

Groton Daily Independent

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The Webster Area School board voted Thursday night to not pursue a wrestling co-op with Groton Area.

Saturday, December 12

Conference Debate (location TBD)

Birthdays: Brittany Ronning • Jason Warrington

• Robert Meister • Alan Nierman

9:00am: Santa Day at Professional Management Services

9:00am: Robotics at Rapid City Stevens

10:00am: Wrestling Tourney at Lamoure

2:00pm: Double Header hosts Leola-Frederick (Boys JV at 3 pm, Varsity girls at 4:40 pm and boys varsity at 6 pm)

4:30pm: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Mass

Sunday, December 13

Birthdays: Jon Vedvei • Jessica Adler • Blake Fliehs • Gabriella Merkel • Melissa Gilbert, Dean Townsend

9:00am: Emmanuel Lutheran School

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

9:00am: St. John's Lutheran Worship

9:30am: Emmanuel Lutheran Fellowship

10:00am: Heaven Bound Ministries worship at Pierpont Church

10:00am: St. John's Lutheran Christmas Program practice

10:15am: Emmanuel Lutheran Worship/SS Sings

11:00am: United Methodist Church Worship

3:00pm: 3:00 pm: Open Gym (JK-8th grade 6th grade - 12th grade 5-7 pm)

Monday, December 14

School Breakfast: Cereal, yogurt, fruit, juice, milk.

2015 Groton Area Elementary Preschool Developmental Screening for 3 year olds

Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2015

Parents of children ages 3 in the Groton Area School District are asked to contact Heidi Krueger at the Groton Area Elementary School during school hours at 397-2317 to set up a screening time or to confirm their screening time.

The Developmental Screening will take place at the Groton Area High School Arena. Please park and use the east entrance to the gym.

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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Harry Implement
"Family Owned & Operated Since 1935!"



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Ferney

Groton Daily Independent

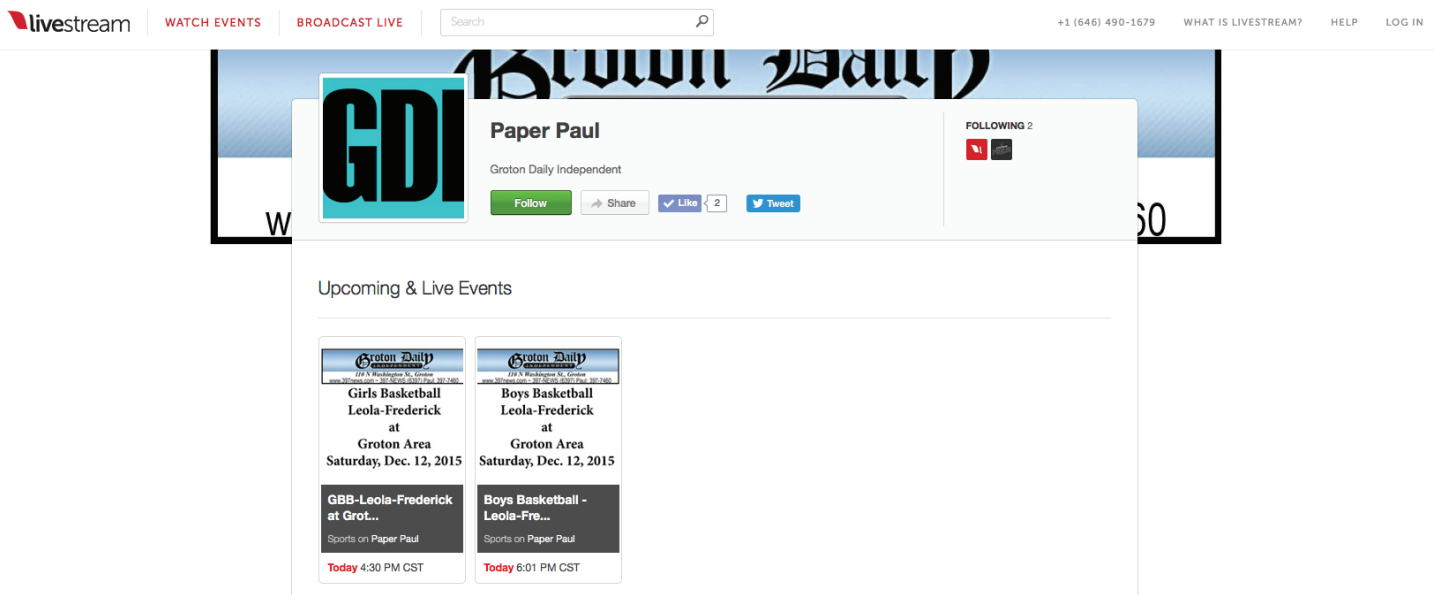
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All Events Streamed with the Groton Daily Independent can now be seen on



All future streams can be viewed at
<http://livestream.com/GDI>

that includes today's girls basketball game at 4:30
and today's boys basketball game at 6:00
Middle/High School Christmas Concert
Elementary Christmas Concert
and more!



When you get to the page, it will look like that above. Click on the green Follow button, enter your email address or sign in with your Facebook account and you'll be notified of the streams. You watch the streams on your mobile device as well.



Groton Chamber Holiday Boxes are out & about in Groton!

This Week (thru 12/11) – Lori's Pharmacy
\$25 Chamber Bucks OR Savory Seasoning!

Next Week (thru 12/18) – Professional
Management Supply
\$25 Chamber Bucks OR Mystery Gift!

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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Groton Lions Club

The December monthly meeting of the Groton Lions Club was held last Thursday evening, with president Christ Frost leading the short business session.

Plans were made for a holiday party and potluck supper, for the monthly January meeting, Thursday, Jan. 14, at 6 pm.

Lee Schinkel proposed four new possible members to the Groton club. They were Joseph Williams, Joshua and Elizabeth Heitz, and Justin Kersten, all of Groton. All four were voted upon to become the newest members of the club.

Groton Kiwanis Club

Lee Schinkel was program leader for last week's weekly dinner Kiwanis meeting.

Lee introduced Kristen Gonsoir, GHS science instructor, debate coach, and oral debate coach,; and six of her GHS students. These students were seniors, Lily Cutler, Kelsey Iverson, and Katie Miller; juniors Keri Pappas, and Erin Smith, and sophomore, Jenifer Fjelstad. This group, the Reader's Theater, wrote their own oral interp selections, were state qualifiers, and placed 2nd at the Watertown Invitational.

Lily Cutler was a state qualifier in poetry, and placed 5th at the Mitchell tournament.

Erin Smith and Jenifer Fjelstad were also state qualifiers in duo interp. Keri Pappas was a state alternate in non-original oratory, and Lily Cutler was a state alternate in the humorous division.

**S & S Lumber/Hardware Hank of Groton
will be closing
at noon on Wednesday, Dec. 16th, for inventory
and will reopen at normal hours on Thursday.**

Doug Sombke Elected to Serve Sixth Term as South Dakota Farmers Union

HURON, S.D. - Doug Sombke was elected by the members of South Dakota Farmers Union to serve a sixth term during the organization's centennial convention held in Huron Dec. 9 and 10, 2015.

"I feel truly honored to serve the membership of this great organization - these are South Dakota's farmers, ranchers and rural citizens," explained Sombke, a fourth generation Conde crop and cattle farmer who has served as the organization's President since 2005.

Serving more than 17,000 family farmers, ranchers & rural citizens statewide As president of one of South Dakota's largest agriculture organizations, Sombke spends his days traveling across the state and nation advocating for family farms, ranches and rural communities, while his three now-grown sons manage the day-to-day farming operations of the family farm. All three sons also operate

independent businesses which helps the farm sustain four families.

"It's the next generation of young farmers and ranchers who inspire me - our state's economic future rests in their hands because agriculture is our number one industry. They are the reason I put my all into this role each and every day," Sombke explains. "When I was first asked to serve as President 10 years ago, the timing could not have been better. My sons were ready to become more active on the farm."

Since becoming President 10 years ago, the organizations' membership numbers have soared, reaching a 20-year high of 17,000 in 2015.

"Membership numbers increased in nearly every county throughout South Dakota - this is a clear sign that our organization is not only strong, but growing," says Karla Hofhenke, S.D. Farmers Union Executive Secretary.

Hofhenke that as a grassroots organization, she and the rest of the state staff are led by Sombke and a board of agriculture producers. During state convention, three board members were also reelected. These members include; Wayne Soren, SDFU Vice President, Lake Preston; Jim Wahl, Salem; Lynn Frey, Lemmon; and Joel Keierleber, Colome.

To learn more about S.D. Farmers Union, Sombke and his family's farm, visit www.sdfu.org and click on the Celebrating Farm & Ranch Families icon.



