

Groton Daily Independent

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Saturday, February 27

Debate at Brookings
State Wrestling in Rapid City
Birthdays: Alice Severson, Eddy Nehls
4:30pm: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church
Mass

Sunday, February 28

Birthdays: Meagan Stearns, Shirlee Briggs
9:00am: Emmanuel Lutheran School and Confirmation
9:00am: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church
Mass
9:00am: St. John's Lutheran Worship
9:30am: Emmanuel Lutheran Fellowship
10:00am: St. John's Lutheran School
10:15am: Emmanuel Lutheran Worship and Baptismal Milestones for 1st and 4th grades
11:00am: United Methodist Church Worship
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.: Kumla Dinner at the Groton Community Center

2016 Groton Area Elementary Preschool Developmental Screening for 4 and 5 year olds February 29 and March 1

Parents of children ages 4 and 5 in the Groton Area School District are asked to contact Heidi Krueger at the Groton Area Elementary School during school hours at 397-2317 to set up a screening time or to confirm their screening time. If your child is already receiving services or enrolled at Groton Elementary School they will not need to be screened.

Please bring a copy of your child's birth certificate and immunization record.

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

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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Follow The Groton
Activities On-Line



gdilive.com

Coming up next week at gdilive.com

Boys Regional Game

6:15 p.m. Monday, Feb. 29

Groton Area vs. Webster Area (not finalized yet)

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

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Region 1A Girls Basketball Tournament

Aberdeen Roncalli 45, Milbank Area 27
 Britton-Hecla 39, Sisseton 23
 Groton Area 54, Tiospa Zina Tribal 37

Webster Area 54, Britton-Hecla 35
 Aberdeen Roncalli 54, Groton Area 45

#1 Webster Area

Score:

Date: February 25

Time: 6:00

Site: Britton Hecla Arena

Britton-Hecla

Score:

#4 Sisseton

Score:

Date: February 23rd

Time: 20 minutes following 2nd

Site: Britton Hecla Arena

Score:

#5 Britton-Hecla

#3 Aberdeen Roncalli

Score:

Date: February 23rd

Time: 20 minutes following first

Site: Britton Hecla

Score:

#6 Milbank Area

#2 Groton Area

Score:

Date: February 23rd

Time: 4:30

Site: Britton Hecla Arena

Score:

#7 Tiospa Zina

Webster

Score:

Date: March 1st

Time: 7:00

Site: Britton Hecla Arena

CHAMPION

State Qualifier

Roncalli

Score:

Roncalli

Score:

Date: February 25th

Time: 20 minutes following

Site: Britton Hecla Arena

Groton

Score:

Region 1

Seed
Points

W-L

[Webster Area](#)

45.60

18-2

[Groton Area](#)

42.65

14-6

[Aberdeen Roncalli](#)

40.95

11-9

[Sisseton](#)

40.70

11-9

[Britton-Hecla](#)

39.28

7-11

[Milbank Area](#)

39.00

6-14

[Tiospa Zina](#)

36.89

4-15

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Region 1A Boys Basketball Tournament

#1 Sisseton

Score:

Date: Thursday, March 3rd
Time: 6pm
Site: Groton Area HS

Score:

#4 Britton-Hecla

Score:

Date: Monday, Feb. 29th
Time: 20 Min. after 2nd game
Site: Groton Area HS

Score:

#5 Tiospa Zina

Score:

Date: Tuesday, March 8th
Time: 7pm
Site: Groton Area HS

CHAMPION

State Qualifier

#3 Groton Area

Score:

Date: Monday, Feb. 29th
Time: 20 Min. after 1st game
Site: Groton Area HS

Score:

Score:

#6 Webster Area

Date: Thursday, March 3rd
Time: 20 Min. after 1st game
Site: Groton Area HS

Score:

#2 Aberdeen Roncalli

Score:

Date: Monday, Feb. 29th
Time: 4:30pm
Site: Groton Area HS

Score:

Score:

#7 Milbank Area

Region 1	Seed Points	W-L
Sisseton	43.30	15-5
Aberdeen Roncalli	42.80	12-8
Groton Area	41.40	12-8
Britton-Hecla	40.60	10-10
Tiospa Zina	39.75	9-11
Webster Area	38.90	8-12
Milbank Area	38.30	5-15

Follow the Tigers on

gdilive.com

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There will be a school board election!

A school board election will be held on Tuesday, April 12, 2016 to fill three open seats for 3-year terms. The four candidates vying for the open positions are listed as they will appear on the ballot:

Merle Harder
Corey Mitchell
Clint Fjelstad
Deborah Gengerke

Elected candidates will be sworn in as new or re-elected members at the Annual Meeting of the Groton Area School Board to be held on July 11, 2016.



Kumla \$10 Dinner

Sunday, Feb. 28th

Serving 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Groton Community Center

Sponsored by

Heaven Bound Ministries
of Pierpont



With Assistance from Thrivent Action Program

By placing an order through Schwans.com a portion of the sales will come back in support of our congregation! Your support of Heaven Bound Ministries is greatly appreciated! (When you check out, under Step 2: Coupon Codes and Fundraising, Click on "I would like to contribute to a new fundraiser." Then enter Campaign ID 26276. Campaign starts Monday, Feb. 22.



Women of Influence

Among South Dakota's "Great Faces" are the pictures of countless women who have had a strong influence over the way we live and work. They may be our mothers, sisters or daughters. Perhaps a coworker, employer, or teacher. Maybe they're one of South Dakota's notable female pioneers. Perhaps she's even the "Pioneer Woman" herself, Laura Ingalls Wilder, whose literary works brought life on the prairie to readers (and later viewers) around the globe.

There is also Gladys Pyle from Huron, who in 1938 became the first female senator in U.S. history to serve as a Republican. Even more recently, Rapid City's Becky Hammon has broken significant barriers in sports, becoming the first full-time female coach in NBA history and the first female head coach in the NBA's Summer League, which she led her team to win. Without question, some incredible women have called South Dakota home.

March is Women's History Month, and as important as it is to reflect back on all the women whose shoulders we stand on today, I try to remain focused on building a bigger foundation on which the next generation of female leaders can stand. To do so, we must unlock the potential of hardworking Americans – both women and men – empowering them to build a future that is better and brighter and more prosperous than we could have imagined.

From a policy perspective, it means building paths to upward mobility, giving more families the opportunity to rise from poverty into the Middle Class. As a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, this is an area I am actively working on. There is so much we can do to make our welfare system more accountable to both taxpayers and the families it's intended to help.

We also need to develop a healthy economy that produces more and better-paying jobs. We need to secure our neighborhoods, our borders, and our homeland. We need to create more opportunities – that's the only way America's next chapter will be more successful than the last.

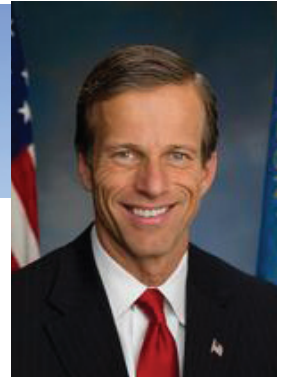
On a personal level, I want to foster opportunities that help more South Dakotans thrive. One way I'm doing that is by holding my first Women of Influence Conference in Sioux Falls on March 31. This will be a networking and education opportunity for women who are interested in changing the minds and hearts of those around them. We have an incredible line-up of special guests who will provide tools, advice, and contacts that I'm hopeful will help women across the state take their next step – whether they are just starting off or backed by years of experience.

Attendees will hear from familiar faces, including Angela Kennecke of KELOLAND, Karla Santi of Blend Interactive, and Melissa Johnson of Oh My Cupcakes! Entertainment Tonight's Mary Hart will be our keynote speaker and what an incredible story she has to tell, building a career that took her from Madison, South Dakota, to the red carpet.

Businesses and organizations from across the state will also be on hand to provide conference-goers with additional resources, tools and information. If you or a woman who has influenced your life is interested in attending the conference, please RSVP at noem.house.gov/WomenOfInfluence

I hope to see you there as we continue to build an even brighter tomorrow for South Dakota.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



New Law a Win for Consumers, Producers, and Innovators

Honey production is an important part of South Dakota's agriculture economy. In fact, we're consistently one of the top honey-producing states in the country. While that's a badge of honor many South Dakotans wear proudly, and rightly so, the United States produces less than half the amount of honey it consumes, which means there's a lucrative market for foreign competitors to export their product to the United States.

Over the years, I've learned a lot about the unfair practice of circumventing our trade laws, conducted primarily by Chinese honey producers trying to cheat the market, a process also known as "honey laundering." In 2011, Richard Adee, a well-known honey producer from Bruce, South Dakota, testified before a congressional panel I led about the negative economic effects honey laundering has had on domestic producers and family-run businesses. Thanks to producers like Richard who told their story and kept pressure on lawmakers in Washington, the United States is cracking down on these unethical practices and the importers who knowingly break the law. After all, free trade is only fair trade when our trading partners all play by the same set of rules.

These provisions to combat honey laundering, along with several others I authored aimed at providing relief to consumers, assistance to small businesses, and incentives to innovators, were recently signed into law as part of a larger trade enforcement bill, which enjoyed broad bipartisan support on Capitol Hill. It passed the Senate in early February by a vote of 75-20.

Also included in this trade enforcement bill is an important provision to make it easier for small businesses to import components they need to create products sold in traditional brick and mortar stores or online venues like eBay and Etsy. Unfortunately, when the ability of American entrepreneurs to send and receive necessary components or products becomes encumbered by unnecessary costs and red tape, it makes it more difficult for their business to grow. With that in mind, my provision significantly increases the threshold for certain duty-free imports, which reduces complexity and a heavy paperwork burden and gives these small businesses one less thing to worry about.

