

Groton Daily Independent

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Baby Shower for Eva Roy Olson, daughter of Nick and Stephanie Olson, will be held Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2015, at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Eva was born October 7, 2015. They are registered at Target.

Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

The cardboard/paper
recycling trailer at the school is **Open**

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Wednesday, November 25

NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Break

Senior Menu: Ham/ raisin sauce, sweet potato, California blend veggies, crazy cake.

Birthdays: Emery Sippel • Kari Hanson • Angela Falk • Penny Herther • Devan Howard • Arielle Schaller

7:00am: United Methodist Men's Bible Study

12:00pm: Kiwanis meets at the Community Center

7:00pm: Emmanuel Lutheran Worship

Thursday, November 26

NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Break

Thanksgiving Day

Birthdays: Dawn Imrie

11:30am: Community Thanksgiving Day Dinner at Groton Community Center

Friday, November 27

NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Break

Anniversary: Marty & Ellie Sippel

Birthdays: Christopher Loutsch

Saturday, November 28

Anniversary: Bill and Jana Duncan

Birthdays: James Washnok • Amanda Geist • Brittany Raap • Sharon Zoellner • Sylvia Campbell
4:30pm: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Mass

Sunday, November 29

Anniversaries: Curtis & Janice Sombke • Chuck & Carrie Cole

Birthdays: Audrey Thurston • Melinda Eikamp • Travis Swisher • Aubray Harry • Gene Loeschke

9:00am: Emmanuel Lutheran School

9:00am: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Mass

9:30am: Emmanuel Lutheran Fellowship

Midwest Masonry & concrete Pumping

Greg Heilman, owner

405 E 1st Ave., Groton

Greg: 253/929-9137

Mike: 605/492-7041

midwestmasonry1@yahoo.com



DPS Officials Encourage Motorists To Buckle Up for Holiday Travel

PIERRE, S.D.—Officials of the South Dakota Department Public Safety are urging motorists this Thanksgiving holiday weekend to drive carefully and that includes wearing seatbelts.

State Highway Patrol troopers are spending Wednesday conducting the Patrol's annual "Operation Safe Thanksgiving." It is a campaign designed to encourage motorists to make safe driving choices while traveling for the holiday. Col. Craig Price, superintendent of the Highway Patrol, says troopers plan to stress seatbelt compliance.

"The Highway Patrol and other law enforcement agencies always promote the need for seatbelts and this effort is a way to do it," Price says. "We want those traveling for Thanksgiving to safely reach their destinations. The use of seatbelts should be part of their trip."

This past weekend, five of seven occupants involved in three fatal crashes reported in South Dakota were not wearing seatbelts. Office of Highway Safety Director Lee Axdahl says annually, nearly two-thirds of the roadway fatalities in South Dakota involve people not wearing seatbelts. He says the DPS continues to encourage people to buckle up.

"It is a proven fact that seatbelts save lives," he says. "Wearing seatbelts at any of the time of the year is important. But during the holiday season, and when the weather conditions can rapidly change, seatbelts are needed not only for drivers, but every occupant in a vehicle, including children."

Both Axdahl and Price say motorists should also adhere to other rules of the road such as not drinking and driving, slowing down and not overdriving road conditions.

DENR Announces New Lake Levels Map

PIERRE, S.D. – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has added a lake levels map to the department's interactive database maps online at <http://denr.sd.gov/datagis.aspx>.

"Many people in South Dakota place a very high value on our lakes and lake shores, but water levels can have a dramatic effect on the use of the lake and whether shoreline development is at risk," said DENR Secretary Steve Pirner. "To track trends in lake levels, DENR's Water Rights Program collects water level data from 167 lakes twice a year. Working with the Bureau of Information and Telecommunications, DENR is now making this information available to everyone over the Internet using a new and improved interactive Geographic Information System (GIS) map. If you have a favorite lake or lakes and are interested in both historical and current water levels, you will like this map."

The lake levels map is an updated version of a map previously available on the DENR website. The new map features spring and fall water level measurements for 167 lakes with elevation measurements dating back to the early 1980's. Historical lake level measurements are available by locating a measured lake on an interactive map or by searching by name or county location. Measurements can be downloaded or a hydrograph can be displayed with the measurements plotted on a line graph for viewing online or printing.

The lake levels map also shows ordinary high and low water mark elevations and outlet elevations for lakes where those elevations have been set by the state Water Management Board.

This map is in addition to the department's interactive maps for oil and gas, construction aggregate, spills, closed and active regulated storage tanks, recyclable materials, water right dry draw location notices and permitted solid waste facilities that have been available online. The maps show data from 1,900 files for oil and gas holes and geologic logs from 96,595 other holes; more than 4,600 active and closed construction aggregate mines across the state; more than 13,250 spill sites; about 5,000 closed and active regulated storage tanks; more than 150 locations that take recyclable materials; 97,620 filings for water right dry draw location notices; and 200 permitted solid waste facilities.

The interactive maps can be accessed from the department's homepage at <http://denr.sd.gov> under "One-Stop Shops" and "Data & Mapping."

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Ken Fiedler, Aberdeen, owner of the Ken's supermarkets, visited the Groton Ken's Food Fair store recently to look over the recent remodeling that was done. He is deep in thought, looking things over to make sure everything is just right. Ken's son, Kevin, is the vice president and general manager of the Ken's supermarkets, is pictured on the left in the bottom photo with Groton store manager Lionel Bruemmer. The Groton Food Fair/Shell Express store is located at the junction of US12 and SD37.



Friends . . . Near and Far

Editor's Note: This is the 42nd in a series featuring your friends, near and far.

Stephen Duncan

Job Wise what are you doing today? Youth Pastor at Richland Church, Mina, SD

How long have you been working at the current job? 2 ½ years

How did you get your current job? After we moved to Ipswich, we began attending Richland. A few years later, after being a volunteer with the youth group for a time, I was asked to begin considering taking the leader position.

If you have previous employments list them and how long you were there.

Midstates Printing – Assistant Web Press Operator 2007-2008

Lang's TV and Appliance – Delivery and installation 2008-2010

Holy Cross Catholic Church and School – Custodian 2010-2014

What year did you graduate from high school? GHS 2004

Where did you attend college and what was your degree? Northern State University (3 years) as an Elementary Education major. I dropped out do to the fact that I realized it wasn't for me.

What advice would you give the high school students today? Don't waste your life on trivial things and cheap thrills. Look to the One who can ultimately save you and give you everlasting life. That is the only place you will EVER find hope.

List your major accomplishments that you have had so far in life.

Learning to be more obedient to God and what He wants of me. That is a process that will be ongoing. I am thankful for His grace and mercy.

Marrying the most beautiful woman inside and out and having the privilege of being married to her for nearly eight years as of December 2015.

Having four children; 2 boys and 2 girls. How cool is that?

Your Spouse: Valerie from Wilmot, SD

How did the two of you meet? We met at Northern. I saw a girl wearing a Zelda shirt from across the room and knew she had to be awesome. As usual, I was correct. She



In back are Daisy, Valerie, Stephen and Lucy; in front are Lincoln and Samuel.

was worth the student loans.

Do you have any children? 4 Children: Lincoln – 6 years old, Samuel – 4 years old, Lucy – 2 years old, Daisy – 1 year old

Do you feel that your high school and college education prepared you adequately for post education life? I feel that without the experience of it, I would be a different person. I think much of education is "filler" and could be thrown into the waste category. Does that mean it is a waste and should be skipped? No. We need to be educated for the things we do; it's just working to find that balance is tough, especially when the system is the problem.

South Dakota's Gas Price Average Plunges 35 Cents in 46 Days Drivers to Pay Lowest Thanksgiving Gas Prices since 2008

Nov. 24, 2015 – Approximately 135,000 South Dakotans are expected to take a road trip this Thanksgiving, and drivers should pay the lowest pump prices for the Thanksgiving holiday since 2008. The state's retail average, \$2.131, is 35 cents below the price recorded just 46 days ago, on Oct. 9. One year ago today, the South Dakota statewide average was 69 cents higher at \$2.823 per gallon. Current gasoline prices, updated daily, can be found at FuelGaugeReport.AAA.com.)

	Today	Last Week	Change	Oct. 20	Change	Last year
Aberdeen	\$2.175	\$2.353	-\$0.178	\$3.379	-\$1.204	\$2.857
Brookings	\$2.037	\$2.228	-\$0.191	\$2.540	-\$0.503	\$2.850
Huron	\$2.241	\$2.244	-\$0.003	\$2.397	-\$0.156	\$2.899
Mitchell	\$2.180	\$2.259	-\$0.079	\$2.572	-\$0.392	\$2.745
Pierre	\$2.291	\$2.602	-\$0.311	\$2.701	-\$0.410	\$2.936
Rapid City	\$2.317	\$2.326	-\$0.009	\$2.465	-\$0.148	\$3.005
Sioux Falls	\$1.841	\$1.966	-\$0.125	\$2.256	-\$0.415	\$2.537
Vermillion	\$2.009	\$2.089	-\$0.080	\$2.409	-\$0.400	\$2.649
Watertown	\$2.147	\$2.263	-\$0.116	\$2.546	-\$0.399	\$2.861
Yankton	\$2.165	\$2.336	-\$0.171	\$2.346	-\$0.181	\$2.824
South Dakota	\$2.131	\$2.249	-\$0.118	\$2.446	-\$0.315	\$2.823

Nationwide, AAA predicts 42 million Americans will take to the highway over Thanksgiving, enjoying a national average gas price of \$2.06. It's fallen for 17 consecutive days and is poised to fall below the \$2 per gallon benchmark by the Christmas holiday. Already, more than half of U.S. stations are selling gas for less than \$2 per gallon.

Midwestern refineries continue to come back online following both planned and unplanned maintenance work. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, production in the region reached its highest rates in nearly two months, which has also helped gas prices recover in the region following recent spikes due to unexpected outages. As a result of more supply entering the regional market, the largest weekly and monthly declines in the price at the pump are localized to this region and drivers in Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana are benefitting from noticeable savings in the price of retail gasoline.

Demand for gasoline typically declines during the month of November, and barring any unexpected disruptions in supply, the national average is expected to move lower leading into 2016.

Crude oil supply from a number of production countries including Russia and Saudi Arabia is expected to sustain the global oil market's current oversupply and keep market fundamentals bearish in the near term. Projections of slower than expected economic growth from China, combined with the impact of a strengthening U.S. dollar, are also likely to keep the market out of balance and put a ceiling on global oil prices. When the value of the U.S. dollar increases, West Texas Intermediate crude oil, priced in U.S. dollars, becomes a relatively less attractive investment for those holding currencies overseas.

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration points to crude oil inventories being up more than 100 million barrels from this time last year. Domestic inventories are nearing all-time record levels, which contributed to WTI falling temporarily below \$40 per barrel last week. WTI closed out Monday's formal trading session on the NYMEX at \$41.75 per barrel.

