

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Area is starting 1 hour late this morning due to the icy roads.

Tuesday, December 15

Watertown Novice Debate

School Breakfast: Mini pancakes, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Pizza, green beans, lettuce salad, fruit.

Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, au gratin potatoes, peas and carrots, iced honey cookie, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: Col Arthur Krueger • Marjae Schinkel

• Janice Sombke

10:00am: United Methodist Women's Bible Study

6:30pm: BBB host Hitchcock-Tulare

Wednesday, December 16

School Breakfast: Egg and cheese omelet, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Soft shell tacos, refried beans, fruit.

Senior Menu: Lasagna rotini, tossed salad with dressing, ambrosia fruit salad, oatmeal spice cookie, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: John Sippel • Layne Howard • Sage Mortenson • Dan Schinkel

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

12:00pm: Kiwanis meets at the Community Center

3:45pm: St. John's Lutheran Confirmation

7:00pm: St. John's Lutheran Advent Service

Thursday, December 17

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Ham and cheese sandwich, fruit, French Fries, broccoli and dip.

Senior Menu: Roast beef, potatoes, carrots and onions, gravy, peaches, multi-grain dinner roll.

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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Lifetime Warranty on all Collision Work!

13556 400th Ave., Groton SD 57445
Allen McKiver, Owner ~ 605/397-4404

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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>

Middle/High School Christmas Concert. 7 p.m., on Dec. 17
Elementary Christmas Concert, 2 p.m. on Dec. 18
and more!

A screenshot of the Livestream website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'livestream' on the left, 'WATCH EVENTS', 'BROADCAST LIVE', and a search box. On the right, there are links for '+1 (646) 490-1679', 'WHAT IS LIVESTREAM?', 'HELP', and 'LOG IN'. The main content area features a large banner for 'GDI Paper Paul' (Groton Daily Independent). Below the banner, there's a 'Following & Live Events' section. It lists two upcoming events: 'Girls Basketball Leola-Frederick at Groton Area Saturday, Dec. 12, 2015' and 'Boys Basketball Leola-Frederick at Groton Area Saturday, Dec. 12, 2015'. Each event has a 'Sports on Paper Paul' button and a 'Today' time indicator (4:30 PM CST and 6:01 PM CST respectively).

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.

No change in wrestling program

A 40 minute discussion was held on the Groton Area wrestling program. Ten people and the athletic director, Brian Schuring, were in attendance to talk about the low numbers of the program.

The Webster Area School Board met last Thursday. There was a motion to discuss a wrestling coop with Groton Area, but there was no second.

Superintendent Joe Schwan said, "I believe the best thing for us to do is to leave and try not to make any big changes in the middle of the season."

Practicing with another school is against the rules of the South Dakota High School Activities Association. "We should propose a rule change on the state level to allow schools to practice together," Schwan said. "I don't think we're alone with low numbers." Board member, Marty Weismantel, said it is a long, drawn out process. "First it has to go to an advisory board, then the athletic directors before it reaches the board," he said.

Head varsity wrestling coach, Dana Dargatz, said the wrestlers out are working on technique and there are a couple of adults helping out with practices. "We're scraping and clawing, but we're getting by," he said. "All things considered for early in the season, they have responded really well and have kept their composure. I can't be happier with the way the kids are performing right now."

Schuring said, "We are not the only school with low numbers. There could be a whole lot of factors. We thought our numbers would be better so we didn't pursue a coop option last year. The best thing for us is to be in tournaments. The wrestlers get more out of tournaments, but we're in a conference and the matches are set for this year and next year."

There was discussion of the need for a middle school wrestling coach and to have a teacher in the elementary school be involved with wrestling to help promote the program. The low numbers present safety issues as well. Chad Pray said two wrestlers quit after being injured. One is coming back, but the other one is not sure as he has no one to wrestle with. "We need someone to take care of the junior varsity kids and take them to tournaments," Pray said. Pat Krause said, "You need a middle school program to keep the kids interested. We can bring the numbers back up, but we need to have a middle school program."

"The Groton School District is looking at a major overhaul," Dargatz said. "It's a minimum of seven years to get the numbers back. If there is no one promoting at the elementary level, it's a losing battle. Then there needs to be someone in the middle school."

The board agreed that something needs to be done, but it can't be done this year. Board President Steve Smith told the group if they have any ideas, they need to talk with the athletic director. "He is the go-to guy," Smith said.



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

**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.**

October Students of the Month

The student council is sponsoring Student of the Month. Each month the faculty select students who show outstanding academic achievement. These students receive certificates and have year-end lunch with the principal.

Senior Lily Cutler's parents are James and Lisa Cutler from Claremont. Greyson Cutler is her brother.

Lily is involved in yearbook, oral interp, Destination Imagination, debate, youth group and was the cross country student manager. Her accomplishments are honor roll, student of the month, receiving a superior and first superior rating in oral interp, qualifying for state in oral interp, qualifying for DI Global Finals, being on the National Honor Society and earning the President's Service Award.

Lily's interests are reading, studying, sleeping, watching Netflix and hanging out with family and friends. Chemistry is her favorite subject and her role models are her parents. Lily plans to attend South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and major in chemical engineering.

Junior Erin Smith is the daughter of Dr. Steve and Carol Smith of Groton. Her siblings are Samuel, Marah, Luke, AnneMarie and Isaac. Erin's activities are show choir, all-school play, choir, band, Jazz band, oral interpretation, FCCLA, piano and running cross country. Her accomplishments are earning superiors for instrumental and vo-



Back - Tylan Glover (grade 9), Jenifer Fjelstad (grade 10), Erin Smith (grade 11), Lily Cutler (grade 12)

Front - Ashley Flihs (grade 8), Erin Unzen (grade 7), Seth Johnson (grade 6)

cal solos, advancing to state oral interpretation and placing at cross country meets.

Erin's interests are music, reading, spending time with friends and family and Sci-fi. English is her favorite subject and her role model is her dad. Erin plans to teach high school English.

Sophomore Jenifer Fjelstad is the daughter of Clint and Tara Fjelstad, Groton. Her activities are show choir, dance team, Destination Imagination, oral interp, cross country, St. Paul's youth group, 2TY:12, band and choir. Jenifer's accomplishments are 4.0 honor roll, making state oral interp, going to Global DI Finals and earning an superior

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rating plus in oral interp.

Jenifer's interests are dance, time with friends and family, singing and reading. Chemistry is her favorite subject and her parents are her role models. She plans to attend college after graduation.

Freshman Tylan Glover is the son of Burt and Angela Glover, Groton. Tadyn Glover is his sister, who is in the eighth grade. Tylan's activities are being in honor band, All-State Choir, Middle School All-State Band for two years and earning MathCounts team awards.

Tylan's interests are fine arts, such as band, choir and school play) and sports. Math is his favorite subject and Mr. Cody Swanson is his role model. After graduation he plans to go into psychology or some kind of fine arts major.

Ashley Flihs, eighth grade, is the daughter of Kristie and Jarod Flihs, Groton. Her siblings are Megan and Brevin. Ashley's activities include dance, volleyball, keeping basketball stats, being in the Carnival of Silver Skates, in band and choir. She had earned MathCounts awards. Ashley is interested in dance and cooking and FACS is her favorite subject. Her mom is her role model and she plans to be a photographer and a baker.

Erin Unzen, seventh grade, is the daughter of Jake and Tiffany Unzen, Groton. Her siblings are Nathan, Megan and Haley. Erin's activities are basketball, volleyball, band, golf, church youth group and ice skating. Her accomplishments are placing in MathCounts, winning poetry contest, honor roll and being a previous student of the month. She is interested in baking, playing volleyball and hanging out with friends. English is her favorite subject and her mom is her role model. Erin's future plans are undecided.

Seth Johnson, sixth grade, is the son of Greg and Mary Johnson, Bristol. His siblings are Cole, Scott and Angie. He is involved in basketball and baseball and his interests are hunting, snowmobiling and tubing. Seth's accomplishments are youth football tournament champions and being on the honor roll. PE is his favorite subject and Luke Bryan is his role model.

