

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 1 of 36

- 1- Hanlon Brothers ad
- 1- Recycling Trailers in Groton
- 1- Davies Bridal Shower
- 1- Today's Information
- 2- Upcoming events on gdilive.com
- 2- Golden LivingCenter Help Wanted Ad
- 3- MathCounts qualifies for state
- 4- Lady Tigers beat Redfield-Doland
- 5 - Kumla dinner planned in Groton
- 5- Kiwanis Potato Bar Feed today
- 6- Rep. Feickert's Column
- 7- School Land Lease Auction
- 7- Heartland offers financing
- 8 - Today in Weather History
- 8- Livestreaming Weddings Ad
- 9- Local Weather Forecast
- 10- National Weather Map
- 10- Local Weather
- 11- Daily Devotional
- 12 - News from the Associated Press

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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Friday, February 19

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

School Lunch: Fish nuggets, tri tater, broccoli and dip, fruit.

Senior Menu: Hot turkey combo, mashed potatoes and gravy, 7 layer salad, peach sauce.

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 (**Cancelled**)

Show Choir Murder Mystery Dinner

Anniv: Ken & Leslie Dinger

Birthdays: Gerald Osterman, Lori Giedt, Michael Wells, Shaun Wanner, Jerry Bjerke

9:00am: Robotics at SF Washington

10:00am: Regional Wrestling at Britton-Hecla

10:00am: Emmanuel Lutheran pastor at Rosewood Court

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

Sunday, February 21

Youth Wrestling Tourney in Groton

Birthdays: Kate Profeta, Leah Swanson, Les Nehls, Natalia Warrington, Scott Smith

9:00am: Emmanuel Lutheran School and Confirmation

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

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



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Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 2 of 36



Follow The Groton
Activities On-Line



gdilive.com

Coming up this week at gdilive.com

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!

MathCounts team takes second, qualifies for state

The 2016 South Dakota Northeast Chapter MathCounts Competition was held at the Crothers Engineering Hall on the campus of South Dakota State University in Brookings on Saturday, February 6. Groton team members, Kaycie Hawkins, Kayla Jensen, Noah Poor, and Isaac Smith, earned the second place trophy and plaque, thereby qualifying to compete in the state competition on Saturday, March 12, in Pierre. Mickelson Middle School of Brookings won the team competition and also advances to the state event.

Isaac Smith and Kayla Jensen also received individual recognition. Isaac placed sixth in the individual/countdown portion of the competition and Kayla placed eighth. Besides the team, Indigo Rogers and Madeline Schuelke also participated in the chapter competition.

The top four highest scoring individuals and the coach of the winning team at the state level will represent South Dakota at the National MathCounts Competition in Washington, D.C., May 7-10, 2016.



From left: Kayla Jensen, Madeline Schuelke, Kaycie Hawkins, Isaac Smith, Noah Poor, Indigo Rogers

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 4 of 36

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Wheeting makes game winning shot in Tigers win over Redfield-Doland

Things to know from last night's girls basketball game at Redfield.

First, Groton held a 4-3 lead in the first quarter, and that was it until three seconds left in the game.

Second, Groton's field goal percentage was challenging - 20 percent in the first quarter, 18 percent in the second and 9 percent in the third while Redfield-Doland was at 17 percent in the first, 40 percent in the second and 42 percent in the third. It was the fourth quarter that turned the tide as Groton made 38 percent of its field goals and Redfield did not make a field goal in the fourth quarter.

Third, it was Carly Wheeting who made the game winning shot with three seconds left to give Groton a 26-25 lead.

Fourth, in the fourth quarter, Groton changed up its defense as Redfield-Doland had six turnovers in the fourth quarter.

It does not get any more exciting than that. Groton trailed, 5-4 after the first quarter, 13-9 at half time and 24-12 at the end of the third quarter. Groton outscored Redfield-Doland, 14-1, in the fourth quarter for the win.

Wheeting led the Tigers with nine points while Audrey Wanner scored all six of her points in the fourth quarter, Harleigh Stange had six points and Katie Koehler added five.

Sarah Rozell led the Pheasants with eight points followed by Rylie Gall and Brenna Taylor with five each, Trista Frost had four and Allison Tschetter added three points.

Redfield-Doland commanded the boards, 33-19. Wheeting had six for Groton while Brenna Taylor had

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 5 of 36

11 and Rozell 10 for Redfield-Doland. Groton had four turnovers compared to 17 for Redfield-Doland. The Pheasants had seven team fouls while allowed Groton to be six of eight from the line. Groton had eight team fouls as Redfield was two of four from the line. Groton had 10 steals with Wanner having five and Wheeting four. Redfield had no steals. The Tigers had four blocked shots with Wanner having two and Koehler and Wheeting each having one.

Groton Area finishes the season with a 14-6 record and will begin region play on Tuesday at Britton-Hecla. Redfield-Doland finishes its regular season with a 12-8 record.

Groton won the junior varsity game, 21-19. Alex Stange led Groton with six points followed by Jenny Doeden with five, Payton Maine and Taylor Holm each had four and Gia Gengerke added two points.

Redfield won the C game, 22-17. Madison Sippel had five points, Portia Kettering and Sam Menzia each had four and Taydyn Glover and Kaycie Hawkins each had two points. Report from Pierre from Rep. Dennis Feickert, District 1

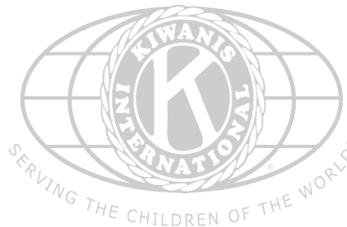
The girls varsity game had 176 views from the game last night on gdilive.com.

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



Kumla Dinner

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

Groton Community Center

Sponsored by Heaven Bound Ministries of Pierpont

Report from Pierre from Rep. Dennis Feickert, District 1

We've just wrapped up the Sixth Week and the 24th Legislative Day of the 91st Legislative Session. There are a total of 38 total legislative days, so that means we have 14 days left to get the work done.

After a week of gamesmanship and delays, today 23 House Republicans defeated HB 1182. This bill was a pragmatic approach to address what experts are calling a looming teacher shortage. Things will only continue to deteriorate in the next 5 years. We won't be able to meet demand for new teachers and jobs will go unfilled. Our children's education will suffer. And in turn, South Dakota will continue to be marginalized economically as we fail to produce a generation of South Dakotans with the skillset needed to survive in a competitive global economy. We had an opportunity to take a bold step forward this Session and instead by obstructing action, the House Republicans have made it harder for South Dakota to succeed.

The education debate on HB 1182 took over two hours on the House floor on Feb. 18. While it passed unanimously (9-0) out of House Appropriations, because it required a 2/3 majority, it failed narrowly on the House floor by a 46-23 vote. It would require 47 votes out of the 70 legislators to reach the 2/3 required. Probably because it was so close, a motion was instantly made to reconsider the motion. We anticipate the vote early next week. There were no Democrats who opposed the bill. I'm still hopeful that a couple of these 23 Republicans will change their mind and get this over to the Senate so the conversations continue. Differences are almost always ironed out in a concurrent committee when there are amendments from both Chambers which have to be sorted out before a final version of a bill emerges.

I was pleased to see my good friend; fellow legislator and farmer, Sen. Jim Peterson of Revillo get some recognition in the Watertown Public Opinion. Thanks to Jim for 14 years of dedicated service to agriculture in the legislature. His waterway buffer bill is an important piece of legislation I was happy to co-sponsor in the House. Land owners will want to follow the progress of SB 136, which would permit certain cropland along lakes, rivers, and streams to be assessed as noncropland. This bill allows land that is seeded to perennial vegetation within 50 feet of these waters to pay a lower tax rate. Buffers provide food and habitat for game species and filter out sediment, pesticides, and herbicides. Many studies show a great improvement for water quality. This sailed through the Senate Ag Committee on a 9-0 vote and received a unanimous 35-0 vote on the Senate floor. I look forward to hearing this bill on the House side in the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on which I serve. It is the kind of lasting legacy to our children and grandchildren when we protect our natural resources in this manner.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to serve you, the residents of District 1. Please feel free to contact me at rep.feickert@state.sd.us or call me at 605-216-3451 with any questions, concerns or comments. If you plan to travel to Pierre during the legislative session, please let me know as I would be honored to meet with everyone from back home in District 1.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 7 of 36

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.



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Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 8 of 36

Today in Weather History

February 19, 2000: Due to the extremely dry and windy conditions, a fire, believed to be started by a discarded cigarette, burned about 40 square miles of grassland between Kennebec and Lower Brule. The fire threatened a ranch but changed directions before anyone had to be evacuated.

February 19, 2008: Arctic air along with blustery northwest winds brought extreme wind chills during the evening and early morning hours to northeast South Dakota. Wind chills ranged from 35 to 50 degrees below zero. The winds diminished in the early morning hours of the 20th allowing air temperatures to fall to record or near record lows across northeast South Dakota. Ten new record lows, ranging from 23 to 30 degrees below zero, were set for February 20th. Several water pipes were broken in Aberdeen and in Roslyn. In Roslyn, 225 people were without water for much of the day on the 20th as the water main broke during the night. Also, there were many vehicles that did not start along with late school starts or closings.

1884: Severe thunderstorms spawned sixty tornadoes in the southeastern U.S., killing more than 420 people and causing three million dollars damage. Georgia and the Carolinas hardest were hit in the tornado outbreak.

1888: Severe thunderstorms over southern Illinois spawned a violent tornado which touched down in Jefferson County and devastated the southeast half of Mount Vernon. The tornado killed 24 people, injured 80 others, and destroyed or damaged 300 homes and 50 businesses. Overturned wood stoves ignited many fires in the wreckage. This currently stands as the 9th deadliest Illinois tornado on record. This event was one of the first disasters to which the American Red Cross responded.