Finally, in a victory for both consumers and businesses, accessing the Internet will no longer be a taxable event. This is good news for families and small businesses who currently pay an access tax on their monthly cable or phone bill. A permanent ban on Internet access taxes – an effort I've championed for years – gives our entrepreneurs and innovators a greater incentive to not only continue working toward the next generation of connectivity in America, but the next big thing yet to be invented. I was also glad to see a provision I fought hard to include that gives states that currently tax Internet access four years to prepare for this transition.

Amid all the seemingly bad news that comes out Washington, D.C., in instances like this, it's nice to share some good news. We're starting 2016 off on the right foot, and I hope we'll be able to score more victories like these for South Dakotans over the course of the year.

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Today in Weather History

February 27, 1969: Snowfall of up to 15 inches blocked many roads in South Dakota. Freezing rain formed a glaze on many utility lines resulting in extensive damage to the lines. The greatest damage occurred in the north central part of the state.

February 27, 1996: Across central and northeast South Dakota as well as west central Minnesota, a strong area of low pressure brought 4 to 11 inches of snow from the late afternoon of the 26th to the late evening of the 27th. Along with the snow came strong cold north winds of 20 to 40 mph, creating near blizzard conditions at times. Wind chills were from 20 below to 60 below. Some schools were closed or started late the 27th along with some activities canceled. Snowfall amounts included, 4 inches at Sisseton, 5 inches at Aberdeen, Redfield, near Reliance, Wheaton, Browns Valley, Britton, and Gettysburg. Other snowfall amounts included, 6 inches at Lebanon, Hoven, Miller, Webster, Eden, Frederick, and Seneca, 7 inches near Chelsea and Mellette, 8 inches at Roscoe and east of Hosmer, Tulare and near Milbank, 9 inches south of Ree Heights, 8 to 10 inches in the Ortonville area, and 11 inches at Wilmot.

1717 - What was perhaps the greatest snow in New England history commenced on this date. During a ten day period a series of four snowstorms dumped three feet of snow upon Boston, and the city was snowbound for two weeks. Up to six feet of snow was reported farther to the north, and drifts covered many one story homes. (David Ludlum)

1969 - A record snowstorm in Maine came to an end. Two to four feet of snow buried southern and central Maine, with a state record of 57 inches reported at West Forks. Drifts covered many single story homes, and the weight of the snow collapsed many roofs. Two to four feet of snow also buried northeastern Vermont and northeastern Massachusetts. In New Hampshire, Mount Washington NH reported 97.8 inches of snow, a record storm total for New England. (24th-28th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1986: It was 99 degrees in Palm Springs, California. This is the highest temperature on record for February. This also occurred on Fe2/26/1986.

2010: A magnitude 8.8 earthquake occurred off the coast of central Chili at 3:34 local time. The earthquake triggered a tsunami which devastated several coastal towns in south-central Chile. Tsunami warnings were issued in 53 countries. Waves caused minor damage in San Diego area and the Tohoku region of Japan.

1987 - A storm spread heavy snow into the Central High Plains Region, and produced severe thunderstorms in the Southern Plains. Snowfall totals in western Nebraska ranged up to 19 inches at Sydney. Severe thunderstorms in Oklahoma produced baseball size hail at Stringtown and Atoka. A storm in the eastern U.S. produced heavy rain over the Carolinas and heavy snow in the southern Appalachians and piedmont region. Five inches of rain left four feet of water in the streets of Greenville SC. Snowfall totals in southwestern Virginia ranged up to 20 inches. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms along a cold front produced heavy rain in southern California, with up to 2.52 inches reported in Ventura County. Strong winds accompanying the rain gusted to 55 mph in the Tehachapi Mountains. Rapid City SD established a February record with an afternoon high of 75 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1989 - Rain and snow prevailed in the southeastern U.S. Up to eight inches of snow blanketed north central Tennessee, and snowfall totals in western North Carolina ranged up to 14 inches at Mount Mitchell. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)


1990 - A winter storm produced heavy snow in southeastern Colorado, with 12 inches reported at Lamar. The same storm produced severe thunderstorms over the Southern High Plains, with wind gusts to 93 mph reported at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. Low pressure brought high winds to the Prince William Sound area of Alaska. Big River Lakes reported wind gusts to 92 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2010 - A weak EF0 tornado causes no damage as it moved across California's southern San Joaquin Valley. However it is the only tornado reported in the United States during the month. According to the Storm Prediction Center only five months since 1950 have lacked a tornado report. The Weather Doctor


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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Rain/Snow and Breezy	Breezy. Slight Chance Snow then Partly Sunny	Increasing Clouds	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Snow	Slight Chance Snow	Mostly Sunny
High: 62 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 45 °F	Low: 29 °F	High: 38 °F	Low: 13 °F	High: 29 °F






Record High Temperatures? Its Going to Be Close!



Location	Forecast High Temp	Record High Temp	Average High Temp
Aberdeen	62°	65° in 1895	32°
Watertown	56°	60° in 1921	31°
Pierre	68°	68° in 1988	39°
Mobridge	65°	65° in 1988	35°
Sisseton	59°	60° in 1932	32°
Kennebec	68°	67° in 1932	41°
Timber Lake	64°	65° in 1988	36°
Wheaton	57°	60° in 1932	29°

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD


weather.gov/Aberdeen

[National Weather Service Aberdeen](https://www.facebook.com/NWSAberdeen)

[@NWSAberdeen](https://twitter.com/NWSAberdeen)
Updated: 2/27/2016 4:29 AM Central

Published on: 02/27/2016 at 4:32AM

It's gonna be warm today so enjoy! We will see increased clouds with a few rain showers and some gusty winds early Sunday morning. Temperatures will be a little cooler for Sunday but readings will still be 5 to 15 degrees above average for much of the area.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 51.3 at 3:27 PM

Low: 20.0 at 7:03 AM

High Gust: 21 at 1:29 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 61° in 1921

Record Low: -23 in 2001

Average High: 32°F

Average Low: 12°F

Average Precip in Feb.: 0.52

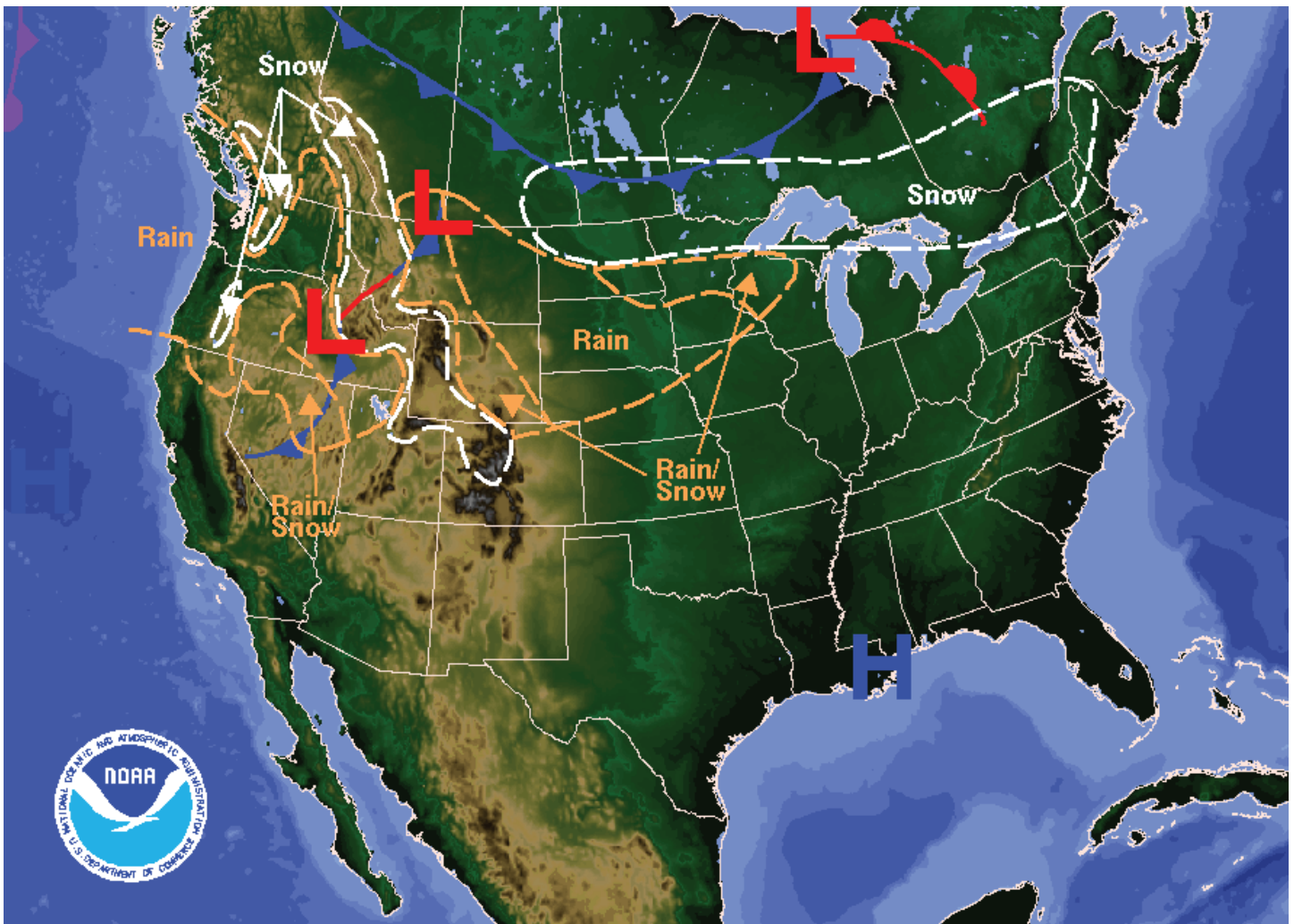
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.60

Average Precip to date: 0.99

Precip Year to Date: 0.60

Sunset Tonight: 6:17 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:14 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Sat, Feb 27, 2016, issued 3:20 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Krekeler based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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"SOMEBODY LOVES YOU!"