Considering Our Options On Medicaid

A column by Gov. Dennis Daugaard:

In the past, I've been unwilling to support expansion of Medicaid in South Dakota. Without a plan to cover the state costs, I have opposed expansion. But I have never said "never," and there may be a way to cover our costs completely.

Since last spring the state has been in discussions with the federal government and South Dakota tribes about the way healthcare services are provided to Native Americans. The United States Government strives to meet their treaty obligation to provide health care to Native Americans through the Indian Health Service.

Many Native Americans in South Dakota are not able to be served by IHS, however. This can be because there is no IHS facility in their area, because IHS doesn't have specialists available, because of long wait times or because IHS funding for the fiscal year is exhausted.

No matter the reason, when a Native American who is Medicaid eligible does not seek care through IHS, but instead goes to another provider, part of the cost is shifted to the state. When South Dakota must cover these costs, it is because the federal government is not meeting its treaty obligation.

If more Native American health care expenditures could be 100% federally funded – as the treaty requires – the state could save up to \$67 million per year. That would be enough to cover fully the state's costs to expand Medicaid.

In the past, the federal government has not been receptive to fixing the cost shifting problem. Gov. Janklow tried to change it and couldn't. Gov. Rounds sued over it and lost. But now, the federal government is willing to listen. For the first time, we have the opportunity to solve this longstanding problem.

But it is only possible if we expand Medicaid at the same time. Any change to our state Medicaid program is subject to approval by HHS and requires tribal consultation. They will not approve a change in how IHS reimburses our state unless we use the proceeds to fund expansion.

This is a very complex area and making something work will be difficult. I cannot tell you today that everything will come together. But if it does, we should seize the opportunity. Making this change would benefit Native Americans and others who would gain health coverage. It would also save funds for counties, jails and prisons, hospitals, and other Medicaid providers.

I know many South Dakotans are skeptical about expanding Medicaid, and I share some of those sentiments. It bothers me that some people who can work will become more dependent on government. It bothers me that a single adult could choose to go on Medicaid rather than work a minimum wage job to qualify for insurance on the health insurance exchange.

But we also have to remember those who would benefit, such as the single mother of three who simply cannot work enough hours to exceed the poverty line for her family.

I also want to be clear: This is not a done deal. Our talks with the federal government have been promising, but there is much work to be done. There is still the potential for this effort to fall through.

I will not support expansion unless our savings cover costs anticipated next year, and every year through State Fiscal Year 2021. I will not support expansion unless HHS and IHS do what they need to do to make it work. I will not support expansion unless our tribes agree with these changes. And I will not support expansion unless the Legislature supports it also.

This is a complicated decision and we all have to weigh the positives and negatives. In my mind, the opportunity to end this longstanding IHS reimbursement issue, to gain coverage for more South Dakotans, to improve health care for Native Americans, to save money for counties and Medicaid providers, and to potentially save millions in state dollars outweighs the negatives. If we can make the money work, we should seize this opportunity.

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Delivering On Our Promise to the American People **By Sen. John Thune**

Last year at this time, Republicans were preparing to take control of the Senate – the first time Republicans would control the upper chamber since 2007 – and follow through on the promises we made to the American people. Republicans were serious when we pledged to get Washington working again. It wasn't a half-hearted slogan we used to campaign for the majority, it was a commitment by which we intended to govern in the majority.

Republicans pledged to tackle the big issues, which is why in just the first few weeks of the new Republican majority, we sent a bill to President Obama that would have approved the long-stalled, job-creating Keystone XL pipeline. We also passed important legislation that gave the American people a voice on the president's misguided nuclear agreement with Iran, a ten-year balanced budget that didn't raise a single dime in taxes, a bill that funds America's men and women in uniform, numerous resolutions that would block burdensome EPA regulations, legislation that defunds Planned Parenthood, and a bill that repeals Obamacare.

I was glad we were able to help secure the Powder River Training Complex (PRTC) expansion, which was an effort nearly nine years in the making. As I said in March when the expansion was first announced, while this was a long process, I'm proud we're able to provide our servicemen and women with the resources they need to be successful in a combat environment. In early December, PRTC commanders and airmen completed their first of what I hope will be many successful large force exercises.

It was a humbling experience to play an integral role in getting the first long-term highway bill in more than a decade signed into law. The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, of which I am chairman, can be credited with nearly half of the legislative text included in the final version of the bill, including reforms that will enhance safety, provide regulatory relief, streamline grant programs, and improve the accountability and efficiency of oversight efforts. Having served on the conference committee that negotiated the final version, I was in a unique position to ensure South Dakota's interests were given key consideration.

States like South Dakota that depend on freight rail to ship products to and from their communities will benefit from the important Surface Transportation Board (STB) reforms that I helped usher through the Commerce Committee and full House and Senate. These reforms – the first of their kind for the STB – will end the uncertainty faced by businesses and agriculture producers and help protect the consumers who are ultimately impacted by disruptions in freight transportation.

While we've been able to accomplish a lot of important things for the American people, there is more work to be done. We plan to spend the second year of the 114th Congress the way we've spent the first: fighting to make our economy stronger, our government more efficient and more accountable, and our nation and our world safer and more secure.

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Here is how the Schwan's fundraiser works.

Customers phone in the order or order online
They use the code. 25179

If they regularly order online they are asked if they want to contribute to a fundraiser

That is when they put the code in.

Between Dec 2 and Jan 16, we will earn 20% of sales
If a customer orders an ecertificate-and online gift card we get \$10 for the \$25 ecertificate.

When you get an ecertificate, you can go in and purchase right away or you can print it out
if you want to give it as a gift or save it for later.
Customers are limited to one ecertificate...BUT if you use an alternate email address you can purchase more than one

If you are not a regular Schwan's customer, when you place your order they will tell you what day
And approximate (2 hour) time they plan to deliver.

You can be a one time customer and support us.

If you order online you must give them a credit card number, however you can switch payment at the door.

It took me a few fundraisers to realize that if I purchase during the first 45 days I contribute 20% and save my ecertificates for after the Jan 16 date, duh! Before that I was purchasing ecertificates and using them right away.

Our greatest income will be during this 45 day period.
After that we will earn 5% until April 16.

Schwan's
Cares™
A Fundraising Network



Support Us

*Giving back to your community
never tasted so delicious.*

Schwan's Home Delivery offers over 350 delicious foods, flash-frozen at the peak of freshness and conveniently delivered to your door. Through Schwans-Cares.com, you can order from Schwan's Home Delivery and help our organization meet its fundraising goals. When you order by **January 16th, 2016**, 20% of product and 40% of eGift Card sales will go back to the organization.

Here are two ways to support us!

Order Online:

1. Visit Schwans-Cares.com
2. Enter Campaign ID: **25179** into the search box located in the upper right hand corner then click to open campaign.
3. Click "Shop to Give" and then select either the "Buy Now" or "Shop Now" option.
4. Select team member, if applicable
5. Start shopping!

Order by Phone:

Call 1-855-870-7208 and provide Campaign ID: **25179**

Thank you for your support!

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Shop online at Schwans-Cares.com
or call 1-855-870-7208



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Today in Weather History

December 12, 1968: An intense blizzard visited most of South Dakota and Minnesota on the 12th and 13th of December. The storm began in the western part of South Dakota on the morning of the 12th then spread into the eastern part of the state and into west central Minnesota by that afternoon, where it continued into the morning of the 13th. Snow was preceded by freezing rain, and in west central Minnesota, with thunder and lightning as well. Winds of over 50 mph caused blowing and drifting snow, which occasionally reduced visibilities to near zero. Gusts reached 70 mph in many places. Temperatures falling to near zero during the day also resulted in dangerously low wind chills, particularly in Minnesota. The eastern half of South Dakota into west central Minnesota experienced the most severe blizzard conditions. Many schools were closed, and most other activities were greatly curtailed.

Automobile accidents were numerous across the area. Numerous utility lines were downed, and power and telephone outages were numerous due to the high winds. Power outages from less than an hour up to 12 hours were common across Minnesota. Snowfall ranged from around one inch in western South Dakota, to five inches in eastern South Dakota, to five to ten inches in west central Minnesota. One death in South Dakota was attributed to the storm when a man died of exposure to the cold near Allen in southwest South Dakota. In Minnesota, one man was found frozen to death near his car after it had run into the ditch several miles northwest of Boyd in Lac Qui Parle County. Another man was killed by a train when his car became stalled on a railroad crossing at Hancock. 5 inches of snow fell at Watertown, Sisseton, and Webster with 6 inches at Clear Lake.

