

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 3, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 249 ♦ 1 of 27

- 1- Rix Apartments for Rent
- 1- Groton Ford
- 1- Recycling Trailers in Groton
- 1- Today's Information
- 2- Drought area expands
- 3- Avian Influenza in South Dakota
- 3- Classifieds
- 4- Yelduz Shrine Circus Ad
- 6- Drier than average April expected
- 6- Editorial by Larry Littrell
- 7- Paint South Dakota Program
- 7- Cropland Expansion outpaces ag and biofuels policies
- 9- Today in Weather History
- 10- Local Forecast
- 11- National Weather Map
- 12- Local Weather
- 12- Daily Devotional
- 13- Gerber Life Insurance Ad
- 14- News from the Associated Press

Friday, April 3 GOOD FRIDAY

No School

Birthdays: Adlyn Larsen, Haley Unzen, Marc Johnson, Randy Jaeschke, Sue Stanley

12:00 p.m.: Community Good Friday Worship at United Methodist Church

7:00 p.m.: Emmanuel Lutheran Worship

7:00 p.m.: St. John's Lutheran Worship

Saturday, April 4

Birthdays: David Krueger, Desiree Morehouse, Mitchell Madsen, Sandy Strom

Sunday, April 5 EASTER SUNDAY

Birthday: Toby Carda

7:00 a.m.: Emmanuel Lutheran Sunrise Service (Breakfast by League)

10:00 a.m.: Heaven Bound Ministries Worship at Bethlehem Church, Pierpont

10:15 a.m.: Emmanuel Lutheran Worship

Monday, April 6

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.

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

FOR RENT

Attached garage.

Major appliances included.

\$700 per month

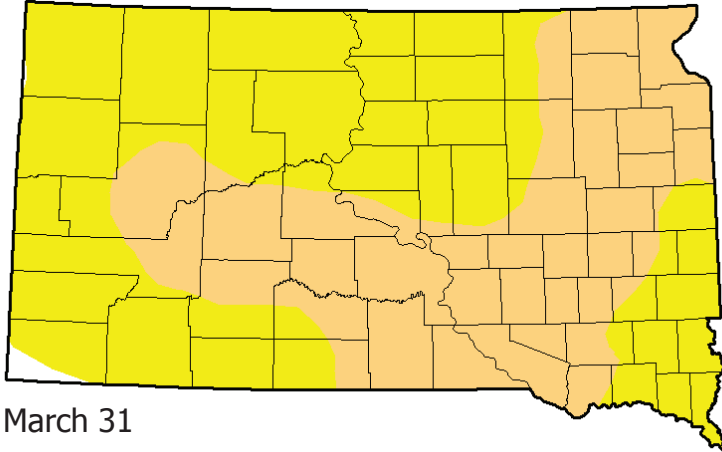
Roger: 605/397-7118



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GROTONFORD.COM 605-397-2311

Drought Area Expands



March 31

Light to moderate rainfall on the northernmost Plains was in sharp contrast to increasing dryness and drought farther south. Locally more than an inch of rain in North Dakota was sufficient to prevent further expansion of Abnormal Dryness (D0) or Moderate Drought (D1), though precipitation over the past 6 months remained well short of normal (30-60 percent of normal). Farther south, above-normal temperatures (daytime readings in excess of 80°F) and a lack of much-needed rain resulted in expansion of D1 in southern South

Dakota; precipitation in South Dakota's new D1 area averaged 25 to 50 percent of normal over the past 6 months, which equated to a Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI, a station-based drought indicator) equivalent over the same time period of D1. Likewise, soil moisture rankings remained unfavorably low over much of southern and eastern South Dakota, and streamflows – which benefited from recent snow melt – have begun to drop rapidly.

March 31, 2015

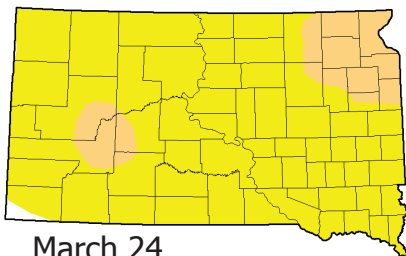
(Released Thursday April 2, 2015)

Valid 8 a.m. EDT

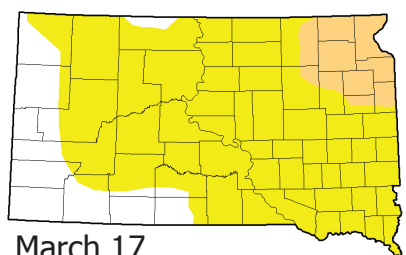
Statistics type: Traditional (D0-D4, D1-D4, etc.) Categorical (D0, D1, etc.)

Drought Condition (Percent Area):

Week	Date	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	2015-03-31	0.57	99.43	42.78	0.00	0.00	0.00
Last Week	2015-03-24	0.57	99.43	12.67	0.00	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago	2014-12-30	48.53	51.47	4.46	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year	2014-12-30	48.53	51.47	4.46	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year	2014-09-30	97.46	2.54	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago	2014-04-01	90.33	9.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00



March 24



March 17

Population Affected by Drought: **282,077**

[View More Statistics](#)

Intensity:

- D0 - Abnormally Dry
- D1 - Moderate Drought
- D2 - Severe Drought
- D3 - Extreme Drought
- D4 - Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying [text summary](#) for forecast statements.

Author(s):

Eric Luebehusen, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in South Dakota: Questions and Answers

BROOKINGS, S.D. - This week, the South Dakota State University Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory detected highly pathogenic avian influenza virus in samples submitted from a turkey farm in Beadle County.

Higher than normal death loss in one of four barns on the premises prompted the caretakers to seek diagnostic assistance, explained Dr. Russ Daly, SDSU Extension Veterinarian, State Public Health Veterinarian & SDSU Associate Professor.

"Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreaks have occurred throughout the U.S. this spring, affecting small backyard poultry flocks, as well as large commercial barns," Daly said.

He explained that these outbreaks occurred along three different migratory bird flyways (Pacific, Central, and Mississippi). The South Dakota occurrence is the second to be identified in the Central flyway.

"Influenza viruses are encountered every year by people and a variety of animals," Daly said. "For the most part, these "flu" viruses stick to one species: human influenza viruses spread among people, avian influenza viruses (such as these particular HPAI viruses) spread among birds, and so on. Occasionally, influenza viruses normally found in one species will infect other species. For example, certain swine influenza viruses have occasionally infected people, and certain avian influenza viruses, notably the H5N1 virus in Asia, occasionally infect people as well."

Below, Daly responds to frequently asked questions in regards to the Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus.

Q: What is happening with the affected farm?

A: State and federal animal health officials are responding to the outbreak according to long-standing protocols. Infected farms are placed under quarantine, meaning that no birds can leave or enter the farm. Remaining live birds are humanely euthanized and disposed of on the premise. The building and grounds are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and sit idle for a period of time.

Q: How will this outbreak affect neighboring farms?

A: State and federal response plans establish a 10 kilometer (approximately 6 miles) "control" zone, as well as a 20 kilometer "surveillance" zone around the infected farm. All poultry flocks in the control zone will be sampled by animal health officials and tested for avian influenza. All poultry flocks in the surveillance zone will be contacted by animal health officials to determine if any signs of illness or unexpected death losses have been noticed.

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.

Lineman wanted

Electric lineman who will assist with miscellaneous City maintenance duties. Certified Journeyman mandatory. EOE. Send resume to City Finance Office, PO Box 587, 209 N Main, Groton, SD 57445 by April 17.



YELDUZ CIRCUS

PRODUCED BY
CIRCUS SPECTACULAR, CINDY MIGLEY - PRODUCER

SPECTACULAR CIRCUS EXTRAVAGANZA
7 big shows packed full of amazing acts, many that
have never been seen in Aberdeen before!

ABERDEEN CIVIC ARENA

April 9, 10, 11, 2015

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 p.m., 8 p.m.	4 p.m., 8 p.m.	11 a.m., 3 p.m., 7 p.m.

Children \$4⁰⁰
Adults \$12⁰⁰ at the door
Advance Tickets \$10⁰⁰

Advance tickets available at Ken's Super Fair Foods, Kessler's, Aberdeen Federal Credit Union or the Shrine Office, 8-2 S. Main St.