A receptionist walked to her desk one morning and saw a bouquet of twelve beautiful roses. Anxiously, she opened the card and read, "From somebody who loves you!"

Her mind began to go through a list of individuals whom she thought might have sent her the flowers. It could have been her boyfriend, her mom or dad, co-workers – or any number of different people. She made many phone calls to everyone who she thought might have sent the flowers.

Finally, she thought of her sister and called her. "Janet," she asked, "did you send me the roses?"

"Yes," was the reply. "You seemed discouraged and I wanted you to spend some time thinking about people who love you."

"Well, I did," she said, "and the list went on and on. I never thought that I was important to anyone."

But there is Someone who loves us more than anyone on earth – our Heavenly Father. Long ago Jeremiah wrote about God's love: "I have loved you, My people, with an everlasting love. With an unfailing love I have drawn you to Myself." It is almost unbelievable!

God, in His grace, mercy and kindness, has offered His unfailing and everlasting love to anyone who will accept it. How blest we are: God loves each of us.

Prayer: Lord, we are undeserving and unworthy of the love that You offer us through Christ our Savior who died that we may live with You eternally. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: Jeremiah 31:3 The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.

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News from the Associated Press

Driver shot by deputy during Pennington County traffic stop

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Pennington County Sheriff's department says a deputy fatally shot a motorist during a struggle after a traffic stop.

Authorities say it happened at about 11:26 p.m. on Friday in Rapid City. Authorities say a struggle ensued minutes into the traffic stop and the deputy fired his duty weapon multiple times.

Both the deputy and suspect were transported to Rapid City Regional Hospital by ambulance. The suspect was pronounced dead at the hospital. The deputy was treated and released.

The investigation into the shooting has been turned over to the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation.

The deputy is on standard paid administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation.

Friday's Scores The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Christian 60, Northwestern 52
Clark/Willow Lake 71, Arlington 35
Dakota Valley 68, Lennox 61
Faith 68, Wall 40
Florence/Henry 58, Estelline 48
Harding County 83, Bison 58
Hitchcock-Tulare 62, Sunshine Bible Academy 28
Hot Springs 62, Edgemont 37
Langford 39, Waverly-South Shore 34
Lemmon 90, Wakpala 39
Leola/Frederick 65, Ipswich 60
Little Wound 60, Lower Brule 52
McCook Central/Montrose 59, Baltic 49
Miller 82, Highmore-Harrold 69
New Underwood 51, Jones County 34
Philip 35, Kadoka Area 32
Rosholt 73, Great Plains Lutheran 37
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 58, Wessington Springs 26
Sioux Falls Christian 64, Tri-Valley 40
St. Francis Indian 83, Red Cloud 82
Sully Buttes 50, Eureka/Bowdle 32
Tea Area 62, Beresford 50
Timber Lake 82, Tiospaye Topa 60
Vermillion 63, Canton 54
White River 75, Lyman 50

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

District 2AA First Round: Brandon Valley 60, Yankton 46
District 7B Championship: Elkton-Lake Benton 38, Chester 30
District 9B Championship: Freeman 50, Menno 31
District 10B Championship: Irene-Wakonda 51, Viborg-Hurley 48
District 11B Championship: Platte-Geddes 43, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 37
District 12B Championship: Avon 45, Burke/South Central 29

Daugaard to announce if he will pursue Medicaid expansion

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard's office said Friday that he will announce next week whether he'll pursue an expansion of Medicaid.

The governor is set to make the announcement Monday, after getting input Friday from federal officials about policy revisions necessary to satisfy his conditions. Daugaard said earlier this week that he was "increasingly optimistic" the state would have the means to expand Medicaid.

He would also need to sell the plan to lawmakers and the state's Native American tribes.

Daugaard has proposed expanding eligibility to roughly another 50,000 South Dakota residents, as long as the state's share of the cost is covered by other savings. His stance marks a departure from many other Republican governors who have resisted expanding Medicaid as part of the federal health care overhaul.

In a letter sent to state officials Friday, the U.S. Department of Health Human Services outlined policy revisions that may help accommodate a potential expansion in South Dakota.

The letter says the federal government will use Medicaid dollars to fully fund services for Native Americans who are eligible for Medicaid and receive care from providers outside Indian Health Service, as long as the provider has an agreement with IHS or a tribal facility. The state's proposal hinges on whether some services for Native Americans who are eligible for Medicaid can be fully funded by the federal government.

Currently, there is a rough split in financing between the state and the federal government when people who are eligible for Medicaid but can get services through IHS go to an outside health care provider. The changes could reduce current state spending to be put toward expansion.

The governor is evaluating the policy revisions, chief of staff Tony Venhuizen said Friday.

Daugaard formally proposed broadening eligibility for the health coverage program for low-income and disabled people at his budget address in December.

The legislative session ends March 11, meaning the governor and lawmakers don't have much time to debate the proposal. Daugaard acknowledged the time constraints Thursday, saying he needs to evaluate whether the Legislature would be willing to dive into the plan.

Republican Rep. Don Haggar, an opponent of Medicaid expansion, said the changes should improve access to health care for Native Americans in South Dakota. But, he said it would be a mistake to try to push through Medicaid expansion this legislative session.

"I feel like it would be a hasty decision," he said.

US Rep. Kristi Noem set to speak at mobilization ceremony

HARRISBURG, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Republican U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem is set to speak at a mobilization ceremony for the South Dakota Army National Guard in Harrisburg.

The mobilization ceremony is scheduled to be held on Saturday at Harrisburg High School.

The Guard's 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade is based in Sioux Falls. It will be deployed to Kuwait for a year to support Operation Spartan Shield.

Noem is South Dakota's lone U.S. representative. She serves with U.S. Sens. John Thune and Mike Rounds, fellow Republicans, in the state's congressional delegation.

AG: Suspect killed when pursuit ends in head-on collision

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Attorney General Marty Jackley says a 31-year-old Eureka man wanted on an arrest warrant was killed when a pursuit by law enforcement officers ended with a head-on collision near Selby.

Jackley says Destin Bray was charged in a warrant issued Thursday with two counts of rape in the first degree, two counts of aggravated incest and one count of sexual contact with a child under sixteen.

He says the South Dakota Highway Patrol was serving an active warrant Friday afternoon when a pursuit ensued, ending in Bray hitting a semi-truck head-on.

The Walworth County Sheriff's Office is handling the crash investigation. The results of the investigation will be reviewed by the Walworth County Sheriff's Office and the Attorney General's Office.

Tinker named new School of Mines head football coach

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Assistant Coach and offensive coordinator Zack Tinker has been promoted to head football coach of the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology.

The school announced earlier Friday that head football coach Stacy Collins has resigned to take the special teams coordinator position at Utah State. Tinker was introduced as head coach during a news conference Friday afternoon.

Tinker was hired by Collins in January 2012 and has also served as the Hardrockers' quarterbacks and running backs coach. Tinker also was Collins' assistant at Eastern Oregon University.

Collins led the Hardrockers program for four seasons, compiling a 16-27 record. He helped transition the program from NAIA to NCAA Division II competition, and led the team to two winning seasons, including last year.

Rapid City man indicted for attempted sexual exploitation

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The U.S. Attorney's Office says a 31-year-old Rapid City man has been indicted on federal charges related to having underage girls send him sexually explicit photographs over the Internet.

Nathan Johnross Weibel has been charged by a grand jury with attempted sexual exploitation of a minor, attempted enticement of a minor using the Internet and transfer of obscene material to a minor. Weibel pleaded not guilty to the charges on Wednesday.

Weibel's public defender, Gary Colbath, said he could not comment on a pending case.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Daneta Wollmann remanded Weibel to the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service pending trial. A trial date has been set for April 19.

Suspect in polygamous fraud scheme says he's no flight risk

BRADY McCOMBS, Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A lawyer for a man accused of playing a key role in a food stamp fraud scheme in a polygamous community on the Utah-Arizona border says his client isn't a flight risk and should be allowed out on supervised release.

A detention hearing is scheduled Friday afternoon for John Wayman. Prosecutors say he is a confidant of sect leader Warren Jeffs who handles legal and tax issues for the group.

Wayman is one of 11 people indicted on fraud and money laundering charges.

Prosecutors say Wayman and three other leaders should remain in custody so they don't go into hiding in a network of houses the sect has.

Lawyer Jim Bradshaw says Wayman is a business owner with no criminal record. He says the allegation that Wayman only goes out in public in disguise is false.

1 child killed, another injured by pickup in Rapid City area

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — One child died and another was seriously injured when they were struck by a pickup truck on a road 2 miles north of Rapid City.

The Highway Patrol says the incident happened about 6:15 p.m. Thursday. A 3-year-old girl who was riding a tricycle and a 2-year-old boy who was walking near her were hit.

The boy died at the scene. The girl's injuries are not considered life-threatening. Authorities did not immediately release their names.

The 19-year-old Sturgis man driving the pickup was not hurt.

The patrol is continuing to investigate what happened.

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Pierre and Huron pursuing studies on local business markets

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Officials in Pierre and Huron are curious to know what types of businesses their cities can support.

