

Groton Daily Independent

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Friday, April 24

Birthday: Taryn Rossow

Senior Menu: Meat loaf, baked potato with sour cream, fruited Jell-O, whole wheat bread.
No School. Faculty inservice

Saturday, April 25

Birthdays: Charlie Pray, Rachel Blackmun, Rick Schauer
10:00 a.m.: Track at Ipswich (moved from May 2nd)

Sunday, April 26

9:00 a.m.: Emmanuel Lutheran Sunday School
9:15 a.m.: Emmanuel Lutheran Fellowship
10:00 a.m.: Heaven Bound Ministires worship in Pierpont
10:15 a.m.: Emmanuel Lutheran worship.
11:00 a.m. to 1 p.m.: Kumla dinner at Pierpont church
3:30 p.m.: Heaven Bound Ministires fellowship at Golden Living Center

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

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.



www.harrmotors.com

605-225-3078 ~ 1-800-658-3463

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Classifieds

CARD OF THANKS

I want to thank everyone for their visits, phone calls and cards after my surgery. All of these helped with my recovery.

Donald Walter

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has helped me since I broke my leg. I appreciate the visits, cards, phone calls, gifts, and prayers. I can never say thank you enough for everything! Your help means so much to me! What a great community we live in!

Gordie Nelson

Help Wanted

Andover Bar & Grill is looking for a cook. Contact Stacy at 605/298-5252 or Randy at 605/216-2595.

Harry Implement, Ferney, is looking for a Truck driver for pickup and delivery of equipment. Contact Steve at 605-395-6421 or e-mail s.harry@harrysinc.com

FOR RENT

ONE AND TWO bedroom apartment for rent. HDS subsidized. Rent includes utilities and heat. No smoking. Pets okay. Contact Darlene Daly at 605/380-0571 or Arlys Kluess at 605-216-8399.

Bridal Showers

Open House Bridal Shower honoring Jessica Hoscheid, bride-to-be of Zach Harry, April 25, 2015, from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Ferney. The couple is registered at Target, Inspire and Menards.

Bridal Shower for Ashley Larson, bride-to-be of Austin Fordham, Saturday, April 25th, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton, S.D. Registered at Target and Herbergers. (2t)

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DQ DI Night

Two Groton Destination Imagination teams going to the Global Finals were helpers at the Groton Dairy Queen Thursday night. A percentage of the proceeds will go towards the Groton DI program.

In back, left to right, are Nathan Fjelstad, Trey Wright and Luke Smith; in front are Keri Pappas, Lily Cutler, Katie LaMee, Breanna Marzahn, Jenifer Fjelstad and Erin Smith. In the far back middle is Dale Grenz. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



New fence is up

The new outfield fence at Locke-Karst Field was completed this week. A new feature is a higher fence at center field. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Slide going up

Shawn Lambertz is running the digger truck as Joe Foertsch helps to set one of the arms on the slide at the Groton Swimming Pool. (Photo by Tina Kosel)



Supports are up

The supports for the slide at the Groton Swimming Pool were put up Thursday afternoon. The work was accomplished in three hours. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

PARTS COUNTER SALES

Self motivated individual needed to fill our Parts Counter Sales position. Duties include parts sales, display stocking, shipping and receiving. Sponsored training, excellent benefits package and the possibility for advancement. Contact Steve at 605-395-6421 or email resume to s.harry@harrysinc.com.

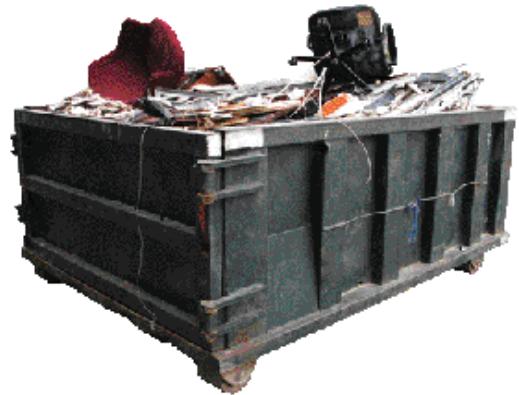
Harry Implement Inc.

PO Box 841
Ferney, SD
57439



Time for a Spring Cleaning

Groton City Spring Cleanup
May 2-9 2015



Bring Anything You
Wish to dispose of to
Dumpsters located at
the City Shop
10 E Railroad Ave

Or Call City Hall at
397-8422 for
free hauling May 4-8

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Ward Gilchrist is guiding Branden Abeln in unloading parts of the slide at the pool on Thursday. (Photo by Tina Kosel)



Paul Kosel was installing two new bricks at the Groton Swimming Pool on Thursday. Bricks for Jody Opp and Boston Kurth were installed. There is still time to get your brick for this season. Contact City Hall at 397-8422 to order your brick. (Photo by Justin Olson)

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School Board Agenda

Groton Area School District #06-6 School Board Meeting

April 27, 2015 – 7:30 PM – GHS Conference Room

Buildings, Grounds, Transportation Meeting – April 27th at 6:00 PM

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.

2. Program Overview Presentations K-12 Special Education...J. Erdmann, C. Fadness, M. Erickson, N. Johnson, R. Erickson, K. Miller

K-5 Title/RtI...L. Grieve, B. Schimmel, J. Helvig

3. School Board Committee Reports:

a. Building, Grounds, & Transportation: Lars Hanson, Merle Harder, Marty Weismantel

i. Meeting on April 27, 2015 at 6:00 PM.

b. Personnel, Policy, & Curriculum: Dorene Nelson, Grant Rix

c. Negotiations: Kelly Kjelden, Steve Smith

4. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principals' Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Math curriculum review presentations by faculty representatives.

2. Approve resignation of Cheryl Hanson, MS Math Instructor, effective at the end of the 14-15 school year.

3. Approve resignation/retirement of Doug Bahr, custodian, effective June 1, 2015.

4. Approve hiring Desiree Yeigh as MS Instrumental Music Teacher for 2015-2016 school year with salary to be published in July.

5. Consider motion to approve deferred employee payroll deductions for July 2015 health insurance premiums due in June.

6. Discussion on school district health plan options with motion to finalize which plan options will be available locally.

7. Approve ASBSD Protective Trust Agreement for Health Insurance for FY16.

8. Other items, as may be appropriate or as deemed necessary.

ADJOURN

Reminder: May 11 Board Meeting is scheduled for 5:00 PM (MS/HS Concert at 7:00 PM)



A child's Special Gift for Mom Event

Reserve your child's opportunity to plant a 4" blooming or green plant in a fun, colorful container just in time for Mother's day! Reserve a spot for your child(ren) to create a special gift for their mom or grandmother!

May 2nd

10-11am

or

2-3pm

\$20 per child/
per plant



Each paid reservation (by April 30) receives a 20% off one reg price item coupon (one per family)

Oldebankfloral@nvc.net
605-397-8650

Groton wins four events at Redfield Relays

Groton Area had four first-place winners at the Redfield Relays Track meet held Thursday. The girls 800m relay team and shuttle hurdle relay team both took first as did Carly Wheeting in the discus and Nick Dalchow in the discus.

Girl's Division

100m Hurdles: 4, Josie Doeden, 18.03.

300m Hurdles: 6, Josie Doeden, 53.26; Audrey Wanner, 54.86.