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Proposed 2016-17 Groton Area School Calendar

GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
2016-2017
SCHOOL CALENDAR
Amended Draft 12/7/15

DRAFT A.2

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

August 23 - Faculty Inservice
23 - Welcome Back Picnic (5:00 PM)
23 - PK-6 Open House (6:30 PM)
24 - Faculty Inservice
25 - 1st Day of School

JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

January 5 - Labor Day - NO SCHOOL
26 - Homecoming Coronation (7:30)
30 - Homecoming FB vs. Sisseton

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

September 5 - Labor Day - NO SCHOOL
26 - Homecoming Coronation (7:30)
30 - Homecoming FB vs. Sisseton

October 7 - Marching Band Festival
10 - Native American Day - NO SCHOOL
21 - End of 1st Quarter (40)
27 - Parent/Teacher Conferences (1:30-8:30)
28 - Faculty Inservice - NO SCHOOL

FEBRUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

February 7 - MS/HS Fall Family Night
11 - Veterans Day
23-25 - Thanksgiving Break - NO SCHOOL

OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

November 7 - MS/HS Fall Family Night
11 - Veterans Day
23-25 - Thanksgiving Break - NO SCHOOL

December 8 - MS/HS Christmas Concert (7:00)
9 - Elementary Christmas Concert (2:00)
21 - End of 1st Semester (39/79)

MARCH

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

March 10 - End of 3rd Quarter (45)
16-17 - Spring Break - NO SCHOOL

NOVEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

January 4 - School Resumes
13 - Faculty Inservice - NO SCHOOL

February 9 - Parent/Teacher Conferences (1:30-8:30)
10 - Faculty Inservice - NO SCHOOL
20 - President's Day - NO SCHOOL

APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

April 14 - Good Friday - NO SCHOOL
17 - Easter Monday - NO SCHOOL
27 - FCCLA Style Show
28 - FFA Banquet

DECEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

May 1 - Kiwanis Athletic Banquet
2 - Elementary Spring Concert (7:00)
4 - MS/HS Spring Concert (7:00)
18 - End of 2nd Semester (45/90)
19 - Faculty Inservice - NO SCHOOL
21 - SENIOR GRADUATION (2:00)






MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

May 1 - Kiwanis Athletic Banquet
2 - Elementary Spring Concert (7:00)
4 - MS/HS Spring Concert (7:00)
18 - End of 2nd Semester (45/90)
19 - Faculty Inservice - NO SCHOOL
21 - SENIOR GRADUATION (2:00)

Month	C	N	T
August	5	2	7
September	21	0	21
October	19	2	21
November	19	0	19
December	15	0	15
January	19	1	20
February	18	2	20
March	21	0	21
April	18	0	18
May	14	1	15
Totals	169	8	177

****All make-up days will be added on to the end of the school year.**

	Faculty In-Service
	No School
	Important Dates
	P/T Conferences
	End of Quarter

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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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Winter Storm Warning
URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE ABERDEEN SD
354 AM CST TUE DEC 15 2015

...HAZARDOUS WINTER WEATHER CONDITIONS THROUGH WEDNESDAY...

.A STORM SYSTEM WILL MOVE INTO THE REGION TODAY AND TONIGHT. AHEAD OF THIS SYSTEM...EXPECT PERIODS OF FREEZING DRIZZLE BEFORE TEMPERATURES COOL ENOUGH FOR A CHANGE OVER TO SNOW. SNOW WILL BECOME WIDESPREAD THIS AFTERNOON AND OVERNIGHT...PERSISTING INTO WEDNESDAY. BLOWING SNOW WILL ALSO BE AN ISSUE AS THE SYSTEM LIFTS NORTHWARDS.

MNZ039-046-SDZ005>008-010-011-017>021-151800-
/O.UPG.KABR.WS.A.0003.151215T2100Z-151217T0000Z/
/O.EXB.KABR.WS.W.0003.151215T1800Z-151217T0000Z/
TRAVERSE-BIG STONE-MCPHERSON-BROWN-MARSHALL-ROBERTS-EDMUNDS-DAY-
FAULK-SPINK-CLARK-CODINGTON-GRANT-
INCLUDING THE CITIES OF...WHEATON...ORTONVILLE...EUREKA...
ABERDEEN...BRITTON...SISSETON...IPSWICH...WEBSTER...FAULKTON...
REDFIELD...CLARK...WATERTOWN...MILBANK
354 AM CST TUE DEC 15 2015

...WINTER STORM WARNING IN EFFECT FROM NOON TODAY TO 6 PM CST WEDNESDAY...

THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN ABERDEEN HAS ISSUED A WINTER STORM WARNING FOR HEAVY SNOW...WHICH IS IN EFFECT FROM NOON TODAY TO 6 PM CST WEDNESDAY. THE WINTER STORM WATCH IS NO LONGER IN EFFECT.

- * EXPECT PERIODS OF FREEZING DRIZZLE THROUGH THE AFTERNOON HOURS TODAY. SNOW WILL THEN DEVELOP LATE THIS AFTERNOON AND INTO THE EVENING...AND CONTINUE THROUGH MID DAY WEDNESDAY.
- * THE HEAVIEST SNOWFALL RATES WILL OCCUR BETWEEN 6 PM THIS EVENING AND WEDNESDAY MORNING.
- * TOTAL SNOW ACCUMULATIONS OF 4 TO 8 INCHES ARE EXPECTED.
- * LOOK FOR SIGNIFICANT REDUCTIONS IN VISIBILITY AT TIMES.
- * PLAN ON DIFFICULT DRIVING CONDITIONS.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

A WINTER STORM WARNING MEANS SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF SNOW...SLEET...AND ICE ARE EXPECTED OR OCCURRING. STRONG WINDS ARE ALSO POSSIBLE. THIS WILL MAKE TRAVEL VERY HAZARDOUS OR IMPOSSIBLE.

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Today in Weather History

December 15, 1983: A storm system impacted the region on the 14-15th with five inches of snow and strong winds to produce blocked roads and numerous school closings on the 15th throughout most of the eastern third of South Dakota. No travel was advised from late afternoon on the 14th due to low visibility and blocked roads in Roberts and Brookings Counties. The conditions contributed some to several traffic accidents. Meanwhile, snow also spread across Minnesota on December 13th and diminished late on the 15th. Snow accumulations ranged from 1 to 2 inches in west central Minnesota to higher amounts over 10 inches to the east. Winds increased and temperatures began to fall on December 14th as an arctic cold front pushed through the state. The strongest winds occurred during the night of December 14th and into the morning of December 15th. Near-blizzard conditions developed in the southwest and west central sections of Minnesota where the visibility was reported to be near zero with winds of 20 to 30 mph. The wind chill index dropped to 30 below to 60 below zero. Blowing and drifting snow conditions occurred to some degree throughout all of Minnesota. Many roads were closed due to drifts. Drifting snow continued during the evening of December 15th as the winds and snowfall gradually diminished. This event, associated with an arctic cold front, was the beginning of what would become, and still remains, the coldest stretch of December days on record across most of the area. For the next nine days, beginning on December 16th, Aberdeen did not warm above -6 degrees, enduring temperatures as low as -34 F and high temperatures as low as -15 F. Other stations around the region had very similar cold temperatures during the December 16th through December 24th time period, with temperatures warming into single digits above zero on Christmas Day.

December 15, 1992: Cyclone John hit the sparsely populated northwest coast of Australia with winds gusting to 185 mph. John was the strongest cyclone to hit Australia in over 100 years.

1839 - The first of triple storms hit Massachusetts Bay. The storm produced whole gales, and more than 20 inches of snow in interior New England. There was great loss of life at Gloucester MA. (David Ludlum)

1901 - An intense cold front swept across the eastern U.S. The cold front produced heavy rain in Louisiana, and heavy snow in the northeastern U.S. (David Ludlum)

1945 - A record December snowstorm buried Buffalo, NY, under 36.6 inches of snow, with unofficial totals south of the city ranging up to 70 inches. Travel was brought to a halt by the storm. (14th-17th) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A major winter storm hit the Great Lakes Region, intensifying explosively as it crossed northern Illinois. High winds and heavy snow created blizzard conditions in southeastern Wisconsin. Winds gusted to 73 mph, and snowfall totals ranged up to 17 inches at LaFarge. The barometric pressure at Chicago IL dropped three quarters of an inch in six hours to 28.96 inches, a record low reading for December. Up to a foot of snow blanketed northern Illinois, and winds in the Chicago area gusted to 75 mph. O'Hare Airport in Chicago was closed for several hours, for only the fourth time in twenty years. High winds derailed train cars at Avon IN. Light winds and partly sunny skies were reported near the center of the storm, a feature typical of tropical storms. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - High pressure in the Pacific Northwest and low pressure in the southwestern U.S. combined to produced high winds from Utah to California. Winds gusting to 70 mph in the San Francisco area left nearly 300,000 residents without electricity. Winds in Utah gusted to 105 mph at Centerville. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

