

Groton Daily Independent

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Friday, December 18

Debate at Brookings

School Breakfast: Cinnamon roll, yogurt, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Quesadilla, corn, mixed veggie trays, fruit.

Senior Menu: Breaded codfish, parsley buttered potatoes, coleslaw, orange sherbet, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: Jean Harrison, Pastor Craig Grams, Jasper Pray, Kelly Pappas, Dylan Hanson, Michaela Oleson

2:00pm: Elementary Christmas Concert at GHS Gym

4:00pm: Basketball Double Header at Deuel (JH girls at 4:00, JH Boys at 5:00, C boys at 4:00, Girls JV at 4:00, Boys JV at 5:00, Girls Varsity at 6:30, Boys Varsity at 8:00)

Saturday, December 19

Debate at Brookings

Birthdays: Jeff Howard, Tim Thurston, Brad Waage, Gretchen Dinger, Quenton Severson

10:00am: Emmanuel Lutheran Worship at Rosewood Court

11:00am: NEC Wrestling at Milbank

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

Sunday, December 20

Anniversary: Lon & Marva Gellhaus

Birthdays: • Virginia Spencer • Lisa Adler • Jim Pray • Harvey Fliehs III • Lexi Osterman

9:00am: Emmanuel Lutheran School

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

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

10:00am: Heaven Bound Ministries worship at

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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Midwest Masonry & concrete Pumping

Greg Heilman, owner

405 E 1st Ave., Groton

Greg: 253/929-9137

Mike: 605/492-7041

midwestmasonry1@yahoo.com



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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 shows a profile for 'Paper Paul', which is the Groton Daily Independent. The profile includes a 'GDI' logo, the name 'Paper Paul', the description 'Groton Daily Independent', and buttons for 'Follow', 'Share', 'Like' (with a count of 2), and 'Tweet'. Below the profile, there's a section titled 'Upcoming & Live Events' which displays two event cards. The first card is for 'Girls Basketball Leola-Frederick at Groton Area Saturday, Dec. 12, 2015' with a 'Today 4:30 PM CST' indicator. The second card is for 'Boys Basketball Leola-Frederick at Groton Area Saturday, Dec. 12, 2015' with a 'Today 6:01 PM CST' indicator. Both cards mention 'Sports on Paper Paul'.

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.

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The Groton Middle School and High School Christmas Concert was performed Thursday, Dec. 17, at the GHS Gym.



Jerick Hanson, Korbin Blackmun, Dustin Fish and Garrett Stene started off the Christmas Concert with a SLN skit.



The sixth grade choir sang, "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree," and "Who Put the Christmas Presents Under the Tree."

We do apologize that the Livestream of the concert did not work. We found out too late that the audio was not recording for an unknown reason. We hope to have everything working by the elementary concert today.

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The junior high choir, with Joy Voss as accompanist and directed by Cody Swanson, sang, "Jingle Bell Dash," "A Bell Carol," and "On With the Snow." Tucker Carda and Alexis Hanten were the soloists.



The Sixth Grade Band, under the direction of Desiree Yeigh, performed, "Jingle Bells/Have A Holly Jolly Christmas / Up On the Housetop," "Saxes We Have Heard On High" featuring the Alto Saxophone Section," and "All I Want For Christmas."



The Junior High Band, under the direction of Desiree Yeigh, performed, "A Cartoon Christmas," "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" with Erin Unzen doing a trumpet solo, and "African Bell Carol."

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The High School Choir, under the direction of Cody Swanson, sang, "The Holly and the Ivy" with Gabbie Kramer and Maggie Simon as soloists and Jaden Oliver on percussion, "Noel Peace Canon," and "Baby Born in Bethlehem."



The Chamber Choir, under the direction of Cody Swanson, sang, "Mary Did You Know?"



Emily Raap on flute and Kari Hanson on Piccolo had soloists parts during, "Celtic Carol."

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The High School Band, under the direction of Desiree Yeigh, performed, "A Christmas Festival," "Scherzo for Santa," "Holy Night, Silent Night," and "Celtic Carol." Soloists were Emily Raap on flute, Kari Hanson on Piccolo and Maggie Simon on Bongos."



The entire music department then had a Holiday Sing-a-Long with, "Deck the Hall," "Jingle Bells," "O Christmas Tree," and "We Wish You A Merry Christmas."

El Nino Drives Warmer Temperatures Through Spring 2016

BROOKINGS, S.D. - A near-record strong El Nino has brought warmer than average temperatures to South Dakota throughout December. According to the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Dec. 17, 2015 Climate Outlook, the trend is forecast to continue until spring 2016, said Laura Edwards, SDSU Extension Climate Field Specialist.

"Several records have already been tied or broken this month, with high minimum temperatures across the region," Edwards said.

Statewide approximately 59 new daily records were set between December 9 and 13, 2015. "On December 10 alone, 35 new records were set for high minimum temperatures all across the state, from Pactola Dam to Sisseton," Edwards said.

She added that three stations tied their all-time minimum temperature for all Decembers on record: Vermilion with 49 degrees on Dec. 8; Roscoe with 35 on Dec. 9; and Selby with 36 on Dec. 9.

"The outlook for January and the next three months shows a continued trend of warmer than average temperatures across the northern states," said Dennis Todey, South Dakota State Climatologist & SDSU Extension Climate Specialist. "Despite a cool-down over the next couple of days in South Dakota, the region is forecast to warm up again by the end of the month. Even these cooler days are just a little below average."

For precipitation, there are some increased chances of moisture to pass through our area in the next couple of weeks. "Most of the lower 48 states are favored to be slightly wetter than average, with the eastern states in the Ohio River and Tennessee Valley areas with the highest likelihood of wetter conditions," Todey said.

Looking further ahead, the climate outlook shows drier conditions favored over the northern Rockies and the Great Lakes. "South Dakota again straddles a region to the north that is forecast to be drier than average, and a region to the south that is favored to be wetter than average in Nebraska and across the southern Plains," Todey said.

Edwards added that the main agricultural impacts the team is watching currently include winter wheat condition and the muddy conditions for feedlot cattle. "With continued warm temperatures and wetter soils, there are muddy conditions causing some feedlot difficulties. Winter wheat is being monitored because inconsistent snow cover could expose this year's crop to frost damage if snow is not present," Edwards said.



Groton Chamber Holiday Boxes are out & about in Groton!

This Week (thru 12/18) – Professional
Management Supply

\$25 Chamber Bucks OR Mystery Gift!

Next Week (thru 12/23) – Olde Bank
Floral 'N More

**\$25 Chamber Bucks or a Fresh Floral Christmas Bouquet

Stop by each participating business and register for \$25
Groton Chamber Bucks – or a prize supplied by the business.



Merry
Christmas



Wheat Growers Innovation Center, Bath, SD

Wheat Growers' Innovation Center Open for Business

(Bath, SD) --- Wheat Growers' commitment in providing our farmer-owners with the latest in technological advancements now has a one-of-a-kind focal point, as the Innovation Center officially opened for business yesterday with a grand opening celebration. The Center is located on the grounds of Wheat Growers' Bath facility.

"We're very excited about what this facility allows us to do for our farmer-owners, their equipment and ideas and for ourselves internally," Steve Briggs, Wheat Growers Senior Vice President, Agronomy and Corporate Marketing, says. "Credit goes to our board of directors for their vision for the future of our co-op and the industry."

South Dakota Secretary of Agriculture Lucas Lentsch, in a letter congratulating Wheat Growers on the Innovation Center, said, "The Innovation Center will help the producers in the state learn first-hand what precision ag tools are available and provide them the necessary training to get the most out of their investments. I look forward to seeing the great benefits from your efforts for years to come."

The 36,000-square-foot Innovation Center has four distinct sections:

The Innovation Showroom promotes technology and the understanding of its possibilities for Wheat Growers' farmer-customers. This section showcases software and hardware demonstrations and displays, new communication tools, innovative equipment and technologies from Wheat Growers' supply partners in precision ag. Wheat Growers' staff was on hand during the grand opening to explain and demonstrate the technologies.

The Demonstration Theater is for demonstrations of equipment and hardware for planters, tractors and other farm equipment. It has stadium seating for approximately 50 people for year-round training on equipment, custom application, safety and other topics for Wheat Growers staff and customers. Video of demonstrations can be live-streamed to other Wheat Growers facilities around the Dakotas.

The Equipment Modification Shop is for internal repairs and maintenance on equipment, including modifications such as fertilizer attachments, precision hardware, seed meter calibration, pump repair and planting hardware.

The Wheat Growers Parts Store brings together the entire Wheat Growers' parts inventory that was spread out in several areas of the Bath location. It will be a well-managed, state-of-the-art store run by professional parts experts.

"This is truly a one-of-a-kind facility," Briggs says. "We have received interest and excitement about the Center from SDSU, Lake Area Technical Institute, Mitchell Technical Institute and equipment manufacturers. We are looking at joint training and educational efforts with them at the Center."

Anglers Reminded to Use Caution While Ice Fishing

PIERRE, S.D. – The calendar may say we are close to winter, but mild temperatures and snow cover have made for “unwinter-like” conditions on most of South Dakota’s lakes, rivers and streams. Due to the mild beginning to the ice fishing season, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) officials are urging anglers, snowmobilers and recreationists to take extreme caution when venturing out.

“Ice conditions across the state are not very good right now,” said John Lott, GFP fisheries administrator. “Repeated freezing and thawing have made for poor ice and open areas on many of our lakes.”

The rule of thumb is that it takes at least two inches of ice to support an angler, at least six inches to support an ice shack and over a foot for a vehicle, but that applies to strong, clear ice. Many area lakes have produced “cloudy” or “dark” ice due to the warm conditions. Dark or cloudy ice is not as strong as clear ice.

If a person is going to venture out, they should also test ice conditions as they proceed. “Just because an angler sees six inches near the shore, doesn’t mean it will be six inches across the lake. Springs, current, wind or ice heaves all effect the formation of ice and can make ice very dangerous,” concluded Lott.

Anglers are reminded to drill test holes to measure the thickness of the ice they are traveling on, have flotation devices available and tell someone where they are going to be.

Top baby names of 2015 at Sanford Health

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – Emma was the most popular name for newborn girls at Sanford Health in 2015, while Jackson topped the list for boys. Emma jumps to the top spot after ranking third in 2014. Jackson was the fourth most popular name for a baby boy in 2014.

The top-five baby names for 2015 for girls and boys can be found below.

