

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Chiropractic Clinic

Carol McFarland-Kutter, D.C.
1205 N 1st St., Groton 397-8204

**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 18

School Breakfast: Cinnamon roll, yogurt, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Chili, corn bread, veggie cups, fruit.

Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, sweet potatoes, green beans, glorified rice, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: Jean Harrison • Pastor Craig Grams

• Jasper Pray

7:00pm: MS/HS Christmas Concert

Friday, December 19

Debate at Brookings

End of Second Quarter

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

School Lunch: Hot dogs, baked beans, Romaine salad, fruit.

Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, peas and carrots, peach cobbler, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: Jeff Howard • Tim Thurston • Brad Waage

4:00pm: BB Double Header - Deuel is here (JV GBB at 4 pm, JV BBB at 6 pm, Varsity girls at 6:30 pm, Varsity boys at 8:00)

Saturday, December 20

Debate at Brookings

Birthdays: • Virginia Spencer • Lisa Adler • Jim Pray • Harvey Flihs III • Lexi Osterman

10:00am: Emmanuel Lutheran Pastor at Rosewood Court

11:00am: NEC Wrestling at Sisseton

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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Groton Prairie Mixed

Team Standings: Jackelopes 4, Foxes 3 ½, Pocket Gophers 3, Coyotes 1, Chipmunks 1/2, Killer Chihuahuas 0

Men's High Games: Brad Waage 279, 211, Randy Stanley 219, Ron Belden 212, 201, Brad Larson 211, Roger Spanier 200

Women's High Games: Dar Larson 201, Sue Stanley 196, Lori Giedt 191

Men's High Series: Brad Waage 686, Rick Carlson 579, Brad Larson 572

Women's High Series: Dar Larson 517, Lori Wiley 498, Sue Stanley 493

Groton Coffee Cup

Team Standings: Ten Pens 36 (Winners of first half), Jungle Lanes 28.5, Farm Girls 27.5, James Valley 27, Ken's 26.5, Golden Girls 22.5.

High Games: Vickie Walter 181, 164; Penny Stolle 166, Jan Raap 155.

High Series: Vickie Walter 486, Penny Stolle 457, Sue Stanley 425.

Conde National

Team Standings: Gians 25.5, Pirates 20.5, Mets 20.5, Cubs 19, Colts 18.5, Braves 16.

Men's High Games: Larry Frohling 197, Lance Frohling 192, Bryce Dargatz 172.

Women's High Games: Mary Larson 179, 165; Ranae Ball 167, Nicole Kassube 164.

Men's High Series: Larry Frohling 512, Lance Frohling 474, Topper Tastad 458.

Women's High Series: Mary Larson 470, Nicole Kassube 452, Hope Knoepfle 430.

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)

Farm Credit Services of America To Distribute Record \$160 Million Cash-Back Dividend for 2014

Omaha, Nebraska – December 17, 2014 – Farm Credit Services of America (FCSAmerica), a customer-owned financial cooperative, has approved a 2014 cash-back dividend of \$160 million to its eligible customer-owners. FCSAmerica serves the credit and risk management needs of farmers, ranchers, agribusiness and rural residents in Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming.

The 2014 cash-back dividend represents the largest annual dividend approved by the cooperative's Board of Directors. Since 2004, FCSAmerica has distributed \$990 million to its eligible-customer owners. Eligible customers can expect 2014 payments to be distributed in March 2015

The FCSAmerica Board also has approved a patronage program for 2015, ensuring a portion of the cooperative's earnings will be returned to farmers and ranchers for the 12th consecutive year.

"Cash-back dividends are one of the unique aspects of our cooperative model," said Jeremy Heitmann, a southeast Nebraska family farmer who serves as chairman of the FCSAmerica Board of Directors. "We are proud to return a portion of net income to those farmers and ranchers whose decision to do business with FCSAmerica strengthens the cooperative for all our benefit."

"Our customer-owners use their dividends to invest in their operations, their families and local communities," said Doug Stark, CEO and president of FCSAmerica. "In the past 11 years, that has amounted to nearly a billion dollars that FCSAmerica has returned to its customer-owners to benefit agriculture and main streets across our four states. The portion of earnings retained each year by FCSAmerica helps build the cooperative's financial capacity and strength to serve borrowers through all economic cycles, now and into the future."

Cash-Back Dividend Details

As a cooperative, FCSAmerica is uniquely positioned to return a portion of its profits through cash-back dividends to its customer-owners. Cash-back dividends are based on the average daily balance of a customer-owner's eligible loans. Generally, the more eligible loan business that farmers and ranchers do with FCSAmerica, the more they benefit financially from the patronage program.

EPA's proposed Clean Power Plan wrong for South Dakota, PUC says

Pierre, S.D. – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's proposed plan to regulate carbon emissions from existing power plants will have harmful results on the reliability and affordability of electricity in South Dakota if implemented as it is currently written, warned the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission. The PUC responded to the EPA's call for comments to its Clean Power Plan by thoroughly analyzing the proposal, discussing effects with South Dakota stakeholders and submitting extensive written comments to the federal agency this month. Those comments can be read on the PUC's website at www.PUC.SD.gov/energy/111dcomments.aspx

In mid-June of this year the EPA rolled out its proposed rule to regulate carbon emissions from existing power plants under the Clean Air Act §111(d). The agency initially opened a comment period until mid-October for the myriad parties that would be affected by the complex rule to share their concerns. The EPA extended the comment period to Dec. 1, after receiving feedback from numerous parties about the compressed timeline. The EPA expects to finalize the rule by June 1, 2015. States will be required to submit their plans on how to comply with the rule by June 30, 2016. The South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources will be responsible for compiling and filing the state plan with the EPA.

In its proposed rule, the EPA specifies carbon reduction goals for the state that are based on national or regional averages with no consideration for the production and dispatch of energy in South Dakota that crosses state boundaries. The existing power plants in South Dakota targeted by the EPA's proposal are the Big Stone Plant, a coal-fired plant near Milbank jointly operated by Otter Tail Power Co., NorthWestern Energy and Montana-Dakota Utilities Co.; and Deer Creek Station, a natural gas combined cycle plant near Elkton owned by Basin Electric Power Cooperative. The EPA's proposal does not give credit for carbon-free electricity generated by hydropower plants located along the Missouri River in South Dakota.

PUC Commissioners Gary Hanson, Chris Nelson and Kristie Fiegen are unified in their opposition to the EPA's proposed plan and in supporting the comments the PUC has filed. Paramount among their concerns are the proposal's use of flawed assumptions and suggestions of carbon emission reductions that are not technically feasible, resulting in dramatic increases in the cost of electricity to consumers and a reckless disregard for electric reliability.

The PUC's written comments focus on four primary elements: educating the EPA about South Dakota's electric industry; identifying concerns with EPA's short compliance timeline; identifying technical issues with the building blocks EPA has specified for states to use to comply with the Clean Power Plan; and providing economic impacts forecasted for South Dakota.

