

Groton Daily Independent

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Davies Bridal Shower

Open house bridal shower for Traci Davies will be held Saturday, February 20, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the United Methodist Church in Groton. The bride is registered at Target.

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

The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **Open**

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Wednesday, February 17

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

Birthdays: Darien Shabazz, Lila Olson, Marie Gengerke

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

12:00pm: Kiwanis meets at the Community Center

3:45pm: St. John's Confirmation

6:00pm: Emmanuel Lutheran Lenten Meal (SS Serves)

7:00pm: Emmanuel Lutheran Worship

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

Thursday, February 18

State FFA Proficiency Judging at Webster

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

Birthdays: Crystal Young, Zach Herron

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

5:15pm: GBB at Redfield (C at 5:15, JV at 6:30, Varsity at 8:00)

Friday, February 19

School Breakfast: Pancake on stick, fruit, juice, milk.

1994: Kara and Todd Anderson

Birthdays: Connor Hanson, Gaylene Voss, Heather Westby, Heidi Westby, Robert Sippel, Robin O'Neill, Terry Furman, Tyler Kampa

3:00pm: BBBJH at Groton (7th at 3 pm, 8th at 4 pm)

5:15pm: BBB host Redfield-Doland (C at 5:15, JV at 6:30, Varsity at 8:00)

Saturday, February 20

Elementary PAC BBB Tourney in Groton

Show Choir Murder Mystery Dinner

Anniv: Ken & Leslie Dinger

Groton Chiropractic Clinic

Carol McFarland-Kutter, D.C.

1205 N 1st St., Groton 397-8204

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Follow The Groton
Activities On-Line



gdilive.com

Coming up this week at gdilive.com

Thursday, Feb. 18: GBB at Redfield (Varsity Only)

Friday, Feb. 19: BBB host Redfield-Doland (Varsity Only)

The Groton Area games for both boys and girls in the regions will be broadcast on gdilive.com. Watch for dates and details.

Ready to bring your heart and expertise to a team that feels more like a family? Bring your passion for patient care to the Golden LivingCenter in Groton. The Groton facility is now hiring for CNAs and Nurses. They have new wages with an excellent benefits package. All shifts are open. Join the team today by calling Jessica at 397-2365. The Golden LivingCenter of Groton is looking for you!

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DI to host Dessert Theater on Feb. 28

Groton DI, Destination Imagination, will host their Dessert Theater on Sunday, February 28, 2016. It will begin at 3 pm in the GES gym. DI is an extra-curricular activity that encourages teamwork, creative problem solving, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) Skills and 21st Century Skills.

Groton has eight teams involved in DI this year. Two of the teams are Early Learning Teams – these students are in Kindergarten through second grade. We have three elementary teams which are students in third through fifth grade. There are two middle school teams of students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. Students in grades nine, ten, eleven and twelve are represented by one high school team.

In the fall of the year, teams have a variety of challenges to research and decide which one is a good fit for their team. They have been working since October to solve their challenge. Each challenge has multiple solutions and therefore each presentation is different. It is always interesting to see what solutions various teams develop. Dessert Theater, many times is the first public performance of the teams' solutions, which gives the students a trial run, in the safe environment of friends and family.

Please come and see the solutions of the 2016 DI Challenges that the Groton DI Teams have worked through. If you can't make Dessert Theater please set aside the date of March 5th. Groton is hosting the NE Regional competition on March 5th at the high school. Teams from all over NE South Dakota will be competing for state honors on this day. We hope to see you at one of these events to witness the ingenuity our youth use. THANK YOU for your continued support of Groton Destination Imagination!

Conde National League

Team Standings: Pirates 19, Cubs 14, Giants 14, Braves 14, Colts 12, Mets 10.

Men's High Games: Lance Frohling 202, 174; John Lowary 182; Troy Lindberg 172.

Men's High Series: Lance Frohling 546, John Lowary 468, Troy Lindberg 459.

Women's High Games: Renee Hanlon 186, Nancy Radke 168, Michelle Johnson 157.

Women's High Series: Renee Hanlon 457, Nancy Radke 441, Mary Larson 434.

Kiwanis Potato Bar Feed

Groton Area vs. Redfield-Doland

Friday, February 19th

\$6.00 per person



Serving 5:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Groton High School Arena

Annual police department report presented to council

Jerry Bjerke presented the annual police report to the city council Tuesday night.

It was an average year for miles driven, which is about 30,000 miles per year. The majority of the tickets written were for warnings," Bjerke said. The ratio was 4 warnings to one ticket written. That ratio was 10 to 1 in 2014. There were 10 DUIs in 2015. Ninety percent of the DUIs come from the highway. Seat belt violations are a primary offense for those 18 and under. Bjerke said that the number of domestic instances is the highest since he has been here. In February statewide, five officers were killed and three were domestic instances. In Groton, there were 14 domestic instances and that number has jumped to 19 in 2015.

The council approved to send Justin Cleveland to a sex offender's school March 29-30. Bjerke said that when a sex offender comes to town, they have three days to report to Cleveland. If they don't, he finds them. "He does that job very well for us," Bjerke said.

Getting dogs licensed has been a challenge for city officials. Of the 255 dogs in Groton, 172 were sold by December 31, 2015. Starting January 1, it's a \$1 per day fine per dog plus the cost of the license. By January 15, the fine goes to \$25 and 60 licenses were sold from January 1-15. As of today, there are two dogs left in town that are unlicensed and the fine goes to \$50. Mary Flihs said, "If you don't want to buy a dog license, then we should come and get your dog." Officer Bjerke said, "I've been here for 13 years and it's been a problem every year." The council tabled making any further decision.

The sidewalk at the end of Main Street on the east side has not been cleaned off after a snowfall. "It's his property. He should have it cleaned," said Councilman Eddy Opp. "The man has a sidewalk there and he should clean it. Everyone else cleans their sidewalk."

Cheri Strom has asked for a cut in the curb in front of her place for elderly people coming to her business. "She has a nice business downtown and she deserves what she's asking for," Opp said. The council will get cost estimates for the project.

The 2015 recreation report was presented. The pool lost \$62,979.07 (that includes \$15,307.73 for the slide), the baseball program lost \$24,496.20, the library lost \$1,993.44, the skating complex lost \$2,894.49, the community center lost \$303.97, the city park lost \$464.71, the basketball court lost \$294.93, the tennis court lost \$579.94 and the golf program (well house) lost \$510.20. All recreation programs for the city has lost \$94,516.95. Councilman Jay Peterson said, "What is the deficit that the city can allow for all recreation programs. These are all good programs, but I struggle to come up with something that will reduce the deficit." He said, "I propose having an across the board increase of 12 percent." Eddy Opp said, "I understand what you're saying, but I know some people are having a tough time paying the fees as they are now."

Still do not have an agreement with the school for the soccer complex. The city sent signed documents but the school has never returned the documents signed.

They tried passing the hat at the junior teener and above games last year and it did not work out well, according to Councilman David Blackmun. He said that he will talk with the baseball/softball foundation committee and see what options they have for the gate.

The Paint South Dakota program is going again this year and nominations have to be submitted by April 1 and the paint on the building by the end of June. The city is looking for an organization that might be willing to volunteer their time in painting. For more information, contact city hall. (See related article on Page 6)

Until someone takes ownership of the car show set for June 19th, the city will took no action on granting approval.

Councilmen Jay Peterson (1 year term), Burt Glover (2 year term) and David Blackmun (2 year term) have taken out petitions. Mayor Scott Hanlon has turned in his petition for mayor (3 year term). Councilman David McGannon has not taken out a petition. The deadline to turn in petitions is 5 p.m. on February 26.

After the executive session, Brenda Madsen, Kami Lipp and Karla Pasteur were hired as the pool managers; Pat Krause as the baseball coordinator and Kathy Bjerke as the softball coordinator.

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South Dakota's Gas Prices Bucking the Trend

Feb. 16, 2016 - AAA South Dakota reports the state gasoline price average, now at \$1.698 per gallon, is four cents lower than one week ago. This is the lowest statewide average since December of 2008.

"Normally, given the time of the year, we would expect to see pump prices rise," said Marilyn Buskohl, spokeswoman for AAA South Dakota. "Demand is building and refineries are starting to re-tool, putting a crimp in supply. But nothing about gas prices over the last 18 months has been typical so we'll just have to wait and see how long these low prices stay."

	Today	Last Week	Change	Jan. 11	Change	Last year
Aberdeen	\$1.723	\$1.819	-\$0.096	\$1.982	-\$0.259	\$2.205
Brookings	\$1.649	\$1.768	-\$0.119	\$1.985	-\$0.336	\$2.243
Huron	\$1.771	\$1.774	-\$0.003	\$1.999	-\$0.228	\$2.182
Mitchell	\$1.696	\$1.856	-\$0.160	\$1.920	-\$0.224	\$2.249
Pierre	\$1.667	\$1.758	-\$0.091	\$2.062	-\$0.395	\$2.149
Rapid City	\$1.854	\$1.958	-\$0.104	\$2.076	-\$0.222	\$1.477
Sioux Falls	\$1.919	\$1.540	\$0.379	\$1.725	\$0.194	\$2.174
Vermillion	\$1.499	\$1.689	-\$0.190	\$1.739	-\$0.240	\$2.165
Watertown	\$1.593	\$1.816	-\$0.223	\$1.831	-\$0.238	\$2.262
Yankton	\$1.734	\$1.863	-\$0.129	\$1.849	-\$0.115	\$2.306
South Dakota	\$1.662	\$1.770	-\$0.108	\$1.914	-\$0.252	\$2.122

Oklahomans are enjoying the lowest gasoline prices in the nation, according to FuelGaugeReport.AAA.com. Missouri's price average today is four-tenths of a cent higher, Kansas is at \$1.44 and Arkansas stands at \$1.49. Among the 48 contiguous states, California reports the highest price average today - \$2.40 - followed by Nevada at \$2.07 and Washington at \$2.04.

The national average price of gas increased today for the first time in 20 days, but average prices are still at levels not seen since January 2009. The national average has fallen for 42 out of 47 days this year for a total savings of 30 cents per gallon. Today's average price of \$1.70 represents a savings of three cents per gallon on the week, 20 cents per gallon on the month and 55 cents per gallon compared to this same date last year.

Typical for this time of year, refinery production is beginning to drop as many refineries prepare for seasonal maintenance in advance of the summer driving season. In addition, some refineries reportedly have cut production because of abundant supplies and low prices. This decline in production has led to higher prices throughout the Midwest and slowed recent declines in the national average price of gas.

Industry analysts expect this year's spring maintenance season to peak in April, and pump prices are likely to rise in the coming months due to fluctuations in supply and demand associated with this process. However, unlike previous years, gasoline inventories are reportedly at higher-than-normal levels and the price of crude oil remains low. The combination of these two factors should help keep gas prices relatively low compared to recent years, though prices are likely to be a good deal higher by Memorial Day than they are today.

Speculation about future supply and demand is contributing to swings in the global price of crude oil. Market fundamentals continue to point to oversupply, though prices may continue to fluctuate in the near-term as rumors of production cuts and possible deals between OPEC and non-OPEC member countries influence the market.

Despite the lower price environment, there has not yet been a major reduction in U.S. oil production. West Texas Intermediate crude oil fell to its lowest point in nearly 13 years last week, largely due to an abundance of domestic oil supplies. The latest data from the EIA indicated a drop in crude oil stocks for the first time this year, though inventories remain elevated and are likely to increase in the coming weeks.

WTI rallied to end the week, and at the close of Friday's formal trading session on the NYMEX, was up \$3.23 to settle at \$29.44 per barrel. The NYMEX was closed yesterday in observance of the President's Day holiday.

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Downton Abbey Goes Out In Style

Friends of SDPB host teas throughout South Dakota

To celebrate the final episode of Masterpiece's popular Downton Abbey series, Friends of South Dakota Public Broadcasting (SDPB) will host afternoon teas at 12 locations throughout South Dakota. The teas take place Saturday, March 5th at 2pm LOCAL TIME (2pm CT & 2pm MT).

Each tea will have sweet and savory treats, Downton Abbey trivia, door prizes, and plenty of "dishing" with fellow fans about the season finale of the beloved PBS series. Attendees are encouraged, but not required, to come dressed as their favorite Downton Abbey character for a costume contest.

The teas are open to the public, but seating is limited. Suggested contribution is \$25. Please visit SDPB.org to RSVP.