Doors open 1 hour before each show. Proceeds are for the benefits of the Yelduz Shriners. Payments are not deductible as charitable contributions.

Q: What does this avian influenza virus do to these birds?

A: That this virus is termed "highly pathogenic" is no mistake. These strains affect birds so quickly that clinical signs are usually not noticed. The first signs noticed by flock owners are an unexpected number of dead birds. Weakness, difficulty breathing, and purple swelling of the comb and wattles are signs that may be observed prior to death.

Q: How do these domestic birds get infected by HPAI?

A: Birds infected with influenza discharge the virus through their droppings or nasal/respiratory fluids. Susceptible birds ingest or inhale the virus when they encounter those fluids. Most experts assume that the source of these HPAI viruses is migratory waterfowl traveling through the areas.

It's relatively easy to picture how a free-roaming backyard poultry flock could come in contact with migratory geese and ducks. However, modern poultry production features tight, environmentally controlled barns that typically exclude outside birds and limit human traffic as well. Wild birds congregating around air inlets, or people walking through areas that wild birds have frequented and then entering poultry barns are potential routes of transmission. Sampling of wild birds in the vicinity of outbreaks has not demonstrated a clear source or transmission route for these infections.

Q: How is this HPAI virus similar to other HPAI viruses found across the world?

A: Molecular analysis of the US HPAI H5N2 viruses shows that they are a combination of Asian HPAI viruses with low-pathogenic North American viruses. The HPAI type that has affected the South Dakota flock is an H5N2 type that carries the "H" antigen from highly-pathogenic Asian strains and the "N" from common low-pathogenic North American viruses.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 3, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 249 ♦ 5 of 27

Q: What bird species have been most commonly affected with HPAI H5N2?

A: Of domestic birds, turkeys have been most commonly affected by these outbreaks across the US, but chickens and a variety of backyard birds have also been identified.

No wild bird infections have been detected yet in South Dakota, but in other states, the virus has most often been associated with ducks and geese. Birds of prey such as hawks, falcons, and eagles are also affected, presumably from eating infected waterfowl. While many sources mention pheasants as susceptible to HPAI, no pheasant death losses have been detected in South Dakota; however, a backyard pheasant flock in Washington State was identified as infected in January.

Q: What is the danger for people working with the affected birds?

A: There is no indication that these HPAI H5N2 avian strains affect people (or other animals). In each outbreak, agriculture officials work closely with state health departments to identify and monitor people who have been in close contact with infected birds. Typically, exposed people are offered preventative antiviral medications and are contacted each day for 10 days to ensure that they are not suffering flu-like symptoms. In other states, non-specific illnesses in some of these people have prompted further testing, but no influenza viruses have been found in any of these individuals to date.

Q: Are there food safety problems associated with these HPAI outbreaks?

A: No. Affected birds do not enter the food supply. Furthermore, all influenza viruses are easily inactivated by proper cooking techniques.

Q: How can I protect my backyard flock from infection with these viruses?

A: Owners of backyard free-roaming birds should consider their proximity to places where waterfowl might congregate. If domestic birds can come into contact with waterfowl like ducks and geese, it might be prudent to confine the birds inside. Basic biosecurity protocols such as limiting visitors and vehicle traffic, and cleaning and disinfecting equipment used around other flocks, have increased in importance.

Q: How can I protect my commercial poultry flock?

A: Flock owners should pay close attention to barn security in terms of excluding wild birds and limiting human traffic into poultry barns. Anyone entering barns should adhere to strict policies regarding changing clothes and boots prior to entry. Vehicle and foot traffic should be closely controlled, as tires, boots or clothing that have had contact with wild bird areas are a potential route of entry for a HPAI virus into a barn.

Q: Who should I contact if I suspect HPAI?

A: If you notice unexplained death loss in your birds, contact your veterinarian or the South Dakota Animal Industry Board at 605-773-3321 as soon as possible.

Editorial by Larry Littrell

When Governor Daugaard said that he thought it would be an affront to the voters if the state legislators changed the minimum wage law just passed in the fall election, I thought we had someone in Pierre that listened to the voters. I sure read that wrong.

The more the legislators try to justify their actions the less sense they make.

First they say that the bill will save the state \$27,000. That is about \$3 a year for every resident. The 17 & under group loses that in half of a day. They even took away the cost of living increase, a whole whopping 12 ³/₄ cents an hour.

Next they told us the 17 year old does not need the raise because most live at home. We did not vote based on where they lived. What makes the legislators think 17 years old don't need that money? All of them do not have rich parents who buy them anything they want. Most have cars they need to drive to and from work. They pay for the car, gas, insurance, work clothes, prom, yearbooks, etc. Most of them also try to save for college or vocational school where they will pay for tuition, books, room and board, and gas. Saving this money lowers or eliminates the need for a student loan.

The topper was the statement that "the bill was directed at the 14 & 15 year olds, not the 17 year olds." If this is true, why don't you exempt the 15 and under group and give the 16 & 17 year olds their hard earned money back?

In the next election, there will be 150,000 voters (those that voted for the increase) remembering how their vote was ignored. We will also be joined by a new group of voters called the young and first time voters.

Thank you.
Larry Littrell
Warner

Paint South Dakota Program

SD Housing Development Authority announces that the Paint-South Dakota program has been reauthorized for 2015. 25 communities have a chance to participate.

Paint South Dakota was started in celebration of the SDHDA's 25th Anniversary in 1998. After seventeen successful years, nearly 6,688 volunteers have applied more than 8,708 gallons for paint and primer to more than 450 homes across the state.

SDHDA will purchase the paint and primer needed. A volunteer group will be responsible for organizing the necessary equipment, as well as preparing and painting the house. In the past, communities and businesses have worked together to provide meals for the volunteers, printed t-shirts, and donated supplies.

Volunteer groups can be any church, non-profit, or civic organization interested in organizing a group to paint the nominated home.

The intent of the program is to help someone in need. The house must be a single family, owner-occupied residence in need of painting. The owner should be physically or financially unable to paint their home. Nominations must be presented before May 1, 2015. Questions can be directed to Sheila Ricketts at 605-773-7603 or www.sdhda.org.

New Report: Cropland Expansion Outpaces Agricultural and Biofuels Policies

Land-use changes have caused the loss of over seven million acres of grasslands, wetlands and forests
WASHINGTON - (April 2, 2015) – Recent land-use changes across the nation have caused the conversion of 7.34 million acres of grasslands, wetlands and forests to cropland, while 4.36 million acres of cropland were taken out of production according to a new report by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Cropland Expansion Outpaces Agricultural and Biofuel Policies in the United States¹ details the extent and location of land-use changes during the build-out of the corn ethanol industry.

The first crop and spatially-explicit nationwide assessment of its kind, the report uses remote sensing and other data to assess nationwide land-use changes between 2008 and 2012 and discusses the policy implications of such changes. The new, peer-reviewed study was published today in the journal Environmental Research Letters and addresses debate on whether the recent boom in demand for common biofuel crops and other agricultural policies have led to the carbon-emitting conversion of natural areas.

"We realized there was remarkably limited information about how croplands have expanded across the United States in recent years," said Tyler Lark, lead author and PhD student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. "Our results are surprising because they show large-scale conversion of new landscapes, which most people didn't expect."

The report finds that 5.7 million acres of grasslands, including native prairie, planted pasture, CRP and more, were the largest source of converted cropland, with 77 percent of new annual cropland coming from these perennial grass covers. These lost grasslands are now emitting significant quantities of carbon and no longer providing critical wildlife habitat. Grasslands are one of the fastest declining ecosystems in North America, with less than 10 percent of native grasslands left on the landscape. Of biggest concern, the report finds that an area of undisturbed prairie and range the size of the state of Delaware was converted to cropland. Once grasslands are plowed, the full diversity of the ecosystem can never

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 3, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 249 ♦ 8 of 27

again be restored. This loss is especially troubling as wildlife species that depend on this ecosystem, from the Monarch Butterfly to grassland nesting bird species, are in steep decline.

Forests were also a source for new cropland, causing the loss of about 200,000 acres of forests nationwide. While cropland expansion has taken place nationally, North and South Dakota have experienced the highest concentrations of total conversion to cropland, followed by Southern Iowa and Northern Missouri, and Western parts of Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. The top states for loss of virgin sod were Texas (105,000 acres), Montana (93,000 acres), Kansas (83,000 acres) North Dakota (81,000 acres), and South Dakota (81,000 acres).