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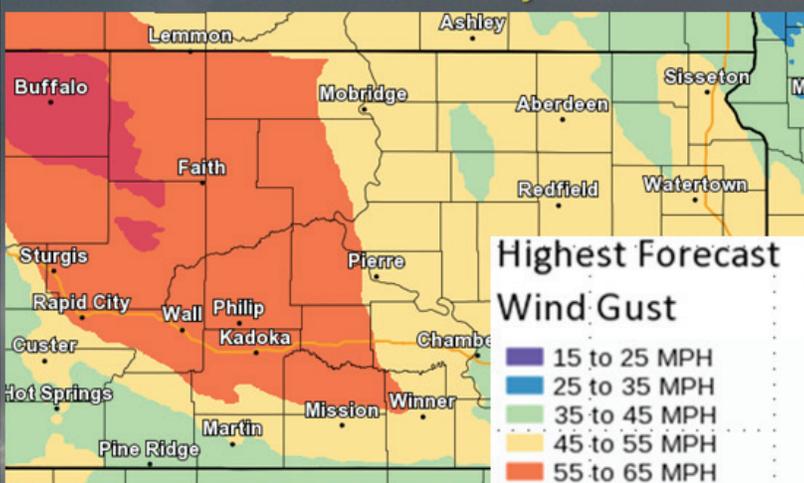
Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 9 of 36

<p>NOW until 6:00pm Fri</p>  <p>80%</p> <p>Wind Advisory</p>	<p>Today</p>  <p>80%</p> <p>Showers and Breezy then Sunny and Windy</p> <p>High: 51 °F</p>	<p>Tonight</p>  <p>Partly Cloudy</p> <p>Low: 28 °F</p>	<p>Saturday</p>  <p>Partly Sunny</p> <p>High: 45 °F</p>	<p>Saturday Night</p>  <p>20% 20%</p> <p>Slight Chance Rain then Slight Chance Rain/Snow</p> <p>Low: 25 °F</p>	<p>Sunday</p>  <p>Mostly Cloudy</p> <p>High: 32 °F</p>	<p>Sunday Night</p>  <p>Mostly Cloudy</p> <p>Low: 21 °F</p>
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Very Windy, But Warm Today

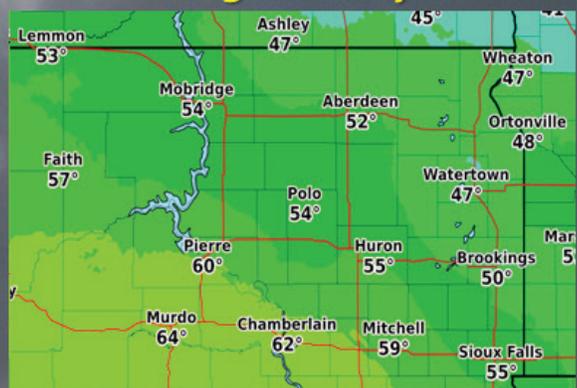
Winds Today



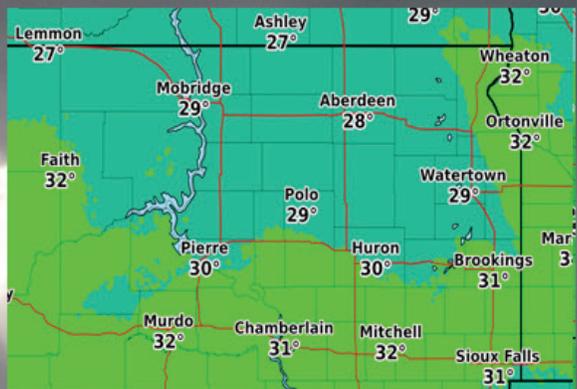
Highest Forecast Wind Gust

- 15 to 25 MPH
- 25 to 35 MPH
- 35 to 45 MPH
- 45 to 55 MPH
- 55 to 65 MPH
- 65 to 75 MPH
- Greater than 75 MPH

Highs Today



Lows Tonight



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD

weather.gov/Aberdeen
f National Weather Service Aberdeen
@NWSAberdeen
Updated: 2/19/2016 4:34 AM Central

Published on: 02/19/2016 at 4:38AM

A strong low pressure system will move through the area today. Showers are likely across most of the area this morning, with snow showers possible in North Dakota and Minnesota. Winds will be strong again this afternoon with local gusts in excess of 60 mph in western and central South Dakota. Winds will diminish later this evening.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 10 of 36

Yesterday's Weather

High: 41.2 at 5:12 PM

Low: 31.2 at Midnight

High Gust: 29 at 6:22 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 62° in 1930

Record Low: -34 in 1929

Average High: 29°F

Average Low: 9°F

Average Precip in Feb.: 0.33

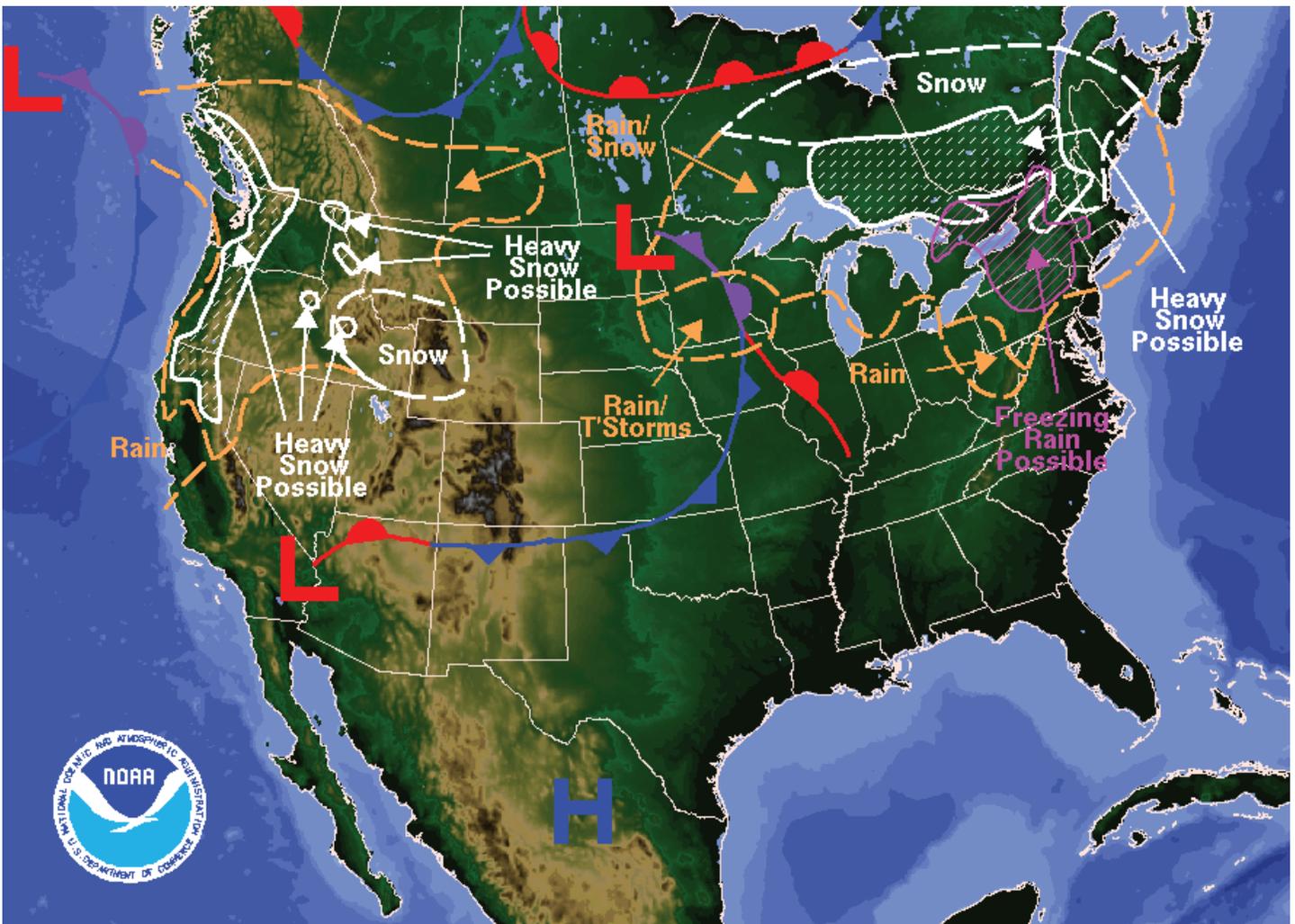
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.60

Average Precip to date: 0.80

Precip Year to Date: 0.60

Sunset Tonight: 6:06 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:28 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Fri, Feb 19, 2016, issued 2:59 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



"I WISH I WERE DEAD!"

Recently a young wife, mother and highly recognized and effective school teacher sat across from me and said, "I wish I were dead. I would like to go to sleep and never awaken again – just die. I have disgraced myself, my husband, my children, my family, my friends, my students. Everyone! Life as I knew it is over and I no longer want to be part of it. I'm going to prison and I am afraid."

What a tragedy. Life as she once knew it is gone forever. In the eyes of many the wrong cannot be righted nor the damage repaired. It is a scar that is permanent and will remain throughout life. But is that a reason to want to die? Not for one who understands the grace of God.

The Bible says, "If we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness!" If we want to maintain our relationship with God we must ask for His cleansing and forgiveness whenever we falter and fail. Whenever we ask for His forgiveness, we receive it as well as His guarantee that He will remove every sin. He is a faithful God who honors His Word and will never forsake us. Never!

When God forgives us of our sins, He also removes the guilt and the penalty which are justly ours. But in His grace, we are justified, forgiven and made complete and His penalty removed.

Prayer: We thank You, Father, for Your salvation, knowing that Your love exceeds our guilt and Your mercy allows forgiveness. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

News from the Associated Press

Only coach in history of Rapid City Rush steps down

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The only head coach in the history of the Rapid City Rush has stepped down to concentrate on his general manager duties.

Joe Ferras resigned as coach of the ECHL team on Wednesday, after leading the Rush since their inaugural season in 2008-09. Associate head coach Mark DeSantis has been named the team's new head coach.

Ferras said the original plan was for DeSantis to take over at the end of the season. But the team has struggled, at one point losing 10 games in a row. Ferras says he decided it was time for a new voice in the locker room.

The Rush are in last place in the West Division of the ECHL's Western Conference.

The team compiled a 272-192-48 record under Ferras.

Youth groups call on governors to reject transgender bills

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A coalition of youth-oriented groups is calling on the nation's governors to reject measures it says are harmful to young transgender Americans.

The group of seven organizations that includes the National Education Association and American Academy of Pediatrics released an open letter to the governors just days after South Dakota lawmakers approved a bill that would prohibit transgender students from using the bathroom of their choice.

Supporters of the bill say it's meant to protect student privacy and not meant to be hurtful. But the coalition condemned such measures, saying they could increase risks of bullying and harassment.

The Human Rights Campaign, which has spoken against the South Dakota legislation, solicited the groups and released the letter.

South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard hasn't indicated whether he will sign the bill.

Man sent to prison for dealing meth on Rosebud Reservation

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Mission man has been sentenced to 10 years in federal prison for distributing methamphetamine on the Rosebud Sioux Indian Reservation.

Authorities say 42-year-old William Whiting in 2014 and 2015 sold meth and also recruited others to sell the drug for him.

U.S. Attorney Randolph Seiler says Whiting pleaded guilty to a drug conspiracy charge. He'll be on supervised release for five years following his prison term.

Democrat set to announce challenge to US Sen. John Thune

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Democrat in South Dakota is set to announce a challenge to Republican U.S. Sen. John Thune, who is up for re-election in November.

The South Dakota Democratic Party says the candidate will be announced Friday at an event in Sioux Falls.

Thune didn't face an opponent in the 2010 campaign for his second term in the Senate.

Democratic state Rep. Paula Hawks has already announced her campaign to unseat Republican U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem.

Noem claimed South Dakota's lone congressional seat in 2010 and is serving her third term.

Mission woman sentenced to more than 7 years on meth charges

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A 38-year-old Mission woman has been sentenced to more than seven years in prison after pleading guilty to conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine in South Dakota.