Now in its sixth season, Downton Abbey is the most-watched PBS program ever. The British Edwardian-era drama about the aristocratic Crawley family and their contingent of servants has amassed dozens of Emmy, Golden Globe, and BAFTA nominations and awards and was the second most-watched program on Super Bowl Sunday. The final episode airs Sunday, March 6 on SDPB1.

Downton Abbey Finale Teas locations: Aberdeen – ARCC Art Gallery, 24 – 3rd Ave. SE

Beresford – Beresford Community Library, 115 W. 3rd

Brookings – The Old Sanctuary, 928, 4th St.

Milbank – Milbank Visitor's Center, 1001 E. 4th Ave.

Mitchell – Dakota Discovery Museum, 1300 McGovern Ave.

Huron – Top Floor Event Center, 31 – 4th St. SE

Pierre – The Hitching Horse Inn, 635 N. Euclid

Rapid City – Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 717 Quincy St.

Sioux Falls – History Club of Sioux Falls, 758 S. Phillips

Spearfish – Club Nevada, 340 W. Nevada St.

Vermillion – Austin Whittemore House, 15 Austin St.

Watertown – Grace Lutheran Church Community Room, 202 – 2nd St. SE

2016 Paint – South Dakota Campaign

PIERRE, S.D. – "Paint – South Dakota" is underway and South Dakota Housing Development Authority (SDHDA) is seeking volunteers to pick up paint brushes and set aside some free time to help residents in their communities.

To get involved, an individual or group of people nominate someone in their community whose home is in need of a fresh coat of exterior paint. The home must be a single family, owner-occupied residence whose owner is physically or financially unable to paint their home themselves.

In the last 18 years, over 450 homes across South Dakota have been painted, resulting in more than 8,942 gallons of paint and primer being applied by 6,876 local volunteers.

"We continue this campaign because of its success in cities and towns of all sizes," said Executive Director Mark Lauseng. "This benefits residents of our state and beautifies the community as well."

Applications may be submitted to SDHDA and must be received by 5 p.m. CDT, April 1, 2016. Applicants will be able to select from one of four Saturdays in June to complete the painting of the home.

Additional information and a link to the poster and application can be found at www.sdhda.org. If you have any questions, contact Sheila Ricketts at 605.773.7603.



Kumla Dinner

Sunday, Feb. 28th, Serving 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Groton Community Center

Sponsored by Heaven Bound Ministries of Pierpont

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SCHOOL LAND LEASE AUCTION

A school land lease auction will be held at the Brown County Courthouse in Aberdeen, SD on March 17, 2016 at 1:15 PM (CT) on the following tract:

16 125N 65W E2NE, E2SE

A list of tracts available for lease may also be obtained at the Brown County Auditor's Office or by contacting the Office of School & Public Lands at (605) 773-4172. For more information contact Mike Cornelison, Office of School & Public Lands, 500 E Capitol Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501-5070 or phone (605)773-4172. Disabled individuals needing assistance should contact the Office of School and Public Lands at least 48 hours in advance of the auction to make any necessary arrangements.



Attention Groton Businesses!

Are you
...looking for low-interest financing?
...wanting to expand?
...planning to increase your labor force?

Heartland has programs available to help.
Contact us today!

CASEY CRABTREE
Heartland Director of Economic Development
(605) 256-6536 • ccrabtree@hcpd.com

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Today in Weather History

1930 - Eureka, CA, reported an all-time record high of 85 degrees, a record which lasted until September of 1983. (The Weather Channel)

1936 - The temperature at McIntosh SD plunged to 58 degrees below zero to establish a state record. (David Ludlum)

1958 - The greatest snowstorm of the mid 20th century struck the northeastern U.S. The storm produced 30 inches of snow in interior New England, including more than 19 inches in 24 hours at the Boston Airport. The same storm produced up to three feet of snow in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region, with 14 inches at Washington D.C., and 15.5 inches at Baltimore MD. The storm resulted in 43 deaths and 500 million dollars damage over the Middle Atlantic Coast States. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A couple of winter storms, one off the Atlantic coast and another over the south central U.S., produced snow and ice from the Mississippi Valley to the Mid Atlantic Coast Region. Freezing rain produced a coat of ice three inches thick in northern South Carolina, and 30,000 homes around Pee Dee were left without electricity. Parts of south central Kentucky were without electricity for three days following the storm, which was their worst in 35 years. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Santa Ana winds in southern California gusted to 63 mph at Ontario. Heavy snow blanketed parts of Colorado, with 11 inches reported at Strontia. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Low pressure off the Washington coast produced more than a foot of snow in the Cascade Mountains, and more than three inches of rain along the Northern Pacific Coast. Spokane WA was blanketed with 13 inches of snow. Cold arctic air in the Upper Midwest produced all-time record high barometric pressure readings of 31.10 inches at Duluth MN, 31.09 inches at Minneapolis MN, and 31.21 inches at Bismarck ND. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - The biggest winter storm of the season hit the Pacific Coast Region. In northern California, snow fell along the coast, and two day totals in the mountains ranged up to 67 inches at Echo Summit. Snowfall totals in the mountains of southern California ranged up to 48 inches at Green Valley, with 46 inches reported at Big Bear. Up to two feet of snow blanketed the southern Cascade Mountains of Oregon, and 20 to 35 inches were reported in the northern Cascades of Oregon. Up to ten inches of snow blanketed Seattle WA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)






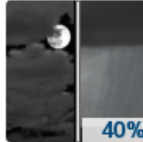



**Livestream
your
wedding!**

How cool would that be?!

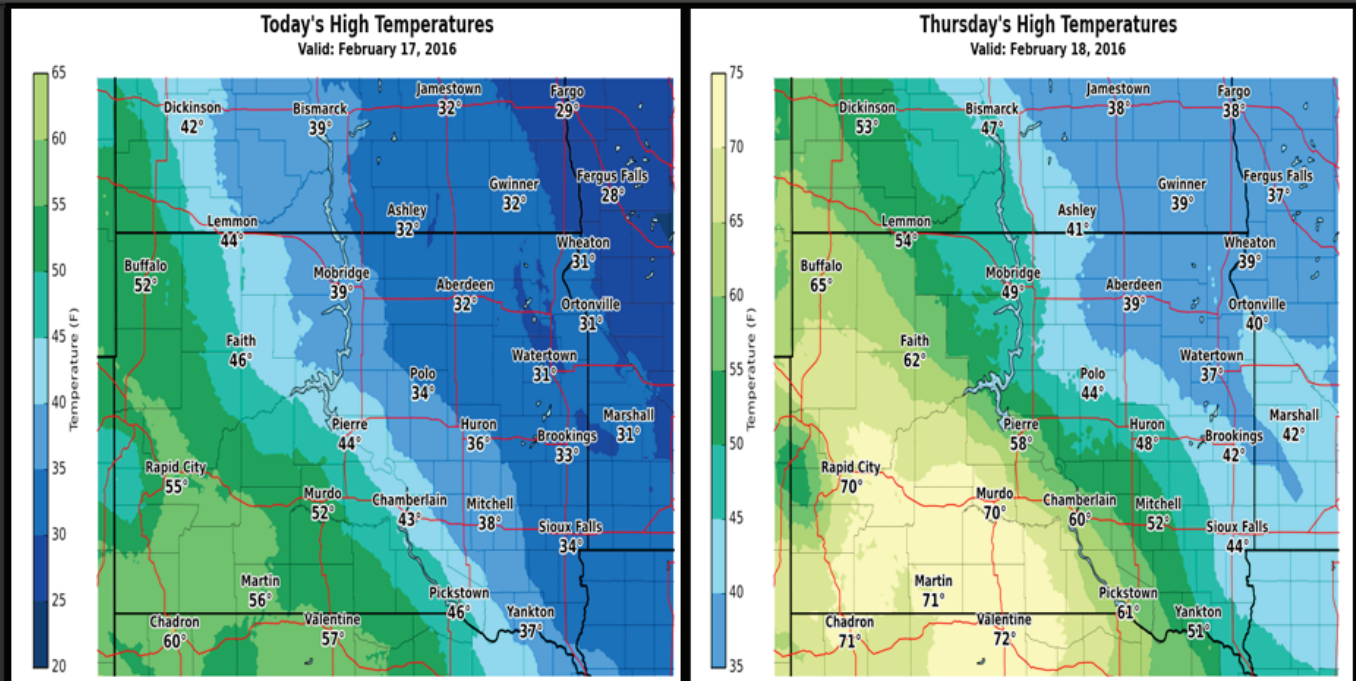
Call or text Paul at 605/397-7460.

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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
						
20%			40%	20%		
Slight Chance Snow then Cloudy	Cloudy then Patchy Fog	Breezy. Patchy Fog then Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Showers and Breezy	Windy. Slight Chance Showers then Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 32 °F	Low: 28 °F	High: 40 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 50 °F	Low: 28 °F	High: 46 °F

Getting Warmer Next Couple Days!



* Southerly Breezes Will Usher in a Milder Airmass *

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD



weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen | Updated: 2/17/2016 3:24 AM Central

Published on: 02/17/2016 at 3:27AM

Southerly breezes will kick-in over the next couple days. That will spell milder temperatures across most of the Northern Plains. Even warmer temperatures are expected for late in the week as the wind turns westerly and gustier.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 30.5 at 1:55 PM

Low: 25.7 at 2:15 AM

High Gust: 15 at 7:22 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 67° in 1913

Record Low: -39 in 1903

Average High: 29°F

Average Low: 8°F

Average Precip in Feb.: 0.29

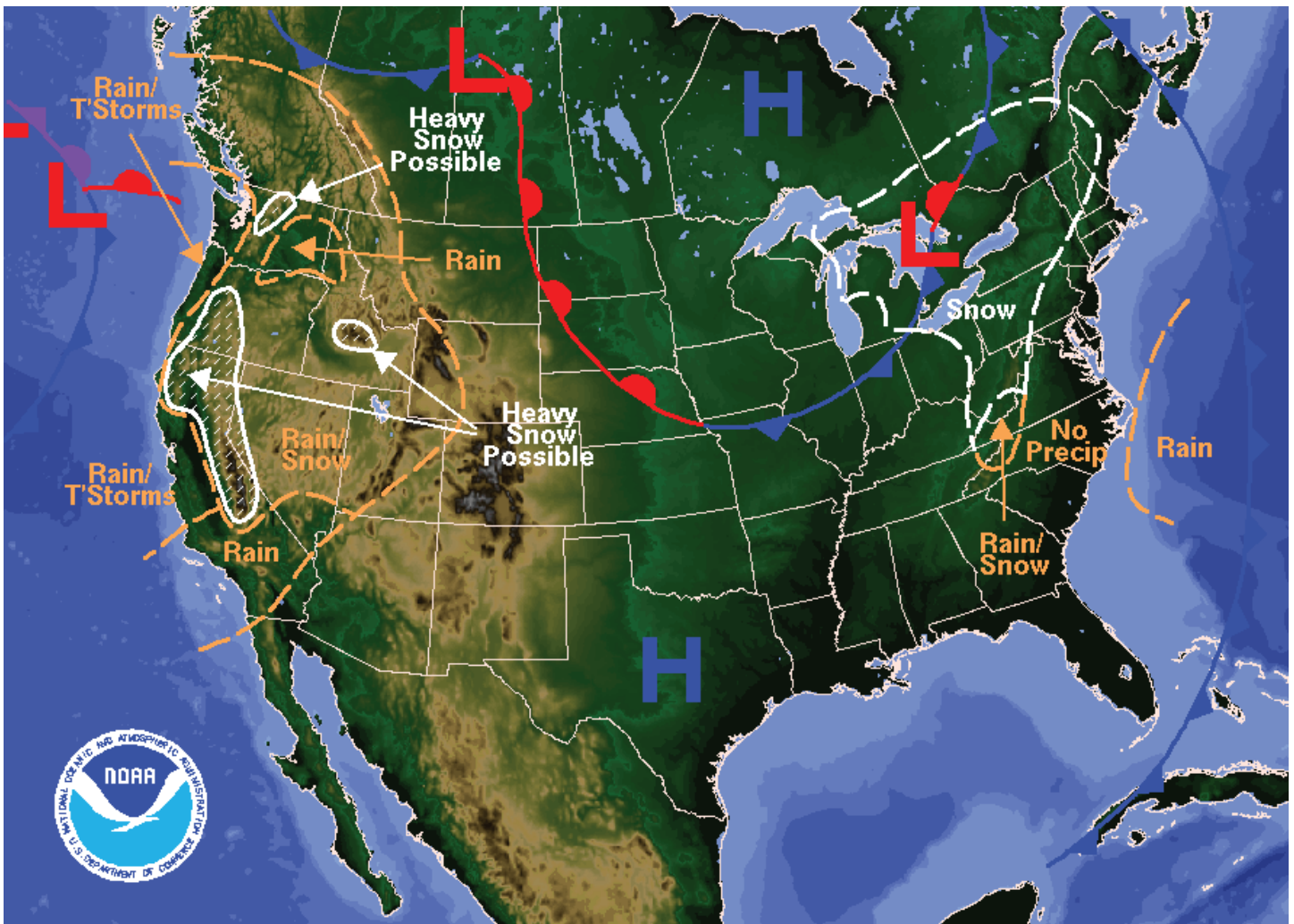
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.60

Average Precip to date: 0.76

Precip Year to Date: 0.60

Sunset Tonight: 6:03 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:31 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Wed, Feb 17, 2016, issued 3:46 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



HOW TO GET REVENGE

The check-in line at the reservation counter was longer than usual. And it was moving very, very slowly. One of the people in the line was passing the time by watching the people around her. Finally, it was almost her turn. Only one person was in front of her.