The authors found that conversion to corn and soy alone may have emitted as much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere as 34 coal-fired power plants operating for one year or 28 million more cars on the road.

"The study provides much needed information on the environmental impacts the expansion of cropland is causing," said Julie Sibbing, Senior Director of Agriculture and Forestry programs at the National Wildlife Federation. "It's also concerning that most of the land converted to cropland was not likely well suited for agriculture, which could lead to increased erosion, flooding and drought, while millions of acres of cropland were abandoned, many of which should never have been brought into crop production in the first place. Our federal biofuels and agricultural policies are obviously broken and it is costing the taxpayers billions."

Since the passage of the Renewable Fuel Standard 2 (RFS2) in 2007, environmental impacts of corn ethanol production have been hotly debated. The RFS2 mandated the greatly expanded use of biofuels as part of the nation's fuel supply, and was designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from liquid transportation fuels. The regulation contains protections against the conversion of forests, wetlands and prairies for feedstock production, but have not been enforced to their full potential. The results of the study may guide policymakers as Congress debates whether to reform or repeal parts of the RFS2.

Other policy implications may also be involved with the results of the study. The Sodsaver provision of the 2014 Farm Bill currently reduces federal subsidies to farmers who grow on previously-uncultivated land, yet the provision only applies in six Northern Plain states. However, results from the study show that roughly two-thirds of the previously-uncultivated lands converted to crop production have been in states not covered by the Sodsaver provision.

"In order to protect remaining native ecosystems and critical wildlife habitat, our findings suggest a nationwide Sodsaver is needed," said Lark.

Read NWF's summary report at www.nwf.org/Farms-and-Forests or the original study at <http://iop-science.iop.org/1748-9326/10/4/044003>. Get more National Wildlife Federation news at NWF.org/News.

Today in Weather History

1955 - Record snows fell in north central Wyoming and south central Montana. Billings MT received a storm total of 42.3 inches, and on the 4th reported a record snow depth of 35 inches. Sheridan WY established a 24 hour snowfall record of 26.7 inches. (2nd-4th) (The Weather Channel)

1974 - A "Super-Outbreak" of tornadoes ravaged the Midwest and the eastern U.S. Severe weather erupted early in the afternoon and continued through the next day. Severe thunderstorms spawned 148 tornadoes from Alabama to Michigan, most of which occurred between 1 PM (CST) on the 3rd and 1 AM on the 4th. The tornadoes killed 315 persons, injured 5300 others, and caused 600 million dollars damage. Alabama, Kentucky and Ohio were especially hard hit in the tornado outbreak. One tornado destroyed half of the town of Xenia OH killing 34 persons. Another tornado, near the town of Stamping Ground KY, produced a path of destruction a record five miles in width. A tornado raced through Guin AL at a speed of 75 mph. Two powerful tornadoes roared across northern Alabama during the early evening hours, killing fifty persons and injuring 500 others. Some rescue vehicles responding to the first tornado were

1987 - A storm in the southeastern U.S. produced a trace of snow at Mobile, AL, one inch at Jackson MS, and two inches at Meridian MS, the latest snow of record for those three locations. Birmingham AL received seven inches of snow, and up to nine inches was reported in northeast Alabama. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - A wind gust to 114 mph was clocked at Ann Arbor, MI, during a tornadic thunderstorm. Thunderstorms in Michigan and Indiana spawned five tornadoes that Easter Sunday, and also produced golf ball size hail. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Southern Plains to the southern and central Appalachians. The thunderstorms spawned twenty tornadoes, including one which caused eight million dollars damage at Fort Branch IN. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

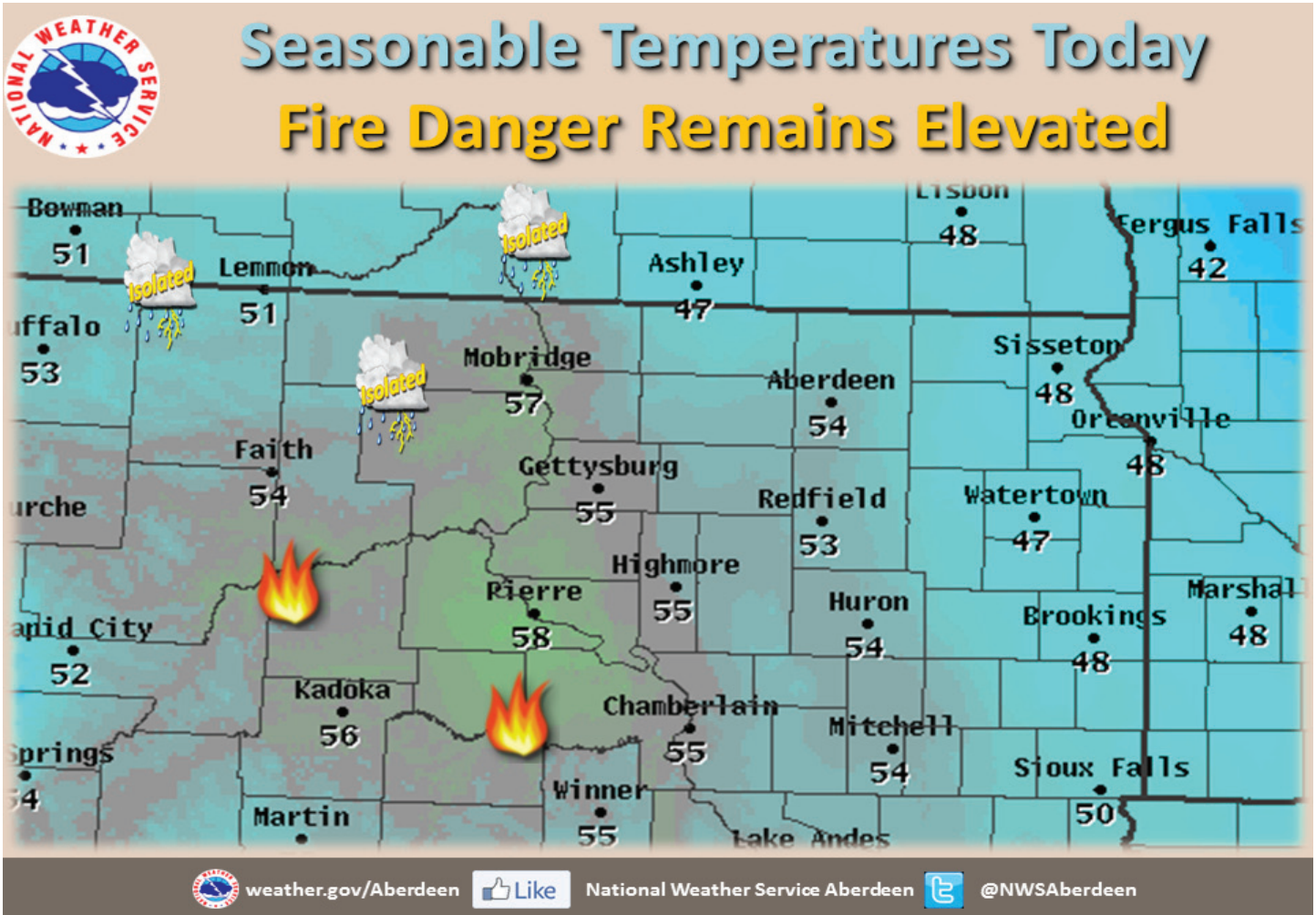
1990 - Rain and snow prevailed in the northeastern U.S., with snow reported in New York State. Boston MA was soaked with 2.91 inches of rain during the day and night, and up to half a foot of snow blanketed the hills of Steuben County NY that Tuesday night. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2008 - An EF-1 tornado knocks down numerous trees and powerlines, destroys homes in Leawood and Cammack Village and passes directly over the Little Rock National Weather Service office. Six tornadoes were confirmed in central Arkansas, but no fatalities were reported.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 3, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 249 ♦ 10 of 27

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
Breezy	Blustery	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 53 °F	Low: 23 °F	High: 51 °F	Low: 26 °F	High: 60 °F	Low: 30 °F	High: 52 °F



Temperatures will be near normal for Today. Meanwhile, fire danger will remain elevated given the continued dry conditions region wide. Isolated showers/thunderstorms may form with the afternoon heating, especially out west.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 3, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 249 ♦ 11 of 27