100m Dash: Jasmine Schinkel, 14.92.

200m Dash: 2, Harleigh Winther, 27.36.

400m Dash: Alex Stange, 1:14.32; Hannah Lewandowski, 1:14.88.

800m Run: 7, Hannah Lewandowski, 3:03.5; 8, Alex Stange, 3:05.07.

800m Relay: 1, Groton (Courtney Kurtz, Heather Lone, Harleigh Winther, Mckenzie Menzia), 1:55.57.

1600m Relay: Groton (Josie Doeden, Katie Koehler, Jasmine Schinkel, Jasmine Schaller), 5:53.

Medley Relay: Groton (Courtney Kurtz, Heather Lone, Mckenzie Menzia, Jasmine Schaller), 4:57.52.

High Jump: 8, Taryn Rossow, 4-1.

Long Jump: Audrey Wanner, 14-0.25; Katie Koehler, 13-0.25; Taryn Rossow, 11-11.75.

Triple Jump: 7, Audrey Wanner, 31-2.5; Katie Koehler, 28-9; Taryn Rossow, 26-7.25.

Discus: 1, Carly Wheeting, 104-5; 5, Jessica Bjerke, 94-2; Marlee Jones, 88-11; Alyssa Sippel, 85-4.

Shot Put: 2, Tori Bjerke, 32-11; Marlee Jones, 29-5; Jessica Bjerke, 27-0.

Boy's Division

300m Hurdles: 7, Bennett Shabazz, 46.92.

100m Dash: Tyler Iverson, 14.26; Jackson Oliver, 12.71.

200m Dash: Trevor Pray, 25.31; Jackson Oliver, 26.47; Tyler Iverson, 30.11.

400m Dash: Jackson Oliver, 1:01.25.

800m Relay: 2, Groton (Jackson Doeden, Trevor Pray, Zack Crosby, Landon Larson), 1:37.20.

Medley Relay: 3, Groton (Jackson Doeden, Zack Crosby, Martin Rygg, Lucas Sternhagen), 4:01.74.

1600m Relay: Groton (Lucas Sternhagen, Martin Rygg, Sean Schuring, Brandon Keith), 4:88.

3200m Relay: 2, Groton (Bennett Shabazz, Sean Schuring, Brandon Keith, Lucas Sternhagen), 9:12.47.

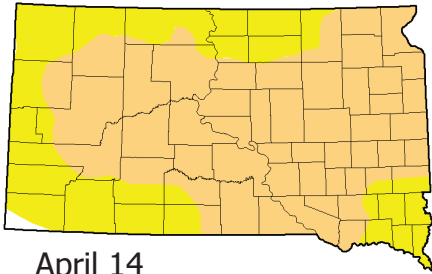
Long Jump: Adam Herman, 17-6.5; Bennett Shabazz, 17-0; Trevor Pray, 16-11.

Triple Jump: 6, Adam Herman, 38-3; Trevor Pray, 34-1.5.

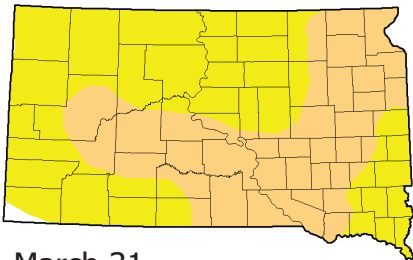
Discus: 1, Nick Dalchow, 141-4; 3, McLane Lone, 122-9; Stevie Fey, 105-2.

Shot Put: 2, Nick Dalchow, 40-9; 5, Stevie Fey, 38-8.

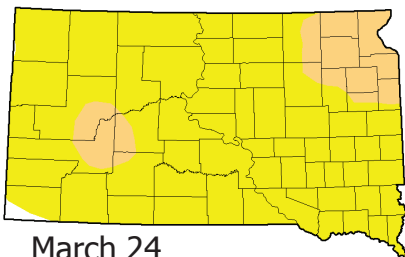
U.S. Drought Monitor



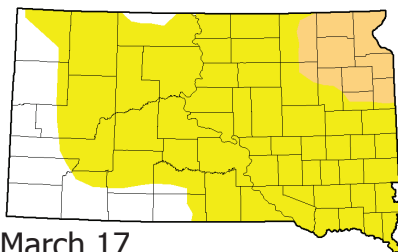
April 14



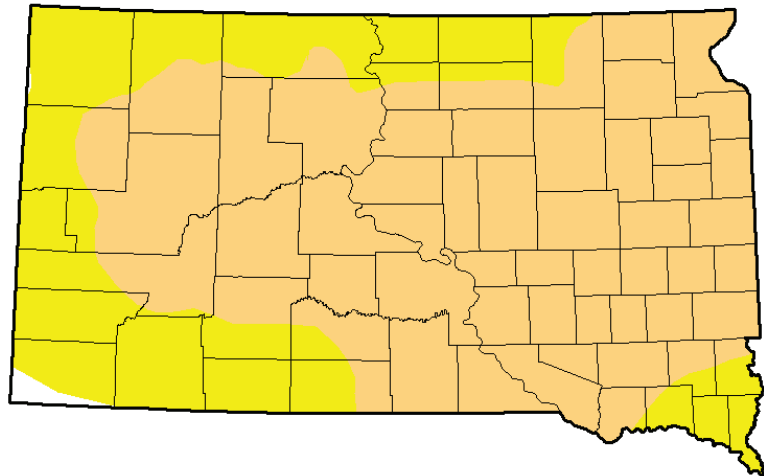
March 31



March 24



March 17



April 21, 2015

(Released Thursday April 23, 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	2015-04-21	0.58	99.42	69.26	0.00	0.00	0.00
Last Week	2015-04-14	0.53	99.47	65.84	0.00	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago	2015-01-20	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	2014-04-22	52.04	47.96	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Population Affected by Drought: **593,966**

[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):

Anthony Artusa, NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC

National Drought Summary for April 21, 2015

Summary

During the past 7-days, moderate to heavy rain (generally 0.5-3.0 inches, locally greater) fell across portions of the Southeast, the Gulf Coast, the Great Plains, and the Ohio Valley. These areas of precipitation occurred in proximity to several slow-moving/stationary fronts and mid-level troughs. By far the heaviest precipitation totals were observed near the Gulf Coast, where numerous coastal counties from southeastern Texas to the extreme western Florida Panhandle received 5-10 inches during the past week. Precipitation amounts were generally light (0.5-inch or less) in the interior Pacific Northwest, the Southwest and the northern Plains.

The Plains

In North Dakota, light rain fell during the past 7-days, offsetting further deterioration of conditions. Temperatures also fell significantly (below freezing in some areas), keeping evaporation rates low. In South Dakota, only slight adjustments were made to the drought depiction. In north-central South Dakota, moderate drought (D1) was extended slightly northward into Walworth and Edmunds Counties. In southeastern South Dakota, moderate drought (D1) was expanded slightly southward to include eastern Hutchinson, central Turner, and northern Lincoln Counties. Most other areas of the state received enough rain this past week (a quarter-inch to an inch) to offset additional deterioration of conditions, but not enough to justify improvements. In the southern portion of the Nebraska Panhandle and nearby southeastern Wyoming, abnormal dryness (D0) was eliminated due to a recent storm system that produced about 2 inches of precipitation (liquid equivalent), much of which fell as wet snow. The region is finally beginning to experience spring green-up. The improved conditions also warranted the removal of abnormal dryness (D0) in the northern Laramie Range in southeastern Wyoming. During the past week in the Sand hills region of north-central Nebraska, 2-4 inch rainfall surpluses and good soil moisture infiltration prompted a 1-category improvement to the depiction. In northeastern Nebraska, despite receiving decent moisture over the past 2 weeks, significant deficits still linger at the 30-, 60-, and 90-day time periods. Therefore, the depiction remains unchanged in this area, pending reassessment next week. In Kansas, respectable rains (mostly 0.5-2.0 inches, locally greater) helped to offset any additional degradation. Surface water supplies are still low, and runoff is minimal. No alteration was made to the Kansas drought depiction this week.