The Greater Huron Development Corp. has hired an independent contractor to analyze opportunities for hotels and restaurants to start up in the city, KOKK radio reported. The study should be done in about a month and a half.

"We've had several people talking to use about the possibilities of franchises and looking at privately owned facilities," corporation President Jim Borszich said. "Each and every time we get to the point of trying to determine whether or not it will give them the kind of return they want on their investment, the market analysis issue comes up."

Pierre City Administrator Leon Schochenmaier is proposing hiring a consultant to do a retail study for his city. The idea is to generate data on what stores and restaurants Pierre can support. The last such study was done about eight years ago, and helped convince Menards to build a store in Pierre, the Capital Journal reported.

"One of the things you need to put your best foot forward is data," Schochenmaier said.

The City Commission must approve the new study. That could happen as early as next week.

USD getting federal grant money for telehealth network

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — The University of South Dakota is getting federal telecommunications grant money to connect facilities in Vermillion, Pierre, Rapid City, and Sioux Falls with 24 rural hospitals and clinics, including one on the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation.

The Vermillion-based school is getting about \$500,000 through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Distance Learning and Telemedicine program. The money is expected to boost efforts to prepare medical students and nursing students for careers in rural health care practices, USD spokeswoman Cheryl Tiahrt said.

"The funds will allow us to build a telehealth video network linking the university's resources and educators to health care professionals and students across the state," she said.

The federal DLT program aims to bring medical and educational opportunities to rural areas, according to Bruce Jones, acting state director for USDA's Rural Development agency.

"These funds will ensure educational opportunities exist for residents of the state of South Dakota no matter where they live," he said.

The USD project will provide service to people in the counties of Minnehaha, Pennington, Hughes, Clay, Grant, Lawrence, Walworth, Tripp, Roberts, Brule, Spink, Moody, Custer, Day, Hutchinson, Hand, Gregory, Charles Mix, Jerauld, Bon Homme, Turner, Haakon, Faulk, Douglas, and Turner.

In turnabout, Christie endorses former GOP rival Trump

JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie has a reputation for vengeance.

And he delivered it with gusto Friday when he shocked many in the political world by endorsing GOP front-runner Donald Trump for the Republican presidential nomination.

The surprise endorsement, the first for Trump from a current governor and by far his most prominent, comes as Trump rival Marco Rubio appeared on the cusp of a breakthrough following a breakout debate performance. It was the second time that Christie has undercut the Florida senator, just as he appeared to be on the rise.

At the news conference in Fort Worth, Texas, Christie described Trump — a man he had previously panned as ill-suited for the White House — as the best Republican candidate to lead the country and beat Democrat Hillary Clinton.

"I've gotten to know all the people on that stage and there is none who is better prepared to provide America with the strong leadership that it needs both at home and around the world than Donald Trump,"

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Christie said. Reporters covering the event were visibly stunned when the governor, who dropped his own bid for the presidency earlier this month following a disappointing finish in New Hampshire, walked into the room.

"Chris called up out of the blue and he said, 'You're the one that's going to win,'" Trump said Saturday in an interview on the Fox News Channel. "We have a movement going on. ... and he sees what's happening," said Trump, adding, "Honestly, he's the one endorsement to me that really meant a lot."

The endorsement comes at a particularly opportune time for the real estate mogul, who on Thursday night faced a barrage of new attacks from Rubio during the final debate ahead of next week's Super Tuesday contests, where large numbers of delegates are at stake. During the debate, Rubio hit at Trump's business record, history of hiring foreign workers and his vague policy positions. The broadsides clearly irritated Trump and threatened to provide Rubio with a jolt of new momentum as he seeks to turn the contest into a two-man race.

Rubio appeared to be flying high on Friday morning, delivering new Trump attack lines, including mocking his spelling on Twitter, with newfound glee.

But then, in charged Christie to steal the news cycle and momentum.

"I think this changes the narrative in a dramatic way," said Fred Malek, a major Republican fundraiser, of Christie's decision.

The timing immediately following the debate appeared to be a coincidence.

A former Christie campaign official said the governor made his decision to endorse Trump on Thursday following a meeting in Manhattan attended by the two men and their wives. Christie was already on a plane heading to Texas as the debate was airing, according to the former official, who was not authorized to speak publically on Christie's behalf and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

But it was nonetheless the second time Christie has managed to tear down Rubio just as he was on the rise. During the last GOP debate before the New Hampshire primary, as Rubio appeared on the cusp of a breakthrough, Christie set a verbal trap that left Rubio repeating the same practiced line over and over again.

It was a high moment for Christie's campaign.

Christie has grown deeply resentful of Rubio. Some of that anger stemmed from a super PAC supporting the Florida senator that was responsible for much of the negative advertising that Christie's campaign and his allies have blamed for his loss in the race.

Ironically, Christie's tactic was the same one used so effectively by Rubio against Trump on Thursday night, as he forced the billionaire to repeat the same talking points to describe a health care plan thin on detail. "I just watched you repeat yourself five times five seconds ago," Rubio said.

With his endorsement, Christie is now back in the game, and his role now appears to entail taking on Trump's rivals, starting with Rubio, whom Christie portrayed as a desperate man on the cusp of losing the race.

Trump repeatedly mentioning Christie's showdown with Rubio during that pre-New Hampshire debate.

"I gotta tell you, Chris was so — wow, what he did. That was one of the great prosecutions I've ever seen," Trump raved at a post-endorsement rally.

"I watched Chris take a man apart," he added. "And honestly, I thought he was going to die, Rubio. He was so scared like a little frightened puppy."

Buffett: US economy better than presidential hopefuls say

JOSH FUNK, AP Business Writer

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The United States' economy is in better shape than the presidential candidates make it seem, investor Warren Buffett said Saturday, even though businesses like his still face challenges.

In his annual letter to Berkshire Hathaway shareholders, Buffett didn't name specific candidates or issues, but noted that the negative drumbeat about the economy, health care reform and income inequality may get voters down about the future.

"It's an election year, and candidates can't stop speaking about our country's problems (which, of course,

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only they can solve)," he said, adding later, "that view is dead wrong: The babies being born in America today are the luckiest crop in history."

Buffett noted that there will still be economic troubles as business evolves, but that the country needs to make sure it has a solid safety net to help people who lose jobs.

"The answer in such disruptions is not the restraining or outlawing of actions that increase productivity. Americans would not be living nearly as well as we do if we had mandated that 11 million people should forever be employed in farming," he wrote.

Buffett pointed out that change also creates challenges for Berkshire's businesses. For instance, its BNSF railroad is certain to haul less coal in the future and Geico insurance could be hurt by driverless cars.

He assured shareholders that Berkshire's businesses will adapt just as the company did when its original Berkshire Hathaway textile operation failed.

Buffett's letter is one of the most well-read documents the business world each year because of his successful track record and his knack for explaining complicated subjects in simple terms.

Buffett said the book value of Berkshire's businesses improved 6.4 percent last year even as its stock price fell 12.5 percent. When dividends are factored in, the S&P 500 gained 1.4 percent by comparison. Buffett has warned that it will be increasingly hard for Berkshire to continue beating the market because the company is so large.

Berkshire Hathaway employs more than 360,000 people at its eclectic mix of companies, including insurance, utilities, railroad, manufacturing and retail firms. Berkshire also holds significant stakes in Coca-Cola, Wells Fargo, American Express, IBM and other companies.

One-year spaceman sees mission as 'steppingstone' to Mars

MARCIA DUNN, AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — As soon as he returns from the International Space Station, NASA's first and only yearlong spaceman, Scott Kelly, will try to pop up from a lying position and stand still for three minutes.

He'll take a crack at a mini-obstacle course and attempt to walk a straight line, heel to toe — all so researchers can see whether he'd hit the ground running if this were Mars instead of Earth.

NASA considers it crucial prep work for future Mars explorers who will have to spend much longer in space and won't have the help of a welcoming committee. In fact, this mission — which began with a launch last March — is all about Mars.

"I think we'll learn a lot about longer-duration spaceflight and how that will take us to Mars someday," Kelly said Thursday in his final news conference from orbit. "So I'd like to think that this is another of many steppingstones to us landing on Mars sometime in our future."

Kelly's 340-day mission — the longest by 125 days for NASA — comes to a dramatic end Wednesday on the remote steppes of Kazakhstan. (It will be Tuesday night in the U.S.) The astronaut will ride a Soyuz spacecraft back with two Russians, including Mikhail Kornienko, his roommate for the past year.

Once out of the capsule, the two will submit to a multitude of field tests.

What could new arrivals do on Mars, asks Dr. Stevan Gilmore, the lead flight surgeon who will be at the landing site to receive Kelly. Could they jump up and down? Could they open a hatch? Could they do an immediate spacewalk?

The tests on Kelly and Kornienko should provide some answers. There will also be blood draws, heart monitoring and other medical exams. The testing will continue for weeks if not months once they're back home in Houston and at cosmonaut headquarters at Star City, Russia.

Checkups will also continue for Kelly's identical twin, retired astronaut Mark Kelly. The 52-year-old brothers joined forces to provide NASA with a potential gold mine of scientific data: one twin studied for a year in orbit — twice the usual space station stay — while his genetic double underwent similar tests on the ground.

While a handful of Russians have spent longer in space, the record being a 438-day flight, those expeditions date back to the 1980s and 1990s aboard the Mir space station, rustic if not rickety compared with

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the current space station. Medical testing was spotty back then, and the data weren't always widely shared.

As of Thursday — Day 335 — Kelly professed to feeling pretty good. Indeed, flight surgeon Gilmore doesn't expect any alarming results at touchdown.