Girls:

Emma

Ava

Addison

Evelyn

Amelia and Olivia (tied for fifth place)

Boys:

Jackson

Oliver

Connor

Mason

William and Henry (tied for fifth place)

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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

1957 - A tornado swept across Jackson County, Williamson County and Franklin County in southern Illinois killing eleven persons. (David Ludlum)

1981 - A heavy lake-effect snow blanketed the southern and southeast shores of Lake Michigan leaving up to 22 inches of snow at Valparaiso IND. (David Ludlum)

1983 - Record cold hit the north central states. At Havre, MT, the mercury plunged to a record reading of 34 degrees below zero. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1984 - A storm over southern California left up to 16 inches of snow in the mountains and upper deserts, with 13 inches reported at Lancaster. Edwards Air Force Base was closed, and Interstate 5 was closed from Castaic to the Tehachapis Mountains. (18th-19th) (The Weather Channel)

1986 - A strong winter storm, which developed off the coast of New Jersey and moved out to sea, lashed the northeastern U.S. with high winds, heavy rain, and heavy snow. The storm left snowfall amounts of up to 30 inches in Vermont, 24 inches in Massachusetts, and 20 inches in New Hampshire. The highest rainfall amounts approached four inches in southern New England, where winds gusted to 70 mph. (Storm Data)

1987 - A weakening storm moved into the Rocky Mountain Region producing six inches of snow at the Platoro Reservoir in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado. The storm then spread rain and drizzle across the Southern High Plains into the Middle Mississippi Valley, with thunderstorms over Texas. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Warm weather prevailed in the central U.S. while cool weather prevailed across the eastern states. Sheridan, WY, with a record warm afternoon high of 68 degrees, was seven degrees warmer than Key West FL. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - A winter storm moving out of the Great Plains Region spread freezing rain, sleet and snow across parts of the southeastern U.S. Freezing rain resulted in 170 auto accidents in the Memphis area during the evening hours. Unseasonably warm weather continued ahead of arctic cold front. Miami FL equalled their record for December with an afternoon high of 87 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2009 - A monster snow storm affected the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions of the U.S. on December 18th through December 20th. The storm originated in the Gulf of Mexico and moved northward along the Eastern Seaboard, leaving behind heavy snow accumulations from North Carolina to Massachusetts. Impacts from this storm included the closing of major airports, interstate highways, and rail systems. Over 1,200 flights were cancelled at the three major airports in the New York City area, and hundreds of thousands of people lost power due to the storm. Seven people were reported killed across the Mid-Atlantic (source: Reuters).

Over two feet of snow accumulation was reported in portions of North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York. At one point, the storm was over 500 miles in width, and affected 14 states and tens of millions of Americans (Source: AFP).

2016 DOG LICENSES

AVAILABLE NOW!!

Licenses due by Dec. 31, 2015

Fines start after Dec. 31, 2015

Dogs CAN NOT be licensed without providing updated rabies shot information, please bring records for each dog to City Hall

Please contact City Hall as soon as possible if you no longer have any dogs

Spayed or neutered dogs are \$5 per dog, otherwise \$10 per dog

**Groton
Transit
Christmas**

Open

House

December 18th

9am to 4pm.








**Register for
Door Prizes**

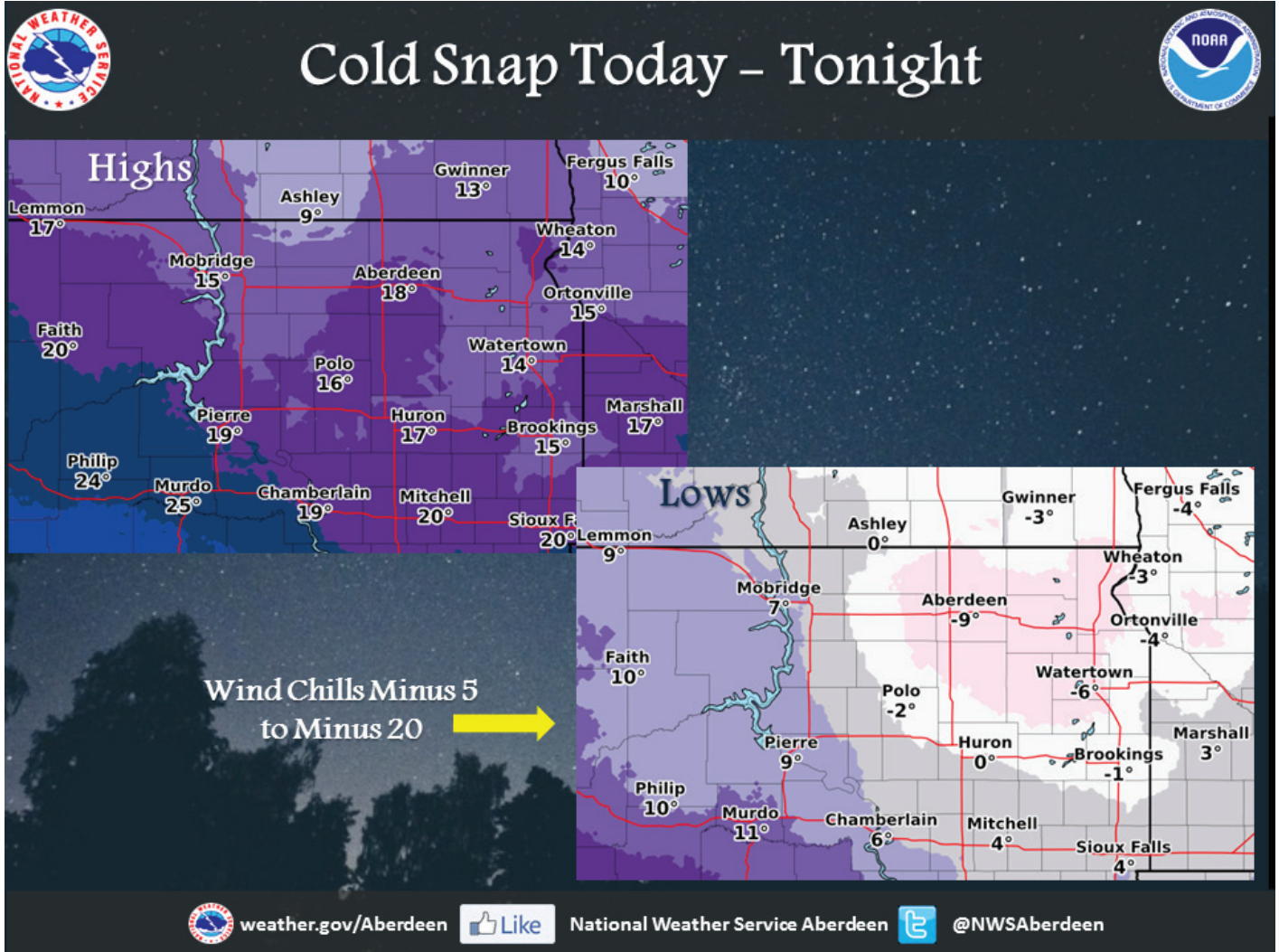
**Come in for
Cider, Coffee
and goodies.**

All welcome!

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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
						
Scattered Flurries	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Snow	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 18 °F ↓	Low: -9 °F	High: 28 °F	Low: 16 °F	High: 29 °F	Low: 10 °F	High: 27 °F



Published on: 12/18/2015 at 4:27AM

Much more winter like temperatures are in the forecast for today and tonight with the coldest readings of the season - and wind chill values down to as low as 20 below tonight. Temperatures will moderate for the weekend with readings back above average.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 25.7 at Midnight

Low: 6.6 at 7:37 PM

High Gust: 25 at 12:15 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 58° in 1979

Record Low: -28° in 1951

Average High: 25°F

Average Low: 5°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.30

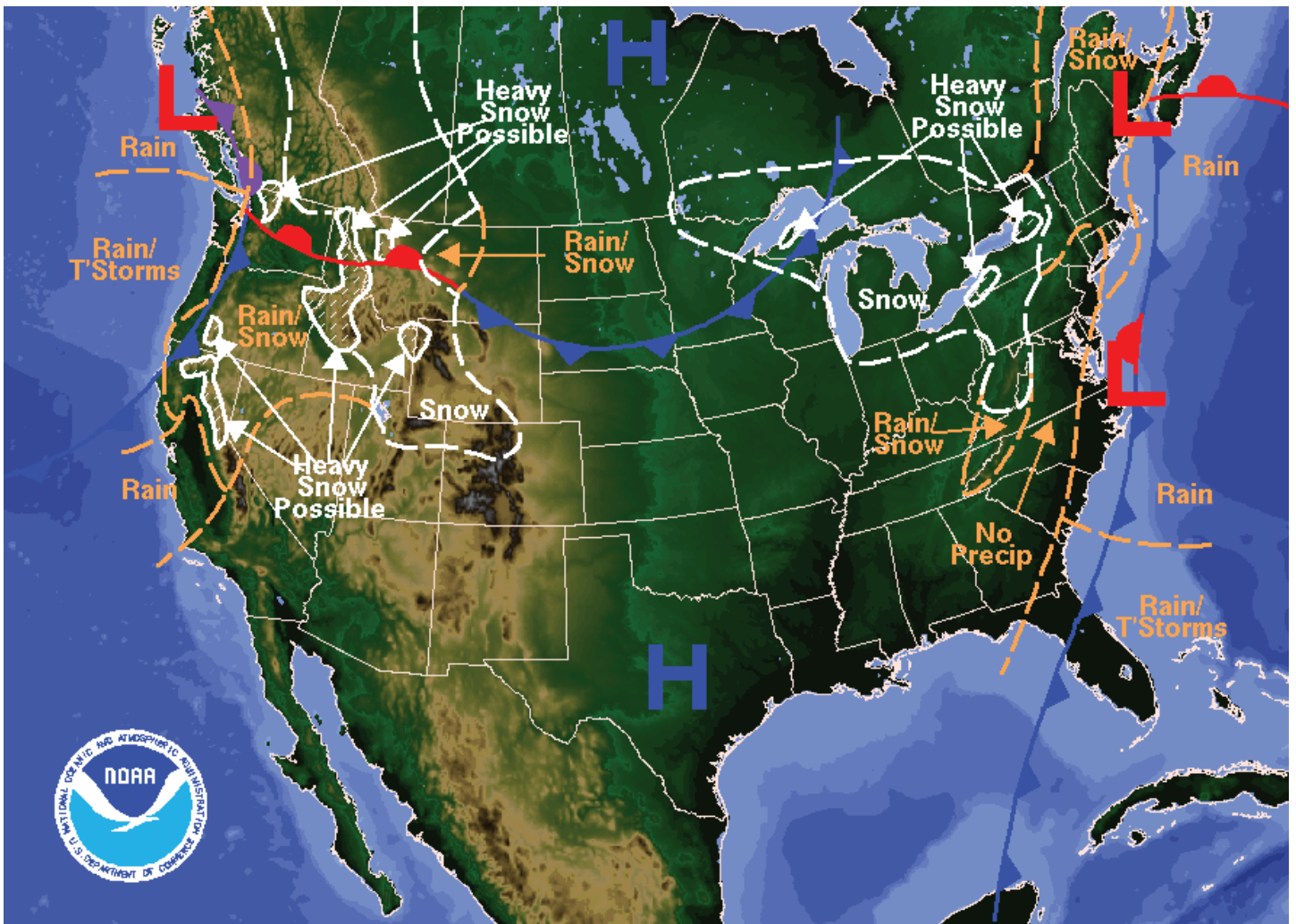
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.55

Average Precip to date: 21.50

Precip Year to Date: 20.37

Sunset Tonight: 4:51 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:09 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Fri, Dec 18, 2015, issued 5:13 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



GOD WANTS YOU

A little girl went to church for the first time. She was full of questions.