Motorists can find current gas prices along their route with the free AAA Mobile app for iPhone, iPad and Android. The app can also be used to map a route, find discounts, book a hotel and access AAA roadside assistance. Learn more at AAA.com/mobile.

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Northern State University/Community Concert Band to perform Dec. 7

ABERDEEN, S.D. – The Northern State University/Community Concert Band will perform at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 7.

The concert, which is free and open to the public, will be held in the Jerde Hall music area. Holiday refreshments will be served. Along with the Concert Band, the NSU Percussion Ensemble and the music student group Jet Lagged will perform.

Concert Band selections include "With Quiet Courage" by Larry Daehn, "First Suite in E flat for Military Band" by Gustav Holst and "The Black Horse Troop" by John Philip Sousa.

The Percussion Ensemble will perform OneRepublic's "Counting Stars," arranged by NSU student Paulo Daniel Jimenez, and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," arranged by David Steinquest. Percussion Ensemble personnel include Paulo Daniel Jimenez, Luke Bergjord, Molly Royals, Ever Jimenez, Balie Albrecht, Nyssa Duffield, Dustin Schmidt, Jackson Foy and Grace Gasperich.

Jet Lagged will perform "Shofukan" and "Tio Macaco," both by Michael League. Jet Lagged personnel includes Paulo Daniel Jimenez, Ever Jimenez, Jackson Foy, Sarka Stehnova, Nick Ries, Taylor Johnson, Torriano Barrett, Heather Kelsey, Andy Brelu, Tyler Beck, Leandro Fernandez and Luke Bergjord.

NSU/Community Concert Band personnel

Flute:

Jennifer Dolejsi, Aberdeen, alumna

Grace Gasperich, Aberdeen

Roxanne Jensen, Groton, community member

Abbi Johnson, Estelline

Oboe:

Mallory Beckler, Aberdeen, community member

Bassoon:

Jacque Bratcher, Lead

Clarinet:

Amanda Cook, Richfield, Minn.

Katie Cosman, Estelline

Jared Geffre, Aberdeen

John Patzlaff, Aberdeen, alumnus

Alicia Peterson, Aberdeen, alumna

Alexander Torres, La Quinta, Calif.

Bass Clarinet:

Margaret Adams, NSU faculty, math

Alto Saxophone:

John Cassens, Faulkton

Kallan Christman, Clark

Harrison Homelvig, Bowman, N.D.

Luke Snoozy, Dell Rapids

Tenor Saxophone:

Susan Knodel, Aberdeen, community member

Anita Nielson, Aberdeen, community member

Dannale Norris, Onida

Baritone Saxophone:

Melanie Monnier, Toronto, S.D.

Trumpet:

Cassandra Bruns, Brookings

Seung Hun Jung, Korea

Terrence Kenny, Redfield, community member

Brian LaCroix, Aberdeen, community member

Danica Mickelson, Miller

Elsa Swanson, Chaska, Minn.

Spencer Werth, Aberdeen, community member

Horn:

Lindsey Beckler, Aberdeen, community member

Brock Fischer, Aberdeen

Rachel Hemke, Aberdeen, alumnus

Mikaela Moser, Mobridge

Laurie Wilkins, Mansfield, community member

Dani Wolf, Britton, community member

Euphonium:

Brandon Barrett, Britton

Carl Mathwig, Waconia, Minn.

Trombone:

Katie Appl, Aberdeen

Susan Beckler, Aberdeen, community member

Lindsey Friedrichsen, Huron

Tanner Fuhrer, Mitchell

Kevin O'Malley, Aberdeen

Cordell Ring, Onida

Jamie Werner, Faulkton, community member

Tuba:

Schuyler Boyd, Yankton

Joseph Peterson, Aberdeen, alumnus

Greg Smith, Mina, community member

Percussion:

Nyssa Duffield, Browns Valley, Minn.

Hyemin Lee, Korea

Kayla Nuese, Hendricks, Minn.

Carrie Pospishil, Yankton, Senior

Dustin Schmidt, Huron

Illegally Dumped Snow Causing Problems

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Department of Transportation reminds the public and commercial snow removal operators that it is illegal to place or dump excess snow on highway right of way, which includes driving surfaces, shoulders and ditches.

"The recent snowstorm across South Dakota has deposited a large amount of snow already this year and we are seeing an increase in violators," said Rod Gall, Yankton area engineer. "The space within the right of way needs to be reserved for future snow that may fall on the road. If the department's plow operators do not have a place to put that snow, it severely hampers their ability to clear roadways."

Violation of the anti-dumping law is a Class 1 misdemeanor, with a penalty of up to one year in jail, \$2,000 in fines, or both. It is the policy of the SDDOT to remove snow that has been illegally piled within the highway right of way that may be a safety hazard. In addition, violators will be billed for the costs of removing illegally dumped snow.

"Piling snow in the state highway right of way can also be very dangerous," says Gall. "Snow piles can restrict sight distance, as well as present an extreme hazard if a vehicle leaves the roadway. Snow piles that remain adjacent to the road may cause additional drifting and visibility problems posing more safety hazards to travelers, as well as additional expenses for manpower and equipment to remove the illegally dumped snow."

Property owners and access users are reminded it is their responsibility to remove snow from the ends of driveways and around their own mailboxes.

The department asks landowners and commercial snow-removal operators to keep excess snow on private property or haul it to legal dumping sites.

Fire Marshal Warns of Home Fire Risk During Holidays

PIERRE, S.D. - South Dakota Fire Marshal Paul Merriman wants South Dakotans to celebrate the upcoming holidays, but also realize the season means an additional fire risk.

Thursday's Thanksgiving Day starts the month-long holiday season. That means the installation of lights, trees, candles and other decorations, both inside and outside of homes.

Merriman says each one of those holiday trappings carries a potential fire risk.

"We all enjoy the trees, candles and lights," Merriman says. "But if not handled properly, they can be a fire hazard. We want everyone to have a joyous holiday season, but not one ruined by a home fire."

More cooking during the holidays also leads to an increased fire risk in the kitchen. The National Fire Prevention Association says 40 percent of home fires start in the kitchen. The leading cause of kitchen fires is unattended cooking.

The potential for a cooking fire can be reduced by:

- *** Wearing clothing with tight-fitting sleeves when cooking;
- *** Keeping potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper and plastic bags, towels and anything else that can burn, away from the stovetop;
- *** Turning off burners before leaving the kitchen; and
- *** Cleaning up food and grease from burners and stovetops.

One important way to guard against fires is to have working smoke alarms on each level of the home. Merriman says two-thirds of home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or working smoke alarms.

"Smoke alarms that are properly installed and maintained can play a vital role in reducing fire deaths and injuries," Merriman says. "That is true all of the time; but especially so during the holidays when there is a greater potential for fires."

The South Dakota Fire Marshal's Office is part of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.



SMALL BUSINESS

SATURDAY[®]

NOV 28

Shop Local This Holiday Season!

Specials for Small Business Saturday -



Select Fashion Scarves - 50% OFF

Select Boot Toppers - 50% OFF

All Christmas - 20% OFF

Thank you for supporting your local small businesses!

Happy Thanksgiving!





Groton Chamber Holiday Boxes are out & about in Groton!

This Week (thru 11/27) – Groton Ford
\$25 Chamber Bucks OR Free Oil Change!

Next Week (thru 12/04) – Dairy Queen
\$25 Chamber Bucks OR 10" Ice Cream Cake!

Stop by each participating business and register for \$25
Groton Chamber Bucks – or a prize supplied by the business.
Prizes will be drawn weekly – starting over each week with
entries!



Merry
Christmas

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Today in Weather History

November 25, 1896: A major blizzard occurred throughout South Dakota, beginning on the 25th and continuing until the 27th. The storm began in most locations as rain and sleet, which turned to snow, accompanied by strong northerly winds. The 26th was the peak of the storm, and the heaviest snow and strongest wind occurred throughout the north, northeast, west and southwest portions of the state. In eastern and southeastern South Dakota, sleet was extraordinarily heavy on the 26th. There were many reports received of large quantities of trees stripped of smaller branches and limbs due to the weight of the sleet. Across the state, telegraph lines were flattened in all directions, and the poles were broken off in many places. Although there was very little loss of livestock in areas with available shelter, there were heavy individual losses on the ranges of South Dakota. Several people also perished on the ranges west of the Missouri River when they became lost in the storm without livestock. Reports of snowfall totals from the storm are very limited, but included 17 inches at Aberdeen and 12 inches at Mellette. This blizzard was the most prominent individual feature in a November that was overall very cold, with a state mean temperature of 16.5 degrees, which was 17.2 degrees below normal at the time. The month still stands as the coldest November on record in Aberdeen, with an average temperature nearly 7 degrees Fahrenheit colder than the next coldest November (1985). The lowest reported temperature during the month was -29 F at Webster. Aberdeen recorded a low of -25 F on the 29th with a high temperature of -8 F that same day. The month currently stands as the snowiest November on record and second snowiest overall month on record for Aberdeen, with 32.8 inches, behind 38.5 inches recorded in February 1915.

November 25, 1703: The greatest windstorm ever recorded in the southern part of Great Britain, reaches its peak intensity which it maintains through November 27. Winds gust up to 120 mph, and 9,000 people perish in the mighty gale, most of them sailors of the British fleet. The storm continued through December 2nd. It was reported that 4,000 oaks perished in the New Forest and an attempt to count the toll of trees in Kent gave up at 17,000. At sea, the Eddystone Lighthouse was swept away and six people were killed. Daniel Defoe wrote a journal called the *The Storm*(1704) about this event. The *Strom* has been called the first substantial work of modern journalism.

1950: Called the "storm of the century" this storm impacted the eastern part of the US, killing hundreds and causing millions of dollars in damages. New York City recorded a 94 mph wind gust and Bear Mountain, just north of the city recorded a 140 mph gust. Record low temperatures were reported on the southern end of this storm in Tennessee and North Carolina. This storm was unique as Pittsburgh saw 30 inches of snow, while Buffalo saw 50 degrees with 50 mph wind gusts.