"The EPA's proposal will be destructive to our economy," said PUC Chairman Hanson. "I agree that environmental prudence should be part of national energy policy. I also firmly believe that energy must be affordable and reliable. I am frustrated that the EPA's plan obviously bypasses essential facts about South Dakota's reality. If the plan is unchanged, our state's consumers will pay dearly," he concluded.

"I believe the comments the PUC submitted to the EPA do a great job of stating why the EPA's proposal is unrealistic and unattainable for South Dakota without significant cost," stated PUC Vice Chairman Nelson. "This plan concerns me to the core and the PUC will continue to do all that we can to moderate its impact to South Dakota consumers, farmers and business people," Nelson said.

"South Dakota is known for its common sense approach to challenges and changes," commented Commissioner Fiegen. "Unfortunately, the EPA doesn't place common sense very high on its priority scale, as reflected in this proposed plan. It is important that South Dakota energy consumers know that the PUC will continue to dig our heels in and advocate for rational and reasonable solutions on their behalf," she said.

The PUC hosted a forum in July 2014 to discuss the proposed Clean Power Plan with representatives of South Dakota's electric industry, the EPA and the state's congressional delegation. Access presentations and recordings of the forum at www.PUC.SD.gov/energy/111dcomments.aspx

SD Farm Bureau and County Farm Bureau Chapters Contribute Funds for State Fairgrounds' New Exhibit Hall

HURON, S.D.-The South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation has provided \$25,000 toward the South Dakota State Fair Foundation for its new exhibit hall, and is also assisting in campaign fundraising in a number of other ways.

Earlier this year at DakotaFest, the State Fair Foundation was selected as one of three organizations to compete in Farm Bureau Financial's "Cast Your Kernel" competition. Voting members of the public chose the State Fair Foundation to win the top donation of \$2,000.

"Farm Bureau cares about rural families and the future opportunities in agriculture," said Wayne Smith, executive director of the South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation. "Advocating to consumers about the food we produce will be one of the greatest challenges in the future. Farm Bureau is pleased to assist 4-H as they help youth develop their leadership abilities."

In addition, a number of South Dakota county Farm Bureau chapters have pledged to match funds raised by county 4-H groups. So far, nearly \$7,500 has been matched by county Farm Bureau chapters.

"It has been wonderful to have not only a generous donor, but a statewide grassroots partner in the Farm Bureau," said Loren Noess, capital campaign chair. "From the start of our campaign, they have gone the extra mile to assist 4-H fundraising efforts in the communities served by local Farm Bureau chapters."

The funds raised by 4-H members and doubled by county Farm Bureau chapters are doubled again by philanthropist Earl Nordby's 4-H Campaign Challenge. For each dollar raised by 4-H'ers and their families for the new exhibit hall, Nordby is matching it 1:1.

When built, the Nordby Exhibit Hall for 4-H, Youth, and Community will feature 30,000 square feet of exhibit space, multiple classrooms, a large kitchen for 4-H Special Foods competitions and a performance stage for the many 4-H activities that will take place year-round.

The Foundation has raised more than \$3.5 million of its \$4 million goal. Those interested in supporting the Capital Campaign should contact the State Fair Foundation at 605-274-3370 or visit www.sdstate-fairfoundation.com. To learn more about your local 4-H fundraising efforts for the exhibit hall, contact your SDSU Extension 4-H Advisor.

The South Dakota Farm Bureau Federation is a membership organization composed of 14,000 member families statewide, and works to build strong leaders that can speak for and lead agriculture into the future. 4-H plays a very important part in the development of young rural leaders.

Agriculture is South Dakota's No. 1 industry, generating \$25.6 billion in annual economic activity and employing over 115,000 South Dakotans. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture's mission is to promote, protect, preserve and improve this industry for today and tomorrow. Visit us online at <http://sdda.sd.gov> or find us on Facebook and Twitter.

4-H Membership is Growing Across South Dakota

By Lura Roti, for SDSU Extension/iGrow.org

4-H is a tradition in Jennifer "Pearson" Ringkob's family. "I belonged to the Go-Getters 4-H Club. It's the same club my dad, Neal, belonged to and the same club my grandpa, Kenneth, was a leader of," says the SDSU Extension 4-H Youth Program Advisor for Marshall and Day Counties.

Today, all three of her children continue the family's 4-H legacy. They are among a growing number of South Dakota youth who participate in the organization.

Statewide, 4-H membership grew in 2014 by 500. Today, South Dakota 4-H boasts 8,911 members. Ringkob says continued growth can be attributed to many factors - specifically the program's ability to break traditional molds and evolve to meet the changing needs of youth and families throughout the state.

"Kids have so many choices today. We work to ensure that 4-H continues to be a choice they want to make," Ringkob says. "We have really broadened our horizons to provide more activity and programming opportunities."

Reflecting on the 4-H she participated in as a child and comparing it with the 4-H she and her children are part of today, Ringkob says the organization has increased programming in the areas of leadership, advocacy, STEM (science, technology, engineering & math) and healthy relationships.

"4-H has always been about having something for everyone," explains Peter Nielson, SDSU Extension 4-H Youth Development Program Director. "We've worked closely with communities to develop activities and programming which appeal to today's youth and their families."

The delivery system has also changed. Today Ringkob and many of her peers, like Megan Peterson, provide after school programming to introduce 4-H and its opportunities to students and families who may not otherwise be involved.

As the SDSU Extension 4-H Youth Program Advisor for Tripp and Gregory Counties, Peterson regularly leads hands-on science activities for youth. "In our after school program, the kids have been in class all day so they are ready to have fun. The other day we made cardboard boomerangs and discussed the design, why they fly and why they come back to us when we throw them," Peterson said.

Last summer, youth utilized GPS units to participate in a scavenger hunt around Burke Lake State Park. "It was a great way to incorporate STEM with exercise," Peterson explains.

In McCook County, SDSU Extension 4-H Youth Program Advisor, Alicia Reif, coordinated with FFA Advisor and 4-H volunteer, Terry Rieckman, to start the McCook Central 4-H Club for youth who do not already belong to a 4-H club.

"It's a natural fit," says Rieckman, who grew up in 4-H and has taught agriculture education at McCook Central High School for more than 30 years. "We are slowly seeing students take advantage of 4-H opportunities they did not already have through FFA."

He adds that any time students have the opportunity to develop their leadership and speaking skills, communities should embrace it. "It's huge. These kids will someday be sitting on our co-op boards, school boards and in boardrooms. They need the ability to persuade others," Rieckman explains.

Volunteer support and community buy-in have always played an important role in 4-H. In recent years, Nielson says there has been a trend toward increased involvement. Today, more than 1,700 South Dakotans serve as 4-H volunteers. "By partnering with other organizations and calling on volunteer involvement, we can more effectively reach youth and communities," Nielson says.