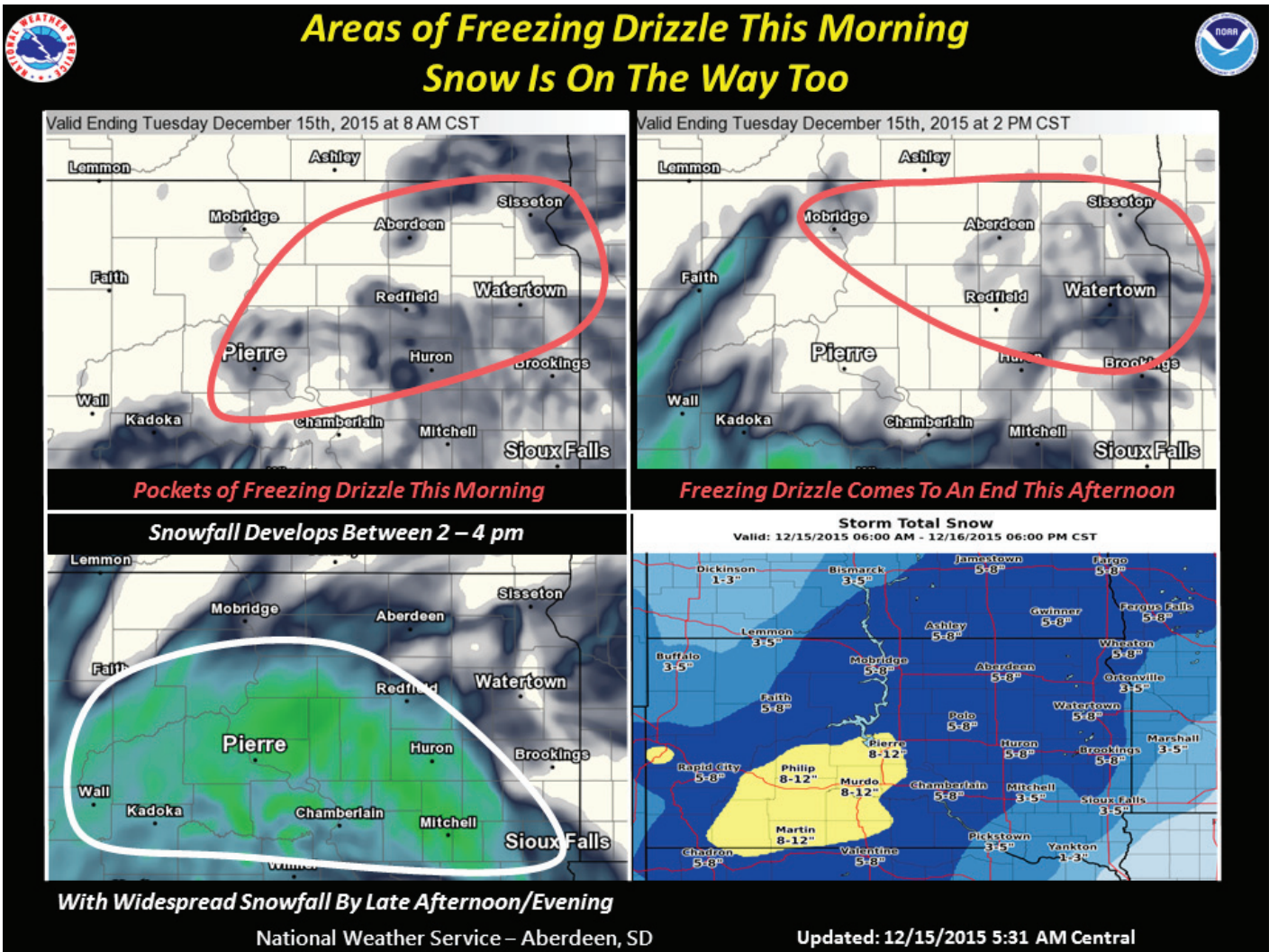
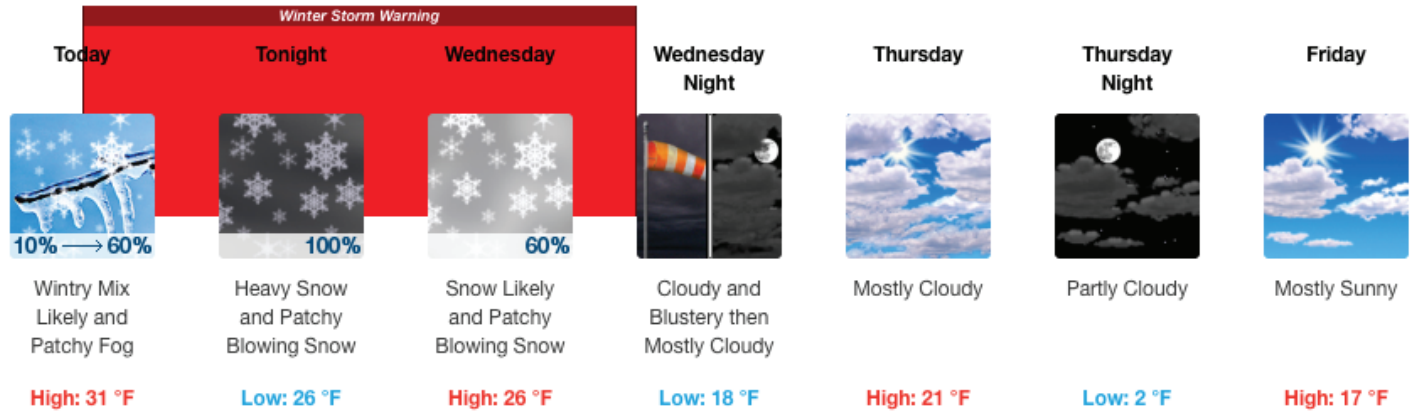
1989 - A couple of low pressure systems spread heavy snow across the northeastern U.S. Up to two feet of snow was reported along Lake Erie in northeastern Ohio, and up to ten inches was reported in Connecticut. Heavy snow squalls developed over Michigan for the third day in a row. Three Oaks MI reported 25 inches of snow in two days. Twenty-six cities in the north central U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. The low of 10 degrees below zero at Wichita KS was a December record for that location. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2005 - Freezing rain and ice pellets fell throughout portions of the southeast U.S. The accumulation of ice caused about 683,000 utilities customers to lose power from northern Georgia northward through the western Carolinas. The power outages were the result of ice accretions of up to three-quarter inch in thickness. The ice storm was blamed for at least four deaths (Associated Press).

2010 - A winter storm swept across parts of the Southeast U.S., bringing a mixed bag of snow, sleet, and freezing rain, making for treacherous travel conditions. At least eight people were killed in Alabama, Mississippi, and North Carolina in weather-related traffic fatalities. Schools were forced to close and thousands of residents lost power in North Carolina and Virginia. The winter storm also impacted Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, and Washington D.C. (NCDC)

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Freezing drizzle will continue across the region through much of the morning making for a slick commute. Snow will move up out of Nebraska around mid-day with widespread snow for central South Dakota by this afternoon - and for north central and northeast South Dakota this evening. Wintry conditions will continue into Wednesday with gusty north winds.

Published on: 12/15/2015 at 5:35AM

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 31.6 at 5:23 AM

Low: 26.8 at 11:32 PM

High Gust: 30 at 6:59 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 60° in 1939

Record Low: -24° in 1917

Average High: 25°F

Average Low: 6°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.25

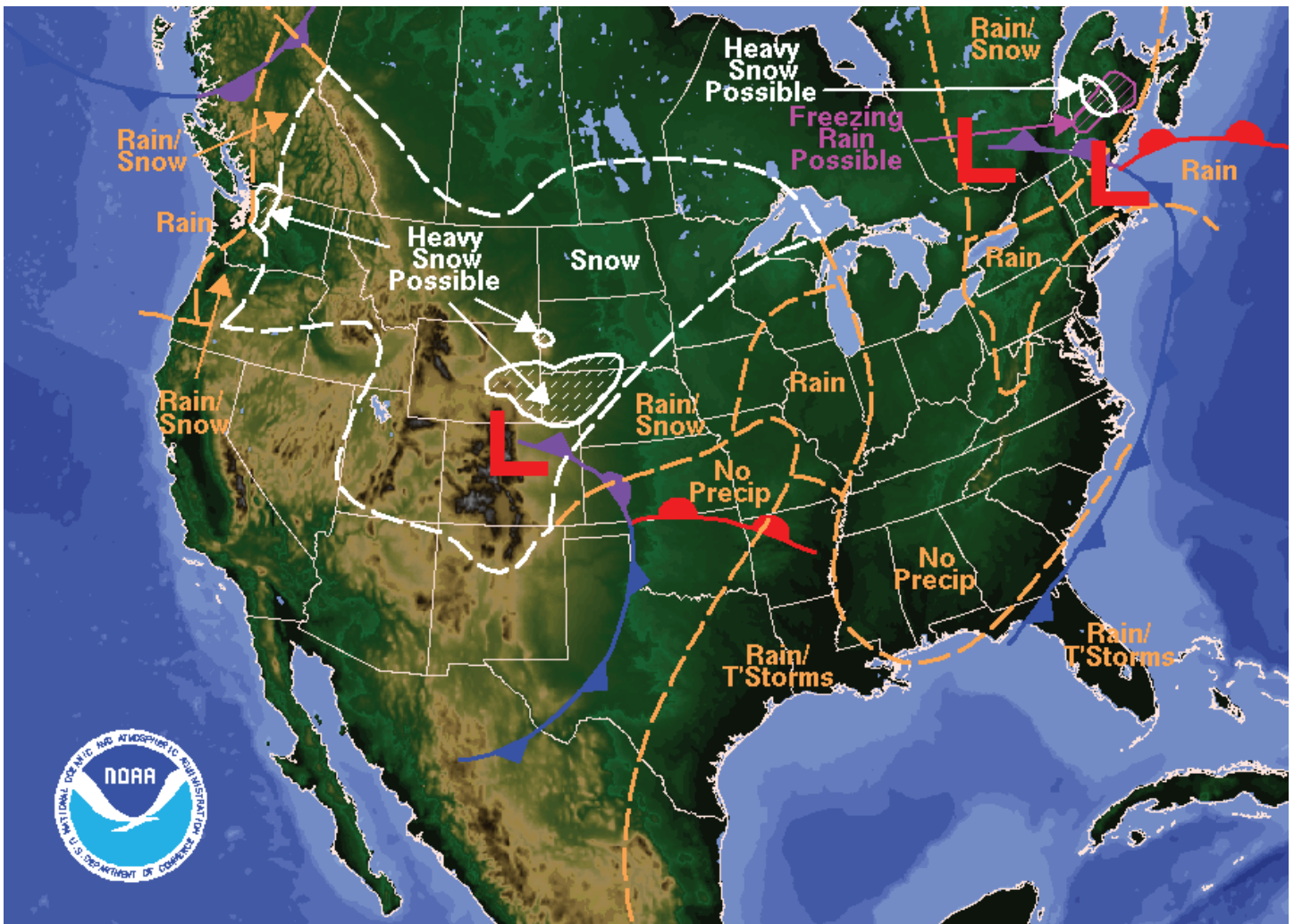
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.55

Average Precip to date: 21.45

Precip Year to Date: 20.37

Sunset Tonight: 4:50 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:07 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Tue, Dec 15, 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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ANYONE ELSE UP THERE?