1970 - The temperature at Tallahassee, FL, dipped to 13 degrees, following a high of 40 degrees the previous day. The mercury then reached 67 degrees on the 26th, and highs were in the 70s the rest of the month. (The Weather Channel)

1983 - The Great Thanksgiving Weekend Blizzard hit Denver, CO. The storm produced 21.5 inches of snow in 37 hours, closing Stapleton Airport for 24 hours. The snow and wind closed interstate highways around Denver. Visibility at Limon CO was down to zero for 24 hours. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - An early morning thunderstorm in southeastern Texas produced high winds which rolled a mobile home east of Bay City killing two of the four occupants. Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in central and eastern Texas, with nine inches reported at Huntsville, and 8.5 inches at Wimberly. Snow fell across northern and central Lower Michigan, with totals ranging up to nine inches at Cadillac. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in Arkansas, eastern Oklahoma and northwest Texas during the day and into the night. Thunderstorms in Texas produced softball size hail at Alba, and wind gusts to 80 mph at Krum. Hail and high winds caused nearly five million dollars damage at Kaufman TX, and strong downburst winds derailed twenty-eight freight cars at Fruitvale TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Today	Tonight	Thanksgiving Day	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
						
Cloudy then Cloudy and Breezy	Cloudy	Slight Chance Snow then Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny
High: 39 °F	Low: 19 °F	High: 29 °F	Low: 7 °F	High: 32 °F	Low: 12 °F	High: 36 °F



Very Light Snow Behind Front

Follow us on Social Media

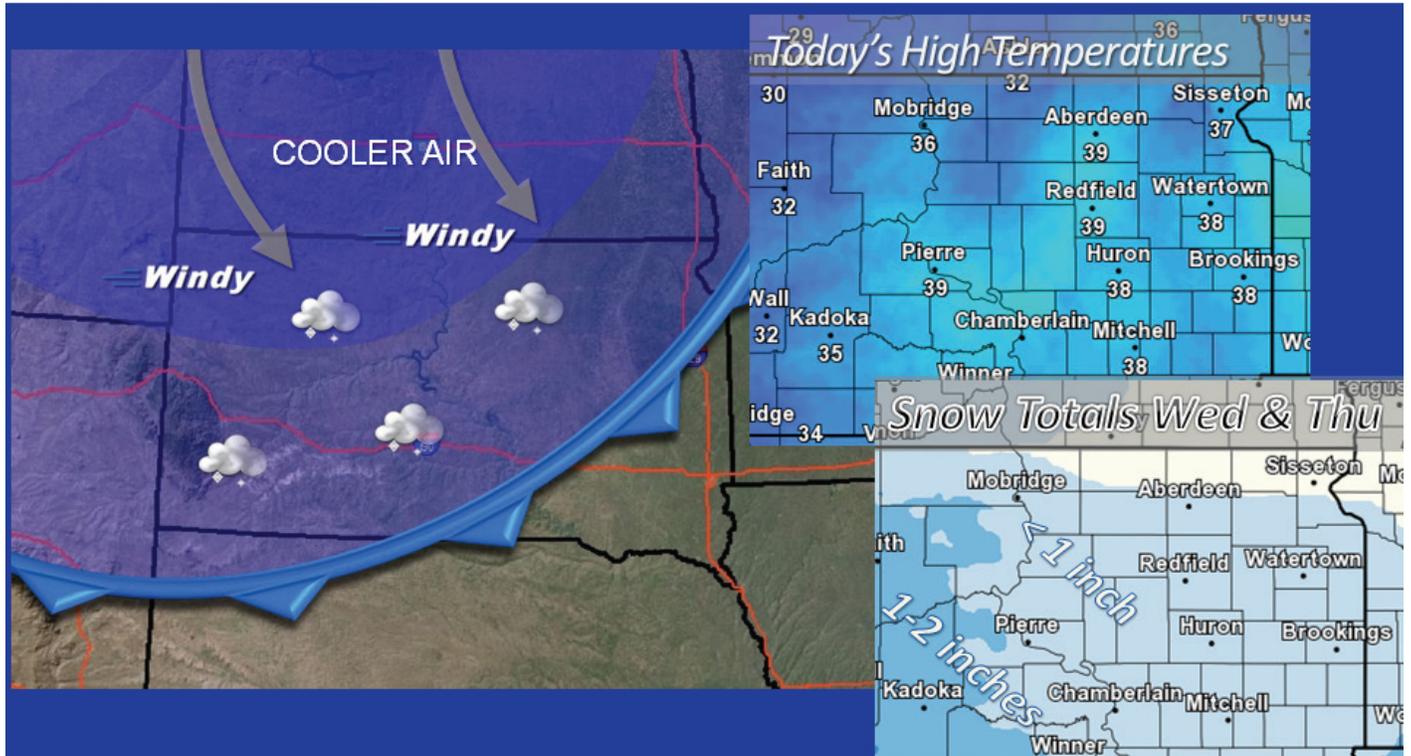
weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen



Published on: 11/25/2015 at 6:01AM

A front will move across the region today, with gusty northwest winds and cooler temperatures to follow. On and off light snow is also possible this afternoon through Thursday morning. Very little to no snow accumulation is expected for most of northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota, however areas west of the Missouri River could get 1 to 2 inches.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 48.0 at 2:06 PM

Low: 31.8 at 3:07 AM

High Gust: 26 at 11:12 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 64° in 1960

Record Low: -22° in 1996

Average High: 34°F

Average Low: 14°F

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.64

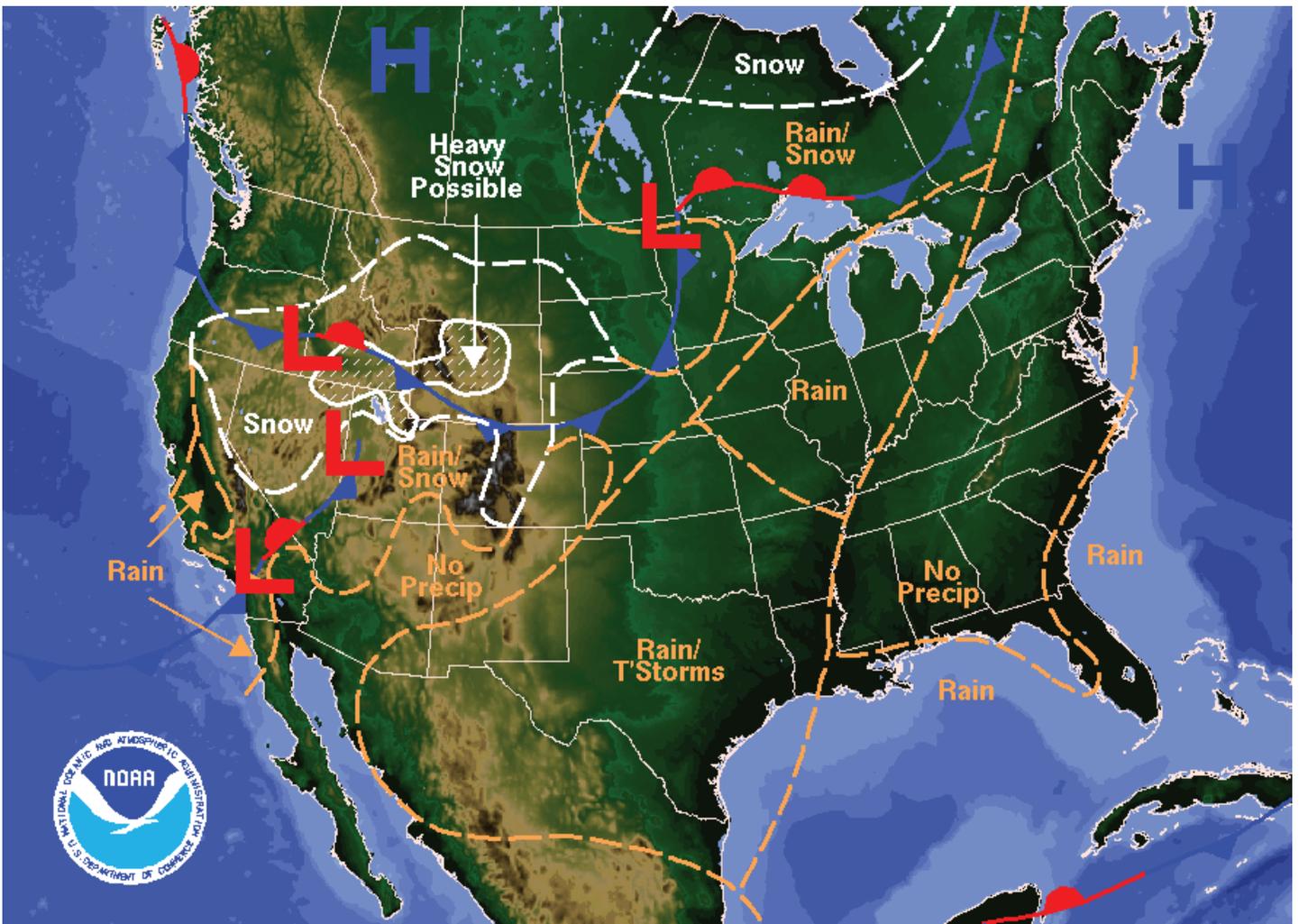
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.71

Average Precip to date: 21.11

Precip Year to Date: 19.82

Sunset Tonight: 4:55 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:46 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Wed, Nov 25, 2015, issued 4:34 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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HOW DID YOU GET THERE?

Alex Haley, the famous author of *Roots*, had a picture of a turtle sitting on a fence in his office. One day a friend looked at the turtle, then at Haley and asked, "Why do you have such an unusual picture?"

He replied, "Anytime I start thinking 'Isn't it marvelous what I've done!' I look at that picture and remember how this turtle – me – got on that post."

None of us would be where we are today without the help of others. It may have been a mother or father, sister or brother, Sunday school teacher or deacon, choir or youth leader. Someone, somewhere along life's path was at the right place at the right time to nudge us forward. We may have forgotten the name, but it was the kind word during painful times that got us through the difficulty.

The great thing about the Christian community, the church, is that we can be an inspiration to each other in our daily walk. Often we see or hear of someone who is struggling or straining to get through a tragic event. It may be an illness or the death of a loved one, a problem at work or a difficult time learning a new skill, a family that is disintegrating because of a failed marriage. We Christians are to have a heart that shows Christ's love, a voice through which He speaks and a hand with which He helps. Fortunate is the church with helpful encouragers.

Prayer: Father, open our eyes to see what You see, to do what You would have us to do and to lift the fallen. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: Isaiah 41:6 Everyone helped his neighbor, And said to his brother, "Be of good courage!"

News from the Associated Press

Meade County commissioners award contract for Sturgis bypass

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — Meade County commissioners have awarded a \$1.3 million contract to a Rapid City company to build a highway bypass at Sturgis.

Tuesday's vote came a day after a judge removed a roadblock by declining the plea of opponents to mandate a public vote on the project, clearing the way for the Fort Meade Way.

The gravel bypass connecting Interstate 90 with S.D. Highway 34 east of Sturgis is scheduled to be ready next July. Officials say the goal is to spur growth east of Sturgis and ease traffic congestion during the annual motorcycle rally that draws hundreds of thousands of people to the area.

"We're not unaware that there is opposition to this road, but we do believe it is in the best interest of the county to move forward, and that's what we decided to do," Commissioner Galen Niederwerder said.