He points to a recent Farm Safety Day hosted by the Marshall County Extension Office and the Community 4-H Promotion and Expansion Committee in Ringkob's counties. This committee was formed to

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increase outreach to non-4-H members and their families. "We are a rural community and have many youth who live and work on farms. We wanted to focus on educating the kids so that accidents can be prevented," Ringkob says.

The volunteers on the committee organized the event and garnered support from school administration who hosted the event on the school grounds, making it possible for more than 90 fifth through eighth graders to attend.

"It's exciting to see youth who are not already in 4-H receive benefits from 4-H programming - and hopefully it will spark their interest and they will want to become involved," says Vicki Renner, a Community 4-H Promotion and Expansion Committee volunteer.

Benefits like community involvement, public speaking, organizational skills and a network of friends are the reason, Renner, a former 4-H member, encouraged her sons, Thane, 16, and Weston, 13, to become involved in 4-H because she recognizes these skills as lifelong benefits.

This community partnership led to additional opportunities for local 4-H members when members of the Governor's Commission on Fort Sisseton reached out to Ringkob and local 4-H volunteers looking for youth to reenact local ghost stories during the Ft. Sisseton State Park Haunted Forest.

"They wanted 4-H Jr. Leaders to participate because they recognize them as the community's youth leaders," Ringkob said.

Developing leaders, Ringkob acknowledges, is among many time-honored 4-H traditions that will never change.

To learn more about South Dakota 4-H, visit www.iGrow.org/4h.

Today in Weather History

1985: On one of the coldest mornings of the year, most places in South Dakota experienced low temperatures of less than 20 degrees below zero (F). The coldest temperature was 30 below zero at Huron in Beadle County and Canton in Lincoln County. Aberdeen dropped to 22 below zero, Highmore and Mobridge fell to 23 below zero, Britton fell to 24 below zero, and Summit bottomed out at 25 below.

1996: A powerful Alberta Clipper and a slow-moving deep Arctic high pressure system brought widespread prolonged blizzard conditions to the entire region from the 16th to the 19th. The clipper dropped from 1 to 5 inches of snowfall on top of the already expansive and deep snow cover of 1 to almost 4 feet. Across central and north central South Dakota, north winds increased to 25 to 40 mph with gusts to 55 mph late in the morning of the 16th. Temperatures also fell, and widespread blizzard conditions and dangerous wind chills of 40 to 70 below zero developed, prevailing through noon on the 18th. Across northeast South Dakota, conditions changed through late in the day of the 16th, with widespread blowing snow, falling temperatures and dangerous wind chills. Widespread blizzard conditions developed on the morning of the 17th and continued into the evening of the 18th. Conditions changed throughout the afternoon of the 16th in west central Minnesota, with a full-fledged blizzard by the morning of the 17th.

North winds of 30 to 40 mph gusting to 50 mph brought visibilities to near zero and caused heavy drifting, making travel difficult. Many people had to be rescued from their vehicles after getting stuck in large snowdrifts or going into ditches because of low visibilities. Some people had to wait to be rescued for many hours, for some over a day. Due to the massive amount of blowing snow, widespread heavy drifting occurred across the entire area, blocking roads, making travel difficult, and leaving some people stranded to wait out the storm. Some snowdrifts from the storm were as high as 15 feet with a few houses almost buried. A Burlington Northern locomotive became stuck in a 12-foot drift near Hazel and had to be dug out. Due to the weight of the snow, the roof of a hanger at the Gettysburg Airport collapsed onto an airplane, crushing the plane.

All schools were let out early on the 16th with some schools not reopening until the 20th. Several school buses went into the ditch or got stuck in drifts and had to be pulled out. There were several accidents, most with minor injuries; however, one accident in Dewey county resulted in serious injury. Most of the roads, state highways and Interstate 90 were closed for a day or two until road crews could get to them. This left many people stranded to wait out the storm. Interstate

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Full-Time CNA
Part-Time/Casual CNA

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- ★ 401(k) Retirement Savings Plan
- ★ Life, Accidental Death and Disability Insurance
- ★ Tuition Reimbursement Program
- ★ Flexible Spending Accounts
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29 also received heavy drifting, with parts of it closed for a while during the storm. Most snow plows had to be called back, because they could not see the roads or the roads would be drifted over shortly after they were plowed. Some county snow removal budgets were already depleted or were close to being depleted. Emergency personnel and road crews were working extended hours to keep up with the storm. Rescue vehicles had a difficult time responding to emergencies. In one case, a lady from Moberly had to be brought to Aberdeen. The 100-mile trip took six hours. Also, a rural Westport man died because the rescue units could not get to him in time.








Airports were closed or flights were canceled or delayed. Mail was delayed for some people up to several days with a huge backup of Christmas packages. Some government offices and many businesses were closed for several days. All sports and other activities were postponed or canceled. Farmers and ranchers had a difficult time getting feed to their livestock. Many cattle were loose and had to be found as they walked on snow drifts over fences. Several livestock and countless number of pheasants were also killed by the storm with some buried in the snow. Several dairy producers had to dump thousands of pounds of milk, because trucks could not get to them in time. Fortunately, there were only spotty power outages throughout the storm. For several hours on the night of the 16th in the extreme cold, 3000 people in Pierre were without power for several hours.

1944: The ships of the US Navy Task Force 38, seven fleet and six light carriers, eight battleships, 15 cruisers, and about 50 destroyers were operating about 300 miles east of Luzon in the Philippine Sea. A small but violent typhoon overtook the task force with relatively little warning. Many of the ships were caught near the center of the storm and buffeted by extreme seas and hurricane force winds. Three destroyers capsized and went down with practically all hands, while a cruiser, five aircraft carriers, and three destroyers suffered serious damage. Approximately 790 men were lost or killed. Fires occurred in three carriers when planes broke loose in their hangars and 146 planes on various ships were lost or damaged beyond economical repair by fires, impact damage, or by being swept overboard.

1957: An unusually late tornado outbreak for the time of year for so far north struck Missouri and Illinois. 18 tornadoes were rated F2 or greater. An F4 ripped through Jackson, Williamson, and Franklin counties in Illinois. Murphysboro was hard hit with 10 people killed. Sunfield, IL vanished completely as an F5 tornado swept it clean.