U.S. Attorney Randolph Seiler says Julie Little Thunder pleaded guilty to the charge in December and

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 13 of 36

was sentenced this week.

Authorities say officers executed a search warrant on Little Thunder's Todd County home in April and found a safe with \$1,640 in cash and 34 grams of methamphetamine. The investigation revealed that beginning in 2013, Little Thunder received meth from outside suppliers and distributed it within the state.

Officials say she distributed more than 500 grams of the drug.

Little Thunder was turned over to the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service.

Fish house removal deadline nears in South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's wildlife officials are reminding anglers that the deadline to get permanent fish houses off state waters is approaching.

The state's Game, Fish and Parks Department says fish houses, shelters and other structures must be removed from the ice by midnight Feb. 29.

Portable fish houses, shelters and other structures can still be used after the deadline if they are removed daily.

Thursday's Scores The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Roncalli 63, Hamlin 53
Andes Central/Dakota Christian 67, Kimball/White Lake 38
Bison 54, Lemmon 48
DeSmet 76, Florence/Henry 46
Dupree 75, Newell 60
Eureka/Bowdle 57, Leola/Frederick 53
Freeman 64, Gayville-Volin 59
Huron 43, Aberdeen Central 42
Miller 77, Northwestern 48
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 58, Iroquois 33
Pine Ridge 77, Todd County 71
Platte-Geddes 60, Wagner 50
Potter County 66, Ipswich 23
Rapid City Stevens 65, Rapid City Central 57
Red Cloud 85, Sturgis Brown 78
Sioux Falls Christian 72, Beresford 51
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 76, Brookings 71
Spearfish 69, Douglas 54
Sully Buttes 57, Faulkton 41
Vermillion 66, Madison 65, OT
Warner 65, Aberdeen Christian 28

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 73, Huron 42
Avon 51, Menno 24
Burke/South Central 67, Gregory 18
Canton 57, Alcester-Hudson 28
Castlewood 55, Estelline 36
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 69, Timber Lake 52
DeSmet 54, Lake Preston 33
Dupree 43, Rapid City Christian 19
Ethan 80, Centerville 31

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 14 of 36

Flandreau 64, Elkton-Lake Benton 27
Freeman 48, McCook Central/Montrose 36
Groton Area 25, Redfield/Doland 24
Hamlin 60, Aberdeen Roncalli 42
Herreid/Selby Area 62, Northwestern 56
Hill City 47, Hot Springs 35
Ipswich 54, Potter County 34
Kimball/White Lake 51, Corsica/Stickney 47
Lemmon 66, McIntosh 44
Leola/Frederick 44, Eureka/Bowdle 29
Madison 49, Dell Rapids 46
Milbank Area 41, Deuel 38
Miller 56, Highmore-Harrold 50
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 53, Parkston 28
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 41, Mitchell Christian 25
Sioux Falls Christian 43, Beresford 25
Sioux Falls Lincoln 59, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 51
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 36, Brookings 33, OT
Sioux Falls Washington 53, Brandon Valley 39
Sioux Valley 61, Garretson 34
Spearfish 55, Douglas 36
Sully Buttes 85, Faulkton 24
Tea Area 50, Parker 49
Tri-Valley 52, Baltic 44
Tripp-Delmont/Armour 46, Scotland 44
Vermillion 66, Madison 65, OT
Viborg-Hurley 78, Canistota 54
Wagner 56, Platte-Geddes 53
Waverly-South Shore 60, Great Plains Lutheran 42
Webster 63, Clark/Willow Lake 45
West Central 65, Lennox 31
Wilmot 50, Rosholt 44

IPFW beats South Dakota State 91-79 to claim Summit top spot

FORT WAYNE, Ind. (AP) — John Konchar had 22 points and 12 rebounds and IPFW moved alone into first place in the Summit League with a 91-79 win over South Dakota State on Thursday night.

Max Landis had 22 points and Michael Calder scored 20 for the Mastodons (21-7, 10-3), who entered the game tied with South Dakota State (20-7, 9-4). DeAngelo Stewart added 12 points.

IPFW pulled away late with an 11-1 run that turned a two-point edge with 3:11 left into an 89-77 lead with 44 seconds to go.

George Marshall led the Jackrabbits with 27 points. He made 4 of 8 from 3-point range and 9 of 15 from the field. Mike Daum added 13 points and Reed Tellinghuisen scored 10.

South Dakota State rallied with a 10-4 run to get within 78-76 on Daum's basket with 3:11 left. The Jackrabbits then missed their next five from the field.

Sales tax hike for teacher pay narrowly fails in the House

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The proposed half-cent sales tax increase that would help fund Gov. Dennis Daugaard's plan to improve South Dakota teacher pay narrowly failed Tuesday in the state House of Rep-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 15 of 36

representatives.

The vote in the chamber was 46-23, just one short of the two-thirds margin required to pass a tax hike. But a lawmaker gave notice he intends to attempt to revive the tax increase for teacher pay, which a state task force studying education funding found is the lowest of the 50 states and District of Columbia.

Education advocates said they're disappointed with the outcome of the vote, but intend to keep pushing lawmakers for their support.

"We cannot let the status quo continue as we watch our teachers leave and our students left without opportunities," said Mary McCorkle, president of the South Dakota Education Association, a professional organization with more than 5,000 members. "We have to act."

Momentum has been building in the state to raise educators' salaries. Spectators packed the House's upper gallery during the debate.

The Republican governor's proposed sales tax increase would raise more than \$100 million in the upcoming budget year, most of which would be put toward helping raise the state's target average teacher salary to \$48,500 per year.

If enacted, it would be the first permanent increase to the state's sales tax rate of 4 cents per dollar in nearly half a century.

About \$62.4 million from the sales tax hike would go toward teacher salaries and about \$40 million would go to property tax relief, according to the governor's office.

But opponents argued that education could be prioritized in existing tax dollars.

Republican Rep. Steve Westra, who opposed the bill, said school districts have hundreds of millions of dollars in the bank and argued that money from a tax hike wouldn't actually reach teachers.

"The problem is not that we underfund education, but we have a broken system," Westra said. "Taxing South Dakota families to perpetuate this system is wrong."

The governor's administration knew the vote was going to be close, said Daugaard's chief of staff, Tony Venhuizen, who anticipated that lawmakers will support the move to reconsider the bill.

"We need one person to change their mind," he said.

House Republican leader Brian Gosch, an opponent of the tax hike, had predicted it was unlikely to succeed and set about finding a tax-free contingency for teacher pay.

Gosch said after the vote that he has contacted Daugaard's office and the Senate to discuss alternative proposals for funding education.

Robin Curtis, a teacher at the Winner School District who came to the Capitol to watch the vote, said she remains optimistic.

"We don't throw our hands up and walk away," Curtis said. "That isn't what we do in a classroom when we have a kid who is having a hard day."

State names interim director for Redfield development center

REDFIELD, S.D. (AP) — The state Department of Human Services has named an interim director for a state development center that has faced criticism by former employees.

Secretary of Human Services Gloria Pearson says Barb Abeln will oversee the South Dakota Developmental Center in Redfield while the state searches for a permanent leader.

Some former employees have accused the Redfield center of having a hostile administration and a dangerous work environment. The facility also is dealing with a staff shortage — more than 40 open positions out of about 340 — that has resulted in required overtime for some employees.

Jan Banghart, the former director, announced her decision to retire immediately in an email to workers last week. She did not elaborate on her reasons.

Educational co-op files \$2M claim against former manager

DIRK LAMMERS, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Platte-based educational cooperative has filed a \$2 million claim against

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 16 of 36

the estate of its late business manager, who was accused of killing his wife and children and setting the family home on fire before taking his own life.

Attorney Scott Swier filed the claim last week on behalf of Mid-Central Educational Cooperative acting business manager Catrina Brown and board chairwoman Pamela Haukaas, saying "there is a reasonable probability" Scott Westerhuis "may have improperly misappropriated funds" from the co-op.

Swier's filing said the amount of possibly stolen money was uncertain and the claim might change after investigations are complete.

Swier didn't return calls from The Associated Press to discuss the filing.

Criminal investigators said Westerhuis killed his wife and four children with a shotgun in September, just hours after the state Department of Education informed Mid-Central that it was losing its most recent \$4.3 million GEAR UP contract because of financial problems and failure to follow proper accounting procedures.

Court files showed several claims suggesting financial difficulty for the family, including more than \$15,000 for an American Express credit card balance, nearly \$4,500 owed on an online payment account and a balance of more than \$1,800 balance on the couple's credit union overdraft account.

The state Department of Criminal Investigation is looking into Westerhuis' personal finances, and Gov. Dennis Daugaard has asked Attorney General Marty Jackley to look beyond Westerhuis for evidence of wrongdoing in the administration of GEAR UP.

A separate inquiry by State Auditor General Martin Guindon is looking deeper at Mid-Central and potentially other organizations that worked with the cooperative. Westerhuis had ties to at least two nonprofit organizations — the American Indian Institute for Innovation and the Oceti Sakowin Education Consortium — which have received at least \$2 million in GEAR UP funding since 2012, according to Internal Revenue Service records.

Both investigations continue.

Mid-Central has made several personnel changes over the past couple of months, including executive director Dan Guericke's planned retirement in June.

The September fire destroyed the Westerhuis' home 3 miles south of Platte, but spared other structures on rural property that resembled a mini sports complex. The lot features a half size football field with two goalposts, a two-story metal building that houses an indoor gym and weight room and a partially completed structure with open walls awaiting roof trusses.

Creditors have four months after the first publication of a notice to file claims against estates, and the window on the Westerhuis estate runs through March 25.

Pat Westerhuis, Scott Westerhuis' mother, said Thursday she did not wish to comment on the case. A message left for the attorney handling the estate, Trudy Morgan, was not immediately returned.

Nicole Westerhuis' estate, which is being represented by her parents, posted its initial notice on Oct. 29 so creditors have until the end of February to make claims. The credit union claim was the only one filed as of Thursday morning, according to court records.

Officials: Dangerous fire conditions in western South Dakota

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The state Department of Agriculture says warm, dry and windy weather in the western half of South Dakota is making for dangerous fire conditions.

Officials with the department's Wildland Fire Division say they expect "very high" fire danger conditions through Friday.

Officials say the primary area to watch on Thursday is from Todd and Mellette counties west through the eastern edge of the Black Hills. Warm, dry and windy weather can combine with dry grass to create fast-moving fires in those areas.

On Friday, the danger will primarily be in northwestern South Dakota where strong northwest winds could carry fire quickly through grasses.

Officials are urging South Dakotans to take care with open fire and equipment in grassy areas through Friday. They're also urging landowners to curtail any open burning.

Report: Hawaii leads nation in getting too little sleep

MIKE STOBBE, AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Tired of hearing that more than a third of U.S. adults don't get enough sleep? Here's something new: a government report about which states get the most sack time.

It says South Dakota has the largest proportion of residents who get at least seven hours of sleep each night.

Hawaii — often thought of as a peaceful vacation spot — has the lowest proportion.