Opponents worry about the road's effect on Sturgis businesses, and about possible encroachment on homes and ranches along the route. But Judge Jerome Eckrich on Monday rejected their lawsuit, saying the Meade County Taxpayers for Responsible Government could not force the county to stop moving forward on developing the road. Opposition group spokesman Rod Baumberger said continuing to fight likely would be costly and fruitless.

The county awarded the construction contract to Zandstra Construction.

Officials light up state Capitol Christmas tree display

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard says there's no better way to start the holiday season.

Hundreds of people were on hand as officials on Tuesday lit up the state Christmas tree display in the Capitol in Pierre.

A 29-foot-tall Colorado blue spruce that came from Baltic is the featured tree. It was donated by Willette Reichert.

There are more than 100 other trees decking the halls of South Dakota government for the holiday season. They're decorated by businesses, civic organizations and nonprofits from around the state. This year's theme is "Christmas Around the World."

The holiday display runs from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. each day through Dec. 26.

State fire marshal warning residents of holiday fire risks

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's fire marshal is warning residents of the added risk of home fires during the holiday season.

Fire Marshal Paul Merriman says residents often begin putting up lights, trees, candles and other decorations just after Thanksgiving, both inside and outside homes.

Merriman says each one of those holiday trappings carries a potential fire risk. He says if trees, candles and lights are not handled properly, they can become a fire hazard.

More cooking during the holidays also leads to an increased fire risk in the kitchen. The National Fire Prevention Association says 40 percent of home fires start in the kitchen, and the leading cause of kitchen fires is unattended cooking.

Merriman says one important way to guard against fires is to have working smoke detectors.

South Dakota Highway Patrol troopers out in force

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Highway Patrol troopers are out in force for a pre-Thanksgiving effort to raise public awareness of traffic laws.

The Highway Patrol says "Operation Safe Thanksgiving" is a statewide, high-visibility campaign designed to remind motorists to be careful during the holiday weekend.

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The day before Thanksgiving traditionally is one of the busiest travel days of the year.

As part of the operation, the Highway Patrol says troopers will focus on "discouraging and arresting drunk drivers" and enforcing seatbelt compliance. They also will strictly enforce other traffic laws, such as speeding, stop sign and passing zone violations.

Col. Craig Price is the superintendent of the Highway Patrol. He says troopers will make arrests as needed, but the main goals of the operation are education and awareness, not arrests.

South Dakota drills S Dakota School of Mines 83-63

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Casey Kasperbauer scored a career-high 26 points with six 3-pointers to help South Dakota defeat the South Dakota School of Mines 83-63 on Tuesday night.

Kasperbauer, a 6-foot-1 senior guard, shot 8-for-15 from the field with 6 of 10 from 3-point range. He's now made 204 3-pointers for South Dakota (2-3), the ninth player in program history to make 200 treys during a career.

Konor Kulas led the Division II Hardrockers with 18 points and eight rebounds, Brian Orr added 12 points with four 3-pointers.

Kasperbauer drilled a 3-pointer to tie the game at 7-7 during an 11-1 run that had the Coyotes ahead 15-8 on their way to a 40-25 halftime lead.

In the second half, Kasperbauer scored a pair of 3-pointers as he put up eight straight points, pushing the lead to 52-35.

Federal judge sentences man in Jamaican lottery scam

JAMES MacPHERSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A federal judge in North Dakota sentenced a Jamaican man to 20 years in prison on Tuesday for a lottery scam that authorities say cost victims around the country millions of dollars.

A jury in May convicted 26-year-old Sanjay Williams, of Montego Bay, Jamaica, of 35 counts of conspiracy, wire fraud and money laundering. U.S. District Court Judge Daniel Hovland sentenced Williams during a 2 ½ hour court appearance, during which Williams was defiant and often argumentative with the Bismarck-based judge.

Williams said the allegations against him were "fictitious" and the "jury failed to use their common sense" when convicting him.

Investigators describe Williams and Lavrick Willocks as leaders of two separate scamming operations based in Jamaica.

Frank Gasper, a Bismarck-based FBI agent, said more than 80 of the victims of Willocks and Williams have been identified and their losses are more than \$5.6 million. Willocks has been charged but not extradited to the United States.

Prosecutors said the case came to light four years ago when Edna Schmeets, 86, of Harvey, North Dakota, received a call from a man who told her she had won \$19 million and a new car, and needed only to pay taxes and fees. The process dragged on until the widow's savings were wiped out, a sum of more than \$300,000.

A teary Schmeets told Hovland that she "lost everything" and has been "hurt not only financially but emotionally."

Schmeets said she shared her story with the judge so that others would not be taken by scammers.

"It's hard to think you could fall for this stuff," Schmeets told Hovland. "I don't know how they get you, but they do. It's almost like they hypnotize you."

Marlow McMahan, of Salt Lake City, Utah, traveled to North Dakota to see Williams sentenced "and put where he can't hurt anyone again."

McMahan, 84, did not say how much he lost in the scam, though he told the judge he was forced to borrow from banks and friends to claim a bogus multimillion dollar prize.

"I come from a time when your word was your word and when somebody tells me I won millions of dollars, I believe them," McMahan told the judge.

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Assistant U.S. Attorney Clare Hochhalter, the lead prosecutor in the case, also posted on a video screen a suicide letter from a 72-year-old woman who was taken in by the scam.

In recent years, estimates by U.S. officials put the yearly take by Jamaican fraudsters at \$300 million, but some American authorities suspected the total was far higher. In 2012, C. Steven Baker, a Chicago-based director with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission, told The Associated Press that Jamaica's scammers could be bilking Americans out of \$1 billion a year.

Marshall leads South Dakota State past Houston Baptist 92-68

CANCUN, Mexico (AP) — Geroge Marshall scored 19, including three 3-pointers, and Deondre Parks added 17 points to help South Dakota State beat Houston Baptist 92-68 Tuesday.

Mike Daum added 13 points on 5-of-9 shooting and Reed Tellinghuisen finished with 11 points and eight rebounds for South Dakota State (5-0).

The Jackrabbits made 17 of 26 (65 percent) field goals, including 6 of 9 from 3-point range, in the first half to take a 50-33 lead into the break. They shot season highs from the field (57 percent) and 3-point range (55 percent).

Jourdan Stickler scored 13 points, Terry Harris added 12 and Reveal Chukwujekwu had 11 for Houston Baptist (1-4).

The Huskies made just 22 of 60 (37 percent) field goals.

SD man who pleaded guilty in fatal crash won't go to prison

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A 77-year-old South Dakota man who pleaded guilty to a second-degree manslaughter charge stemming from a fatal car crash in May won't go to prison.

The South Dakota Attorney General's Office says Hennis Lambley, of Herrick, was granted a suspended imposition of sentence and placed on five years of probation.

Authorities say Lambley was driving a pickup truck when he struck a car at a rural intersection on May 26. Twenty-four-year-old Herrick resident Steven Wheeler was driving the car and died at the scene.

Lambley suffered injuries that the Highway Patrol at the time called serious but not life-threatening.

Lambley on Tuesday was also ordered to complete 100 hours of community service, write an apology letter to Wheeler's family and pay a \$5,000 fine and more than \$17,000 in restitution.

Nevada judge won't rule on sage grouse before Christmas

SCOTT SONNER, Associated Press

RENO, Nev. (AP) — A federal judge in Nevada is postponing a decision on whether to block U.S. regulations protecting the greater sage grouse, partly because she's not clear if the rules are really to blame for delays in construction of a rural water supply tank near Great Basin National Park along the border with Utah.

U.S. District Judge Miranda Du granted an extension so lawyers can file additional briefs to supplement arguments they made last week during a two-day hearing in Reno. That means she won't rule before Christmas on the request by nine Nevada counties and two mining companies to issue a temporary injunction freezing the regulations.

White Pine County officials say the new rules have thrown a monkey wrench in their plans to replace a leaking water tank posing a health and safety threat in the town of Baker about 40 miles southeast of Ely and 5 miles west of the Utah line.

Du wants more details on other factors the government says are contributing to any possible delay, including the need to conduct an archaeological survey after Native American artifacts were found in the area.

Du said the plaintiffs submitted a letter from the chairman of the Baker Water and Sewer General Improvement District as evidence in the case just before last week's hearing that says the community is "currently foreclosed from building the urgently needed storage tank" as a result of the grouse protections.

The letter "raises more questions than it answers," the judge said in extending the filing deadlines to Dec. 28.

District Chairman David Sturlin said the project was put on the fast track earlier this year after the U.S. Bureau of Land Management indicated an environmental impact statement would not have to be completed to grant a right of way on federal land necessary to build a new tank adjacent to the existing one.

But he said that after the new land planning amendments were issued in September, the agency changed its mind and indicated it would have to consider the matter further because the area has been identified as containing important habitat for sage grouse.

"It is now over a month since the sage grouse monkey wrench was thrown into the works. Our tank replacement project is now on indefinite hold," Sturlin wrote in the Nov. 9 letter.

"The BLM expressed that they could not provide us with a timeline as to when the required surveys will be complete, leaving our tank replacement project in limbo," he said. "With the storage tank leak getting progressively worse, it is just a matter of time before bacteria enters the water supply and puts the community at risk, not to mention the potential loss of fire protection."

Du said she wants more details to prove the project was expected to be exempted from environmental review. She wants to know "the status of such review and the resulting delay, if any."

Justice Department lawyers said an exemption can be granted if the project developers can show it would have a net gain in conservation of sage grouse habitat, or if the developers could establish that it would have no direct or indirect impact on the bird.

Amy Lueders, the Bureau of Land Management's Nevada state director, testified at the hearing that the adoption of the planning amendments was a critical factor in Interior Secretary Sally Jewell's decision in September denying the grouse protection under the Endangered Species Act. "If we kept doing what we were doing, we likely would have ended up with a listing," Lueders said.

Man who stole century-old flag submits apology letter

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A former employee in South Dakota's secretary of state's office who admitted to stealing a century-old state flag has submitted a court-ordered apology.

The 26-year-old Garrett Devries addressed the brief letter to the secretary of state, the office's employees and the people of South Dakota. DeVries offers a "sincere apology" and says he understands that his actions caused the office "to devote time and energy to recover the flag."

Devries pleaded guilty to misdemeanor theft and was given a suspended 30-day jail sentence. He was ordered to publicly apologize, pay court costs and \$1,500 toward upkeep of the flag.

The flag that dates to Deadwood's Old West days had been displayed on a stand inside the secretary of state's office through numerous administrations.

Officials noticed it was missing earlier this year and investigators recovered it from Devries Oct. 8.

SD attorney general urges residents to be careful shoppers

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Attorney General Marty Jackley is urging South Dakota residents to be careful when shopping this holiday season to avoid common mistakes.

He says the holiday shopping season begins earlier each year and this one is no exception with the lure of pre-black Friday deals and other specials.

Jackley says people should check refund and return policies for restrictions and exceptions. He says people buying gift cards should check for fees and expiration dates.