But the man in front of her had seven bags to check-in. He became impatient and began to curse the agent because he had to pay an additional charge for all of his luggage. The agent, with a gracious smile, politely said to the man, "Have a nice flight, Sir."

Impressed, when she presented her ticket to the agent she said, "My, you were so kind to that man who cursed you. He even embarrassed me. Are you always so courteous?"

"Thank you," he replied, "but I'm really not very nice. You see, he's going to Miami but his baggage is going to Minneapolis."

Whenever someone does something to hurt us on purpose, the natural thing we want to do is to seek a way to get revenge. But, revenge is not our responsibility, it is God's. Paul said, "Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God."

When we return evil with good and thoughtfulness for thoughtlessness, we are demonstrating God's love: loving others the way He loves us. God's grace: let's pass it on!

Prayer: Save us, Father, from doing harm to others. Let us show Your love and kindness, compassion and care to everyone as You have shown it to us. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: Romans 12:19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

News from the Associated Press

All students released from hospital after bus-pickup crash

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — All of the students taken to a Rapid City hospital after a school bus and a pickup truck collided in the Box Elder area have been released.

All 26 students on the Douglas School District bus were taken to the hospital as a precaution after the Tuesday morning crash, and six were treated for minor injuries.

The Highway Patrol says the two vehicles collided at an intersection. Authorities are continuing to investigate.

The bus driver was not hurt. Authorities say the pickup driver suffered injuries that were serious but not life-threatening.

House panel to consider bill to reject daylight saving time

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A bill that would reject daylight saving time in South Dakota and make it permanently standard time is set to go before a legislative committee.

The House State Affairs committee is scheduled to take up the bill on Wednesday.

A proposal to make it permanently daylight saving time in South Dakota failed last month in the state Senate.

Republican Sen. Betty Olson has been a main backer of both proposals.

Olson has said she brought the Senate bill forward because she and many of her neighbors are sick of switching clocks and having to adjust to the change.

North Dakota State national football trophies going on tour

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — North Dakota State's five national football championship trophies are going on display throughout the area.

The hardware will be shown at six Scheels stores in three states, beginning Friday in Bismarck with a showing from 3 to 7 p.m. The trophies will be in Minot from 9:30 a.m. to noon and Grand Forks from 5 to 7 p.m. on Saturday, and in Fargo from noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

Other events are scheduled March 5 in Rochester, Minnesota, and March 6 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

North Dakota State is the first team in college football history to win five straight national championships. The Bison defeated Jacksonville State 37-10 in the Football Championship Subdivision title game to complete a 13-2 season.

Syrup processing workshops planned in 5 South Dakota cities

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota State University Extension will be hosting five workshops over the next two weeks to teach individuals how to process maple syrup.

The workshops are for people with a few sugar, silver maple or boxelder trees who are interested in hobby maple syrup production or are considering small commercial production.

The workshops will be held in Aberdeen, Brookings, Sioux Falls, Watertown and Yankton. The first one is scheduled for Thursday at the McCrory Gardens Education and Visitor Center in Brookings.

The SDSU Extension says there's no cost to attend the workshops thanks to funding from a specialty crops grant program administered by the state's Department of Agriculture.

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Tuesday's Scores The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Brandon Valley 63, Brookings 60
Bridgewater-Emery 57, Mitchell Christian 54
Britton-Hecla 59, Leola/Frederick 25
Chamberlain 64, Lyman 46
Chester 76, Garretson 56
Colome 65, Burke/South Central 40
Corsica/Stickney 73, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 17
Dakota Valley 75, Sioux City, West, Iowa 56
DeSmet 71, Lake Preston 58
Douglas 65, Lead-Deadwood 31
Dupree 91, Takini 67
Elk Point-Jefferson 71, Centerville 43
Elkton-Lake Benton 65, Flandreau Indian 38
Flandreau 89, Baltic 36
Hamlin 69, Great Plains Lutheran 45
Harding County 84, New England, N.D. 45
Iroquois 56, Howard 49, OT
Langford 65, Aberdeen Christian 38
Lennox 67, Beresford 56
Little Wound 76, Pine Ridge 52
Menno 51, Viborg-Hurley 32
Miller 63, Faulkton 56
Mitchell 57, Harrisburg 55
Mobridge-Pollock 62, Stanley County 50
Oelrichs 78, Wall 67
Ortonville, Minn. 63, Milbank Area 45
Rapid City Central 71, Sturgis Brown 62
Redfield/Doland 69, Northwestern 35
Sioux Falls Lincoln 50, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 46
Sioux Falls Washington 69, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 56
Sioux Valley 66, Castlewood 38
Spearfish 51, Belle Fourche 49
St. Thomas More 65, Hill City 40
Sully Buttes 77, Sunshine Bible Academy 32
Tri-Valley 65, McCook Central/Montrose 38
Vermillion 68, Wagner 43
Waverly-South Shore 50, Rosholt 39
Webster 69, Wilmot 56
West Central 64, Canton 52
Winner 53, Platte-Geddes 48

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Roncalli 64, Ipswich 45
Alcester-Hudson 46, Colman-Egan 35
Andes Central/Dakota Christian 44, Parkston 39
Arlington 46, Elkton-Lake Benton 36
Brandon Valley 36, Brookings 35
Centerville 80, Marion 23

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Chamberlain 40, Stanley County 30
Dell Rapids St. Mary 47, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 28
Deubrook 38, Estelline 15
Ethan 54, Freeman 30
Faith 37, Philip 30
Flandreau 76, Baltic 44
Flandreau Indian 53, Hendricks, Minn. 32
Hamlin 62, Great Plains Lutheran 22
Harrisburg 41, Mitchell 31
Herreid/Selby Area 65, Potter County 62
Hitchcock-Tulare 54, Wolsey-Wessington 42
Irene-Wakonda 60, Beresford 35
James Valley Christian 49, Highmore-Harrold 34
Kimball/White Lake 58, Wessington Springs 44
Lead-Deadwood 39, Rapid City Christian 20
Lemmon 62, McLaughlin 60
Leola/Frederick 48, Britton-Hecla 47
Little Wound 67, Todd County 59
Miller 58, Faulkton 38
Mitchell Christian 38, Bridgewater-Emery 30
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 66, Bon Homme 26
New Underwood 69, Newell 25
Ortonville, Minn. 61, Milbank 56
Parker 50, Garretson 40
Pierre 66, Rapid City Stevens 62, OT
Pipestone, Minn. 39, Lennox 36, OT
Rapid City Central 63, Sturgis Brown 22
Red Cloud 64, Hill City 58
Redfield/Doland 48, Northwestern 34
Scotland 56, Canistota 43
Sioux Falls Lincoln 65, Watertown 58
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 44, Sioux Falls Washington 26
Sioux Valley 42, Castlewood 35, OT
Sisseton 60, Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley, Minn. 43
Spearfish 48, Belle Fourche 42
Sully Buttes 73, Sunshine Bible Academy 14
Tripp-Delmont/Armour 62, Corsica/Stickney 45
Vermillion 64, Wagner 58
Viborg-Hurley 54, Menno 25
Wall 49, Oelrichs 26
Waubay/Summit 35, Warner 29
West Central 64, Canton 45

Transgender bathroom bill sent to South Dakota governor

JAMES NORD, Associated Press
KEVIN BURBACH, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota would be the first state in the U.S. to approve a law requiring transgender students to use bathrooms and locker rooms that correspond to their sex at birth if the governor signs a bill passed Tuesday by the state Senate.

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The Senate voted 20-15 to send the bill to Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard, who initially responded positively to the measure but said last week he'd need to study it more before making a decision.

Advocates say the bill is meant to protect the privacy of students, but opponents say it discriminates against vulnerable adolescents.

Under the plan, schools would have to provide a "reasonable accommodation" for transgender students, such as a single-occupancy bathroom or the "controlled use" of a staff-designated restroom, locker room or shower room.

Republican Sen. David Omdahl urged other legislators Tuesday to support the bill to "preserve the innocence of our young people."

Democratic lawmakers and some Republicans unsuccessfully opposed the measure in the Senate.

The American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota and Human Rights Campaign have been vocal in their opposition to the measure and have called on Daugaard to veto the legislation.

"History has never looked kindly upon those who attack the basic civil rights of their fellow Americans, and history will not treat kindly those who support this discriminatory measure," Chad Griffin, the president of the LGBT-rights organization Human Rights Campaign, said in a statement Tuesday.

Transgender advocates have also criticized comments made by some lawmakers, including Omdahl, about transgender people.

"I'm sorry if you're so twisted you don't know who you are," Omdahl said at a recent event when asked about the bill. "I'm telling you right now, it's about protecting the kids, and I don't even understand where our society is these days."

Several states have looked at addressing gender and public facilities in the past several years. But South Dakota would be the first state in the nation to put such a measure into law, said Joellen Kralik, a research analyst at the National Conference of State Legislatures.

The Legislature's passage of the bill is "shocking," said Thomas Lewis, a transgender student in his senior year at Lincoln High School in Sioux Falls, the state's most populous city.

"At this point, I'm hoping that the governor has a sense of humanity and the common sense not to write this bill into law," said Lewis, who is planning to attend college in Minnesota. "I am so glad to be leaving soon. I can escape the oppression that my home state wants to put on me."

Supporters say South Dakota's plan is a response to changes in the Obama administration's interpretation of the federal Title IX anti-discrimination law related to education. Federal officials have said that barring students from restrooms that match their gender identity is prohibited under Title IX.

Federal district court denies death row inmate's appeal

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A federal court has denied the appeal of a death row inmate seeking to overturn his 23-year-old murder conviction.

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley says the U.S. District Court in South Dakota has denied Charles Rhines' petition for a writ of habeas corpus.

A Pennington County jury convicted Rhines of first-degree murder in 1993 for the death of Donnivan Schaeffer. He was later sentenced to death.

Rhines appealed his conviction for killing Schaeffer during the 1992 burglary of the Rapid City doughnut shop where Schaeffer worked. The state Supreme Court upheld the conviction.

Rhines can appeal the federal district court's decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals and, ultimately, to the U.S. Supreme Court.

House again delays consideration of proposed sales tax hike

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The state House has again delayed voting on the proposed half-cent sales tax hike that would help fund Gov. Dennis Daugaard's plan to raise teacher salaries in the state.

The chamber took up the tax measure on Tuesday. But legislators for the second time used a procedural move to postpone more debate until later in the week.

If the tax measure is approved, it would be sent to the Senate for consideration.

More than \$60 million from the hike would go toward the teacher salary plan. House Republican leader Brian Gosch is pursuing a teacher pay hike without increasing taxes.

The governor's office has said Daugaard is optimistic about his plan to raise South Dakota's lowest-in-the-nation teacher compensation. It takes two-thirds support in each chamber to pass a tax hike.

South Dakota high court mulls payday lending ballot question

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota attorney general's office should have to rewrite its explanation of a ballot measure that would cap the interest rates offered by payday and auto title lenders to make clear it would drive such lenders from the state, an attorney for an opponent of the measure told the state Supreme Court on Tuesday.