The southern Great Plains also experienced a mix of both improvements and degradations. In Oklahoma, 1-category degradations were made in the western Panhandle, as only 1.0-1.5 inches of rain fell during the past 30-days. There were reports of dust storms and dead dryland wheat across much of this area. In west-central Oklahoma, a swath of 4-8 inch rains prompted a 1-category improvement from about Roger Mills County northeastward to Major County. In extreme northeastern and northwestern Roger Mills County, and most of adjacent Ellis County, no good runoff rains were reported, suggesting status quo for those areas. In Texas, widespread 1-category improvements were made to the drought depiction after recent rain fell over many areas that needed it. Stream flows are improving in southern and south-central Texas, and there is continued reservoir improvement in the Dallas area. In the Panhandle region, some of the wheat crop is expected to be salvaged, but it is unlikely the crop will return to normal.

Today in Weather History

April 24, 1948: A significant F2 tornado moved northeast from South of Castlewood to near Goodwin. Barns were destroyed on two farms. Also on this day, two other tornadoes were observed in South Dakota. One moved from Turner County on into Minnehaha County, injuring two people. The other touchdown 3 miles Southeast of Sioux Falls, destroying barns and other buildings on the west edge of Brandon.

1880: Several tornadoes affected parts of central and southwest Illinois. One tornado of F4 intensity touched down near Jerseyville, and killed one person along an 18 mile path. Another F4 tornado passed just north of Carlinville and lifted near Atwater, destroying 50 buildings. Six people were killed in Christian County by an F5 tornado, which tracked from 9 miles southwest of Taylorville to near Sharpsburg.

1899 - Two women and one son lived to tell the story of being picked up by a tornado and carried more than a fourth of a mile, flying far above the church steeples, before being gently set down again. The young boy and one of the ladies said they had the pleasure of flying alongside a horse. The horse "kicked and struggled" as it flew high above, and was set down unharmed about a mile away. (The Weather Channel)

1908 - Severe thunderstorms spawned eighteen tornadoes over across the Central Gulf Coast States claiming the lives of 310 persons. The state of Mississippi was hardest hit. A tornado near Hattiesburg MS killed 143 persons and caused more than half a million dollars damage. Four violent tornadoes accounted for 279 of the 310 deaths. The deadliest of the four tornadoes swelled to a width of 2.5 miles as it passed near Amite LA. The tornado also leveled most of Purvis MS. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Showers and thunderstorms produced heavy rain in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. Up to seven inches of rain drenched Virginia in three days. Morgantown WV received 4.27 inches in 24 hours, and flooding was reported in south central West Virginia. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Low pressure produced high winds and severe thunderstorms in the Southern Plains Region. Strong thunderstorm winds destroyed two mobile homes at Whitt TX injuring two persons. Winds associated with the low pressure system gusted to 70 mph at Guadalupe Pass TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Twenty cities in the central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Russell KS was the hot spot in the nation with a reading of 101 degrees. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather from Colorado to Wisconsin. Hail four and a half inches in diameter was reported at Sargeant NE. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Southern High Plains to north central Kansas. Thunderstorms spawned ten tornadoes, including one which injured four persons and caused 1.5 million dollars damage at Shattuck OK. Thunderstorms also produced softball size hail at Wheeler TX, wind gusts to 85 mph southwest of Arnett OK, and 13.45 inches of rain near Caldwell TX, which resulted in the worst flooding in recent memory for that area. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2003: The temperature soars to a maximum of 70 degrees in Juneau Alaska. This is the earliest record of 70 degree reading to occur in Juneau.

2010: April Tornado Outbreak- During a major severe weather outbreak across the South on April 22-25, 142 tornadoes raked the region, including 77 on April 24 alone. Ten died from the long-track tornado that swept across Mississippi on April 24. A long-lived twister left a trail of destruction extending over 149 miles from Louisiana through Mississippi, resulting in 10 deaths and 75 injuries. This EF4 storm, which grew to a width of 1.75 miles, sported the fourth longest track in Mississippi history. This storm destroyed part of Yazoo City, Mississippi. The Swiss Reinsurance Company estimated insured damages with this outbreak at \$1.58 billion.

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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
						
20%	30%					20%
Slight Chc Thunderstorms	Chance Thunderstorms	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Slight Chc Showers
High: 63 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 59 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 63 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 65 °F



Thunderstorms Again Possible Late

Follow us on *Social Media*

Issued: April 24, 2015

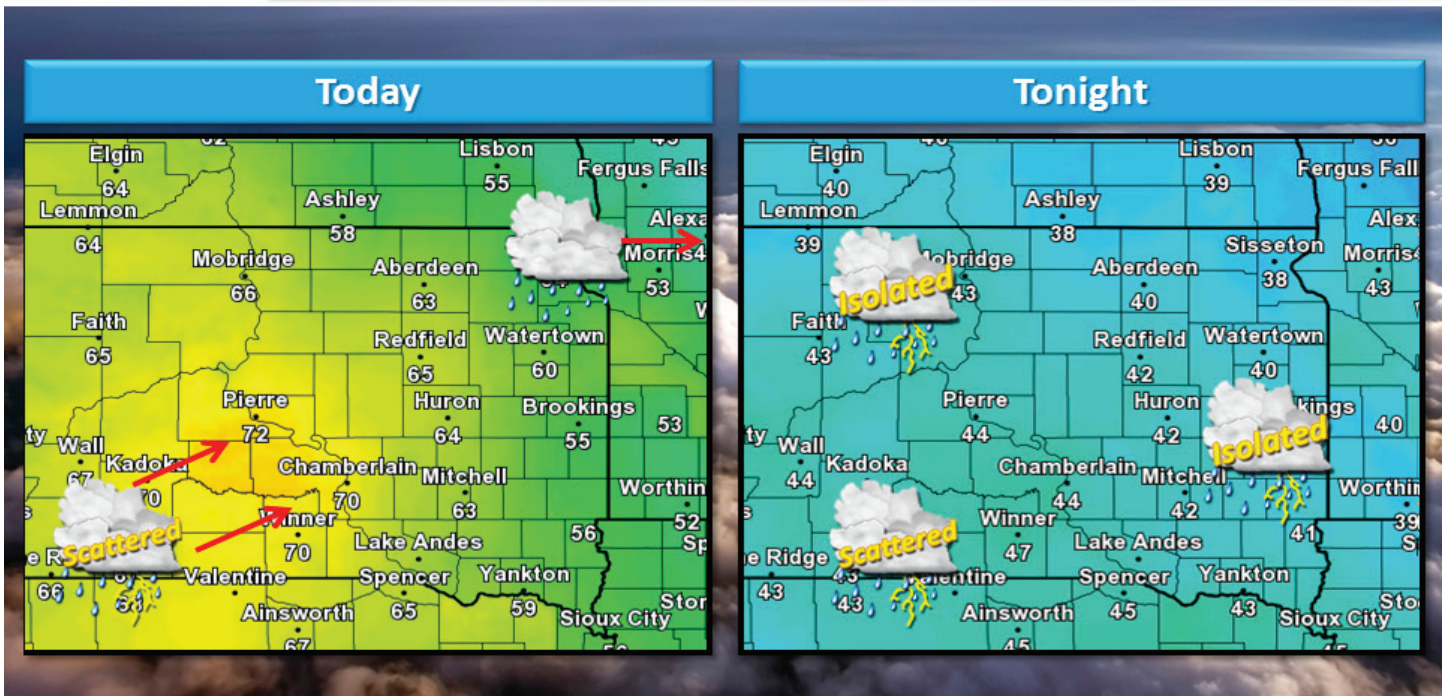
weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen



