Diana Henderson said. "We are anticipating some localized flooding, maybe some downed trees and downed power lines. It could have an effect on a wide range of people."

Meteorologist Charles Bell predicted that major elements of the storm would hit the San Francisco Bay area by late morning.

The storm is "going to be advancing toward the south through the day today," Bell said Thursday. Winds were also picking up, he said, noting gusts of up to 50 mph were hitting some buoys off the coast.

Residents rushed to buy emergency supplies, with some stores running out of water, batteries and flashlights. Some cities announced on their Twitter accounts that they had no sandbags or sand left by Wednesday evening.

The Citrus Heights Police Department tweeted Wednesday: "Sandbag locations in CH are closed. All bags and sand has been taken. All sand & bags were taken in 3hr period."

Ski resorts in the northern Sierra Nevada could get more than 2 feet of snow.

The storm is expected to later pound parts of Southern California before a weakening system moves east through Nevada, Idaho, Arizona and New Mexico. Those states could get rain and snow, but nothing like what California is expected to experience, forecasters say.

In San Francisco, where as much as 4 inches of rain was forecast, crews cleared storm drains and removed loose rocks from a hillside to prevent them from crashing down. Residents were advised to sweep up leaves and debris in front of their properties to prevent them from clogging drains.

"We have crews working starting tonight in 12-hour shifts," said Rachel Gordon, a spokeswoman for San Francisco's public works agency. "It will be all hands on deck."

Public schools in several Bay Area cities, including San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley, and some private schools canceled Thursday's classes.

Wind gusts of up to 70 mph were expected on mountain tops, creating possible blizzard conditions in the Sierra. Rain, pounding surf and gusty winds were forecast for Southern California starting Thursday evening.

The weather service issued a high-surf advisory from the Central Coast to Ventura County, saying

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"waves will over-top jetties and sea walls at times" and "will potentially wash into low-lying beach areas or parking lots."

In California's agricultural heartland, farmers were looking forward to the dousing after three consecutive dry years. Parts of the state have experienced above-average rainfall this year but not enough to make much of a dent in the drought.

James McFarlane, a third-generation farmer in Fresno County, said workers would have to stop picking citrus crops during the storm, but rain this time of year makes fruit bigger, allowing it to fetch higher prices.

"If we're not getting some Mother-Nature-dictated time off out in the field, that probably means we're going to have a hard time finding surface water in the warmer months," he said.

The rain and the snow in the Sierra Nevada fill reservoirs that supply irrigation water during hot, dry months.

Farther north, a series of strong weather fronts with high winds and heavy rains could lead to flooding and landslides in western Washington.

The weather service expects as much as 14 inches of rain between Monday and Thursday in the Olympic Mountains west of Seattle.

Saturated soils will bring the risk of mudslides, while winds could topple trees.

High winds were also forecast in Oregon.

Major provisions of \$1.1 trillion spending bill

The Associated Press

Top lawmakers Tuesday released a massive 1,603-page, \$1.1 trillion omnibus spending bill funding every government agency but the Homeland Security Department through Sept. 30, 2015. The measure also contains dozens of policy provisions affecting financial regulations, the environment, school lunches and regulations requiring truckers get more rest. Provisions include:

SPENDING

— Overall spending. \$1.013 trillion for core agency budgets for day-to-day operations, with \$521 billion for defense and \$492 billion for non-defense. That represents about one-third of the federal budget and is essentially a freeze at current levels. Another \$64 billion is provided for overseas military operations.

— Defense. Provides a base budget of \$490 billion to the Pentagon, a \$3.3 billion increase. Maintaining 1.3 million active-duty troops and 820,800 reserves would cost \$128 billion. Another \$162 billion is provided for operations and maintenance; procurement of new weapons systems, including 38 new F-35 fighters, totals \$92 billion.

— Overseas military operations. Provides \$73.7 billion for overseas military operations and diplomatic efforts by the State Department to combat terrorism, including \$3.4 billion to continue the air campaign against Islamic State militants and \$1.6 billion to train the Iraqi military. Provides \$4.1 billion to train and equip Afghanistan's military.

