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The Groton Area School District is seeking applicants for a full-time custodian. Daytime shift during summer months, afternoon/evening shift during school year. Starting wage \$11.00/hour. Benefits include paid sick leave, vacation, holidays, health insurance, matching retirement. Interested parties should contact Joe Schwan at 605-397-2351. More information available at www.grotonarea.com.

Midwest Masonry & concrete Pumping

Greg Heilman, owner
405 E 1st Ave., Groton
Greg: 253/929-9137
Mike: 605/492-7041
midwestmasonry1@yahoo.com



Tuesday, May 26

Birthdays: Heather McDonald • Stephanie Vedvei • Beth Gustafson • Drake Peterson

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, coleslaw, frosted brownie, whole wheat bread.

9:00 a.m. to 2 p.m.: St. John's Lutheran Vacation Bible School

Wednesday, May 27

Birthdays: Dean Kramer • Susan Knudsen • Shirley Meister

Senior Menu: Tater tot hot dish, green beans, grape juice, sour cream apple pie square, whole wheat bread.

9:00 a.m. to 2 p.m.: St. John's Lutheran Vacation Bible School

Thursday, May 28

Birthdays: Kim Zerr • Darliss Larson • Lora McMahon • Marty Sippel • Jim Stearns • Joyce Grenz • Steven Jones • Braeden Flihs

Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, mashed potatoes, winter mix vegetables, buttermilk biscuits, banana pudding with bananas.

9:00 a.m. to 2 p.m.: St. John's Lutheran Vacation Bible School

11:30 a.m.: James Valley Telecommunications Annual Meeting lunch and registration with meeting at 12:30 p.m. at GHS Gym/Arena.

The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **Open**

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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SDSU Scholarship recipients:

Back - Matthew Knecht, Gabriel Dohman, Logan Lane

Front - Kiana Kokales, Katherine Groeblichhoff, Maryn Howard, Kasey Waage



College Scholarship recipients:

Back - Jocelyn Peterson (NSU), Danielle Schinkel (MTI), Kennedy Clark (USF)

Front - Jacob Milbrandt (SDSMT), Jackson Doeden (Valley City), Dylan Vogel (SW MN State)

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USD Scholarship recipients

Back - Taylor Gustafson, Alyssa Sippel, Rachel Blackmun, Haley Unzen

Front - Luke Smith, Maddison Colestock, Natalia Dohman, Lucas Sternhagen



6th Grade Students of the Month 2014-2015:

Back - Samantha Pappas, Tanae Lipp, Trey Gengerke, Sage Mortenson

Front - Isaac Smith, Erin Unzen, Tessa Erdmann, Alexis Hanten

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7th Grade Students of the Month 2014-2015:

Back - KaSandra Pappas, Ashley Flihs, Kaycie Hawkins, Kayla Jensen

Front - Nicole Marzahn, Kya Jandel, Rylee Ronsenau, Payton Colestock



8th Grade Students of the Month 2014-2015:

Back - Ashley Garduno, Tylan Glover, Paige Snyder, AnneMarie Smith

Front - Kaitlyn Anderson, Cassandra Townsend, Emily Thompson, Alexis Simon

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Memorial Day 2015



The Groton American Legion Post #39 hosted its Memorial Day Program with the main event taking place at the Legion Post home due to the weather. The Color Guard was at the cemetery doing their part of the ceremony. The smaller photos from left to right are:

Bob Wegner had the message and he also presented Bob Wehde with a certificate for his 60 years of service to the American Legion.

Tami Zimney and Jake McKiver took turns reading the roll call.

After the ceremony, the Legion Auxiliary had a dinner in Legion reception room.

(Thanks to Deb Olson for the photos)

Today in Weather History

1771 - A famous Virginia flood occurred as heavy rains in the mountains brought all rivers in the state to record high levels. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1917 - A tornado touched down near Louisiana MO about noon and remained on the ground for a distance of 293 miles, finally lifting seven hours and twenty minutes later in eastern Jennings County, IN. The twister cut a swath of destruction two and a half miles wide through Mattoon, IL. There were 101 persons killed in the tornado, including 53 at Mattoon, and 38 at Charleston IL. Damage from the storm totalled 2.5 million dollars. (David Ludlum)