A man was looking over a cliff when he slipped and began to fall. Sliding down the ledge he grabbed a branch and was hanging on for dear life. Shouting loudly he cried, "Is anyone up there?"

"I am the Lord and I am here," came the answer. "Do you believe in Me?"

"Yes, Lord, I do. But I can't hang on much longer."

"I'll save you," said the Lord. "Just let go."

There was a pause. Finally the man asked, "Is anyone else up there?"

How like so many of us. We doubt the Lord and put our trust in others.

Early in life we are taught to depend on ourselves, to be self-sufficient, strong and solve problems on our own. We also learn to rely on others, look to them for strength and help. Eventually we reach our limits and those we look to for insight, come up lacking. Then, when we become fearful or frustrated, we learn to look to God first and foremost.

Do you remember learning to swim? Can you recall someone standing in front of you in the water and saying, "Jump!" Knowing that they were able to catch us is the faith factor. Jumping in becomes the trust factor.

God's Word constantly encourages us to have faith in Him. It gives us many examples of those who have faith in Him. It is the "letting go" by knowing that He is there to care for us that makes faith work – the trust factor.

Prayer: Teach us, Father, to realize our need to let go and let God meet us at our point of need. May our knowing give way to believing. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 60:11, 12 Give us aid against the enemy, for human help is worthless. With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies.

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News from the Associated Press

Freezing drizzle, fog, snow moving into the Dakotas

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Many schools including those in Rapid City have closed for the day as a winter storm moves into the Dakotas.

Freezing drizzle and dense fog are creating hazardous driving conditions in western South Dakota, and heavy snow promises to follow.

The National Weather Service has issued a winter storm warning for much of South Dakota and for south central North Dakota. Much of the rest of the two states is under weather watches and advisories.

Forecasters say snow totals through Wednesday afternoon could range from half a foot to a foot, and gusty winds will blow it around and make travel dangerous.

Missing Rapid City minimum-security inmate back in custody

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A minimum-security state prison inmate who was placed on escape status over the weekend is back in custody.

Authorities say 54-year-old Ernest Foos was arrested Monday night and transported to the Pennington County Jail.

Foos had left the Rapid City Community Work Center without authorization on Saturday. The Department of Corrections facility houses minimum-security inmates and Community Transition Program parolees.

Foos is serving forgery-related sentences out of Lawrence and Pennington counties.

Different faiths to gather in Sioux Falls for prayer service

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — People of different faiths are gathering in Sioux Falls to pray for peace and to show solidarity with those subjected to terror and violence.

The prayer service is scheduled for Tuesday evening at First United Methodist Church in Sioux Falls. It is expected to unite Muslims, Christians and Jews in prayer.

At the event, prayers for love and peace from different religious traditions are set to be read aloud. Time for silent prayer and music will also be set aside.

Monday's Scores The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Roncalli 85, Mobridge-Pollock 81, 2OT

Bridgewater-Emery 72, Dell Rapids St. Mary 27

Canistota 61, Irene-Wakonda 46

Chadron, Neb. 55, Hot Springs 37

Elk Point-Jefferson 77, Akron-Westfield, Iowa 43

Elkton-Lake Benton 65, Castlewood 46

Estelline 59, Iroquois 32

Redfield/Doland 51, Wessington Springs 42

Scotland 56, Viborg-Hurley 51

Takini 58, McIntosh 55

Waverly-South Shore 52, Florence/Henry 32

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Clark/Willow Lake 63, Lake Preston 40

DeSmet 44, Wolsey-Wessington 22

Elk Point-Jefferson 55, Akron-Westfield, Iowa 38

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Groton Area 60, Tiospa Zina Tribal 42
Hanson 56, Parkston 29
McCook Central/Montrose 66, Dell Rapids 61, OT
McIntosh 66, Takini 28
Redfield/Doland 61, Wessington Springs 15
Webster 61, Waubay/Summit 49
West Central 47, Lennox 40

South Dakota State University president to step down

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota State University President David Chicoine is stepping down to teach in the university's economics department, the state Board of Regents said Monday.

The board said Chicoine, who has been in the role since 2007, will leave the post around July 2016 — or sooner if a replacement is found. Regents President Randy Schaefer said in a statement that the school has "flourished" under Chicoine.

Chicoine, who graduated from the university in 1969 with a bachelor's degree in agribusiness, said his proudest achievements as the school's leader have involved helping students, faculty and others be successful.

"I started my academic career as an assistant professor, and it'll be a great opportunity to finish it as a faculty member in the Department of Economics," said Chicoine, 68, adding that he and his wife have considered the return to his alma mater a privilege. "We've enjoyed every minute."

Schaefer said the board will soon announce a presidential search process and timeline to choose a new university president.

The largest fundraising campaign for education in state history was completed during Chicoine's tenure, according to the board. Research activity also experienced significant growth under his leadership.

With Chicoine at the helm, the school completed the transition to Division I athletics, where the Jackrabbits have in many respects enjoyed more success than they did at the Division II level.

Eighteen Jackrabbit teams have qualified for NCAA Division I national competitions under Chicoine's watch, led by six tournament appearances in women's basketball. The achievements also include back-to-back appearances in the NCAA men's basketball tournament in 2012-13, and five trips to the Football Championship Subdivision tournament.

Before serving as president at South Dakota State University, Chicoine worked for the University of Illinois for more than 30 years, most recently as vice president for technology and economic development.

Coach: Nkemdiche's status for Sugar Bowl undetermined

DAVID BRANDT, AP Sports Writer

Robert Nkemdiche's status for the Sugar Bowl is uncertain after the Mississippi defensive lineman was charged with possession of marijuana following a 15-foot fall at an Atlanta hotel over the weekend that sent him to the hospital.

Coach Hugh Freeze said Monday he hasn't decided if Nkemdiche will play against Oklahoma State on Jan. 1 — assuming he is physically able to take the field. Freeze said he had a brief phone conversation with Nkemdiche, who apologized, and the player's dad.

Nkemdiche, a 6-foot-4, 296-pound junior, has stitches in his back and leg and a swollen ankle, according to the coach. Freeze added he needs to gather more facts and talk more with Nkemdiche before making a decision about any punishment.

"Any time these things happen with young men there's no cut and dried answer, particularly when you don't know all the facts and issues," Freeze said. "I haven't even had a chance to visit with him (in person). I certainly owe him that before we talk about details. My main concern when I first heard it was his health, of course."

Nkemdiche was expected back on the Ole Miss campus later Monday.

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Freeze addressed the media before the team's first practice for the Sugar Bowl. But instead of talking about the Cowboys or playing in the Sugar Bowl for the first time since 1970, Freeze spent most of his time discussing Nkemdiche's injuries.

Police say the 21-year-old Nkemdiche broke a hotel room window, walked about 15 feet, climbed over a wall and fell roughly 15 feet late Saturday night. He was taken to the hospital.

A police report said a double pane window in the room was busted and the room was in "complete disarray." The report also said there were "approximately 7 rolled marijuana cigarettes" in plain sight that police linked to Nkemdiche.

The police investigation is ongoing, the report stated.

When police arrived on Saturday night, Nkemdiche was lying on the concrete in front of the Hyatt Hotel where he was "conscious and breathing." There were several "associates" of Nkemdiche at the scene but "none of them claimed to know what transpired," according to the report.

"There's a blessing that he wasn't on the 10th floor," Freeze said. "It could have been tragic."

The talented Nkemdiche has more to worry about than just his status for the upcoming Sugar Bowl — he is considered a potential first-round NFL pick and the incident could affect his draft stock.

"He knows exactly what he has at stake," Freeze said. "I'm disappointed to hear he was in that situation, but I don't know all the facts as of yet."

Nkemdiche was the consensus top recruit in the country three years ago. He anchored the Rebels' defensive line this season and was selected to the AP All-America second team on Sunday.