The justices heard oral arguments in the appeal of a circuit judge's ruling last year that upheld Attorney General Marty Jackley's written explanation for the initiative, which would cap interest rates for such short-term loans at 36 percent annually.

Supporters say the proposal is aimed at protecting consumers from predatory lenders whose high-rate loans can trap people in debt.

Jackley has said he has provided the public with a fair and accurate explanation of the proposal.

But attorneys for Erin Ageton, an opponent of the initiative and an employee of a car title lender, argue that the explanation doesn't correctly state the effect and purpose of the measure.

They contend that the explanation should include language informing voters that the proposal would put the industry out of business in South Dakota because the cap would prevent lenders from covering the costs of making the loans.

"The measure bans short-term lending," said Alan Simpson, an attorney for Ageton. "The 36 percent number is just something grasped out of thin air."

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's website says a typical two-week payday loan can have fees that equate to an annual interest rate of almost 400 percent.

It's not clear when the Supreme Court will issue an opinion. The legal proceeding is just one part of the complicated campaign over short-term lending in South Dakota ahead of the 2016 election.

An attorney for Ageton has said that she is an employee of Georgia-based Select Management Resources. The company gave about \$1.7 million in 2015 to a South Dakota group pursuing a ballot measure that opponents say is an industry-backed attempt to insert a loophole allowing unlimited interest rates into the state constitution.

The company has auto title lending locations in South Dakota under the name North American Title Loans.

Select Management Resources was the sole financier in 2015 of South Dakotans for Fair Lending, a political committee pushing for the amendment to cap interest rates in South Dakota at 18 percent annually but allow higher ones if the borrower agrees to them.

The 18 percent amendment was put forward after the 36 percent measure, which is backed by a group fighting against payday lending called South Dakotans for Responsible Lending.

Both the 36-percent rate cap and the industry-backed amendment are proposed to go before voters in the 2016 election.

But opponents of both initiatives are also challenging signatures turned in to the secretary of state's office to get them on the ballot.

Pipeline opponents ask board to consider new US oil exports

DAVID PITT, Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Opponents of a proposed pipeline project in Iowa want the state utilities board to take additional evidence that crude oil produced in the United States is now being shipped overseas, which would bolster their argument that North Dakota oil to be shipped through the so-called Bakken pipeline may have no benefits for Iowa.

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It's been more than two months since the Iowa Utilities Board ended hearings and gathering documents on the project, which would stretch diagonally across 1,300 parcels of land and 18 counties in Iowa at a cost of \$1 billion.

Board members began deliberations last week on whether to grant a hazardous liquid pipeline permit to Dakota Access, a Texas-based company owned by major petroleum industry players, and whether the company can use eminent domain to force owners of 296 parcels of land to allow the pipeline to be buried on their property.

At issue is a 2006 law that prohibits private development of agriculture land without the owner's consent — unless the developer is a utility. The board must decide whether Dakota Access meets the definition of a utility, such as an electricity or telephone provider. Opponents say it isn't because it provides no service directly to Iowa residents.

Pipeline opponents claim it is not because there is no assurance the project will provide even an indirect service to Iowa residents, much less be a "public convenience and necessity" as required by law.

But Dakota Access has said the consumers will benefit by helping to reduce U.S. reliance on imported oil, stabilizing prices and improving national security. The company said the project creates jobs and provides an economic benefit to local communities during construction. It also contends that moving oil via pipeline is safer than rail or truck transportation.

At the time of the hearings, which ended in December, a 40-year ban on the export of domestically produced crude oil was in place. But Congress approved a bill that repealed the long-standing ban on Dec. 18, and two weeks later, ConocoPhillips sent a cargo ship loaded with Texas crude oil to Italy. Another ship left in early January to deliver light crude to Europe.

Des Moines attorney William Hanigan, who represents landowners opposing the pipeline, said the board was informed during hearings that the type of light crude oil to be transported by the pipeline had no foreign marketplace and would remain in the country for domestic use.

"This understanding is incorrect," he said in a motion filed Thursday for a reopened record to consider the new information.

Dakota Access' attorney filed a document Monday resisting such a reopening.

"The application before the board is for new, safe, efficient shipping of domestic oil from the Bakken to a hub at Patoka, Illinois where shippers want to move oil," Bret Dublinske said. "What happens after that point does not impact whether this project promotes the public convenience and necessity."

Iowa is the only state yet to approve the permit for the \$3.78 billion Bakken pipeline, which will carry about a half-million barrels of oil per day from North Dakota to Illinois, crossing through Iowa and South Dakota. The project also must receive approval from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers because the pipeline will be tunneled underneath the Mississippi River.

The board has scheduled another deliberation meeting for Friday, and a board spokesman says the board can rule on the motion to reopen the record at any time.

SDSU football team gets new assistant coach for safeties

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota State University head football coach John Stiegelmeier has added another assistant to his staff.

Jake Dickert will be in charge of the team's safeties.

Dickert spent the past two seasons as the defensive coordinator and linebackers coach at Minnesota State, Mankato, an NCAA Division II program.

SDSU competes in the higher-level Football Championship Subdivision. The Jackrabbits last season made their fourth consecutive appearance in the FCS playoffs, and finished No. 16 in the final coaches poll and No. 15 in the media poll.

Dickert previously coached at the University of South Dakota, Augustana, North Dakota State and South-east Missouri State.

Apple resisting magistrate order to share iPhone information

TAMI ABDOLLAH, Associated Press

ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Apple Inc. CEO Tim Cook says his company will fight a federal magistrate's order to hack its users in connection with the investigation of the San Bernardino shootings, asserting that would undermine encryption by creating a backdoor that could potentially be used on other future devices.

Cook's ferocious response, posted early Wednesday on the company's website, came after an order from U.S. Magistrate Judge Sheri Pym that Apple Inc. help the Obama administration break into an encrypted iPhone belonging to one of the shooters in the December attack.

The first-of-its-kind ruling was a significant victory for the Justice Department in a technology policy debate that pits digital privacy against national security interests.

Noting the order from federal Magistrate Judge Sheri Pym in California, Cook said "this moment calls for public discussion, and we want our customers and people around the country to understand what is at stake." He argued that the order "has implications far beyond the legal case at hand."

Pym's order to Apple to help the FBI hack into an encrypted iPhone belonging Syed Farook, one of the San Bernardino, California shooters, set the stage for a legal fight between the federal government and Silicon Valley. The ruling by Pym, a former federal prosecutor, requires Apple to supply highly specialized software the FBI can load onto the county-owned work iPhone to bypass a self-destruct feature, which erases the phone's data after too many unsuccessful attempts to unlock it. The FBI wants to be able to try different combinations in rapid sequence until it finds the right one.

The order represents a significant victory for the Justice Department and the Obama administration, which has embraced stronger encryption as a way to keep consumers safe on the Internet but has struggled to find a compelling example to make its case.

Federal prosecutors told the judge in a court application that they can't access a work phone used by Farook because they don't know his passcode and Apple has not cooperated. Under U.S. law, a work phone is generally the property of a person's employer. The magistrate judge told Apple in Tuesday's proceeding to provide an estimate of its cost to comply with her order, suggesting that the government will be expected to pay for the work.

Apple has provided default encryption on its iPhones since 2014, allowing any device's contents to be accessed only by the user who knows the phone's passcode.

The order requires that the software Apple provides be programmed to work only on Farook's phone, but it was not clear how readily that safeguard could be circumvented. The order said Apple has five days to notify the court if it believes the ruling is unreasonably burdensome.

It also was not immediately clear what investigators believe they might find on Farook's work phone or why the information would not be available from third-party service providers, such as Google or Facebook, though investigators think the device may hold clues about whom the couple communicated with and where they may have traveled.

The phone was running the newest version of Apple's iPhone operating system. San Bernardino County provided Farook with an iPhone configured to erase data after 10 consecutive unsuccessful unlocking attempts. The FBI said that feature appeared to be active on Farook's iPhone as of the last time he performed a backup.

In his website posting, Cook said the U.S. government order would undermine encryption by using specialized software to create an essential back door that he compared to a "master key, capable of opening hundreds of millions of locks."

"In the wrong hands, this software — which does not exist today — would have the potential to unlock any iPhone in someone's physical possession," Cook wrote. "The FBI may use different words to describe this tool, but make no mistake: Building a version of iOS that bypasses security in this way would undeniably create a back door. And while the government may argue that its use would be limited to this case, there is no way to guarantee such control."

The ruling tied the problem to the San Bernardino attack, the deadliest by extremist elements on U.S. soil since the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Syed Farook and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, killed 14 people in a Dec. 2 shooting at a holiday luncheon for Farook's co-workers. The couple later died in a gun battle with police.

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The couple took pains to physically destroy two personally owned cell phones, crushing them beyond the FBI's ability to recover information from them. They also removed a hard drive from their computer; it has not been found despite investigators diving for days for potential electronic evidence in a nearby lake.

Farook was not carrying his work iPhone during the attack. It was discovered after a subsequent search. It was not known whether Farook forgot about the iPhone or did not care whether investigators found it.

The judge didn't spell out her rationale in her three-page order, but the ruling comes amid a similar case in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

Investigators are still working to piece together a missing 18 minutes in Farook and Malik's timeline from Dec. 2. Investigators have concluded they were at least partly inspired by the Islamic State group; Malik's Facebook page included a note pledging allegiance to the group's leader around the time of the attack.

In 2014, Apple updated its iPhone operating system to require that the phone be locked by a passcode that only the user knows. Previously, the company could use an extraction tool that would physically plug into the phone and allow it to respond to search warrant requests from the government.

Global markets turn higher ahead of Wall Street open

ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Stocks advanced in Europe and were due to rise on Wall Street on Wednesday as oil prices were supported by more international talks on a possible production freeze.

KEEPING SCORE: Germany's DAX rose 1.8 percent to 9,295.06 and Britain's FTSE 100 was up 1.6 percent at 5,956.94. The CAC 40 of France gained 2 percent to 4,191.66. U.S. markets looked set for gains, with the Dow and S&P 500 futures both up 0.7 percent.

OIL TALKS: Oil prices edge higher after a wild day on Tuesday, as investors weighed the possible impact of a Russia-Saudi accord to freeze production that will only take effect if other OPEC nations agree to it. Iran has so far said it won't sign on because it wants to raise output following its period of sanctions, but more talks were being held in Tehran on Wednesday. The slump in oil prices has been one factor unnerving stock markets recently as a sign of weak global demand.

ANALYST VIEWPOINT: "How prices now perform will depend to a major extent on the signals sent out from Iraq and Iran," analysts at Commerzbank wrote in a note to clients. They said, however, that there is some room for compromise, as Saudi exports are due to decline in the summer, leaving space for Iran to increase its own output.

ENERGY PRICES: U.S. crude rose 56 cents to \$29.60 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It lost 40 cents on Tuesday. Brent crude, a benchmark for international oils, added 87 cents to \$33.71 a barrel. On Tuesday it lost \$1.21.

ASIA'S DAY: Japan's Nikkei 225 fell 1.4 percent to 15,836.36 as investors shrugged off data showing strong machinery orders in January. Hong Kong's Hang Seng dropped 1.0 percent to 18,924.57 while the Shanghai Composite rose 1.1 percent to 2,867.34. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 lost 0.6 percent to 4,882.10 and South Korea's Kospi shed 0.2 percent to 1,883.94. Markets rose in Indonesia, Taiwan and New Zealand and fell in Singapore, Thailand and India.

CURRENCIES: The dollar fell to 114.05 yen from 114.23 yen the previous day. The euro rose to \$1.1147 from \$1.1127.

GOP candidates in high-stakes chess match in South Carolina

JULIE PACE, Associated Press

BILL BARROW, Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — Jeb Bush, John Kasich and Marco Rubio are locked in a high-stakes political chess match in South Carolina, strategically moving money and other campaign resources around in a bid to pull ahead in the Republican primary race — or at least keep their campaigns afloat if they don't.

The maneuvering comes as some Republican leaders fear Donald Trump or Ted Cruz will begin piling up the delegates needed to secure the nomination before one of the more traditional candidates can concentrate the support of voters turned off by the brash billionaire and fiery Texas senator, who so-called establishment Republicans believe could jeopardize the party's chances of winning in November's general election.

"We do need to get the field down to Trump, Cruz and somebody," said Henry Barbour, a Republican National Committee heavyweight from Mississippi. "New Hampshire tried, but it's clear as mud."