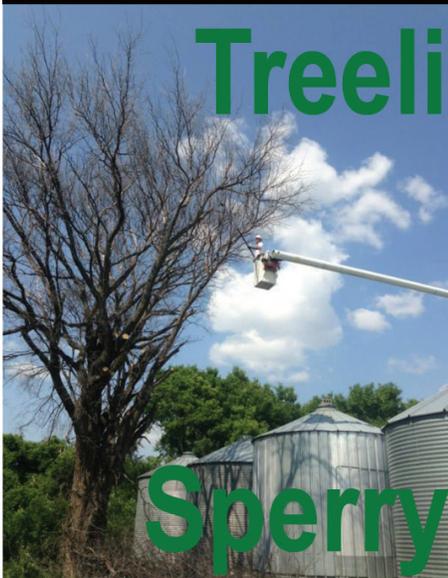
1984 - Thunderstorms during the late evening and early morning hours produced 6 to 13 inches of rain at Tulsa OK in six hours (8.63 inches at the airport). Flooding claimed fourteen lives and caused 90 million dollars property damage. 4600 cars, 743 houses, and 387 apartments were destroyed or severely damage in the flood. (Storm Data) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in southwest Iowa spawned five tornadoes and produced up to ten inches of rain. Seven inches of rain at Red Oak forced evacuation of nearly 100 persons from the town. Record flooding took place in southwest Iowa the last twelve days of May as up to 17 inches of rain drenched the area. Total damage to crops and property was estimated at 16 million dollars. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - There was "frost on the roses" in the Upper Ohio Valley and the Central Appalachian Mountain Region. Thirteen cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Youngstown OH with a reading of 30 degrees. Evening thunderstorms in North Dakota produced wind gusts to 75 mph at Jamestown. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms in produced large hail in eastern Oklahoma during the pre-dawn hours, and again during the evening and night. Hail two inches in diameter was reported near Prague, and thunderstorm winds gusted to 70 mph near Kenefic. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from eastern Colorado to western Arkansas and northeastern Texas. Severe thunderstorms spawned three tornadoes, and there were eighty-eight reports of large hail or damaging winnds. Evening thunderstorms over central Oklahoma spawned strong tornadoes east of Hinton and east of Binger, produced hail three inches in diameter at Minco, and produced wind gusts to 85 mph at Blanchard. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)



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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						
20%	20%		60%	40%	40%	20%
Slight Chc Thunderstorms	Slight Chc Thunderstorms	Mostly Sunny	Thunderstorms Likely	Chance Thunderstorms	Chance Thunderstorms	Slight Chc Thunderstorms
High: 77 °F	Low: 51 °F	High: 82 °F	Low: 58 °F	High: 79 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 64 °F



Warmer Temps Return Today

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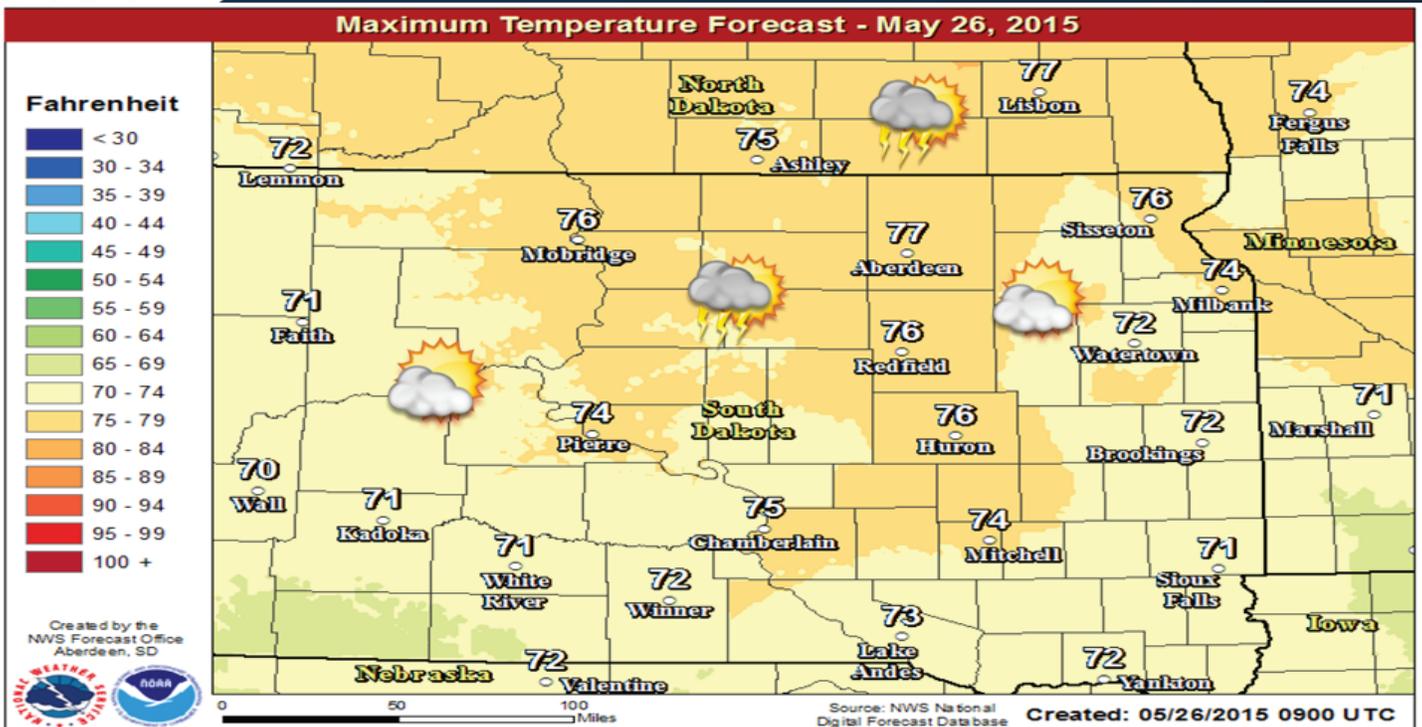
weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen



Published on: 05/26/2015 at 5:14AM

Increasing sunshine and warmer temperatures will return to the region today as highs rise into the 70s. Along with the daytime heating will come a chance for isolated thundershowers, mainly across north central into northeast South Dakota. Warm temperatures will continue into Wednesday with some areas rising into the lower 80s.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 68.5 at 4:36 PM