Yesterday's Weather

High: 53.2 at 2:19 PM

Low: 25.0 at 7:22 AM

High Gust: 39 at 2:52 PM

Snow: 0.00

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 83° in 1921

Record Low: -2° in 1975

Average High: 50°F

Average Low: 27°F

Average Precip in April.: 0.9

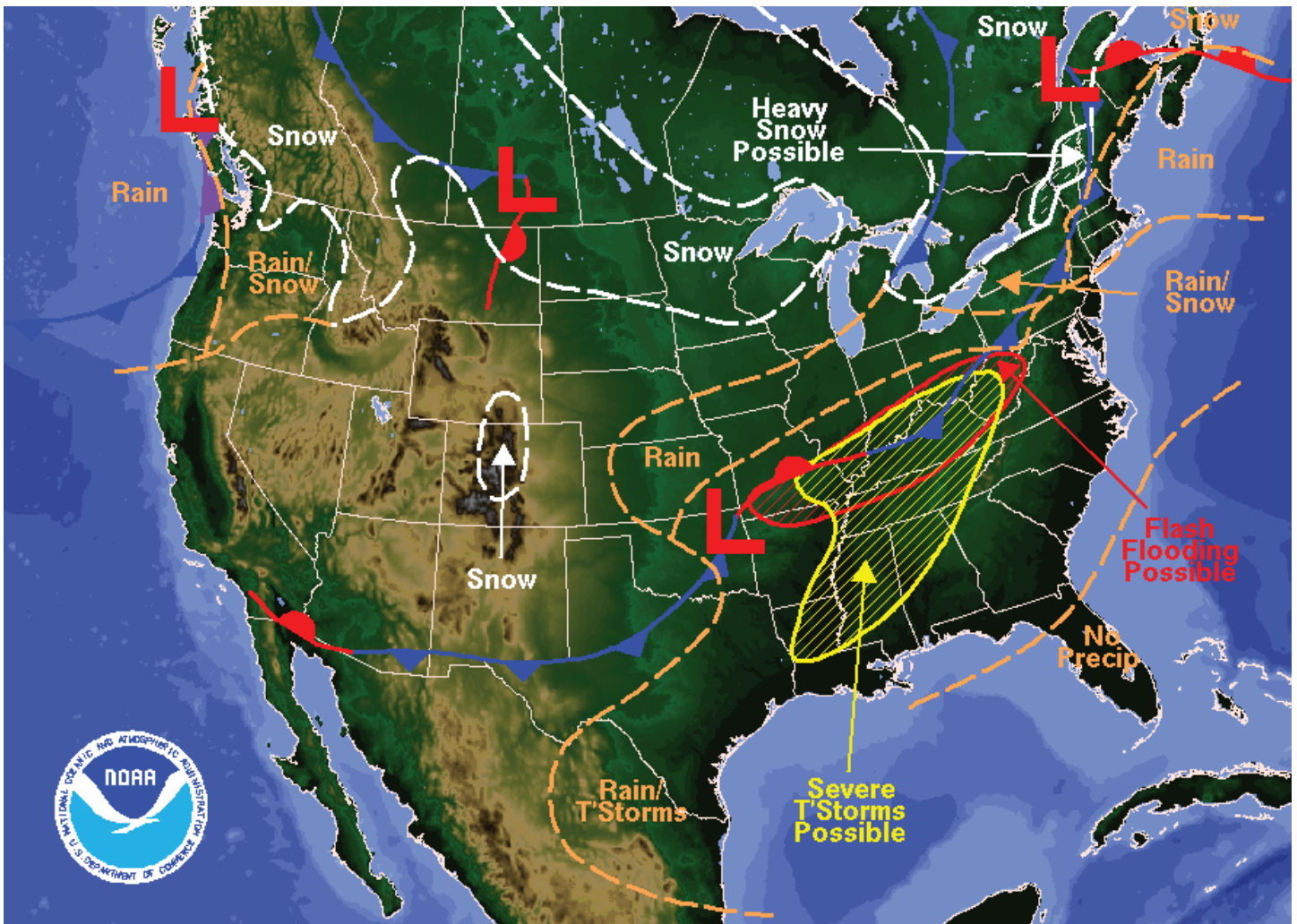
Precip to date in April.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 2.27

Precip Year to Date: 0.47

Sunset Tonight: 8:04 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:09 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Fri, Apr 03, 2015, issued 4:10 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 3, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 249 ♦ 12 of 27



CLOUDS AND RAIN

On July 12, 1990, Pastor Trenny Thomas called the members of his Evergreen Baptist Church, Metter, GA to a day of prayer. The farmers of this small, rural area had endured a long, devastating drought and were about to lose their crops. They gathered together and prayed for twenty-four hours. At the end of the vigil, there was no rain.

The congregation decided to begin another twenty-four hour time of prayer when clouds suddenly began to appear. Suddenly the clouds exploded with rain and an inch covered the dry, thirsty land. The rain turned into a mist and lasted through the night. The crops and families were saved by the grace of God.

Said Rev. Thomas, "It was a feast. It was just like the manna falling from heaven when God fed his people. It was a divine intervention from God."

"Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of gifts he does not give," said Solomon. Here he presents the picture of a man who boasts of talents and gifts he does not have. He represents himself to be more than he is - like clouds without rain that appear to tease the hopeful and destroy faith.

Perhaps "that man" does have talents and abilities, skills and power and can do good things for those in need. But empty promises and vain promises are not what others seek in times of a "drought." When others have needs we can meet, we dare not taunt them with promises we do not intend to keep. False promises destroy hope.

Prayer: Thank You for Your faithfulness, Father. May we honor our word to others as You have to us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Proverbs 25:14 Like clouds and wind without rain is one who boasts of gifts never given.

ATTENTION

Parents and Grandparents:

Help give your child a head start for just pennies a day with individual whole life insurance from the

Gerber Life Grow-Up[®] Plan

A Plan that Grows

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A Gift that Doubles

The Grow-Up[®] Plan provides up to \$50,000 of whole life insurance that automatically doubles during age 18 at no extra cost!

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Policy Form# ICC12-GPP
Policy Form Series GPP-12

News from the Associated Press

Sioux Falls launches ad and web campaign to recruit workers

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls has succeeded in creating jobs but needs to do more to fill them, Mayor Mike Huether said in announcing an effort to recruit workers from around the region.

The campaign launched Thursday includes billboard and kiosk advertisements and a website. It aims to help employers fill more than 2,300 job vacancies, Huether said.

"This is an opportunity that just can't wait any longer," he said.

The website www.SiouxFallsHasJobs.com details the city's attributes and directs job-seekers to employer websites where applications can be submitted.

"Maybe a better job, better career for them," said Darrin Smith, director of Sioux Falls Community Development. "It's a link to an easy-to-use, easy-to-navigate site that they can forward to friends and family anywhere in the country and all across the globe."

The billboard and kiosk ads feature the mayor touting the available jobs and the address for the website. The signs have been placed at the Sioux Falls airport and at the T. Denny Sanford Premier Center in the city. They eventually will be placed in other cities around the region, including Minneapolis; Des Moines, Iowa; and Omaha, Nebraska.

"It will be fluid and flexible," Huether said.

The Community Development office spent more than \$35,000 preparing for the campaign launch. Officials are negotiating with a private company to operate the website, and there also will be monthly costs associated with the billboard and kiosk advertising.

1 Harding County wildfire contained, another still burning

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Crews have fully contained one wildfire in northwestern South Dakota's Harding County but are still working to get a handle on a second blaze.

The Great Plains Fire Information office says the Sheep Draw Fire is 100 percent contained, but the Moonshine Fire is only about 5 percent contained. The cause of both fires is still being investigated.

The Sheep Draw Fire scored nearly 22 square miles. The Moonshine Fire is about 6 square miles in size. State Highway 20 between Buffalo and Reva was closed due to that fire.

To the east in Potter County, officials have reopened stretches of U.S. Highway 212 and state Highway 47 that were closed due to a grass fire near Gettysburg.

Rounds asks for stories about federal government regulation

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds is asking for stories from South Dakota residents about how federal regulations affect day-to-day life in the state.

Rounds announced the initiative on Thursday as a way to give focus to his efforts to curb overregulation from the government.