Here's the lowdown:

THE PROBLEM

For adults, the recommended amount of sleep is seven to nine hours each night. Past studies have found that more than one-third of U.S. adults get less. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Thursday released a new round of national survey data that found the same thing.

Some of those people — nearly 10 percent of Americans, by some estimates — suffer chronic insomnia and may seek a physician's help. Inadequate sleep has been tied to the start and worsening of a range of diseases and conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, obesity and depression.

THE STATES

The latest CDC report, based on surveys of more 444,000 adults in 2014, for the first time offers a look at findings in all 50 states. The Great Plains states led the nation in healthy sleep, buoyed by South Dakota, where 72 percent of those surveyed said they averaged at least 7 hours nightly.

The South and Appalachian states got the least sleep as a region. But Hawaii was the worst individual state, where 56 percent of respondents got the recommended amount of sleep. The report also found that while two-thirds of white people nationally got enough sleep, only about half of blacks, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders did.

THE RECOMMENDATION

The report didn't dig into why certain states or racial groups got less sleep than others. Experts believe several factors could be involved. For example, people with steady jobs and normal work hours tend to get more sleep than others. Smoking and health problems also can rob people of sleep, said the CDC's Anne Wheaton, one of the report's authors.

Doctors offer tips for good sleeping that include sticking to a regular bedtime schedule, getting exercise each day and avoiding caffeine and nicotine at night.

Bill to allow guns in Capitol, courthouses moves forward

A state House committee has approved a bill that would allow people to carry concealed weapons in the South Dakota Capitol or county courthouses if they have an enhanced permit

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A state House committee has approved a bill that would allow people to carry concealed weapons in the South Dakota Capitol or county courthouses if they have an enhanced permit.

The House State Affairs committee voted 7-6 to approve the bill. It now goes to the full chamber for consideration.

The recently created enhanced permit to carry requires background checks and firearms training.

Republican Rep. Jim Stalzer says the current restrictions deny citizens the right to defend themselves.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard policy adviser Matt Konenkamp says law enforcement should be allowed to protect spaces such as courthouses.

The Senate Judiciary Committee on Thursday voted down a separate plan that would have removed from state law a prohibition from carrying a concealed weapon in the state Capitol.

Senate committee votes down industrial hemp cultivation bill

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A state Senate committee has defeated a bill that would have allowed the cultivation of industrial hemp in South Dakota.

The Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee voted 5-3 against the bill that previously

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 18 of 36

passed the House.

Republican Rep. Mike Verchio of Hill City is the bill's main House sponsor. He's said the crop could be a significant economic development opportunity and could lead to jobs in South Dakota.

The bill would have allowed people to apply to the state Agriculture Department for a license to grow industrial hemp, a cousin of marijuana. It would have restricted the content of THC for hemp. THC is the intoxicant in marijuana.

Public safety representatives opposed the plan. Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard has also said he's against allowing industrial hemp in the state.

Survey: Slight improvement in bankers' view of rural economy

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A new survey suggests there's been a little improvement in some bankers' views of the rural economy in their 10 Western and Plains states.

A report released Thursday says February's Rural Mainstreet Index rose to 37.0 from 34.8 in January. Survey officials say any score below 50 on any of the survey's indexes suggests that factor will decline.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss oversees the monthly survey, and he says it's the sixth straight month that the index has registered below growth neutral.

The report says 8.7 percent of bank CEOs who responded say their local economy was expanding while 36.9 percent say their local economy was in a recession.

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

Pierre plumber accused of raping teen girl pleads not guilty

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Pierre man accused of raping a teenage girl in a home where he had done plumbing work has pleaded not guilty.

Thirty-year-old David Timmons faces three rape-related counts that could put him in prison for decades if he's convicted.

Judge John Brown on Wednesday also set bond for Timmons at \$20,000 cash or surety. A magistrate judge earlier had refused to set bond, in part because Timmons' parents had refused to take him in while his case proceeds.

Defense attorney Brad Schreiber told Brown that the parents have since changed their minds.

Global stock markets, oil price turn lower

YURI KAGEYAMA, AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Global stock markets turned lower on Friday on lingering concerns about the slump in oil prices and uncertain prospects for the global economy.

KEEPING SCORE: France's CAC 40 was down 1 percent to 4,198.62 and Germany's DAX fell 1.1 percent to 9,366.19. Britain's FTSE 100 shed 0.6 percent to 5,939.06. U.S. shares were set to drop modestly on the open, with Dow and S&P 500 futures both down 0.4 percent.

ROUGH START: Stock markets have slumped since the beginning of the year as the price of oil dived and investors fretted about a slowdown in global growth. After that mauling, many markets rebounded in the past week but the underlying concerns that stock prices are too high relative to waning world growth remain.

THE QUOTE: "The past week saw the rebound in shares and other risk assets continue," said Shane Oliver, chief economist at AMP Capital in Sydney. "Shares have seen a decent rebound from oversold levels which may have further to go. But with global growth worries remaining it's still premature to say we have bottomed."

ASIA'S DAY: Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 lost 1.4 percent to finish at 15,967.17. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 inched down 0.8 percent to 4,952.80. South Korea's Kospi added 0.4 percent to 1,916.24. Hong Kong's

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 19 of 36

Hang Seng fell 0.4 percent to 19,285.50 and the Shanghai Composite in mainland China inched down 0.1 percent to 2,860.02. Some other regional markets, including the Philippines and Indonesia, fell, but shares were slightly higher in Taiwan and Singapore.

ENERGY: Adding to uncertainty was a fall back in oil prices, which had rallied over the last few days. Investors are hoping that a round of international talks will lead to a deal that addresses a glut in oil production, but the U.S. government reported that energy stockpiles are still growing. Benchmark U.S. crude was down 65 cents to \$30.12 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, a benchmark for international oils, was down 47 cents at \$33.81 a barrel.

UK FOCUS: The British pound was slipping as the leaders of Britain and the rest of the 28-country European Union entered a second day of talks on how to reform the country's membership in the bloc. The talks are stalled over a series of issues, including immigration rights, leading some investors to become cautious, as a potential British exit from the bloc would hurt the pound. The currency was down 0.5 percent at \$1.4273.

CURRENCIES: The euro fell to \$1.1113 from \$1.1144 on Thursday. The dollar fell to 112.86 yen from 113.09 yen.

Eyewitness: Helicopter fell from sky into Pearl Harbor

JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER, Associated Press

AUDREY McAVOY, Associated Press

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii (AP) — Tourist Shawn Winrich was taking photos of Pearl Harbor when he saw a helicopter “essentially coming straight at us” at a popular tourist destination that attracts thousands of visitors daily.

He switched to video, recording as the helicopter lost altitude and dipped closer to the water.

“All of a sudden it essentially just fell out of the sky and crash-landed in the water,” the Madison, Wisconsin, man said.

He stopped filming and jumped in to help.

All five people on board made it out, but one passenger — a 16-year-old boy who was trapped underwater and had to be cut free from his seat, according to witnesses — was hospitalized in critical condition.

“We are told bystanders jumped in to help rescue these patients from the water,” said Shayne Enright, spokeswoman for Honolulu Emergency Services Department.

One of them was Chris Gardner, a tour guide with Keawe Adventures who was with a group of tourists at the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center when he heard the crash.

“I took off my shirt and dove in,” he said, describing how he, a Navy sailor, a federal police officer and another man took turns diving to the submerged helicopter and trying to free a passenger with a knife. “He was strapped into his seat in the back of the aircraft.”

U.S. Navy spokeswoman Agnes Tauyan identified the aircraft involved in Thursday's crash as a Bell 206. The names of the five people on board were not immediately released.

The helicopter crashed about 20 feet offshore, right next to the visitor center's lawn, said Winrich's daughter, Justice Winrich. She watched as it “plopped down” into the water.

“I saw it like as it was coming in, and it looked pretty normal. It didn't look like it was shaking or anything,” Winrich said. She thought it was strange that the helicopter was that close to people.

As it got closer to the water, she saw some dark smoke coming out of the back of the helicopter, and it started shaking slightly.

Winrich saw three people get out of the helicopter immediately and start swimming to shore.

“It was crazy,” she said. “You go on vacation and you never think you're going to see something like that.”

Local author Allan Seiden was signing books at the visitor center when someone told him a helicopter crashed. He rushed over to where people were gathered, but by then the helicopter wasn't visible.

“I think it sunk instantly,” he said.

Seiden watched as the helicopter's occupants— including a man in a neck brace— were carried away on stretchers. “People were very calm,” he said. “You could tell everyone was very shocked.”

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 20 of 36

Federal records show the helicopter is registered to Jeffrey Gebhard of Kailua, Hawaii. He couldn't immediately be reached for comment.

The Navy said in a statement that the helicopter reportedly belongs to Genesis Aviation. A website for Genesis Helicopters says it conducts helicopter tours over Oahu and that Gebhard started Genesis in 1999.

A 45-year-old woman and a 50-year-old man were taken to the hospital in stable condition.

Honolulu paramedics treated the 16-year-old passenger and took him to a hospital in critical condition, Enright said.

"It was a team effort and we pray that he's OK," Gardner said of the teen he helped free.

"It's part of the instinct growing up in Hawaii," he said of jumping in to help. His eyes were still burning from the fuel in the water, he said.

Details on the two other people on board, including the pilot, were not immediately available.

Operations at the visitor center, including visits to the nearby USS Arizona Memorial, were suspended, the Navy said. The memorial honors the 1,177 sailors and Marines killed on the ship in the Dec. 7, 1941, attack by Japan.

Partial operations at the visitor center will resume Friday, the National Park Service said. The theater and boat trips to the Arizona Memorial were suspended. The visitor center grounds, museums, snack shop and bookstore will be open.

Federal Aviation Administration investigators were on their way to the crash site. A National Transportation Safety Board investigator was expected to arrive Friday.

It was the second major crash this year involving helicopters on Oahu.

Twelve Hawaii-based Marines were killed when two military helicopters crashed during nighttime training on Jan. 14. Both aircraft were CH-53E Sea Stallion helicopters that were part of Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463.

Official: US warplanes hit multiple IS targets in Libya **ROBERT BURNS, AP National Security Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — American warplanes struck multiple targets in Libya overnight, hitting an Islamic State training camp and a senior extremist leader, U.S. defense officials said Friday.

One official described the strikes as being carried out "against an ISIL training camp" and said the attack near Sabratha, Libya, not far from the Tunisian border, "likely killed ISIL operative Nouredine Chouchane." ISIL is an acronym for the Islamic State group.

The U.S. officials spoke on grounds of anonymity because they weren't authorized to be publicly identified discussing a military operation not yet formally announced.

President Barack Obama earlier this year directed his national security team to bolster counterterrorism efforts in Libya while also pursuing diplomatic possibilities for solving its political crisis and forming a government of national unity. While the Islamic State has emerged in other places, including Afghanistan, Libya is seen as its key focus outside of Syria and Iraq.