1882 - Portland, OR, was drenched with 7.66 inches of rain, a record 24 hour total for that location. (12th-13th) (The Weather Channel)

1960 - The first of three Middle Atlantic snowstorms produced a foot of snow at Baltimore MD. A pre-winter blizzard struck the northeastern U.S. producing wind gusts as high as 51 mph, along with 16 inches of snow at Nantucket MA, and 20 inches at Newark NJ. (David Ludlum)

1969 - The worst tornado of record for western Washington State tracked south of Seattle, traveling five miles, from Des Moines to Kent. The tornado, 50 to 200 yards in width, began as a waterspout over Puget Sound. One person was injured and the tornado caused half a million dollars damage. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - While a developing winter storm began to spread snow across New Mexico into Colorado, high winds ushered unseasonably cold air into the southwestern states. Winds in California gusted to 60 mph in the Sacramento River Delta, and in the San Bernardino Valley. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Cold arctic air spread from the Great Lakes Region to the Appalachian Region. Twenty-five cities, mostly in the northeastern U.S., reported record low temperatures for the date. The low of 12 degrees below zero at Albany NY was their coldest reading of record for so early in the season. Saranac Lake NY was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 28 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary)








1989 - A winter storm produced snow from northern Mississippi to the Middle Atlantic Coast, with 10.5 inches reported at Powhatan VA. Heavy snow whitened the Black Hills of South Dakota, with 36 inches reported at Deer Mountain. Thirteen cities in the north central U.S., from Minnesota to Texas, reported record low temperatures for the date, including Duluth MN and Yankton SD with morning lows of 22 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1995 - A severe coastal storm is blamed for five deaths and loss of power to over one million people in Oregon and Washington. Winds at Sea Lion Caves near Florence topped out at 119 mph before problems developed with the anemometer. In Newport, a gust of 107 mph occurred downtown, while Astoria and Cape Blanco also had gusts of over 100 mph. Astoria's air pressure dropped as low as 28.53 inches, an all-time record (and comparable to the central pressure of a Category 2 hurricane!). Gusts in the Willamette Valley exceeded 60 mph.

2008 - A significant ice storm wreaked havoc across New York and New England on December 12, disrupting electricity and leaving over 1 million homes and businesses without power. New Hampshire alone had as many as 320,000 residents without power, which according to reports it was described as the worst outages in 30 years (Reuters). Four fatalities were reported and parts of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Maine declared a state of emergency (BBC News).

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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Cloudy	Chance Snow	Slight Chance Snow then Cloudy	Cloudy then Cloudy and Blustery	Cloudy and Breezy then Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance Snow	Chance Snow
High: 34 °F	Low: 29 °F	High: 35 °F	Low: 27 °F	High: 33 °F	Low: 22 °F	High: 29 °F



Light Snow Moving In Later Today

Follow us on Social Media

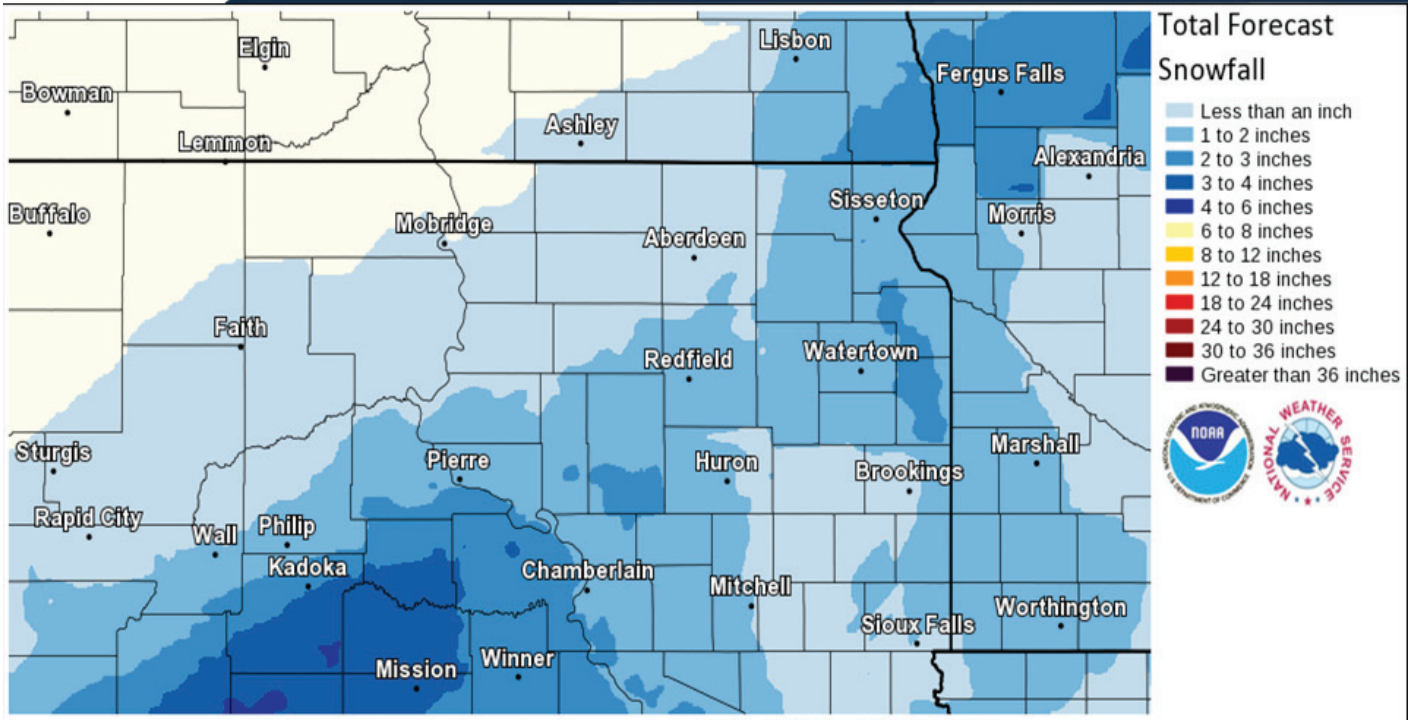
weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen



Valid ending at Monday December 14th, 2015 at 6 PM CST

Created Saturday December 12th, 2015 at 4:39 AM CST

Published on: 12/12/2015 at 4:59 AM

Light snow will begin moving into the region this afternoon and continue spreading northeast into the evening hours. In general, a trace to 2 inches are expected over the area today through Sunday, but amounts near 3 inches are possible across south central South Dakota.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 34.3 at Midnight

Low: 31.1 at 4:55 AM

High Gust: 13 at 6:50 AM

Precip: 0.03

Today's Info

Record High: 54° in 1924

Record Low: -28° in 1893

Average High: 26°F

Average Low: 7°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.21

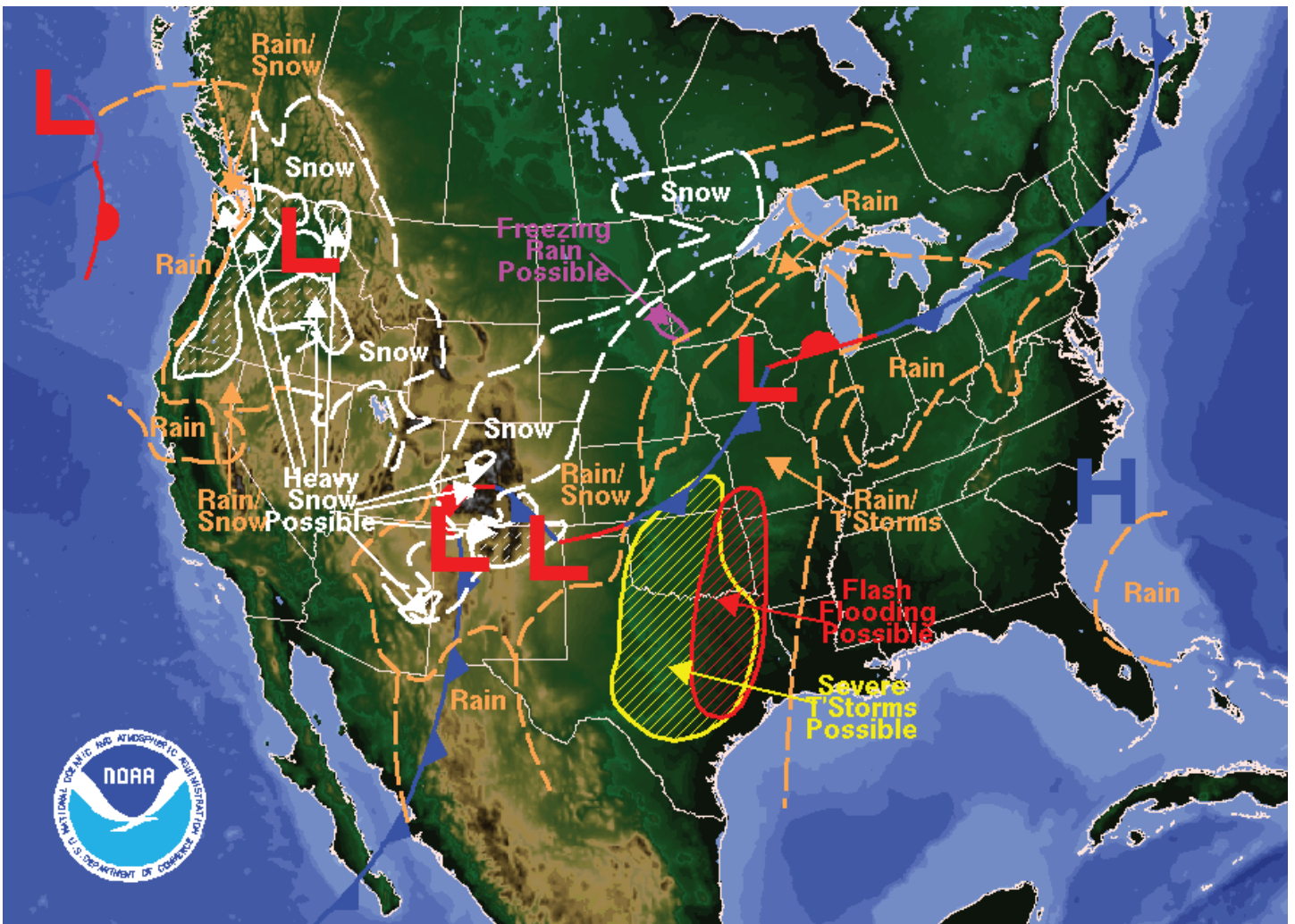
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.55