Rollover near Hettinger kills 95-year-old South Dakota woman

HETTINGER, N.D. (AP) — Authorities say a 95-year-old woman from Lodgepole, South Dakota, died in a rollover accident near Hettinger, in southwestern North Dakota.

The Highway Patrol says there was dense fog at the time of accident, which happened at 9:15 a.m. Monday. The woman was driving a 2006 Chevy Colorado that lost control on a curve while northbound on state Highway 8.

Authorities say the victim was not wearing a seat belt and was ejected. Her name has not been released.

Construction started on ag storage facility near Colton

COLTON, S.D. (AP) — A new agriculture storage facility is being built near Colton.

Officials with CHS Eastern Farmers say construction has started on a building that should store 30,000 tons of dry fertilizer and 1,500 tons of liquid fertilizer. It will include crop protection and seed warehouses.

The project is expected to be completed in the second half of 2016.

CHS Eastern Farmers is a division of CHS Inc., a Minnesota-based farmer-owned cooperative.

South Dakota prison population dips, parole success grows

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A landmark public safety overhaul passed in 2013 has staved off gains in South Dakota's prison population by more than initially expected while also boosting the number of offenders who are successfully completing their parole, state officials said Monday.

The legislation changed how the state handles nonviolent drug offenders and authorized the South Dakota Supreme Court to set up drug courts in any jurisdiction in the state. The overhaul aims to boost rehabilitation rates and reduce corrections spending, with more focus on violent and career criminals.

According to a report from a public safety panel charged with examining the effects of the law, it's too early to call the overhaul an irrefutable success, but the first two years of results "foreshadow the coming victories."

Here are some of the findings:

PRISON POPULATION

South Dakota's overall prison population — sitting at about 3,560 people at the end of June 2015 — has dipped more than originally projected. And without implementing the overhaul, the Pew Charitable Trusts

estimates the state's prisoner count at that time would have been about 3,875.

The effect of curbing that growth is tens of millions of dollars in averted spending on a new women's prison and ongoing costs, according to the report.

PAROLE SUCCESS

The report says budget year 2015 saw 65 percent of offenders successfully complete parole supervision, a 5 percentage point jump over fiscal year 2014 and an improvement from 37 percent in 2012.

A significant number of South Dakota's prisoners are locked up for parole violations, said Jim Seward, general counsel for Gov. Dennis Daugaard and head of the panel. That means increasing the successful completion of parole also helps slow the growth in the number of people who are incarcerated, he said.

DRUG COURT GAINS

The legislation aimed to build on the drug court's existing successes in saving state funds and improving rehabilitation rates. The state drug court capacity jumped from 45 people in budget year 2011 to accommodating 245 people in budget year 2015, according to the report.

In 2014, there were nearly 100 people accepted, up from 69 people in 2013. Seward said the courts hold offenders accountable with intense supervision and treatment while keeping them in their communities.

South Dakota hires Western Illinois coach Nielson

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Bob Nielson of Western Illinois, the reigning coach of the year in the Missouri Valley Football Conference, has been named the new head coach at South Dakota.

Nielson will succeed Joe Glenn, who retired after four seasons at South Dakota.

The 56-year-old Neilson has compiled a 186-80-1 record in 23 seasons as a head coach. He's been at Western Illinois the last three seasons. Before that he coached Ripon College, Wartburg College, Wisconsin-Eau Claire and Minnesota Duluth. He led Duluth to NCAA Division II national championships in 2008 and 2010, and he was voted Division II coach of the year following both seasons.

Nielson this season led Western Illinois to the Football Championship Subdivision playoffs.

Much of Dakotas could see significant snowfall by midweek

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Much of the Dakotas could be in store for significant snowfall by midweek.

The National Weather Service has posted winter storm watches and advisories in the western and central portions of the two states and into eastern North Dakota Tuesday into Wednesday.

Forecasters say a foot or more of snow could fall in the northern Black Hills of South Dakota. Other areas could see about half a foot of snow. Freezing drizzle also could fall in parts of the two states.

The weather service says there is no arctic air moving down with the system, so high temperatures will remain in the 20s and 30s and wind chills likely will stay above zero. It could be breezy, though, with blowing snow that could hamper motorists.

Sioux Falls neighborhood fights historic designation

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Property owners have blocked a move to nominate a Sioux Falls neighborhood for the National Register of Historic Places, and say the city wasted money on the effort.

The register lists properties the federal government considers worthy of recognition and preservation. A resident had asked that Sioux Falls' Pendar Lane neighborhood be nominated.

The South Dakota State Historical Society said it received letters of objection from more than half of the neighborhood homeowners, and Historic Preservation Director Ted Spencer said the society won't be nominating the area.

The proposed historic district would have included about 300 homes. The neighborhood is home to Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Mission/Spanish Revival and Bungalow/Craftsman homes, according to the petition for inclusion as a historic district.

"There's a really neat, eclectic mix of architectural style there," Spencer told the Argus Leader newspaper.

"It's kind of a neat area to walk through and see such a variety."

Being in a designated historic district makes homes eligible for historic preservation grants and tax rebates. However, it also means that property owners need to get approval from a state historic preservation officer before performing renovations or home improvements that require a building permit, according to state law.

"That's more of my freedom than I'm going to give up," said neighborhood resident Joe Hurly, who organized the dissent.

The city used state grant money to pay a consulting firm \$30,000 to start the nomination process, according to KELO-TV. Hurley said the city should have asked residents their thoughts about being an historic district before spending the money.

City Planner Mike Cooper called it "a lesson learned."

'Star Wars' premiere crowd cheers for familiar, new faces

DERRIK J. LANG, AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The reaction was strong to "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" at the film's world premiere in Hollywood.

Inside the TCL Chinese Theatre, the audience began cheering Monday from the moments the movie's first words appeared on screen and reacted excitedly to seeing the return of Han Solo and Chewbacca after a 32-year hiatus.

The audience also greeted newcomers, such as Gwendoline Christie's Captain Phasma and Daisy Ridley's Rey, with vocal enthusiasm and loudly gasped at the film's various twists and turns.

After the showing, audiences spilled out into an after-party held inside a giant tent erected on Hollywood Boulevard, where they snapped photos with Stormtroopers, lined up to build their own droid toys and noshed on salmon and short ribs.

For many of the celebrity guests in attendance, they wholeheartedly approved of director J.J. Abrams' vision for the first new live-action "Star Wars" film in a decade.

"I loved it," actor-director Zach Braff told The Associated Press immediately after the premiere. "I thought J.J. did an amazing job. My favorite part was just seeing the camaraderie between the veteran and the new cast members."

"The Force Awakens" mixes old-school characters, such as Harrison Ford's Han Solo and Carrie Fisher's Leia Organa, with a new cast that includes John Boyega, Adam Driver and the spherical droid BB-8.

Patton Oswalt said "The Force Awakens" represented a return to what made him fall in love with "Star Wars" in the first place.

"It was a lot of fun," the actor-comedian said after watching the film inside the TCL Chinese Theatre. "I had the same feeling as when I would watch these films as a kid."

Disney screened "The Force Awakens" simultaneously at three Hollywood venues, with the cast and crew watching the film together inside the adjacent Dolby Theatre.

"It can't be said enough — not nearly enough — that none of us would be here tonight without the miraculous creation of one man," Abrams told the crowd before the film. "George Lucas, from the bottom of my heart, and behalf of everyone involved with 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens,' thank you, sir."

"The Force Awakens" will be released publicly Friday, with some box-office analysts expecting it to smash sales records. "The Force Awakens" has already broken presale ticket records, and many fans are eager to see the reunion of original trilogy characters last seen in 1983's "Return of the Jedi."

The premiere's red carpet kicked off Monday with Stormtroopers marching and droids rolling past cameras before the film's stars arrived. John Williams' soaring score played in the massive opaque tent spanning four blocks in Hollywood.

While most stars opted for chic red carpet attire, Joseph Gordon-Levitt showed up dressed as Yoda and actor-comedian Rainn Wilson dressed as a Jedi.

The celebration melded classic "Star Wars" mythology with the new generation that will carry the weight

of two more sequels, spin-offs, video games, comic books, toys and other merchandise.

At one point on the red carpet, Fisher turned the microphone on her co-star, Oscar Isaac, and conducted an interview broadcast on StarWars.com that included her dropping an expletive.

Ford reflected on the impact of the film and the role that catapulted him to superstardom.

"Well, in the '70s nobody knew what to anticipate," said Ford. "Nobody had ever seen anything like it. Now we have to live up to what the first films delivered."

Abrams and "Star Wars" creator Lucas posed together for photos, and both men took time to chat with fans — some dressed as X-Wing pilots and others as new "Force Awakens" characters — before heading inside.

For those without tickets to the premiere, the most they could see was the outside of the tent.

"We're really disappointed because we are big 'Star Wars' fans, and we were hoping to at least see a little of the celebrities," said Natalie Arnet, a tourist from Paris, who attempted to catch a glimpse of attendees from behind a barricade with her family.