The U.S. military has been closely monitoring Islamic State movements in Libya, and small teams of U.S. military personnel have moved in and out of the country over a period of months. British, French and Italian special forces also have been in Libya helping with aerial surveillance, mapping and intelligence gathering in several cities, including Benghazi in the east and Zintan in the west, according to two Libyan military officials who are coordinating with them. The Libyan officials spoke on condition of anonymity recently with The Associated Press on this matter because they were not authorized to speak to the press.

U.S. officials predicted early this month that it would be weeks or longer before U.S. special forces would be sent, citing the need for more consultations with European allies. Additional intelligence would help refine targets for any sort of military strikes, but surveillance drones are in high demand elsewhere, including in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Adding to the concern in Washington and Europe is evidence that the number of Islamic State fighters in Libya is increasing - now believed to be up from about 2,000 to 5,000 - even as the group's numbers in Syria and Iraq are shrinking under more unrelenting U.S. and coalition airstrikes.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 21 of 36

Obama discussed the situation when asked during a news conference Wednesday at the closing of a summit in California where he hosted leaders of several nation members of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) group.

"With respect to Libya," he said, "I have been clear from the outset that we will go after ISIS wherever it appears, the same way that we went after al Qaida wherever they appeared." ISIS is another acronym for Islamic State.

"We will continue to take actions where we've got a clear operation and a clear target in mind," the president said. "And we are working with our other coalition partners to make sure that as we see opportunities to prevent ISIS from digging in, in Libya, we take them. At the same time, we're working diligently with the United Nations to try to get a government in place in Libya. And that's been a problem." "The tragedy of Libya over the last several years is Libya has a relatively small population and a lot of oil wealth and could be really successful," he said. "They are divided by tribal lines and ethnic lines, power plays."

"There is now, I think, a recognition on the part of a broad middle among their political leadership that it makes sense to unify so that there is just some semblance of a state there, but extremes on either side are still making it difficult for that state to cohere," Obama told reporters.

Tunisia, Libya's neighbor which shares nearly 500 kilometers of border, has been worried for weeks about what they understood to be an "imminent" strike by the coalition. Tunisia fears "terrorists"; arms traffickers and a flux of refugees onto its territory, and recently built nearly a 200-kilometer wall of sand and trenches to fortify its border. Nearly a million Libyans crossed the border into Tunisia during the 2011 uprising against Libyan strongman Moammar Khadafi.

Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi had asked that Tunisia be consulted before any decision to strike.

In a recent interview with AP, Prime Minister Habib Essid said the IS group has stretched its tentacles to Sabrata.

Tunisians make up the largest number of IS foreign fighters — an estimated 5,000 in Syria, Iraq and Libya, according to Tunisian officials. Some reportedly joined Libya from Syria, others by crossing the Tunisian border

Cameron, EU leaders still have 'lot to do' to reach deal

RAF CASERT, Associated Press

JILL LAWLESS, Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — British Prime Minister David Cameron forged ahead at tougher-than-expected talks with European partners Friday after meetings through the night failed to make much progress on his demands for a less intrusive European Union.

It's potentially a pivotal moment for the 28-nation bloc, which is proud of its decades of integration among once-enemy nations across Europe. At a tense summit in Brussels, Cameron and other EU leaders staked out firm positions — in part to show voters back home that their interests are being defended.

"We've made some progress, but there's still no deal," Cameron said as he returned for talks just hours after wrapping up meetings at 5:30 a.m. "We're going to get back in there. We're going to do some more work — and I'll do everything I can."

Many Britons questions whether belonging to the bloc is still worth it, so Cameron is pushing for an EU reform deal that he hopes will persuade voters to back continued membership in a British referendum that could come as soon as June.

An EU-wide breakfast meeting that was to address Cameron's concerns was delayed until lunch. A British official speaking on customary condition of anonymity said Friday morning that gaps had narrowed, but "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed."

Another European official said Friday that none of the sticking points had yet been resolved — but no new problems had emerged either. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the consultations were confidential.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 22 of 36

The draft deal offers guarantees to the nine EU countries, including Britain, that do not use the shared euro currency, that they will not be sidelined and makes tweaks aimed at giving national parliaments more power.

Most of the tensions surround a relatively minor change: a move to suspend or restrict benefit payments made to workers from other EU countries.

Immigration is an especially sensitive point for British voters, because Britain has attracted hundreds of thousands of workers from Eastern Europe in the past decade, drawn by the prospect of higher-paying jobs. The EU immigrants can also claim child tax credits and other benefits in Britain, which Cameron's government says is straining his budget.

Cameron has proposed reducing one payment — the child benefit, given to all families with children — to migrants from other EU nations for at least 10 years. Eastern countries want to limit the change to only three or four years, according to one European official involved in the talks.

Cameron has also run into unexpectedly firm resistance from France on financial regulation. French President Francois Hollande insisted Friday that Britain should not be given any "right of veto or blockage" and that all EU countries should have rules limiting speculation and avoiding new financial crises.

The 19 EU countries that share the euro currency worry that protections for Britain and the eight other non-eurozone nations would offer unfair advantage to Britain's financial center, the City of London.

Hollande also warned that too-generous concessions to Britain could prompt other countries to seek special rules, too.

However, EU leaders ultimately want Britain, a major world economy, to stay in the bloc.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte argued Friday for the importance of keeping Britain's free-market voice in the EU.

"(A British exit) would be bad news for the EU — but also for the U.K. It would end up as a mid-sized economy somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean," he said.

Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Roives acknowledged that leaders at the summit are "pursuing our national interests" but said they all want Cameron to get the deal he needs.

Even if Cameron wins a deal, the referendum is expected to be close and hard-fought. Opponents have said his demands of the EU are too weak.

Tycoon Richard Branson argued Friday for Britain to stay in the EU.

"It would be very, very damaging for Great Britain ... and I think it would be the start, most likely, of the breakup of the European Union," he told Sky News.

Britain has stayed out of both the EU's euro currency and its passport-free Schengen travel zone, and many Britons resent what they see as Brussels increasingly meddling in sovereign issues.

Cameron said he would not stop other EU members striving for more unity, but insisted that Britain should have ironclad guarantees it could stay on the sidelines.

China accuses US of militarizing South China Sea

CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China on Friday accused the U.S. of militarizing the South China Sea, just days after it was revealed Beijing had deployed surface-to-air missiles on an island in the hotly disputed area.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei told reporters that patrols by U.S. military aircraft and Navy vessels, along with joint exercises involving regional partners were the true reason why concerns were growing over peace and stability.

"The above actions have escalated tensions in the South China Sea, and that's the real militarization of the South China Sea," Hong said.

U.S. and Taiwanese officials this week confirmed commercial satellite images showing the missiles placed on Woody Island in the disputed Paracel chain.

China has not denied the appearance of the missiles, but says it is entitled to defend its territory and points to the construction of lighthouses, weather stations and other infrastructure undertaken to provide more "public goods and services to the international community."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 23 of 36

The deployment follows China's building of new islands by piling sand atop reefs and then adding air-strips and military installations. The buildup is seen as part of Beijing's efforts to claim virtually the entire disputed sea and its resources.

Vietnam, which along with Taiwan also claims the Paracels, issued a diplomatic note to the Chinese Embassy in Hanoi on Friday to demand a stop to what it called "China's infringement of Vietnam's sovereignty" over the islands.

China's action "have also threatened peace and stability in the region as well as security, safety, and freedom of navigation and aviation," Foreign Ministry spokesman Le Hai Binh told reporters.

The Philippines, which claims waters and features east of Woody island, on Friday said it was "gravely concerned" by reports of the missile deployments.

"Such actions negate China's earlier commitment not to militarize the South China Sea," the Department of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

Although not one of the six governments with claims in the South China Sea, the U.S. says it has a national interest in the region's stability and freedom of navigation and overflight in and above what are some of the world's busiest sea lanes.

Secretary of State John Kerry has suggested that the positioning of missiles and other signs of increasing militarization contradicted a public assurance from Chinese President Xi Jinping when he visited the White House last September.

Hong's comments represent China's attempt to turn that accusation back on Washington, a cause to which it has rallied its entirely state-controlled media outlets.

China's "defensive deployment on Yongxing targets external military threats," the Communist Party newspaper Global Times said in an editorial, using China's name for Woody Island. "The U.S. is bold about imposing pressure on China, and China must make an appropriate response."

China requires approval for foreign firms to publish online

GERRY SHIH, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — A new Chinese regulation announced this week will require foreign companies and foreign-Chinese joint ventures to acquire approval before publishing content online, in the government's latest move to tighten control of the digital realm.

In an apparent countervailing trend born of the need to shore up slowing growth and flagging foreign investment, the government on Friday also announced plans to make it easier for foreigners to live and work in the country under new rules for obtaining permanent residency.

Under the new regulations going into effect March 10, firms with at least part-foreign ownership will be banned from publishing on the mainland text, pictures, maps, games, animation and sound "of informational or thoughtful nature" without approval from the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television.

Chinese law has long required Internet service providers to hold an operating license that can only be obtained in partnership with a Chinese firm, and the new regulations do not represent a wholesale revision of existing rules or practices, experts say.

But the new policies underscore the increasingly restrictive political climate in China, where the leadership has sought to rein in public speech and thought, with an emphatic focus on the country's fast-growing Internet industry.

The explosive rise of new media, ranging from social media messaging services to streaming TV shows, for instance, has prompted Chinese censors to introduce a slate of new regulations so it could police digital and social media as closely as it did traditional publications. The country's top Internet regulator has repeatedly warned that an untamed cyberspace would pose a risk to domestic security and the government should decide who to allow into "its house."

"China is still focused more on maintaining the social stability and national security interests when it comes to making policies on the Internet industry, while caring less about the commercial and individual

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 24 of 36

interests," said Zhang Zhian, the director of the school of communication and design at Sun Yat-sen University.

As part of the new regulations, online publishers must store their content on servers in the mainland, a stipulation that gives the government expanded legal powers regarding data access and control. Beijing has made similar data storage requirements for technology firms as part of new cybersecurity and national security laws passed in the past year.

Paul Gillis, a visiting professor at Peking University's Guanghua School of Management who studies Chinese-foreign joint ventures, said China has introduced regulations in recent months that explicitly give authorities censorship powers under the law that they have long had in practice.

"From a practical standpoint it's not much different," he said. "There was tough regulation of anything online before and they shut down anything they thought disrupts social order. But a lot of what might have been common practices before are being put into legislation so China can argue it's operating under the rule of law."

Meanwhile, the new guidelines issued by China's Cabinet aim to expand the categories of foreigners in China eligible to obtain the Chinese equivalent of a U.S. green card. Procedures will be simplified and restrictions relaxed on foreign students seeking jobs in the country.

China's economy posted its slowest growth in a quarter century last year, expanding 6.9 percent. Officials expect growth this year of between 6.5 and 7 percent, while once-robust interest among foreign investors is falling amid complaints over excessive government interference.