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TODAY	TONIGHT	FRIDAY	FRIDAY NIGHT	SATURDAY	SATURDAY NIGHT	SUNDAY
						
Chance Flurries High: 23 °F	Cloudy Low: 18 °F	Mostly Cloudy High: 30 °F	Mostly Cloudy Low: 20 °F	Partly Sunny High: 31 °F	Mostly Cloudy Low: 20 °F	Mostly Sunny High: 33 °F



Cloudy & Cold Today

Warming Friday – Saturday – Sunday

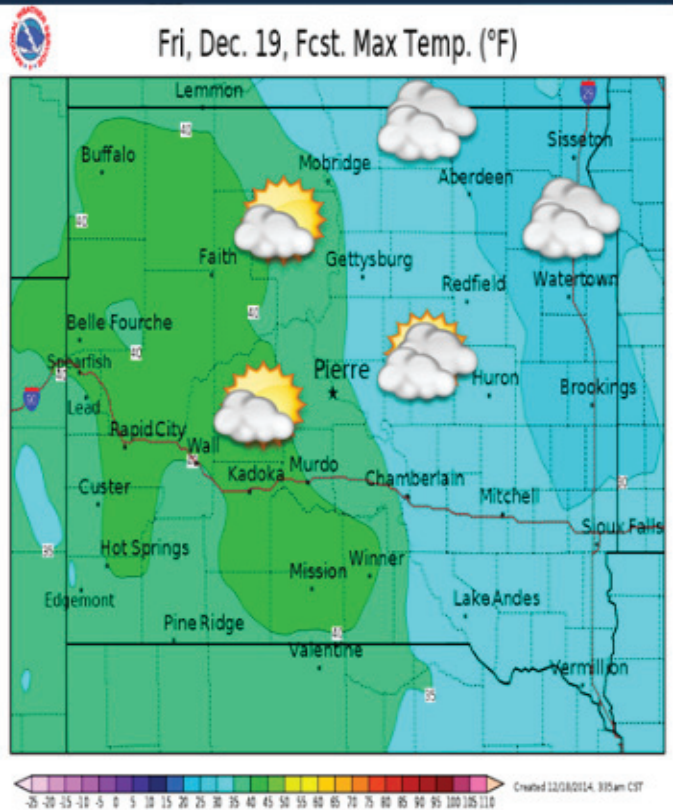
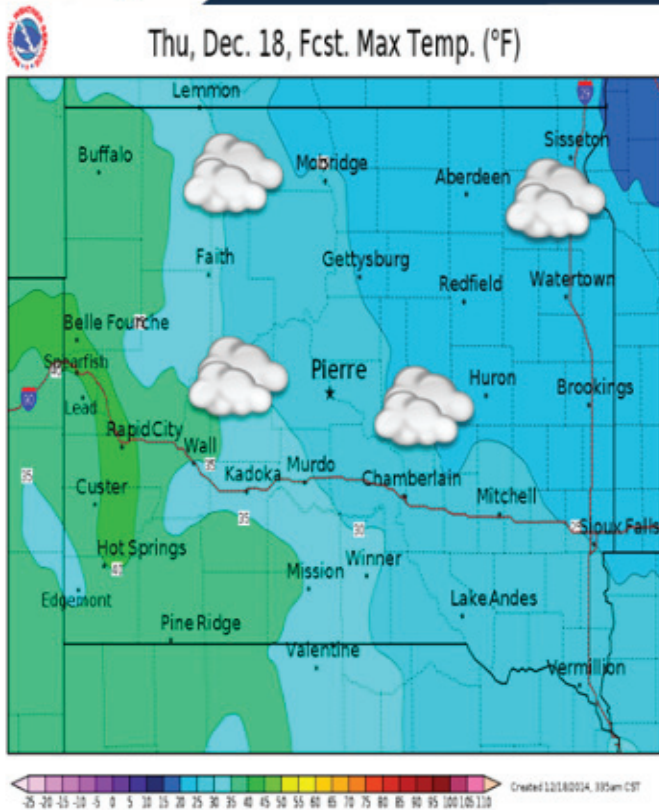
weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen



Clouds will continue to dominate conditions across the region. We will begin to see some partial clearing west river Friday, with milder temperatures that will continue into the weekend.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 16.7 at 2:16 PM
Low: -1.8 at 7:41 AM
Wind Chill:
High Gust: 9 at 3:33 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 58° in 1979
Record Low: -28° in 1951
Average High: 25°F
Average Low: 5°F
Average Precip in Dec.: 0.28
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 21.48
Precip Year to Date: 13.99
Sunset Tonight: 4:52 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:09 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Thu, Dec 18, 2014, issued 3:05 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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GOD WANTS YOU

A little girl went to church for the first time. She was full of questions.

When a baby was presented for baptism she became more interested than ever. Noticing her attentiveness, her father said, "The parents are giving her to God."

After the baptism, the minister gave the baby back to the parents.

Not understanding, she whispered to her father, "I guess God didn't want that one."

Not so! God wants every one of us.

On one occasion He said, "Come to Me, all of you..." On another occasion He said, "If you come to Me I will not reject you."

We have all experienced the pain of rejection. We know what it is like to feel alone. Family members leave us. Friends turn their backs on us. But not Jesus.

Someone said, "With Jesus, the welcome mat is out and the door is always open." Paul said, "...nothing...will ever separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord." There is nothing that we have done or ever will do that can separate us from Him, His love or His salvation.

Prayer: Father, we are so grateful for Your love that reaches out to all of us. We are thankful that Your arms are always open to each of us. We rejoice in Your salvation that can save and keep us: in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: Romans 8:38, 39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Police search for 3 men after SD home invasion

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City police say they are searching for three men after a violent home invasion.

Police responded to the home Wednesday afternoon. They say the men forced their way into the residence and assaulted the 72-year-old homeowner. He was taken to a hospital with serious injuries that weren't life threatening. Police haven't released the victim's name.

Police say the three suspects took several items and were recorded on the home's surveillance system. Police are asking anyone with information about the suspects to come forward.

Carbon monoxide sickens Fargo plant workers

FARGO, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say about 20 people at a Fargo agricultural plant have been taken to a hospital for carbon monoxide poisoning.

Firefighters and ambulance crews were called to Red River Commodities around 2 p.m. Wednesday. Several employees had complained about headaches and nausea. Responders evaluated 24 employees for exposure and at least 19 were taken to a hospital.

Their conditions were unclear early Thursday.

Investigators measured carbon monoxide levels of up to 300 parts per million. They say a faulty gas heater may have caused the problem in the bird food operations building. The building has been ventilated and the levels of the gas have declined.

SD man gets 14 months in shotgun threatening case

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota man has been sentenced to 14 months in prison for pointing a sawed-off shotgun at his brother and threatening to shoot him.

U.S. Attorney Brendan Johnson says 27-year-old Kelly Romero was also sentenced to 18 months of supervised release. Romero earlier pleaded guilty to assault with a dangerous weapon.

Authorities say Romero had been drinking and got into an argument with his brother at his home in Cherry Creek. Romero had been shopping for his grandmother's "Memorial Give Away" earlier in the day. Prosecutors say Romero then threatened to shoot his brother with the sawed-off shotgun pointed

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FRIED CHICKEN DAY
Served with Mashed Potatoes & Gravy

Serving 5-9 p.m.