Published on: 04/24/2015 at 4:19AM

Showers will track across northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota this morning. There should then be a break in the action this afternoon, before additional showers and thunderstorms develop later this evening. The best chances for precipitation will be over parts of south central South Dakota.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 61.9 at 5:23 PM

Low: 21.4 at 4:55 AM

High Gust: 26 mph at 4:32 PM

Snow: 0.00

Precip: 0.03

Today's Info

Record High: 92° in 1962

Record Low: 17° in 1956

Average High: 62°F

Average Low: 35°F

Average Precip in April.: 1.25

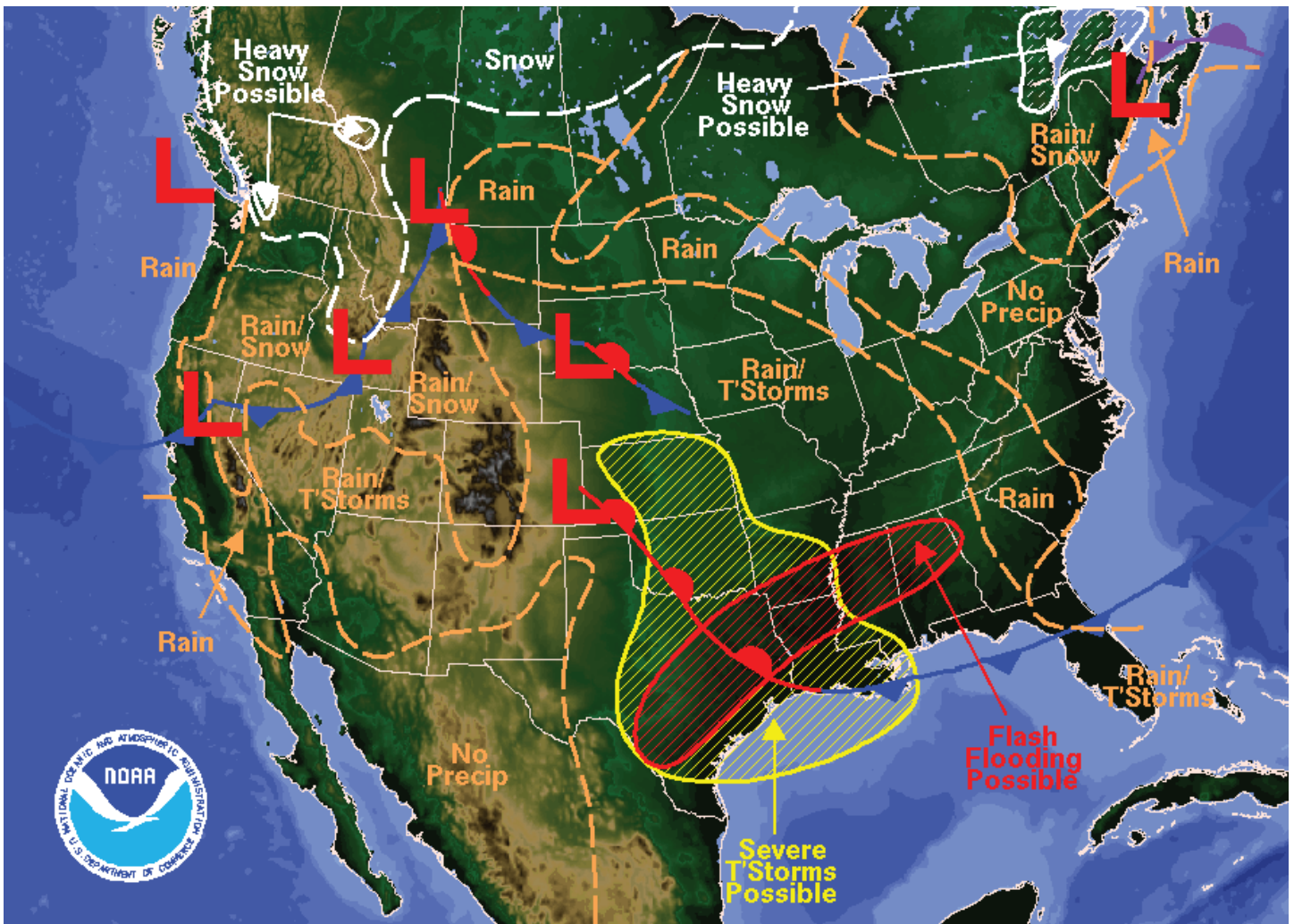
Precip to date in April.: 0.47

Average Precip to date: 3.43

Precip Year to Date: 0.94

Sunset Tonight: 8:31 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:32 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Fri, Apr 24, 2015, issued 3:43 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



UNSELFISH SERVICE

Where do service and charity end? Certainly, not in the home. Selfish homes produce selfish children and God's Kingdom and God's world suffers. What can be done to change this condition?

"She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy."

There is an obvious route that travels from the head to the heart to the hands. God's Word enters our lives through our head. We hear the Word preached and taught and read and meditate on the Word each day. But it must not stop there. It must reach into our hearts - the very center of our lives and then move outward through our hands in service and charity to others. It's the head, heart, hands conception.

What is in our hearts always comes out in our lives. Nobel character is of little good if the character is an end in itself. In fact, the sign of our character is seen in what we do in our homes first and then God's world. One pastor said, "A saving faith is always seen in serving others." If we are saved, we will serve.

There can be little doubt that our love for God is always seen in our attitude and actions toward those in need. Proverbs contains many warnings about those who refuse to be charitable and in fact reminds us that giving to the poor is the same as lending to God.

"Open arms and extended" hands, however, is much more than giving "things." It is giving one's self. It includes time, talents and teaching God's way to others.

Prayer: Father, we owe so much to others because of what You have given us. May we all serve sacrificially! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Proverbs 31:20 She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.

News from the Associated Press

Dry weather should help South Dakota corn crop start early

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — The dry weather will likely help South Dakota farmers get a jump on spring corn planting.

State climatologist Dennis Todey says planting generally runs from late April to mid-June, but weather conditions this year mean it might be able to proceed significantly ahead of normal.

SDSU Extension crop production extension associate Jonathan Kleinjan says farmers might need to plant deeper than usual 1.5-inch depth because of the dryer soil but no deeper than 3 inches.