Low: 53.1 at 11:56 PM

High Gust: 26 at 2:00 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 94° in 1900

Record Low: 30° in 1992

Average High: 71°F

Average Low: 48°F

Average Precip in May: 2.62

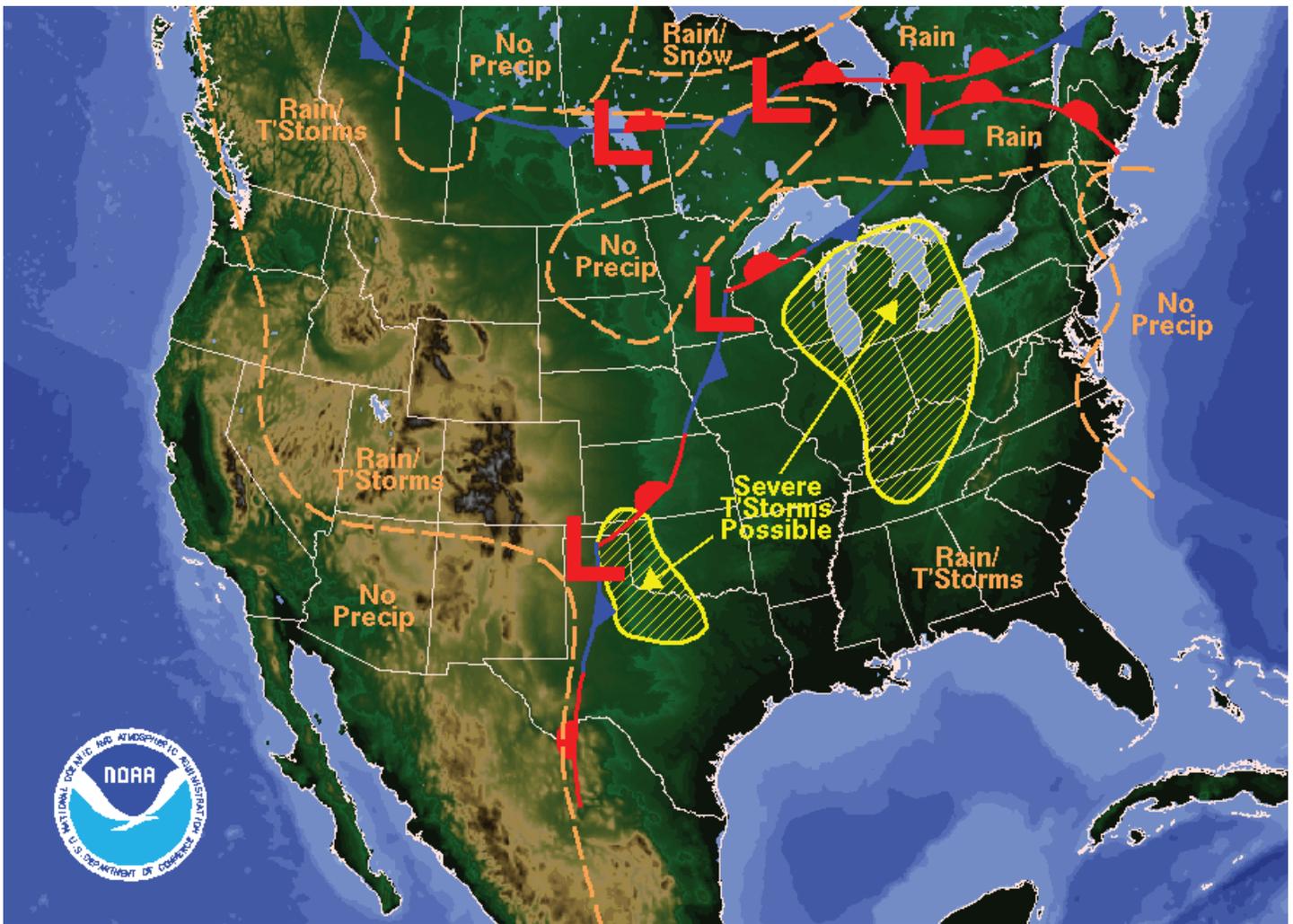
Precip to date in May: 4.04

Average Precip to date: 6.65

Precip Year to Date: 5.68

Sunset Tonight: 9:09 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:51 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Tue, May 26, 2015, issued 4:01 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



WHERE AM I GOING?

A well-respected theologian was leaving London for a lecture series in another city. As he sat looking out the window, the conductor asked for his ticket.

Searching frantically through his pockets, he discovered that he had lost it.

Wanting to be helpful, the conductor said, "It's all right. Don't worry."

"No, it's not all right," said the passenger. "I don't know where I'm going."

Many have the same problem. They start on life's journey not knowing where they are going or where or when it will end. Someone once said, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there."

Not David. He knew where to find directions. In Psalm 25 he said, "Show me the path I should walk, O Lord, point out the right road for me to follow."

With all of his knowledge and wisdom, success and power, David still looked to the Lord for direction. He constantly looked to God for guidance no matter where he was or what he was doing. How wise!