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at him if he didn't leave the house.

Romero is in the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service.

Wednesday's Scores The Associated Press

Boys Basketball

Lakota Nation Tournament

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 81, Flandreau Indian 44

Crow Creek 61, McLaughlin 43

Little Wound 75, Oelrichs 23

Little Wound 79, Oelrichs 23

Pine Ridge 62, Tiospa Zina Tribal 56

Red Cloud 78, Hill City 34

St. Francis Indian 68, Lower Brule 36

White River 85, Omaha Nation, Neb. 21

Girls Basketball

Lakota Nation Tournament

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 43, Lower Brule 15

Hill City 66, Crow Creek 18

Little Wound 71, White River 56

McLaughlin 75, Tiospa Zina Tribal 43

Oelrichs 59, St. Francis Indian 57

Pine Ridge 62, Flandreau Indian 19

Red Cloud 64, Omaha Nation, Neb. 46

Todd County 64, Custer 21

Sanford giving \$25M for South Dakota scholarships

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Philanthropist T. Denny Sanford is donating \$25 million to South Dakota for a scholarship program for the state's technical schools, the governor's office announced Wednesday.

The state is matching Sanford's gift by pledging \$25 million of its own to create the Build Dakota Scholarship Program, which officials say will help fill empty jobs and address a worker shortage that is hindering South Dakota's growth.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard said the program is aimed at students entering "high-need" workforce programs at state technical institutes. It will allow students beginning in the fall of 2015 to graduate without debt and to fill jobs that South Dakota businesses have had trouble filling. An August report from Daugaard's office determined that the state is facing a labor supply shortage for industries that require considerable training.

"The establishment of this scholarship will mean that each year hundreds of our young people will have the opportunity to enter high-demand fields without incurring debt," Daugaard said in a statement. "The impact of this will be huge, not only for the students who receive the scholarship but for our entire state which has been faced with workforce challenges."

Sanford made his money in the banking business and owns First Premier Bank/Premier Bankcard. He has given away more than \$1 billion of his fortune to groups across the country.

Available for students who agree to remain in South Dakota for three years to work in their studied field, Daugaard expects to award 300 full scholarships per year, starting in the fall of 2015. The scholarship program will involve all four of the state's technical schools: Southeast Technical Institute in Sioux Falls, Western Dakota Tech in Rapid City, Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell and Lake Area Tech in Watertown.

In 2020, an endowment would shift to fund about 50 scholarships annually. The governor's office also put forward another \$1 million in funding earlier this year to help address the worker shortage.

"Business leaders across South Dakota have told me that workforce is the single largest obstacle to our continued economic growth," Economic Development Commissioner Pat Costello said. "Some businesses have been unable to expand because of the lack of workers. Others have turned down business. This new scholarship will go a long way in addressing that problem."

Study: Tall grass aids sage grouse nesting success

MEAD GRUVER, Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — Newly published research that examined the relationship between grass height and the greater sage grouse's nesting success could have implications for cattle and sheep grazing as environmental groups push for federal protection for the chicken-size, ground-dwelling bird.

Researchers studied sage grouse nests at two locations in the Powder River Basin in northeastern Wyoming and southeastern Montana. Over five years, they found the likelihood that at least one egg in a nest would hatch increased when nearby grass was taller, it and decreased when grass was shorter.

Tall grass and healthy sagebrush can help sage grouse hide their eggs from predators such as foxes and badgers, said Jeffrey Beck, a University of Wyoming associate professor and co-author of the study published in the December issue of *Wildlife Biology*.

"Sometimes it's even worse where they kill the adult female that's nesting on the clutch and then eat the eggs up," Beck said Wednesday.

Three groups — WildEarth Guardians, Western Watersheds Project and the Center for Biological Diversity — pointed to the grass-and-nest study as cause for concern about livestock grazing in sage grouse habitat.

"The more grass cows eat, the fewer sage grouse survive on public lands," said Randi Spivak with the Center for Biological Diversity.

The groups are among those pushing for Endangered Species Act protection for the greater sage grouse, which inhabit 11 states: California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Cattle grazing occurred in the areas studied, but the researchers didn't examine how grazing might have affected grass height, Beck said.

"There's also other things that eat grass too, including grasshoppers," he said.

Rain and snowfall also affect grass height, and the research from 2003 to 2007 encompassed wet years and dry ones. Still, the researchers suggested that grazing should be considered in sage grouse management.

"Managing grass height in large and intact landscapes with grazing is a tool that may benefit populations in eastern Montana and northeast Wyoming," they wrote.

More research is needed to evaluate how livestock grazing affects sage grouse habitat, Beck said.

Overgrazing can indeed harm sage grouse habitat, but ranchers can be flexible, said Jim Magagna, executive vice president of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association.

"You can adapt grazing programs to make them more amenable to the grouse," Magagna said.

Congress recently voted to bar any spending to plan to protect sage grouse as threatened or endangered. Even so, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell said Wednesday that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would stick by its longstanding plan to decide by Sept. 30 whether to list the birds.

Federal jury finds man guilty of drug conspiracy

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A federal jury has found a western South Dakota man guilty of recruiting others to illegally distribute methamphetamine in South Dakota.

U.S. Attorney Brendan Johnson says 42-year-old Luis Olivares, of Rapid City, was found guilty of multiple charges including conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

The charges carry a 20-year minimum sentence and up to life in prison. Prosecutors have filed a motion asking the presiding judge for mandatory life imprisonment.

Authorities say Olivares distributed meth with his co-conspirators in western South Dakota dating back to 2008.

While awaiting trial, Olivares filed a civil lawsuit against federal prosecutors, a magistrate judge and several others. Records show a judge found his civil rights complaint "frivolous" and dismissed the case, but he has filed an appeal.

Olivares's attorney in the criminal trial didn't immediately return a call seeking comment.

Protections blocked, but sage grouse work goes on

MATTHEW BROWN, Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — U.S. wildlife officials will decide next year whether a wide-ranging Western bird species needs protections even though Congress has blocked such protections from taking effect, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell said Wednesday.

They could determine the greater sage grouse is heading toward possible extinction, but they would be unable to intervene under the Endangered Species Act. The bird's fate instead remains largely in the hands of the 11 individual states where they are found.

President Barack Obama signed a \$1.1 trillion spending bill late Tuesday with a provision that barred money from being spent on rules to protect the chicken-sized bird and three related types of grouse.

Jewell said the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will continue collecting and analyzing data on sage grouse. A decision on whether protections are warranted will be reached by the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30, Interior officials said.

Greater sage grouse range across 11 Western states and two Canadian provinces. Oil and gas drilling, wildfires, livestock grazing and other activities have consumed more than half the bird's habitat over the past century.

The spending bill provision on sage grouse came after Western lawmakers and representatives of the oil and gas and agriculture industries said a threatened or endangered listing would devastate the region's economy.