Indeed, the only thing that is clear heading into Saturday's South Carolina primary appears to be Trump's grip on the lead. Cruz, the winner of the Iowa caucuses, is also in the mix for a strong finish.

But the more mainstream lane populated by Bush, Kasich and Rubio is more jumbled. Bush's campaign now sees an opening to capitalize on Rubio's fifth-place finish in New Hampshire, while Kasich's strong second-place showing there has given him reason to keep his campaign going. Rubio's team, meanwhile, is quietly confident that South Carolina will prove to be a comeback story for the Florida senator.

Kasich's finish in New Hampshire has scrambled what might have been a do-or-die contest between Bush and Rubio in South Carolina. After initially viewing the first-in-the-South primary as too much of a long-shot for a moderate Midwesterner, Kasich abruptly changed his schedule this week and announced plans to campaign in South Carolina almost every day until Saturday's primary.

The newly confident Ohio governor also recently put a small batch of ads on television in South Carolina — something he hadn't planned until after his New Hampshire success.

"Exceeding expectations is why we're there," Kasich spokesman Chris Schrimpf said.

For Kasich, exceeding expectations would be to finish ahead of Bush, the former Florida governor. Bush has deep family ties to South Carolina — his father and brother each won two Republican primaries here — and a poor showing Saturday could leave him without a compelling rationale to keep his campaign going.

Right to Rise USA, the heavily funded super PAC backing Bush, has reduced its radio and television ad spending by nearly \$3 million across seven states that vote in the coming weeks, according to Kantar Media's Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG) data. The cuts impact some states that vote on Super Tuesday, the delegate-rich March 1 voting bonanza.

The super PAC made the biggest change in Texas, where it cut more than \$1 million in ads it had planned through the March 1 primary. The group also cut back in Virginia, Georgia, Tennessee and Oklahoma — all Super Tuesday states — as well as Michigan and Idaho.

Right to Rise spokesman Paul Lindsay cast the moves as a "delay" in spending that "will give us the opportunity to prioritize following South Carolina."

Rubio is also trimming back his ad spending, though his cuts come in South Carolina. According to the CMAG data, Rubio's campaign has scaled back its remaining paid media in the state by more than half. However, his allied super PAC does appear to be picking up the slack by increasing its ad buys ahead of Saturday's voting.

Rubio aides said the moves were aimed at bringing the campaign's ad spending down to the level of its competitors in South Carolina, not a sign of financial troubles or an indication that the Florida senator was lowering expectations in the state.

As the third major contest in the primary campaign, South Carolina is accustomed to settling divergent results in Iowa and New Hampshire, with the winner here emerging as the nominee in each presidential

cycle from 1980 to 2008. But those typically were two-man contests as the race headed South: Ronald Reagan dispatched George H.W. Bush in 1980, the elder Bush defeated Bob Dole in 1988 and George W. Bush topped John McCain 12 years later.

This time, the gaggle of candidates means there's no clean divide on ideology, personality or anything else.

Even before South Carolina votes, Republican leaders — and even some voters — are making the case that candidates who aren't competitive need to swallow their pride and let go of their presidential ambitions.

"I'm just hoping through this election — or maybe the next one — we whittle it down a little to two or three really good candidates," said Bill Hann, a 69-year-old Republican from Daniel Island, South Carolina, who is still deciding between Rubio, Kasich and Bush. "Just too many voices right now."

Katon Dawson, a former South Carolina GOP chairman who remains unaligned, put it more bluntly. He said that if a candidate finishes in the single digits Saturday, "you ought to quit."

Obama chides senators to 'do their job,' vote on court pick

DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama is challenging Republicans to live up to their avowed adherence for the Constitution and agree to vote on his nominee to replace the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. A key Republican is leaving the door open to taking the first step.

Despite widespread GOP insistence that he leave the decision to the next president, Obama said Tuesday he had no intention of abdicating his responsibilities before leaving office early next year. He chidingly told the Senate he expects "them to do their job as well."

"The Constitution is pretty clear about what's supposed to happen now," Obama said before returning to Washington from California.

Fallout from Scalia's unexpected death overshadowed Obama's two days of summitry with Southeast Asian leaders. Obama pledged to nominate a candidate "indisputably" qualified, but Republican leaders have threatened to refuse to hold hearings or a vote on his pick to replace the conservative Scalia.

Yet there were hints that at least some Republicans might come around. Senate Judiciary Chairman Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, said he would wait "until the nominee is made before I would make any decision" about holding hearings, boosting White House hopes for getting a third justice confirmed on Obama's watch.

With the looming nomination creating ripples in the presidential campaign, Obama sought to broaden his argument by calling the dispute emblematic of years of escalating partisan hostilities over judicial nominations. He lamented a new normal in which "everything is blocked" even when there's no ideological or substantive disagreement — and conceded that Democrats are not blameless

"This would be a good moment for us to rise above it," Obama said.

Court officials said Scalia's body will lie in repose on Friday in the Supreme Court's Great Hall, after a private ceremony. The funeral mass Saturday will take place at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

Since Scalia's unexpected death at a Texas ranch over the weekend, White House lawyers and advisers have been scrambling to identify potential replacements, while also devising a strategy to get a nominee confirmed.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said he doesn't think Obama should put a candidate forward. The Kentucky senator joined several Republicans up for re-election in declaring that Obama should let voters in November weigh in on the direction of the court through their vote for president.

Obama rejected that notion, insisting he will put forward a replacement and believes the Senate will have "plenty of time" to give the nominee a fair hearing and a vote. Democrats say Obama has every right and a constitutional duty to fill vacancies on the court until he leaves office next January.

The pace of judicial confirmations always slows in presidential election years, thanks to reluctance by

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the party out of power in the White House to give lifetime tenure to their opponents' picks. In the past, lawmakers have sometimes informally agreed to halt hearings on lower court nominations during campaign season. But Obama argued that "the Supreme Court's different."

McConnell has shown no signs of shifting his opposition, and several lawmakers facing heated elections have backed him up. But the party may still be searching for a strategy.

The White House has been looking for cracks in the Republican opposition as it deliberates on a nominee, and Grassley's remarks to home-state reporters offered the first signs of hope.

If Republicans indicate they may hold hearings, Obama would have greater reason to name a "consensus candidate," a moderate nominee that Republicans would be hard-pressed to reject. If there's virtually no chance of Republicans bending, Obama might pick a nominee who galvanizes Democratic support and fires up interest groups in the election year.

Obama would not tip his hand — much. He said he'd pick someone that would pass muster for honor and integrity even among ideological opponents.

He would not comment on whether he would consider appointing a candidate during a congressional recess, a last-ditch maneuver that would inflame partisanship in Congress.

If Senate Republicans hold fast to their vow not to confirm anyone Obama nominates, the Supreme Court will operate with eight justices — not just for the rest of this court term, but for most of the next one as well. High court terms begin in October, and the 80 or so cases argued in the course of a term typically are decided by early summer.

The court would be unable to issue rulings on any issue in which the justices split 4-4.

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 OBAMA CHIDES SENATORS

The president is challenging Republicans to live up to their avowed adherence to the Constitution and agree to vote on his nominee to replace the late Antonin Scalia.

2. GOP CANDIDATES IN HIGH-STAKES MATCH IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Jeb Bush, John Kasich and Marco Rubio are strategically moving money and other campaign resources around in a bid to pull ahead in the Republican primary race.

3. APPLE REJECTS ORDER TO SHARE IPHONE INFORMATION

CEO Tim Cook says his company will resist a federal magistrate's order to hack its own users in connection with the investigation of the San Bernardino, California shootings.

4. TAIWAN SAYS CHINA DEPLOYS MISSILES IN DISPUTED SOUTH CHINA SEA

The Chinese foreign minister accuses the media of hyping the issue and says more attention should be paid to "public goods and services" provided by Beijing's development of its maritime claims.

5. WHO FINDS REFUGE 'NORTH OF THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE'

About 100 asylum-seekers in the world's northernmost refugee shelter are trying to adapt to the darkness, extreme climate and unfamiliar customs of northern Norway, The AP finds.

6. WHERE SIEGE WARFARE REVIVES DEBATE OVER ANCIENT TACTIC

Images of emaciated civilians in besieged areas in Syria prompt global outrage, and the U.S. says Assad is violating the rules of war with a policy of "surrender or starve."

7. POPE CONCLUDES MEXICO TRIP

Francis wraps up his visit with some of his most anticipated events: stops at a Juarez prison just days after a deadly riot in another lockup and at the Texas border.

8. STOMACHS AS LATEST FRONT IN STANDOFF BETWEEN THE KOREAS

Seoul asks South Koreans not to eat at the North Korean-run restaurants in cities around the world in a bid to stop money from helping fund Pyongyang's pursuit of nuclear weapons.

9. VARIETY OF FACTORS PREVENT EMPLOYEES FROM WORKING LONGER

Health is perhaps the most obvious explanation, but layoffs, business closings and family factors also lead to early retirement.

10. CJ THE GERMAN SHORTHAIRED POINTER WINS WESTMINSTER DOG SHOW

"It's exactly like what I imagined," co-owner, breeder, and handler Valerie Nunes-Atkinson says.

Despite friction with some, Cruz has allies in Congress

MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Ted Cruz's rivals like to say he doesn't have any friends in Washington. That's not true.

Despite a distinct lack of support from Senate colleagues — not one single endorsement — the Republican presidential candidate and freshman Texas senator has a small but loyal group of supporters in the House who are flying to rallies, meeting with voters and trying to convince the electorate that he's not such a bad guy.

Republican Rep. Mark Meadows says he's traveled to Cruz events "to really tell the personal side of Ted Cruz that not many people know." His North Carolina district shares a media market and a border with South Carolina, which will hold its closely contested GOP primary on Saturday.

"On issue after issue, Cruz has told the truth and done what he said he was going to do," Meadows said when he endorsed Cruz last month. "It may not make him a lot of friends in Washington, but it is exactly what the American people expect of their leaders."

Meadows is one of about 20 House Republicans who are campaigning for Cruz around the country. Iowa Rep. Steve King, a fierce opponent of immigration, stood by Cruz's side when he gave his victory speech after winning the state's caucuses two weeks ago. South Carolina Rep. Jeff Duncan is appearing with Cruz in at least four South Carolina cities this week.

Rep. Tim Huelskamp of Kansas endorsed Cruz on Tuesday, saying he's "not one of those 'campaign conservatives' who are all talk — he is a proven, principled conservative."

Many say it doesn't matter that Cruz has a reputation for getting on the wrong side of some of his GOP Senate colleagues, such as Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, whom Cruz accused of lying last year, or Arizona Sen. John McCain. McCain has sparred with Cruz a number of times and last month said questions about Cruz's eligibility due to his Canadian birth should be explored, keeping the issue alive after Cruz's foe Donald Trump raised concerns.

His congressional supporters say Cruz isn't always well loved because he's doing his job.

In 2013, the Texas senator and his House allies contributed to the partial 16-day government shutdown as they tried to starve President Barack Obama's health care overhaul of money, a move several of Cruz's GOP colleagues considered ill-conceived and futile.

"It rubs people the wrong way because ultimately what Ted is trying to do is reduce the influence of outside groups and force members to make tough decisions," said Colorado Rep. Ken Buck, who also endorsed Cruz last month and is serving as his Colorado campaign chairman. "I think that people who don't like him now as a colleague will respect him and be willing to work with him as president."

The supporters say they aren't worried that he wouldn't get along with lawmakers if elected president. They say they aren't trying to rally support in the Capitol, but with voters.

"Senators and congressmen know enough to make their own decisions," says Rep. Mo Brooks, a Cruz supporter from Alabama.

Cruz has always had a closer relationship with members of the House, where the tea party-inspired Freedom Caucus has made similar moves to block GOP leadership. Freedom Caucus member Randy Weber of Texas said "there has been some discussion" in the caucus about making an endorsement, though at this point members are making their own decisions.

Some, like Meadows, have introduced House versions of Cruz's Senate bills. Meadows and Duncan attended the Republican debate in South Carolina Saturday and spoke to reporters afterward as surrogates for Cruz. King live-tweeted the debate, criticizing Cruz's opponents and writing that the Texas senator landed "final blows" at the end.