Rounds says he consistently hears from residents who are dealing with too much bureaucracy. South Dakota's junior U.S. senator wants to make federal regulations simpler and less onerous.

He says the goal is "to make government more effective, efficient and accountable."

Elected in 2014, one major focus of Rounds' Senate campaign was tackling government red tape.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 3, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 249 ♦ 15 of 27

Easter egg hunt planned at governor's mansion in Pierre

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard and first lady Linda Daugaard are inviting families to an Easter egg hunt at the governor's mansion in Pierre.

Children up to age 12 can participate in the event Sunday on the governor's residence lawn. The 62nd Annual Elks Easter Egg Hunt is sponsored by the Pierre Elks.

Egg hunt chairman Steve Wegman estimates that up to 1,500 children participate each year. Wegman calls the hunt the oldest and largest family event in the state of South Dakota.

The governor says he and his wife are "happy to have the opportunity to continue the tradition."

The event is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. CT.

Stocks of grain crops in South Dakota mixed

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Stocks of grain crops in South Dakota compared to a year ago are mixed. The federal Agriculture Department says in its latest report that soybean stocks on March 1 were up 12 percent over the year, while corn stocks were down slightly.

Oat stocks were up 32 percent and wheat stocks up 34 percent. At the same time, barley stocks were down 24 percent and sorghum stocks were down 80 percent.

Utah visit leaves Obama 1 state short of 50

DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

HILL AIR FORCE BASE, Utah (AP) — President Barack Obama made his first presidential visit to Utah on Thursday, leaving him one state short of touching down in all 50 while in office.

South Dakota is the only state he hasn't been to.

Obama arrived at Hill Air Force Base near Ogden, Utah, ahead of a Friday appearance at the military base to talk about clean energy and clean-energy jobs. He had visited Louisville, Kentucky, earlier Thursday.

Upon arrival at his hotel in Salt Lake City, Obama went straight into a meeting with top leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Among the Mormon church leaders he met with were President Henry Eyring, President Dieter Uchtdorf and Elders Tom Perry and Todd Christofferson, White House spokesman Eric Schultz said.

Schultz said Obama was pleased to meet with the church leaders as presidents before him have done. They were expected to discuss the church's record of service, including its work on disaster relief and other humanitarian issues, and the need to overhaul the U.S. immigration system, Schultz said.

Obama began the year four states short of having visited all 50. The White House quickly scheduled trips to Idaho and South Carolina, two of the four, before the stop in Utah.

It's unclear how soon Obama will visit South Dakota. But with 21 months left on his term, he has plenty of time to get there.

Obama's last visit to Utah was a brief stop in Park City in 2007 when he was a candidate for president.

Deadly bird flu shows up in South Dakota, 5th Minnesota farm

CARSON WALKER, Associated Press

STEVE KARNOWSKI, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A bird flu strain that's deadly to poultry has spread to a second turkey farm in one of the top turkey-producing counties of Minnesota, state and federal officials said Thursday.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture confirmed the H5N2 strain in a flock of 71,000 turkeys in Stearns County, the Minnesota Board of Animal Health said. That brings the number of Minnesota turkey farms where the strain has been detected to five, officials said.

The strain also has shown up in a commercial turkey flock in South Dakota. So far, the total number of outbreaks in the Midwest has reached 10 and led to the deaths of 314,000 birds since early March.

Earlier, the USDA confirmed the H5N2 strain in a flock of 53,000 turkeys in Beadle County of eastern South Dakota, and a fourth Minnesota case in the southwest part of the state, in Nobles County, involving a commercial turkey farm with about 21,000 birds.

Following the same protocols used at other infected farms, the surviving birds at the operations have been quarantined and will be killed to prevent the disease's spread. Any nearby poultry farms will be checked.

While officials have stressed there's little danger to public health and no food safety concern, they've monitored workers at the affected farms as a precaution. No human H5N2 infections have been reported in the U.S., although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said similar viruses have been detected in people in other countries.

The infected South Dakota flock is on Riverside Farms near Huron, one of several Hutterite colonies that own and supply turkeys to Dakota Turkey Growers LLC.

"It's extremely frightening, to be honest with you," Dakota Turkey Growers president and CEO Ken Rutledge said. "We were hopeful we'd be able to get through this without having a break in the state."

The birds killed by the virus or euthanized represent just a sliver of the overall U.S. turkey production — 235 million birds in 2014, according to USDA statistics.

Experts say U.S. consumers likely will benefit from lower turkey prices eventually because poultry that would have been exported will have to be sold instead on the domestic market. More than 40 countries have imposed import restrictions since late last year. Some bans are limited to the affected states or counties, while China cut off all poultry shipments from the U.S.

Minnesota — the nation's top turkey-producing state — was the first state to see the H5N2 strain in the Mississippi Flyway, a major wild bird migration route. The state's first case was confirmed March 4, followed by flocks in Arkansas and Missouri. Kansas was the first to see H5N2 in the Central Flyway when the virus was confirmed in a backyard chicken and duck flock on March 13, now followed by South Dakota.

The same virus and other highly pathogenic H5 bird flu strains also have turned up in commercial and backyard flocks and wild birds in the Pacific Flyway since late last year.

Experts say turkeys appear to be particularly susceptible to this virus, but chickens and other species are not immune. Montana's first recorded case this week was confirmed in a captive falcon.

Most commercially grown turkeys and chickens in the U.S. spend their entire lives indoors to keep them away from waterfowl and other wild birds that could introduce diseases. Migratory ducks and geese don't normally become sick from bird flu, but can spread viruses via droppings, which farm workers and rodents can then track into barns.

Biosecurity has been stepped up at farms across the Midwest in recent weeks in response. The outbreaks have been a particular concern in Minnesota — which has had the most cases in the region and

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 3, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 249 ♦ 17 of 27

lost 170,000 turkeys. The affected turkey farms in Missouri lost 51,000 birds, the while one in Arkansas lost 40,020. Kansas officials have refused to release their losses.

Judge denies death row inmate's motion to delay execution

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Attorney General Marty Jackley says a state judge has denied a motion by Rodney Berget to delay his May execution.

Jackley says Circuit Court Judge Brad Zell found that Berget's motion was outside of his court's jurisdiction. Berget had filed the motion on Jan. 30

Berget was sentenced to die for his role in killing State Penitentiary guard Ronald Johnson during an April 2011 escape attempt.

Another inmate charged in Johnson's death, Eric Robert, was executed in 2012. A third inmate, Michael Nordman, was sentenced to life in prison for providing materials used in the slaying of Johnson, which happened on his 63rd birthday.

Jackley says Berget may still seek the right to file additional habeas proceedings in order to stay his sentencing date.

Behind the wheel: 3 of 4 teens drive, fewer in bigger cities

MIKE STOBBE, AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A new government study finds about 3 out of 4 older teens are driving, but rates vary widely by state and city.

Hawaii had the lowest percentage of teen drivers, at 53 percent. North Dakota and South Dakota had the largest proportions, at about 90 percent.

The teen driving rate in the U.S. was as high as 85 percent a decade ago but has been declining, earlier research found.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study released Thursday found roughly 75 percent of teens 16 and older are drivers. Researchers also — for the first time — reported driving rate differences from place to place.

The report was based on a 2013 survey of tens of thousands of teens in 42 states and 21 cities. States not included: California, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Washington.

The study also found:

—Among 21 large school districts, the highest proportion of drivers — 76 percent — was in Charlotte, North Carolina. Close behind was — at 75 percent — was Jacksonville, Florida.

—San Francisco, New York City and Boston were at the other end of the spectrum, with only about 30 percent of kids 16 and older saying they drove in the previous month. In those cities, there's more public transportation and owning and parking a car is more of a hassle.

—About 83 percent of white teens said they drove in the previous month, compared to a little under 70 percent of blacks and Hispanics.

Huron area Hutterite colony hit with bird flu found

HURON, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota turkey flock that tested positive for bird flu is one of the Hutterite colonies that own and supply turkeys to Dakota Turkey Growers LLC near Huron.

Growers plant president Ken Rutledge says the birds will be destroyed at Riverside Farms and the operation can start over with a new flock in about six weeks.

He says the Huron plant handles just under 5 million turkeys a year.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 3, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 249 ♦ 18 of 27

The U.S. in recent months has seen an increase in cases of the highly pathogenic H5N2 strain of avian influenza affecting poultry in multiple states.