Average Precip to date: 21.41

Precip Year to Date: 20.37

Sunset Tonight: 4:50 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:04 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Sat, Dec 12, 2015, issued 3:52 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Tate based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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EMOTIONS

Emotions are a very important part of life. They are a gift from God and have a very important role in life. Our emotions are an outward expression of what is going on inside of us. We smile when something pleases us. We cry when something saddens us. We rejoice when unexpected gifts are given to us. We groan when we hurt or someone we love hurts. There is no internal feeling that does not have an external result. Yet, it is "external" things that we "internalize" that force our feelings.

Take sporting events. When teams face one another in a contest, one will win and the other will lose. If we select the winning team, our emotions will demonstrate feelings of joy and happiness, excitement and ecstasy. We will stand and shout, lift our arms in victory and jump up and down. If we select the losing team, our emotions will demonstrate feelings of gloom and doom, discouragement and disgust. Unless we are gambling on the outcome of the event, all we stand to lose is our pride for making the wrong choice.

Rarely, however, do we see overt emotions expressed when God grants His blessings. There were days when His children wept with joy when a lost soul repented or shared their enthusiasm when a prayer request was answered or stood with arms reaching toward heaven for a miracle of healing. We seem to have allowed an exact "theology" to overcome the joy of "doxology."

We need to heed the Psalmist: "Let those who trust and love You...be glad...sing for joy...and rejoice in You."

Prayer: Awaken our emotions Lord! Free us from being lukewarm, uninvolved and impassioned about Your grace. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 5:11 But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.

News from the Associated Press

Kimzey wins 2nd straight world bull riding title

KEITH FREEMAN, Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Sage Kimzey became the first bull rider to win world championships in each of his first two seasons, earning his second straight title with a second-place finish in round nine of the National Finals Rodeo on Friday night.

The defending world and aggregate champ, who has led the world standings throughout the NFR, scored an 84 on Maverick. Kimzey, of Strong City, Okla., now has earned \$261,601 while Cody Teel of Kountze, Texas, is second in the world standings with \$207,249 after getting bucked off of Hang 'em High.

Teel leads the aggregate standings with 574 points for seven rides. Kimzey is second with 494 points over six successful rides.

Clayton Foltyn of Winnie, Texas, won the round with an 88 on Skid Row. It was the second win for Foltyn at the 2015 NFR, as he was the lone qualifier and collected \$84,615 in round two.

In team roping, header Trevor Brazile of Decatur, Texas, and heeler Patrick Smith of Lipan, Texas, won the round in a time of 4.0. Brazile became the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association's first \$6 million man in career earnings as he has now made \$6,029,513 in three events and all-around and collected a record 23 gold buckles.

"It (his career earnings) just shows how much this sport has changed and grown," Brazile said. "I never take winning and records for granted. I've been blessed beyond my wildest dreams in my career."

Header Derrick Begay of Seba Dalkai, Arizona, and heeler Clay O'Brien Cooper of Gardnerville, Nevada, remain first in the world standings with \$196,464 for Begay and \$197,584 for Cooper after placing third in a time of 4.2.

Header JoJo LeMond of Andrews, Texas, and heeler Junior Nogueira of Scottsdale, Arizona, are the aggregate standings leaders with a time of 50.2 for nine rounds after placing fifth in 4.7.

In tie-down roping, Brazile took over the world standings lead with \$196,324 when he tied for fourth in 7.4.

Defending three-time world champion Tuf Cooper of Decatur, Texas, dropped from first in the world standings to second with \$187,976 after not placing among the top six with a time of 16.6.

Caleb Smidt of Bellville, Texas, who finished third in 7.3, led the aggregate standings with a time of 72.8 for nine head. Brazile is second in the aggregate with a time of 73.5 for nine head.

Hunter Herrin of Apache, Oklahoma, finished first in a round-nine record time of 6.6.

In bareback riding, defending four-time world champion Kaycee Feild of Spanish Fork, Utah, won his fourth 2015 NFR round with an 82 on Control Freak.

Steven Peebles of Redmond, Oregon, Feild's closest competitor, didn't place among the top six with a 78.5 on RodeoHouston's Alpha Dog.

Feild now leads the world standings with \$260,463 while Peebles is second with \$225,999.

"This (his battle with Peebles) is something that I'm going to remember for the rest of my life," Feild said. "This NFR, win or lose, is going to mean more to me than any other one because it's been so much fun to compete with Steven every night."

Peebles leads the NFR aggregate standings with 749 points over nine rides. Feild is third with 715.5 points over nine rides.

In steer wrestling, Clayton Hass of Terrell, Texas, is the world standings leader for his second straight round with \$184,296 despite not placing among the top six.

Dakota Eldridge of Elko, Nevada, remains the aggregate leader for his second straight round with a time of 41.3 over nine rounds after finishing outside the top six in 5.0.

Casey Martin of Sulphur, Louisiana, won his first round of the 2015 NFR in a time of 3.5.

In saddle bronc riding, Rusty Wright of Milford, Utah, a 20-year-old NFR rookie, stayed in the world standings lead with \$221,179 after placing fifth with a 79 on Shoshone Mountain.

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Jacobs Crawley of Boerne, Texas, holds on to his lead in the aggregate standings, as he is first with 729 points over nine rides after ending up outside the top six with a 76 on Hickok.

Two-time world champion Taos Muncy of Corona, New Mexico, won the round with an 83 on Let 'er Rip. This was his first NFR win since round nine of 2012.

In barrel racing, Lisa Lockhart of Oelrichs, South Dakota, knocked Sarah Rose McDonald of Brunswick, Georgia, out of first in the world standings when she finished third in 13.86.

Lockhart has now earned \$262,636 while McDonald, who didn't place among the top six with a time of 18.81, is next with \$247,196.

Callie DuPerier of Boerne, Texas, who was outside the top six in 14.32, remained the aggregate standings leader with a time of 126.29 over nine rides.

Jana Bean of Ft. Hancock, Texas, won in a time of 13.71.

SD wildlife officials finalize bighorn sheep 2016 season

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota wildlife officials have finalized the 2016 bighorn sheep hunting season. The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission says the season will operate under the same structure as the ongoing one. It will run from Sept. 1 through Dec. 31, and only three "ram bighorn sheep" licenses will be available.

Officials say one of the three licenses will be given out through the auction of the Midwest Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation.

Daugaard to discuss budget proposal at Sioux Falls event

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard is set to speak in Sioux Falls about his budget proposal for the upcoming legislative session.

Daugaard will discuss the plan on Monday.

The Republican governor outlined the \$4.8 billion budget during a speech Tuesday. The proposal includes increases to higher education, Medicaid providers and state workers, among other areas.

Most of the \$60 million in one-time spending would pay off debt to help public higher education institutions freeze tuition. Daugaard has also proposed to expand the Medicaid program for low-income and disabled people if some conditions are met.

Daugaard has said the state's cost for expanding Medicaid would have to be covered by savings to move forward.

Parents encouraged to register kids in SDCHIP

WORTHING, S.D. (AP) — Officials will be in Worthing on Saturday to encourage parents to register their kids in a comprehensive child identification program.