The attorney general says shoppers also should review warranties, compare prices and check shipping and handling fees for items ordered online.

Jackley also says people should be cautious of social media scams, including fake Twitter and Facebook pages. He recommends that people stick to the websites they are familiar with and do not click on unfamiliar links.

South Dakota man loses \$11,500 in sweepstakes scam

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A 69-year-old Sioux Falls man has lost more than \$11,000 to a sweepstakes scam.

Police spokesman Sam Clemens says the man wired the money to people purporting to be with Publishers Clearing House and promising a \$2.5 million prize.

Clemens says the man received a letter Oct. 30 saying he had won the seven-figure prize. Clemens says the scammers sent the man a \$7,000 check, which a bank determined to be false when he tried to cash it.

Despite the fraudulent check, the man continued to correspond with the scammers and sent them \$10,000. Clemens says the bank cautioned the man about the potential scam, but he still withdrew the money. Altogether, the man ended up wiring \$11,500.

Clemens says people should do some research if they get a notice about a big prize.

South Dakota farmers wrapping up the fall harvest

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota farmers are wrapping up the fall harvest, though rain and snow over the past week brought fieldwork to a halt.

The Agriculture Department says in its weekly crop report that the only crops remaining in the field are sunflowers and sorghum, and those harvests are beyond 90 percent complete.

South Dakota's winter wheat crop is rated 69 percent in good-to-excellent condition, up from 68 percent last week.

Pasture and range conditions statewide are rated 49 percent good to excellent. Stock water supplies are 71 percent adequate to surplus.

Known length of Jewel Cave extended to more than 180 miles

CUSTER, S.D. (AP) — One of the longest caves in the world has gotten a little bit longer.

Explorations of Jewel Cave in western South Dakota in the past two months have extended the known length of the cave from about 177 miles to a little more than 180 miles, the National Park Service said Tuesday.

Volunteer explorers also discovered two small lakes, the first encountered in the cave. They might be the cave's intersection with the Madison Aquifer, and more lakes might be found in as-yet unexplored passages, Resource Management Chief Mike Wiles said.

"Remote and pristine, (the lakes) could become a valuable focus for future hydrological and microbiological studies," Wiles said in a statement.

Jewel Cave National Monument is 13 miles west of Custer, about an hour's drive from Rapid City. It's considered the third-longest known cave in the world, according to the Park Service. It's also home to nine bat species, including the rare Townsend's big-eared bat.

The cave also is getting an upgraded visitor center. Work began in August on a \$671,000 expansion project that will provide more room for environmental education, including classrooms, theater space and educational display space. The project is scheduled to be completed in February.

Jewel Cave was established as a national monument in 1908. Its parking area was upgraded last year at a cost of \$2.5 million, and the Park Service worked with the state Transportation Department to rebuild a dangerous, winding stretch of U.S. Highway 16 leading to the site.

Rapid City goalie back from brief NHL call-up

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rookie goaltender Marek Langhamer is back with the Rapid City Rush after a brief call-up to the NHL's Arizona Coyotes.

The 21-year-old rookie from the Czech Republic did not get any NHL ice time on Saturday, but he served as a backup to Anders Lindback. Lindback stopped 20 of 23 shots in the Coyotes loss to the Winnipeg Jets.

Langhamer is the first Rush player to make it to the NHL.

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The 6-foot-2, 185-pound Langhamer has compiled a 1-1-1 record in 3 games played with a 2.92 goals-against average. His first professional win was a 2-0 shutout of the Utah Grizzlies on Nov. 14.

Judge won't mandate public vote on proposed Sturgis bypass

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — A state judge has declined a plea by opponents to mandate a public vote on a proposed highway bypass at Sturgis.

The group Meade County Taxpayers for Responsible Government sued earlier to try to force an election on the proposed Fort Meade Way.

Judge Jerome Eckrich on Monday said the group could not force the County Commission to stop moving forward on developing the road. The group can appeal, though a sign indicating Fort Meade Way has already been erected and commissioners on Tuesday were opening construction bids, according to the Rapid City Journal.

Opposition group spokesman Rod Baumberger told the newspaper that continuing to fight the project might be fruitless or too costly.

The 2.5-mile gravel bypass connecting Interstate 90 with S.D. Highway 34 east of Sturgis could cost up to \$2.8 million. Buffalo Chip Campground owner Rod Woodruff has pledged up to \$1 million. Construction could start this month and wrap up next July.

Bypass proponents say it could spur growth east of Sturgis and ease traffic problems during the annual motorcycle rally that draws hundreds of thousands of people to the region.

Opponents including the Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce worry about the effect of a bypass on local businesses. Some landowners along the route also worry about encroachment on their homes and ranches. Voters in March overwhelmingly rejected a tax increment financing district to pay for it.

Some in military suspended for deadly Afghan hospital attack

ROBERT BURNS, Associated Press
LYNNE O'DONNELL, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — American soldiers and airmen who killed and wounded dozens of civilians in a strike on an Afghanistan hospital violated the rules of engagement and have been suspended as they await disciplinary action, U.S. military officials said Wednesday.

Briefing reporters on the results of two investigations, Gen. John Campbell, the U.S. commander in Afghanistan, described an egregious series of human and technical failures that led a U.S. warplane to mistakenly destroy a medical charity's hospital in northern Afghanistan last month. But Campbell and other officials would not say how many people had been removed from their jobs nor whether those high up the chain of command will be subject to discipline.

Officials said the crew of an AC-130 gunship had been dispatched to hit a Taliban command center in a different building, 450 yards away. However, hampered by problems with their targeting sensors, the crew relied on a physical description that led them to begin firing at a hospital run by the Doctors Without Borders medical charity, even though they saw no hostile activity there.

Many chances to avert the error were missed, officials said.

"We made a terrible mistake that resulted in unnecessary deaths," Brig. Gen. Wilson Shoffner said.

Campbell and Shoffner said that neither the special forces commander who called in the strike at the request of Afghan forces, nor the air crew, was aware that a hospital was being hit until it was too late. They did not address claims by Afghan officials that the hospital had been overrun by the Taliban, but a summary of one of the investigations, obtained by The Associated Press, says there is no evidence to support that. It also says there was no hostile activity observed at the hospital.

The plane fired 211 shells at the compound over 25 minutes before commanders realized the mistake and ordered a halt, according to the summary. Doctors Without Borders contacted coalition military personnel during the attack to say its facility was "being 'bombed' from the air," and the word finally was relayed to the AC-130 crew, the report said.

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The report says the attack on Oct. 3 in the city of Kunduz killed at least 31 civilians and injured 28 others. Investigators determined that additional civilians probably were killed or injured.

US stocks edge higher in early trading; Deere gains on earns

MARLEY JAY, AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks are drifting higher in early trading Wednesday, building on their small gains from the previous day, as markets start to wind down ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday in the U.S.

EARLY GAINS: The Dow Jones industrial average added 26 points, or 0.2 percent, to 17,838 as of 10:02 a.m. Eastern. The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose two points, or 0.1 percent, to 2,090. The Nasdaq composite index gained 11 points, or 0.2 percent, to 5,114.

PLOWING ALONG: Agricultural equipment maker Deere dealt with plunging sales of tractors, bulldozers and other equipment by slashing costs. The company's fiscal fourth-quarter results and its projections for the current fiscal year were better than analysts expected. Deere rose \$2.70, or 3.5 percent, to \$79.02.

HP DIVERGES: Hewlett-Packard reported earnings for the final time Tuesday night, weeks after the tech giant formally split into two separate companies. The outcomes for the two stocks were starkly different.

HP, which inherited the parent company's PC, printer and commercial software business, sank \$2.26, or 15.4 percent, to \$12.39 after reporting weaker sales. HP Enterprise gained 32 cents, or 2.5 percent, to \$14.04. Sales of hardware for data centers, including servers and networking devices, did better.

THE ECONOMY: Consumer spending inched up 0.1 percent in October, the second small gain in a row. Despite weak spending in September and October, economists think spending will keep growing because the labor market is strong. Applications for unemployment aid fell last week, although the more stable four-week average was unchanged.

ENERGY: The price of oil fell \$1.04, or 2.4 percent, to \$41.83 a barrel in New York. Brent crude fell \$1, or 2.2 percent, to \$45.12 a barrel in London. Chevron fell 78 cents, or 0.9 percent, to \$90.57. Chesapeake energy fell 14 cents, or 2.6 percent, to \$5.35.

EUROPE STOCKS: Britain's FTSE 100 rose 1 percent and the CAC 40 of France gained 1.4 percent. Germany's DAX was up 1.6 percent.

BONDS, CURRENCIES: Bond prices rose and the yield on the 10-year Treasury bond slipped to 2.23 percent from 2.24 percent. The euro fell to \$1.0583 from \$1.0655 on Tuesday. The dollar rose to 122.85 yen from 122.44 yen.

Rams WR Bailey critical, stable after being shot in Florida

R.B. FALLSTROM, AP Sports Writer

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Suspended St. Louis Rams wide receiver Stedman Bailey was shot and critically wounded as he and four other people were sitting in a car outside a home in the Miami area, police said Wednesday.

Bailey was at a hospital awaiting surgery for injuries that have not been disclosed by the Rams or the authorities. Another man, Antwan Reeves, was with Bailey and was also shot in the attack Tuesday night. Three others in the car, including two minors, were not wounded, police said.

"The victims drove themselves to an area hospital for evaluation and treatment," Miami Beach police said in a statement. "Based on reports from the hospital, Bailey is in critical but stable condition awaiting surgery."

Police said they were looking for suspects, who had driven up in another car before shooting.

The Rams said they were aware Bailey was "involved in an incident" and that they had spoken with him.

"We are gathering facts about the situation and will provide updates as we learn more," the team said.

Bailey went to high school in the Miami area. His is in third season with the Rams but has been suspended twice by the NFL.

Bailey, who turned 25 on Nov. 11, was a third-round pick in the 2013 draft out of West Virginia, where he was part of a prolific wide receiving tandem with Tavon Austin, whom the Rams selected with the eighth overall pick that year.

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Bailey was suspended four games this month for violating the NFL's substance abuse policy. He has two games remaining on the ban. He served a two-game suspension for performance-enhancing drugs at the start of last season.

According to police, Bailey, Reeves and the three others were sitting in a car at about 8:45 p.m. ET Tuesday at a local residence. Another vehicle arrived and "opened fire," police said. Reeves was taken into surgery shortly after arriving at the hospital.

Players from around the league reached out on social media shortly after reports emerged.

"Keep our brother @iamSB3 in your thoughts, prayers tonight. I don't wanna believe it," Rams defensive end Chris Long tweeted.

Pittsburgh Steelers star running back Le'Veon Bell used Twitter to send his best wishes: "prayers to my brother Stedman Bailey."