The state Health Department says no human has been infected with that strain, but workers who came in contact with the birds will watch out for a fever for the next 10 days.

Highways 212 and 47 closed again near Gettysburg due to fire

GETTYSBURG, S.D. (AP) — Officials have closed several highways in Potter County due reduced visibility caused by flare-ups from a large grass fire northeast of Gettysburg.

Transportation officials say Highway 212 is closed from Gettysburg east to about a mile past the junction with Highway 47. Highway 47 is closed from the junction with Highway 20 south to Highway 212.

Officials are redirecting westbound Highway 212 traffic onto a county road at Seneca north to Highway 20. The public is asked to stay away from the area and find an alternate route until further notice.

Crews are continuing to battle hot spots on the fire than began Wednesday north of Highway 212 between Gettysburg and Lebanon that continues to be fueled by strong winds.

The 8-square-mile blaze was started by a tractor fire.

Regents approves 5.8 percent average resident tuition hike

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Tuition and fees for South Dakota's six public universities will increase by an average of 5.8 percent for the upcoming school year under a plan the South Dakota Board of Regents approved Thursday.

The board met at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion in part to discuss the hikes, which translate to an average increase of about \$456 for on-campus resident students. Scarce state funds killed the prospect of another year of frozen tuition, which lawmakers put nearly \$4 million toward during the 2014 Legislature.

The increases approved range from 4.3 percent at Northern State University to 6 percent at South Dakota State University. Regent Joseph Schartz, a student at South Dakota State University, said college affordability is a concern for the board, but he also noted that state funds were tight this year.

"I don't think it's going to send students who are already at our institutions packing their bags and leaving," he said, adding that rising student costs and lagging state support is "a scary trend that we need to reverse."

The average cost of tuition and fees at a South Dakota public university for on-campus resident students for the upcoming year will be about \$8,380, up from \$7,925. The state ranks third of eight nearby states when it comes to in-state students' costs, which also includes lodging and meals, according to a regents report.

Chris Nemec, a University of South Dakota freshman from Highmore said he is unhappy about the school's 5.4 percent increase, which is \$435.

Nemec, 19, said his parents are paying for school, where he is studying business management. But Nemec said he's concerned for students who have to pay for a degree on their own or don't qualify for scholarships.

"It's really affecting them way more," Nemec said. "What if they become a genius scientist that finds a cure to cancer later in life, but they couldn't do that because (tuition) was raised?"

Funding salaries and hikes for pay competitiveness and inflation are projected to cost the regents an additional \$5.7 million for the upcoming fiscal year, according to a report to the board. Tepid state

Broton Daily Independent

Friday, April 3, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 249 ♦ 19 of 27

revenues also left lawmakers little spare cash to fund dramatic cost-reduction programs for higher education when they set the state budget earlier in March. A proposal to fund an increase to the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship, for example, had to be scaled back by roughly \$1 million after state economists predicted revenue collections for the next budget year will fall short of previous projections.

Board of Regents Executive Director and CEO Jack Warner said the increase is "reasonable and understandable" based on increasing costs and the board's focus on salary competitiveness.

Mitch Fuerst, a 21-year-old University of South Dakota freshman studying nursing, said he is paying for school using loans and military service benefits. Fuerst, who is from Scotland, South Dakota, said he's concerned about increasing tuition and fees but said the jump is reasonable.

"I really don't like it, but I mean the school's got to pay for teachers and stuff," Fuerst said.

Brookings County commissioners declare fire emergency

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Officials in Brookings County have declared a fire emergency because of dry air and no moisture in the region.

KELO-TV reports (<http://bit.ly/1F6PrN0>) the Brookings County Board of County Commissioners declared the emergency Thursday.

The state of emergency will go into effect on Friday and last until the board lifts it.

The emergency means all open burning will be banned in Brookings County.

Grass fires continue to flare up across the state as warm and dry conditions continue.

SD Board of Regents elects Randy Schaefer as board president

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Board of Regents has chosen Randy Schaefer to succeed retiring Regent Dean Krogman as president of the board, which oversees South Dakota's six public universities.

The board voted Thursday at its meeting at the University of South Dakota to install Schaefer as president. He has served on the board since 2009.

Schaefer lives in Madison and owns an insurance agency there. He is a graduate of Dakota State University.

Krogman is stepping down after 12 years on the board, where he served as president for the last two years. Schaefer says he had "a strong and steady hand" working to support the state's public universities.

The board has also chosen Bob Sutton as vice president and Terry Baloun as secretary.

Penning County Sheriff's Office says missing woman found

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Pennington County Sheriff's Office says a woman who had been last seen on Tuesday has been found.

The office says 50-year-old Rhonda Jones-Foos has been located and is safe.

Officials sought the public's help on Wednesday because they wanted to check the welfare of Jones-Foos.

South Dakota delegation says bat listing is misguided

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Listing the northern long-eared bat as threatened is a misguided approach to addressing the mammal's decline, members of South Dakota's congressional delegation believe.

The state won't immediately be affected by the new protective measures, but Sens. John Thune and

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 3, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 249 ♦ 20 of 27

Mike Rounds and Rep. Kristi Noem, all Republicans, worry about potential harm to the Black Hills timber industry.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Wednesday announced its decision to list the bat as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The move comes in response to the spread of a deadly fungal disease called white-nose syndrome that has killed millions of the bats. The agency says the bats play a key role in insect control and are "a critical component of our nation's ecology and economy."

Thune said the agency's restrictions on forest management do "not focus on the real problem, which is that northern long-eared bat deaths are due to white-nose syndrome, not habitat loss." Rounds called it "another example of federal overreach by this administration."

Protective measures will improve the bats' breeding opportunities by restricting some logging and tree removal from forest areas where the bats spend the warmer months, Fish and Wildlife said.

White-nose syndrome has been confirmed or suspected in 28 of the 37 states where the bats live. It has not yet been found in South Dakota, and the state won't immediately be affected by the new protective measures.

"While I am relieved to see South Dakota land outside the buffer zone for now, I remain concerned that the Fish and Wildlife Service continues to elevate an unproven environmental agenda rather (than) keeping the focus on a disease that truly jeopardizes the long-eared bat's population in certain areas of the county," Noem said.

If the disease ever is detected in South Dakota, it could hurt the Black Hills timber industry, which employs about 1,500 people and generates an estimated \$119 million in revenue annually, the delegation said.

The Black Hills Forest Resource Association, a trade group whose members include logging companies, praised the Fish and Wildlife Service's decision to exempt South Dakota's habitat but also said in a statement that there is concern about possible future restrictions.

Pace of US hiring weakens with just 126K jobs added in March

JOSH BOAK, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The weakening U.S. economy spilled into the job market in March as employers added only 126,000 jobs, the fewest since December 2013, snapping a streak of 12 straight months of gains above 200,000.

The Labor Department said Friday that the unemployment rate remained at 5.5 percent.

Economic growth has been hammered this year by harsh winter weather, factory slowdowns and lackluster construction activity. The manufacturing, construction and government sectors each shed workers, while hiring at restaurants plunged from February.

In addition to reporting the sluggish hiring in March, the government revised down its estimate of job gains in February and January by a combined 69,000.

Wage growth in March remained modest. Average hourly wages rose 7 cents to \$24.86 an hour.

Past job growth, along with cheaper gasoline, has yet to significantly boost consumer spending. A continued deceleration in hiring could delay the Federal Reserve from raising interest rates in mid-year.

The Fed signaled last month that it would be cautious in raising rates from record lows. The Fed has yet to rule out a June rate hike. But many analysts expect the first increase no earlier than September. In part, that's because Fed officials have revised down the range of unemployment they view as consistent with a healthy economy to 5 percent to 5.2 percent from 5.2 percent to 5.5 percent previously.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 3, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 249 ♦ 21 of 27

Chair Janet Yellen has stressed that even when the Fed begins raising rates, it will do so only very gradually.

A Fed rate hike would point to stable growth. But the economy has weakened in the first two months of 2015, in part because of the tough winter.

The Atlanta Federal Reserve estimates that growth was flat during the first three months of 2015. JPMorgan Chase says that growth is tracking at an annualized rate of 0.6 percent. Those forecasts are significantly below the annual growth rate of 2.2 percent in the final three months of 2014 and a rate of more than 4 percent in the middle of last year.