Siri vs. Cortana vs. 'OK Google': Who's better, who's best

BRANDON BAILEY, AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Cortana's learning the neighborhood. Google's digital assistant can't tell a joke. And Siri apparently has a thing for the metric system.

Those are just a few of the things I learned after staging a face-off between the three leading digital assistants. Apple's Siri and "OK Google" — they're not big on personification at Google — are now standard on smartphones; Microsoft recently added its Cortana service to Windows 10, so it works on PCs, too.

Now that just about anyone can talk to their phone or computer, we wanted to see what happens when you try.

Unsurprisingly, none of the assistants are perfect. Surprisingly, they do have distinct personalities, even if they're just deliberate artifacts of their creators.

I asked the same 10 questions of each service, using an iPhone with Siri, a Nexus phone with Android's "OK Google" and a Microsoft Surface Pro tablet with Cortana.

INFORMATION PLEASE

First up: Some basic factual questions. All three did pretty well when asked, "What's it like outside?"

Cortana earned extra points for answering with a spoken weather report. Google and Siri each showed a screen image that listed current conditions and a forecast.

All three supplied President Obama's age. When asked "What's his wife's name?" they all remembered that the question referred to the president, and correctly identified the First Lady: Michelle Obama.

Similarly, they all knew the length of the Golden Gate Bridge. But for some reason, Siri answered in meters, while Cortana and Google stuck to feet.

AT YOUR SERVICE

Next came more complicated tasks, like finding the nearest pharmacy. Google and Siri listed three within a half-mile of The Associated Press bureau in downtown San Francisco. But neither mentioned the drug store on the ground floor of the building where the bureau is located. Cortana did.

Posing questions is hungry work. I asked for help making a lunch reservation at Credo, a fancy restaurant around the corner. Siri and Cortana were stumped, but Google automatically fired up the Open Table app on the Nexus phone, with the form already filled out to make a reservation. Too bad the place is so trendy; it was booked for weeks.

Ever feel like ducking work to catch an afternoon movie? (Shhh! Don't tell my editor.) All three assistants had local movie listings at their digital fingertips. But Siri led off with a new release at a theater just half a mile from the AP bureau. With a couple of taps, Siri had opened Fandango, an app that lets you buy

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tickets online.

Google also connected with Fandango. Cortana had more trouble; Microsoft lags behind Apple and Google in the number of apps that work with its software, and I couldn't get the right Fandango app to load on a Surface tablet.

JUST FOR LAUGHS

Finally, a personality test. I challenged each to tell a joke. Siri had the best answer: "If I told you a joke in my language, I'd have to explain it."

Then I tried the famous line from "2001: A Space Odyssey" in which astronaut Dave Bowman tells the ship's computer: "Open the pod bay doors." Cortana knows the right answer: "I'm sorry Dave. I'm afraid I can't do that." But Siri had a better one: "Doesn't anybody knock anymore?"

To be clear, these aren't the witty rejoinders of some artificial intelligence. The creators of Siri and Cortana thought it would be fun to pre-load each service with humorous answers to predictable questions.

Google doesn't bother with such frills. Sticking to its search-engine roots, "OK Google" answered the "2001" question by silently presenting a series of Internet links, starting with one for a YouTube clip from the movie.

Likewise, when asked about the meaning of life, Siri and Cortana were both ready with a quip. Google just recited a dry definition that only a biologist could love: "Life is the condition that distinguishes animals and plants from inorganic matter. ..."

FINAL SCORE

All three services are good on factual questions. Siri's programmers have the best sense of humor. Google stays focused on the task at hand. And Cortana is quickly catching up to both of them.

10 Things to Know for Tuesday

The Associated Press

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

1. WHY TED CRUZ WILL BE IN SPOTLIGHT AT GOP DEBATE

The senator's rise in Iowa, home to the campaign's kickoff caucuses, makes him a top target for Trump, Marco Rubio and other rivals.

2. BERGDAHL TO BE COURT-MARTIALED

If convicted, the Army sergeant who walked off his post in Afghanistan could be sentenced to life in prison.

3. SUPPORT GROWS FOR SENDING US TROOPS TO FIGHT ISLAMIC STATE GROUP

The percentage of Americans who favor deploying ground troops against the extremists has risen from 31 percent to 42 percent over the past year in AP-GfK polling.

4. HOW DISNEY GOT SET FOR 'STAR WARS' PREMIERE

The film studio took over a half-mile of Hollywood Boulevard, with spotlights everywhere and bleachers for fans.

5. AMERICAN YOUNGSTERS FEEL MUSLIM BACKLASH

Parents say their children hear comments, see hateful bumper stickers and T-shirts, and have had friends abandon them because of their faith.

6. WHAT OBAMA SEES AS IMPORTANT PART OF LEGACY

He's counting on the global climate accord to allow him to leave a lasting imprint on the planet.

7. EGYPT: NO SIGN OF TERRORISM IN DEADLY CRASH OF RUSSIAN JET IN SINAI

The preliminary finding conflicts with Russian, U.S. and British beliefs that a bomb on the aircraft probably was to blame.

8. US TO REQUIRE DRONES TO BE REGISTERED

The move comes at a time when the Federal Aviation Administration is receiving more than 100 reports a month about drones flying near manned aircraft.

9. BILL COSBY FIRES BACK

The entertainer countersues seven women, saying they made false accusations in their lawsuits against him.

10. PETE ROSE'S BID FOR REINSTATEMENT TO BASEBALL FAILS

Commissioner Rob Manfred says Rose hasn't quit gambling and would be a risk to the sport's integrity if he was allowed back in the game.

Driver dodges death when large metal beam pierces windshield

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — Northern California authorities say a driver is lucky to be alive after a large metal beam pierced the windshield of his SUV while on a San Jose freeway.

San Jose Fire Department Capt. Christopher Salcido says the beam fell off of a flatbed truck, crashing through the windshield and lodging itself into the driver's seat of the BMW.

The driver, 66-year-old Don Lee of San Jose, California, suffered a small scratch to his right arm.

Both vehicles were traveling at 60 mph when the incident occurred around noon Friday on I-280.

Twenty-two-year-old Javier Zambrano of Los Banos was driving the Ford flatbed truck carrying the beam. California Highway Patrol spokesman Ross Lee says Zambrano will be cited for spilling a load once the investigation is complete.

Cosby says 7 women who sued him made false accusations

DENISE LAVOIE, AP Legal Affairs Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Bill Cosby fired back Monday at seven women who are suing him for defamation, accusing them of making false accusations of sexual misconduct for financial gain.

In a countersuit filed in federal court, Cosby alleges the women made "malicious, opportunistic, and false and defamatory accusations" against him. Cosby is seeking monetary damages "to the maximum extent permitted by law."

The women have claimed Cosby defamed them by allowing his representatives to brand them as liars after they went public with allegations of rape and other sexual misconduct dating back decades.

In his counterclaim, the comedian says the women have "engaged in a campaign to assassinate" his reputation and character. He says their campaign is "nothing more than an opportunistic attempt to extract financial gain from him."

The women suing Cosby in U.S. District Court in Springfield are among approximately 50 who have come forward with allegations of rape or unwanted sexual contact over the last year. Cosby has a home in Shelburne in western Massachusetts.

Joseph Cammarata, an attorney representing the women, said Cosby's countersuit "stinks of retaliation." "To suggest that these ladies — each and every one of them — got together and orchestrated a campaign against Mr. Cosby is hard to fathom," Cammarata said.

Cosby's countersuit cites his work as an entertainer and philanthropist, saying Cosby "prides himself in the legacy and reputation he has earned throughout his life."

His lawyers say that his reputation and career have been damaged by the women, noting that they filed their defamation lawsuit against Cosby at a time when he was set to return to television in a new NBC series.

Once news of his return to television became well publicized in 2014, each of the women "repeatedly and maliciously published their unsubstantiated stories through multiple interviews and posts on social media platforms," Cosby's lawyers wrote. NBC dropped plans for the show after multiple women came forward with rape allegations.

When Cosby's former longtime attorney, Martin Singer, defended the comedian by denying accusations of sexual misconduct, the women filed a defamation suit against him "to silence his defenses and monetize their false accusations," his attorneys wrote.

In his countersuit, Cosby denies the rape and other sexual misconduct claims made by the women and says the allegations were motivated by money.

For example, Cosby's lawyers cite comments one of the women, Therese Serignese, made to The Huffington Post in November 2014.

Serignese said Cosby drugged and raped her in 1976 and that she called him after her mother said Cosby maybe would "take care of you." Serignese told website that she contacted Cosby in the 1990s and accepted money from him after being injured in a car accident.

In a statement, Cosby's lawyer, Monique Pressley, said the women's "multidecade-old, false, uncorroborated, opportunistic allegations of sexual assault have caused and continue to cause him to suffer substantial injuries and damages" to his reputation and business contracts.

FAA to require most drones to be registered and marked

TOM KRISHER, Associated Press

Spurred by numerous reports of drones flying near jets and airports, the federal government will require that the aircraft be registered to make it easier to identify owners and educate amateur aviators.