Rams punter Johnny Hekker tweeted, "Praying for guardian angels over Sted. We're with you brother."

Bailey has started three games each of the last two seasons, and this year has 12 receptions for 182 yards with one touchdown. He was fined for pulling a stunt after the lone score after using the ball as a pillow and lying down in the end zone.

Last year, he had 30 receptions with a 14.5-yard average and one touchdown. He was among five Rams receivers who did the "Hands Up, Don't Shoot" gesture during player introductions before a game last December as a show of solidarity for protesters in nearby Ferguson, Missouri.

The Rams signed free-agent wide receiver Wes Welker after Bailey's second suspension. Bailey is eligible to return to the roster on Dec. 7, the day after the Rams play at Arizona.

Putin sends air-defense missiles to Syria to deter Turkey

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV, Associated Press

President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday ordered state-of-the-art air defense missile systems to be deployed at a Russian air base in Syria following the downing of one of its warplanes by Turkey, a move that raised the threat of a military confrontation between the NATO member and Moscow.

The S-400 missile systems will be sent to the Hemeimeem air base in Syria's coastal province of Latakia, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) south of the border with Turkey. The systems have a range up to 400 kilometers (250 miles) and are capable of targeting Turkish jets with deadly precision. If Russia shot down a Turkish plane, Turkey could proclaim itself under attack and call for military assistance from its NATO allies.

Turkey shot down a Russian Su-24 bomber on Tuesday, saying it crossed into its airspace from Syria despite repeated warnings. One of its two pilots was killed by militants after bailing out, while his crewmate was rescued by Syrian army commandos and delivered in good condition to the Russian base early Wednesday.

Putin said the Russian plane remained in Syria's skies when it was shot down. He described Turkey's action as a "crime" and a "stab in the back," warning of serious consequences.

He said a warning from the Russian Foreign Ministry for Russians not to visit Turkey was needed "because we can't exclude some other incidents following what happened yesterday and our citizens in Turkey could be in significant danger."

Speaking in televised comments from the base, the surviving navigator of the downed plane, Capt. Konstantin Murakhtin denied that their jet has veered into Turkey's airspace "even for a single second." He also rejected the Turkey's claim that it has issued repeated warnings to the Russian crew before shooting down the plane.

"There have been no warnings whatsoever," said Murakhtin, adding that he wants to keep flying missions from the base "to pay them back for my commander."

On Wednesday, the Russian leader ordered the military to deploy the S-400s to Hemeimeem and take other measures that "should be sufficient to ensure flight safety."

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Wednesday that the Russian missile cruiser Moskva already has moved closer to shore to protect the Russian aircraft flying missions near Syria's border with Turkey with its long-range Fort air defense system.

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"It will be ready to destroy any aerial target posing a potential danger to our aircraft," Shoigu said at a meeting with military officials.

He also said that from now on all Russian bombers will be escorted by fighters on their combat missions in Syria. He said that his ministry has severed all contacts with the Turkish military.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who canceled his planned trip to Turkey after the incident, described the shooting down of the Russian plane as a "planned provocation."

He said the Turkish action came after Russian planes successfully targeted oil infrastructure used by the Islamic State group, alleging that Turkey benefited from the oil trade.

Lavrov also said that Turkish territory was used by "terrorists" to prepare attacks in other countries, but offered no details. He said that Russia "has no intention to go to war with Turkey," but added that Moscow will re-consider its ties with Ankara.

Some leading Russian tourist agencies already have suspended the sales of tour packages to Turkey. Nearly 4.5 million Russians visited Turkey last year, second only to German tourists.

Some Russian lawmakers suggested that Moscow should crack down on Turkish companies in Russia, but Lavrov said that "we don't want to artificially create problems for Turkish producers and exporters, who aren't responsible for what has happened." Still, he added that "we can't but react to what has happened."

Russia was the biggest source of Turkish imports last year, worth \$25 billion, which mostly accounted for Russian gas supplies.

Most Turkish exports to Russia are textiles and food. Although Turkish food exports have not been covered by the Russian food embargo, they fell by 40 percent in January-September this year compared to a year ago.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a written statement that Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and Lavrov agreed to a meeting "in the coming days," during a telephone conversation Wednesday, but Lavrov said he has no such plans.

Turkey informed the United Nations that two Russian planes disregarded warnings and violated Turkish airspace "to a depth of 1.36 miles and 1.15 miles in length for 17 seconds."

Lavrov shrugged off the Turkish argument that it had no choice but to shoot down the plane, pointing at the 2012 downing of a Turkish warplane by Syria in its airspace. He said Ankara argued in that case that a brief incursion wasn't reason to shoot down its jet. He also pointed at routine violations of Greece's airspace by Turkish combat planes.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Wednesday that his country doesn't wish to escalate tensions with Russia.

Speaking at an Organization of Islamic Cooperation economy meeting in Istanbul, Erdogan said that Turkey favors "peace, dialogue and diplomacy." He defended his country's move to shoot down the plane saying: "No one should expect Turkey to stay silent to border violations or the violation of its rights."

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu also sought to ease tensions, calling Russia Turkey's "friend and neighbor" and insisting relations cannot be "sacrificed to accidents of communication."

In a sign of the tensions, protesters in Moscow hurled eggs and stones at the Turkish Embassy, breaking windows in the compound. Police cleared the area and made some arrests shortly after the protest began.

Davutoglu told his party's lawmakers on Wednesday that Turkey didn't know the nationality of the plane that was brought down on Tuesday until Moscow announced it was Russian.

He said Russia was warned on several occasions that Turkey would take action in case its border is violated, in line with its military rules of engagement.

Davutoglu also said Russia is an "important partner and tops the list of countries with which we have shown great sensitivity in building ties."

The Turkish prime minister, however, criticized Russian and Syrian operations in Syria's Turkmen region, saying there is "not one single" presence of the Islamic State group there. Davutoglu demanded that operations there stop immediately.

Palestinian assailant killed after stabbing Israeli soldier

JERUSALEM (AP) — A Palestinian assailant was shot and killed by Israeli forces after stabbing and seriously wounding an Israeli soldier in the West Bank on Wednesday, the latest in an unrelenting, two month-long wave of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

The Israeli military said the soldier was stabbed at a junction near the West Bank city of Hebron. Troops on the scene shot the attacker, who later died in a Jerusalem hospital.

The attack comes a day after U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry visited the region to try to calm tensions. The violence erupted in mid-September over tensions surrounding a sensitive Jerusalem holy site and quickly spread across Israel and into the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The past week has been the deadliest of the outburst so far.

Attacks by Palestinians have killed 19 Israelis and 90 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire, among them 58 said by Israel to be assailants.

Israel says the violence stems from Palestinian incitement and incendiary videos on social media. Most of the attackers have been young Palestinians in their teens and early 20s.

The Palestinians say the violence is rooted in frustration over nearly a half century of Israeli occupation and lack of hope for obtaining independence.

There were no signs that Kerry made any headway in easing tensions during his meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

The violence continued even as Kerry's plane touched down, with a Palestinian motorist ramming his vehicle into a group of Israeli soldiers and wounding three before he was shot and wounded, the Israeli military said. The ongoing escalation has sunk the chances of a renewed peace push during the Obama administration's final year.

Chicago awaits more protests over police shooting

DON BABWIN, Associated Press

JASON KEYSER, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The white officer who shot a black Chicago teen 16 times has been charged with murder and jailed. The graphic video of the slaying has been made public. And in the hours after the footage was released, protesters seemed to honor pleas for restraint.

The question now is whether those efforts will be enough to address the simmering resentment that authorities took more than a year to share the footage and charge the officer who emptied an entire magazine into the teen even after he had crumpled to the ground.

City officials and community leaders had long braced for the release of the dash-cam video showing the death of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald. They feared the kind of turmoil that occurred in cities such as Baltimore and Ferguson, Missouri, after young black men were slain by police or died in police custody.

A judge ordered that the recording be made public by Wednesday. Moments before it was released, the mayor and the police chief urged protesters to stay calm.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel said residents will "have to make an important judgment about our city and ourselves and go forward." He referred to the episode as a potential "moment of understanding and learning."

Chicago authorities are right to be concerned. The sometimes violent protest movement that was galvanized by the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson in August 2014 continues to disrupt cities nationwide. The Nov. 15 killing of black 24-year-old Jamar Clark by a white Minneapolis police officer has prompted days of protests outside a police precinct. And the demonstrations continue, despite calls from Clark's family to go home after a shooting near the protest site injured five people.

In Chicago, protest groups are expected to stage more demonstrations in the days ahead, including one at City Hall scheduled for Wednesday and another seeking to block the main city's shopping thoroughfare, Michigan Avenue, during Friday's holiday spending bonanza.

Among the protesters was Justin Taylor, an 18-year-old University of Iowa student who returned home

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to Chicago for Thanksgiving.

"It's powerful we're coming together," Taylor said. "Things like this happen too often."

The relevant portion of the video runs for less than 40 seconds and has no audio.

McDonald swings into view on a four-lane street where police vehicles are stopped in the middle of the roadway. As he jogs down an empty lane, he appears to pull up his pants and then slows to a brisk walk, veering away from two officers who are emerging from a vehicle and drawing their guns.

Almost immediately, one of the officers appears to fire from close range. McDonald spins around and collapses on the pavement.

The car with the camera continues to roll forward until the officers are out of the frame. Then McDonald can be seen lying on the ground, moving occasionally. At least two small puffs of smoke are seen coming off his body as the officer continues firing.

In the final moments, an officer kicks something out of McDonald's hands.

Police have said the teen had a knife. Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez said Tuesday that a 3-inch knife with its blade folded into the handle was recovered from the scene.

Shortly after the video's release, protesters began marching through city streets. Several hundred people blocked traffic on the near West Side. Some circled police cars in an intersection and chanted "16 shots."

Demonstrators, at times numbering in the hundreds, streamed through streets in the downtown and near South Side areas, gathering at one point outside the police department's District 1 headquarters.

Later, along Michigan Avenue, at least one person was detained, which led to a tense moment as protesters tried to prevent police from taking him away. Some threw plastic water bottles at officers and sat behind a police vehicle, refusing to move. Officers pulled them away, and the vehicle sped off.

The biggest group had mostly dissipated by 11 p.m., with a few dozen returning to the District 1 building. Another group of at least 50 people briefly blocked a busy expressway before walking toward a lakefront park.

Before the release of the video, city officials spent months arguing that the footage could not be made public until the conclusion of several investigations. After the judge's order, the investigations were quickly wrapped up and a charge announced.

Alvarez said concern about the impending release prompted her to move up the announcement of the murder charge.

"It is graphic. It is violent. It is chilling," she said. "To watch a 17-year-old young man die in such a violent manner is deeply disturbing. I have absolutely no doubt that this video will tear at the hearts of all Chicagoans."