When a baby was presented for baptism she became more interested than ever. Noticing her attentiveness, her father said, "The parents are giving her to God."

After the baptism, the minister gave the baby back to the parents.

Not understanding, she whispered to her father, "I guess God didn't want that one."

Not so! God wants every one of us.

On one occasion He said, "Come to Me, all of you..." On another occasion He said, "If you come to Me I will not reject you."

We have all experienced the pain of rejection. We know what it is like to feel alone. Family members leave us. Friends turn their backs on us. But not Jesus.

Someone said, "With Jesus, the welcome mat is out and the door is always open." Paul said, "...nothing...will ever separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord." There is nothing that we have done or ever will do that can separate us from Him, His love or His salvation.

Prayer: Father, we are so grateful for Your love that reaches out to all of us. We are thankful that Your arms are always open to each of us. We rejoice in Your salvation that can save and keep us: in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: Romans 8:38, 39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

News from the Associated Press

9 women's prison inmates in Pierre indicted on drug charges

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Hughes County grand jury has indicted nine inmates at the South Dakota Women's Prison in Pierre on drug charges.

The Attorney General's Office says two of the inmates smuggled methamphetamine into the facility, used the illegal drug and distributed it to seven other inmates who also ingested it.

The indictments followed an investigation by the state Division of Criminal Investigation.

El Nino helps several parts of state set temperature records

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Edwards says that several records have already been tied or broken this month with high minimum temperatures across the region. On Dec. 10 alone, 35 records were set for high minimum temperatures across the state from Pactola Dam to Sisseton.

South Dakota State Climatologist Dennis Todey says that despite a cool-down over the next couple of days in South Dakota, the region is forecast to warm up again by the end of the month.

Thursday's Scores The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Christian 68, Leola/Frederick 53
Aberdeen Roncalli 48, Britton-Hecla 43
Alcester-Hudson 51, Parker 50
Canistota 64, Freeman 38
Faith 69, Bison 40
Gregory 63, Colome 56
Hanson 40, Menno 38, OT
Harding County 65, Hettinger/Scranton, N.D. 62
Herreid/Selby Area 73, Faulkton 52
Hitchcock-Tulare 58, Wessington Springs 49
Langford 64, Ipswich 36
Marshall, Minn. 43, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 38
Marty Indian 84, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 77
Mitchell Christian 73, Kimball/White Lake 66
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 58, Corsica/Stickney 52
Platte-Geddes 53, Burke/South Central 40
Rosholt 35, Florence/Henry 30
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 80, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 22
Sioux Valley 63, Baltic 23
South Border, N.D. 54, Eureka/Bowdle 44
Stanley County 75, Philip 54
Sturgis Brown 56, Douglas 49
Sully Buttes 61, Edmunds Central 50
Watertown 43, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 41, OT
Yankton 46, Harrisburg 44

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Lakota Nation Tournament (Makosica Bracket)
Quarterfinal
Pine Ridge 61, Crow Creek 53
White River 54, Lower Brule 53
Winnebago, Neb. 73, Red Cloud 58
Lakota Nation Tournament (Paha Sapa Bracket)
Quarterfinal
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 55, Custer 35
McLaughlin 56, Oelrichs 50
Tiospa Zina Tribal 57, Omaha Nation, Neb. 53
Todd County 78, Crazy Horse 40

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Andes Central 70, Marty Indian 29
Arlington 56, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 47
Beresford 47, Deubrook 43
Bon Homme 52, Scotland 38
DeSmet 41, Dell Rapids St. Mary 22
Douglas 45, Hot Springs 20
Elkton-Lake Benton 41, Colman-Egan 34
Estelline 40, Lake Preston 32
Faith 69, Bison 29
Hamlin 63, Clark/Willow Lake 48
Hanson 56, Menno 10
Harrisburg 55, Yankton 25
Hartington Cedar Catholic, Neb. 40, Avon 38
Hitchcock-Tulare 72, Wessington Springs 39
Kimball/White Lake 36, Mitchell Christian 32
Lennox 45, Madison 42
Leola/Frederick 50, Aberdeen Christian 17
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 67, Corsica/Stickney 34
Parker 54, Alcester-Hudson 28
Philip 70, Stanley County 35
Potter County 41, Highmore-Harold 26
Redfield/Doland 36, Milbank 25
Sioux County, Neb. 43, Edgemont 38
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 57, Bishop Heelan Catholic, Sioux City, Iowa 36
Sioux Valley 65, Baltic 46
Sisseton 55, Webster 51
Sully Buttes JV 65, Edmunds Central 13
Tripp-Delmont/Armour 54, Wolsey-Wessington 46
Warner 52, Northwestern 40
Waubay/Summit 39, Waverly-South Shore 25
Wilmot 56, Great Plains Lutheran 49
Winner 64, Burke/South Central 41
Lakota Nation Tournament (Makosica Bracket)
Quarterfinal
Little Wound 67, McLaughlin 65
Todd County 55, St. Francis Indian 48
White River 67, Red Cloud 64
Lakota Nation Tournament (Paha Sapa Bracket)
Quarterfinal

Custer 61, Tiospa Zina Tribal 31
Winnebago, Neb. 81, Lower Brule 40

SD residents encouraged to check unclaimed property list

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Need some extra cash for the holiday season? South Dakota's treasurer wants you to check the state's unclaimed property list, which currently has more than \$344 million.

Unclaimed property refers to accounts in financial institutions, businesses and government agencies that have had no activity for three years or longer. The state holds the money in a custodial capacity until the property can be returned to the rightful owners.

State Treasurer Rich Sattgast says that as a father of three, he understands how important the holidays are for families. He says "a little extra cash can make a big difference, especially this time of year."

The state has received \$71.7 million in forgotten funds since July and returned over \$7.5 million to people who claimed the money.

Late shot lifts South Dakota over Milwaukee 92-91 after 2OTs

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Tre Burnette scored the game winner with 1.2 seconds left in second overtime to give South Dakota a 92-91 victory over Milwaukee on Thursday night.

Burnette got open in the lane off a South Dakota (7-4) inbound play after Milwaukee's Matt Tiby turned it over with 5.6 seconds left. Tiby secured a defensive rebound off Trey Norris' miss but fell to the ground for a travelling violation.

Tiby, who finished with 31 points and 17 rebounds, had just given the Panthers (8-4) the lead with 14 seconds to play. He also passed 1,000 career points.

D.J. Davis and Tyler Hagedorn led the Coyotes with 17 points each. Davis also grabbed 10 boards.

Austin Arians had 16 points and Akeem Springs 13 for Milwaukee.

The Panthers appeared to win off Springs' tip-in with less than a second left in first overtime, but the referees reviewed and determined the shot clock had already expired.

Accomplice in 1994 killings set to be released Christmas Eve

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A 46-year-old man serving two concurrent 25-year sentences for being an accomplice in the 1994 killing of two women is set to be released from prison next week, South Dakota Corrections Secretary Denny Kaemingk said Thursday.

Glen Walker's sentence expires Dec. 24, and Kaemingk said he must be released on that date. Because the crime occurred prior to July 1, 1996, Walker is entitled under state law to receive a reduction of his sentence for good conduct while incarcerated. He will not be under supervision, such as parole or probation, he said.

"Based on his criminal history, I believe it warrants alerting law enforcement and the public of this pending release from prison," Kaemingk said in a statement.

Walker was sentenced in 2000 for helping Robert Leroy Anderson kidnap one of the two women Anderson eventually killed.

Anderson was found guilty of kidnapping and killing Larisa Dumansky, 29, of Sioux Falls, and raping, kidnapping and killing Piper Streyle, 28, of Canistota. He was given the death penalty in 1999 for both murders, but committed suicide at the state penitentiary in 2003.

Walker, Anderson's lifelong friend, led law enforcement officers to a shallow grave at Lake Vermillion that held shell casings and bone fragments. DNA testing showed the bones genetically matched Dumansky.

Kaemingk said Walker has indicated that he plans to leave South Dakota and live in another state upon his release.

Rapid City police arrest 2 on drug, weapons charges

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say they've arrested a 31-year-old Timber Lake woman and a 27-year-old California man on drug and weapons charges as part of an investigation into the distribution of methamphetamine and firearms in the Rapid City area.

Rapid City police say that the arrest of the woman on an outstanding warrant led them to the man's hotel room and car, where they found a large amount of cash, marijuana, methamphetamine, empty plastic baggies and two additional firearms.

The Unified Narcotics Enforcement Team says it believes the two were dealing in drugs and firearms in South Dakota other cities and is working with those agencies.

Sgt. Tony Harrison says it's important to remember that people who deal meth and marijuana are not afraid to use firearms to protect themselves and their product.

Bankers say economy to stay weak in rural parts of 10 states

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Bankers expect economic activity to remain slow in rural parts of 10 Western and Plains states over the next few months.

The region's economic index declined again in December to 41.5 from November's 43.7. Any score below 50 on one of the survey's indexes suggests that factor will decline.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss oversees the monthly survey of rural bankers released Thursday. He says the current low energy and crop prices are slowing the economy.

The strong U.S. dollar and a slower pace of manufacturing are also factors.

The bankers aren't very optimistic. The confidence index remained in negative territory even though it improved slightly to 39.8 in December from November's 38.9.

Bankers from Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming were surveyed.