Kelly's vision has degraded a bit as it did during his last mission, a normal outcome for some astronauts because of increased pressure inside the skull in weightlessness. He anticipates his bones and muscles have weakened as well, despite daily exercise in orbit.

The real question mark — and Kelly's biggest concern — is the possible lingering effects of space radiation.

"Hopefully, I'll never find out what the true effects are of that," Kelly said in a TV interview last week. NASA will need to tackle the problem for Mars trips because of the increased level of exposure.

Johnson Space Center physiologist John Charles puts the psychological side of long-duration spaceflight right up there with radiation, as well as in-flight medical care and even food preservation and packaging for the long haul.

"Just about everything is a big problem for Mars," Charles said in a phone interview.

Mars expeditions planned for the 2030s will last 2½ years; the anticipated crew size will be four to six. The astronauts will almost certainly have to grow some of their own food; that's the reason for an experimental greenhouse aboard the space station.

Kelly and his crewmates grew red romaine lettuce in the mini-hothouse last summer and sampled some of the crop.

Even more impressive, Kelly nursed zinnias back to health in January, displaying a lush orange and yellow bouquet on Valentine's Day. He had to "channel my inner Mark Watney" — the lone astronaut who survives on potatoes in last year's blockbuster movie "The Martian" — to save the zinnias from mold.

Trust me when to add water, Kelly urged Mission Control, not some preflight script. That's how it will need to be when astronauts venture to Mars, he gently reminded everyone.

Charles stresses that Mars travel will be different than a space station stay. No regular phone chats with the husbands, wives and kids back home. No constant whispering in the astronauts' ears from Mission Control. Support would come via email.

"They're going to be highly autonomous," Charles said of the Mars explorers, "and that's something that we're trying to practice on the space station now ... learning how to get Mission Control out of the back pockets of the astronauts."

Kelly points out that crew quarters on Mars-bound craft will be much tighter than the space station — and nothing like the spaceships of science fiction. Between sleeping and working on his laptop, Kelly estimates he's spent almost half his time inside his personal cubicle — about the size of a phone booth.

NASA will need to improve privacy on Mars missions, he said, if it hopes to combat crew stress and fatigue.

The toughest part for Kelly has been the physical isolation from everyone he loves, 250 miles below him. But on a trip to Mars, tens of millions of miles away, astronauts won't be able to even see Earth.

"Obviously going to Mars, there are a lot of other challenges, but none of these we can't overcome," Kelly said.

NASA is discussing doing more one-year flights with the other countries involved in the station program; more subjects are needed for a better understanding of all the challenges. It's a long time, no matter how you cut it. Just ask Kelly, who recently acknowledged, "a year now seems longer than I thought it would be."

Catwalk: Wisconsin cat disappears, then reappears in Florida

NAPLES, Fla. (AP) — It takes about 22 hours to reach Florida by car for a person traveling from Wisconsin. But if you're a cat, the 1,484-mile journey likely takes closer to two months. At least that's how long it took Nadia, the Russian blue, to trek from her home on a snowy December day to sunny Naples this week where animal officials helped find her owners.

The Naples Daily News (<http://bit.ly/1TB3rJy>) reports Cheri Stocker adopted the cat nine months ago in Wisconsin. On Christmas Eve, the cat escaped.

A Naples woman found the kitty in North Naples.

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Workers at an animal shelter found the cat's microchip and, through a pet relocation service, got hold of Stocker's sister, who had been listed as an emergency contact.

Nuke chief: running out of time to begin updating nukes

ROBERT BURNS, Associated Press

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. (AP) — In describing how little room the Pentagon has to extend the life of its decades-old nuclear forces, the top U.S. nuclear war-fighting commander, Navy Adm. Cecil Haney, says "we're at the brick wall stage."

Time to begin modernizing the country's nuclear weapons is running short, he and other Pentagon leaders say. They contend the force is still in fighting shape — "safe, reliable and effective" is the official mantra. But they also argue the time has come to begin modernizing the force or risk eroding its credibility as a deterrent to attack by others.

They don't face brick wall-like resistance in Congress, but the debate over spending hundreds of billions of dollars to build and field a new generation of nuclear-capable bombers, submarines and land-based missiles is just beginning.

Critics say full-scale modernization is neither affordable nor necessary.

The debate is influenced not only by the perceived need to fully replace aging weapons but also by worries about North Korea's nuclear ambitions and concern over what Defense Secretary Ash Carter calls Russia's "nuclear sabre-rattling."

Robert Work, the deputy secretary of defense, said the Pentagon will need an estimated \$18 billion a year between 2021 and 2035 to modernize the three "legs" of the U.S. nuclear triad — weapons capable of being launched from land, sea and air.

"We need to replace these," Work said. "We can't delay this anymore."

The enormous sums needed are at risk of getting squeezed by high-priority requirements for non-nuclear, conventional weapons. And Work's numbers don't include the billions that would be needed to modernize the nuclear warheads on the business end of missiles and bombs.

"Modernization now is not an option" — it must happen, Haney, the commander of U.S. Strategic Command, said in an interview on Friday, just hours after watching a test launch of an unarmed Minuteman 3 intercontinental ballistic missile, or ICBM. The Minuteman, which has been on constant 24-hour alert since 1970, has long surpassed its 10-year life expectancy.

Haney said the U.S. stockpile of nuclear warheads is the oldest it has ever been. As head of Strategic Command he is the military's top nuclear war-fighter.

"We have to realize we can't extend things forever," Haney said, noting that the Navy is planning to replace its aging Ohio-class ballistic nuclear missile submarines, while the Air Force intends to build a new nuclear-capable bomber to replace the B-52.

Work said that although the Pentagon is closely monitoring Russia's nuclear modernization, which includes development of new versions of its ICBMs, those moves are not driving U.S. decisions about how quickly and broadly it should modernize its nuclear forces.

Some private analysts, however, see the U.S. and Russia entering a new arms competition.

"It's disturbing how quickly both the United States and Russia are sliding back toward the Cold War, both rhetorically and operationally," said Stephen Schwartz, an independent nuclear policy analyst and author.

"Worse still, both the United States and Russia are now using each other's nuclear programs and military activities to justify and rationalize their own," he added.

Haney and Work both were present Thursday night for the Minuteman 3 test launch, which was the second such test of the year. Work said Friday that the test was successful, with the missile's payload landing within a targeted area of water near Kwajalein Atoll in the south Pacific. He said it was the eighth consecutive successful Minuteman test launch, which would mean the last unsuccessful test was in December 2013, according to a chronology provided by the Air Force.

Native Hawaiian group adopts constitution at convention

Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — A constitutional convention of Native Hawaiians has adopted a governing document that will go out to a vote for ratification, the organization behind the gathering announced.

The proposed constitution, approved Friday by an 88 to 30 vote with one abstention, allows room for recognition by the U.S. government while holding out for the possibility of independence, said Na'I Aupuni, an organization that says on its website it's dedicated to "establish a path for Hawaiian self determination."

The U.S. Interior Department is giving Native Hawaiians an option to have a government-to-government relationship with the United States. The plan would extend to Native Hawaiians recognition similar to what many Native American tribes have had for generations. However, the department stresses that the Native Hawaiian government won't automatically be eligible for federal American Indian programs, services and benefits unless Congress allows it.

Under the proposed constitution, citizens of the Hawaiian nation would be any descendants of the indigenous people who lived in Hawaii before 1778. It also says citizenship in the Native Hawaiian nation shall not affect U.S. citizenship. The government would be led by a president and vice president and advised by an island council, plus a legislature with 43 members representing the islands and Native Hawaiians, as well as a judicial authority.

The delegates to the convention were brought in by Na'i Aupuni. The proposed constitution will be presented to a vote by Hawaiians, Na'i Aupuni has said.

The Interior Department will negotiate the issue of recognizing Native Hawaiians as a nation with representatives of the community.

Opponents of the push for recognition by the U.S. government say it's a move to make Native Hawaiian like American Indians. They also say the effort does nothing to correct the wrongs of the overthrow of the Native Hawaiian government by a group of American businessmen in 1893.

Until the overthrow, the United States recognized the Hawaiian nation's independence, extended full diplomatic recognition to the Hawaiian government and entered into several treaties with the Hawaiian monarch.

The United States annexed Hawaii five years after the overthrow. Hawaii became a state in 1959.

In South Carolina, Hillary Clinton looks to win, and win big

JULIE PACE, Associated Press

LISA LERER, Associated Press

ORANGEBURG, S.C. (AP) — For Hillary Clinton, the South Carolina presidential primary is a chance to not just win, but win big.

After an up-and-down start to the 2016 presidential contests for Clinton, a sizable victory over Bernie Sanders on Saturday would be an emotional boost for her White House campaign and a chance to wipe away the fraught memories of her 2008 primary loss in the state.

It would also establish Clinton as the firm favorite among black voters, a crucial segment of the Democratic electorate, and set her up for a big delegate haul in next week's Super Tuesday contests in the South.

"The South Carolina primary is personally important to me because I want to send a strong signal that South Carolina is ready for change, ready for progress, ready to make a difference," Clinton said Friday during a rally in Columbia.

Sanders knows his prospects with South Carolina's heavily black Democratic electorate are grim. A longtime lawmaker from Vermont, where just about 1 percent of the population is black, Sanders lacks Clinton's deep and longstanding connections to the African-American community. He's tried to broaden his economic inequality message and touch on issues such as incarceration rates and criminal justice reform, but he has still struggled to gain traction in South Carolina.

Rather than devote precious time to a state he's prepared to lose, Sanders spent much of the past week in areas that vote in March. Even on Friday, the last full day of campaigning before South Carolina's polls open, Sanders began with a rally in Minnesota before heading south for a pair of events.