Factory orders have been mixed, having dropped sharply in January before ticking up modestly in February. Cheaper oil has led energy companies to halt orders for pipelines and equipment, hurting manufacturers. At the same time, the strengthening dollar has made American-made goods costlier abroad, thereby cutting into exports.

This year's job growth has yet to ignite a larger boom in consumer spending. Average hourly wages have risen a tepid 2 percent in the past 12 months. McDonald's, Wal-Mart, the Gap and other major employers have announced raises for their lowest-paid employees. But those pay raises are staggered and unlikely to fuel faster wage growth.

The economy has disproportionately added low-paying jobs in the retail and restaurant sectors since the recovery from the Great Recession began nearly six years ago. Adding jobs in the lowest-paid industries can suppress average hourly wages, even when employers are rewarding cashiers, waiters and sales clerks with pay bumps.

Yet evidence of a strong spring rebound might hinge on hiring by retailers and restaurants, noted Tara Sinclair, a George Washington University professor and chief economist at Indeed, the job-posting web site.

Continued hiring by retailers and restaurants would suggest that employers anticipate solid demand from customers, who might finally be comfortable spending their savings from cheaper gas. Prices at the pump have plunged 33 percent over the past year to a national average of \$2.40 a gallon, according to AAA.

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. IRAN, WORLD POWERS FACE TOUGH NUKE TALKS

With one phase of negotiations over, the sides now have an ambitious to-do list that — if implemented — will cut into Tehran's bomb-capable technology.

2. INDIANA, ARKANSAS TRY TO STEM RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS UPROAR

The two states are now looking to move forward after taking different approaches to changing the legislation to ease concerns about discrimination.

3. RUSSIA FOCUSES ON TRAINING REBELS IN UKRAINE

This is a tactical shift apparently aimed at minimizing Moscow's military presence in the neighboring country, part of an effort to persuade the West to lift sanctions.

4. HOW ALLIES TRYING TO HELP SEN. MENENDEZ

They launch a public relations campaign to support the politician through a long legal fight over federal corruption charges.

5. GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO STOPPING 'HOMEGROWN EXTREMISTS'

Prosecutors say the arrests of two New York City women who talked about recipes for homemade

bombs show the authorities will do everything they can to prevent domestic terrorism.

6. WHERE RACISM REMAINS LINGERING PROBLEM

College students and administrators are struggling to deal with racist incidents on campuses despite repeated condemnations.

7. DRONE OFFERS GLIMPSE OF ANTIQUITIES LOOTING

At a Bronze Age cemetery in Jordan, aerial photographs taken by a homemade device help researchers map where and when these ancient tombs were robbed.

8. DISASTER EXPO SHOWS INNOVATIONS IN THRIVING JAPANESE INDUSTRY

Some of the products on display feature new materials, but many are just inventive solutions for challenges such as quickly getting people out of harm's way.

9. TASTES GREAT, LESS STICKY

The trip from tree tap to bar tap underway again this spring in upstate New York as a brewery uses maple sugar to create its maple amber craft beer.

10. WHY TOP BLACK COACHES FORM ORGANIZATION

A group headlined by Tubby Smith and Shaka Smart are setting it up to address the dwindling numbers of minority head coaches in college basketball.

AP News in Brief

Obama's pursuit of Iranian nuclear deal now subject to gauntlet of American politics

WASHINGTON (AP) — After securing a surprisingly broad and detailed framework agreement with Iran, President Barack Obama must now subject his signature foreign policy pursuit to the gauntlet of partisan American politics.

A blueprint finalized Thursday after marathon negotiations in Switzerland did little to ease the standoff between Obama and some lawmakers over Congress' role in a final accord. The president has vowed to veto legislation giving Congress the ability to approve or reject a deal, and he made a fresh appeal for lawmakers to give the U.S. and its international partners space to hammer out a comprehensive agreement ahead of a June 30 deadline.

"The issues at stake here are bigger than politics," Obama said. "These are matters of war and peace."

But Republican leaders reaffirmed their intent to vote on legislation giving Congress the last word. Tennessee Republican Sen. Bob Corker, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said the panel will vote on such a measure when lawmakers return from a spring recess on April 14.

"The administration first should seek the input of the American people," Corker said.

Iran and 6 powers reach understanding on final nuclear agreement, but tough bargaining ahead

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (AP) — With one phase of nuclear talks over, Iran and six world powers now have an ambitious to-do list that — if implemented — will cut significantly into Iran's bomb-capable technology while giving Tehran quick access to bank accounts, oil markets and other financial assets blocked by international sanctions.

But the deal is far from done. The sides have been working on a substantive result for nearly two years. After a week of grueling negotiations, they managed on Thursday only to draw up a series of commitments that still must be worked out in detail before June 30. That is the deadline agreed on

months before negotiators sat down in Lausanne for the final haggling.

If implemented, the undertakings will substantially pare back some Iranian nuclear assets for a decade and restrict others for an additional five years. It would be the first significant success for the United States and its partners in more than a decade of diplomatic efforts focusing on capping Tehran's nuclear advance.

Yet even before the talks culminated in the preliminary outline of what needs be done, both sides warned of the hard work ahead. And the bickering began just a few hours after the sides signed off on their preliminary understanding.

"There is no need to spin using 'fact sheets' so early on," tweeted Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, in a reference to a public document released by the United States listing both sides' commitments. He also questioned some of the assertions contained in the document, such as the speed of a U.S. sanctions drawdown.

Kenya attack survivor says gunmen early in attack went to room where Christians were praying

GARISSA, Kenya (AP) — The militants who slaughtered 147 people in a Kenyan school appeared to have planned extensively, even targeting a site where Christians had gone to pray.

Survivor Helen Titus told The Associated Press on Friday that "They investigated our area. They knew everything." Titus, a 21-year-old English literature student, was shot in the wrist and is being treated at a hospital in Garissa, where the attack by al-Shabab Islamic extremists happened.

One of the first things that the assailants did early Thursday, she said, was to head for a lecture hall where Christians were in early morning prayer. Also Friday, a few men walked down a road in Garissa with signs including one that read "We are against the killing of innocent Kenyans!!!! We are tired!!"

Indiana, Arkansas take different tacks in trying to stem uproar over religious objection laws

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Leaders in Indiana and Arkansas are looking to move forward after taking different approaches to tamp down concerns about discrimination over religious objections laws.

The two governors signed bills Thursday that lawmakers hoped would quiet the national uproar over whether the laws offered a legal defense for discrimination against gays.

For Arkansas, the changes requested by Gov. Asa Hutchinson amid mounting criticism from retail giant Wal-Mart and other businesses meant revising the language to closely align with that in the 1993 federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Indiana's solution was an amendment that put the first references to sexual orientation and gender identity into state law.

Indiana Gov. Mike Pence says the law was never intended to allow discrimination and blamed the fallout on "mischaracterizations."

Russia's role in Ukraine seen as shifting from sending troops to training rebels

YENAKIEYEVE, Ukraine (AP) — On a recent spring morning, an important visitor watched Russian-backed rebels conduct infantry maneuvers in eastern Ukraine.

"The general is very pleased," rebel commander Ostap Cherny told his troops, referring to the figure

in camouflage encircled by guards.

The man — almost certainly a Russian military officer — became alarmed when he saw two journalists approach. His entourage shielded him — forbidding photos — and the group sped off in a motorcade, the “general” safely inside a black Toyota SUV with no license plates.

Nearly a year into the Ukraine conflict, the extent of Moscow’s direct involvement has become clear: They may wear camouflage, but the Russians’ presence in eastern Ukraine is hardly invisible.

At the same time, there has been a tactical shift apparently aimed at minimizing Russia’s military presence, part of an effort to persuade the West to lift economic sanctions.

Allies of Sen. Bob Menendez working to build support, raise funds after federal indictment

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — Allies of New Jersey Sen. Bob Menendez have launched a coordinated public relations campaign to support him through what is likely to be a long and expensive legal fight over a litany of federal corruption charges.

Menendez pleaded not guilty Thursday to charges that he accepted nearly \$1 million in gifts and campaign contributions from a longtime friend in exchange for a stream of political favors.

His supporters have been working quietly behind the scenes since news reports emerged in March suggesting an indictment was imminent.