Jewell criticized what she called "political posturing" in Congress over the issue. She said the spending prohibition would "undermine the unprecedented progress that is happening" as states and federal agencies craft sage grouse conservation plans.

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

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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. Those parcels can be put up for sale once conservation plans for sage grouse are in place, which is expected sometime next year. The plans are separate from any endangered species protections.

Wyoming and Montana account for 55 percent of the birds' population. Officials from the two states and others have pushed to keep greater sage grouse off the federal protected species list so they can retain control over the bird and its habitat.

A spokesman for Montana Gov. Steve Bullock, a Democrat, said collaborative efforts to conserve the bird would continue. Spokesman Dave Parker said the spending bill provision was "really not delaying the work we need to do, to ensure Montana can protect the sage grouse."

Wildlife advocates remained wary.

"Now we're going to get our chance to see if the state, local and federal agencies can deliver on sage grouse protections in the absence of an Endangered Species Act listing," said Erik Molvar with WildEarth Guardians.

Magistrate judge named to Seventh Judicial Circuit

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court has appointed Bernie Schuchmann as a full-time magistrate judge for the Seventh Judicial Circuit.

Schuchmann is an adjunct professor at Black Hills State University and previously served as Lawrence County's chief public defender.

He received his juris doctorate law degree from Texas Wesleyan Law School. He holds two master's degrees from Harvard University and an advanced law degree from Temple University.

The Seventh Judicial Circuit consists of Custer, Fall River, Pennington and Shannon counties.

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. WHAT DROVE OBAMA'S DECISION ON NORMALIZING WITH CUBA

The president was driven in part by realizing that the policy toward Cuba was isolating the U.S. from the rest of the world.

2. JUBILATION IN HAVANA, MUTED REACTION IN MIAMI

Bells tolled and school children applauded on the island when they heard Raul Castro deliver the news. Outrage among Cuban-Americans in their Florida hub was understated, showing vast change in recent years.

3. HACKING COULD UNDERSCORE NORTH KOREA'S CAPABILITIES

In a country where most people have never used the internet, Pyongyang has amassed a small army of computer coders who may have unleashed an attack against Sony.

4. AP INVESTIGATION: HUNDREDS OF CHILD DEATHS COULD HAVE BEEN PREVENTED

Nearly 800 kids died of abuse or neglect in the U.S. even though protection agencies knew they were in danger.

5. WHO HAS FAITH IN THE RUBLE

Putin says Moscow has enough foreign reserves and expresses confidence that his country's embattled currency will recover.

6. BOSTON MARATHON SUSPECT TO APPEAR IN COURT

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Dzhokhar Tsarnaev will make his first public appearance in a year and a half as he faces 30 federal charges.

7. MITCH MCCONNELL TAKES AIM AT OBAMA'S GREEN 'CRUSADE'

The incoming Senate majority leader tells the AP that he'll do everything he can to stop stricter limits on emissions from coal-burning power plants.

8. WHERE FRACKING WILL BE BANNED

The decision by New York state is cheered by environmentalists, while the industry and its supporters express outrage.

9. STUDY: ALCATRAZ INMATES COULD HAVE SURVIVED FAMED ESCAPE IN 1962

Dutch scientists, studying the tides and currents, conclude the three men might have made it to land.

10. WHICH 'SMART' PRODUCTS TO GIFT THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

A toothbrush with Bluetooth connectivity, a Mr. Coffee machine you can start remotely with your phone, and a scale that tracks your weight loss (or gain) are among this year's best offerings.

Q&A: Drones might help show how tornados form

DAN ELLIOTT, Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Researchers say they've collected promising weather data by flying instrument-laden drones into big Western and Midwestern storms. Now they want to expand the project in hopes of learning more about how tornados form.

Drones can penetrate parts of weather systems that other instruments can't reach, and they can do it at less cost and with less danger than piloted planes, the scientists say.

The University of Colorado and University of Nebraska announced this week they have formed the Unmanned Aircraft System and Severe Storms Research Group to develop the program.

Here are some key questions and answers about the research:

WHY USE DRONES?

Scientists have no other way to get instruments deep inside a storm. Drones can take measurements at any altitude up to about 2,500 feet — higher than measurements by ground stations and storm-chasing vehicles, said Adam Houston of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, co-director of the research group. They can also measure wind below 300 feet, lower than radar can reach. Drones can cover more territory than a ground-based storm chaser, and they don't need an airport to take off or land. A drone can fly into the strong winds, downdrafts, rain and hail of a powerful storm without putting a human pilot in danger.

DON'T THEY CRASH?

So far, none of the drones have crashed during storm research, but if the scientists launch a more intensive program with more flights, crashes become more likely, said Eric Frew, director of the University of Colorado's Research & Engineering Center for Unmanned Vehicles and a member of the Severe Storms Research Group.

WHAT KIND OF DRONES?

The aircraft are about 5 feet long and have a wingspan of about 10½ feet. They carry instruments to measure temperature, moisture and wind direction and speed, transmitting data to researchers on the ground via Wi-Fi and also storing it onboard. Including instruments, autopilot and communications gear, they cost \$30,000 to \$50,000 each. Making them storm-worthy increases the cost above other research drones, but piloted aircraft would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, the researchers said.

WHAT DO RESEARCHERS LEARN?

Researchers try to fly the drones into supercell thunderstorms, which create tornados, but not into tornadoes themselves. The measurements taken inside a storm provide a “fingerprint” that can tell where the air inside a storm came from and what forced it there, Houston said. If that air becomes part of a tornado, the fingerprint can help researchers learn how the twister formed. The researchers also want to know if that information could help forecasters predict tornados.

WHAT HAVE THEY ALREADY DONE?

Colorado and Nebraska researchers have flown drones into about 10 storms, including six supercell thunderstorms, since 2009. “Funding agencies didn’t believe we could do it,” Frew said. “We demonstrated that we could do it.” The temperature and moisture data from those flights were good, but the wind measurements proved trickier, Houston said, and researchers are working on ways to improve them.

WHAT’S NEXT?

The team is looking for a government research grant of \$1 million to \$1.5 million for a two- or three-year project. They would make multiple trips into storm country during the May-June tornado season and then analyze the data.

WHERE WOULD THE DRONES FLY?

The scientists currently have Federal Aviation Administration clearance to fly in 47,000 square miles over parts of Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska and Wyoming, Frew said. They’re seeking FAA authorization for parts of Oklahoma and Texas, which would add about 47,000 square miles more.

HOW ARE DRONES USED IN OTHER RESEARCH?

More scientists are utilizing using drones to gather data, Frew said. University of Colorado drones have been used to measure atmospheric temperatures and cloud chemical composition in the Arctic. The university will also use drones to measure turbulence, temperature and other data in the wake of wind turbines. Other researchers use them to check crop health and soil moisture on farms.