SDCHIP generates packages of various identifying items of children for parents or guardians. The information includes dental impressions, a DNA cheek swab, a digital still photo, fingerprints and a video image interview.

The South Dakota Child Identification Program is part of MASONICHIP, an initiative of the Masons.

Attorney General Marty Jackley says it's a comprehensive child identification program designed to assist in the event a child becomes missing,

The Worthing event runs from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Friday's Scores The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 77, Sturgis 36

Alcester-Hudson 82, Freeman Academy 25

Baltic 55, Gayville-Volin 48

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Belle Fourche 82, Hill City 52
Brandon Valley 58, Harrisburg 47
Burke/South Central 47, Scotland 43
Castlewood 58, Deuel 48
Chamberlain 63, Sully Buttes 40
Chester 80, Flandreau 65
Colman-Egan 68, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 50
Crow Creek 53, Flandreau Indian 49
Custer 64, Oelrichs 46
Dell Rapids 82, West Central 70
Dell Rapids St. Mary 59, Estelline 49
DeSmet 59, Wolsey-Wessington 46
Deubrook 58, Lake Preston 39
Edmunds Central 65, Wakpala 35
Ethan 42, Hanson 36
Freeman 67, Viborg-Hurley 54
Harding County 73, Newell 43
Herreid/Selby Area 65, McLaughlin 39
Little Wound 69, St. Francis Indian 52
Mott-Regent, N.D. 68, Faith 66
Rosholt 72, Waubay/Summit 35
Sioux Valley 69, Howard 12
Timber Lake 69, Lemmon 58
Todd County 51, Valentine, Neb. 40
Tri-Valley 58, Garretson 43
Watertown 45, Huron 42
Waverly-South Shore 72, Wilmot 39
White River 113, Jones County 18
Winner 55, Wagner 34
Yankton 56, Mitchell 31
Gillette Tournament
Cheyenne Central, Wyo. 89, Rapid City Central 54

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 44, Sturgis 26
Alcester-Hudson 46, Freeman Academy 34
Avon 57, Gregory 26
Belle Fourche 42, Hill City 37
Bon Homme 61, Vermillion 33
Brandon Valley 53, Harrisburg 47
Britton-Hecla 59, Langford 43
Elk Point-Jefferson 66, Canton 21
Flandreau Indian 42, Crow Creek 34
Gayville-Volin 56, Baltic 42
Lead-Deadwood 61, Douglas 44
Mitchell 45, Yankton 42, OT
Mitchell Christian 31, Iroquois 15
New Underwood 69, Edgemont 14
Parkston 46, Tea Area 41
Pine Ridge 71, Hot Springs 26
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 36, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 23
Sioux Falls Washington 67, Rapid City Stevens 32

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Timber Lake 57, Lemmon 47
Todd County 66, Valentine, Neb. 30
Wakpala 34, Edmunds Central 31
Watertown 53, Huron 42
White River 113, Jones County 18
Winner 78, Wagner 61

BLM approves Nevada project critics claimed doomed by grouse

SCOTT SONNER, Associated Press

RENO, Nev. (AP) — Federal land managers are clearing the way for a rural Nevada county to replace an aging water tank that critics called a prime example of development doomed by new protections for the greater sage grouse.

The move comes a week after Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval announced that the U.S. Interior Department agreed to address concerns about the land-use restrictions, including the water tank that White Pine County officials say is desperately needed near Great Basin National Park along the Utah line.

U.S. Bureau of Land Management officials authorized the necessary right-of-way late Thursday that will allow construction to begin in July, agency spokesman Steve Clutter said.

Clutter says the deal protects important habitat, consistent with regulations issued in September when Interior Secretary Sally Jewell determined that the chicken-sized bird doesn't need Endangered Species Act protection. The sage grouse lives mostly in high-desert sagebrush from California to the Dakotas.

"Construction of the tank will begin next year following the greater sage-grouse breeding and nesting season and in a manner that maintains public health and safety," Clutter said in a statement Friday.

The Obama administration said the water tank proves that protections for the bird can be carried out without major disruptions feared by opponents.

The tank is among the projects cited by nine Nevada counties, two mining companies and a ranching operation suing to block the land-use restrictions.

The lawsuit, which Nevada Attorney General Adam Laxalt supports over Sandoval's objections, claims the rules were adopted illegally and would threaten the survival of miners, ranchers and rural economies across much of the West.

Judge Miranda Du has refused to temporarily suspend the rules ahead of a trial expected to begin early next year. She said critics have failed to prove any irreparable harm from the restrictions.

Sandoval met with Jewell last week during a meeting of the Western Governors' Association and told reporters they had made strides in addressing concerns about the rules. He repeated his belief that the lawsuit undermined his ongoing efforts to negotiate reasonable protections for the bird.

"Some of these issues that are stuck in litigation — it could be years before we have some finality on some of these," the governor said last Friday. "This Baker water tank is 'Exhibit A.' We may be able to resolve this before there is even a decision."

The regulations establish buffer zones as large as 3 miles in diameter around sage grouse breeding grounds. The bird's numbers have dwindled from 16 million to between 500,000 and 200,000 due in large part to mining, livestock grazing and other development across 11 states.

Lawyers representing the BLM said in a brief filed late Thursday that the water tank site is 0.7 miles from an existing breeding ground and in an area that contains habitat for grouse breeding and nesting.

Nevertheless, federal officials could approve the project because it would benefit the grouse through installation of anti-perching devices to keep away raptors, among other things.

"Contrary to plaintiffs' assertions, these requirements are not 'one-size-fits-all,'" assistant U.S. Attorney General Luther Hajek wrote. "BLM has determined that the replacement of the water tank would provide a net conservation gain to sage grouse by reducing the attractiveness of the area to predators and ensuring a source of water to control wildfires."

Highway Patrol: Child killed in Interstate 90 minivan crash

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a child was killed Friday morning when a minivan crashed on Interstate 90 in Rapid City.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol says an adult driver and four children were in the van about 9:45 a.m. Friday when it was involved in the one-vehicle crash. The patrol did not release the name of the child pending notification of family members.

The medical conditions of the driver and other passengers were not known.

The accident remains under investigation.

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The accident remains under investigation.

2 people arrested in Sioux Falls with guns and explosives

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Two Sioux Falls residents are in custody after police say they found weapons and explosives materials in their home.

The investigation began after the neighbor of the town house noticed a bullet hole in a wall between the two homes on Sunday. The person later found a .22-caliber slug in a mattress.

The property manager went into the adjoining house and saw weapons. Police obtained a search warrant and found the guns and items to make explosives. They arrested a 29-year-old man and 35-year-old woman on Thursday.

Officers confiscated more than 100 firearms from inside the home, some of them modified with shortened barrels. Police say they don't know why the two had the weapons and explosives.

Dakotas National Guard to be part of cyber protection team

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Army National Guard in the Dakotas will be part of one of seven new Army National Guard cyber protection teams around the country.

The goal is to help protect the nation's cyber infrastructure and address emerging cyber threats.

The National Guard Bureau says the cyber units will be activated in 23 states by the end of fiscal 2019. The Guard in North Dakota and South Dakota will be part of a 39-member team also involving Colorado and Utah.

The team is expected to be organized during fiscal 2018. No decision has been made on where the unit will be based.

No charges filed in shooting by private security officer

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — No charges will be filed in the shooting of a man by a private security officer in Rapid City.

Police say 21-year-old Keven Gross with Black Hills Patrol shot 21-year-old Jorge Mata Diaz after responding to a fight involving weapons Sept. 20 at a Rapid City convenience store.

Diaz suffered injuries that were not life-threatening.

Police determined after an investigation that no charges were warranted against either man, and Pennington County State's Attorney Mark Vargo concurred.

University of Wisconsin regents approve resolution affirming commitment to free speech

By TODD RICHMOND
Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — University of Wisconsin System leaders approved a resolution Friday affirming free speech and academic freedom, joining colleges across the country that have officially proclaimed their devotion to free expression amid concerns academia is trying to protect students from being offended.

The resolution, adopted by a vote of 16-2, states that the university shouldn't shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome or offensive.

"These are not just pretty words we are going to put in a brass plaque," Regent Jose Delgado said. "The ability to speak in this country is a rational, academic way is under attack. You've got to be able to listen hard, even if it hurts."

Civil rights advocates are concerned that universities are trying to limit free speech to protect students from feeling offended.

In Columbia, Missouri, protesters angry over racial incidents on campus forced University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe to resign last month. An assistant professor aligned with protesters blocked a student photographer from the protesters' tent city and university police told students to report any hateful or hurtful speech they experienced, leaving the impression any comment considered offensive could be prosecuted as a crime.

Civil liberties supporters also have raised concerns over the use of so-called "trigger warnings" to alert students about uncomfortable course content. Campus groups also have protested or cancelled appearances by contentious speakers.