10 Things to Know Today The Associated Press

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

1. WHERE LIFE GOES ON, DESPITE SANCTIONS

Few countries have endured sanctions as deep or longstanding as North Korea. There was dancing in the streets in the wake of the recent missile test, but it wasn't exactly spontaneous.

2. GOP CLASH AHEAD OF SOUTH CAROLINA

The Republican Party's high-stakes tug-of-war over minority voters — in play well before the pope's comments on Donald Trump — could determine much more than South Carolina's primary, but also whether the party nominee wins the White House.

3. HOW WILL SCIENTISTS PROVE WHAT'S BEHIND BIRTH DEFECTS?

Experts suspect an outbreak of the Zika virus is behind a surge in rare deformities in Brazilian babies. The question is: how to prove it?

4. SCALIA'S LAST TRIP TO SUPREME COURT

In a day of ceremony and tribute, the casket carrying Justice Antonin Scalia will lie in repose at the Supreme Court where he spent nearly three decades as one of its most influential members.

5. WHO IS COMING TO APPLE'S AID

Facebook, Twitter and Google have all voiced support for Apple's fight against a court order that Apple says would make iPhones less secure.

6. BRITAIN BRACES FOR MORE EU TALKS

British Prime Minister David Cameron faces tough new talks with European partners after all-night meetings fail to meet his demands for a less intrusive European Union, as tensions flare around the continent's migrant crisis.

7. WHERE LIONS ARE ON THE LOOSE

Kenyan wildlife authorities say six lions have broken out of the Nairobi National Park and were last seen roaming in a residential area.

8. HOW LABOR IS DIVIDING DEMOCRATS

Unions are a pivotal player in Nevada, the next state to vote in the Democratic nominating process. Hillary Clinton has won the vast majority of national endorsements but Bernie Sanders' campaign contends the rank-and-file is with him.

9. WHERE SYRIAN REFUGEES ARE MEETING RESISTANCE

In a Jordanian border district packed with Syrian refugees, resentment is festering, with residents complaining that the influx has pushed down their wages and driven up their cost of living.

10. WHY THERE WASN'T MUCH BOUNCING AROUND THE NBA

As most NBA teams looked ahead to next summer's salary cap impact, there were some deals but no blockbusters, as rumored trade targets like Dwight Howard, Kevin Love and Al Horford all stayed with their current clubs.

Big tech companies are joining Apple in its encryption fight

BRANDON BAILEY, AP Technology Writers

MICHAEL LIEDTKE, AP Technology Writers

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The tech industry is starting to line up with Apple in its fight against the federal government over the encryption it uses to keep iPhones secure.

Earlier this week, a U.S. magistrate ordered Apple to help investigators break into an iPhone used by one of the San Bernardino mass shooters. Apple has until next Tuesday to challenge that ruling, setting the stage for a legal clash that could determine whether tech companies or government authorities get the final say on just how secure devices like smartphones can be.

CEO Tim Cook decried the order on Tuesday, saying it would degrade iPhone security and make users more vulnerable to spies and cyber thieves. Increasingly, other prominent tech companies agree.

"We stand with @tim_cook and Apple (and thank him for his leadership)!" Twitter chief executive Jack Dorsey wrote in a tweet Thursday afternoon.

In a statement late Thursday, Facebook said it condemns terrorism and also appreciates the essential work of law enforcement in keeping people safe. But it said it will "fight aggressively" against requirements for companies to weaken the security of their systems.

"These demands would create a chilling precedent and obstruct companies' efforts to secure their products," the statement said.

Google CEO Sundar Pichai had earlier voiced support for Apple in a series of tweets. "Forcing companies to enable hacking could compromise users' privacy," Pichai wrote on Wednesday, adding that the case "could be a troubling precedent."

Apple's recent iPhones use encryption security that Apple itself can't unlock. The government isn't asking Apple to help break the iPhone's encryption directly, but to disable other security measures that prevent attempts to guess the phone's passcode.

Cook argues that once such a tool is available, "the technique could be used over and over again, on any number of devices." Law enforcement insists that safeguards could be employed to limit use of the workaround to the particular phone at hand. On Tuesday, Cook posted a 1,117-word open letter that contended the FBI's request might have implications "far beyond the legal case at hand."

For months, Cook has engaged in a sharp, public debate with government officials over his company's decision to shield the data of iPhone users with strong encryption — essentially locking up people's photos, text messages and other data so securely that even Apple can't get at it. Law-enforcement officials from FBI Director James Comey on down have complained that terrorists and criminals may use that encryption as a shield.

While tech companies have spoken against broad government surveillance in the past, the Obama administration has recently sought to enlist the tech industry's help in fighting terrorism. Several companies have recently heeded the administration's request for voluntary efforts aimed at countering terrorist postings on social media.

Civil liberties groups warned the fallout from the San Bernardino dispute could extend beyond Apple.

"This is asking a company to build a digital defect, a design flaw, into their products," said Nuala O'Connor of the Center for Democracy and Technology, a Washington-based group that has criticized government surveillance. In a statement, the center warned that other companies could face similar orders in the future.

Others said a government victory could encourage regimes in China and other countries to make similar requests for access to smartphone data. Apple sells millions of iPhones in China, which has become the

company's second-largest market.

"This case is going to affect everyone's privacy and security around the world," said Lee Tien, a staff attorney for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a digital rights group in San Francisco.

The case turns on an 18th-century law that the government has invoked to require private assistance with law enforcement efforts. Apple has also challenged a federal search warrant based on the same law in a Brooklyn drug case. Apple has complied with previous orders invoking that law — the All Writs Act of 1789 — although it has argued the circumstances were different.

Cook may have no choice but to mount a legal challenge, given his very public commitment to protecting customer data. Two fellows at the Brookings Institution — one of them a former lawyer for the National Security Agency — criticized that stance Thursday, writing that Apple's "self-presentation as crusading on behalf of the privacy of its customers is largely self-congratulatory nonsense."

Cook has made privacy protection a part of Apple's marketing strategy, drawing a contrast with companies like Google and Facebook that sell advertising based on customers' online behavior.

Apple "can't be seen now as doing something that would make their products less safe," said Wendy Patrick, who lectures about business ethics at San Diego State University. "I think everyone saw this issue coming down the pike and Apple always knew it was going to push back when the moment came."

In doing so, Apple risks alienating consumers who put a higher value on national security than privacy. A recent survey by the Pew Research Center found 82 percent of U.S. adults deemed government surveillance of suspected terrorists to be acceptable. Apple's stance drew fire Wednesday from GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump and commentators on Fox News.

Only 40 percent of the Pew respondents said it's acceptable for the government to monitor U.S. citizens, however. The survey also found nearly three-fourths of U.S. adults consider it "very important" to be in control over who can retrieve personal information about them.

Oregon lawmakers approve landmark minimum wage increase

KRISTENA HANSEN, Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Oregon lawmakers have approved landmark legislation that propels the state's minimum wage for all workers to the highest rank in the U.S., and does so through an unparalleled tiered system based on geography.

The state House of Representatives on Thursday passed Senate Bill 1532, which now heads to Democratic Gov. Kate Brown, who said in a statement she will sign it into law.

"I started this conversation last fall, bringing stakeholders together to craft a workable proposal; one that gives working families the much-needed wage boost they need, and addresses challenges for businesses and rural economies presented by the two impending ballot measures," Brown said.

The move makes Oregon a trailblazer in the broader debate about minimum wage unfolding nationwide as the federal threshold remains unchanged from Great Recession levels.

Oregon now joins 14 other states that have raised their rates over the past two years. Another dozen or so are considering taking up the issue this year, either through legislative action or ballot initiative, as issues of wage inequality and middle-class incomes have climbed to the forefront of presidential campaigns by Democratic candidates Bernie Sanders and Hilary Clinton.

The bill was crafted as a compromise between what unions, businesses and farmers want and as an attempt to thwart more aggressive proposals that could go before voters in November. Those two proposals call for a statewide minimum of \$13.50 or \$15, and would be phased in over half the time. Labor unions have not yet indicated whether they'll follow through with ballot initiatives.

Oregon follows moves in states such as Massachusetts, California and Vermont that recently boosted statewide minimums above \$10. That stands in stark contrast to more conservative states such as Idaho, which has blocked previous efforts to raise its minimum beyond the federal level, and Arizona, where lawmakers are considering a bill that would block state funding to municipalities that set a local minimum wage.

Oregon's new plan imposes a series of gradual increases over six years. By 2022, the state's current \$9.25

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 27 of 36

an hour minimum - already one of the highest in the nation - would climb to \$14.75 in metro Portland, \$13.50 in smaller cities such as Salem and Eugene, and \$12.50 in rural communities.

Those minimums dethrone Massachusetts - where the statewide rate will climb to \$11 an hour next year - from the top spot, according to the Economic Policy Institute, a D.C.-based think tank that tracks wage laws across the nation.

While there are varying approaches to raising the minimum wage, the three-tiered regional system is uniquely Oregon's.

States have targeted wage hikes for only government employees or certain industries, as seen recently in New York for fast-food workers, while others allow local jurisdictions to set their own rates above the state threshold, prompting recent hikes in cities such as Seattle and Los Angeles.

Oregon, however, has made the unprecedented move to be the first state without a one-size-fits-all statewide minimum.

"Oregon has always been at the forefront of new ideas in the country. We were the first to actually have a minimum wage," said Rep. Paul Holvey, a Democrat from Eugene. "Trust me, we're not solving all the problems, but we are making a substantial dent in it by pushing up from the bottom some wage equality ... from the huge disparity we have in incomes."

The state is deeply divided between west and east by economic, cultural and political differences. The goal of the tiered approach is to balance the needs of the more urban west_where living costs have soared in rapidly growing Portland_and struggling farming communities in the east.

Division over the minimum wage - currently at \$7.25 in federal law - is also often split along party lines and pits low-wage workers against business groups, as has been seen in Oregon this year. Republicans, the minority party in the Oregon Statehouse, have opposed the increase.

The President of Oregon Farm Bureau said Thursday's vote shows Democrats don't value family agriculture.

"This enormous increase will force many family farmers to try to find ways to mechanize or transition away from labor-intensive products Oregon is known for, like apples, pears, milk and berries. Unfortunately, some will give up and sell, while others will simply go out of business," said Barry Bushue, President of Oregon Farm Bureau.

David Cooper, an economic analyst the Economic Policy Institute, said wage increases have never lead to widespread damaging effects, but he also expressed hesitation about Oregon's regional approach.

"I think any time you create these sorts of somewhat arbitrary geographic districts, that's when you can create opportunities for some sort of economic disruption," he said. "I would prefer the whole state got to the same wage level but at a slower pace by region so that everyone is held to the same standard."

Analysis: Pope shines spotlight on GOP minority challenges

STEVE PEOPLES, Associated Press

SPARTANBURG, S.C. (AP) — The Republican Party's tug-of-war over its relationship with black and Hispanic voters was under way long before Pope Francis decided to answer a question about Donald Trump.