He says ideal seeding depth should be based on soil conditions and the near-term or 10-day weather outlook.

Todey says corn shouldn't be planted until morning soil temperatures at a depth of 2 inches are at least 50 degrees.

Mountain pine beetle spraying workshops planned in SD

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Forest Service are hosting three mountain pine beetle spraying workshops in the Black Hills over the next few weeks.

The workshops will focus on the benefits and methods of treating trees to protect them from mountain pine beetles. Attendees will learn about spraying techniques and chemicals used.

The first workshop is scheduled for Thursday at Hudson Hall in Spearfish.

The second workshop will take place May 5 at the Canyon Lake Cottage on the Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Home Campus in Hot Springs.

The Silver City Community Hall in Silver City will be hosting the third workshop on May 16.

All landowners are welcome to attend.

Noem to have Watertown talk with business, community leaders

WATERTOWN, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem is holding a discussion with community and business leaders in Watertown.

Noem's office announced the discussion will be on Friday at the Hy-Vee in Watertown.

South Dakota's lone U.S. representative and the group of leaders will discuss the difficulties facing small businesses as well as federal red tape, taxation and health care.

Noem is a Republican first elected to Congress in 2010. She serves with GOP U.S. Sens. John Thune and Mike Rounds in Washington.

Wild Card 2 ticket sold in South Dakota worth \$6,000

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Wild Card 2 ticket sold in South Dakota is worth \$6,000.

State lottery officials say the ticket sold in Pierre matched all five white ball numbers, but missed the Wild Card in the Wednesday drawing to win the game's second prize. The winning numbers are 1, 8, 12, 30, 32 and the Wild Card is the Ace of Diamonds.

The odds of winning \$6,000 playing Wild Card 2 are 1 in about 127,000.

The winner has about six months to claim their money.

Wild Card 2 is played in the Dakotas, Montana and Idaho. The jackpot currently sits at \$615,000 for the next drawing on Saturday.

Senate GOP caucus to hold leadership elections next month

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Senate GOP caucus will meet next month to fill the leadership void left when two top Republican members resigned, and President Pro Tempore Corey Brown said Thursday he will run for Senate majority leader.

Caucus elections are scheduled for May 9 at the state Capitol in Pierre, Brown said. The 25-member Republican Senate conference — which could grow if Gov. Dennis Daugaard fills the two vacancies before the caucus elections — will vote to fill the spots that former Senate Majority Leader Tim Rave and former Assistant Majority Leader Dan Lederman vacated with their midterm departures from the Legislature.

Tony Venhuizen, the governor's chief of staff, said in an email that Daugaard hopes the two seats will be filled within a month.

The Senate leaders play a key role in negotiating policy positions. During the 2015 Legislature that meant fighting for the Senate stance on issues such as road and bridge funding hikes and insurance coverage of treatments for children with autism.

"In that role of leader, essentially, you're ... one of the chief negotiators with the House and with the governor and with the minority party," Brown said. "Having had been involved with a lot of those discussions over the last four or five years, I think my fit in the caucus is maybe better in that particular role."

Brown said he isn't aware of challengers for the majority leader spot. He has previously served as assistant majority leader.

Republican political observers have said bids for the leadership posts could come from one of the caucus' three majority whips or from a rank-and-file member. If a whip were elected to a higher post, an additional vote to fill the spot would be necessary, and if Brown succeeds Rave, a new president pro tempore would need to be chosen.

The three majority whips are Sens. Ried Holien, Ernie Otten and Deb Soholt.

Holien was unavailable for comment. Otten and Sen. Brock Greenfield said they intend to run for assistant leader. Soholt said she is "taking a strong look" at a run for assistant leader or president pro tempore.

"I'm at 98.9 percent that I'm going to be running," Otten said. "I think I could bring a position from the harder right and be a person that could bring also the middle and hopefully bring everybody together."

Greenfield, who doesn't occupy a leadership position, said if elected, he wouldn't simply succumb to the executive branch. He said he would be the "strongest voice for the Legislature that I know how to be, and ultimately for my caucus."

Minority Leader Billie Sutton, who leads the eight-member Democratic caucus in the Senate, said Brown would make a good Republican leader. He said he hopes the conference chooses a leader who can bridge the gap between the more conservative and the moderate Republican members.

"I think he's probably one of the ones who could do it," Sutton said.

14 students receive international travel scholarship at USD

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Fourteen students at the University of South Dakota are the first to receive scholarships to study abroad through a new international travel fund at the Vermillion instruction.

The new International Opportunity Fund in USD's College of Arts and Sciences was established by alumni Tom and Nancy Gallagher. The couple gave approximately \$1 million to the USD Foundation to support international travel by students.

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The scholarship awards range from \$600 to \$2,500 each and the students will travel to 11 different locations including the Galapagos Islands, Scotland and Peru.

The fund awarded about \$20,000 in all to support travel costs. More money will be allocated through a competitive process in the fall.

Judge puts scheduled execution of inmate Berget on hold

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A circuit court judge has put the execution of death row inmate Rodney Berget on hold.

Attorney General Marty Jackley says Circuit Court Judge Douglas Hoffman issued a stay of the execution after Berget filed a habeas petition.

Berget was sentenced to die the week of May 3 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 it remains the state's position that due process has been satisfied.

Defense attorney Jeff Larson declined to comment.

Bird flu cuts into egg, poultry exports in Iowa, Midwest

DAVID PITT, Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Some international trade partners are declining to buy egg and poultry products from Midwestern states that have been affected by a deadly strain of bird flu, while others are excluding imports only from counties where the virus has surfaced.

The H5N2 virus has cost turkey and chicken producers over 7 million birds since early March. Federal agriculture officials say the food supply is safe.

A few countries — including China, Russia, South Korea and Thailand — have shut off all imports of poultry products from the United States. Mexico, Japan and Canada are among 33 countries declining to accept poultry products from entire states, including Iowa, the nation's leading egg producer, and Minnesota, the top turkey grower in the U.S.

Other countries, including Hong Kong, limit the ban to counties where the virus has been confirmed. Some countries — including Honduras, Kazakhstan and Qatar — require products to be heated to a temperature that will kill the virus before they'll accept poultry products.

"We'd like to see those countries that are restricting on a statewide basis go down to a county level," said Jim Sumner, president of the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association. He said Thursday that 110 countries continue trade with the U.S. with no restrictions, and it's likely that once the flu is isolated without spreading further for at least a month, some of the trade bans may relax.

The exports of poultry products have been growing. For example, the United States exported 42.5 million dozen shell eggs in 2014, up from nearly 16 million in 2012 and 38.8 million dozen eggs as processed egg products, up from 15 million just two years earlier.

U.S. Department of Agriculture spokeswoman Joelle Hayden said the agency is working with the poultry industry, trade associations and others to mitigate the impact on exports.

"We are actively engaging with most of these countries to reduce these restrictions," she said.

Agricultural states are fighting to contain the virus. Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton declared a state of emergency Thursday to fight the H5N2 strain, a similar action taken earlier by Wisconsin.

Students suffer minor injuries in Rapid City bus crash

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Rapid City School District says some middle school students suffered minor injuries in a bus crash.

District officials say about 55 middle school students were on the bus when it crashed about 7:45 a.m. Thursday.