Woman sentenced for stealing \$30K from Standing Rock shelter

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — A federal judge has sentenced a woman who admitted to stealing nearly \$30,000 from a shelter for victims of domestic violence on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

U.S. District Judge Charles Kornmann sentenced 54-year-old Dawn Muir to more than three years in prison and ordered her to repay the money to the Pretty Bird Woman House in McLaughlin. Muir, of Mandan, North Dakota, pleaded guilty to one count of larceny in June.

Federal authorities say Muir was the executive director of the shelter in February 2011, when she began to write checks for herself from an emergency fund that the facility maintained to provide food and relocation money to victims of domestic violence.

Authorities say Muir claimed the money was for mileage and travel reimbursement and other non-emergency tasks.

Pope approves miracle for Mother Teresa's canonization

NICOLE WINFIELD, Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis has signed off on the miracle needed to make Mother Teresa a saint, giving the tiny nun who cared for the poorest of the poor one of the Catholic Church's highest honors just two decades after her death.

The Vatican said Friday that Francis approved a decree attributing a miracle to Mother Teresa's intercession during an audience with the head of the Vatican's saint-making office on Thursday, his 79th birthday.

No date was set for the canonization, but Italian media have speculated that the ceremony will take place in the first week of September — to coincide with the anniversary of her death and during Francis' Holy Year of Mercy.

"This is fantastic news. We are very happy," said Sunita Kumar, a spokeswoman for the Missionaries

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of Charity in the eastern city of Kolkata (earlier called Calcutta), where Mother Teresa lived and worked. The miracle responsible for Mother Teresa's canonization concerned the inexplicable cure of a Brazilian man suffering from a viral brain infection that resulted in multiple abscesses. By Dec. 9, 2008, he was in a coma and dying, suffering from an accumulation of fluid around the brain.

The Rev. Brian Kolodiejchuk, the postulator spearheading Mother Teresa's canonization case, said in a statement Friday that some 30 minutes after the man was due to undergo surgery that never took place, he sat up, awake and without pain, and was a day later declared to be symptom-free.

The Vatican later attributed the cure to the fervent prayers to Mother Teresa's intercession by the man's wife, who precisely at the time of his scheduled surgery was at her parish church, praying alongside her pastor.

Mother Teresa, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, died on Sept. 5, 1997, aged 87. At the time, her Missionaries of Charity order had nearly 4,000 nuns and ran roughly 600 orphanages, soup kitchens, homeless shelters and clinics around the world.

Francis, whose papacy has been dedicated to ministering to the poor just as Mother Teresa did, is a known fan. During his September 2014 visit to Albania, Francis confided to his interpreter that he was not only impressed by her fortitude, but in some ways feared it.

Francis recounted that he had met Mother Teresa, an ethnic Albanian, when they attended a 1994 bishop synod at the Vatican together. At the time, he was Archbishop Jorge Mario Bergoglio.

"Bergoglio had Mother Teresa behind him, nearby, and he heard her intervene often with great strength, without letting herself in any way be intimidated by this assembly of bishops," the Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, later recounted. "And from that he developed a great esteem for her, as a strong woman, a woman able to give courageous testimony."

But Bergoglio, who has long shown admiration for the women who raised him and taught him, added: "I would have been afraid to have had her as my superior, since she was so tough."

Mother Teresa was born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu on Aug. 26, 1910, in Skopje, Macedonia.

She joined the Loreto order of nuns in 1928 and in 1946, while traveling by train from Calcutta to Darjeeling, was inspired to found the Missionaries of Charity order.

The order was established four years later and has since opened more than 130 houses worldwide to provide comfort and care for the needy, sick and "poorest of the poor."

Mother Teresa won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 for her work with Calcutta's destitute and ill — work which continued even after she herself became sick.

"The poor give us much more than we give them," Mother Teresa said in 1977. "They're such strong people, living day to day with no food. And they never curse, never complain."

St. John Paul II, one of Mother Teresa's greatest champions, waived the normal five-year waiting period for her beatification process to begin and launched it a year after she died, convinced of her saintliness and apparently intent on at least beatifying her in his lifetime.

He bestowed that honor on her in 2003 in a Vatican ceremony.

Archbishop of Kolkata Thomas D'Souza said the news of the Vatican's decision was "the best Christmas gift one can get."

"We are grateful to God and we are extremely happy," he said.

While Mother Teresa is known and admired by many around the world, she was not beloved by all. She was criticized for taking donations from Haitian dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier and disgraced American financier Charles Keating. Detractors opposed her stance against birth-control use in Calcutta's slums, which was nevertheless in keeping with church teaching opposing artificial birth control.

Effort to curb painkiller prescribing faces stiff opposition

MATTHEW PERRONE, AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A bold federal effort to curb prescribing of painkillers may be faltering amid stiff resistance from drugmakers, industry-funded groups and, now, even other public health officials.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was on track to finalize new prescribing guidelines for opioid painkillers in January. The guidelines — though not binding — would be the strongest government effort yet to reverse the rise in deadly overdoses tied to drugs like OxyContin, Vicodin and Percocet.

But this highly unusual move — the CDC rarely advises physicians on medications, a job formally assigned to the Food and Drug Administration — thrust the agency into the middle of a longstanding fight over the use of opioids, a powerful but highly addictive class of pain medications that rang up over \$9 billion in sales last year, according to IMS Health.

Critics complained the CDC guidelines went too far and had mostly been written behind closed doors. One group threatened to sue. Then earlier this month, officials from the FDA and other health agencies at a meeting of pain experts bashed the guidelines as “shortsighted,” relying on “low-quality evidence.” They said they planned to file a formal complaint.

The CDC a week later abandoned its January target date, instead opening the guidelines to public comment for 30 days and additional changes.

Anti-addiction activists worry the delay could scuttle the guidelines entirely.

“This is a big win for the opioid lobby,” said Dr. Andrew Kolodny, co-founder of Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing, a group working to reduce painkiller prescribing.

CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden said politics did not play a role and the guidelines remain a priority.

“We want to make sure we don’t go so fast that there are questions about our process, but we certainly don’t want to see any further delay,” Frieden told the Associated Press.

Frieden said the FDA and other agencies support his effort, despite the negative comments from some officials. The Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees both the CDC and the FDA, said the guidelines are critical to “tackling the opioid epidemic.”

Frieden acknowledged the limited evidence comparing various treatments. “But there is no way we can wait for better evidence while so many people are dying.”

Under the proposed guidelines, doctors would prescribe these drugs only as a last choice for chronic pain, after non-opioid pain relievers, physical therapy and other options. The CDC also wants doctors to prescribe the smallest supply of the drugs possible, usually three days or less. And doctors would only continue prescribing the drugs if patients show significant improvement.

The CDC’s logic: Reshaping how primary care doctors use opioid painkillers would result in fewer prescriptions and, therefore, fewer deaths. By its estimation, deaths tied to these drugs have surged four-fold since 1999.

But industry-funded groups like the U.S. Pain Foundation and the American Academy of Pain Management warn that the CDC guidelines could block patient access to medications if adopted by state health systems, insurers and hospitals. Such organizations often look to the federal government for health care policies.

The CDC decision to delay its guidelines followed months of lobbying by physician and patient groups aligned with the pharmaceutical industry, who have almost always had a seat at the table in federal discussions on opioids. As a result, they have had far more influence over federal policy than addiction activists, according to experts.

“They’re very well-funded and they have a lot of pharma money behind them,” said Dr. Lewis Nelson of New York University, an FDA adviser who is also advising the CDC on its guidelines. “And then you have the anti-addiction groups on the other side, which is clearly much less funded and organized.”

THE PAIN DEBATE

Behind the CDC controversy is a decades-long debate over the use of opioids, which include medications like morphine and codeine and illegal narcotics like heroin.

For most of the 20th century, doctors reserved opioids for severe, short-term pain — such as after sur-

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gery — or chronic pain from deadly diseases like cancer.

But in 1990s that changed, as some specialists argued the drugs could be used safely to treat common ailments like back pain and arthritis. The message was amplified by multibillion-dollar marketing campaigns for new, long-acting drugs like OxyContin, which were promoted as less addictive.

That drug's maker, Purdue Pharma, would later plead guilty and pay over \$600 million in fines for misleading the public about OxyContin's risks. But prescriptions continued to rise — along with deaths.

Purdue declined to comment for this story.

Deaths linked to misuse and abuse of prescription opioids climbed to 19,000 last year, the highest figure on record, according to the CDC. Meanwhile, heroin overdoses have more than tripled to 10,500 since 2010. CDC's Frieden says more Americans are "primed" for heroin use because of their exposure to painkillers.

Pain care advocates say they were blindsided, though, when the CDC moved to create formal guidelines without first consulting them.

"It looks to us like they had a pretty good idea of what they wanted these things to say and they wanted to minimize feedback that was contrary to that," said Dr. Robert Twillman of the American Academy of Pain Management, a group which represents pain physicians and receives funding from painkiller manufacturers such as Purdue and Teva Pharmaceuticals.

Twillman's group has asked Congress to investigate the CDC's handling of the guidelines, including an expert panel of advisers, which it says is "studded with a number of individuals who are publicly on record as opposing the use of opioids."

The CDC had not publicly disclosed the panel's membership, but Twillman and other pain advocates identified several members, including two who are leaders with Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing, a group working to reduce painkiller prescribing. That group is backed by Phoenix House, a network of rehabilitation clinics.

The Washington Legal Foundation — a conservative group which frequently represents pharmaceutical interests in court — says CDC is in "blatant violation of federal law" for not disclosing its advisers. The foundation wants the CDC to scrap its current guidelines and start over.

BATTLE FOR INFLUENCE

Many of the patient and physician groups opposing the CDC guidelines are part of a larger coalition called the Pain Care Forum, which meets monthly in Washington to strategize on pain issues. Officials from the White House, the FDA, NIH and other agencies have met with the group over the years, according to documents obtained by the Associated Press under the Freedom of Information Act.

The Pain Care Forum presents itself as a leaderless collective that does not take formal positions. But most members receive funding from drugmakers, including OxyContin-maker Purdue, whose chief lobbyist helped found the group and remains at its center.

Anti-addiction advocates worry that outside pressure from such groups led the CDC to re-open its guidelines for comment.

"Opening a docket will tack months on to the process and increases the likelihood that the guideline might never be released," said Kolodny, an addiction therapist.

It's a process advocates say has played out before at the FDA, which as the nation's top drug regulator writes the prescribing labels that accompany prescription drugs.

In 2009, the FDA announced it would develop "risk management" plans to ensure extended-release opioids were used safely. The agency's initial ideas included mandatory certification for doctors who prescribe drugs like OxyContin and a national registry to track patients taking opioids.