UW-Madison had a freedom of expression spat last month after Chancellor Rebecca Blank wrote in her blog that no one is entitled to express themselves in ways that diminish others. Blank walked her remarks back a few days later, saying she was simply trying to encourage civility.

Regent Tim Higgins and faculty members began developing the resolution in May, following the lead of the University of Chicago and Purdue. Regents President Regina Millner insisted the measure wasn't inspired by any recent events. She said it's meant to reassure faculty members that they will still enjoy academic freedom as the regents draft new tenure policies. She also pointed out that the regents have reaffirmed their commitment to free speech seven times since 1922.

Still, Millner said students must find the strength to listen to viewpoints they don't share.

Charles Pruitt and Jose Vasquez were the only regents who voted against the measure. Pruitt said he didn't think the resolution was thought through. Vasquez said he didn't see any problems with people expressing themselves on UW System campuses now.

"What is the issue we're trying to truly address?" he said.

A group of about 20 protesters filed into the meeting after the resolution was approved to draw attention to their demands for more recognition of diversity on campus. Millner acknowledged them and thanked them for coming but did not give them a chance to speak.

As the meeting drew to a close the students stood and demanded to be allowed to talk. One of them read a speech about how the resolution would open the door to hate speech. The regents ignored him and made their closing remarks as he continued to shout.

The regents then moved into a previously scheduled closed session and police cleared the room. The students left without incident.

UW System President Ray Cross and Millner planned to meet with the group later Friday but the meeting fell through. Millner issued a statement saying the students canceled it. The students said UW officials refused to allow the media to attend or to record the proceedings. A system spokesman said the meeting was supposed to be private.

Preseason storm spurs hopes of wet winter to dry California

CHRISTOPHER WEBER, Associated Press

JANIE HAR, Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — In an encouraging prelude to winter, California got a heavy dose of snow and rain that the drought-stricken state badly needed, and the wet weather may not be done yet.

While ski resorts rejoiced at the deep snows they were seeing, on the coast rain and wind gusts prompted high surf warnings and repeated cautions from highway patrol to slow down when driving Friday.

California needs all the snow and rain it can get, given years of drought that have dried up reservoirs and left trees parched. Even a wet winter is not expected to end the drought, but this week's weather brought on by a tropical atmospheric river is the kind Californians used to see before drought set in.

"This is the kind of storm we've been missing for the last four years of drought," said Doug Carlson, a spokesman with the California Department of Water Resources. "This is the kind of storm we would need a lot of to start digging our way out of the drought."

Higher snow peaks in the Sierra Nevada didn't hit 3 feet as projected, but there was still a foot or two of snow, enough to keep sledders, skiers and snowboards happy, National Weather Service meteorologist Dawn Johnson said Friday.

To the south in Ventura County, surging waves inundated several low-lying streets along the coast as a very large Pacific swell hit Friday. Rough seas surged over the Ventura Pier during high tide, and seawater streamed through residential neighborhoods.

Mike Laan took a break from his job with the city of Ventura's tourism bureau to join hundreds of residents snapping photos of the huge waves.

"They're bigger than I've ever seen," Laan said. "When they're breaking, the waves are higher than the pier. The water is going all the way past the sand to the streets."

The pier was damaged by the battering surf and closed indefinitely. No serious damage was reported to homes, and the high tide receded by midmorning.

Another storm is expected this weekend, which could bring another 2 feet of snow to parts of the Sierra.

The Southern California coast remains under a high surf advisory through Sunday, with unpredictable waves topping 10 feet.

Forecasters have said a strong El Nino weather system could drench California and other parts of the West in the coming months. However, Johnny Burg, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Seattle, said he didn't believe the latest Northwest storms were related to El Nino.

"We just had a jet stream pointed at us, and it brought successive storms," he said. "We don't see the effects until the winter."

Authorities: Fire at Southern California mosque was arson

COACHELLA, Calif. (AP) — A Southern California mosque was damaged in a fire that authorities said was intentionally set.

Flames were reported just after noon Friday at the Islamic Center of Palm Springs, according to the Riverside County Fire Department. The fire was contained to the small building's front lobby, and no one was injured.

By late Friday night, the Sheriff's Department released a statement calling the blaze "an intentional act" and saying it would use all available resources to investigate.

People at the mosque described hearing a "loud boom" and seeing flames, said Reymundo Nour, the mosque's acting imam, who was not on the site at the time. He said the mosque had been "firebombed."

Authorities provided no details on how the fire was set or whether the department has any suspects.

State fire investigators, the federal Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the FBI are assisting in the investigation.

The mosque is about 75 miles from San Bernardino, where last week a couple who federal officials say were inspired by Islamist extremists killed 14 people. Some Muslims in Southern California and beyond have worried about the potential for reprisals, while leaders of various faiths have called for tolerance.

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In a statement released Friday evening, U.S. Rep. Raul Ruiz, whose district includes the area in which the mosque is located, called on authorities to investigate the blaze as a possible hate crime.

"Our faith in humanity will not be intimidated," he said. "And we stand together against any form (of) violence towards the innocent."

County and city officials also condemned the attack.

"We see this as a cowardly act of vandalism that we not tolerate in our community," Coachella Mayor Steven Hernandez said.

The mosque was hit by gunfire in November 2014 in what authorities investigated as a possible hate crime. No one was injured in the early morning incident. The case remains under investigation, and no arrests have been made.

Stocks around the world fall as investors fear slide in oil

BERNARD CONDON, AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Another drop in the price of oil rattled stock investors around the world on Friday, with steep losses in Europe and the U.S., where a major market index ended its worst week since the summer.

The selling in the U.S. was broad, with all 10 sectors of the Standard and Poor's 500 index ending down. Oil and gas companies lost the most. Southwestern Energy plunged 14 percent and Chesapeake Energy sank 9 percent.

Investors sought refuge in bonds. Treasury prices rose, sending yields lower. Another measure of anxiety, the so-called Vix index, jumped. It is now up 70 percent in just five days.

Investors worry the sharp fall in the price of oil and other commodities is a sign of weakness in the global economy, especially China, and that will cut into profits at big energy producers and suppliers of raw materials as well as other companies.

"We're stockpiling commodities and demand is not picking up," said Tim Courtney, chief investment officer of Exencial Wealth Advisors. "It's kind of a depressing market."

Investors are looking ahead to a Federal Reserve meeting next week where the central bank is widely expected to announce an increase in its benchmark interest rate from a record low.

Recent economic reports indicate that the U.S. economy is healthy enough to withstand a rate hike, but investors are still nervous because it would be the first rate rise in nearly a decade.

Another focus of investor attention is a batch of reports from China on the state of that country's economy. Several pieces of monthly data are expected on Saturday, including retail sales, fixed asset investment and industrial production. Further out, a report on foreign direct investment in China is due on Wednesday.

The latest figures will provide an update on the world's second biggest economy, which is struggling with a stubborn slowdown in growth.

The trouble on Friday began with a report from the International Energy Agency that said the oversupply in oil would persist until late next year even as demand continues to weaken. Benchmark U.S. crude plunged \$1.14, or 3 percent, to close at \$35.62 a barrel in New York. It has been falling for 1 1/2 years and is now at its lowest level since early 2009.

By the end of the day, the S&P 500 index had lost 39.86 points, or 1.9 percent, to 2,012.37. It was down 3.8 percent for the week, its worst showing since August.

The Dow Jones industrial average lost 309.54 points, or 1.8 percent, to 17,265.21. The Nasdaq composite declined 111.71 points, or 2.2 percent, to 4,933.47.

In Europe, Germany's DAX lost 2.4 percent, Britain's FTSE 100 dropped 2.2 percent and France's CAC 40 shed 1.8 percent.

Investors were also rattled by trouble in a risky corner of the credit markets where bonds from heavily indebted companies are traded. Their prices have fallen sharply as investors fear the companies that issued the bonds might default. A fund that tracks the bonds, the iShares iBoxx USD High Yield Corporate Bond ETF, has dropped nearly 4 percent in five days.

"It's anticipation of the Fed, it's oil, it's credit ... all of these factors are putting fear and confusion into

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the investor," said Jonathan D. Corpina, senior managing partner at Meridian Equity Partners.

In a sign of trouble among commodity producers, Dow Chemical and DuPont on Friday announced a \$130 billion deal to merge their businesses to counter falling prices. Their stocks had risen in previous days on reports the deal was forthcoming, but fell sharply on Friday.

Dow Chemical dropped \$1.54, or nearly 3 percent, to \$53.37. DuPont lost \$4.11, or 5.5 percent, to \$70.44.

In Asia, Japan's Nikkei 225 index climbed 1 percent, but most other major indexes fell. Hong Kong's Hang Seng dropped 1.1 percent and mainland China's Shanghai Composite lost 0.6 percent.