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"We are fighting the fight for the survival of the working class of this country," Sanders said Friday morning at a rally in Hibbing, Minnesota.

In 2008, black voters made up 55 percent of the electorate in South Carolina's Democratic primary, according to exit polls. Clinton lost the state overwhelmingly to Barack Obama in a heated contest where her husband, former President Bill Clinton, was seen by some as questioning the legitimacy of the black presidential contender.

But South Carolina voters appear ready to forgive. The former president has been well-received by voters as he's traveled the state campaigning for his wife. Hillary Clinton also received the endorsement of South Carolina Rep. James Clyburn, the influential black lawmaker who stayed neutral in the 2008 primary, but was critical of the former president's comments.

"My heart had always been with Hillary Clinton, but my head had me in a neutral corner," Clyburn said as he announced his support for Clinton last week.

Even with a win all-but-guaranteed, Clinton's campaign sees South Carolina as an important jumpstart heading into a busy March. More than half of the delegates up for grabs in the Democratic race are on the table in the next month, with a heavy concentration one day next week — an 11-state voting bonanza known as Super Tuesday.

While Sanders has the money to stay in the race deep into the spring, Clinton's campaign sees an opportunity to build enough of a delegate lead to put the race out of reach in the coming weeks.

Clinton has a one-delegate edge over Sanders after her narrow win in Iowa, her sweeping loss in New Hampshire and a five-point victory in Nevada. She also has a massive lead over Sanders among super-delegates, the Democratic Party leaders who can throw their support behind a candidate of their choice, regardless of how their states vote.

Rep: Yoko Ono hospitalized for flu symptoms, but on the mend

NEW YORK (AP) — Yoko Ono was hospitalized in New York City for flu-like symptoms, but is on the mend and the 83-year-old artist-singer should be released this weekend, her representative said.

Ono went to the hospital on the advice of her doctor, and media reports that she had had a stroke were not true, Elliott Mintz told The Associated Press on Friday.

Ono is the widow of John Lennon of the Beatles. The couple's son, Sean Ono Lennon, also tamped down reports of a stroke. He said on Twitter that his mother was dehydrated and tired.

"Only stroke @yokoono had was a Stroke of Genius! ... She's really fine," he tweeted. "Thanks for all the well wishes!"

Mintz said Ono likely will be released from the hospital Saturday. "It was nothing," he added.

A Fire Department spokesman said an ambulance was called to Ono's apartment building at 72nd Street and Central Park West in Manhattan around 9 p.m. Friday.

Ono has lived in the luxury apartment building on Manhattan's Upper West Side since 1973. John Lennon was shot and killed in front of the building on Dec. 8, 1980.

Ono remained hospitalized Friday night at Mount Sinai West Hospital in Manhattan, the same hospital where Lennon was pronounced dead. At the time, it was called St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital.

Women in Film celebrate Oscar nominees, call for equality

SANDY COHEN, AP Entertainment Writer

WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif. (AP) — The president of Women in Film is done talking about diversity and wage equality.

It's time for action, said Cathy Schulman, Oscar-winning producer of "Crash."

"No more talking about it. No more dealing with it as only philanthropy," Schulman told guests Friday at Women in Film's ninth annual pre-Oscars cocktail party. "This is a business issue. Movies and television for women and girls make money."

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More than a dozen women nominated for Academy Awards this year attended the private event at Hyde Sunset Kitchen + Cocktails in West Hollywood, California, where Patricia Arquette and Jennifer Lawrence renewed their call for wage equality for women.

Besides Lawrence, other Oscar nominees in attendance included supporting-actress favorite Alicia Vikander ("The Danish Girl") and Jennifer Jason Leigh ("The Hateful Eight"), screenwriters Emma Donoghue ("Room") and Andrea Berloff ("Straight Outta Compton"), songwriter Diane Warren and costume designer Sandy Powell ("Carol" and "Cinderella"), who wore flame-red hair, silver platform sneakers and a tuxedo tailcoat over a T-shirt that read, "Straight Outta Brixton."

Arquette, who raised the issue of equal pay for women during last year's Oscar show when she accepted the supporting actress award, also announced the launch of a new change.org petition (www.change.org/era) to support an equal-rights amendment to the Constitution.

"Be careful of your lawmakers," she said, "because your rights depend on who's in office at any given time, unless you have a constitutional amendment."

Lawrence, who penned an essay about wage equality for Lena Dunham's online newsletter last fall, pledged Friday to sign the petition.

"I love that she stood up," Lawrence said. "We're starting a conversation. We're getting a dialogue going ... Equal pay for women!"

Today in History The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Feb. 27, the 58th day of 2016. There are 308 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 27, 1991, Operation Desert Storm came to a conclusion as President George H.W. Bush declared that "Kuwait is liberated, Iraq's army is defeated," and announced that the allies would suspend combat operations at midnight, Eastern time.

On this date:

In 1801, the District of Columbia was placed under the jurisdiction of Congress.

In 1891, broadcasting pioneer David Sarnoff was born in present-day Belarus.

In 1911, inventor Charles F. Kettering demonstrated his electric automobile starter in Detroit by starting a Cadillac's motor with just the press of a switch, instead of hand-cranking.

In 1922, the Supreme Court, in *Leser v. Garnett*, unanimously upheld the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which guaranteed the right of women to vote.

In 1933, Germany's parliament building, the Reichstag (RYKS'-tahg), was gutted by fire; Chancellor Adolf Hitler, blaming the Communists, used the fire to justify suspending civil liberties.

In 1939, the Supreme Court, in *National Labor Relations Board v. Fansteel Metallurgical Corp.*, effectively outlawed sit-down strikes. Britain and France recognized the regime of Francisco Franco of Spain.

In 1943, during World War II, Norwegian commandos launched a raid to sabotage a German-operated heavy water plant in Norway. The U.S. government began circulating one-cent coins made of steel plated with zinc (the steel pennies proved unpopular, since they were easily mistaken for dimes).

In 1951, the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution, limiting a president to two terms of office, was ratified.

In 1960, the U.S. Olympic hockey team defeated the Soviets, 3-2, at the Winter Games in Squaw Valley, California. (The U.S. team went on to win the gold medal.)

In 1973, members of the American Indian Movement occupied the hamlet of Wounded Knee in South Dakota, the site of the 1890 massacre of Sioux men, women and children. (The occupation lasted until May.)

In 1986, the U.S. Senate approved telecasts of its debates on a trial basis.

In 1997, divorce became legal in Ireland.

Ten years ago: "The Da Vinci Code" author Dan Brown was accused in Britain's High Court of taking material for his blockbuster conspiracy thriller from a 1982 book about the Holy Grail. (The court ruled in favor of Brown's publisher, Random House, the actual target of the breach-of-copyright lawsuit.) Former Newark Eagles co-owner Effa Manley became the first woman elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. Re-

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tired Brig. Gen. Robert L. Scott, author of "God Is My Co-Pilot," died in Warner Robins, Georgia, at age 97. Former Los Angeles Times publisher Otis Chandler died at age 78.

Five years ago: "The King's Speech" won four Academy Awards, including best picture; Colin Firth won best actor for his portrayal of Britain's King George VI. Frank Buckles, the last surviving American veteran of World War I who'd also survived being a civilian prisoner of war in the Philippines in World War II, died in Charles Town, West Virginia, at age 110. Duke Snider, 84, the Baseball Hall of Famer who helped the Dodgers bring their only World Series crown to Brooklyn, died in Escondido, California.

One year ago: In Tyrone, Missouri, Joseph Jesse Aldridge, 36, a man who authorities said might have been unhinged by the death of his ailing mother, was found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound after apparently killing seven people in a house-to-house shooting rampage. Boris Nemtsov, a charismatic Russian opposition leader and sharp critic of President Vladimir Putin, was gunned down near the Kremlin. Actor Leonard Nimoy, 83, world famous to "Star Trek" fans as the pointy-eared, purely logical science officer Mr. Spock, died in Los Angeles.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Joanne Woodward is 86. Consumer advocate Ralph Nader is 82. Actor Van Williams (TV: "The Green Hornet") is 82. Opera singer Mirella Freni is 81. Actress Barbara Babcock is 79. Actor Howard Hesseman is 76. Actress Debra Monk is 67. Rock singer-musician Neal Schon (Journey) is 62. Rock musician Adrian Smith (Iron Maiden) is 59. Actor Timothy Spall is 59. Rock musician Paul Humphreys (Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark) is 56. Country singer Johnny Van Zant (Van Zant) is 56. Rock musician Leon Mobley (Ben Harper and the Innocent Criminals) is 55. Basketball Hall of Famer James Worthy is 55. Actor Adam Baldwin is 54. Actor Grant Show is 54. Rock musician Mike Cross (Sponge) is 51. Actor Noah Emmerich is 51. Actor Donal Logue (DOH'-nuhl LOHG) is 50. Rhythm-and-blues singer Chilli (TLC) is 45. Rock musician Jeremy Dean (Nine Days) is 44. Rhythm-and-blues singer Roderick Clark is 43. Country-rock musician Shonna Tucker (Drive-By Truckers) is 38. Chelsea Clinton is 36. Actor Brandon Beemer is 36. Rock musician Cyrus Bolooki (New Found Glory) is 36. Rhythm-and-blues singer Bobby Valentino is 36. Singer Josh Groban is 35. Banjoist Noam (cq) Pikelny is 35. Rock musician Jared Champion (Cage the Elephant) is 33. **Actress Kate Mara is 33. Actress Lindsey Morgan is 26.**

Thought for Today: "I am indeed rich, since my income is superior to my expenses, and my expense is equal to my wishes." — Edward Gibbon, English historian (1737-1794).