On one side, Marco Rubio and others insist the GOP must attract more minorities to win the presidency. On the other, leading rivals Trump and Ted Cruz embrace fiery rhetoric designed to motivate angry white conservatives. Complicating it all is immigration, the issue the party's pragmatic professionals can't square with the passions of their most faithful voters.

Pope Francis on Thursday shined an international spotlight on the intra-party debate when, asked about Trump's call to build a massive wall on the U.S.-Mexican border, he said those who seek to build walls instead of bridges are not Christian.

It's a high-stakes clash that could determine much more than South Carolina's Republican primary election on Saturday, but also whether the GOP nominee succeeds in November's general election.

"I don't think conservatism has ethnic boundaries," Rubio told The Associated Press on Thursday as he campaigned alongside South Carolina's Indian-American Gov. Nikki Haley and African-American Sen. Tim Scott.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 28 of 36

"We just need to take our policies to people that haven't regularly voted for us in the past, communities that would benefit from what we stand for, but perhaps have been told that Republicans don't care about people like them," he said.

Haley highlighted the diversity on stage with Rubio, the son of Cuban immigrants, during an earlier rally in West Columbia: "A new group of conservatives that's taking over America looks like a Benetton commercial," she said. She added, "I hope we're the new faces of the conservative movement."

Yet their day on the trail was overshadowed by Pope Francis' extraordinary reply to a question about Trump and his focus on building a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border to stem illegal immigration. "I say only that this man is not Christian if he has said things like that," Francis said.

While the question concerned Trump, who described Mexican immigrants as rapists and criminals in his announcement speech and later called for a temporary ban on all Muslims entering the United States, the billionaire real estate mogul isn't alone in his calls to build a border wall.

Cruz supports the idea, too, and Rubio has repeatedly said that no progress can be made on immigration until Washington can prove to Americans that illegal immigration is under control. "They want to see the wall built," Rubio said of voters at the last GOP debate.

That border-security-first approach is at odds with the recommendations of the Republican National Committee, which determined after an exhaustive post-2012 study the GOP must adopt "comprehensive immigration reform" to help expand its appeal beyond older, white men in order to again win the White House.

It may not matter in South Carolina's primary, a contest that will be dominated by white voters. In 2012, the state's Republican primary electorate was 98 percent white.

It's a different story for the November general election, when minority voters are expected to make up more than 30 percent of the eligible voting-age population — and more than 50 percent of the voter pool by 2052.

A new Associated Press-GfK poll found that Rubio and Cruz are slightly more popular than Trump among Hispanics, although none of them is well-liked. All of them have especially low ratings among blacks.

Fifteen percent of blacks and 31 percent of Hispanics have a favorable view of Rubio, the new poll found. Cruz earns positive marks from 11 percent of black voters and 29 percent of Hispanics, while Trump finishes at the bottom with favorable ratings from just 8 percent of blacks and 16 percent of Hispanics.

Trump isn't ignoring minority voters. He's campaigning in South Carolina this week alongside Pastor Mark Burns, a black televangelist who told AP that many people have the mistaken impression that Trump is "a racist bigot."

"That's not the case at all," he said.

"We've changed thousands of African-American's mindsets," Burns said.

Cruz, whose father is also a Cuban immigrant, is banking on winning the White House by energizing evangelical and working-class white voters. To help excite them, Cruz has brought along allies to South Carolina this week that include Iowa Rep. Steve King, who has compared immigrants living in the country illegally to drug mules and livestock.

Cruz was to spend Friday, the day before the South Carolina GOP primary, flying around the state with "Duck Dynasty" star Phil Robertson, who has said that African-Americans were happy under Jim Crow laws.

Republican National Committee member Henry Barbour, who helped author the RNC's post-2012 study, praised the minority outreach efforts of candidates like Rubio and former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.

"But it's troubling to me for the future of our party that we have candidates like Donald Trump and Ted Cruz who think that it's still 1972," Barbour said. "Not only is it an electoral loser, it's bad for the country."

Q&A: As Zika rages in the Americas, should Asia be worried?

MARGIE MASON, AP Medical Writer

Zika virus continues to rage in the Americas, and the World Health Organization has declared it a global health emergency. Taiwan has recently issued a travel advisory for Thailand, warning expectant mothers

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 29 of 36

or women trying to get pregnant to postpone their trips there. But how big of a concern is Zika virus for Asia? Here's what you need to know:

Q: HAS ZIKA VIRUS BEEN A PROBLEM IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION IN THE PAST?

A: The disease was first identified in 1947 in a monkey in the Zika forest of Uganda. The virus has been found in Asia as far back as the 1960s. It has appeared in Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines and Pakistan, but no widespread cases have been reported and symptoms have typically been mild and similar to dengue and chikungunya, which may have helped mask its presence. Up until the first outbreak in 2007, only 14 cases were reported globally. The outbreak occurred on the Pacific island of Yap in Micronesia, where an estimated three-quarters of the population had been infected. No hospitalizations or lasting health issues were reported. In 2013 and 2014, outbreaks again hit the Pacific, including Easter Island, the Cook Islands and New Caledonia. In French Polynesia, an increase in a neurological disorder called Guillain-Barre syndrome coincided with the outbreak. In 2015, the virus was reported in Vanuatu, Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Samoa.

Q: ARE THERE ANY CASES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC NOW? ARE PRECAUTIONS BEING TAKEN?

A: Thailand has reported one case, and active transmission is occurring on the Pacific islands of American Samoa and Samoa. Tonga has declared a Zika epidemic after five cases were confirmed and more than 260 suspected infections were identified. Other imported cases have popped up in the region, mostly from tourists returning from Zika-endemic areas. However, many more cases have likely gone undetected or been misdiagnosed as dengue or chikungunya, which are also spread by the same type of mosquito — the *Aedes aegypti* — and have similar symptoms of headache, fever rash and joint pain. An estimated eight out of 10 people infected with Zika experience no symptoms at all. After a Thai migrant worker was diagnosed with the disease in Taiwan, health officials there issued a Feb. 14 travel advisory warning expectant mothers or women trying to get pregnant to put off traveling to Thailand, and for men to wear condoms after returning to avoid potentially spreading the virus via sex. But Dr. Nick White, a tropical disease expert who has researched mosquito-borne diseases for decades at Thailand's Mahidol University, called Taiwan's travel guidance "excessive." He said Thailand is being singled out for having good surveillance and fast case reporting compared to other countries in the region, "but to say that it would be worse to come here than say, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, Indonesia or Malaysia, there's absolutely no evidence of that at all," he said.

Q: WHAT IS MICROCEPHALY AND GUILLAIN-BARRE SYNDROME? HOW ARE THEY LINKED TO ZIKA?

A: Babies with microcephaly are born with small heads, and their brains may not have developed properly. The condition can lead to seizures, learning disabilities, developmental problems, cerebral palsy, vision problems and other issues. Guillain-Barre syndrome is an autoimmune disorder where the body attacks the nervous system. People of all ages can be affected. The condition causes weakness and loss of sensation or tingling in the arms and legs and sometimes elsewhere on the body. Most people recover from it, but it can cause paralysis or death. Scientists are researching the potential link between microcephaly, Guillain-Barre and Zika virus to try to understand it better.

"We don't know enough about it," White said, adding it's unclear whether the exact same virus circulating in the Americas is also prevalent in Asia. "No one has identified rampant microcephaly anywhere else, so I think we need to know a lot more about it before panicking."

Q: WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT ZIKA INFECTION?

A: Experts say the same precautions to prevent dengue, chikungunya and other mosquito-borne diseases should be taken. Eliminate mosquito breeding grounds by not allowing water to collect around the home in roof gutters, flower pots or other containers. Use insect repellent and wear long-sleeve shirts, pants and socks, especially during key *Aedes* mosquito feeding times in the morning, late afternoon or evening. Some health agencies, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, have issued guidance

for pregnant women to avoid traveling to areas experiencing Zika outbreaks and for men returning from affected countries to wear condoms or abstain from sex with pregnant women. Sexual transmission of the Zika virus has occurred in rare cases. There is currently no vaccine or specific treatment for Zika virus.

Kenya: Lions wander out of park into residential area

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Kenyan wildlife authorities say six lions have broken out of the Nairobi National Park and were last seen roaming in a residential area.

Kenya Wildlife Service spokesman Paul Udoto said Friday the lions were first spotted at 4 a.m. near a hospital in the suburb of Langata, and later near Kibera, Kenya's largest slum.

Udoto said wildlife rangers do not know how the lions got out of the park which is surrounded by an electric fence.

He says a team of wildlife rangers tracking the lions aims to capture them and return them to the park. Nairobi National Park is home to many species of wildlife including endangered black rhinos, lions, leopards, cheetahs, hyenas, buffaloes, giraffes and diverse birdlife.

Nairobi's skyscrapers can be seen from the park.

Selfies taken with stolen Kindle show up in cloud

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Los Angeles police say a photo they circulated of two people taken with a stolen Kindle has led to its return.

Police released the photo Thursday that had uploaded automatically to the owner's cloud account. It showed a photo of a man and a woman who apparently visited church on Ash Wednesday because she had a smudge of ash on her forehead.

Police say a few hours later the 26-year-old man in the picture returned the Kindle, and it has been returned to the owner. The woman in the photo was the man's mother, who police say had nothing to do with the theft.

Police Capt. Paul Vernon says there was family pressure on the man to return the tablet because his mother was in the picture.

Police say they'll seek a misdemeanor charge for the man.

Analysis: In a resilient North Korea, can sanctions work?

ERIC TALMADGE, Associated Press

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP) — As the U.S. Congress passed a new set of sanctions on North Korea this week, South Korea shut down the last symbol of inter-Korean economic cooperation and the United Nations Security Council discussed its own measures to punish the North for what it claimed was its first H-bomb test and subsequent rocket launch, people in Pyongyang were literally dancing in the streets.

Few countries have endured sanctions as deep and longstanding as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. But somehow life goes on.

"Sanctions and pressure will never work on the DPRK, which has been exposed to all kinds of sanctions and blockade for decades," its state-run Korean Central News Agency wrote in an editorial last week. "Despite the enemies' ever-increasing threats and sanctions, the foundation of the Juche self-supporting economy of the DPRK has been further consolidated and its nuclear deterrence for defending the sovereignty has also been bolstered on a daily basis." Juche is the North's policy of self-reliance.

Despite the bluster, previous sanctions against the North over its nuclear program have taken a toll.

Power outages, partly due to the impact of sanctions and partly because of the way the North allocates its scarce resources, are taken for granted. Hospitals, schools and homes are often almost as cold inside as the winter is outside.

To most international investors, banks and even aid organizations, North Korea is like kryptonite. It's illegal in many cases for them to get involved, and even if they're willing to accept the risks of dealing with

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 31 of 36

an unpredictable autocracy, their images could be damaged by being associated with the North.

And yet, North Koreans seem almost blasé about sanctions, even as more appear to be headed their way. That may be because at least some of them still manage to get what they want.