Though he doesn't have any Senate endorsements — rival GOP presidential contender Marco Rubio has some half dozen — Cruz does have a handful of friends there. When he made a rare appearance to

vote on a North Korea sanctions bill last week, a few senators on the floor warmly greeted him. Others pointedly ignored him.

Perhaps Cruz's closest friend in the Senate is Utah Sen. Mike Lee, whom he met before he was elected. Lee came to the Senate floor to block several nominees on Cruz's behalf earlier this month. He hasn't endorsed the Texas senator in the presidential race, saying he's also close friends with Rubio, but said he would consider an endorsement, "if this became about one of them."

Lee says he isn't worried that Cruz couldn't get along with Congress if he wins the presidency in November. He says he would be a "breath of fresh air" for Republicans compared to Obama. And he doesn't agree that Cruz doesn't have any friends.

"Whenever I hear someone make that suggestion, I find that troubling because it simply isn't true," Lee said. "He's a great guy. I consider him not only a political ally, I consider him a close personal friend."

He does have at least one other fan in the chamber: Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, who called Cruz "a very effective campaigner."

"I like Ted and I think he has a lot of friends in the Senate," Sessions said. Still, the Alabama senator hasn't endorsed him.

Opening arguments to begin in trial for ex-BP rig supervisor

JANET McCONNAUGHEY, Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Federal prosecutors and lawyers for a Deepwater Horizon rig supervisor are ready to tell jurors what they expect to prove as 65-year-old Robert Kaluza is tried on a misdemeanor pollution charge from the BP oil spill.

A jury was chosen Tuesday for what's probably the last trial from a sweeping Justice Department probe of the rig explosion and blowout. Opening arguments were scheduled Wednesday.

The well blew in April 2010, spewing an estimated 134 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico before it was plugged months later.

Prosecutors say Kaluza and fellow supervisor Donald Vidrine botched a "negative pressure test" and missed clear signs of trouble before the blowout.

Vidrine pleaded guilty to the same charge: violating the Clean Water Act. He's among 31 possible prosecution witnesses.

As deaths rise, so do chances of total Takata air bag recall

TOM KRISHER, AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — As the Takata air bag saga drags on, concerns are growing that tens of millions of U.S. drivers with cars that haven't been recalled could be at risk of death or injury from the potentially defective devices.

Federal safety regulators last month confirmed that a South Carolina man's death in December was caused by a driver's air bag inflator that wasn't under recall. It was the ninth Takata-related fatality in the U.S.

In a Feb. 10 letter to Mark Rosekind, head of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., urged the agency to recall all Takata inflators in U.S. cars. He said the agency's current approach of issuing recalls piecemeal, "appears to be confusing many consumers" who wonder if their cars have an unsafe air bag that hasn't been recalled.

Since 2008, 14 automakers have recalled 24 million vehicles to replace the inflators, which can rupture in a crash, shooting metal shards at the driver and passengers.

Experts say there could be as many as 50 million Takata air bag inflators in cars that have yet to be called back for repairs. For drivers of those vehicles, finding out if their car has a Takata inflator can be tricky. They either have to convince a dealer to take apart the car to look, or get the automaker to tell them. Some, like General Motors and Ford, won't tell. Nissan and Toyota won't say if they will disclose a Takata inflator. Fiat Chrysler, Mazda, Mercedes and BMW say they'll tell if asked.

NHTSA spokesman Gordon Trowbridge says the agency doesn't have the data yet to justify a recall of every Takata inflator. The agency has given Takata until the end of 2018 to solve the problem or issue a

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blanket recall. Takata says it continues to investigate the cause; NHTSA and the auto industry also have investigations under way.

The death of Joel Knight, 52, underscores how perplexing the search for a solution is. On Dec. 22, Knight's 2006 Ford Ranger struck a cow on a rural road near his home in Kershaw, South Carolina. He died after metal fragments from the driver's inflator impaled his neck. According to a law firm representing Knight's family, the crash was moderate and otherwise survivable.

NHTSA says Knight's driver air bag hadn't been recalled because tests on hundreds of inflators like the one used in his Ranger did not show any failures. The passenger air bag had been recalled.

Knight's death fits into one prevailing theory about the cause of the ruptures: his truck was an older model, and spent a long period of time in a region with high humidity.

Takata is nearly alone among inflator makers in using the chemical ammonium nitrate to create a small explosion that inflates the bags in a crash. Tests show that over time, high temperatures and humidity can degrade the chemical, causing it to explode with too much force, rupturing a metal canister that's supposed to contain the explosion. The pieces can hit a car's occupants.

Initially, the recalls targeted older vehicles along the Gulf Coast, and NHTSA has ordered that dealers in those areas receive the bulk of replacement inflators as they're made. But the latest recall from Volkswagen includes cars from 2014, and a recent Honda recall has a 2016 model.

"Recent events and recalls involving relatively new vehicles with these types of inflators raise serious questions as to whether Takata's ammonium nitrate propellant is inherently dangerous," Nelson wrote to Rosekind. "I am concerned that the current approach may be needlessly incremental and fail to adequately protect public safety."

Scott Upham, who runs a Rochester, New York, research firm that tracks air bag sales, estimates there are 50 million unrecalled Takata inflators on U.S. roads today.

Until they're all recalled and fixed "people are going to keep dying," he says.

Takata maintains that most of its inflators are safe, but says it agreed with government demands to stop making those with ammonium nitrate by 2018 — except for inflators with a drying agent.

All of the deaths have been caused by driver's inflators, and NHTSA's Trowbridge says all but a few thousand of those without a chemical added to keep them dry have been recalled. That means most of the unrecalled inflators are on the passenger side, where there have been fewer serious injuries.

Still, the piecemeal approach to recalls has allowed the population of Takata inflators to grow so large that a total recall wouldn't immediately fix the problem because replacements can't be manufactured fast enough.

Takata says it and other suppliers can make up to 1.5 million replacement inflators per month, meaning up to 18 million a year. But some of those must go to other countries, where about 30 million more inflators are being recalled.

In the U.S., it would take about four years to replace inflators now under recall.

So far, automakers have replaced about 5 million inflators. That low rate is due both to the limited number of inflators and to an issue common to most recalls: People don't take their cars in for repairs, even with a problem this serious.

Two other senators want to make sure everyone with a Takata inflator can get a replacement.

Sens. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut and Edward Markey of Massachusetts, in a separate letter this month, asked NHTSA to recall all the inflators and force Takata to publish all makes and models for which it has supplied air bags since 2000. The public also should be allowed to see inflator test results, they said.

"Every consumer deserves to know whether their vehicle could be lethal in a fender-bender," the senators wrote.

Obama: No excuse for GOP not to vote on a court nominee

DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press, KATHLEEN HENNESSEY, Associated Press

RANCHO MIRAGE, Calif. (AP) — President Barack Obama declared Tuesday that Republicans have no constitutional grounds to refuse to vote on a Supreme Court nominee, and he challenged his political foes

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in the Senate to rise above the "venom and rancor" that has paralyzed judicial nominations.

As Obama cast the dispute over filling the seat of the late Justice Antonin Scalia as a test of whether the Senate could function, there were early signs that Republican resistance could be eroding. Senate Judiciary Chairman Charles Grassley suggested he might be open to considering Obama's yet-to-be named nominee, an indication his party may be sensitive to Democrats' escalating charges of unchecked obstructionism.

"I intend to do my job between now and January 20 of 2017," Obama told reporters at a news conference. He said of the nation's senators, "I expect them to do their job as well."

Obama was in California for a meeting of Southeast Asian leaders gathered for two days of diplomacy. But his attention was divided at that conference.

Since Scalia's unexpected death at a Texas ranch on Saturday, White House lawyers and advisers have been scrambling to refine and vet a list of potential replacements, while also devising a strategy to push a candidate through the Republican-led Senate.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said he doesn't think Obama should be putting a candidate forward. The Kentucky senator, as well as several Republicans up for re-election this year, say Obama should leave the choice up to the next president. The November election, they argue, will give voters a chance to weigh in on the direction of the court.

Obama dismissed that notion, insisting he will put forward a replacement and believes the Senate will have "plenty of time" to give the nominee a fair hearing and a vote. Democrats say Obama has every right and a constitutional duty to fill vacancies on the court until he leaves office next January.

Obama conceded the dispute reflects years of escalating partisan hostilities over judicial nominations and said Democrats' hands are not bloodless. Years of bickering have left the public accustomed to a situation where "everything is blocked" — even when there's no ideological or substantive disagreement, he said.

"This would be a good moment for us to rise above it," he said.

The pace of judicial confirmation always slows in a presidential election year, as the party that does not control the White House holds out hope that its candidate will fill vacant judgeships rather than give lifetime tenure to the other party's choices. In the past, lawmakers have sometimes informally agreed to stop holding hearings on lower court nominations during campaign season.

Obama argued Tuesday that "the Supreme Court's different."

"There's no unwritten law that says that it can only be done in off years. That's not in the constitutional text," he said. "I'm amused when I hear people who claim to be strict interpreters of the Constitution suddenly reading into it a whole series of propositions that aren't there. There's more than enough time for the Senate to consider in a thoughtful way the record of a nominee that I present and to make a decision."

McConnell has shown no signs of shifting his opposition, and several lawmakers facing heated elections have backed him up. But the Republican party may still be searching for a strategy.

In an interview with home state reporters, Iowa Republican Grassley said he "would wait until the nominee is made before I would make any decision."

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid told reporters in Las Vegas Tuesday, "I'm very glad we've had a few renegade Republicans break from the pack and say there should be action taken" on a nominee.

The White House has been looking for cracks in the Republicans opposition as it deliberates on a nominee. If Republicans indicate they may hold hearings, Obama would have greater reason to name a "consensus candidate," a moderate nominee who would be at least somewhat difficult for Republicans to reject. If there's virtually no chance of Republicans bending, Obama might go another route — picking a nominee who galvanizes support among the Democrats' liberal base and fires up interest groups in the election year.

Obama on Tuesday would not tip his hand — much.

"I'm going to present somebody who indisputably is qualified for the seat and any fair-minded person, even somebody who disagrees with my politics, would say would serve with honor and integrity on the court," he said.

Asked if that meant he was leaning toward a moderate, Obama said, bluntly, "No."

He would not comment on whether he would consider appointing a candidate during a congressional recess, a last-ditch maneuver likely to further inflame partisanship in Congress.

Obama's dilemma arises, in part, because of the unusual timing. Supreme Court vacancies in presidential years are rare, largely because the justices avoid retiring when prospects for confirming successors are uncertain.

If Senate Republicans hold fast to their vow not to confirm anyone Obama nominates, the Supreme Court will operate with eight justices not just for the rest of this court term, but for most of the next one as well. High court terms begin in October, and the 80 or so cases argued in the course of a term typically are decided by early summer.

The court would be unable to issue rulings on any issue in which the justices split 4-4.

Court officials said Scalia's body will lie in repose Friday in the Supreme Court's Great Hall, after a private ceremony. The funeral mass Saturday will take place at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington.

Scalia's courtroom chair was draped in black on Tuesday.

Trial opens for Colorado woman in case of baby cut from womb

SADIE GURMAN, Associated Press

BOULDER, Colo. (AP) — Dynel Lane went to extreme lengths to show those closest to her she was expecting a baby, sharing ultrasound images with her daughter and keeping photos of herself appearing pregnant on her cell phone.

She even arranged to meet her husband for a pre-natal appointment the same day prosecutors say she cut open the belly of a pregnant stranger and removed the woman's unborn baby girl, passing the child off as her own before admitting the March 18, 2015 attack.

Michelle Wilkins, who was 8 months pregnant, survived, but the unborn baby did not.

Jurors will hear opening statements Wednesday in the gruesome case, which stunned the foothills community of Longmont and reignited a highly charged debate playing out across the country over when a fetus can legally be considered a human being. District Attorney Stan Garnett said he could not charge Lane, 35, with murder because a coroner found no evidence the fetus lived outside the womb.

That roiled anti-abortion groups and prompted Colorado Republicans to introduce legislation that would have allowed prosecutors to file murder charges for killing a fetus, but Democrats rejected the measure. It was the third time such a proposal failed in Colorado, setting it apart from 38 states that have made the killing of a fetus a homicide.

Lane was charged instead with attempted first-degree murder, assault and unlawful termination of a pregnancy, a criminal charge filed under a new law intended to be a compromise between opponents and supporters of abortion rights. The maximum punishment under that provision is 32 years in prison.