But she also defended the 13 months it took to charge Officer Jason Van Dyke, insisting that she made a decision "weeks ago" to charge him and the video's ordered release did not influence that.

Some community leaders questioned that assertion.

"This is a panicky reaction to an institutional crisis within the criminal justice system," said the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who said he hoped to see "massive" but peaceful demonstrations.

Months after McDonald's death, the city agreed to a \$5 million settlement with his family, even before relatives filed a lawsuit, a move that also drew deep skepticism from the community.

At the time of McDonald's death, police were responding to complaints about someone breaking into cars and stealing radios.

Van Dyke, who was denied bond on Tuesday, was the only officer of the several who were on the scene to open fire.

Alvarez said the officer was on the scene for just 30 seconds before he started shooting. She said he opened fire just six seconds after getting out of his vehicle and kept firing even though McDonald dropped to the ground after the initial shots.

At Tuesday's hearing, Assistant State's Attorney Bill Delaney said the shooting lasted 14 or 15 seconds and that McDonald was on the ground for 13 of those seconds.

An autopsy report showed that McDonald was shot at least twice in his back and PCP, a hallucinogenic drug, was found in his system.

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Van Dyke's attorney, Dan Herbert, maintains his client feared for his life and acted lawfully and that the video does not tell the whole story.

After the shooting, Van Dyke was stripped of his police powers and assigned to desk duty.

Herbert said the case needs to be tried in a courtroom and "can't be tried in the streets, can't be tried on social media and can't be tried on Facebook."

UN weather agency: It's record hot out there this year

SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Because of man-made global warming and a strong El Nino, Earth's wild weather this year is bursting the annual heat record, the World Meteorological Organization announced on Wednesday.

The United Nations weather agency's early bird report on 2015 says it is the hottest year on record, surpassing last year's record heat. It made the proclamation without waiting for the end of the year because it has been so extraordinarily hot, forecast to stay that way and unlikely to cool down enough to not set a record.

The report comes the week before world leaders assemble in Paris to try to negotiate an agreement to fight climate change.

"This is all bad news for the planet," the agency's secretary-general, Michel Jarraud, said in a statement.

The report is not surprising: Scientists at the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and elsewhere already were saying that 2015 likely would be the hottest. The U.N. agency, NOAA, NASA and Japan's weather agency all say 2014 is the current record hot year with a global temperature of 14.57 degrees Celsius, 58.23 degrees F.

"I would call it certain," NOAA's chief climate monitor, Deke Arndt, said on Tuesday. "Something game-changing massive would have to happen for it not to be a record."

Records go back to 1880.

Jarraud also said it is likely that the world has now warmed by 1 degree Celsius, or 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit, over pre-industrial times. That's a symbolic milestone: International leaders have set a goal of keeping global warming within 2 degrees C, 3.6 F, of pre-industrial times.

"It's a fair summary of where we are," said Gavin Schmidt, head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies. "2015 is going to be exceptional in many ways."

The world is warming because of heat-trapping gases that come from the burning of coal, oil and gas. On top of that, El Nino, a naturally occurring climate event that starts with warm water in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific, makes the world even warmer, scientists say.

The report is an atlas of extreme weather, from heat waves in Pakistan and India, where high temperatures broke 45 degrees Celsius, or 113 degrees F, to a record strong Hurricane Patricia in Mexico. It included heavy rains and flooding in the southern United States, Mexico, Bolivia, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, and droughts in the western United States, central Europe, Russia and Southeast Asia.

Brussels schools reopen, maximum threat alert still in place

MARIA CHENG, Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — After a four-day shutdown prompted by a threat alert across Brussels, schools are reopening their doors with the help of beefed up security, including police armed with machine guns.

Though the Belgian capital continues to be under the highest-level threat alert, meaning that an attack is serious and imminent, schools and subways began reopening across the city on Wednesday. That is restoring a sense of normality to the city, parts of which have been deserted since the alert was first raised to the top level in the capital on Saturday.

The threat level is expected to be in place until at least Monday unless there are significant developments, like the capturing of suspects linked to the Paris attacks on Nov. 13.

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At Brussels' College Saint-Jean-Berchmans, some parents gave their children a quick kiss before dropping them off, while several police officers guarded the entrance, including one with a visible machine gun. Among the students at the school is Belgium's Princess Eleonore.

"I'm concerned, but I think that life must go on," said Dimitri De Cra Yencour, a father of four. "Even if something happens in Paris or in Brussels, they have to go back to school," he said, adding he had instructed his children be extra attentive and to tell their teachers if they saw anything unusual.

At other schools in the region, officials sent parents letters and emails explaining security measures being taken under police orders, like limiting access to the school and not allowing children to play or gather in large spaces like courtyards.

Some children looked visibly worried as they arrived at the upscale Brussels school but most gave a friendly handshake to a burly school official guarding the entrance alongside the police officers.

Father Didier Nkoy Balengola said he had explained to his children that "there are some bad men who for no reason want to hurt innocent people" but he had confidence in the police.

Others said that after the terror-sparked school vacation this week, it was definitely time for classes to re-start.

"It was like Christmas come early for the children," said Annalaure Leger, a mother of two. "They stayed at home and played with the neighbors' kids." Leger said their family lives partly in Paris and that the children are very aware of what's happening both there and in Belgium. She said that Wednesday's school drop-off wasn't much different from any other day, except for the presence of camera crews snapping their arrival.

Leger said that neither she nor her children were too concerned about an imminent attack.

"It would be better if the police had caught the terrorists, but the children know they are trying to do that so that everyone is safe."

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. RUSSIAN PILOT RESCUED BY SYRIAN COMMANDO UNIT

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu says the man is now "safe and sound" at the Russian air base in the government-controlled area in Syria.

2. RUSSIAN CRACKDOWN ON MUSLIMS FUELS EXODUS TO ISLAMIC STATE GROUP

Thousands of young men in Russia's republic of Dagestan leave to join the militants in Syria in part because of the intimidating security presence and the culture of violence.

3. HOW MILITANTS NAVIGATED BENEATH IRAQI TOWN

Video footage shows a complex network of tunnels stocked with U.S. made ammunition and plenty of supplies carved into rock underneath Sinjar where they were vanquished.

4. OFFICER CHARGED WITH MURDER IN FATAL SHOOTING OF CHICAGO TEEN

The graphic video of the slaying is made public, and in the hours after the footage is released, protesters seem to honor pleas for restraint.

5. FRANCE INCREASES SECURITY FOR CLIMATE CONFERENCE

The country is deploying additional police and troops to guard about 140 world leaders expected in the Paris region for critical talks on fighting global warming.

6. WHY CHINA'S XI FACES DIPLOMATIC QUANDARY

The killings of Chinese citizens by Islamic militants in Syria and Mali require the president to decide how Beijing can respond without betraying its stance against intervention.

7. MOST TRAVELERS ON THE ROAD FOR THANKSGIVING SINCE 2007

An estimated 46.9 million Americans will be taking cars, planes, buses or trains over the holiday weekend, fueled by cheap gas prices, but concerns over attacks persist.

8. WHO FINESSES ABORTION STANCE

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In an interview with The AP, GOP presidential candidate Marco Rubio says he unequivocally backs abortion exceptions when the life of the mother is in danger.

9. IT'S RECORD HOT OUT THERE

Because of man-made global warming and a strong El Nino, Earth's wild weather this year is bursting the annual heat record, the World Meteorological Organization is set to announce.

10. REFEREES STRUGGLE WITH RESPECT AMID GROWING HOSTILITY

Recognizing the potential shortage, many state high school associations take lead roles in recruiting new talent to an aging workforce facing hostile conditions.

Pope brings peace message to Africa amid security fears

NICOLE WINFIELD, Associated Press

TOM ODULA, Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Pope Francis wants to bring a message of peace and reconciliation to an Africa torn by extremist violence, but security concerns are so high that he might be forced to make changes to his itinerary for the final leg of the trip.

Francis left Wednesday for his first-ever visit to the continent, a whirlwind pilgrimage to Kenya, Uganda and the Central African Republic that marks the first time a pope has flown into an active armed conflict: the 2-year-old spiral of deadly violence between Christian and Muslims in the Central African Republic.

On the eve of the departure, the Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, insisted that there were no new worrisome threats and that the pope planned to carry on with his program, as scheduled. But in a sign that the Vatican was on alert, Francis' own chief bodyguard made a last-minute visit to Bangui this week to get the latest on-the-ground security updates, and will only meet up with the pope once he lands in Nairobi on Wednesday afternoon.

The bodyguard, Domenico Giani, said upon his departure that "some small modifications" could be made to the itinerary if risks emerged, especially for the civilian population or the U.N. peacekeeping operation.

Before he gets to conflict-wracked Central African Republic, Francis is expected to press a host of issues close to his heart in Kenya and Uganda, including poverty, the environment and the need for interfaith dialogue.

He is also likely to challenge the countries' political leaders on corruption. Transparency International ranked Kenya a lowly 145 out of 174 countries in its 2014 corruption perception index, while critics of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni charge that official corruption has thrived under his three-decade rule.

Francis is likely to raise the issue during his first meeting Wednesday with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, who declared this week that corruption is a national security threat to East Africa's largest economy.

While in Kenya, Francis will also deliver an important environmental message at the U.N. Environment Program headquarters on the eve of make-or-break climate talks in Paris. He'll also visit a Nairobi slum and seek to encourage young Kenyan Christians following the rampage by Islamic extremists who killed nearly 150 people at a college of mostly Christian students in April.

In Uganda, Francis will pray at the shrine to the country's famous martyrs and celebrate a Mass in their honor.

The 45 Anglicans and Catholics were killed during the persecution of Christians in the region from 1885-1887. Pope Paul VI canonized the 22 African Catholics in 1964, and they remain an important reference point for Ugandan Catholics such that some 2 million people are expected at Francis' Mass on Saturday.

Some uncomfortable issues may arise: The church's opposition to condoms as a way to fight AIDS, and its support of local legislation criminalizing homosexuality are chief among them.

But on the whole, the pope's visit is meant to tell the African church that it matters, said the Rev. Robert Dowd, professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame. "It has a crucial role to play in promoting justice and peace in societies where governments are not always accountable or responsive."

The Vatican has long looked to Africa as the future of the Catholic Church, given the proportion of African Catholics in the world population of Catholics increased from 7 percent to 16 percent between 1980

and 2012, according to a report this year by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, a research center affiliated with Georgetown University in the United States.

Francis, though, is also likely to issue some tough love words to local clergy, who tend to let missionaries get their hands dirty working with society's outcasts while diocesan priests and bishops live somewhat removed from the hardships of daily life. The Vatican has also long fought to keep its African clergy celibate.

The pope is due to arrive Sunday in Bangui for the most delicate part of the trip. The country has been highly volatile since early 2013, when Muslim rebels overthrew the president of a decade. Unprecedented sectarian violence followed and has continued to flare despite the presence of more than 11,000 peacekeepers and police.