But industry pushed back. The Pain Care Forum developed its own "consensus guidelines," which opposed any measures creating "new barriers" to opioids. At the same time, the group's members generated a 4,000-signature petition opposing registries, saying they would stigmatize patients.

Instead of the tough measures initially floated, the FDA in 2012 put in place modest changes: drugmakers would fund physician training programs, but they would be optional. Additionally, patients would receive a pharmacy pamphlet about opioid risks.

"We were stunned," Kolodny said.

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An FDA spokesman declined to comment for this story, instead pointing to government documents about the risk plans.

If the final CDC guidelines emerge intact, they may push physicians to reconsider alternate treatments like physical therapy, counseling or modifying patients' routines. Experts say those methods proved effective before the rise of painkillers.

"As a civilization we somehow managed to survive for 50,000 years without OxyContin and I think we will continue to survive," agency adviser Nelson said.

Holiday sales show online shift

ANNE D'INNOCENZIO, AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — More often shoppers are making the decision to sit on their couches than head to stores this holiday season.

Online sales growth so far this holiday season is surpassing growth in sales at physical stores, according to First Data, which analyzed online and in-store payments from Oct. 31 through Monday.

Sales growth for stores is up 2 percent, while online sales rose 4.6 percent, according to First Data, which declined to give dollar figures, citing proprietary reasons.

Total spending, including sales in both physical stores and online, climbed 2.4 percent, stronger than the 1.8 percent growth during the same period last year.

While physical stores still account for the majority of spending, the uneven growth between buying at locations and on websites signals the continuation of a big shift in how U.S. consumers are shopping.

The change in spending is largely due to more retailers working to improve their websites and offer speedier delivery on orders placed online. As a result, shoppers, who increasingly are looking for convenience, are spending more of their holiday budgets online.

That's led to a big gap in some product categories between online and physical stores. According to First Data, clothing and accessories stores had a 2.9 percent sales decline so far this season, compared with a 3.7 percent increase online. Furniture and home furnishings store sales slipped 0.5 percent, while online increased 8.1 percent.

Amy Kemper said she's been shopping more online because of the convenience of doing so. Her family travels for the holidays, and it's easier to buy online and then have things shipped to where they are going.

"I do come to the mall to look around and see what's out there and then go back online," said Kemper, who lives in Indianapolis.

First Data doesn't make predictions for holiday sales. But the National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group, expects sales for November and December to rise 3.7 percent to \$630.5 billion. There's still plenty of time for that estimate to come true: Christmas is a week away, and there are some of the biggest shopping days left.

And as cutoffs to order online to get gifts shipped to stores approaches, retailers are relying on die-hard traditionalists like Ann Rabbit during the final stretch.

Rabbit picked up a sweater for herself for 40 percent off at Old Navy in East Harlem in New York on a recent weekend.

"I don't do online. I like to touch things," she said.

Warm weather leaves stores in the cold

ANNE D'INNOCENZIO, AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The unseasonably warm weather has left some people feeling cold about holiday shopping.

Rosemarie Nowicki, who lives in Berkeley Heights, N.J., finally spent some of her holiday budget last weekend buying coats online for her family because she hated the thought of being stuck in a store with such mild temperatures outside.

"It's hard to get into the holiday spirit; I've been walking around in short-sleeve shirts and capri leggings," Nowicki says. "I was certainly not going to the mall."

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Turns out, lots of shoppers feel the same way as temperatures in cities across the country, including New York and Philadelphia, near record levels for December. The balmy weather hasn't done anything to entice Americans to venture out and shop, which has hurt sales at stores that depend on the holiday season for up to 40 percent of their annual revenue.

Planalytics, a weather forecasting firm for retailers, estimates so far this season mall-based clothing stores have lost \$343 million in sales compared with last year. That's the largest weather-related loss since 1998 when a devastating ice storm hit parts of the Northeast.

Sales of cold-weather items have been particularly icy. Sales of women's boots in New York, for instance, are down 24 percent for the first half of December, according to Planalytics. And First Data, which analyzes payments at stores and online, said fur sales fell 20 percent from Oct. 31 through Monday.

"Winter didn't happen and so the clothes, the scarves are not selling," said Ron Friedman, head of the retail and consumer products group at accounting firm Marcum LLP. As a result, he says shoppers will see discounts of 75 percent in after Christmas.

The fair-weathered shopping challenge underscores how U.S. consumers, still affected by the Great Recession, remain strategic in their buying patterns. It's a habit they picked up during the economic downturn that's remained ever since.

Many shoppers only buy what they can wear, so it stands to reason that they're not buying coats, boots and hats this year. And since cold-weather items are also hot gifts during the holiday shopping season, many of those items are left on store shelves.

The National Retail Federation, nation's largest retail group, is sticking by its prediction earlier in the season that sales in November and December will rise 3.7 percent to \$630.5 billion. Still, the unusually warm weather is a concern.

Marc Kaufman, CEO of the upscale furrier that operates one store in New York City but mostly sells online, says business is down 5 percent. The decline in its Northeast business has been partially offset by its online operations. But Kaufman figures if the weather was colder, sales for the holiday season would be up 30 percent.

"If it weren't for online, I would be in severe trouble," he said.

The cold reception by shoppers is forcing retailers to be creative to try to lure them into stores.

Some stores are offering bigger discounts than they ordinarily would. Macy's, for example, is advertising 70 percent off some men's sweaters and 75 percent off children's outerwear this weekend, while Kohl's is slashing prices of puffy jackets to \$39.99 from the original \$100.

Sears is relocating its grills to the front part of its outdoor living sections in the Northeast, where it's been unseasonable warm.

And Overstock.com is featuring resort wear like swimsuits on its web site before Christmas. Overstock.com, which doesn't own the inventory, said it's directing shoppers to what they need now.

"When there's no snow, we don't advertise coats," said Amy Browning, merchandise manager of Overstock.com.

10 Things to Know for Today

The Associated Press

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

1. WHY COUNTERFEITING IS THRIVING IN CHINA

AP's Erika Kinetz finds that major multinational companies unwittingly paid investigators who themselves manufactured or sold fake goods.

2. MOSCOW APPEARS TO BE DRIVING SYRIA TALKS

Nations meeting in New York and the U.N. will essentially be negotiating a Russian plan for a "political transition" to end the civil war.

3. WHO'S ON THE ROAD TO CANONIZATION

Pope Francis signs off on the miracle needed to make Mother Teresa a saint, giving the nun who made

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the poor her life's mission one of the Catholic Church's highest honors.

4. GUN BUYER MUSED ON FACEBOOK OF TROUBLES HE FACED

Less than a month before his friend carried out the San Bernardino massacre, Enrique Marquez Jr. wondered when the multiple lives he was leading would come crashing down.

5. PHARMA'S 'VILLAIN' FACES RECKONING

Martin Shkreli is the enfant terrible of pharmaceuticals, a millionaire music fan, an unabashed self-promoter and now a defendant in a fraud case.

6. CONGRESS POISED TO SEND BUDGET DEAL TO OBAMA

The massive spending package would shower tax breaks on working families, businesses and a wide swath of special interests.

7. WOMEN OUT-EARNING MEN IN CORPORATE FINANCE

Compensation for female chief financial officers at S&P 500 companies last year outpaced that of their male counterparts, according to an analysis by Equilar and the AP.

8. WHAT COURTSIDE COLLISION MAY PROMPT NBA TO DO

LeBron James crashes into and injures the wife of PGA champion Jason Day, and that could prompt the league to take a look at fan safety.

9. 'STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS' THRILLS FANS, SETS RECORDS

The most anticipated film in the galaxy opens globally, setting international and pre-sale box-office records and delighting moviegoers.

10. RAMS BEAT BUCCANEERS IN POSSIBLE FINAL GAME IN ST. LOUIS

Tavon Austin scores twice, Todd Gurley tops 1,000 yards rushing for the season and the Rams beat Tampa Bay 31-23 as the franchise considers a move to Los Angeles.

Global stock markets weaker as energy prices fall

YOUKYUNG LEE, AP Business Writer

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Global stock markets dropped sharply Friday as a further falls in the the price of oil weighed on investor sentiment, eroding gains sparked the day before by the U.S. Federal Reserve's first rate hike in nearly a decade.

KEEPING SCORE: In Europe, the FTSE 100 index of leading British shares was down 0.6 percent at 6,064 while France's CAC 40 fell 1.2 percent to 4,620. Germany's DAX was 1.3 percent lower at 10,618. Wall Street was likely to extend losses from the previous session. Dow futures and the broader S&P 500 futures were down 0.4 percent.

ENERGY SLUMP: The price of oil hovered below \$35 a barrel Friday following a big fall earlier this week after a surprise build in U.S. crude inventories. Energy and mining stocks have been pummeled this year as the sluggish global economy reduces demand even as supplies become more abundant.

OIL PRICES: Benchmark U.S. crude was down 49 cents at \$34.46 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It closed 1.6 percent lower, or 57 cents, at \$34.95 a barrel in New York on Thursday. It had not closed beneath \$35 per barrel since Feb. 18, 2009 and traded above \$60 a barrel as recently as June. Brent crude, a benchmark for international oils, was 24 cents lower at \$37.82 a barrel in London.

ANALYST TAKE: "The Fed decision has clearly had no effect on the ongoing world of pain that oil prices find themselves in," said Angus Nicholson, a market analyst at IG in Melbourne, Australia. "A wave of defaults and bankruptcies in the energy sector still looks likely to come, and these concerns are certainly weighing on markets."

ASIA'S DAY: Japan's Nikkei 225 sank 1.9 percent to 18,986.80 and South Korea's Kospi slipped 0.1 percent to 1,975.32. Hong Kong's Hang Seng finished 0.5 percent lower at 21,755.56 while Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added 0.1 percent to 5,106.70. Stock markets in Southeast Asia were mixed.

JAPAN STIMULUS: The Nikkei index slumped even after the Bank of Japan said it will expand its asset purchase program to encourage more corporate investment. The central bank is pumping tens of trillions

of dollar a year into the economy but has yet to make much progress.

CURRENCIES: The euro was flat at \$1.0840 while the dollar was down 1.1 percent at 121.18 yen as traders responded to the limited additional stimulus from the Bank of Japan.

Beijing issues 2nd smog red alert of the month

BEIJING (AP) — China's capital Beijing issued its second smog red alert of the month on Friday, triggering vehicle restrictions and forcing schools to close.

A wave of smog is due to settle over the city of 22.5 million from Saturday to Tuesday. Levels of PM2.5, the smallest and deadliest airborne particles, are set to top 500, according to the official Beijing government website.