If it was important for David to do this, how much more so for us. He realized that he needed God's guidance. He discovered it by meditating on His Word, going to Him in prayer and listening for His voice. Instead of demanding answers, he waited for directions.

Prayer: We pray, Father, that we will look to You to lead us and guide us in paths of righteousness. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 25:1-5 Show me Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths.

Sioux Falls bail bondsman indicted on felony, misdemeanor

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls bail bondsman has been indicted for allegedly accepting illegal tips and allowing unlicensed bounty hunters to make an arrest.

The Argus Leader newspaper reports (<http://argusne.ws/1FLQ2bm>) that a grand jury has indicted 54-year-old Steven Krier of Dakota Bail Bonds on a felony charge of aiding and abetting an unlicensed and unqualified person to act as a bail bondsman, and a misdemeanor count of accepting a tip as a bail bondsman.

State law bars bail bond agents from accepting tips for their services.

Krier did not immediately respond to an Associated Press request for comment.

Claremont man dies after SUV rolls over in Marshall County

AMHERST, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a 21-year-old man from Claremont has died after being ejected from his vehicle when it rolled over in Marshall County.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol says Darren Stahl died at the scene Sunday night outside Amherst. According to the Highway Patrol, Stahl lost control of the SUV he was driving when the road changed from gravel to asphalt, and the vehicle went into a ditch.

A passenger identified as 21-year-old Thomas Stahl suffered minor injuries. Authorities say neither man was wearing a seatbelt.

Sioux Falls bail bondsman indicted on felony, misdemeanor

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Krier did not immediately respond to an Associated Press request for comment.

Obama at Arlington: Never stop paying tribute to the fallen

DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Va. (AP) — President Barack Obama on Monday saluted Americans who died in battle, saying the country must “never stop trying to fully repay them” for their sacrifices. He noted it was the first Memorial Day in 14 years without U.S. forces engaged in a major ground war.

Speaking under sunny skies to some 5,000 people in an amphitheater on the hallowed grounds of Arlington National Cemetery, Obama said the graveyard is “more than a final resting place of heroes.”

“It is a reflection of America itself,” he said, citing racial and religious diversity in the backgrounds of the men and woman who paid the ultimate sacrifice to preserve “the ideals that bind us as one nation.”

His appearance is an annual rite for presidents at the cemetery nestled among verdant hills overlooking the Potomac River.

In his remarks at Arlington National Cemetery, Obama said most of the remaining troops should be

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removed from Afghanistan by the end of 2016.

He recognized the more than 2,200 patriots who sacrificed themselves in Afghanistan, including the final two killed before the U.S. combat mission ended late last year. He also recognized the first American killed during the "new mission" to train Afghan forces, an Army medic who died in April.

Earlier, troops stationed in that war-wracked country observed a moment of silence in honor of fallen comrades there.

Before making his remarks, Obama laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns. He bowed his head briefly and listened with others to the playing of "Taps."

Obama said most Americans don't understand the sacrifice made by the 1 percent of the population that serves in the all-volunteer Armed Forces. But when he meets with "Gold Star" families that have lost loved ones through military service, Obama said he hears "their pride through their tears."

"I see that their hearts are still broken, and yet still full of love," he said. "They do not ask for awards or honors. They do not ask for special treatment. They are unfailingly humble. In the face of unspeakable loss, they represent the best of who we are."

Obama said the markers at Arlington signify the blessings many Americans enjoy.

"It's a debt we can never fully repay," he said, "but it is a debt we will never stop trying to fully repay."

Introducing Obama, Defense Secretary Ash Carter said, "We, your fellow Americans, lack the words to describe what you feel today because try as we may, and try as we do, we can never fully know. But we do know what your sacrifice means to us."

Across the nation, Americans observed Memorial Day with parades, picnics and tributes that began earlier in the weekend.

—The roar of motorcycle engines throughout the nation's capital on Sunday presaged Monday's solemn event at Arlington, as thousands of bikers saluted veterans with Rolling Thunder's "Ride for Freedom." A concert of patriotic music followed on Sunday evening. Obama held a private breakfast on Monday at the White House with representatives of veteran and military family service organizations and the national Memorial Day parade marched on Constitution Avenue.

— North Dakota marked the 25th anniversary of the groundbreaking for the state's Veterans Cemetery south of Mandan. Gov. Jack Dalrymple directed all state agencies to fly the U.S. and state flags at half-staff.

— In South Dakota, Gov. Dennis Daugaard asked residents to observe the president's request that Americans unite in prayer at 11 a.m. local time and that a moment of silence be observed at 3 p.m. for the National Moment of Remembrance.

— In Kentucky horse country, dozens of people gathered at the cemetery of the Old Friends farm to honor 11 thoroughbreds who died in the past year after being retired there. Some were racetrack winners and descendants of racing royalty, while others were also-rans or never raced at all.

— In Michigan, an ex-Navy SEAL who founded a national organization to help military and emergency service workers who have survived burns served as grand marshal of Dearborn's Memorial Day parade as the Detroit suburb joined communities around the state in marking the holiday.

— The Library of Congress has been working to build an oral history collection to capture veterans' memories of war, and the project is nearing a milestone of 100,000 records.

— In a race in Boulder, Colorado, U.S. Air Force pilot Ben Payne, a runner from Colorado Springs, ran with the names of several family members and friends who lost their lives while serving their country on a bib pinned to his back.