Francis is expected to encourage an interfaith peace initiative involving the archbishop, the evangelical leader and Bangui's imam, while also giving Africa a head start to his Jubilee Year celebrations: On Sunday, he is due to open the "holy door" of Bangui's cathedral, formally inaugurating the yearlong celebration of mercy that he has proclaimed for the church around the world.

In a video message sent to CAR Catholics this week, Francis made clear he had no plans to skip the appointment.

"Your country has known for too long a situation of violence and insecurity where many of you have become innocent victims," he said. "My aim is to bring you comfort, consolation and hope in the name of Jesus."

"A bientot," he said. "See you soon."

Rubio finesses abortion stance criticized by Democrats

JULIE PACE, AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Republican presidential candidate Marco Rubio staked out a hard-line position on abortion in the first GOP debate, Hillary Rodham Clinton took notice.

The Democratic front-runner quickly blasted Rubio's assertion that he did not support abortion exceptions for victims of rape and incest as "offensive and troubling." At Clinton's Brooklyn campaign headquarters, aides saw echoes of the controversial abortion comments by other GOP candidates that hurt Republicans with women voters during the 2012 election.

Since then, Rubio has been finessing his statements. In an interview with The Associated Press, Rubio said he unequivocally backs abortion exceptions when the life of the mother is in danger. He said he also would back legislation with allowances for cases of rape and incest — even though he personally doesn't support those exceptions.

"I, as president, will sign a bill that has exceptions," he said. "I've supported bills that have exceptions."

"I do not personally require a bill to have exceptions — other than life of the mother — in order for me to support it," Rubio added. "But I will sign a bill as president that has exceptions."

While Rubio's policy position remains the same, his tone and emphasis in the interview were notably different than in the August GOP debate, when he bristled at a question suggesting he supported allowing women to end pregnancies that resulted from rape or incest.

"I have never said that," Rubio said at the time. "And I have never advocated that. What I have advocated is that we pass laws in this country that say all human life at every stage of its development is worthy of protection."

Rubio's advisers deny there's been a conscious effort to make his views on abortion more palatable to a general election audience.

"We really do welcome a debate on life in both the primary and general election," said Alex Conant, Rubio's communications director.

Clinton's campaign welcomes the discussion, too.

"Marco Rubio joins much of the Republican field in opposing a woman's right to control her own health care decisions, even in the case of rape and incest," said Christina Reynolds, Clinton's deputy communications director. "No attempt to mislead on his record will change the fact that his agenda on women's

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health is dangerously out of touch and out of date.”

An August Quinnipiac University poll showed that 78 percent of registered voters said abortion should be legal in cases of rape or incest, and 85 percent said it should be legal to save the life of the mother. The same poll showed 65 percent of registered voters said they could support a presidential candidate that holds a different position than they do on abortion.

Democrats' early focus on Rubio's abortion position underscores the party's view that he would pose a formidable challenge to Clinton in the general election. The 44-year-old son of Cuban immigrants has a compelling life story and optimistic campaign message. He's been casting the 2016 election as a generational fight, a strategy aimed not just at his older Republican rivals, but also at Clinton.

Rubio has supported legislation making allowances for abortion, including a 2013 bill that banned abortions after 20 weeks, with exceptions for rape, incest and the health of the mother. Still, the senator has a perfect rating from the National Right to Life organization. During his 2010 Senate campaign in Florida, he repeatedly called for overturning *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion.

While it's unlikely abortion will overtake the economy or national security as the top priority for voters, the issue was briefly in the political spotlight this fall after videos surfaced showing Planned Parenthood officials discussing retrieving fetal tissue. Next year, as the general election kicks into high gear, the Supreme Court is expected to rule on a challenge to a Texas abortion law seen as one of the strictest in the nation.

Both parties can also point to recent electoral examples where using abortion and women's health as wedge issues worked in their favor.

During the 2012 presidential campaign, Democrats aggressively linked GOP nominee Mitt Romney to controversial statements about rape and abortion made by Republican candidates in statewide races. Romney lost women voters by 10 points to President Barack Obama.

Democrats tried to use a similar strategy during the 2014 Senate race in Colorado, a crucial swing state in presidential elections. Sen. Mark Udall ran numerous ads trying to cast his Republican challenger Cory Gardner's anti-abortion stance as extreme. But the single-issue focus backfired, and Gardner handily defeated the incumbent Democrat.

Rubio says he sees an opportunity to turn the abortion debate around on Clinton in a general election. He cast her as the one out of step with most Americans because she has been more permissive of abortions and did not vote for a partial birth abortion ban when she was in the Senate.

"Hillary Clinton basically believes there should be no restrictions on abortion," Rubio told the AP. "Those are radical, out of touch views that she has and I relish the opportunity to expose her radicalism."

He jumped into Normandy, ran spies in Moscow, retired at 90

KEN DILANIAN, AP Intelligence Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hugh Montgomery never wrote a memoir. That just wasn't done among his generation of spies.

But his exploits as a World War II combat veteran, CIA cold warrior and Washington power player could have filled a dozen books and made him a revered figure among the insiders who know his story.

Montgomery jumped into Normandy on D-Day with the 82nd Airborne. He went behind enemy lines for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the CIA's daring and nimble forerunner, where he was among the first Americans to enter the Buchenwald concentration camp. After returning to Harvard to earn his PhD and teach, he joined the newly formed CIA, where he led spying operations against the Soviets in Rome, Paris, Vienna, Athens and Moscow.

"I'd call him one of the founding fathers of the CIA," said Leon Panetta, who consulted Montgomery occasionally when he was director of the spy agency.

Panetta spoke in a video tribute played earlier this month at a black-tie dinner of the OSS Society, which is raising money to build a museum. Montgomery was the main event, standing to accept the William D. Donovan award, named after the OSS founder.

After his overseas career, Montgomery ran the State Department's intelligence bureau for a time, earned the rank of ambassador and settled into a role as the CIA's elder statesman. He regaled lunch partners

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in the 7th-floor dining room while he worked on a 11-volume classified history of the CIA's relationships with other spy services.

He retired from the CIA in May of last year at the age of 90, after the history was finished. He turns 92 on Sunday.

CIA director John Brennan, who last year awarded him the Distinguished Career Intelligence Medal, called him "one of the greatest American heroes of our time."

These days, a broken foot has made it hard for Montgomery to get up and down the stairs in his suburban home near the CIA's Langley, Virginia, headquarters. The February death of his wife of 66 years, Annemarie, has left a void.

But his wit remains sharp and his stories flow easily.

After a semester at Harvard, he enlisted in 1941 before Pearl Harbor, and volunteered for the airborne. He speaks about the D-Day jump into France as if it were yesterday.

"It's awful black out there when you look down unless you see a few tracer bullets coming your way."

Fluent in eight languages, including German, he was recruited into a special counter-intelligence detachment of the OSS, an elite wartime spying organization.

Often, he was tasked with sneaking behind enemy lines in Germany to abduct a Nazi who could provide valuable intelligence. He and his men typically had the exact addresses of their targets, which he believes came through British penetration of German code.

In April 1945, he was on a mission in a vehicle with five other OSS operatives in search of a nuclear physicist in eastern Germany, when they came upon a clearing and "a ghastly smell."

He would later learn it was Buchenwald, where 56,000 prisoners died. The survivors had just seized control, and Montgomery says his group passed guards with their hands up, trying to surrender to any Americans they saw.

"There were a very few of the prisoners who were still vertical," he says. "It was just unimaginable."

He gave the survivors all his cigarettes and radioed the U.S. Army, breaking his secrecy protocol. Some survivors gave him a German SS flag that flew over the camp, now rolled up in his basement.

Montgomery told the former inmates he had to go. They had a request: Leave the guards to us.

"I said, 'They're yours,'" Montgomery recalled.

The camp gave him nightmares, Montgomery said, but his World War II duty also led him to meet his future wife, Annemarie, in a remote Austrian mountain town. They had two children, one of whom now works for the National Security Agency.

After the war, Montgomery was recruited by famous CIA officer Richard Helms to join the CIA. He was sent to Berlin, where he worked on a secret tunnel designed to tap Soviet communications.

In the early 1960s, Montgomery, then deputy station chief in Moscow, was tasked with retrieving an information packet hidden by the agency's top Soviet informant during a dinner party at the American ambassador's residence in Moscow.

He had to stand on the sink to reach into a high-up toilet tank to retrieve the dead drop. The plumbing began to pull away from the wall. Montgomery's suit was soaked up to his sleeve as he reached in and grabbed the packet.

With Annemarie clutching his wet arm, Montgomery slipped away from the party with no one the wiser. CIA asset Col. Oleg Vladimirovich Penkovsky, code-named Hero, went on to provide information that helped President John F. Kennedy defuse the Cuban Missile crisis, the agency says.

Montgomery served in the CIA through its darkest chapters — the coups, assassinations and the interrogations of detainees after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, now widely considered torture. He doesn't claim the CIA's record is without blemish. But he believes the spy agency has been a force for good.

"Nobody knows a lot of the good things that it did," he says. "Did it make mistakes? Unquestionably. This is not an exact science, espionage."

The man whose life has encompassed the entire history of the Central Intelligence Agency was asked if working into his ninth decade kept him spy.

"No," he said with a wistful chuckle. "Nothing keeps you young. The calendar cannot be stopped, I've learned."

Russia halting gas supplies to Ukraine

MOSCOW (AP) — The chief executive of the Russian state-controlled gas company says it is halting supplies to Ukraine.

Gazprom's CEO Alexei Miller said on Wednesday that Russia sent the last shipment to Ukraine at 10 a.m. local time on Wednesday and would not send more because Ukraine has not paid in advance for future supplies.

Russia resumed gas shipments to Ukraine less than two months ago after the two countries signed an EU-brokered deal ensuring supplies through March.

Past gas disputes between Russia and Ukraine have led to cutoffs. One standoff in 2009 caused serious disruptions in shipments EU countries in the dead of winter.

Temperatures in Ukraine where most homes rely on piped gas for central heating were below freezing Wednesday morning.

Sandra now a hurricane in eastern Pacific off Mexican coast; expected to strengthen further

MIAMI (AP) — Sandra now a hurricane in eastern Pacific off Mexican coast; expected to strengthen further.

Alaska beach sculptures represent emotional vulnerabilities

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Dozens of sculptures made of straw, cement, plaster and burlap are spread across an Anchorage beach in a public art installation that is focusing on mental health.

The display has been erected at Point Woronzof and will officially open Dec. 5.

Lead project artist Sarah Davies says the 85 sculptures represent people dealing with emotional vulnerabilities, including trauma and mental illness.

Participants say the 100Stone project is about the personal wellness-management stories of Alaskans. Participants say each sculpture was fashioned from and by people affected by emotional pressures.