That is more than 20 times the level that is considered safe by the World Health Organization.

Half the city's cars will be forced off the road on any given day, while barbecue grills and other outdoor smoke sources will be banned and factory production restricted. Schools will close and residents advised to avoid outdoor activities.

On Friday afternoon, the air was relatively good, with a PM2.5 reading of about 80 and the sun shining brightly over the city.

However, visibility in some parts of Beijing will fall to less than 500 meters (1,600 feet) on Tuesday when the smog will be at its worst, the city government website said. An almost complete lack of wind would contribute to the smog's lingering over the city, it said.

Smog red alerts are triggered when levels of PM2.5 above 300 are forecast to last for more than 72 hours.

Although the four-tier smog warning system was launched two years ago, Beijing had not issued a red alert until last week, drawing accusations that it was ignoring serious bouts of smog to avoid the economic costs.

Some residents have defied the odd-even license plate number traffic restrictions and complained about the need to stay home from work to accompany housebound children. Others have used the break from school to travel to places where the air is better, while many who stay wear air filtering face masks and run air purifiers in their homes.

Scientific studies attribute 1.4 million premature deaths per year to China's smog, or almost 4,000 per day.

Most of the pollution is blamed on coal-fired power plants, along with vehicle emissions, building construction and factory work resulting from three decades of headlong economic expansion. While Beijing's smog gets the most attention, the scourge strikes much of northern China on a regular basis, sometimes forcing the closure of highways because of poor visibility.

The world's biggest carbon emitter, China plans to reduce hazardous emissions from coal-fired power plants by 50 percent over the next five years, and says its overall emissions will peak by about 2030 before starting to decline.

China still depends on coal for more than 60 percent of its electricity but is in the process of shifting to nuclear, solar and wind power.

S. Koreans call fresh protests of conservative president

KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Hundreds of South Koreans called for new protests of conservative President Park Geun-hye, whose increasingly harsh treatment of union members and dissidents has led to criticism comparing her with her late dictator father.

The rally Saturday will be the latest in a series of mass protests in recent months, although police believe the turnout will be smaller than huge demonstrations earlier this month and on Nov. 14, when dozens were injured in a clash between police and protesters.

Although Park still has a strong base of supporters, dissatisfaction has been growing. Demonstrators criticize her conservative policies in labor, trade and education and also what they see as her attacks on personal and political freedoms.

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There is also widespread frustration among young people over joblessness and inequality, which has inspired an Internet buzzword, "Hell Joseon," referring to the feudal Joseon kingdom that ruled Korea before it was colonized by Japan in the early 20th century.

Government figures show that the unemployment rate for people under 30 is approaching levels not seen since the late 1990s, when millions lost their jobs during a crippling financial crisis.

The demonstrations have grown because protesters believe their causes have been neglected by politicians and the media, said Chung Jaewon, a social science professor at Seoul's Kookmin University.

Park's government has responded by clamping down on the labor and civic organizations involved in organizing the protests.

Prosecutors are also considering indicting an arrested labor union official for sedition, a crime punishable by up to 10 years in prison, over the eruption of violence at the November rally. South Korean courts have not convicted a defendant of sedition since 1986, when dictator Chun Doo-hwan was in power, legal experts say.

Police have also vowed tougher actions against protesters who use violence. Critics, however, say the injury of a 69-year-old protester, who remains in a coma, and the heavy use of tear gas and water cannons mixed with pepper spray mean police put lives at risk last month by using unreasonable force to break up the demonstrators.

A follow-up rally on Dec. 5 was peaceful as thousands of people — many donning masks of Guy Fawkes, Marvel superheroes and other characters to protest Park's comments comparing masked protesters with terrorists — marched toward the Seoul hospital where the man in a coma was being treated.

Park's government has also come under massive public criticism for its botched rescue operation during a ferry disaster last year that killed more than 300, mostly school kids.

Park is the daughter of slain military dictator Park Chung-hee, who ruled South Korea in the 1960s and 1970s, and whose legacy as a successful economic strategist is marred by a brutal record of civilian oppression.

'Star Wars: The Force Awakens' thrills fans, sets records

SANDY COHEN, AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — After months of secrecy and anticipation, "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" is thrilling fans and theater owners alike.

The most anticipated film in the galaxy opened globally Thursday, setting international and pre-sale box-office records and delighting moviegoers who've had opening-night tickets in hand for months.

Kelly Andrews, who wears her love of "Star Wars" on her skin in the form of Yoda and R2-D2 tattoos, bought tickets in October for the first showing at Hollywood's classic TCL Chinese Theatre, where the original "Star Wars" premiered in 1977.

"It was outstanding," she said as she left the screening Thursday night clutching a shiny keepsake popcorn bin. "I cried happy tears. I cried sad tears. It was beautiful."

She was among thousands of devotees who praised the space saga's latest installment. The film has received overwhelmingly positive reviews from critics and fans internationally.

All over the world, "Star Wars" enthusiasts toted lightsabers and wore character costumes to packed opening-night showings of "The Force Awakens." They laughed and cheered and gasped together, illuminating their sabers in the theater during key scenes.

While domestic box-office returns won't be available until later Friday, the Walt Disney Co. said Thursday the film debuted with \$14.1 million from its first screenings in 12 international markets. The largest was France, where the film earned \$5.2 million. It set a one-day record in Norway and Sweden.

More than \$100 million in tickets have been presold in North America. The movie ticket service Fandango said it has already sold more tickets for "The Force Awakens" than any movie over its entire theatrical run.

Not everyone in the opening-night audience was dazzled, though. Michael Danke of Los Angeles, who said his friend waited in line for 52 hours for their tickets, was disappointed.

"I was kind of looking forward to a futuristic, bitchin' movie, but it was an old 'Star Wars' movie," he said. "They did it old style."

That nostalgia worked for Tony Brennan, who said he "can't get off of that high that I'm on" after seeing the film with the opening-night crowd in Hollywood.

"It's definitely worth all the hype," he said. "I like how they bring back the old quotes and old scenery and old people... It passed all of our expectations. I'm watching it five, six, seven more times."

Judge to hear arguments over anti-abortion group recordings

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A judge is set to hear arguments over whether to continue blocking an anti-abortion group from releasing recordings that it secretly gathered at annual meetings of the National Abortion Federation, an abortion providers' association.

U.S. District Judge William Orrick in San Francisco has scheduled a hearing for Friday to determine whether to grant the National Abortion Federation's request for a preliminary injunction against the Center for Medical Progress.

The center has released several secretly recorded videos that it says show Planned Parenthood employees selling fetal tissue for profit, which is illegal.

The National Abortion Federation says members of the center infiltrated its meetings and recorded its members. The group says release of any audio or video would put members in danger.

The center says its work is the equivalent of investigative journalism and protected by the First Amendment.

James' courtside crash raises concerns for NBA fan safety

TOM WITHERS, AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — For years, NBA fans have been willing to pay thousands to sit courtside and watch some of the world's most powerful athletes run and jump.

Up close, there is nothing quite like the experience.

On Thursday night, that thrill came with a heavy price.

Chasing after a loose ball, Cavaliers superstar LeBron James crashed into the wife of PGA golf champion Jason Day, sending her tumbling violently backward from her seat in an incident that could push the league to consider changes to protect its fans.

Ellie Day, who gave birth to her second child last month, was hospitalized from the impact of the scary encounter with the 6-foot-8, 250-pound James, perhaps the game's most physically imposing player.

Ellie Day was released from MetroHealth Medical Center early Friday morning, according to hospital spokeswoman Tina Shaerban Arundel.

James was unable to slow himself in time from plowing into Ellie Day, who was sitting next to her husband enjoying the Cavs' 104-100 win over the Oklahoma City Thunder.

James spoke briefly to Ellie Day as she was being immobilized and strapped to a backboard before being carried out of Quicken Loans Arena.

"She squeezed my hand and said she was fine. I think she was just a little weary," said James, who was noticeably shaken by the incident.

It's not uncommon for players to dive into the stands in NBA games. On a few occasions there have been minor injuries, but to this point nothing serious.

But fans are paying big money for premium seats that are closer than ever, creating the potential for problems.

Cavs coach David Blatt, who spent years coaching in Europe, has long been worried about courtside fan safety.

"It's always concerned me, the sideline seats," he said. "Always concerned me, because things like that, when you're talking about players of this speed and physicality and effort level, it's not a simple thing. The powers that be are the ones that really need to decide how to deal with that. He (James) made an

honest attempt at the basketball, that's all, obviously. We all hope she's OK."

The league has recently taken steps to improve safety, including cutting the number of photographers allowed to sit along the baselines to reduce the risk of contact with players.

With a full slate of Christmas Day games just a week away, it may be time for the NBA to consider implementing changes to make the game experience safe for fans so close to the floor.

Other leagues have had to address fan safety following incidents. Major League Baseball this month recommended extra protective netting for seats near the field after a summer of fans being hurt by foul balls and flying bats.

In 2002, a young fan died two days after being hit by a deflected puck at a Columbus Blue Jackets game. Brittanie Cecil was killed two days before her 14th birthday, a tragedy that led to the installation of more protective netting at NHL arenas.

There may be no way to avoid what happened between James and Ellie Day, who has attended many Cleveland games with her Australian husband in the past.

James said the incident hasn't changed how he feels about fans being near the floor.

"It's a great experience for our fans," James said. "I mean, that doesn't happen much. It's unfortunate it happened tonight, but that doesn't happen much. Our fans are why our game is so great. Sitting court-side, it's all part of the game. It's pretty cool. If I was a fan, which I am a fan of the game, but, I would love to sit courtside and watch games."

Gun buyer in massacre mused on Facebook of troubles he faced

BRIAN MELLEY, Associated Press

CHRISTINE ARMARIO, Associated Press

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (AP) — Less than a month before his friend carried out the San Bernardino massacre, the man who bought the assault rifles used in the attack wondered when the multiple lives he was leading would come crashing down.

"Involved in terrorist plots, drugs, anti-social behavior, marriage, might go to prison for fraud, etc," Enrique Marquez Jr. told someone in a Nov. 5 chat on Facebook described in a court document that foreshadowed the trouble he was facing before any bullets started flying.

Now he stands accused of terrorism-related charges and other counts that connect him to the the San Bernardino attack.

Marquez, 24, was charged Thursday with conspiring to provide material support to terrorists in deadly plots with Syed Rizwan Farook in 2011 and 2012 that they never carried out.