— With the assistance of former servicemen and -women, a Michigan State University journalism class researched and wrote a new book, "100 Questions and Answers About Veterans." The book is aimed at

clearing up myths and misunderstandings about the military held by some civilians.

— During a baseball game at Wrigley Field between the Washington Nationals and Chicago Cubs, a moment of silence was observed to honor the sacrifices of veterans.

— One holiday event took an unexpected turn when a waterspout uprooted an inflatable bounce house with three children inside it on a South Florida beach. Police said the youngsters were ejected before it flew over palm trees and across four lanes of traffic before landing in a parking lot. They said the children were injured, but alert and conscious when they were taken to a hospital.

Study of walleye in Lake Oahe beginning to yield results

BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A four-year study of walleye in Lake Oahe is only halfway done but already is yielding results that should prove valuable to both wildlife officials and anglers.

Officials are gaining new information about how fish move, how long they live and what proportion of them are ending up on anglers' hooks. The goal is to use that information to further improve the quality of the popular Dakotas fishery.

"Are anglers using the fishery wisely, without detriment, or are there maybe some additional regulations we might put in place to make the fishery better?" said Paul Bailey, a district fisheries supervisor with North Dakota's Game and Fish Department. "This will give us some pretty good scientific information to make those determinations."

Paid for through a tax on fishing and boating gear, the \$500,000 study is the first time agencies in the two states have collaborated to look at the Missouri River reservoir that stretches from northern South Dakota into southern North Dakota. Biologists with the state wildlife agencies are putting metal tags in the jaws of 40,000 walleye over four years and asking anglers to report the tag number on any of the fish they catch. Some of the fish have special reward tags that anglers can turn in for \$100, to encourage participation.

Anglers have reported catching about one-fifth of the 17,000 walleyes that were tagged in the first two years of the study.

The first two years have revealed some interesting fish movement patterns, according to Bailey. For example, fish tagged in North Dakota moved greater distances than those tagged in South Dakota. That could be due to the fact that the lake's northern reaches have less steep shorelines, and drops in water levels might displace fish more easily, he said.

Fish in the northern reaches also might have to move greater distances to find spawning habitat and food, according to Mark Fincel, senior biologist with South Dakota's Game, Fish and Parks Department.

The study also is finding that walleye in the spring follow warming water, rather than conduct an organized migration.

"Fish have an equal chance of moving up or downstream from where they're tagged," based on water temperatures, Bailey said.

"The most pleasant thing we're seeing this year is that walleye conditions have improved quite a bit," he said. "Walleye put on some growth last year for the first time, really, since the flood of 2011. The forage has improved, and walleye condition has improved."

Once researchers have another year's worth of data in hand, they can start running computer models of the potential effects of various regulations and natural events such as declining prey fish, according to Fincel.

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"We'll really be getting into fine-tuning management for specific conditions on Oahe," he said. Information gleaned from the study eventually will be made public and could benefit anglers, as would an overall improved fishery, Bailey said.

Officer injured during traffic stop to return to duty soon

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Wagner police officer knocked unconscious during a traffic stop on Friday says he hopes to return to duty within a week.

Officer Brian McGuire on Monday was being released from the Sioux Falls hospital where he was treated for bleeding on the brain. He issued a statement thanking well-wishers and fellow law officers.

Fifty-five-year-old Richard Golus, of Lake Andes, allegedly punched McGuire after being stopped for running a red light. He remained in custody Monday. It wasn't clear if he had an attorney.

Oklahoma man dies in crash in national park in South Dakota

WALL, S.D. (AP) — An Oklahoma man was killed in a one-vehicle crash in a national park in South Dakota over the weekend.

The Highway Patrol says the pickup truck driven by the 51-year-old man from Sallisaw, Oklahoma, went off state Highway 240 in Badlands National Park and down a steep embankment, rolling twice.

The driver was thrown from the pickup and died at the scene late Saturday afternoon. The patrol did not immediately identify him.

Suspect in custody in shooting death of man in Rapid City

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City police have a suspect in custody in the early morning shooting death of a man.

Authorities say the 20-year-old male suspect was arrested on drug and alcohol charges at the scene when officers responded to a report of an assault about 12:10 a.m. Monday and found the victim's body. The suspect is from Rapid City.

A 20-year-old Sioux Falls woman who returned to the scene while police were there also was arrested on drug and alcohol charges.

Police Capt. James Johns says all of the people knew one another, and the death was not a random act of violence.

Heavy rains lead to flash flooding in western South Dakota

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Heavy weekend rains have led to some flash flooding in western South Dakota.

The flooding prompted officials to close a few roads in Rapid City, and water submerged parts of a bike path.

Emergency officials are cautioning people to stay away from the edges of swollen rivers and creeks and to not walk or drive across moving water.

The National Weather Service has issued flood watches and warnings for the region.

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10 Things to Know for Tuesday

The Associated Press

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

1. FLOODS INUNDATE TEXAS, TWISTER HITS US-MEXICO BORDER

Torrential rains in the Lone Star state spawn floods that leave 12 people missing, while at least 13 die in the tornado's wake.