Lane pleaded not guilty, but her attorneys have not revealed much about her defense. They said in court documents that they are not presenting a mental health case during the 10-day trial but may call witnesses who can testify about Lane's behavior the day of the attack.

Lane is accused of luring Wilkins, then 26, to a basement with a Craigslist ad for baby clothes. Prosecutors say she then attacked Wilkins, cut her with a broken piece of glass and removed the baby using a kitchen knife and with such precision that authorities initially wondered if she had knowledge of how to perform a Caesarian section.

When Lane's husband came home early from work to meet her for a prenatal appointment, he found the infant in a bathtub, according to police. He drove them both to a hospital, where Lane, holding the still-wrapped baby, told staff she had suffered a miscarriage.

Police said she then admitted the child wasn't hers.

US stealth jets fly over S. Korea amid N. Korea standoff

LEE JIN-MAN, Associated Press

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea (AP) — Four of the most advanced U.S. fighter jets flew over South Korea on Wednesday in a clear show of force against North Korea, a day after South Korea's president warned of the North's collapse amid a festering standoff over its nuclear and missile ambitions.

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The stealthy, high-tech F-22 planes capable of sneaking past radar undetected landed at Osan Air Base near Seoul after the flyover escorted by other U.S. and South Korean fighter jets.

Pyongyang will likely view the arrival of the planes flown from a U.S. base in Japan as a threat as they are a display of U.S. airpower apparently aimed at showing what the United States can do to defend its ally South Korea from potential aggression from North Korea.

"The F-22 'Raptor' is the most capable air superiority fighter in the world, and it represents one of many capabilities available for the defense of this great nation," Lt. Gen. Terrence J. O'Shaughnessy, deputy commander of the U.S. military command in South Korea, said in a statement.

"The U.S. maintains an ironclad commitment" to the defense of South Korea, he said.

The U.S. military would not say how long the F-22s will be deployed in South Korea.

The United States often sends powerful warplanes to South Korea in times of tension with North Korea. Last month it sent a nuclear-capable B-52 bomber to South Korea after North Korea defiantly conducted its fourth nuclear test.

The international standoff over North Korea deepened earlier this month when Pyongyang ignored repeated warnings by regional powers and fired a long-range rocket carrying what it calls an Earth observation satellite. Washington, Seoul and others consider the launch a prohibited test of missile technology.

Foreign analysts say the North's rocket launch and nuclear test put the country further along its quest for a nuclear-armed missile that could reach the U.S. mainland.

South Korea's president on Tuesday warned North Korea faces collapse if it doesn't abandon its nuclear bomb program, an unusually strong broadside that is certain to infuriate Pyongyang.

In a speech at parliament, President Park Geun-hye said South Korea will take unspecified "stronger and more effective" measures to make North Korea realize its nuclear ambitions will result only in accelerating its "regime collapse."

Park made the speech while defending her government's decision to shut down a jointly run factory park in North Korea in response to the North's rocket launch. Pyongyang retaliated by expelling all the South Koreans there, put its military in charge of the area and cut off key communication hotlines between the Koreas.

It is unusual for a top South Korean official to publicly touch on such a government collapse because of worries about how sensitive North Korea is to talk of its authoritarian government losing power. Pyongyang has long accused Washington and Seoul of agitating for its collapse.

After the rocket launch, Seoul announced that talks would begin with Washington on deploying a sophisticated U.S. missile defense system in South Korea and that the allies' annual military drills in the spring will be the biggest ever.

The deployment of the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, is opposed by North Korea, China and Russia. Opponents say the system could help U.S. radar spot missiles in other countries.

Pyongyang has also called regular U.S.-South Korea military exercises a rehearsal for a northward invasion. The allies say their drills are defensive in nature.

Myanmar's insurgents fight on despite advent of democracy

DENIS D. GRAY, Associated Press

MONG ARK, Myanmar (AP) — On a freshly scarred battlefield, a diehard rebel army is facing off at gunfire range against a military that for decades has imposed iron-fisted rule over this Southeast Asian nation. Overhead, vultures circle the mountainous terrain while insurgent soldiers crouch near deep foxholes, prepared, they say, to throw back another possible assault.

Myanmar's civil war — the longest in modern world history — hasn't ended, even with democracy triumphant in recent elections and the winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, pledging to end hostilities between the central government and a host of autonomy-seeking ethnic minorities. Prospects for stopping the bloodshed are balanced on a knife's edge.

Suu Kyi, whose National League for Democracy swept November's elections, has promised that bringing peace will be the top priority when her government assumes power April 1. "We will try for the all-inclusive

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ceasefire agreement," the Noble Prize laureate said recently. "We can do nothing without peace in our country."

But suspicions of the country's military were again aroused as it battled the Shan State Army-North in these remote hills of northeastern Myanmar just as voters were casting their ballots across the country. As the countdown to democracy proceeds, so do clashes with the Kachin Independence Army, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army and others.

The rebel armies represent various ethnic groups that for decades have been fighting for autonomy while resisting "Burmanization," a push by the Burman ethnic majority to propagate its language, religion and culture in ethnic minority regions.

"No, no, no we don't trust them," Shan army Maj. Gen. Hso Hten said of Myanmar's military, vowing they would only lay down their arms if their goals were fully implemented, the foremost of which is a federal system in which ethnic minorities are granted genuine autonomy. That would include use of ethnic languages in schools and greater control over forests, hydro-power and other natural resources.

During the battles in Shan state, which ended with a fragile ceasefire at the end of November, government jet fighters and helicopter gunships strafed and bombed military and civilian targets. They swept into villages, driving more than 10,000 from homes they looted and sometimes destroyed, according to refugee and Shan army accounts.

Both sides accuse one another of sparking yet another round of warfare in an insurgency that erupted in the early 1960s among the Shan, the largest of 135 officially recognized ethnic minorities that make up 40 percent of the population. The first uprising, that of the Karen, was launched 67 years ago, shortly after the country's 1948 independence from Great Britain, followed by numerous others.

The generals ceded power to a military-backed government in 2011, paving the way for the recent elections. But the armed forces remain the country's most powerful institution, stoking fears they will take orders not from the elected government but their commander-in-chief.

Hso Hten, who joined rebel ranks in 1958, expressed some hope in Suu Kyi's future government, given her overwhelming popular support.

"We are compelled to trust her because we don't have any choice," said the 80-year-old general in an interview in the town of Wan Hai from which his rebel army says it commands more than 10,000 troops and 18,000 square miles (46,600 square kilometers) of territory.

Like the other major insurgencies — notably the Kachin and Karen — this Shan group is not a classic guerrilla outfit swooping down from jungle hideouts but more akin to a state within a state. It runs 28 departments, including health and agriculture, schools, a hospital and orphanage, and even issues its own vehicle license plates.

The Shan treasury, which gathers revenue from taxes on residents, can purchase weaponry on the black markets of China, Thailand and Cambodia. Some groups in the Shan State and elsewhere in Myanmar have traditionally financed their insurgencies through drug trafficking.

On the frontline, some 5 miles (8 kilometers) from Wan Hai, soldiers wield everything from Czech pistols to U.S.-made grenade launchers from the Vietnam War. A 24-hour alert is in force, and at night the soldiers observe the campfires of the Burmese military dug into a range of undulating hills.

The fighters sleep burrowed into tiny molehill-like shelters camouflaged against aerial attacks by withered brown leaves. Use of airpower is a recent development in the fighting, and some powerful ordnance appears to have been dropped: one bomb crater measured some 1.5 meters (5 feet) in depth.

The soldiers talk of combat in October and November that killed 70 of their comrades. They file past a shattered house where they killed a Burmese commander with a rocket-propelled grenade. A few meters (yards) away, stretching across a beautiful valley carpeted by terraced rice fields, begins a no-man's land sown with mines.

"We have this small piece of territory and want to live in peace but they still come and attack us," said Lt. Sao Mong. "They are all over these mountains. If they don't intend to attack again why are they still here, why don't they withdraw?"

The Shan State Army-North, one of two main Shan rebel armies, refused to sign a ceasefire agreement

last October between the government and eight insurgent groups. But none of the more than 20 armed insurgencies have given up their weapons. The Shan general said the armed groups in total field some 100,000 soldiers, although analysts believe the figure may be less.

"The government has always said, 'Put down your guns and we will talk politics,' while the insurgents said, 'Let's talk politics and then we will put down our guns, maybe.' That issue is still there," says David Steinberg, an American author of several books on Myanmar.

Suu Kyi's party promise to expunge the legacy of nearly seven decades of hatred, suspicion and blood may prove difficult.

While some rebel groups have committed unlawful acts, including the recruitment of boy soldiers, international agencies, the United Nations and others have over several decades detailed widespread rape, torture and extra-judicial killings of civilians, even crucifixions, by the military. Villagers have been used as human minesweepers. More than half a million people have been driven from their homes just in eastern Myanmar.

The former government acknowledged that some atrocities did occur while its forces were fighting what it called "terrorist organizations." But nobody has been brought to justice, Suu Kyi has announced no plans to do so and the military continues to operate in its former fashion, although the scale of atrocities appears to have lessened.

"We ran away with only the clothes we were wearing. We are afraid to go back," said Pa Phit, a 45-year-old woman who fled with all other 60 residents when government troops entered Ho Nam village while firing their guns. "We have nothing left, not even a small spoon."

Among more than 1,400 refugees encamped on a bare hilltop was 102-year-old Nai Nang, carried over the hills by grandchildren after the troops occupied her village.

With such acts, the insurgents do not lack for fresh recruits to their cause, even if a private in the Shan army earns just \$8 a month.

"We have been facing injustice, bullying and oppression since I was young," said Sao Siha as he walked around a Wan Hai monastery where damage from mortars and air-launched rockets had been freshly repaired.

After years of witnessing killings of innocent people, he finally had enough when in October the military attacked his town of Maing Naung. The abbot of a Buddhist monastery and a monk for 36 of his 45 years, Sao Siha made what he said was a wrenching decision — to exchange his robes for a Shan army uniform.

"I wanted to take action against injustice," he said. "I had no choice."

Scientists: puffins might spend the winter off of New Jersey

PATRICK WHITTLE, Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Researchers say they've found an answer to the longstanding question of where Maine's Atlantic puffins spend the winter: far off New Jersey and New York.

Puffins are the colorful seabirds of the auk family that are graceful in the water and awkward on land and air. The birds spend the spring breeding season and summer in coastal areas before heading out to open ocean waters in the autumn and winter.

The National Audubon Society has described the exact winter locations of Maine's puffins as "long a mystery" to scientists. But the organization said on Tuesday that locators recovered from 19 puffins in recent years show the birds spent a chunk of the winter several states away from Maine.

The area most frequented by puffins in the winter was about 200 miles southeast of Cape Cod, said Stephen Kress, the director of the Audubon Seabird Restoration Program. Kress said the data showed puffins winter over underwater canyons and sea mountains in the Atlantic.

Audubon said its findings represent the first time the winter grounds of Maine-breeding Atlantic puffins have been mapped. It's an important discovery because puffins are a threatened species and data about their movements are needed to inform conservation efforts, Kress said.

"Potential threats of commercial fishing, offshore wind, and climate change have prompted the need for

information on the non-breeding movements and wintering locations of seabirds that nest in the Gulf of Maine," he said.

Atlantic puffins have a large total population estimated at more than 10 million, but the International Union for Conservation of Nature says that population is declining.

The bird is a favorite with birdwatchers and tour groups and has been the subject of vigorous conservation efforts in localized areas, including Maine, where there are about 1,000 pairs of puffins. Puffins nearly disappeared from the Maine coast due to hunting and egg collecting in the 19th century, but have rebounded in the last four decades due to restoration efforts, Kress said.

CJ the German shorthaired pointer wins Westminster dog show

BEN WALKER, AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Now appointed America's top dog — CJ, the German shorthaired pointer.

CJ won best in show at the 140th Westminster Kennel Club on Tuesday night, beating a couple of top favorites at a nearly packed Madison Square Garden.

There was a moment of drama, too.

As judge Dr. Richard Meen from Canada began to announce his choice, German shepherd handler Kent Boyles took a step toward the prized silver bowl. He heard "German" and the "sh" to start the second word, but that was as far as he got.

The 3-year-old CJ bested 2,751 other entries in 199 breeds and varieties to win the nation's most prestigious dog competition.