The duo, who had become adherents to radicalized Islam ideology as neighbors in Riverside, wanted to maximize carnage by using pipe bombs and guns to kill innocent people at a campus cafeteria and those stuck in rush hour traffic, court documents said.

Those plans may never have come to light if not for the attack where Farook and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, used guns Marquez bought years ago to kill 14 people and wound 22 at a holiday meeting of Farook's health department co-workers.

Marquez was charged with illegally purchasing the rifles that the shooters used in the slaughter and were found with hours later after dying in a gunbattle with police.

In his initial court appearance, Marquez looked disheveled. His short hair flopped over his forehead, there was stubble on his face, and the pockets of his black pants were turned out. He appeared calm and showed no emotion as he gave one-word answers to the judge.

No plea was entered and he was ordered held until a bail hearing Monday in U.S. District Court. If convicted of all three counts, he could face up to 35 years in federal prison.

His public defender declined comment, though friends and family have described him as a good person who was easygoing and liked to party.

Marquez, a former licensed security guard, was working at a Riverside bar at the time of the shooting and is not alleged to have had a role in the attack.

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But prosecutors said he was linked to the killings by the guns and explosive materials he bought years earlier. The couple used that material in a remote-controlled pipe bomb that never detonated at the conference room where the shootings occurred.

"His prior purchase of the firearms and ongoing failure to warn authorities about Farook's intent to commit mass murder had fatal consequences," U.S. Attorney Eileen Decker said.

A lengthy affidavit by FBI special agent Joel Anderson outlines evidence against Marquez, including statements he gave investigators over 11 days after he waived his rights to remain silent and be represented by a lawyer.

Attorney E. Martin Estrada, a former federal prosecutor in Los Angeles, said the admissibility of Marquez's statements to the FBI will likely be challenged by defense lawyers, but if the statements are allowed in court, they give prosecutors a very strong case because of corroborating evidence.

"This wasn't a conversation with an average Joe," Estrada said. "This was a conversation with a person that was capable and had the capacity and the intent to commit mass murder. That's pretty chilling."

The affidavit said Marquez called 911 hours after the attack to say his neighbor had used his gun in the shooting, using an expletive to describe Farook.

Marquez then showed up agitated at a hospital emergency room, saying he had downed nine beers and was "involved" in the shooting. He was involuntarily committed to a psychiatric ward.

Marquez lived next door to Farook, 28, who introduced him to Islam 10 years ago. Marquez told authorities he converted to Islam around age 16 and four years later was spending most of his time at Farook's home, reading, listening to and watching "radical Islamic content" that included al-Qaida instructions on how to make bombs.

Four years ago, Marquez said, he and Farook planned to toss pipe bombs into the cafeteria at Riverside Community College and then shoot people as they fled.

They also planned to throw pipe bombs on a busy section of freeway that has no exits, bringing traffic to a halt and then picking off motorists. Marquez would shoot from a nearby hillside, targeting police, as Farook fired at drivers from the road.

As part of the plan, Marquez bought two assault rifles — in November 2011 and February 2012. He said he agreed to buy them because "Farook looked Middle Eastern."

Authorities previously said Marquez had legally purchased the guns Farook and Malik used. But the charges allege that Marquez lied by signing paperwork that said the guns were for himself or a family member.

The FBI has said Farook and Malik, 29, were radicalized before they met online in 2013, but the court documents show Farook had turned down the path to violent plots much earlier.

Marquez said he and Farook aborted their plans after authorities interrupted a terror plot in the area in November 2012 that involved four men who wanted to join either the Taliban or al-Qaida fighting U.S. forces overseas.

He said they didn't see much of each other after it unraveled, though he deepened his connection with the Farook family, marrying the Russian sister of the wife of Farook's brother last year.

Prosecutors said it was a sham marriage to help the woman obtain U.S. residency.

According to the affidavit, Marquez was paid \$200 per month for the union and said his own mother and brother didn't know about it.

When his mother visited him at the hospital two days later after the shootings, her son again referred to Syed Rizwan Farook by an expletive and said he did not know "he was going to do that," Anderson said in the affidavit. Marquez also said he no longer wanted Farook as a friend.

House, Senate rush to send huge budget and tax deal to Obama

ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House and Senate are rushing to send President Barack Obama a massive budget package that would fund the entire government through September 2016 and shower tax breaks on working families, businesses and a wide swath of special interests.

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Friday's votes promise to finish up a surprisingly productive, bipartisan burst of late-session legislation in a divided Congress.

Obama has promised to sign the measure, but it must first overcome some resistance. House Democrats are upset over a victory for big oil, while tea party lawmakers say it spends too much money and has too few victories for the Republicans controlling Capitol Hill.

It may squeak through the House on a relatively narrow vote. Top House Democrat Nancy Pelosi of California, a key negotiator, swung forcefully behind the measure Thursday evening, despite her ire over its lifting of the four-decade ban on exporting U.S. crude oil — which most Democrats oppose.

"Republicans' desperate thirst for lifting the oil export ban empowered Democrats to win significant concessions throughout," Pelosi wrote her Democratic colleagues, citing spending increases for domestic programs, tax breaks for renewable energy, and Democratic success in driving most GOP policy riders from the measure.

On Thursday, Republicans powered the tax portion of the package past divided Democrats by a 318-109 vote.

Both parties scored political coups. More than 50 expiring tax cuts will be extended, with more than 20 becoming permanent, including credits for companies' expenditures for research and equipment purchases and reductions for lower-earning families and households with children and college students.

"Finally, with this tax bill, families and businesses are going to have the long-term certainty that they need instead of scrambling year after year to find out what's next," declared House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis.

Friday's House vote comes on the \$1.14 trillion spending measure, which would fund the operations of every Cabinet agency. It awards increases of about 6 percent, on average, above tight spending caps that were a relic of a 2011 budget and debt deal — and were opposed by both GOP defense hawks and Democrats seeking boosts in domestic spending.

After House action early Friday, the tax cuts will be bundled with the spending measure and sent to the Senate, which is likely to clear the measure for Obama's signature before noon — even though presidential candidates such as Marco Rubio, R-Fla., threatened to delay the votes. Then, Congress would adjourn until January.

The budget pact is the last major item in a late-session flurry of bipartisanship in Washington, including easy passage of long-stalled legislation funding highway programs and a rewrite of education programs.

Many on each side saw the budget deal as the best they could get under divided government. The need to win Obama's signature helped rid the measure of most of the controversial GOP provisions, including efforts to kill federal money for Planned Parenthood, limit the flow of Syrian refugees and undo dozens of Obama actions on the environment, labor, financial regulation and relations with Cuba.

The measure contains large spending boosts for veterans and medical research, and funds a familiar roster of grants for transportation projects, first responders and community development.

It also clears away an almost \$1 billion backlog of federal courthouse projects and sends hundreds of millions of dollars to the states and districts of a handful of powerful lawmakers like Thad Cochran, R-Miss., and Harold Rogers, R-Ky., the chairmen of the Appropriations committees.

Also crammed into the two bills are provisions trimming some of the levies that help finance Obama's prized 2010 health care overhaul. The White House opposed the rollbacks, but Republicans and many Democrats savored them. A tax on medical devices would be suspended for two years, a levy on health insurers would stop for a year and, in a victory for unions, a tax on higher-cost insurance policies would be postponed two years until 2020.

In exchange for ending the oil export ban, Democrats won extensions of tax breaks for alternative power sources such as solar and wind energy.

Other extended tax cuts include breaks for some teachers, commuters, timber investors, electric vehicle owners and makers of hard cider drinks. People in the seven states without income taxes will be able to deduct local sales taxes on their federal returns.

Iran: 'No agreement' seen in key issues before Syria talks

CARA ANNA, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — There "seems to be no agreement" on two key issues just hours before the latest international conference on Syria is held Friday in New York, Iran's foreign minister said.

Mohammad Javad Zarif told The Associated Press on Thursday that his country has seen "no lists we can agree upon" of Syrian opposition groups that should be included in peace negotiations set to begin by Jan. 1, or of Syrian groups that should be considered terrorist organizations instead.

"Card-carrying members of al-Qaida do not satisfy the conditions that we set for members of the opposition," Zarif told reporters, ruling out any affiliates of the extremist group. "The opposition should be serious, and it should be inclusive."

Zarif also said "we still don't know" if there will be any concrete progress in the talks that are aimed at bringing an end to Syria's conflict. Iran, a top Syria ally, will attend.

Russia and the United States are leading the talks, but Russia's ambassador to the U.N. told reporters that he sees attempts to "undercut" the communiqués that have been agreed upon in the Syria discussions so far. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin didn't give details.

A peace plan agreed to last month by 20 nations meeting in Vienna sets a Jan. 1 deadline for the start of negotiations between Assad's government and opposition groups. The plan says nothing about Assad's future but says that "free and fair elections would be held pursuant to the new constitution within 18 months."

Diplomats said the five permanent U.N. Security Council members, which include Russia and the United States, had not yet come to agreement on a draft resolution Thursday evening that the council is expected to adopt just after Friday's talks endorsing the process.

"I'm not sure it's going to happen," Churkin said of the resolution, which has been described as a rare gesture of unity in a Security Council that has been bitterly divided on Syria.

By contrast, British Ambassador Matthew Rycroft said the draft was "in good shape."

Russia, a top Syria ally, and the West continue to be split on the central issue in any discussions on a political transition: the fate of Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Australia leader disappointed with Japan's return to whaling

TOKYO (AP) — Australia's leader said Friday that his country is "very disappointed" with Japan's decision to resume whaling in Antarctic waters earlier this month.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, on his first visit to Japan since taking the helm in September, wants to strengthen Australia-Japan ties but also faces pressure at home to confront Japan on the whaling issue.

"Australia is very disappointed that Japan has resumed whaling in the Southern Ocean this year," he told reporters in Tokyo. "We will, as good friends should, be upfront and frank about our differences of opinion."

Japan stopped whaling last year after an international court ruled against its program, which is ostensibly for scientific research.

Since then, Japan has revised its Antarctic whaling program to reduce the maximum catch to 333 minke whales, about one-third of its previous quota. A fleet of whaling ships set out at the beginning of this month for a scaled-down, three-month hunt.

Exec who jacked up price of a lifesaving drug is arrested

TOM HAYS, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A boyish-looking entrepreneur who became the new face of corporate greed when he jacked up the price of a lifesaving drug fiftyfold was led away in handcuffs by the FBI on unrelated fraud charges Thursday in a scene that left more than a few Americans positively gleeful.