2. WHO SEEKS TO REASSURE IRAQI LEADERS OF US SUPPORT

Vice President Biden calls Iraq Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi with encouragement in the fight against Islamic State militants, a day after the US defense secretary criticized Iraqi forces following the loss of Ramadi.

3. 'IN THE FACE OF UNSPEAKABLE LOSS, THEY REPRESENT THE BEST OF WHO WE ARE'

During Memorial Day observances, that's how President Obama describes "Gold Star" families who have lost loved ones who fought in the nation's conflicts.

4. MEXICO OFFICIALS STAND BY ACCOUNT OF DEADLY SHOOTOUT

The head of the country's police force dismisses questions raised by the lopsided death toll in the gunfight, which killed 42 suspected criminals and one federal officer.

5. AP SOURCE: CLEVELAND REACHES DEAL WITH JUSTICE ON POLICING

Although details of the settlement are unclear, it comes days after a white police officer was acquitted of manslaughter for taking part in a 137-shot police barrage that killed two black, unarmed suspects.

6. WHERE CALIFORNIA LOOKS FOR DROUGHT ADVICE

The worst drought on record has the state looking for solutions in Australia, the world's driest inhabited continent.

7. WHICH IS LATEST STATE TO TEST 'STAND YOUR GROUND' LAWS

In Nevada, a man is on trial on murder charges after opening fire on two trespassers at a vacant rental unit he owns.

8. CHARTER NEARS DEAL FOR TIME WARNER CABLE

If it goes through, the purchase would be for about \$55 billion, according to two people familiar with the negotiations.

9. FLORIDA WATERSPOUT UPROOTS BOUNCE HOUSE

Three children are injured when the inflatable play house is sent flying by a waterspout.

10. UP-AND-COMER OUSTS VENUS FROM FRENCH OPEN

Sloane Stephens, 22, knocks 34-year-old Williams out in a first-round match.

AP News in Brief

Malaysian police find a corpse as forensics teams dig up graves at abandoned traffickers' camp

BUKIT WANG BURMA, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysian forensics teams exhumed a body from a shallow grave Tuesday at an abandoned camp used by human traffickers, the first of what police predicted would be more grim findings as they combed through a cluster of jungle camps on the border with Thailand.

Authorities say there are 139 suspected graves in the mountainous jungle where northern Malaysia meets southern Thailand, a remote area that trafficking syndicates used as a transit point to hold migrants for ransom. Most were believed to be members of Myanmar's persecuted Rohingya Muslim

minority and impoverished migrants from Bangladesh.

"Forensics teams have found one human body so far," said Mohammad Bahar Alias, a senior police official from northern Perlis state. Digging continued at other graves, which police said were marked by sticks or a trio of three stones. "There are graves all over this area."

On Tuesday, Malaysian police took journalists to one of 28 abandoned camps found after a regional crackdown was launched on human trafficking earlier this month.

The camp, reached after a steep 2-hour hike up a jungle path, appeared to have been abandoned a while ago, police said. What remained was a jungle prison that included at least two large wooden pens wrapped with barbed wire.

Recovery teams look for 12 missing after weekend flooding in Texas sweeps away vacation home

WIMBERLEY, Texas (AP) — Recovery teams are set to resume looking for the 12 members of two families who authorities say are missing after a rain-swollen river in Central Texas carried a vacation home off its foundation, slamming it into a bridge downstream.

Trey Hatt, a spokesman for the Hays County Emergency Operations Center, said Monday night that the "search component" of the mission was over, meaning no more survivors were expected to be found in the flood debris along the Blanco River. But recovery efforts were to resume Tuesday morning, following a long holiday weekend of severe weather that led to four confirmed fatalities across the state.

Authorities were also searching for victims and assessing damage just across the Texas-Mexico border in Ciudad Acuna, where a tornado Monday killed 13 people and left at least five unaccounted for.

In the U.S., a line of storms that stretched from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes dumped record rainfall on parts of the Plains and Midwest, spawning tornadoes and causing major flooding that in Texas destroyed or damaged more than 1,000 homes and forced at least 2,000 residents to leave their homes.

"You cannot candy coat it. It's absolutely massive," Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said after touring the destruction.

The Latest on severe weather: Harris County residents warned not to leave home in the morning

4:30 a.m. CDT

Harris County Flood control has advised residents waking up for work and school Tuesday morning to not leave their homes.

KHOU-TV reports The National Weather Service has issued an emergency flash flood Warning for southwest Harris County and northeast Fort Bend County.

Fans at the Toyota Center for the Houston Rockets' playoff game Monday night were advised not to leave because of weather conditions. About 200 people remained at the arena as of 3:50 a.m.

Iraq announces launch of operation to retake western Anbar province from Islamic State

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq on Tuesday announced the launch of a military operation to drive the Islamic State group out of the western Anbar province, where the extremists captured the provincial capital,

Ramadi, earlier this month.

Iraqi state TV declared the start of the operation, in which troops will be backed by Shiite and Sunni paramilitary forces, but did not provide further details.

The Islamic State group seized large parts of Anbar starting in early 2014 and captured Ramadi earlier this month. The fall of the city marked a major defeat for Iraqi forces, which had been making steady progress against the extremists over the past year with the help of U.S.-led airstrikes.