Sanctions intended to deprive North Korea of luxury goods, for example, have been around for years. Even so, for anyone with the money — and there's good reason to believe their numbers are growing — it's easy to find a bottle of \$600 Remy Martin cognac in Pyongyang, to buy an ornately wrapped gift bag filled with the best brand-name cosmetics from Japan, or to stock up on Pampers diapers and Heinz ketchup.

It's not uncommon to see a young couple in a café in Pyongyang who would not look out of fashion in Seoul. Children dressed in brightly colored knitted hats and jackets are evidence that many parents have at least enough wherewithal to fulfill their desire to dote.

While far less upscale, the shelves at the handful of department stores in Pyongyang are well-stocked these days, though the selection of goods available at any given moment can vary widely. Many have grocery floors with fruit and vegetable corners, baked goods and fresh meat. Street stalls selling everything from apples to shrimp chips and cookies from Vietnam are commonplace.

Life is tougher in the countryside, and even in the capital the gap between the haves and the have-nots is hard to ignore. Just a few blocks from those upscale shops with the cognac and the Miss Dior perfume, throngs of city residents stand in long lines to catch the cross-town trolleys or take advantage of the holiday discounts on fish and other foods. Public baths are popular because, when they are open, they are a sure-fire place to find hot water.

And while there has been dancing in the streets, it wasn't exactly spontaneous.

It was part of the mass mobilizations for one of the country's biggest annual events, the birthday of leader Kim Jong Un's late father, Kim Jong Il. The Day of the Shining Star, it is called, and it's been virtually the only thing that the state-run media has been broadcasting for days.

How does North Korea keep running even as much of the world tries to punish it?

Jonathan Pollack, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Brookings Institution think tank, stressed in a recent op-ed that North Korea retains access to the international economy through its links to China, which has allowed it to get the funds it needs to develop its nuclear, missile and space programs and to sustain the "core elites that underpin the Kim family's claims to absolute power."

He added that while the Beijing connection is not enough to transform North Korea's economy, "it helps Pyongyang to survive and enables its ruling elites to prosper."

"China thus holds the key to any appreciable change in North Korean behavior," he said. "Unless and until it is prepared to cooperate in exacting costs on Pyongyang, North Korea will see no reason to alter its strategy. As long as China rejects more onerous sanctions, the prospect for meaningful diplomatic progress also plummets to near zero."

China is angry over North Korea's nuclear and rocket tests but remains reluctant to severely punish the North. Still, it's not just Chinese economic support that is keeping the country afloat. It's increasingly apparent that North Korea is changing, and much of the energy has been from the bottom up, despite the country's efforts to control from the top down.

Technically at war with Washington for more than 60 years and living in a constant state of what is essentially martial law, North Koreans continue to have little to no freedom of expression, thought or assembly in any remotely political way. That hasn't changed much over the years and isn't likely to go away easily — at least not as long as its current regime remains in power and the United States and its allies continue to squeeze it in hopes it will eventually collapse.

Yet at the same time, there has been an upsurge in entrepreneurial activity and quasi-market-style capitalism that has spawned a growing number of citizens, particularly in Pyongyang, who are able to afford to buy more goods and services. These are people who were forced to learn to fend for themselves during the famine years of the 1990s, and learned from the experience.

That has thoroughly, though not officially, transformed the country's real economy and fueled a demand-and-supply cycle that is being met by business-minded individuals operating either with the government

turning a blind eye or providing some sort of support, often in return for a cut of the profits.

For the North's leaders, this is a real conundrum — perhaps a bigger one than any outside pressure might create.

While the rise of a middle class and an ersatz free market economy would pose a threat to North Korea's status quo, its leaders know they must get out in front of their economic problems. They need to maintain control and to retain credibility among a populace increasingly aware of the gap between their living conditions and those not only in capitalist rival South Korea, but also in post-economic reform China.

And it appears they are genuinely considering at least some kind of economic reform.

Kim Jong Un has decided to convene a major party congress in May, the first of its kind in decades, and some analysts believe that could be an opportunity for the North to announce significant new economic policies.

If it does, that might be real cause for dancing in the streets.

Calif. board rejects measure specifying condom use in porn

JOHN ROGERS, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) California officials in charge of workplace safety voted down a proposal Thursday that would have specifically called for putting condoms on porn actors, heeding the call of scores of industry officials who said adding that and other restrictions would force them to make films nobody would watch.

The state Division of Occupational Safety and Health's Standards Board voted the measure down when only three members supported it, Cal/Osha spokeswoman Julia Bernstein said. Four yes votes from the seven-member board were required for passage. The vote was 3-2 in favor, with one member absent and one board position currently open.

The board will now begin considering a new worker-safety measure for the porn industry, Bernstein said.

Board members appeared influenced by the dozens of porn industry representatives who filed to the dais during a public hearing in Oakland, California, to argue forcefully but politely that adopting the condom measure would either destroy their multibillion-industry or force it underground. Doing the latter, they said, could make it more dangerous to performers by eliminating safeguards such as the industry's requirement that actors be tested every 14 days for sexually transmitted diseases.

"I know you guys work really hard and have our best interests at stake, but we need you to work with us to find a solution," said porn actress SiouxsieQ, who also reports on the industry for various publications. "When you criminalize sex work in any way, you make it more dangerous."

Mike Stabile, a spokesman for the industry trade group the Free Speech Coalition, said after the vote that pornographers hope they can work closely in the future in crafting safety requirements that the industry can accept. He didn't say what those might be.

The AIDS Healthcare Foundation has lobbied Cal/OSHA for years to adopt workplace safety standards specifically for the porn industry that are similar to what it has for other businesses.

Although disappointed by Thursday's vote, foundation spokesman Ged Kenslea said his organization was impressed that porn representatives said they recognize a need for some sort of regulation. He added his group would be interested in working with them to achieve that goal.

Under the 21-page proposal Cal/OSHA rejected, so-called engineering controls "such as condoms" must be used by actors engaging in sex to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV and other diseases. Movie producers would also be required to pay for medical visits, treatments and other health-care costs for their performers.

The problem, several speakers said, is that a large segment of their audience loses interest in a film when they see actors with condoms.

Others said that if the rules were put into effect, Cal/OSHA inspectors could also eventually begin ordering actors to use safety goggles and dental dams, adding no one would want to see a film with that equipment.

Although the new provisions rejected made no mention of goggles or dental dams, they would have

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 33 of 36

required sex workers, like those in the medical industry, ensure that their eyes are protected from being infected by blood-borne pathogens.

Industry officials worried that without goggles that could have meant the end to any explicit oral sex scenes.

The AIDS Healthcare Foundation has argued for years that the condom requirement was long overdue and that while it might not prevent transmission of all sexually transmitted diseases it would be far more effective than the industry's 14-day STD testing requirement.

One of those in favor of it, former actor Derrick Burts, has said he became infected with HIV while making porn films despite the testing protocol.

Condoms are required for films made in Los Angeles County, under an AIDS Healthcare Foundation-sponsored ordinance that voters adopted in 2012, and foundation officials maintain that under existing Cal/OSHA workplace safety laws it is clearly implied they are also required. The measure that was rejected would have specifically stated that requirement with the word condoms.

Meantime, the group has placed a similar measure on the statewide ballot for November.

"This will only energize us in preparing for that November ballot," Kenslea said of Thursday's outcome.

Today in History The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, Feb. 19, the 50th day of 2016. There are 316 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 19, 1986, the U.S. Senate approved, 83-11, the Genocide Convention, an international treaty outlawing "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group," nearly 37 years after the pact had first been submitted for ratification.

On this date:

In 1881, Kansas prohibited the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages.

In 1915, during World War I, British and French warships launched their initial attack on Ottoman forces in the Dardanelles, a strait in northwestern Turkey. (The Gallipoli Campaign that followed proved disastrous for the Allies.)

In 1934, a blizzard began inundating the northeastern United States, with the heaviest snowfall occurring in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, clearing the way for the U.S. military to relocate and intern people of Japanese ancestry (including U.S.-born citizens) during World War II.

In 1945, Operation Detachment began during World War II as some 30,000 U.S. Marines began landing on Iwo Jima, where they commenced a successful month-long battle to seize control of the island from Japanese forces.

In 1959, an agreement was signed by Britain, Turkey and Greece granting Cyprus its independence.

In 1963, "The Feminine Mystique" by Betty Friedan was first published by W.W. Norton & Co.

In 1976, calling the issuing of Executive Order 9066 "a sad day in American history," President Gerald R. Ford issued a proclamation confirming that the order had been terminated with the formal cessation of hostilities of World War II.

In 1984, the Winter Olympics closed in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia.

In 1997, Deng Xiaoping, the last of China's major Communist revolutionaries, died at age 92.

In 2001, President George W. Bush opened a museum dedicated to the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. Movie producer-director Stanley Kramer died in Woodland Hills, California, at age 87.

In 2008, an ailing Fidel Castro resigned the Cuban presidency after nearly a half-century in power; his brother Raul was later named to succeed him.

Ten years ago: A gas explosion in northern Mexico killed 65 miners. Israel halted the transfer of hundreds of millions of dollars in tax money to the Palestinians after Hamas took control of the Palestinian

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016 ♦ Vol. 22 - No. 205 ♦ 34 of 36

parliament. Jimmie Johnson won the Daytona 500. The East rallied from 21 points down for a 122-120 victory over the West in the NBA All-Star Game.

Five years ago: Security forces in Libya and Yemen fired on pro-democracy demonstrators as the two hard-line regimes struck back against the wave of protests that had already toppled autocrats in Egypt and Tunisia. The world's dominant economies, meeting in Paris, struck a watered-down deal on how to smooth out trade and currency imbalances blamed for a global financial crisis.

One year ago: President Barack Obama urged delegates from 63 countries at a summit on violent extremism to "confront the warped ideology" espoused by terror groups, particularly using Islam to justify violence.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Smokey Robinson is 76. Actress Carlin Glynn is 76. Former Sony Corp. Chairman Howard Stringer is 74. Singer Lou Christie is 73. Actor Michael Nader is 71. Rock musician Tony Iommi (Black Sabbath, Heaven and Hell) is 68. Actor Stephen Nichols is 65. Author Amy Tan is 64. Actor Jeff Daniels is 61. Rock singer-musician Dave Wakeling is 60. Talk show host Lorianne Crook is 59. Actor Ray Winstone is 59. Actor Leslie David Baker (TV: "The Office") is 58. NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell is 57. Britain's Prince Andrew is 56. Tennis Hall-of-Famer Hana Mandlikova is 54. Singer Seal is 53. Actress Jessica Tuck is 53. Country musician Ralph McCauley (Wild Horses) is 52. Rock musician Jon Fishman (Phish) is 51. Actress Justine Bateman is 50. Actor Benicio Del Toro is 49. Actress Bellamy Young is 46. Rock musician Daniel Adair is 41. Pop singer-actress Haylie Duff is 31. Christian rock musician Seth Morrison (Skillet) is 28. Actress Victoria Justice is 23.

Thought for Today: "Passion and prejudice govern the world; only under the name of reason." — John Wesley, English theologian (1703-1791).