A second bus was sent to the scene to bring the students to school. Some were referred to a school nurse or doctors. It was not immediately clear how many students were hurt.

KOTA-TV reports the crash happened after a woman driving a Jeep pulled out in front of the bus. The woman was ticketed for failing to stop at a stop sign.

Feds move to speed approval for Great Plains wind projects

MATTHEW BROWN, Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Federal officials are moving to speed up their review of wind power projects across the Upper Great Plains in anticipation that the industry will continue growing, a situation that's alarmed wildlife advocates who say many bird and bat species are being put at risk as wind turbines proliferate.

The proposal would cover future wind farms in Montana, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Companies to date have installed roughly 8,000 turbines generating more than 12,000 megawatts of wind energy in the six states. That's almost one-fifth of the wind power in the U.S. and represents enough energy to power the equivalent of almost 3.3 million homes, according to the American Wind Energy Association.

With 8,600 to 30,000 additional turbines anticipated by 2030, officials hope to reduce the duration of environmental reviews that are needed for permitting from two years to one, said Jennifer Neville, a spokeswoman for the Western Area Power Administration, a branch of the U.S. Department of Energy.

To speed the process, wind farm developers would receive site-specific information about potential impacts on wildlife, including bald and golden eagles and endangered whooping cranes. That would ensure developers construct their turbines and transmission lines away from wetlands and rivers where whooping cranes and other birds gather, or shut down turbines when the birds are seen nearby, according to the proposal.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service collaborated with the Western Area Power Administration on a 1,160-page environmental study that details steps companies may need to take to avoid killing birds.

By working off that document, developers would know up-front what measures they might have to take to protect wildlife "so they don't have to build them from scratch every time," Neville said.

A final decision will come after a 30-day review process that begins once the study is published in the Federal Register.

Fish and Wildlife spokesman Ryan Moehring said the proposal would help identify appropriate sites for wind turbines, not reduce government oversight.

Better planning for wind energy has been embraced by wildlife groups, including the American Bird Conservancy, which has said that current lax oversight allows turbines to be constructed in areas frequented by birds.

Michael Hutchins, the head of the conservancy's Bird-Smart wind energy program, cited a study that appeared in the Wildlife Society Bulletin estimating that 573,000 birds and 888,000 bats were killed by wind turbines in 2012. While it's hard to gauge the accuracy of such findings, Hutchins said it's clear

that more turbines erected in bird migration corridors will result in more birds being killed.

The International Crane Foundation estimates that roughly 600 whooping cranes survive.

"Those Midwestern states are right smack in the middle of the whooping crane migratory corridor," Hutchins said. "The loss of even a few (birds) to wind turbines or power lines and towers would have a population-level impact."

ND Senate rejects bill on insurance benefits in new plan

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The North Dakota Senate on Thursday rejected a House bill meant to ensure that thousands of public employees receive the same health benefits when their insurance coverage switches to another company this summer. The vote was 46-0.

Sanford Health Plan, which is based in Fargo and Sioux Falls, South Dakota, will provide coverage for the North Dakota Public Employees Retirement System on July 1. Sanford's bid was lower than Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota, which had provided coverage to the group for the past 37 years.

Lawmakers who proposed the bill said they have been hearing from public employees who are worried about losing some benefits with the new plan. The measure would have allowed bidding on the contract to be reopened if the new coverage didn't offer the same level of coverage as previous plans.

Democratic Sen. Tyler Axness, of Fargo, said the bill was introduced "out of fear of change" and believes it will scare away other potential bidders in the future.

"This is legislative micromanagement, plain and simple," Axness said. "We've always said we wanted competition and now we're afraid of competition."

Sanford will insure about 65,000 people, including public employees, retirees and their families. The six-year contract, which must be renewed every two years, is valued at about \$1.8 billion. A Sanford spokeswoman has said the company is "committed to a goal of matching the existing provider network in North Dakota."

The proposal was introduced late in the session after leadership from the Senate and the House agreed to accept it though its delayed bills process.

South Dakota Symphony Orchestra holding flutist auditions

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Symphony Orchestra expects more than 100 flutists to come to Sioux Falls to audition for its open principal flute spot.

The symphony orchestra said Wednesday that flute hopefuls are coming to South Dakota from across the United States to audition. They will vie for the opening on Tuesday, April 28.

South Dakota Symphony Orchestra Music Director Delta David Gier says the wide geographic distribution of interested flutists is encouraging. He says the principal position is competitive with similar spots in larger orchestras.

The auditions last over three rounds: preliminary, semi-final and final. They are closed to the public.

State High School Activities Association audit raises issues

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's High School Activities Association says it is working to address issues uncovered during a recent audit.

KELO-TV reports (<http://bit.ly/1OfBczu>) that the issues included in the Department of Legislative Audit report included missing money from a corporate sponsor, unreported financial account transfers and inadequate receipts for credit card expenses.

The audit also identified some expenses that were not properly reimbursed by staff members. The

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report says the association paid for 24 tickets to a Boston Red Sox game during a national meeting in Boston, and that some staff members did not reimburse the association as expected.

Association Executive Director Wayne Carney says that money has since been repaid, and that the association is working to address all of the issues. He says the association takes the audit "very seriously."

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. HOSTAGE DEATHS A REMINDER OF RISK OF 'DEADLY MISTAKES'

With the deaths of two Western captives in a CIA drone strike, Obama is brutally reminded of how civilians can be lost in wartime.

2. WORLD LEADERS TO MARK ARMENIA MASSACRE

The presidents of Russia and France are among the dignitaries attending ceremonies commemorating the slaughter 100 years ago of 1.5 million Armenians by Ottoman Turks.

3. MIGRANTS KILLED ON MACEDONIA TRACKS

At least 14 refugees, believed to be from Afghanistan and Somalia, are dead after being hit by a train as they walked along the railroad at night.

4. HIGH SCHOOL PRODUCTION TURNS DANGEROUS

More than a dozen people were injured after a stage filled with students collapsed during a musical performance at a central Indiana high school.

5. A BRIGHT SPOT IN A DARKENED CITY

In a city plagued by chronic power outages, poverty and shortages of construction materials, the rooftop restaurant "Level Up" in Gaza City defies all the rules.

6. WHAT CABLE MERGER COLLAPSE MAY MEAN

Even if Comcast's \$45.2 billion bid for Time Warner Cable is dead, consolidation among the companies will carry on.

7. BYOB: IT'S BREW YOUR OWN BEER AT SOME COLLEGES

Two schools are teaching students how to make beer, giving students the skills to compete for jobs in a rapidly expanding section of the hospitality industry.

8. WHAT A MEMOIR IS AIMING TO DO

The fiancée of Ebola victim Thomas Eric Duncan hopes her book will provide some resolution to a story that began in Ivory Coast and ended 15 years later in a Dallas hospital.

9. HOW TO USE YOUR LATEST APPLE GADGET

AP's Anick Jesdanun has tips on setting up and using Apple Watch for the first time, as the first batch of smartwatches arrive in people's homes.

10. WHO LED WARRIORS TO BIG COMEBACK WIN

Stephen Curry scored 40 points, and was the catalyst in a 20-point, fourth-quarter rally, as Golden State beat New Orleans 123-119 in overtime to take a 3-0 series lead.