AP News in Brief

AP Analysis: US policy aimed at isolated Cuba put Washington at odds with rest of world

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama’s decision to pursue new relations with Cuba was driven in part by a stinging realization: Longstanding U.S. policies aimed at isolating Cuba had instead put Washington at odds with the rest of the world.

The American economic embargo on Cuba drove a wedge between the U.S. and Latin American nations. In an annual diplomatic embarrassment, the United Nations General Assembly votes overwhelmingly to condemn the U.S. policy. And while the U.S. was clinging to its economic restrictions against the small communist nation just 90 miles off its shores, leaders of China, Russia and Brazil flocked to Havana, promising millions in investment.

“Though this policy has been rooted in the best of intentions, no other nation joins us in imposing these sanctions, and it has had little effect beyond providing the Cuban government with a rationale for restrictions on its people,” Obama said Wednesday as he announced historic shifts in U.S. relations with Cuba following 18 months of secret negotiations.

The embargo itself will remain in place; only Congress can fully revoke it. But the president is moving on his own to expand economic ties, open an embassy in Havana, send high-ranking U.S. officials including Secretary of State John Kerry to visit and review Cuba’s designation as a state sponsor of

terrorism. The U.S. also is easing restrictions on travel to Cuba, including for family visits, official government business and educational activities. Tourist travel remains banned.

For the president, the moves signaled his willingness to stretch his executive authority to remake American foreign policy without Congress. As he enters the waning years of his presidency, Obama is increasingly flexing his presidential powers not only on U.S.-Cuba policy, but also on immigration, Internet neutrality and climate change.

Cubans hope for better future with renewal of relations with US

HAVANA (AP) — Cubans cheered the surprise announcement that their country will restore relations with the United States, hopeful they'll soon see expanded trade and new economic vibrancy even though the 53-year-old economic embargo remains in place for the time being.

"This opens a better future for us," said Milagros Diaz, 34. "We have really needed something like this because the situation has been bad and the people very discouraged."

Bells tolled in celebration and teachers halted lessons midday as President Raul Castro told his country Wednesday that Cuba would renew relations with Washington after more than a half-century of hostility.

Wearing his military uniform with its five-star insignia, the 83-year-old leader said the two countries would work to resolve their differences "without renouncing a single one of our principles."

Havana residents gathered around television sets in homes, schools and businesses to hear the historic national broadcast, which coincided with a statement by U.S. President Barack Obama in Washington. Uniformed schoolchildren burst into applause at the news.

AP source: US investigators link NKorea to Sony hacking; official statement could come

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal investigators have now connected the hacking of Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc. to North Korea, a U.S. official said Wednesday, though it remained unclear how the federal government would respond to a break-in that exposed sensitive documents and ultimately led to terrorist threats against moviegoers.

The official, who said a more formal statement might come soon, spoke on condition of anonymity because the official was not authorized to openly discuss an ongoing criminal case. A security professional with knowledge of the breach also said investigators had strong circumstantial evidence and technical commonalities pointing to North Korea.

Until Wednesday, the Obama administration had been saying it was not immediately clear who might have been responsible for the computer break-in. North Korea has publicly denied it was involved, though it did issue a statement earlier this month describing the hack as a "righteous deed."

The unidentified hackers had demanded that Sony cancel its release of the movie "The Interview," a comedy that included a gruesome scene depicting the assassination of North Korea's leader. Sony on Wednesday canceled the Dec. 25 release, citing the threats of violence at movie theaters that planned to show the movie, and later said there were no further plans to release the film.

The disclosure about North Korea's involvement came just after Sony hired FireEye Inc.'s Mandiant forensics unit, which last year published a landmark report with evidence accusing a Chinese Army organization, Unit 61398, of hacking into more than 140 companies over the years.

Sony faces losses on multiple fronts from unprecedented cyberattack linked to North Korea

NEW YORK (AP) — The unprecedented hack of Sony Pictures which a U.S. official says is linked to North Korea may be the most damaging cyberattack ever inflicted on an American business.

The fallout from the hack that exposed a trove of sensitive documents, and this week escalated to threats of terrorism, forced Sony to cancel release of the North Korean spoof movie "The Interview." The studio's reputation is in tatters as embarrassing revelations spill from tens of thousands of leaked emails and other company materials.

Federal investigators believe there is a connection between the Sony hack and the isolated communist nation, according to an official who spoke on condition of anonymity. The official was not authorized to openly discuss an ongoing criminal case.

North Korea has denounced the "The Interview" but earlier this month said the hack might have been carried out by sympathizers. The movie features a pair of journalists played by James Franco and Seth Rogen who are asked by the CIA to assassinate North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un.

The attack is possibly the costliest ever for a U.S. company, said Avivah Litan, a cybersecurity analyst at research firm Gartner. "This attack went to the heart and core of Sony's business and succeeded," she said. "We haven't seen any attack like this in the annals of U.S. breach history."

Putin says Western sanctions only partly responsible for economic crisis.

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin says that Western sanctions have been an important factor in the current economic crisis, but not the only one.

Putin said Thursday the influence of Western sanctions accounts roughly for 25 to 30 percent of factors behind the Russian crisis. He accused the West of trying to infringe on Russia's sovereignty, adding that the Ukrainian crisis was just a pretext for Western action. He said that the reason for Western action wasn't Crimea, it was because of efforts to "defend our independence and the right for existence."

Despite his tough rhetoric, Putin held out hope for normalizing ties with the West, saying that Russia still hopes to expand its gas supplies to southern Europe using a prospective gas hub on Turkey's border with Greece.

AP IMPACT: At least 786 kids die of abuse or neglect under watch of child protective services

BUTTE, Montana (AP) — At least 786 children died of abuse or neglect in the U.S. in a six-year span in plain view of child protection authorities — many of them beaten, starved or left alone to drown while agencies had good reason to know they were in danger, The Associated Press has found.

To determine that number, the AP canvassed the 50 states, the District of Columbia and branches of the military — circumventing a system that does a terrible job of accounting for child deaths. Many states struggled to provide numbers. Secrecy often prevailed.

Most of the 786 children whose cases were compiled by the AP were under the age of 4. They lost their lives even as authorities were investigating their families or providing some form of protective services because of previous instances of neglect or violence or other troubles in the home.

Take Mattisyn Blaz, a 2-month-old Montana girl who died when her father spiked her “like a football,” in the words of a prosecutor.

Matthew Blaz was well-known to child services personnel and police. Just two weeks after Mattisyn was born on June 25, 2013, he came home drunk, grabbed his wife by her hair and threw her to the kitchen floor while she clung to the newborn.

Reformers target traffic courts in Ferguson, but new amnesty programs draw few participants

ST. LOUIS (AP) — In the aftermath of Michael Brown’s death, legal activists suggested that some of the raw anger that erupted in suburban St. Louis had its roots in an unlikely place — traffic court.