Among stocks making big moves:

— Software maker Adobe Systems rose \$2.46, or 2.8 percent, to \$91.42 after reporting earnings in its latest quarter that exceeded analysts' expectations. The stock is up 26 percent since the start of the year.

— Corning rose 99 cents, or 5.6 percent, to \$18.68 after the company said it will give up its stake in Dow Corning, a joint venture with Dow Chemical. Instead it will invest in a semiconductor business that is owned by Dow Corning.

U.S. government bond prices rose sharply. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note fell to 2.12 percent from 2.23 percent late Thursday, a big move. The dollar fell to 120.79 yen from 121.64 yen. The euro strengthened to \$1.0995 from \$1.0939.

Precious and industrial metals futures closed mixed. Gold edged up \$3.70 to \$1,075.70 an ounce, silver fell 23 cents to \$13.88 an ounce and copper rose four cents to \$2.12 a pound.

In other energy futures market, Brent crude, the international oil benchmark, fell \$1.80, or 4.5 percent, to \$37.93 a barrel in London. In New York, heating oil plunged eight cents, or 6.5 percent, to \$1.146 a gallon, wholesale gasoline was little changed at \$1.282 a gallon, and natural gas lost 2.5 cents, or 1.2 percent, to \$1.99 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Today in History The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Dec. 12, the 346th day of 2015. There are 19 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 12, 1915, singer-actor Frank Sinatra was born Francis Albert Sinatra in Hoboken, New Jersey.

On this date:

In 1787, Pennsylvania became the second state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1870, Joseph H. Rainey of South Carolina became the first black lawmaker sworn into the U.S. House of Representatives.

In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt nominated Oscar Straus to be secretary of Commerce and Labor; Straus became the first Jewish Cabinet member.

In 1911, Britain's King George V announced during a visit to India that the capital would be transferred from Calcutta to Delhi.

In 1917, Father Edward Flanagan founded Boys Town outside Omaha, Nebraska.

In 1925, the first motel — the Motel Inn — opened in San Luis Obispo, California.

In 1937, Japanese aircraft sank the U.S. gunboat Panay on China's Yangtze River. (Japan apologized, and paid \$2.2 million in reparations.)

In 1946, a United Nations committee voted to accept a six-block tract of Manhattan real estate offered as a gift by John D. Rockefeller Jr. to be the site of the U.N.'s headquarters.

In 1963, Kenya became independent of Britain.

In 1975, Sara Jane Moore asked a federal court in San Francisco to allow her to plead guilty to trying to kill President Gerald R. Ford. (After the judge ruled Moore competent to change her plea, she was sentenced to life. Moore was released on parole on New Year's Eve 2007 after serving 32 years behind bars.)

In 1985, 248 American soldiers and eight crew members were killed when an Arrow Air charter crashed

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after takeoff from Gander, Newfoundland.

In 2000, George W. Bush became president-elect as a divided U.S. Supreme Court reversed a state court decision for recounts in Florida's contested election.

Ten years ago: California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger refused to block the imminent execution of Stanley Tookie Williams, rejecting the notion that the founder of the murderous Crips gang had atoned for his crimes and found redemption on death row. (Williams was put to death early the next day.) During an impromptu question-and-answer session before the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, President George W. Bush estimated 30,000 Iraqis had died in the war.

Five years ago: An explosives-packed minibus blew up at the entrance of a joint NATO-Afghan base in southern Afghanistan, killing six American troops and two Afghan soldiers as they prepared to head out on patrol. The inflatable roof of the Minneapolis Metrodome collapsed following a snowstorm that had dumped 17 inches on the city. (The NFL was forced to shift an already rescheduled game between the Minnesota Vikings and New York Giants to Detroit's Ford Field.)

One year ago: President Barack Obama urged the Senate to ratify a \$1.1 trillion spending bill opposed by some Democrats, judging it an imperfect measure that stemmed from "the divided government that the American people voted for." (The Senate passed the measure the next day.) Illustrator Norman Bridwell, 86, creator of Clifford the Red Dog, died in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.

Today's Birthdays: Former TV host Bob Barker is 92. Basketball Hall of Famer Bob Pettit is 83. Singer Connie Francis is 78. Singer Dionne Warwick is 75. Rock singer-musician Dickey Betts is 72. Former race car driver Emerson Fittipaldi is 69. Actor Wings Hauser is 68. Actor Bill Nighy (ny) is 66. Actor Duane Chase (Film: "The Sound of Music") is 65. Country singer LaCosta is 65. Gymnast-turned-actress Cathy Rigby is 63. Author Lorna Landvik is 61. Singer-musician Sheila E. is 58. Actress Sheree J. Wilson is 57. Pop singer Daniel O'Donnell is 54. International Tennis Hall of Famer Tracy Austin is 53. Rock musician Eric Schenkman (Spin Doctors) is 52. Rock musician Nicholas Dimichino (Nine Days) is 48. Author Sophie Kinsella is 46. News anchor Maggie Rodriguez is 46. Actress Jennifer Connelly is 45. Actress Madchen Amick is 45. Actress Regina Hall is 45. Country singer Hank Williams III is 43. Actress Mayim Bialik is 40. Model Bridget Hall is 38.

Thought for Today: "If you possess something but you can't give it away, then you don't possess it... it possesses you." — Frank Sinatra (1915-1998).

DuPont, Dow Chemical seek merger, then 3-way split

RANDALL CHASE, AP Business Writer

DOVER, Del. (AP) — Dow Chemical and DuPont are merging to form a company valued at about \$130 billion as they try to counter falling commodities prices and weakness in some key markets that have pressured their giant agriculture and chemicals businesses.

The two companies, whose research has brought the world products ranging from Ziploc bags and Saran wrap developed by Dow to DuPont's Teflon coatings and Nylon and Kevlar fibers, will first form DowDuPont, then separate into three independent publicly traded companies focused on agriculture, material science and specialty products.

The proposed merger, announced Friday, would temporarily create the world's second-largest chemical company, behind BASF. It comes as both Dow and DuPont Co. have seen recent declines in agricultural performance and been pressured by activist shareholders to control spending and shift away from commodities to faster-growing parts of their businesses.

"Overall, this transaction represents a tectonic shift in an industry that has been evolving over the last many years," said Dow Chairman and CEO Andrew Liveris, calling the merger a seminal event for employees and customers of the two companies, which have a combined workforce of more than 110,000.

DuPont Chairman and CEO Edward Breen said the "industrial logic" behind the deal was compelling.

"When I look at DuPont and Dow, I see businesses that fit together like hand and glove," Breen said.

DuPont shares slid 5.5 percent to \$70.44. Dow Chemical closed down 2.8 percent at \$53.37.

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Breen took over as DuPont CEO following the abrupt resignation in October of Ellen Kullman, who just a few months earlier fended off a proxy challenge by Trian Fund Management, a hedge fund led by activist investor Nelson Peltz. Peltz has called for DuPont's agriculture, nutrition and health and industrial biosciences units to be combined into a single growth company, separate from the more cyclical businesses of performance materials, safety and protection, and electronics and communication.

Similarly, Dow has been pressured by hedge fund Third Point LLC, led by activist investor Dan Loeb, to split its specialty chemical and petrochemical businesses. Dow avoided a proxy fight last year by adding four independent directors, giving board seats to two Loeb nominees.

"Both Dow and DuPont had activist shareholders who had sought breakups of these companies, so ultimately the visions of these activists are being realized," said James Sheehan, an analyst for SunTrust Robinson Humphrey.

Sheehan said the deal also could spark other mergers in the ag-chemical industry. Earlier this year, Missouri-based Monsanto, the world's largest seed company, abandoned a \$46.5 billion hostile bid for Swiss pesticide giant Syngenta. Last month, Syngenta rejected a \$42 billion offer from state-owned China National Chemical Corp.

Michael Ritzenthaler, an analyst for Piper Jaffray, said he expects Monsanto to renew its bid for Syngenta. Other big players who could figure in deals include Germany's BASF and Bayer AG.

Liveris will be named executive chairman of the combined company, while Breen will be CEO. The company will have dual headquarters in Midland, Michigan, and Wilmington, Delaware, where they are currently based.

Advisory committees led by Breen and Liveris will be established for each of the spinoff companies.

The deal, which the companies expect to close in the second half of 2016, is sure to be scrutinized by antitrust regulators.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, said in a statement that the proposed merger "demands serious scrutiny."

"I'll be listening to Iowa farmers and consumers about any concerns they may have with this proposal, and the Judiciary Committee will be exercising its appropriate oversight function," Grassley said.

But Breen said that while consolidation in the agricultural industry is a "natural step," any ag-related divestitures are likely to be minimal.