AP News in Brief

Deaths of Western hostages a reminder of risk of 'deadly mistakes' in wartime

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two years ago, President Barack Obama stood before a military audience and spoke of the "heartbreaking tragedy" of accidental civilian deaths caused by U.S. military strikes in the fight against terrorism in places like Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Now, with news of the death of two Western hostages in a CIA drone strike — American Warren Weinstein and Italian Giovanni Lo Porto — the president has received a brutal reminder that every U.S. commander-in-chief may have to face the loss of civilians as collateral damage in wartime.

"It is a cruel and bitter truth that in the fog of war generally and our fight against terrorists specifically, mistakes, sometimes deadly mistakes, can occur," Obama said.

On Friday, the Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement of condolences to the hostages' families.

"Having lost thousands of innocent civilians in the war against terrorism, Pakistan can fully understand this tragic loss and stands with the families of Weinstein and Lo Porto in this difficult time," the ministry said. "The death of Mr. Weinstein and Mr. Lo Porto in a drone strike demonstrates the risk and unintended consequences of the use of this technology that Pakistan has been highlighting for a long time."

Armenia marks centennial of killing of 1.5 million by Ottoman Empire

YEREVAN, Armenia (AP) — The presidents of Russia and France joined other leaders Friday at ceremonies commemorating the massacre 100 years ago of 1.5 million Armenians by Ottoman Turks, an event which remains a diplomatic sore point for both sides.

The annual April 24 commemorations mark the day when some 250 Armenian intellectuals were rounded up in what is regarded as the first step of the massacres. An estimated 1.5 million died in the massacres, deportations and forced marches that began in 1915 as Ottoman officials worried that the Christian Armenians would side with Russia, its enemy in the World War I.

The event is widely viewed by historians as genocide but modern Turkey, the successor to the Ottoman Empire, vehemently rejects the charge, saying that the toll has been inflated, and that those killed were victims of civil war and unrest. On the eve of the centennial, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan insisted that his nation's ancestors never committed genocide.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Francois Hollande and other dignitaries assembled Friday morning at the Tsitsernakaberd memorial complex in the capital, Yerevan.

Each leader walked along the memorial with a single yellow rose and put it into the center of a wreath resembling a forget-me-not, a flower that was made the symbol of the commemoration.

Police: 14 migrants killed by train while walking along train tracks in central Macedonia

SKOPJE, Macedonia (AP) — Fourteen migrants believed to be from Afghanistan and Somalia who were heading north toward the European Union were killed by an express train as they walked along tracks in central Macedonia at night, police said Friday.

The group had been walking along tracks in a narrow gorge near the central Macedonian town of Veles at around 10:30 p.m. (2030 GMT) Thursday night when they were hit by an express passenger

train heading from the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki to the Serbian capital of Belgrade.

Police spokesman Ivo Kotevski said the migrants were believed to have been part of a larger group of about 30-40 people. He said authorities had detained eight other migrants who were uninjured but remained in the area until police arrived. They were taken to Veles, where they were to be questioned by a prosecutor. The remaining survivors are believed to have fled.

Migrants and refugees using the overland route from Greece to central and Western Europe often use train tracks to guide them along their way and to evade police. Local media have reported five similar incidents along train tracks in Macedonia which left six migrants dead in November and December last year.

Tens of thousands of migrants and refugees attempt to reach the more prosperous central and western European countries by heading from Turkey to nearby Greek islands, then either try to sneak onto Italy-bound ferries, or head overland through Macedonia.

More than 12 hurt as stage full of students collapses during concert at Indiana high school

WESTFIELD, Ind. (AP) — More than a dozen people were injured after a stage filled with students collapsed during a musical performance at a central Indiana high school, authorities said.

Capt. Charles Hollowell of the Westfield Police Department said authorities didn't have an exact number of injuries but were certain more than 12 were hurt. At least one person was critically injured after the stage gave way Thursday night at Westfield High School, he said.

Hollowell did not have any further information about that person's injuries. No fatalities were reported.

A large group of students was on the stage during the grand finale of the concert dubbed "American Pie" when the floor of the stage collapsed into the orchestra pit below, authorities and eyewitnesses said.

Video supplied to The Associated Press by Zach Rader — who was in the audience — and consistent with the AP's reporting shows more than a dozen students dancing and clapping on stage while a female student sings along to Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'."

Comcast-Time Warner Cable may be dead, but many people's cable companies will still change

NEW YORK (AP) — Even if Comcast's \$45.2 billion bid for Time Warner Cable is dead, consolidation among the companies that pipe in our TV, phone and Internet will carry on.

Combining the No. 1 and No. 2 U.S. cable companies would have put nearly 30 percent of TV and about 55 percent of broadband subscribers under one roof, along with NBCUniversal. That appeared to be too much concentration for regulators.

Bloomberg News and The New York Times both said Thursday that Comcast is planning to drop its bid, citing unidentified people with knowledge of the matter. Comcast and Time Warner Cable declined to comment on the reports.

But cable companies are likely to keep merging as online video options proliferate, the number of cable and satellite TV subscribers slips and costs rise for the shows, sports and movies piped to subscribers.

At the same time, there will be more competition for young customers seeking stand-alone Internet and mobile video offerings and cheaper TV channel packages.

Renovated rooftop restaurant provides rare bright spot in a wrecked and darkened Gaza

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — When nightfall descends upon Gaza, the glittering lights of the Level Up restaurant seem to be the only bright spot in this darkened city.

In a territory plagued by chronic power outages, poverty and shortages of construction materials, the restaurant defies all the rules: It's well lit, thanks to a humming generator. The tables are crowded and hard to come by, and it is one of the few places in Gaza to rebound and relax.

"People want to believe that they should live their lives," said Basil Eleiwa, the manager of the restaurant. "People seem to like this place."

The story of Level Up is in many ways the story of Gaza. It's located in a high-rise complex that symbolized the short-lived hopes for prosperity in the crowded seaside territory two decades ago. It has been impacted by the rule of the Hamas militant group, experienced the horrors of war, yet somehow manages to plod along in difficult circumstances.

The restaurant opened just days before last year's war with Israel broke out on July 8. At first, it suffered only minor damage. But about three weeks into the fighting, owner Mohammed Abu Mathkour says he received a phone call from the Israeli army.

Iraqi boy's dream of becoming dancer defied conservatism, threats against his stage debut

AMMAN, Jordan (AP) — As a boy in pre-war Baghdad, Adil Faraj dreamed of becoming a dancer, inspired by a Michael Jackson performance he watched on DVD.

For over a decade, he pursued his passion despite daunting challenges and harassment by strangers and police. He taught himself by moving to dance videos in his cramped family home — hiding from a conservative society scornful of the art form and from the chaos that engulfed Iraq after the U.S.-led invasion in 2003.

Last weekend, the sweat and tears paid off when the now 22-year-old performed on stage for the first time, to a packed house at the Amman Contemporary Dance Festival in the Jordanian capital.

After his solo — machine-like moves to the haunting Gary Jules' song "Mad World" mixed with break dancing — the audience erupted in applause, and Faraj raised his fists triumphantly before bowing.

"I felt tremendous joy," he said, his chiseled frame sweaty after the dance. "It is like a dream."

Rough ride? Police union lawyer: Officers didn't strap in arrestee who died of broken spine

BALTIMORE (AP) — No video captured what happened to Freddie Gray inside the police van where officers heaved him into a metal compartment after pinning him to a sidewalk. The cause of his fatal spine injury has not been revealed.