— Homeland Security. Keeps the Homeland Security Department funded at current levels through Feb. 27. Its budget will be revisited next year when Republicans are hoping to roll back President Barack Obama's recent moves on immigration.

— Ebola. Provides \$5.4 billion of President Barack Obama's \$6.2 billion request to fight Ebola at home and abroad; \$2.5 billion of the total would help African countries fight the disease, while \$2.7 billion

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would go to the Health and Human Services Department, including \$1.2 billion for Center for Disease Control and Prevention efforts to stop Ebola in West Africa and strengthen public health systems in at-risk countries.

— Foreign aid. Provides \$49 billion for foreign aid programs, an almost \$3 billion increase. Some \$6 billion would help fight HIV/AIDS overseas, while \$7.2 billion would be for economic and development programs. Israel would receive \$3.1 billion in military aid; Egypt would receive \$1.3 billion in military aid and \$150 million in economic assistance. The Millennium Challenge Corporation, which directs aid to countries demonstrating economic and social progress, would receive \$900 million.

— Environmental Protection Agency. Cuts the EPA budget by \$60 million to \$8.1 billion, or 21 percent below peak levels in 2010.

— Internal Revenue Service. Cuts the IRS by \$346 million to \$10.9 billion. Blocks the agency from targeting tea party organizations and other advocacy groups seeking tax-exempt status based on their ideology.

— Transportation. Provides \$71 billion for transportation programs, including \$40 billion in highway funding for states. Aid to Amtrak would be maintained at \$1.4 billion.

— Housing. Provides \$26 billion for Section 8 and other public housing programs for the poor. Add \$10 billion for other housing programs, including help for the elderly and disabled.

— Crime-fighting. Provides \$8.4 billion for the FBI, a slight increase; \$2.4 billion for the Drug Enforcement Administration; \$1.2 billion for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and \$2.3 billion for various grants to state and local law enforcement.

— NASA. The space program would receive \$18 billion, a \$364 million increase. Of that, \$4.4 billion is provided for the new Orion space-launch system, which last week had its first test launch.

— Food Aid. Provides \$82 billion for food stamps as required by law; allots another \$6.6 billion for a program that provides food aid to pregnant and nursing mothers and their young children. Another \$21 billion goes to mandatory funding for the school lunch program and child nutrition programs.

— Capitol Dome. Provides \$21 million to continue a project restoring the iconic cast-iron Capitol Dome, which is beset by crack and leaks.

POLICY 'RIDERS'

— Likely to be amended to include legislation aimed at shoring up underfunded multiemployer pension plans, including a controversial provision that permits them to cut the benefits of current and future retirees to shore up severely distressed plans.

— Eases regulations under the 2010 Dodd-Frank overhaul of financial regulations that require banks to set up separately capitalized affiliates — ineligible for federal benefits such as deposit insurance — to deal in more exotic and riskier forms of complex financial instruments called swaps. Regulators could still "push-out" risky swaps based on asset-backed securities.

— Blocks new Transportation Department regulations that require truckers to get two nights of sleep before restarting the clock on their workweek. One effect of the rule was to shorten the maximum length of a trucker's workweek from 82 hours to 70 hours.

— Relaxes rules slated to go into effect in 2017 that require more whole grains in school foods. Put off rules to lower sodium in school meals that were supposed to go into effect in 2017.

— Prohibits the use of federal or local funds for implementing a referendum legalizing recreational marijuana use in Washington, D.C. It's ambiguous as to whether it will have a practical effect.

— Blocks the Fish and Wildlife Service from placing the Sage Grouse on the Endangered Species list, which Republicans claim will have economic benefits for Western states.

— Blocks the Justice Department from raiding medical marijuana dispensaries in states where they

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are permitted.

— Prohibits the use of funds for a "National Roadside Survey" by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration.

— Bars funding for renovation of the United Nations headquarters in New York, a new London embassy and debt relief for foreign countries.

— Withholds money from the U.N. population fund, dollar for dollar, if it operates a program in China.

— Prohibits the transfer or release of detainees held at the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; also bans construction of facilities to hold detainees within the U.S.

— Prohibits funding for the administration's "light bulb standard," which prevents the manufacture or sale of incandescent bulbs.