The move, announced Monday by the Federal Aviation Administration, comes at a time when the agency is receiving more than 100 reports per month about drones flying near manned aircraft. The FAA prohibits drones and model airplanes from flying higher than 400 feet or within 5 miles of an airport.

Drones have become increasingly popular with hobbyists. The FAA estimates that 1.6 million small unmanned aircraft will be sold this year, with half during the last three months of the year.

The drones must be marked with the owner's unique registration number. The FAA said that would let authorities track down owners if they violate the rules. But registration also gives the agency a vehicle to educate owners just as thousands get drones as presents for Christmas and other holidays.

The requirement covers aircraft weighing from more than half pound up to 55 pounds, including any payload such as a camera. Drone owners who are 13 and older will have to register on an FAA website that becomes available starting Dec. 21. The FAA expects parents to register for younger children.

Registration will cost \$5 and must be renewed every three years, but the fee will be waived for the first 30 days, until Jan. 20. Owners will have to mark aircraft with an identification number. Recreational fliers can register as many aircraft as they want on one registration number.

Most people who fly drones and model aircraft have little aviation experience, but they become pilots as soon as they start to fly, said Deputy FAA Administrator Michael Whitaker. "They have the responsibility to fly safely, and there are rules and regulations that apply to them," he said.

Those who got drones before Dec. 21 must register by Feb. 19. People who buy them later must register before their first outdoor flight.

Owners will have to provide their name, home address and email, and their identity will be verified and payments made by credit card, the agency said.

The FAA said it used some of the recommendations from a task force appointed by Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, but the move disappointed a large group representing model airplane users.

The Muncie, Indiana-based Academy of Model Aeronautics said registration is an "unnecessary burden for our more than 185,000 members who have been operating safely for decades."

The group maintains that Congress in 2012 prohibited the FAA from new rules for recreational model aircraft users who are part of a community-based organization.

But Whitaker said while the law prohibits new rules, the FAA has the authority to register the aircraft.

Most model airplanes and even some flying toys weigh more than a half-pound and may need to be registered, the academy said.

The requirement won support from others, including the Air Line Pilots Association, which said it is a tool to help make sure drone owners share the skies safely with airplanes. The association would like to see registration required when unmanned aircraft are sold.

Government and industry officials have expressed concern that drones, like birds, could be sucked into an aircraft engine, smash a cockpit windshield or damage a critical aircraft surface area and cause a crash.

Drones are responsible for at least 28 recent instances in which pilots veered off course to avoid a collision, according to an analysis of FAA reports by Bard College's Center for the Study of the Drone in Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.

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Aircraft engine manufacturers currently test the ability of engines to withstand bird strikes by firing dead birds at the engines at high velocities. The FAA hasn't yet said when it will require engine makers to conduct tests with drones, but officials have unofficially acknowledged they are working on the issue, the report said.

Europe shares gain, Asia patchy as Fed weighs rate hike

ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — European stocks were higher Tuesday, after sharp losses the previous day, while Asian markets were patchy in a sign of volatile trading ahead of Federal Reserve and Bank of Japan policy meetings.

KEEPING SCORE: Germany's DAX gained 1.6 percent to 10,303.05 and Britain's FTSE 100 was up 1.3 percent at 5,949.47. France's CAC 40 jumped 1.7 percent to 4,549.69. Wall Street seemed poised to extend Monday's last minute gains. Dow futures were up 0.6 percent at 17,349.00. S&P 500 futures rose 0.6 percent to 2,021.20.

THE FED: The Federal Reserve's last meeting of the year begins Tuesday, and it is expected to raise interest rates for the first time in almost a decade on Wednesday. The Fed's key short-term interest rate has been near zero since Dec. 16, 2008. A rate hike would signal confidence in the U.S. economy, but some investors worry it may slow growth.

JAPAN STIMULUS: Mixed economic data for Japan are keeping alive, though just barely, hopes for more stimulus from the Bank of Japan to help spur the recovery. But most economists do not expect such a move at the policy meeting that wraps up on Friday.

THE QUOTE: With the Fed meeting nearing, "we think that markets may turn cautious though a rate hike is already being priced in," Mizuho Bank Ltd. said in its daily market report. "The element of surprise may come from the Fed's rhetoric."

ASIA'S DAY: Japan's Nikkei 225 stock index fell 1.7 percent to 18,565.90 as the yen rose against the U.S. dollar. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 fell 0.4 percent to 4,909.60 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.2 percent to 21,274.37, while the Shanghai Composite fell 0.3 percent to 3,510.35. South Korea's Kospi was up 0.3 percent at 1,932.97. Markets in New Zealand, Taiwan rose and shares in Southeast Asia were mixed.

ENERGY: The price of U.S. crude oil fell below \$35 a barrel on Monday for the first time since early 2009 but then rebounded to gain about 2 percent, or 69 cents, to \$36.31 a barrel. In Asia on Tuesday, U.S. crude lost 15 cents to \$36.16 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, a benchmark for international oils, rose 13 cents to \$38.29.

CURRENCIES: The dollar dropped to 120.94 yen from 121.09 yen on Monday. The euro rose to \$1.1023 from \$1.0994.

Fear and loathing: Investors are running from junk bonds

STAN CHOE, AP Business Writers

BERNARD CONDON, AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — The junk-bond market has something to really fear: fear itself.

Investors are rushing out of junk bonds, spooked by last week's closure of a mutual fund focused on some of the lowest-quality, highest-yielding bonds. The shutdown comes on top of fears that a spike in bond defaults is coming, and it's led investors to rush for the exits in a corner of the market that generally doesn't handle such things well.

The price drops are hitting many investors who are new to junk bonds and have little experience with the notoriously volatile market. Since the Federal Reserve slashed interest rates to a record low in 2008, investors have been creeping into ever-riskier options in search of more income. They've been attracted to junk bonds, also known as high yield, because they pay higher interest rates than high-quality bonds. The downside is that they're issued by companies more likely to default, socking investors with losses.

In just two days, the central bank is widely expected to finally raise rates above their emergency low

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levels. The policy has helped avert a deeper downturn following the financial crisis, but critics say it's also spread hidden risks throughout the financial system by making investors cavalier.

"Investors took more and more risk without even knowing it," said George Cipolloni, a co-manager of the Berwyn Income fund.

As investors have demanded their money back from junk-bond funds in recent days, managers are being forced to sell bonds to raise cash. And with buyers scarce for the lowest-quality bonds, managers are selling higher-quality ones.

The forced selling is pushing prices lower across the junk-bond market, not just for the kinds that led to last week's fund closure. That's making investors even more scared and creating a vicious cycle of fear and selling. It led the largest junk-bond mutual fund to a 1.2 percent loss on Friday, its biggest in four years. The biggest junk-bond exchange-traded fund fell 1 percent Monday after dropping 2 percent Friday.

The price drops have been so sharp and indiscriminate that some analysts see a chance to buy some types of junk bonds at attractive prices. But that doesn't mean they expect the declines to end soon.

"It's going to affect the entire market," said Jim Kochan, chief fixed-income strategist at Wells Fargo Advantage Funds. "It would be overly optimistic to say that this is finished."

If the junk-bond swoon gets worse, it could eventually hit higher-rated bonds and other markets. One of the big drivers for the stock market — stock buybacks — could be in for a slowdown, for example.

THE SPARK

The Third Avenue Focused Credit fund told shareholders last week that it was closing, in part because many shareholders were asking for their money back.

David Barse, who stepped down Monday as CEO of Third Avenue Management, told investors last week that the fund may have been able to make gains on its investments if given enough time.

But the fund saw that if it wanted to raise cash quickly, it would have to sell holdings at steep discounts, and that would "unfairly disadvantage the remaining shareholders."

By closing the fund, it could take more time and net the highest prices possible. But, in an unusual move for mutual funds, investors may also have to wait a year or more to get most of their cash back.

THE SCARIEST SECTOR

The default rate is still relatively low for junk bonds, but the pace is picking up around the world. Standard & Poor's has counted just over 100 defaults so far this year, the highest number since the end of the Great Recession.

Much of the pain is focused on companies that produce oil and metals, whose prices have plummeted. A barrel of oil is at its lowest price since 2009, which makes it tough for energy producers to make enough money to repay their debt. That's caused investors to flee the sector on worries of a spike in defaults.

Junk bonds of energy companies have lost 19 percent this year on average, much worse than the average loss of 5 percent for the broad junk-bond market.

TRADERS CAN'T FIND PARTNERS

Similar junk-bond selloffs in recent history were followed quickly by rebounds, like the selloffs in 2011 over fears about Europe's debt crisis, in 2013 over fears about rising interest rates, and late last year as oil tumbled.

But Berwyn's Cipolloni thinks this time is different, in part because of how far and wide the fear has rippled out among investors, from junk bonds in one industry to junk bonds in others.

"It started in energy and materials, and now it's spread to retail and health care," Cipolloni said. "It will become more pervasive."

He cited investment-grade bonds issued by Community Health Systems due in 2022, which are currently trading at \$92.57, compared with \$106 in early October, a big move down for a bond.