"These are highly complementary businesses. ... We don't see much real significant overlap here, which is pretty incredible," he said, adding that the combined ag business would be balanced between seeds and crop protection.

One motive for the merger is to cut costs. The companies said the deal should cut annual expenses by \$3 billion. In addition, the companies announced separate restructuring steps.

DuPont announced a plan that is expected to reduce costs by \$700 million in 2016 compared to this year. Employee and contractor layoffs will affect about 10 percent of the company's workforce. DuPont expects to record a pretax charge of about \$780 million, with approximately \$650 million of employee separation costs.

"The state is committed to supporting those affected by DuPont's cost cutting in Delaware," said Delaware Gov. Jack Markell.

Dow, meanwhile, said it is taking full ownership of Dow Corning, currently a 50-50 joint venture between Dow and Corning. Dow said the move is expected to generate more than \$1 billion in additional adjusted earnings and increase its product offerings in the building and construction, consumer care, and automotive markets.

Under the terms of the merger, Dow shareholders will receive a fixed exchange ratio of one share of DowDuPont for each Dow share, and DuPont shareholders will receive a fixed exchange ratio of 1.282 shares in DowDuPont for each DuPont share. Dow and DuPont shareholders will own about 50 percent, respectively, of the combined company.

The proposed agriculture business would unite DuPont's and Dow's seed and crop protection businesses, which had combined pro forma 2014 revenue of about \$19 billion.

The material science company would combine DuPont's performance materials segment with Dow's performance plastics, performance materials and chemicals, infrastructure solutions, and consumer solutions units, excluding its electronic materials business. Combined pro forma 2014 revenue for material science was about \$51 billion.

The specialty products company would combine DuPont's nutrition and health, industrial biosciences, safety and protection, and electronics and communications segments with Dow's electronic materials business. Combined pro forma 2014 revenue for specialty products was approximately \$13 billion.

The new company's board will have 16 directors, consisting of eight current DuPont directors and eight current Dow directors, and two independent co-lead directors.

AP EXPLAINS: What are my options for mobile pay?

MAE ANDERSON, AP Technology Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — With Wal-Mart Stores Inc. becoming the latest retailer to launch a mobile pay system, there are more places than ever to break out a digital wallet to pay for the things you want.

Apple, Rite Aid, Starbucks, KFC and others are now using some form of mobile payment system with a smartphone seemingly in every pocket and purse. Forrester predicts that money spent in stores by people using digital wallets will grow from the \$4 billion of 2014, to \$34 billion by 2019.

But not all digital wallets are the same. So which ones should you use and how safe are they? Here's a look at mobile payment systems and how they work.

I WANT TO GET MOBILE AND I WANT STUFF, SO WHAT DO I USE?

Smartphone owners can use Apple Pay, Android Pay and Samsung Pay, depending on what phone they have. All three services let people buy goods at participating stores by tapping their phones against the store's payment terminal. The user's debit or credit card on file then gets charged.

Merchant Customer Exchange, or MCX, set up a few years ago by a consortium of retailers and restaurants to create an industrywide mobile payment system, is currently testing its CurrentC wallet for iPhones and Android phones in Columbus, Ohio.

Of retailer-specific digital wallets, Starbucks and now Wal-Mart, are the biggest players. Starbucks' mobile app has more than 16 million users and accounts for 21 percent of its purchases. Wal-Mart's service won't debut until early next year, but 22 million customers already use the Wal-Mart app each month, and more than half of Wal-Mart's online orders are now coming from a mobile device.

Banks are jumping in, too. JPMorgan Chase is working on its own system for mobile payments expected to debut next year.

WHY USE MOBILE PAY?

Sure, taking out a wad of cash or pulling a card from your pocket is not going to steal that much of your precious time. But compare that with sticking out your phone, not to mention with a cup of coffee in your second hand that is now free, and mobile pay will win the speed and convenience title every time.

Plus, have you seen those studies on the number of viruses and bacteria on your typical dollar bill? Gross.

IS IT SAFE?

It's safer. With Apple, Samsung and Android Pay, you're assigned a substitute card number unique to the phone. The store gets this number, so if its system gets hacked, your main card number isn't compromised.

To work, the substitute number must be paired with a one-time code generated by that device. Hackers getting that number will also need physical possession of your phone.

Other services have different security methods. Wal-Mart, for example, says no card information is stored on the phone, but the real card number is still stored at what it says is a secure data center. But if that center gets hacked, your real number might get compromised.

Wal-Mart's app is hooked up to your debit or credit card. The Starbucks app is more like refilling a gift

card, and the company doesn't store your card data.

HOW EXACTLY DO THEY WORK?

There are two main ways mobile wallets work in stores: by using wireless technology called NFC or by scanning a QR or other code.

Mobile-payment services from Apple, Google and Samsung all rely on NFC. After entering banking or credit card information to set up the service, the customer merely taps the phone next to a payment machine at the store and authorizes the purchase, usually with a fingerprint ID. But it works only in stores with newer, NFC equipment.

Samsung offers a backup: The phone can mimic the old-school magnetic signals produced by card swipes and work with most existing equipment. The CurrentC system and Wal-Mart's new mobile payment system use QR codes. For the Wal-Mart system, shoppers open up the app and then they activate the camera function to scan a QR code on the reader. That connects the phone to the basket of items they're checking out. Customers can put the phone away and an e-receipt application will be sent to the app. Chase Pay will also rely on QR scanned by a register when it debuts next year.

Fantasy takes hit in NY, but DraftKings, FanDuel get stay

JAKE PEARSON, Associated Press

JENNIFER PELTZ, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Daily fantasy sports giants DraftKings and FanDuel took a hit Friday in their fight to stay in business in New York, but a scramble to an appeals court kept DraftKings in play at least through the end of the NFL regular season.

FanDuel, meanwhile, had already suspended play from New York amid the sites' clash with state Attorney General Eric Schneiderman over whether daily fantasy sports amounts to illegal gambling.

Friday morning, Manhattan state Supreme Court Justice Manuel Mendez temporarily barred both sites from taking play from one of their biggest customer bases, until "a final determination" of the court dispute.

But DraftKings and FanDuel quickly appealed. By Friday afternoon, a Supreme Court Appellate Division judge said the companies could continue operating into January, until a full panel of judges decides whether the companies can keep going while the appeals process unfolds. That could take well into January.

Both sites said they would ultimately prevail in their dispute, which is reflecting debate nationwide about whether playing fantasy sports is betting.

"We look forward to a full and fair hearing and are confident we will demonstrate clearly to the court why we should be able to continue to offer our DFS (daily fantasy sports) games in New York permanently," DraftKings lawyer David Boies said in a statement. FanDuel said it would "work to bring our product back to sports fans around the state through our appeal and working with the legislature to enact sensible regulations for fantasy sports."

Schneiderman spokesman Damien LaVera, meanwhile, said the attorney general was eager to show appeals judges why they should uphold Mendez' ruling.

Mendez didn't make a final declaration on whether the sites are illegal gambling operations. But "the protection of the general public outweighs any potential loss of business" while the case plays out, he wrote.

"The payment of an 'entry fee' as high as \$10,600 on one or more contests daily could certainly be deemed risking 'something of value'— part of the legal definition of gambling in New York, he wrote.

Both DraftKings and FanDuel have said they have hundreds of thousands of customers in New York, and Schneiderman's office has estimated the two companies account for 90 to 95 percent of the daily fantasy sports market.

The case only directly mentions them, and it's not immediately clear how the ruling might affect other companies in the industry. Schneiderman's office declined to comment on that question but also has subpoenaed information from Yahoo, which also offers daily fantasy sports in New York. Yahoo has said it believes it's offering a "lawful product."

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Boston-based DraftKings and New York-based FanDuel argue their contests are highly competitive games of skill, not gambling

The attorney general has said that while the games can involve some skill, that doesn't make them legal, since the outcome ultimately depends on events out of customer control, such as athletes' injuries, weather or even blown calls.

Most states have no laws that specifically address fantasy sports but do have gambling laws that might dictate whether they're legal.

In Washington, the gambling commission specifically concluded that fantasy sports wagering is illegal. Massachusetts lawmakers have proposed specific regulations to protect consumers, while regulators in Nevada have restricted daily fantasy sports to existing casinos.

In New York, State Assembly Racing and Wagering Committee Chairman J. Gary Pretlow predicted this week that the state will ultimately legalize and regulate daily fantasy sports, regardless how the court fight turns out. The state already has legalized some forms of gambling, including lotteries, betting on horse racing, video slot machines at racetracks and a number of forthcoming casinos.

Pretlow said Friday that lawmakers must await further court rulings before determining whether the Legislature could legalize daily fantasy sports by changing the penal code, or whether it would require a state constitutional amendment.