"It's exactly like what I imagined," co-owner, breeder, and handler Valerie Nunes-Atkinson said.

CJ certainly came from championship stock. His grandmother, Carlee, was one of two previous German shorthaired pointers to win Westminster, taking the title in 2005.

"He's never done anything wrong," Nunes-Atkinson said.

A borzoi called Lucy finished second.

CJ also topped a Skye terrier, German shepherd, bulldog, shih tzu and Samoyed. There is no prize money for the win, but there are valuable breeding rights in the near future and a legacy in dogdom forever.

Charlie the Skye terrier finished second at Westminster last year to Miss P the beagle. Rumor the German shepherd was ranked as the No. 1 show dog in the country last year and had won 101 times.

"Vegas odds were not with us," Nunes-Atkinson said.

As Meen studied each of the final seven dogs, he held up his hands like a picture frame to focus on their expression.

CJ "took me back into the past for what they were bred to do," Meen said. "He floated around the ring beautifully."

The fan favorite earlier in the night was a large Leonberger, who wanted a treat and kept gnawing at his handler's suit pocket all the way around the ring.

This was the 18th overall best in show win for CJ, whose initials stand for his path from the West Coast — quite a California Journey, it was, from the city of Temecula.

Earlier in the day, Nunes-Atkinson explained what made CJ so special.

"He has that extra sparkle," she said. "He's an old soul."

Nunes-Atkinson became the first owner, breeder and handler to win Westminster since 1983.

CJ definitely has his rituals. Before romping around the ring, he usually bows down and sneezes.

After the victory, Nunes-Atkinson kept kissing the dog she calls "the Prince" while looking into his golden, winning eyes.

CJ won best of breed earlier in the day, then took the sporting group.

Meen, a psychiatrist, was asked whether he had ever treated dogs.

"No, they're perfect," he said. "People are a mess."

Also on display:

CATWALK TO DOGS WALK: This is Fashion Week in Manhattan, and the models are strutting less than

a block from the Garden. But don't expect to see any of them venturing from the runway over to the ring. Even though designer Valentino famously brings his pugs everywhere, most of the fashionistas are pretty busy. Instead, watch what the top handlers wear on the green carpet.

As a rule, the pooches are supposed to be the stars, so no glitzy couture or loosey-goosey garments.

Michelle Scott is among the very best; she's twice won best in show at Westminster.

"It has to be comfortable. It has to be professional. And I like bright colors," she said.

As for the models on the catwalk, would they be dressed for success with the dogs?

"Oh, they're all so beautiful," Scott said. "But those high heels and short, little outfits. I don't think that would work."

Most dog owners brought their own lucky clothes. From hats to sweaters to jewelry, there were many breeds and varieties of pooch apparel on parade around the rings.

Erik Schimmelfing of Raleigh, North Carolina, came to town with a T-shirt featuring a picture of a basset hound that covered his torso.

"This was the first article of clothing in my suitcase," he said.

UNO FLAP: Try to imagine Derek Jeter being ejected from Yankee Stadium on Old-Timers' Day. That's sort of what happened Monday night to Uno the beagle, widely acclaimed as the most popular winner in Westminster history.

CNBC wanted to show Uno in the opening segment of its telecast, and quietly brought the dog to the TV tower in the ring. But Uno wasn't registered to be in the building and Westminster officials didn't know he was there until they heard him barking.

Now almost 11, the 2008 winner and his handlers were escorted by security out of the Garden as "any undocumented dog would've been," Westminster President Sean McCarthy said.

A spokesman for NBC Sports said it was "a misunderstanding."

Pope concludes Mexico trip with visits to prison, US border

NICOLE WINFIELD, Associated Press, PETER ORSI, Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Pope Francis wraps up his trip to Mexico on Wednesday with some of his most anticipated events: a visit in a Ciudad Juarez prison just days after a riot in another lockup killed 49 inmates and a stop at the Texas border when immigration is a hot issue for the U.S. presidential campaign.

He also scheduled a meeting with Mexican workers, grassroots groups and employers in an encounter at which he was likely to repeat his mantra on the need for dignified work for all and "land, labor and lodging."

Francis' final events cap a whirlwind five-day visit that focused heavily on the injustices faced by Mexico's poorest, most oppressed and vulnerable to the country's drug-fueled violence. He sought to offer comfort while taking Mexico's political and religious leaders to task for failing to do good for their people.

The pope makes a point of going to prisons on nearly every foreign trip, part of his longtime ministry to inmates and his belief that the lowest in society deserve dignity.

He has denounced abuse of pre-trial detention, called life sentences a "hidden death penalty" and urged a worldwide end to capital punishment. As pope, he continues to check in with Argentine prisoners he ministered to as archbishop of Buenos Aires.

In his penitentiary encounters, Francis often urges inmates not to give up hope, telling them that he, too, has sinned and been forgiven. He criticizes prison overcrowding, the slow pace of justice and lack of rehabilitation.

But he also tells inmates not to let their suffering lead to violence — a message he may repeat given the deadly riot last week at Monterrey's Topo Chico prison, where rival gang factions bloodied each other with hammers, cudgels and makeshift knives. Eight more inmates were injured Tuesday in a brawl at another prison.

Ciudad Juarez's Prison No. 3, where Francis planned to speak to inmates and visiting family members, is relatively calm these days. But it has seen violent clashes before that reflected the chaos outside its walls.

Not long ago Juarez was considered the murder capital of the world, as cartel-backed gang warfare fed

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homicide rates that hit 230 per 100,000 residents in 2010. A rash of killings of women, many of them poor factory workers who just disappeared, attracted international attention.

Times have changed. Last year, the city's homicide rate was about 20 per 100,000 people, roughly on par with Mexico's nationwide average of 14 per 100,000 — and well below what is being seen in current hotspots of drug violence such as the Pacific resort city Acapulco and surrounding Guerrero state.

Many businesses that closed during Juarez's darkest years have reopened. Tourists are again crossing over from the United States to shop and dine. People say they no longer have to leave parties early to avoid being on the streets after dark.

"At least now we can go out. We go to the parks. We can walk around a little more at that time of night," Lorena Diaz said, standing under a huge banner of Francis hanging from her second-floor balcony.

Diaz, who along with about 30 family members secured tickets for Wednesday's Mass, has followed news of Francis' tour and welcomed his calls for Mexicans not to tolerate corruption and violence.

"He's telling us to get out of the trenches, not to close ourselves off," Diaz said.

After the prison stop, Francis set a meeting with workers and advocacy groups at which he was expected to address poverty and income inequality.

Juarez's proximity to the U.S. has brought a job boom at hundreds of foreign-owned assembly plants known as "maquiladoras" that manufacture clothes, electronics and other goods to be shipped north. But many workers say conditions can be poor and pay low. At a recent demonstration, protesters said they were struggling to get by on wages of just \$45 a week.

Francis also planned to visit the border with El Paso, Texas, where he was expected to stop at the fence, give a blessing in honor of migrants on the other side and pray for those who died trying to get there.

His visit closes with a large outdoor Mass, to be simulcast live on giant screens on the other side of the Rio Grande at the Sun Bowl, where U.S. officials planned for at least 30,000 people.

Migration is a theme close to the pontiff's heart. He has demanded that countries welcome those fleeing poverty and oppression and denounced what he calls the "globalization of indifference" toward migrants.

It's a message that hasn't gone down well with some in the U.S., at a time when border apprehensions of families and unaccompanied minors rose significantly in the last three months of 2015.

Republican presidential hopefuls Donald Trump and Sen. Ted Cruz have vowed to expel all the estimated 11 million immigrants in the U.S. illegally and build a wall along the entire border from Texas to California.

On the eve of Francis' trip, Trump criticized the pope's border stop.

"I don't think he understands the danger of the open border that we have with Mexico," Trump said in an interview with Fox. "I think Mexico got him to do it because they want to keep the border just the way it is. They're making a fortune, and we're losing."

Late Tuesday, the Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, said the pope is concerned about the plight of migrants everywhere, not just in the United States.

"The pope always talks about migration problems all around the world, of the duties we have to solve these problems in a humane manner, of hosting those who come from other countries in search of a life of dignity and peace," Lombardi said.

Today in History The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Feb. 17, the 48th day of 2016. There are 318 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 17, 1996, world chess champion Garry Kasparov beat IBM supercomputer "Deep Blue," winning a six-game match in Philadelphia (however, Kasparov lost to Deep Blue in a rematch in 1997).

On this date:

In 1815, the United States and Britain exchanged the instruments of ratification for the Treaty of Ghent,

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ending the War of 1812.

In 1863, the International Red Cross was founded in Geneva.

In 1865, during the Civil War, Columbia, South Carolina, burned as the Confederates evacuated and Union forces moved in.

In 1904, the original two-act version of Giacomo Puccini's opera "Madama Butterfly" received a poor reception at its premiere at La Scala in Milan, Italy.

In 1913, the Armory Show, a landmark modern art exhibit, opened in New York City.

In 1925, the first issue of The New Yorker magazine (bearing the cover date of Feb. 21) was published.

In 1933, Newsweek magazine was first published under the title "News-Week."

In 1944, during World War II, U.S. forces invaded Eniwetok Atoll, encountering little initial resistance from Imperial Japanese troops. (The Americans secured the atoll less than a week later.)

In 1959, the United States launched Vanguard 2, a satellite which carried meteorological equipment.

In 1964, the Supreme Court, in Wesberry v. Sanders, ruled that congressional districts within each state had to be roughly equal in population.

In 1972, President Richard M. Nixon departed the White House with his wife, Pat, on a historic trip to China.

In 1986, Johnson & Johnson announced it would no longer sell over-the-counter medications in capsule form, following the death of a woman who had taken a cyanide-laced Tylenol capsule.

Ten years ago: Ten U.S. service members died when a pair of Marine Corps helicopters crashed off the coast of Africa. A federal jury in New Orleans cleared Merck and Co. in the death of a 53-year-old Florida man who'd taken the painkiller Vioxx. A mudslide in the Philippines killed more than 1,000 people. Tanja Frieden of Switzerland won the Olympic women's snowboardcross, speeding past American Lindsey Jacobellis, who'd fallen on her next-to-last jump before the finish line. William Cowsill, lead singer of the family band The Cowsills, died in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, at age 58.

Five years ago: A group of Democratic Wisconsin lawmakers blocked passage of a sweeping anti-union bill, refusing to show up for a vote and then abruptly leaving the state in an effort to force Republicans to the negotiating table. Iowa high school wrestler Joel Northrup defaulted on his first-round state tournament match rather than face Cassy Herkelman, one of the first girls ever to qualify for the event, saying that wrestling a girl would conflict with his religious beliefs.

One year ago: Vice President Joe Biden opened a White House summit on countering extremism and radicalization, saying the United States needed to ensure that immigrants were fully included in the fabric of American society to prevent violent ideologies from taking root at home.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Hal Holbrook is 91. Singer Bobby Lewis is 83. Actor-comedian Barry Humphries (aka "Dame Edna") is 82. Country singer-songwriter Johnny Bush is 81. Actress Christina Pickles is 81. Football Hall-of-Famer Jim Brown is 80. Actress Brenda Fricker is 71. Actress Rene Russo is 62. Actor Richard Karn is 60. Actor Lou Diamond Phillips is 54. Basketball Hall of Famer Michael Jordan is 53. Actor-comedian Larry, the Cable Guy is 53. TV personality Rene Syler is 53. Movie director Michael Bay is 52. Singer Chante Moore is 49. Rock musician Timothy J. Mahoney (311) is 46. Actor Dominic Purcell is 46. Olympic gold and silver medal skier Tommy Moe is 46. Actress Denise Richards is 45. Rock singer-musician Billie Joe Armstrong (Green Day) is 44. Actor Jerry O'Connell is 42. Country singer Bryan White is 42. Actress Kelly Carlson is 40. Actor Ashton Holmes is 38. Actor Jason Ritter is 36. TV personality Paris Hilton is 35. Actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt is 35. TV host Daphne Oz (TV: "The Chew") is 30. Actor Chord Overstreet is 27. Singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran is 25. Actress Meaghan Martin is 24. Actress Sasha Pieterse is 20.

Thought for Today: "Wounded vanity knows when it is mortally hurt; and limps off the field, piteous, all disguises thrown away. But pride carries its banner to the last; and fast as it is driven from one field unfurls it in another." — Helen Hunt Jackson, American author (1831-1885).