Part of the problem is that it has become more difficult for bond investors to find trading partners, making the market less flexible, or, as traders say, less liquid.

Mutual funds and ETFs are designed to be relatively liquid investments, so investors can sell and exchange their investment for cash. Critics say that mixing such liquid investments with an illiquid junk-bond market can cause these vicious cycles.

BROADER IMPACT

Marilyn Cohen, founder of bond manager Envision Capital, says the market is particularly vulnerable now because of what companies did with the trillions of dollars they raised from bonds.

Instead of expanding their business, which might have made it easier to pay off what they owe, many companies used the cash to buy back their own shares or hand out fat dividends to their shareholders.

Corporations have been the biggest buyers of stocks for years, helping to lift the market. If companies find it tougher to borrow, even those with strong credit ratings, the torrid pace of stock buybacks could slow.

"We're getting our comeuppance, and it's well warranted," Cohen said. "It all got overdone."

Crunch time again for health law; Tuesday sign-up deadline

RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's crunch time to sign up for coverage under President Barack Obama's health care law. The website works much better now, but rising premiums and shaken faith among insurers have cast new shadows.

Tuesday is the deadline for millions of uninsured procrastinators to sign up in time for coverage to begin on Jan. 1. As the health insurance expansion enters its third year, their decisions are critical to its economic viability. A surge of younger, healthier customers could hold down premiums in a market that's struggling to grow.

"Medical costs of enrollees have been higher than expected and total enrollment remains low," said Caroline Pearson, a vice president at the consulting firm Avalere Health. "If participation is leveling off, then plans may be stuck with a risk pool that is not particularly balanced."

More than half of the health law's 23 nonprofit insurance cooperatives have folded, and even some major industry players have recently gone public with doubts.

There have been bumps with the health law, says business owner Rayna Collins of Lincoln, Nebraska, but overall she counts on it. She's surprised, however, that many people she knows have remained uninsured.

"It's heartbreaking to think that they could have affordable insurance," said Collins. "They think it's like going on welfare." One friend believed incorrectly that insurers could still turn down customers with pre-existing health conditions, a practice barred under the law.

Collins, a graphic designer, has had to make adjustments. She switched insurers for 2016 because the company she was with left the market. Her premium will be about the same, after subsidies the law provides for private coverage. But her deductible will spike from \$500 to \$2600.

"I'm getting less coverage for about the same, and I'm not happy with that," Collins said. "But I don't know what I would do if I weren't getting the government subsidy. I was already being priced out of health insurance before Obamacare." The coverage allows her to get regular preventive care that's important for people like her, in their early 60s.

The Obama administration says it's seeing a vigorous consumer response this sign-up season, with more than 1 million new customers already.

"All the evidence for us is that the marketplace is strong, it's vibrant, and it's growing," said Andy Slavitt, head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which runs the government's major insurance programs.

Still, the administration's sign-up target for 2016, the president's last full year in office, is modest: 10 million people enrolled and paying premiums at the end of the year, an increase of about 10 percent.

Some important things for consumers thinking about signing up for the first time, as well as for those renewing:

—Deadlines: Tuesday is the deadline to sign up for coverage so it can take effect on the first of the year. It's also the deadline to make any changes to existing coverage so they take effect Jan. 1. Current customers will be automatically renewed Jan. 1 if they make no changes, but they may save money now by shopping for a plan with lower premiums.

The final deadline for new sign-ups and plan switches is Jan. 31, 2016. After that, new enrollments and

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changes are only allowed under special circumstances. People who remain uninsured after Jan. 31 risk fines when they file their 2016 taxes.

—Fines will sting: The fines for people who remain uninsured in 2016 have gone up substantially. A study from the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that the average tax penalty will rise to \$969 per household, or nearly 50 percent. The fines are one of the law's methods for nudging healthy people to get insured.

Fines of \$900 would put a serious dent in most income tax refunds, and it's enough money to pay several months' worth of subsidized premiums. This year uninsured people got a second chance to sign up and avoid penalties if they found out about the fines upon filing their tax returns. There's no such reprieve next year.

—Website working: The HealthCare.gov website, famously balky a couple of years ago, is working well by most accounts. The site has some consumer-friendly enhancements including a cost calculator, a doctor and hospital look-up feature and a way to see whether your prescription drugs are covered. Consumers are urged to double-check the physician finder results with their plans and doctors.

Ahead of sign-up season, it was expected that premiums for health law plans would go up in most places. A wave of closures among the law's nonprofit insurance co-ops led to more worries. But what really seems to have shaken confidence were recent comments by UnitedHealth CEO Stephen Hemsley that the nation's largest insurer had made a bad decision in expanding into more of the law's insurance exchanges.

Drew Altman, president of the Kaiser Foundation, says the health law's insurance markets appear to be making progress. But they're not there yet.

"It's going to take more people enrolled to be fully successful," Altman said.

Today in History The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 15, the 349th day of 2015. There are 16 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 15, 1965, two U.S. manned spacecraft, Gemini 6A and Gemini 7, maneuvered to within 10 feet of each other while in orbit.

On this date:

In 1791, the Bill of Rights went into effect following ratification by Virginia.

In 1814, the "Hartford Convention" began as New England Federalists opposed to the War of 1812 secretly gathered in the Connecticut capital. (America's victory in the Battle of New Orleans and the war's end effectively discredited the Convention.)

In 1864, the two-day Battle of Nashville began during the Civil War as Union forces commanded by Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas attacked Confederate troops led by Gen. John Bell Hood; the result was a resounding Northern victory.

In 1890, Sioux Indian Chief Sitting Bull and 11 other tribe members were killed in Grand River, South Dakota, during a confrontation with Indian police.

In 1938, groundbreaking for the Jefferson Memorial took place in Washington, D.C., with President Franklin D. Roosevelt taking part in the ceremony.

In 1939, the Civil War motion picture epic "Gone with the Wind," starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable, had its world premiere in Atlanta.

In 1944, a single-engine plane carrying bandleader Glenn Miller, a major in the U.S. Army Air Forces, disappeared over the English Channel while en route to Paris.

In 1964, Canada's House of Commons approved dropping the country's "Red Ensign" flag in favor of a new design, the "Maple Leaf" flag.

In 1974, the horror spoof "Young Frankenstein," starring Gene Wilder and directed by Mel Brooks, was released by 20th Century Fox.

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In 1989, a popular uprising began in Romania that resulted in the downfall of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu (chow-SHES'-koo).

In 1995, European Union leaders meeting in Madrid, Spain, chose "euro" as the name of the new single European currency.

In 2001, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, Italy, was reopened to the public after a \$27 million realignment that had dragged on for over a decade.

Ten years ago: Millions of Iraqis turned out to choose a parliament in a mostly peaceful election. Former Sen. William Proxmire, the Wisconsin Democrat who'd fought government waste with his "Golden Fleece" awards, died in Sykesville, Maryland, at age 90.

Five years ago: The U.N. Security Council gave a unanimous vote of confidence to the government of Iraq by lifting 19-year-old sanctions on weapons and civilian nuclear power. Time magazine named Mark Zuckerberg, the 26-year-old co-founder and CEO of Facebook, its Person of the Year. Movie producer, director and writer Blake Edwards, 88, died in Santa Monica, California. Baseball Hall of Famer Bob Feller died in Cleveland at age 92. The New York Jets suspended assistant coach Sal Alosi indefinitely after they discovered he'd ordered five inactive players to form a wall along the sideline for a punt return, during which he tripped Miami Dolphins player Nolan Carroll.

One year ago: A 16-hour hostage siege began in Sydney, Australia, as an Iranian-born, self-styled Muslim cleric took 17 hostages at a cafe; police ended up storming the cafe, resulting in the deaths of the gunman and two of his captives.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-comedian Tim Conway is 82. Singer Cindy Birdsong (The Supremes) is 76. Rock musician Dave Clark (The Dave Clark Five) is 73. Rock musician Carmine Appice (Vanilla Fudge) is 69. Actor Don Johnson is 66. Actress Melanie Chartoff is 65. Movie director Julie Taymor is 63. Movie director Alex Cox is 61. Actor Justin Ross is 61. Rock musician Paul Simonon (The Clash) is 60. Movie director John Lee Hancock is 59. DNC Vice Chairwoman Donna Brazile is 56. Country singer Doug Phelps (Brother Phelps; Kentucky Headhunters) is 55. Movie producer-director Reginald Hudlin is 54. Actress Helen Slater is 52. Actress Molly Price is 50. Actor Garrett Wang (wahng) is 47. Actor Michael Shanks is 45. Actor Stuart Townsend is 43. Figure skater Surya Bonaly is 42. "Crowd-hyper" Kito Trawick (Ghostown DJs) is 38. Actor Adam Brody is 36. Actress Michelle Dockery is 34. Actor George O. Gore II is 33. Actress Camilla Luddington is 32. Rock musician Alana Haim (HYM) is 24. Actress Stefania Owen is 18.

Thought for Today: "The world is moving so fast these days that the one who says it can't be done is generally interrupted by someone doing it." - Harry Emerson Fosdick, American clergyman (1878-1969).