— Bars funding for the White House to order the IRS to determine the tax-exempt status of an organization.

— Prohibits the use of funds for painting portraits.

— Prohibits the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating lead in ammunition or fishing tackle.

Today in History

The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Dec. 11, the 345th day of 2014. There are 20 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 11, 1936, Britain's King Edward VIII abdicated the throne so he could marry American divorcee Wallis Warfield Simpson; his brother, Prince Albert, became King George VI.

On this date:

In 1792, France's King Louis XVI went before the Convention to face charges of treason. (Louis was convicted, and executed the following month.)

In 1816, Indiana became the 19th state.

In 1928, police in Buenos Aires announced they had thwarted an attempt on the life of President-elect Herbert Hoover.

In 1937, Italy announced it was withdrawing from the League of Nations.

In 1941, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States; the U.S. responded in kind.

In 1946, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was established.

In 1964, Che Guevara addressed the United Nations; in his speech, the Argentine revolutionary declared that "the final hour of colonialism has struck." Singer-songwriter Sam Cooke was shot to death by a motel manager in Los Angeles; he was 33.

In 1972, Apollo 17's lunar module landed on the moon with astronauts Eugene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt aboard; during three extravehicular activities (EVAs), they became the last two men to date to step onto the lunar surface.

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter signed legislation creating a \$1.6 billion environmental "superfund" to pay for cleaning up chemical spills and toxic waste dumps. "Magnum P.I.," starring Tom Selleck, premiered on CBS.

In 1994, leaders of 34 Western Hemisphere nations signed a free-trade declaration in Miami.

In 1997, more than 150 countries agreed at a global warming conference in Kyoto, Japan, to control the Earth's greenhouse gases.

In 2008, Bernie Madoff was arrested, accused of running a multibillion-dollar Ponzi scheme. (Madoff is serving a 150-year federal prison sentence.)

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Ten years ago: Doctors in Austria said that Ukrainian presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko had been poisoned with dioxin, which caused the severe disfigurement and partial paralysis of his face. Vitali Klitschko stopped Danny Williams in the eighth round to retain his WBC heavyweight title. Southern California quarterback Matt Leinart (LYN'-nurt) was awarded the 70th Heisman Trophy.

Five years ago: Tiger Woods announced on his website that he was taking an indefinite leave from golf to try to save his five-year-old marriage to Elin Nordegren. (However, the couple ended up divorcing in Aug. 2010.)

One year ago: Time magazine selected Pope Francis as its Person of the Year, saying the Roman Catholic church's new leader - the first from Latin America - had changed the perception of the 2,000-year-old institution in an extraordinary way in a short time.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Jean-Louis Trintignant is 84. Actress Rita Moreno is 83. Former California state lawmaker Tom Hayden is 75. Pop singer David Gates (Bread) is 74. Actress Donna Mills is 74. U.S. Ambassador to China, former Sen. Max Baucus, is 73. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry is 71. Singer Brenda Lee is 70. Actress Lynda Day George is 70. Music producer Tony Brown is 68. Actress Teri Garr is 67. Movie director Susan Seidelman is 62. Actress Bess Armstrong is 61. Singer Jermaine Jackson is 60. Rock musician Mike Mesaros (The Smithereens) is 57. Rock musician Nikki Sixx (Motley Crue) is 56. Rock musician Darryl Jones (The Rolling Stones) is 53. Actor Ben Browder is 52. Singer-musician Justin Currie (Del Amitri) is 50. Rock musician David Schools (Hard Working Americans, Gov't Mule, Widespread Panic) is 50. Actor Gary Dourdan (DOOR'-dan) is 48. Actress-comedian Mo'Nique is 47. Actor Max Martini is 45. Rapper-actor Mos Def is 41. Actor Rider Strong is 35. Actress Xosha (ZOH'-shah) Roquemore (TV: "The Mindy Project") is 30. Actress Karla Souza (TV: "How to Get Away With Murder") is 28. Actress Hailee Steinfeld is 18.

Thought for Today: "It takes a long time to understand nothing." - Edward Dahlberg, American author and critic (1900-1977).