Security forces and Sunni militiamen who had been battling the extremists in Ramadi for months collapsed as IS fighters overran the city. The militants gained not only new territory 70 miles (115 kilometers) west of Baghdad, but also large stocks of weapons abandoned by the government forces as they fled.

The capture of Ramadi was a major blow to the U.S.-backed strategy against the Islamic State group. Defense Secretary Ash Carter said Sunday that Iraqi forces had "vastly outnumbered" the IS militants in Ramadi but "showed no will to fight."

The Latest on IS: Iraqi Shiite militia spokesman says Anbar offensive won't take long

Noon (0900 GMT)

A spokesman for Iraq's Shiite militias says an operation launched to retake the western Anbar province from the Islamic State group will "not last for a long time" and that Iraqi forces have surrounded the provincial capital, Ramadi, from three sides.

Ahmed al-Assadi, who is also a member of parliament, told reporters Tuesday that new weapons are being used in the battle "that will surprise the enemy."

Earlier on Tuesday, Iraqi state TV announced a major operation to retake Anbar, parts of which have been held by the Islamic State since early 2014. It did not provide further details.

The government has called on Shiite militias to help the army retake the Sunni province, raising concerns the offensive could heighten sectarian tensions.

Honeymoon in the 'New York' of the caliphate points to Islamic State's welfare for fighters

BEIRUT (AP) — The honeymoon was a brief moment for love, away from the front lines of Syria's war. In the capital of the Islamic State group's self-proclaimed "caliphate," Syrian fighter Abu Bilal al-Homsi was united with his Tunisian bride for the first time after months chatting online. They married, then passed the days dining on grilled meats in Raqqa's restaurants, strolling along the Euphrates River and eating ice cream.

It was all made possible by the marriage bonus he received from the Islamic State group: \$1,500 for him and his wife to get started on a new home, a family — and a honeymoon.

"It has everything one would want for a wedding," al-Homsi said of Raqqa — a riverside provincial capital that in the 18 months since IS took control has seen militants beheading opponents and stoning alleged adulteresses in public. Gunmen at checkpoints scrutinize passers-by for signs of anything they see as a violation of Shariah, or Islamic law, as slight as a hint of hair gel. In the homes of some of the IS commanders in the city are women and girls from the Yazidi religious sect, abducted in Iraq and now kept as sex slaves.

The Islamic State group is notorious for the atrocities it committed as it overran much of Syria and

neighboring Iraq. But to its supporters, it is engaged in an ambitious project: building a new nation ruled by what radicals see as "God's law," made up of Muslims from around the world whose old nationalities have been erased and who have been united in the "caliphate."

To do that, the group has set up a generous welfare system to help settle and create lives for the thousands of jihadis — men and women — who have flocked to IS territory from the Arab world, Europe, Central Asia and the United States.

A growing type of human trafficking: European women lured to marry for their EU identity cards

LONDON (AP) — Klara Balogova was 18, penniless and heavily pregnant when she rode thousands of miles from Slovakia to England to marry a man she had never met.

She knew he did not want her, or her child. He wanted her European identity card. The marriage was arranged so the 23-year-old Pakistani groom could gain the right to live and work in Europe.

Balogova was promised a clean place to stay in Britain and maybe even some money. But she says within days of arrival, she was moved from Manchester to Glasgow in Scotland, where she was kept in an apartment with her future husband. When he wasn't around, his younger brother would stand over her, and her identity documents were taken away.

"He didn't let me out at any time. He told me it was not possible to go out there," said Balogova, a shy, petite Gypsy woman who spoke reluctantly, never making any eye contact when she was interviewed. "Once a week we went out together. I was never allowed to go alone."

Each year, dozens of women like Balogova from the poorer corners of eastern Europe are lured to the West for sham marriages.

Vermont's "democratic socialist," Bernie Sanders, to kick off 2016 bid from Clinton's left

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP) — For a vocal group of liberals who aren't satisfied with Hillary Rodham Clinton, Vermont's self-described "democratic socialist" senator isn't the candidate they want. But Bernie Sanders is the candidate they're about to get.

Already in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination, Sanders aims to jumpstart his campaign on Tuesday with a kickoff event — complete with free Ben & Jerry's ice cream — in Burlington, the place where he won his first election by beating a longtime incumbent Democrat by 10 votes to become mayor.

Sanders is trying to ignite a grassroots fire among left-leaning Democrats wary of Clinton — a group that pined for months for Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren to get in to race. Some still do.

But while Warren remains committed to the Senate, repeatedly saying she won't run for the White House, Sanders is laying out an agenda in step with the party's progressive wing and Warren's platform — reining in Wall Street banks, tackling college debt and creating a government-financed infrastructure jobs program.

"Hillary Clinton is a candidate. I am a candidate," Sanders said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I suspect there will be other candidates. The people in this country will make their choice."

Cuba tourism boom: US visits up by more than a third since relations began to thaw

HAVANA (AP) — The thaw in relations between the U.S. and Cuba has led to a stunning 36 percent increase in visits by Americans to the island, including thousands who are flying into Cuba from third countries like Mexico in order to sidestep U.S. restrictions on tourism.

The dramatic rise was seen in the number of Americans with no family ties to Cuba who visited between Jan. 1 and May 9 of this year compared to the same period in 2014, according to statistics provided to The Associated Press by a University of Havana professor.