Early election results point to gains for Iran's moderates

NASSER KARIMI, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Early election results in Iran show reformists who favor expanding democratic freedoms and improving relations with the West are expanding their presence in parliament and a clerical body responsible for selecting the country's next supreme leader.

Reports in the semi-official Fars and Mehr news agencies showed hard-liners losing ground in the 290-seat legislature. None of Iran's three main political camps -- reformist, conservative and hard-line -- was expected to capture a majority, but the reformist camp is on track for its best showing in more than a decade.

A victory for reformists would be a boost for moderate President Hassan Rouhani, who championed the newly implemented Iranian nuclear deal with world powers in the face of hard-line opposition.

Initial results also showed moderates gaining ground in the 88-member Assembly of Experts, which will select the successor to 76-year-old Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the country's top decision-maker since 1989.

State TV reported that Rouhani and former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a relative moderate, are on track to keep their seats on the 88-seat assembly, which is elected every eight years.

The two were leading in the Tehran constituency, which will send 16 candidates to the assembly and is seen as a political bellwether. Just three of the Tehran clerics who were on track to win are hard-liners, down from six who currently serve in the assembly. There were no immediate results from other constituencies, and vote counting was still underway.

The current assembly only has around 20 moderates.

Nearly 55 million of Iran's 80 million people were eligible to vote. Participation figures were not immedi-

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ately available, but Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli on Saturday said participation was likely to exceed 60 percent based on the partial counting of the votes.

Friday's election was the first since last summer's nuclear agreement was finalized, lifting international economic sanctions in exchange for Iran curbing its nuclear program. U.S. officials had hoped the agreement would strengthen moderates in Iran, perhaps paving the way for improved ties and cooperation on other issues, including the war against the Islamic State group.

Polls closed at midnight and officials immediately began counting the ballots. In the capital, officials counting the ballots in three different districts told The Associated Press that reformists were leading their hard-line rivals. The officials requested anonymity because they were not authorized to speak with reporters.

A substantial reformist bloc could herald a crucial shift in Iran's internal politics. The hard-line camp is largely made up of loyalists of Rouhani's predecessor, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who during his two terms in office stoked tensions with the U.S. and cracked down on dissent. Ahmadinejad also alienated large sectors of the conservative camp, leading some moderate conservatives to ally with reformists in this election in a bid to reduce the power of the hard-liners.

Reformists rose to power with the 1997 election of President Mohammad Khatami, followed by 2000 parliamentary elections that brought a reformist majority for the first time. The movement pressed for an easing of Islamic social restrictions, wider freedom of expression and better ties to the international community.

But that hold was broken in the next election in 2004, when reformist candidates were largely barred from running. Ahmadinejad's election victory in 2005 sealed the movement's downfall. Reformists were virtually shut out of politics until Rouhani was elected in 2013.

The presidential election in 2009 was followed by mass protests over alleged voting fraud, but other past elections in Iran have been held without any major disputes. However, the Guardian Council has the right to vet candidates, and this year it disqualified all but 30 of the 3,000 reformist candidates who had hoped to run.

AP Interview: Blatter free of FIFA 'burden,' backs Infantino

GRAHAM DUNBAR, AP Sports Writer

ZURICH (AP) — Sepp Blatter feels relief at no longer being FIFA president and warmly praised his successor Gianni Infantino on Saturday.

Blatter seemed happy and at peace in an interview with The Associated Press to reflect on the end of 17 often combative years atop soccer's scandal-hit governing body.

"It is a relief. I had this burden on me," he said, enjoying his first day out of FIFA's employment since 1975. On Wednesday, his FIFA ethics ban for financial conflicts of interest was cut to six years.

"Being suspended or not, I was still the elected president. And now it is finished," Blatter said.

A weight was lifted off him Friday evening the minute he watched on television as Infantino won the election to replace him.

"It was even a welcome day yesterday, 18:01, when they had a new president," he said in the European style for 6:01 p.m. He then paused and exhaled deeply.

When the moment arrived, Blatter said he was with his daughter, Corinne, at her apartment in Zurich. He was drinking a glass of white wine from his native Valais region in Switzerland.

"It was important for FIFA to have a change," said Blatter, who turns 80 in two weeks.

Blatter and the 45-year-old Infantino were born in the neighboring towns of Visp and Brig.

"He is a young man, he is powerful, he has a lot of energy and I am sure he will do the right job," Blatter said.

Both rose to become FIFA president — just the eighth and ninth in its 112-year history — after being the CEO-like top official at, respectively, FIFA and the European soccer body UEFA.

"It is a repetition of history, that is something," said Blatter, who previously traded barbs with Infantino as part of wider tensions between the two organizations.

"If a majority of the 207 national associations so clearly indicated where they want to go then I can only

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say, 'Gianni, good luck and do it,'" Blatter said.

He said he knew Infantino would win when the first-round result was announced in the four-candidate vote Friday. It gave Infantino an 88-85 lead over pre-poll favorite Sheikh Salman of Bahrain.

"This means that everybody is going for the winner for the second (round)," said Blatter, who got two of his five FIFA election wins when his opponent conceded after trailing in the first round.

The tactical shifts Blatter predicted helped Infantino pad his margin to a decisive 115-88 lead in the second round.

A longtime master of FIFA politics, Blatter understood on Thursday that the sheikh's front-runner status through much of a four-month campaign might not hold up.

"I was not surprised with the result when I have known the day before that there was no longer the packages by the confederations," he said, referring to potential bloc votes by continent. "Finally, it was the African votes that have made all the difference."

Pakistan says troops in tribal region kill 19 'terrorists'

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan's military says security forces have killed 19 "terrorists" during a ground operation in a northwestern tribal region near the Afghan border.

It says four troops were killed in Saturday's fighting in the Shawal area of North Waziristan. It says "several" militants were wounded during the final phase of the operation, which was launched earlier this week.

Pakistan has been waging a military offensive against militants in North Waziristan since June 2014. The army says it has killed around 3,500 insurgents since then.

The rugged region has long been a stronghold for the Taliban, al-Qaida and other militants, who launch attacks on both sides of the porous border.

Thousands stranded as Greece becomes a migrant 'warehouse'

ELENA BECATOROS, Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Greece is fast becoming the "warehouse of human beings" that its government has vowed not to allow.

Hastily setup camps for refugees and other migrants are full. Thousands of people wait through the night, shivering in the cold at the Greek-Macedonian border, in the country's main port of Piraeus, in squares dotted around Athens, or on dozens of buses parked up and down Greece's main north-south highway.

On Thursday, hundreds of frustrated men, women and children abandoned their stranded buses or left refugee camps, setting off on a desperate trek dozens of kilometers (miles) long to reach a border they know is quickly shutting down to them.

About 20,000 migrants were in Greece on Thursday, Defense Minister Panos Kammenos said. Of those, Macedonia allowed just 100 people to cross over from Greece's Idomeni border area.

By late Friday, not a single migrant had crossed into Macedonia that day, while 4,900 people waited nearby in heavy rain, according to Greek police.

Thousands more were heading north — about 40 busloads of people were waiting along Greece's main highway, while refugee camps in northern Greece and near Athens were full.

Greece is mired in a full-blown diplomatic dispute with some EU countries over their border slowdowns and closures. Those border moves have left Greece and the migrants caught between an increasingly fractious Europe, where several countries are reluctant to accept more asylum-seekers, and Turkey, which has appeared unwilling or unable to staunch the torrent of people leaving in barely seaworthy smuggling boats for Greek islands.

Adding to the pressure is Greece's financial predicament. The country has been wracked by a financial crisis since 2010 and still depends on an international bailout for which it must pass yet more painful reforms. Those have led to widespread protests, including blockades on the country's highways by farmers who are furious at pension changes.

The vast majority of those reaching Greece, Europe's main gateway for migrants, have been Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis fleeing war at home

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"My only hope is to live in a safe place. That's enough for me actually," said 17-year-old Minhaj Ud Din Wahaj from Afghanistan's Wardak province. "We have been in war since 40 years, so I have been raised in war."

In Athens, hundreds of migrants mill around central Victoria Square, uncertain of where to go next. On Thursday, two men hanged themselves from a tree in the square but were rescued by bystanders. Police said the men were trying to draw attention to their predicament.

In the north, nearly 400 people scrambled out of a former military base set up as a refugee camp in Diavata, near the city of Thessaloniki, and began walking the 70 kilometers (43 miles) to Idomeni on the Macedonian border. Dozens more set off on foot from buses stuck on the highway, where farmers' blockades were hindering traffic.

Still more people flowed into the country, with dinghies full of migrants arriving on Greece's islands and hundreds more people piling on ferries heading to the main port of Piraeus.

"We are escaping from war," said Rana, an English teacher from Syria arriving in Piraeus. She would not give her last name to protect those she left behind. "Our house is destroyed, and salaries in some places stopped. ... I think all the people ... seek the shelter and education for their kids."

But Europe appears increasingly unwilling to provide those basics.

On the weekend of Feb. 20-21, Macedonia stopped allowing Afghans through. Other countries further up the line appeared to do the same. On Thursday, even Syrians and Iraqis were being allowed to cross over from Greece only at a trickle. Nadica V'ckova, a spokeswoman for Macedonia's crisis management department, told The Associated Press that Macedonia was restricting the entry of refugees to match the number leaving the country.

Bitter sniping has ensued between Greece and other EU members as Greece insists the EU's 28 nations share the refugee burden equally.