But a troubling detail emerged as hundreds of protesters converged on City Hall again Thursday: He was not only handcuffed and put in leg irons, but left without a seat belt during his trip to the station.

Unbelted detainees have been paralyzed and even killed by rough rides in police vans." It even has a name: "nickel rides," referring to cheap amusement park thrills.

Police brutality against prisoners being transported was addressed just six months ago in a plan released by Baltimore officials to reduce this misconduct. Department rules updated nine days before Gray's arrest clearly state that all detainees shall be strapped in by seat belts or "other authorized re-

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straining devices" for their own safety after being arrested.

Gray was not belted in, said attorney Michael Davey, who represents at least one of the officers under investigation.

Review: How to set up and use your new Apple Watch; comfort will take time

NEW YORK (AP) — The first batch of Apple Watches will arrive Friday.

If you haven't ordered yours yet, you'll have to wait a while. Apple's retail stores won't have them, nor will any other store in the U.S., with the company taking orders over the Internet only — for delivery as late as July for some models.

But if you were online to order at 3:01 a.m. ET on April 10, you're in store for a new way of interacting with your digital life. A better way? I'll need more time with the watch to say.

For now, I can offer some tips on using it:

Overcoming adversity: DeMarre Carroll emerges as emotional leader of top-seeded Atlanta Hawks

ATLANTA (AP) — When DeMarre Carroll is having one of those nights where the shots just won't fall, like Game 2 of the playoffs, he doesn't get down on himself.

He knows there's so many other ways he can help the top-seeded Atlanta Hawks, whether it's playing shutdown defense, banging for a rebound or diving to the floor to grab a loose ball.

Besides, Carroll knows a thing or two about adversity beyond the court. His brother died young. He's been shot. He has a rare liver disease. Not to mention, all those doubts about his future in the NBA as he bounced from one team to another.

"It made me stronger, man," Carroll said of the winding journey that brought him to where he is now. "I've been through so much, but I look at it as a positive. I look at me being a testimony for all the other individuals or kids or whoever in the world is going through something. You can go through obstacles but still succeed in life."

Carroll has become the emotional core of the Hawks, who surged to the top of the Eastern Conference this season and hold a 2-0 lead in their playoff series against Brooklyn.

Today in History **The Associated Press**

Today is Friday, April 24, the 114th day of 2015. There are 251 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 24, 1915, what's regarded as the start of the Armenian genocide began as the Ottoman Empire rounded up Armenian political and cultural leaders in Constantinople.

On this date:

In 1792, the national anthem of France, "La Marseillaise" (lah mahr-say-YEHZ'), was composed by Captain Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle.

In 1800, Congress approved a bill establishing the Library of Congress.

In 1898, Spain declared war on the United States. (The United States responded in kind the next day.)

In 1916, some 1,600 Irish nationalists launched the Easter Rising by seizing several key sites in Dub-

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lin. (The rising was put down by British forces almost a week later.)

In 1932, in the Free State of Prussia, the Nazi Party gained a plurality of seats in parliamentary elections.

In 1953, British statesman Winston Churchill was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II.

In 1962, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology achieved the first satellite relay of a television signal, using NASA's Echo 1 balloon satellite to bounce a video image from Camp Parks, California, to Westford, Massachusetts.

In 1970, the People's Republic of China launched its first satellite, which kept transmitting a song, "The East Is Red."

In 1980, the United States launched an unsuccessful attempt to free the American hostages in Iran, a mission that resulted in the deaths of eight U.S. servicemen.

In 1986, Wallis, Duchess of Windsor, for whom King Edward VIII had given up the British throne, died in Paris at age 89.

In 1990, the space shuttle Discovery blasted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, carrying the \$1.5 billion Hubble Space Telescope.

In 1995, the final bomb linked to the Unabomber exploded inside the Sacramento, California, offices of a lobbying group for the wood products industry, killing chief lobbyist Gilbert B. Murray. (Theodore Kaczynski was later sentenced to four lifetimes in prison for a series of bombings that killed three men and injured 29 others.)

Ten years ago: Pope Benedict XVI formally began his stewardship of the Roman Catholic Church; the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said in his installation homily that as pontiff he would listen to the will of God in governing the world's 1.1 billion Catholics. South Korean scientists succeeded in cloning a dog as an Afghan hound puppy named "Snuppy" was born. Former Israeli president Ezer Weizman died in Caesarea, Israel, at age 80.

Five years ago: The policy-setting panel of the International Monetary Fund, with a nervous eye on Greece, pledged during a meeting in Washington to address the risks posed to the global recovery from high government debt. A dozen people were killed by a tornado system that bumped down in Louisiana before plowing into Mississippi and then Alabama. Etiquette expert Elizabeth Post (granddaughter-in-law of Emily Post) died in Naples, Florida, at 89.

One year ago: An Afghan government security guard opened fire on foreign doctors at a Kabul hospital, killing three Americans in the latest of a deadly string of attacks on Western civilians in the capital. The tiny Pacific nation of the Marshall Islands took on the United States and the world's eight other nuclear-armed nations with an unprecedented lawsuit demanding they meet their obligations toward disarmament and accusing them of "flagrant violations" of international law.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director-producer Richard Donner is 85. Actress Shirley MacLaine is 81. Author Sue Grafton is 75. Actor-singer Michael Parks is 75. Actress-singer-director Barbra Streisand is 73. Former Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley is 73. Country singer Richard Sterban (The Oak Ridge Boys) is 72. Rock musician Doug Clifford (Creedence Clearwater Revival) is 70. Rock singer-musician Rob Hyman is 65. The Taoiseach (prime minister) of Ireland, Enda Kenny, is 64. Actor-playwright Eric Bogosian is 62. Rock singer-musician Jack Blades (Night Ranger) is 61. Actor Michael O'Keefe is 60. Rock musician David J (Bauhaus) is 58. Actor Glenn Morshower is 56. Rock musician Billy Gould is 52. Actor-comedian Cedric the Entertainer is 51. Actor Djimon Hounsou (JEYE'-mihn OHN'-soo) is 51. Rock musician Patty Schemel is 48. Rock musician Aaron Comess (Spin Doctors) is 47. Actress Melinda Clarke is 46. Actor Rory McCann (TV: "Game of Thrones") is 46. Latin pop singer Alejandro Fernandez is 44. Country-rock musician Brad Morgan (Drive-By Truckers) is 44. Rock musician Brian Marshall (Creed;

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Alter Bridge) is 42. Actor Derek Luke is 41. Actor Eric Balfour is 38. Actress Rebecca Mader is 38. Country singer Rebecca Lynn Howard is 36. Country singer Danny Gokey is 35. Actor Austin Nichols is 35. Actress Sasha Barrese is 34. Contemporary Christian musician Jasen Rauch (Red) is 34. Singer Kelly Clarkson is 33. Rock singer-musician Tyson Ritter (The All-American Rejects) is 31. Actor Doc Shaw is 23. Golfer Lydia Ko is 18.

Thought for Today: "The door to the past is a strange door. It swings open and things pass through it, but they pass in one direction only. No man can return across that threshold, though he can look down still and see the green light waver in the water weeds." - Loren Eiseley, American anthropologist (1907-1977).