It was there, they said, that low-income drivers sometimes saw their lives upended by minor infractions that led to larger problems. If left unpaid, a \$75 ticket for driving with expired tags could eventually bring an arrest warrant and even jail time.

So courts began an experimental amnesty program designed to give offenders a second chance by waiving those warrants. But the effort is attracting relatively few participants, despite a renewed emphasis on municipal court reform after Brown’s death last summer in Ferguson.

St. Louis County’s jumble of more than 80 municipal courts has been targeted by some public-interest lawyers who say the courts are virtual debtor’s prisons, extracting fines and fees from poor drivers and using the money to fund local governments, which in some cases serve just a few hundred residents.

“They make people poor, and they keep people poor,” said Thomas Harvey of the nonprofit legal clinic ArchCity Defenders, which is suing Ferguson and six other small cities, alleging they collect illegal municipal court fees.

Fed pledges a ‘patient’ approach in determining when to raise interest rates

WASHINGTON (AP) — If you didn’t know about the lingering damage from the Great Recession, the U.S. economy would appear remarkably strong.

The unemployment rate is a close-to-healthy 5.8 percent. Inflation is unusually low. Crashing oil prices are rewarding consumers with a tax cut of sorts.

Yet the Federal Reserve made clear Wednesday that it’s eyeing those improvements with caution. The Fed isn’t yet convinced it can start to pull away its stimulus of record-low interest rates.

Though the Fed has kept its key rate near zero for nearly six years to encourage borrowing, spending and investment, the economy has yet to fully repair the destruction from its worst crisis in 80 years.

Many workers remain trapped in part-time jobs. Paychecks are barely rising. Home ownership is dropping. Slumping oil prices have reduced inflation to a level so low it could eventually discourage spending and further stifle wage growth.

Qatar: Building a team to spring a surprise, showcase little nations at 2022 World Cup

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — It’s a cold, hard fact of football: Countries with tiny populations don’t generally beat big ones with deep wells of talented players.

So how embarrassing might the score be when Qatar — smallest host in World Cup history, with just

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282,750 citizens — plays the opening game of its 2022 tournament against, for example, titans Brazil or Germany?

At best 5-0? At worst 10-0, even 30-0?

"Impossible, impossible," said Ivan Bravo, the former Real Madrid administrator working to prevent such a loss from party-pooing over the Middle East's first World Cup.

"They will be ready to have a very good team, a competitive team."

Today in History

The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Dec. 18, the 352nd day of 2014. There are 13 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 18, 1944, in a pair of related rulings, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Korematsu v. United States*, upheld, 6-3, the government's wartime evacuation of people of Japanese descent, including U.S. citizens, from the West Coast (the decision was limited to the exclusion policy, and did not take up the issue of internment), while in *Ex parte Endo*, the justices unanimously agreed that "concededly loyal" Americans of Japanese ancestry could not continue to be detained. (Both rulings came a day after the U.S. Department of War said it was lifting the internment policy.)

On this date:

In 1787, New Jersey became the third state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1863, in a speech to the Prussian Parliament, Prime Minister Otto von Bismarck declared, "Politics is not an exact science."

In 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery, was declared in effect by Secretary of State William H. Seward.

In 1892, Tchaikovsky's ballet "The Nutcracker" publicly premiered in St. Petersburg, Russia.

In 1912, fossil collector Charles Dawson reported to the Geological Society of London his discovery of supposed early human remains at a gravel pit in Piltdown. (More than four decades later, Piltdown Man was exposed as a hoax.)

In 1915, President Woodrow Wilson, widowed the year before, married Edith Bolling Galt at her Washington home.

In 1940, Adolf Hitler ordered secret preparations for Nazi Germany to invade the Soviet Union. (Operation Barbarossa was launched in June 1941.)

In 1958, the world's first communications satellite, SCORE (Signal Communication by Orbiting Relay Equipment), nicknamed "Chatterbox," was launched by the United States aboard an Atlas rocket.

In 1969, Britain's House of Lords joined the House of Commons in making permanent a 1965 ban on the death penalty for murder.

In 1972, the United States began heavy bombing of North Vietnamese targets during the Vietnam War. (The bombardment ended 11 days later.)

In 1980, former Soviet Premier Alexei N. Kosygin died at age 76.

In 1992, Kim Young-sam was elected South Korea's first civilian president in three decades.

Ten years ago: The former Iraqi general known as "Chemical Ali," Ali Hassan al-Majid (ah-LEE' hah-SAHN' ahl mah-ZHEED'), went before a tribunal of judges in the first investigative hearings of former members of Saddam Hussein's regime. (Al-Majid was executed in Jan. 2010.) Former Chilean dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet (pee-noh-CHET') was hospitalized after suffering a stroke.

Five years ago: The infamous iron sign bearing the Nazis' cynical slogan "Arbeit Macht Frei" (Work

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Sets You Free) that spanned the main entrance to the former Auschwitz death camp in Poland was stolen. (The sign was later recovered; six suspects in the theft were later jailed.) Jon and Kate Gosselin officially divorced after 10 years of marriage, eight children and a year of tabloid headlines.

One year ago: A presidential advisory panel released a report recommending sweeping changes to government surveillance programs, including limiting the bulk collection of Americans' phone records by stripping the National Security Agency of its ability to store that data in its own facilities. Ronnie Biggs, 84, known for his role in Britain's 1963 Great Train Robbery, died in London.

Today's Birthdays: Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark is 87. Actor-producer Roger Smith is 82. Blues musician Lonnie Brooks is 81. Actor Roger Mosley is 76. Rock singer-musician Keith Richards is 71. Writer-director Alan Rudolph is 71. Movie producer-director Steven Spielberg is 68. Blues artist Ron Piazza is 67. Movie director Gillian Armstrong is 64. Movie reviewer Leonard Maltin is 64. Rock musician Elliot Easton is 61. Actor Ray Liotta is 59. Comedian Ron White is 58. Actor Brad Pitt is 51. Professional wrestler-turned-actor "Stone Cold" Steve Austin is 50. Actor Shawn Christian is 49. Actress Rachel Griffiths is 46. Singer Alejandro Sanz is 46. Country/rap singer Cowboy Troy is 44. Rapper DMX is 44. International Tennis Hall of Famer Arantxa Sanchez Vicario is 43. DJ Lethal (Limp Bizkit) is 42. Pop singer Sia is 39. Country singer Randy Houser is 38. Actor Josh Dallas is 36. Actress Katie Holmes is 36. Singer Christina Aguilera is 34. Christian rock musician Dave Luetkenhoelter (Kutless) is 32. Actress Ashley Benson is 25. Actress-singer Bridgit Mendler is 22. Actress Isabella Cramp (TV: "The Neighbors") is 10.

Thought for Today: "It's a complex fate, being an American." - Henry James, American author (1843-1916).