Martin Shkreli, a 32-year-old former hedge fund manager and relentless self-promoter who has called himself "the world's most eligible bachelor" on Twitter, was arrested in a gray hoodie and taken into federal court in Brooklyn, where he pleaded not guilty. He was released on \$5 million bail.

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If convicted, he could get up to 20 years in prison. He left court without speaking to reporters. His attorneys had no immediate comment.

Hours later, Shkreli tweeted: "Glad to be home. Thanks for the support."

Online, many people took delight in his arrest, calling him a greedy, arrogant "punk" who gave capitalism a bad name and got what was coming to him. Some cracked jokes about lawyers jacking up their hourly fees 5,000 percent to defend him in his hour of need.

Prosecutors said that between 2009 and 2014, Shkreli lost some of his hedge fund investors' money through bad trades, then looted Retrophin, a pharmaceutical company where he was CEO, for \$11 million to pay back his disgruntled clients.

Shkreli "engaged in multiple schemes to ensnare investors through a web of lies and deceit," U.S. Attorney Robert Capers said in a statement.

Shkreli was charged with securities fraud and conspiracy. A second defendant, lawyer Evan Greebel, of Scarsdale, New York, was charged with conspiracy and also pleaded not guilty.

A spokesman for Shkreli released a statement saying he denies the charges and "expects to be fully vindicated."

"It is no coincidence that these charges, the result of investigations which have been languishing for considerable time, have been filed at the same time of Shkreli's high-profile, controversial and yet unrelated activities," said spokesman Craig Stevens.

In September, Shkreli was widely vilified after a drug company he founded, Turing Pharmaceuticals, spent \$55 million for the U.S. rights to sell a medicine called Daraprim and promptly raised the price from \$13.50 to \$750 per pill.

The 62-year-old drug is the only approved treatment for toxoplasmosis, a rare parasitic disease that mainly strikes pregnant women, cancer patients and AIDS patients.

The move sparked outrage on the presidential campaign trail and helped prompt a Capitol Hill hearing on drug prices. Headlines called the Brooklyn-born Shkreli such things as "America's most hated man," the "drug industry's villain" and "biotech's bad boy" — and those were just some of the more printable names.

Hillary Clinton called it price-gouging and said the company's behavior was "outrageous." Donald Trump called Shkreli "a spoiled brat." Bernie Sanders returned a donation from Shkreli.

Prosecutors said the investigation that led to Shkreli's arrest dated back to last year, before the furor over the drug-price increase.

Shkreli defended the increase by saying that insurance and other programs would enable patients to get the drug and that the profits would help fund research into new treatments.

But he also made an unapologetic business-is-business argument for the price jump. In fact, he recently said he probably should have raised it more.

"No one wants to say it, no one's proud of it, but this is a capitalist society, a capitalist system and capitalist rules," he said in an interview at the Forbes Healthcare Summit this month. "And my investors expect me to maximize profits, not to minimize them or go half or go 70 percent but to go to 100 percent of the profit curve."

Amid the uproar, Shkreli said Turing would cut the price of Daraprim. Last month, however, Turing reneged. Instead, the company is reducing what it charges hospitals for Daraprim by as much as 50 percent.

While most patients' copayments will be \$10 or less a month, insurance companies will be stuck with the bulk of the tab, potentially driving up future treatment and insurance costs.

On Thursday, Robert Weissman, president of the watchdog group Public Citizen, said Shkreli got "a deserved comeuppance."

"Al Capone was brought down for tax evasion, but he committed many worse crimes," Weissman said. "So if Shkreli's arrested for securities violations, it's a comparable justice."

Shkreli is known as a prolific user of Twitter and often livestreams his work day over the Internet, inviting people to chat with him at his desk. He refers to those who follow him online as his "fans."

Recently it emerged that he bought the only copy of a Wu-Tang Clan album titled "Once Upon a Time in Shaolin," which the hip-hop group sold on the condition that it not be released publicly. He said he paid

\$2 million.

The FBI's New York office said on Twitter that agents did not seize Shkreli's album. Said Capers, the chief federal prosecutor: "We're not aware of how he raised the funds to buy the Wu-Tang album."

Last month, Shkreli was named chairman and CEO of KaloBios Pharmaceuticals after buying a majority stake in the struggling cancer drug developer. After his arrest, its stock fell by more than half Thursday before trading in the company was suspended.

Asian stock markets weaker as energy prices fall

YOUKYUNG LEE, AP Business Writer

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Asian stock markets were lower Friday as a persistent drop in the price of oil weighed on investor sentiment, eroding gains sparked the day before by the Fed's first rate hike in nearly a decade.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 dipped 0.2 percent to 19,307.06 and South Korea's Kospi slipped 0.1 percent to 1,976.31. Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell 0.4 percent to 21,786.08 and Australia's S&P/ASX 200 was down 0.1 percent to 5,095.60. Stock markets, mainland China, Taiwan and Southeast Asia also were weaker.

ENERGY SLUMP: The price of oil traded weaker on Friday following a big fall earlier this week after a surprise build in U.S. crude inventories. Energy and mining stocks have been pummeled this year as the sluggish global economy reduces demand even as supplies become more abundant.

ANALYST'S TAKE: "The Fed decision has clearly had no effect on the ongoing world of pain that oil prices find themselves in," said Angus Nicholson, a market analyst at IG in Melbourne, Australia. "A wave of defaults and bankruptcies in the energy sector still looks likely to come, and these concerns are certainly weighing on markets."

OIL PRICES: Benchmark U.S. crude was down 11 cents at \$34.84 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It closed 1.6 percent lower, or 57 cents, at \$34.95 a barrel in New York on Thursday. It had not closed beneath \$35 per barrel since Feb. 18, 2009 and traded above \$60 a barrel as recently as June. Brent crude, a benchmark for international oils, was up 7 cents at \$37.13 a barrel in London

WALL STREET: U.S. stocks skidded Thursday as companies that sell oil, gold and silver tumbled along with the prices of those commodities. The Dow Jones industrial average sank 1.4 percent to 17,495.84. The Standard & Poor's 500 lost 1.5 percent to 2,041.89. The Nasdaq composite index gave up 1.4 percent to 5,002.55.

CURRENCIES: The dollar fell to 122.45 yen from 122.58 yen in the previous session. The euro gained to \$1.0842 from \$1.0835.

Today in History The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, Dec. 18, the 352nd day of 2015. There are 13 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 18, 1915, President Woodrow Wilson, whose first wife, Ellen, had died the year before, married Edith Bolling Galt, a widow, at her Washington home.

On this date:

In 1787, New Jersey became the third state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1863, in a speech to the Prussian Parliament, Prime Minister Otto von Bismarck declared, "Politics is not an exact science."

In 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery, was declared in effect by Secretary of State William H. Seward.

In 1892, Tchaikovsky's ballet "The Nutcracker" publicly premiered in St. Petersburg, Russia.

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In 1912, fossil collector Charles Dawson reported to the Geological Society of London his discovery of supposed early human remains at a gravel pit in Piltdown. (More than four decades later, Piltdown Man was exposed as a hoax.)

In 1940, Adolf Hitler ordered secret preparations for Nazi Germany to invade the Soviet Union. (Operation Barbarossa was launched in June 1941.)

In 1944, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the government's wartime evacuation of people of Japanese descent from the West Coast while at the same time unanimously agreeing that "concededly loyal" Americans of Japanese ancestry could not continue to be detained.

In 1958, the world's first communications satellite, SCORE (Signal Communication by Orbiting Relay Equipment), nicknamed "Chatterbox," was launched by the United States aboard an Atlas rocket.

In 1969, Britain's House of Lords joined the House of Commons in making permanent a 1965 ban on the death penalty for murder.

In 1972, the United States began heavy bombing of North Vietnamese targets during the Vietnam War. (The bombardment ended 11 days later.)

In 1980, former Soviet Premier Alexei N. Kosygin died at age 76.

In 1992, Kim Young-sam was elected South Korea's first civilian president in three decades.

Ten years ago: In a televised speech, President George W. Bush declared that Iraq's parliamentary elections signaled the birth of democracy in the Middle East. Vice President Dick Cheney made a surprise visit to Iraq, where he faced tough questions from battle-weary troops. Susanne Osthoff, a German aid worker kidnapped in Iraq, was freed after three weeks in captivity. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon suffered a mild stroke.

Five years ago: The U.S. Senate approved repeal of the military's 17-year "don't ask, don't tell" ban on openly gay troops in a 65-31 vote. (President Barack Obama later signed it into law.) Skier Lindsey Vonn was named the 2010 Female Athlete of the Year as chosen by members of The Associated Press.

One year ago: Sternly warning the West it could not defang the metaphorical Russian bear, President Vladimir Putin promised to shore up the plummeting ruble and revive the economy within two years. Mandy Rice-Davies, 70, a key figure in the "Profumo Scandal" that rocked Cold War Britain, died in London. Actress Virna Lisi, 78, died in Rome. "The Colbert Report" came to an end after nine years on Comedy Central (host Stephen Colbert went on to become the host of CBS' "Late Show.")

Today's Birthdays: Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark is 88. Actor-producer Roger Smith is 83. Blues musician Lonnie Brooks is 82. Actor Roger Mosley is 77. Rock singer-musician Keith Richards is 72. Writer-director Alan Rudolph is 72. Movie producer-director Steven Spielberg is 69. Blues artist Ron Piazza is 68. Movie director Gillian Armstrong is 65. Movie reviewer Leonard Maltin is 65. Rock musician Elliot Easton is 62. Actor Ray Liotta is 60. Comedian Ron White is 59. R&B singer Angie Stone is 54. Actor Brad Pitt is 52. Professional wrestler-turned-actor "Stone Cold" Steve Austin is 51. Actor Shawn Christian is 50. Actress Rachel Griffiths is 47. Singer Alejandro Sanz is 47. Actor Casper Van Dien (TV: "Mortal Kombat") is 47. Country/rap singer Cowboy Troy is 45. Rapper DMX is 45. International Tennis Hall of Famer Arantxa Sanchez Vicario is 44. DJ Lethal (Limp Bizkit) is 43. Pop singer Sia is 40. Country singer Randy Houser is 39. Actor Josh Dallas is 37. Actress Katie Holmes is 37. Actor Ravi Patel (TV: "Grandfathered") is 37. Singer Christina Aguilera is 35. Christian rock musician Dave Luetkenhoelter (Kutless) is 33. Actress Ashley Benson is 26. Actress-singer Bridgit Mendler is 23. Actress Isabella Cramp is 11.

Thought for Today: "Whoever wants to be a judge of human nature should study people's excuses." — Christian Friedrich Hebbel, German poet and dramatist (1813-1863).