"Greece, from now on, will not assent to agreements if the proportionate distribution of the burden and responsibility among all member states is not rendered obligatory," Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras told Parliament on Wednesday.

"We will not accept the transformation of our country to a permanent warehouse for human beings, while at the same time we continue to operate in Europe and at summit meetings as if nothing is happening," he declared. "We will not put up with a series of countries that not only erect fences on their borders but at the same time do not accept to put up a single refugee."

Athens was enraged when Austria held a meeting of Balkan countries Wednesday on the refugee crisis, excluding Greece. It recalled its ambassador in Vienna the next day.

Greece's minister responsible for migration, Ioannis Mouzalas, had harsh words as he arrived for a Thursday migration meeting in Brussels.

"(Many here) will try to discuss how to respond to a humanitarian crisis in Greece that they themselves are intent on creating," Mouzalas said. "Greece will not accept unilateral actions. Greece, too, can take unilateral action."

Peter Szijjarto, Hungary's minister of foreign affairs and trade, didn't mince his words in response.

"Blackmailing is not a European attitude," he said. "Maybe Greece, too, should observe our common rules, or at least accept help to observe them together. Then we do not have to face such challenges."

While the politicians wrangle, the refugees still stream in, risking their lives across the winter seas in the hopes of a better future.

"If the border closes over there, there will be possibilities, but it may cost a lot of money, not only for me, for everybody," said Jamshid Azizi, a 24-year-old Afghan who once worked as an interpreter for international forces in his homeland.

Many of his friends were already talking to smugglers, but not him.

"I prefer to stay here, because I don't have that amount of money to pay for human traffickers in order to pass the borders," he said.

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Global finance officials promise to shore up sagging growth

JOE McDONALD, Associated Press

PAUL TRAYNOR, Associated Press

SHANGHAI (AP) — Finance officials of the world's biggest economies promised Saturday to use "all tools" to shore up sagging global growth and to avoid devaluing their currencies to boost exports, but made no pledges of joint action.

Finance ministers and central bankers of the Group of 20 rich and developing countries tried to reassure jittery financial markets that the global economy is healthy, though they acknowledged in a statement that they "need to do more" to boost growth.

The declaration following a two-day meeting promised "growth-friendly" tax and spending policies. The governments pledged to press ahead with previously promised reforms aimed at making their economies more efficient and productive.

"We agreed to use all tools — monetary, fiscal and structural — to boost growth," China's finance minister, Lou Jiwei, said at a news conference.

What each country does will be dictated by its circumstances, Lou said. He said some can afford stimulus while others where debt is high have to move faster on structural economic reforms.

Companies and investors were looking to the Shanghai meeting for reassurance and action. But leaders from the United States, China, Europe and elsewhere had tried to squelch expectations that it would produce specific growth plans.

Global growth is at its lowest in two years and forecasters say the danger of recession is rising. The International Monetary Fund cut this year's global growth forecast by 0.2 percentage points last month to 3.4 percent. It said another downgrade is likely in April.

The G-20 statement acknowledged that "vulnerabilities have risen" in the global economy against a backdrop that includes volatile capital flows, the European refugee crisis and the possibility of a British exit from the European Union. But it said that growth should continue at a "moderate pace" in advanced economies and "remains strong" in developing countries.

The governments promised to avoid "competitive devaluations" of their currencies to boost exports — a key concern of global markets following turmoil over China's yuan.

A surprise change in August in the mechanism Beijing uses to set its exchange rate prompted fears that the yuan might be weakened to support struggling Chinese exporters. Despite official denials, repeated Friday by Chinese central bank governor Zhou Xiaochuan, those expectations have driven an outflow of capital that spiked to a record \$135 billion in December.

"We will not target our exchange rates for competitive purposes," the G-20 statement said.

The Chinese hosts wanted the meeting to promote their campaign for a bigger voice in managing trade and finance. Instead, the communist government had to scramble to defend its reputation for competence following stock market and currency turmoil.

In a video message Friday to the meeting, China's top economic official, Premier Li Keqiang, said Beijing had the resources to combat downward pressure on growth that fell to a 25-year low of 7.3 percent last year.

"The Chinese economy has great potential, resilience and flexibility, and we will capitalize on such strengths," Li said.

A repeated theme from officials was that governments need to speed up economic reforms because multiple rounds of stimulus by central banks and treasuries used since the 2008 global crisis are no longer effective.

A previous G-20 meeting in Australia produced a list of some 800 promised reforms aimed at simplifying regulation and boosting trade, technology and job creation, but many have yet to be carried out.

On Friday, Germany's finance minister, Wolfgang Schauble, said his government would refuse to take part in any new joint stimulus in the event of falling global growth. He insisted governments had to embrace reforms instead.

Others at the meeting included U.S. Federal Reserve Chairwoman Janet Yellen, Mario Draghi of the European Central Bank and their counterparts from Europe, South Korea, India and South Africa.

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U.S. Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew welcomed the agreement to avoid devaluations and urged governments to push ahead with reforms.

"We need to redouble our efforts to boost global demand, rather than relying on the United States as the consumer of last resort," Lew said.

British Treasury chief George Osborne said the statement's reference to unease over his country's possible departure from the EU emphasized its potential consequences. The pound has hit seven-year lows as jittery investors react to uncertainty about the June 23 referendum on whether to remain in the 28-country bloc.

The Shanghai meeting concluded that a possible vote to withdraw "is among the biggest economic dangers this year," Osborne said. "If that's their assessment of the impact on the world economy, imagine what it would do to the U.K."

Mexico documents big rebound in monarch butterflies

MARK STEVENSON, Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Monarch butterflies have made a big comeback in their wintering grounds in Mexico, after suffering serious declines, experts said Friday.

The area covered by the orange-and-black insects in the mountains west of Mexico City this season was more than three and a half times greater than last winter. The butterflies clump so densely in the pine and fir forests they are counted by the area they cover rather than by individual insects.

The number of monarchs making the 3,400-mile (5,500-kilometer) migration from the United States and Canada declined steadily in recent years before recovering in 2014. This winter was even better.

This December, the butterflies covered 10 acres (about 4 hectares), compared to 2.8 acres (1.13 hectares) in 2014 and a record low of 1.66 acres (0.67 hectares) in 2013.

While that's positive, the monarchs still face problems: The butterflies covered as much as 44 acres (18 hectares) 20 years ago.

"The news is good, but at the same time we shouldn't let our guard down," said Omar Vidal, director of the World Wildlife Fund in Mexico. "Now more than ever, Mexico, the United States, and Canada should increase their conservation efforts to protect and restore the habitat of this butterfly along its migratory route."

The United States is working to reintroduce milkweed, a plant key to the butterflies' migration, on about 1,160 square miles (3 million hectares) within five years, both by planting and by designating pesticide-free areas. Milkweed is the plant the butterflies feed and lay their eggs on, but it has been attacked by herbicide use and loss of open land in the United States.

Dan Ashe, the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said that in the first year of that effort, the United States had managed to restore about 250,000 acres (100,000 hectares) of milkweed, and raised about \$20 million for the program.

"It is time for celebration because we see the beginning of success," Ashe said. "But our task now is to continue building on that success."

In Mexico, meanwhile, illegal logging has remained a problem. It more than tripled in the monarch butterflies' wintering grounds in 2014, reversing several years of steady improvements. Illegal logging had fallen to almost zero in 2012.

Authorities said the reserve's buffer area lost more than 22 acres (9 hectares) in 2015 due to illegal logging in one area, but said the tree cutting was detected and several arrests were made.

The forest canopy acts as a blanket against the cold for butterflies forming huge clumps on branches during their winter stay in Mexico.

Monarch expert Lincoln Brower wrote in a research paper that the 2015 forest loss was actually 25 acres (10 hectares) in the reserve area, and said the illegal logging "questions the effectiveness of current strategies to protect the already precarious overwintering habitat of the monarch butterfly."

The logging took place in a particularly sensitive area of the reserve, and if butterflies can't find shelter there, "they may be forced into forested areas with less microclimatic protection," exposing them to potential cold and rain that can prove fatal, Brower wrote.

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Alejandro del Mazo, the head of Mexico's protected natural areas, credited the three countries for their cooperation and said they were on their way to achieving the goal of having 220 million butterflies in the reserve by 2020. Del Mazo estimated there were 140 million this year.

"This is a motivation for us to continue building bridges between our three countries, not walls," Del Mazo said.

The migration is an inherited trait: No butterfly lives to make the full round trip, and it is unclear how they find their way back to the same patches of pine forest in Mexico each year.

Some scientists suggest the butterflies may release chemicals marking the migratory path and fear that if their numbers fall too low the chemical traces will not be strong enough for others to follow.

The long-term trend is troubling. After their peak in 1996, when the monarchs covered more than 44 acres (17.8 hectares), each time the monarchs have rebounded, they have done so at lower levels. The species is found in many countries and is not in danger of extinction, but experts fear the migration could be disrupted if very few butterflies make the long trip.

Largely indigenous farm communities in the mountain reserve have received government development funds in return for preserving the 139,000-acre (56,259 hectare) reserve that UNESCO has declared a World Heritage site.

Some of the communities earn income from tourist operations or reforestation nurseries to grow and plant saplings.

In the end, writer and environmental activist Homero Aridjis, and the chief scientist for Parks Canada, Dr. Gilles Seutin, suggested that favorable weather conditions may have helped the monarchs rebound this year. There have been few extreme cold snaps or heavy rains in central Mexico.

"Although thanks to more favorable weather conditions along the monarch's migratory routes numbers in the reserve this season have increased, this does not mean we can ignore one of the main threats to the monarchs now: the extremely damaging illegal logging taking place within the reserve," Aridjis wrote.