In addition to the boom in American visitors, Cuba has seen a 14 percent jump in arrivals from around the world between January and early May compared to the same period last year.

Afghan forces in northern city struggle to push back Taliban, allied militants

KUNDUZ, Afghanistan (AP) — Taliban insurgents, their ranks swelled by foreign fighters pushed across the border from Pakistan, nearly surrounded this northern Afghan city last month with an offensive that stunned local authorities and raised concerns over their ability to defend the country without U.S. and foreign combat troops.

Under pressure from a yearlong military offensive in neighboring Pakistan, the Taliban and allied militants -- some waving the black flags of the Islamic State group -- appear to be trying to carve out a new safe haven in northern Afghanistan that could give them access to Central Asia and China, Afghan officials say.

As Afghanistan's U.S.-trained and equipped forces have struggled to fend off the insurgents -- who at one point came within 3 kilometers (less than 2 miles) of Kunduz -- authorities have increasingly turned to local militias and former warlords, a further indictment of the costly, decade-long U.S. effort to build an effective Afghan military.

Provincial Gov. Mohammad Omer Safi said 3,000 troops are now battling a well-armed insurgent force of some 2,000 fighters who crashed against the city's gates late last month at the start of the spring fighting season. He said logistical problems that left troops without food, fuel or ammunition for days on end have been resolved, but that the Taliban have proven tough to dislodge.

"We have surrounded the enemy everywhere and we will not allow them to advance any further," he told The Associated Press. "Maybe with the passage of time they will be weakened, run out of ammunition and find themselves moved back. This is not a one day or two days, or one month or two months fight."

Today in History **The Associated Press**

Today is Tuesday, May 26, the 146th day of 2015. There are 219 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 26, 1940, Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of some 338,000 Allied troops from Dunkirk, France, began during World War II.

On this date:

In 1521, Martin Luther was banned by the Edict of Worms (vohrms) because of his religious beliefs and writings.

In 1865, Confederate forces west of the Mississippi surrendered in New Orleans.

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In 1868, the impeachment trial of President Andrew Johnson ended with his acquittal on the remaining charges.

In 1913, Actors' Equity Association was organized by a group of actors at the Pabst Grand Circle Hotel in New York.

In 1938, the House Un-American Activities Committee was established by Congress.

In 1942, the U.S. War Department formally established the Armed Forces Radio Service (AFRS). The Tule (TOO'-lee) Lake Segregation Center for Japanese-American wartime internees opened in northern California.

In 1954, explosions rocked the aircraft carrier USS Bennington off Rhode Island, killing 103 sailors. (The initial blast was blamed on leaking catapult fluid ignited by the flames of a jet.)

In 1960, U.N. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge accused the Soviets of hiding a microphone inside a wood carving of the Great Seal of the United States that had been presented to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

In 1969, the Apollo 10 astronauts returned to Earth after a successful eight-day dress rehearsal for the first manned moon landing.

In 1972, President Richard M. Nixon and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in Moscow. (The U.S. withdrew from the treaty in 2002.)

In 1981, 14 people were killed when a Marine jet crashed onto the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz off Florida.

In 1994, Michael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley were married in the Dominican Republic. (The marriage, however, ended in 1996.)

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush received Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas at the White House; Bush called Abbas a courageous democratic reformer and bolstered his standing at home with \$50 million in assistance. Investigators confirmed five cases in which military personnel mishandled the Qurans of Muslim prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, but said they had found no "credible evidence" that a holy book was flushed in a toilet. Actor Eddie Albert died in Los Angeles at age 99. Internationally acclaimed concert pianist Ruth Laredo, 67, died in New York.

Five years ago: BP launched its latest bid to plug the gushing well in the Gulf of Mexico by force-feeding it heavy drilling mud, a maneuver known as a "top kill" which proved unsuccessful. TV personality Art Linkletter died in Los Angeles at age 97. Lee DeWyze was crowned the winner of "American Idol" over Crystal Bowersox.

One year ago: Pope Francis honored Jews killed in the Holocaust and in terrorist attacks during a visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem as he wrapped up his Mideast pilgrimage. Egypt began holding a three-day presidential election (former military chief Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi emerged the landslide winner).

Today's Birthdays: Actor Alec McCowen is 90. Sportscaster Brent Musberger is 76. Rock musician Garry Peterson (Guess Who) is 70. Singer Stevie Nicks is 67. Actress Pam Grier is 66. Actor Philip Michael Thomas is 66. Country singer Hank Williams Jr. is 66. Actress Margaret Colin is 58. Country singer-songwriter Dave Robbins is 56. Actor Doug Hutchison is 55. Actress Genie Francis is 53. Comedian Bobcat Goldthwait is 53. Singer-actor Lenny Kravitz is 51. Actress Helena Bonham Carter is 49. Distance runner Zola Budd is 49. Rock musician Phillip Rhodes is 47. Actor Joseph Fiennes (FYNZ) is 45. Singer Joey Kibble (Take 6) is 44. Actor-producer-writer Matt Stone is 44. Contemporary Christian musician Nathan Cochran is 37. Actress Elisabeth Harnois is 36. Actor Hrach Titizian is 36.

Thought for Today: "Courage is being scared to death - and saddling up anyway." - John Wayne, American actor (born this date in 1907, died 1979).