A spokesman for Menendez, Steven Sandberg, said that the efforts — including an outpouring of support from elected Democrats — were organic.

“A lot of people wanted to show their support and provide statements and we were happy to take them,” he said.

French investigators: Co-pilot repeatedly accelerated plane as he drove it down into Alps

PARIS (AP) — The French air accident investigation agency says the co-pilot of the doomed Germanwings flight repeatedly accelerated the plane as he used the automatic pilot to descend the A320 into the Alps.

The BEA agency said in a statement Friday that investigators have begun studying the black box data recorder from the plane, found at the crash site Thursday.

It says an initial reading of the recorder shows that the pilot used the automatic pilot to put the plane into a descent and then repeatedly during the descent adjusted the automatic pilot to speed up the plane.

Based on recordings from the black box voice recorder, investigators say co-pilot Andreas Lubitz locked the pilot out of the cockpit and intentionally crashed the plane. All 150 people aboard were killed.

Hundreds of fishermen rescued from Indonesian island as gov’t probes slavery revealed by AP

BENJINA, Indonesia (AP) — Hundreds of fishermen raced to be rescued Friday from an isolated Indonesian island following an Associated Press investigation that revealed many of the men were enslaved aboard boats catching seafood that could end up in the United States, Europe and elsewhere.

Indonesian officials probing labor abuses told the migrant workers they were allowing them to leave

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 3, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 249 ♦ 25 of 27

for another island by boat out of concern for their safety. Some 350 fishermen hustled out from nearby trawlers, villages and even the jungle to be able to make the trip.

"I will go see my parents," said Win Win Ko, 42, smiling to reveal a mouth full of missing teeth. "They haven't heard from me, and I haven't heard from them since I left."

That was four years ago. He left impoverished Myanmar on the promise of getting a good job in neighboring Thailand, but like many others stranded in the island village of Benjina, he was instead duped into getting on a fishing boat that took him thousands of miles from home with no return. He said his four teeth were kicked out by a Thai boat captain's military boots because he was not moving fish fast enough from the deck to the hold below.

The men began getting news about the rescue as a downpour started, and some ran through the rain. They sprinted back to their boats, jumping over the rails and throwing themselves through windows. They stuffed their meager belongings into plastic bags and rushed back to the dock, not wanting to be left behind.

Prosecutor: US authorities committed to preventing 'attacks by homegrown violent extremists'

NEW YORK (AP) — The disturbing allegations were contained in court papers describing the latest homegrown terror plot thwarted by the FBI and the New York Police Department.

Noelle Velentzas and Asia Siddiqui were arrested at their Queens homes early Thursday following a sting operation using an undercover officer wearing a wire. Officer searching the homes recovered items including three gas tanks, a pressure cooker, fertilizer, handwritten notes on the recipes for bomb making and jihadist literature, court papers say.

Velentzas, had been "obsessed with pressure cookers since the Boston Marathon attacks in 2013" and made jokes alluding to explosives after receiving one as a gift, according to a criminal complaint citing one of the secret recordings made by the undercover who managed to befriend the pair.

The arrests show U.S. authorities "are committed to doing everything in our ability to detect, disrupt, and deter attacks by homegrown violent extremists," U.S. Attorney Loretta Lynch said in a statement. "As alleged, the defendants in this case carefully studied how to construct an explosive device to launch an attack on the homeland."

The women were held without bail after a brief court appearance where they spoke only to say they understood the charges against them. Velentzas, 28, wore a hijab and a dark dress, and Siddiqui, 31, had on a green T-shirt with a long-sleeved black shirt underneath and a dark long skirt.

Today in History **The Associated Press**

Today is Good Friday, April 3, the 93rd day of 2015. There are 272 days left in the year. The Jewish holiday Passover begins at sunset.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 3, 1865, Union forces occupied the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia.

On this date:

In 1860, the legendary Pony Express began carrying mail between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California. (The delivery system lasted only 18 months before giving way to the transcontinental telegraph.)

In 1882, outlaw Jesse James was shot to death in St. Joseph, Missouri, by Robert Ford, a member of

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 3, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 249 ♦ 26 of 27

James' gang.

In 1936, Bruno Hauptmann was electrocuted in Trenton, New Jersey, for the kidnap-murder of Charles Lindbergh Jr.

In 1946, Lt. Gen. Masaharu Homma, the Japanese commander held responsible for the Bataan Death March, was executed by firing squad outside Manila.

In 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed the Marshall Plan, designed to help European allies rebuild after World War II and resist communism.

In 1965, the United States launched the SNAP-10A nuclear power system into Earth orbit; it was the first nuclear reactor sent into space.

In 1968, the day before he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous "mountaintop" speech to a rally of striking sanitation workers.

In 1974, deadly tornadoes began hitting wide parts of the South and Midwest before jumping across the border into Canada; more than 300 fatalities resulted from what became known as the Super Outbreak.

In 1985, the landmark Hollywood Brown Derby restaurant closed after 56 years in business.

In 1990, jazz singer Sarah Vaughan died in suburban Los Angeles at age 66.

In 1995, former United Way of America President William Aramony was convicted in Alexandria, Virginia, of 25 counts of fraud, conspiracy and money laundering for stealing nearly \$600,000 from the charity. (Aramony ended up serving six years of a seven-year prison sentence.)

In 1996, an Air Force jetliner carrying Commerce Secretary Ron Brown and American business executives crashed in Croatia, killing all 35 people aboard.

Ten years ago: A day after the death of Pope John Paul II, the body of the pontiff lay in state. Millions prayed and wept at services across the globe, as the Vatican prepared for the ritual-filled funeral and conclave that would choose a successor.

Five years ago: The leader of the Anglican church, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, said in remarks released by the BBC that the Roman Catholic church in Ireland had lost all credibility because of its mishandling of abuse by priests. White supremacist Eugene TerreBlanche, 68, was bludgeoned to death on his South African farm in a dispute with black farm workers over wages. Connecticut senior Tina Charles was the runaway choice as The Associated Press' women's college basketball player of the year. Nebraska's Connie Yori was named The Associated Press' women's college basketball coach of the year.

One year ago: The Associated Press reported that the U.S. government had masterminded the creation of a "Cuban Twitter" designed to undermine the communist government in Havana. Serial killer Tommy Lynn Sells was put to death in Texas after the U.S. Supreme Court rejected his lawyers' demand that the state release information about where it had gotten its lethal injection drug. David Letterman announced during a taping of the "Late Show" on CBS that he was retiring as host in 2015 (Stephen Colbert was named as his replacement a week later). Wichita State coach Gregg Marshall was named the runaway winner of the AP coach of the year award. Creighton star Doug McDermott was a near-unanimous pick as the AP player of the year.

Today's Birthdays: Actress-singer Doris Day is 92. Former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl is 85. Conservationist Dame Jane Goodall is 81. Actor William Gaunt is 78. Songwriter Jeff Barry is 77. Actor Eric Braeden is 74. Actress Marsha Mason is 73. Singer Wayne Newton is 73. Singer Billy Joe Royal is 73. Singer Tony Orlando is 71. Comedy writer Pat Proft is 68. Folk-rock singer Richard Thompson is 66. Country musician Curtis Stone (Highway 101) is 65. Blues singer-guitarist John Mooney is 60. Rock musician Mick Mars (Motley Crue) is 59. Actor Alec Baldwin is 57. Actor David Hyde Pierce is 56. Rock

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 3, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 249 ♦ 27 of 27

singer John Thomas Griffith (Cowboy Mouth) is 55. Comedian-actor Eddie Murphy is 54. Rock singer-musician Mike Ness (Social Distortion) is 53. Rock singer Sebastian Bach is 47. Rock musician James MacDonough is 45. Olympic gold medal ski racer Picabo Street is 44. Actress Jennie Garth is 43. Actor Jamie Bamber is 42. Actor Adam Scott is 42. Christian rock musician Drew Shirley (Switchfoot) is 41. Comedian Aries Spears is 40. Actor Matthew Goode (TV: "The Good Wife"; Film: "The Imitation Game") is 37. Actress Cobie Smulders is 33. Rock-pop singer Leona Lewis is 30. Actress Amanda Bynes is 29.

Thought for Today: "The world is not black and white. More like black and grey." - Graham Greene, English author (born 1904, died this date in 1991).