

Groton Daily Independent

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Thursday, Nov. 3

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

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

School Lunch: Quesadilla, mixed vegetables, romaine salad, fruit.

6 p.m.: Volleyball region at Sisseton

Friday, Nov. 4

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

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

School Lunch: Submarines, smiley potatoes, broccoli and dip, fruit.

Saturday, Nov. 5

Robotics at Eureka

Semifinals of Football Playoffs

Apts for Rent

1 bedroom and HUGE 2 bedroom, 2 bath apartments available NOW! All utilities included except A/C, 1 bedroom \$504 and HUGE 2 bedroom 2 bath \$674 Please call or text 239-849-7674

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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JOHNSON AGENCY

Real Estate & Insurance

Jay Johnson, Broker

www.johnsonagencygroton.com

102 N Main St. Office: 605/397-2424
Groton, SD 57445 Home: 605/397-8565



Holiday open house

November 10-12

Thursday 9am-5pm

Friday 9am - 5pm

Saturday 10am-4pm

Discounts through
out the store

Daily door prize
drawings

Wine Sampling each
day

Shop Local!



101 N Main St, Groton SD
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find us on facebook, instagram or at
www.oldebankfloralsd.com

The Livestream logo features a red and white stylized 'L' icon to the left of the word 'livestream' in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Volleyball Regions

Groton Area vs. Webster Area

Broadcast sponsored by

**Blocker Construction ~ Groton Ford
Hanlon Brothers**

Harry Implement of Ferney

Hefty Seed - Justin Hanson

James Valley Seed - Doug Jorgenson

McKiver Collision ~ Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.

Producer's Hybrids - John Wheeting

Weber Landscaping

gdilive.com

Groton Prairie Mixed

Team Standings: Shih Tzus 3, Jackelopes 3, Cheetahs 2, Foxes 2, Coyotes 1, Chipmunks 1

Men's High Games: Roger Spanier 211, 197, Brad Waage 210, 198, Bob Walter 190, Brad Larson 190

Women's High Games: Darci Spanier 180, Vicki Walter 171, Vicki Jorgensen 168

Men's High Series: Brad Waage 583, Roger Spanier 574, Brad Larson 503

Women's High Series: Nicole Kassube 439, Darci Spanier 439, Lori Giedt 438, Vicki Walter 418, Sue Stanley 418

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Groton Coffee Cup League

Oct. 31 Team Standings: James Valley 18 1/2, Ten Pins 15, Jungle Lanes 12, Kens 10 1/2

High Game: Vicki Walter 211, 179; Penny Stolle 177; Joyce Walter 170

High Series: Vicki Walter 549, Penny Stolle 463, Vickie Kramp 446

Conde National League

Team Standings: Giants 18, Colts 18, Pirates 17, Cubs 15, Braves 15, Mets 13

Men's High Games: Lance Frohling 236, 203; Bruce Herman 203; Bryce Dargatz 195

Men's High Series: Lance Frohling 602, Bruce Herman 537, Butch Farmen 533

Women's High Games: Michelle Johnson 254, Joyce Walter 194, Hope Dagartz 189

Women's High Series: Michelle Johnson 518, Vickie Kramp 494, Joyce Walter 478

DOLLAR GENERAL IS HIRING!

Dollar General is a national discount retailer with over 13,000 stores employing more than 100,000 people. We offer the challenge and growth opportunities you desire. We are seeking energetic & hands-on team players to fill important roles in our stores!

New Store Opening in Groton, SD.

Need all Candidates to apply right away as the store will open in early December:

Store Manager

Assistant Store Manager

Lead Sales Associates

Sales Associates

To apply, go to www.dollargeneral.com/careers

- Click on "Store Careers", then click on "Apply Online"
- Click "Search by Location -> Zip Code" to search for positions in Groton, SD 57445
- Log in to apply

Again thank you for your interest in Dollar General.

Dollar General Corporation is an equal opportunity employer

DOLLAR GENERAL®

Save time. Save money. **Every day!**



**6 p.m., Saturday
Football**

**Groton Area hosts Aberdeen Roncalli
State Championship Semifinal Playoff**

Broadcast sponsored by

Allied Climate Professionals - Kevin Nehls

Bahr Spray Foam & Construction

Blocker Construction ~ Dollar General of Groton

Doug Abeln Seed Co ~ Groton Ford

Harry Implement of Ferney ~ Hefty Seed - Justin Hanson

James Valley Seed - Doug Jorgenson

James Valley Telecommunications

Johnson Agency ~ Ken's Food Fair of Groton

Lori's Pharmacy ~ McKiver Collision

Milbrandt Enterprises ~ Olde Bank Floral

Olson Backhoe & Trenching

Olson Development ~ Patios Plus

S&S Lumber ~ Subway of Groton ~ TNTax Business

gdilive.com

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Region 1A Volleyball Tournament

#1 Milbank Area

Scores:

Date: Thurs. November 3
Time: 6:00 PM CT
Site: Sisseton

SWEET 16 QUALIFIER

#4 Aberdeen Roncalli

Scores: **25 25 25**

Date: Tues. November 1
Time: 7:30 PM CT
Site: Sisseton

Scores: 12 21 23

Scores:

Aberdeen Roncalli

#5 Sisseton

#3 Webster Area

Scores: **25 25 25**

Date: Tues. November 1
Time: 6:00 PM CT
Site: Sisseton

Scores: 5 18 20

Webster Area

Scores:

#6 Britton-Hecla

Date: Thurs. November 3
Time: 7:30 PM CT
Site: Sisseton

SWEET 16 QUALIFIER

#2 Groton Area

Scores: **25 25 25**

Date: Tues. November 1
Time: 4:30 PM CT
Site: Sisseton

Scores: 18 8 4

Scores:

Groton Area

#7 Tiospa Zina

School	Seed Pts.
Milbank Area	43.22
Groton Area	42.27
Webster Area	42.11
Aberdeen Roncalli	41.83
Sisseton	37.46
Britton-Hecla	36.91
Tiospa Zina	36.78

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**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**



**Larry Zimmerman
Secretary**

Make Your Bucket List for Veterans!

On Oct. 8, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the first Veterans Day Proclamation encouraging widespread observance of this anniversary and asking all veterans, all veterans' organizations, and the entire citizenry to join hands in the common purpose.

It's the one day set aside each November to honor those who have served and continue to serve our nation. The holiday also offers a great opportunity to remind Americans about the sacrifices service members and their families make year-round, year-after-year.

Everyone has a bucket list ---- with adventurous things they want to accomplish in their lifetime – new job, expanding education, travel, new food venues, and crazy fun challenges.

How about considering a bucket list for meaningful things you can do throughout the year for our veterans and their families who have sacrificed so much for our country. While a simple "thank you" is always a good way to show your support, there are many more personal ways you can demonstrate, all year-long, your appreciation to those who have served – display your American flag, teach your children about veterans and the sacrifices they have made, attend a Veterans Day program, take a moment of silence to remember those who sacrificed their lives to protect our freedom, take a veteran to breakfast or lunch, take a veteran some homemade treats, give a veteran a gift card, visit a local retirement home and chat with some of the elderly veterans, volunteer at a VA Hospital, mow a veteran's lawn, shovel a veteran's sidewalk, take groceries to a veteran, support a veterans service organization project that benefits veterans, or take a veteran to a ballgame.

Or how about learning more about the veterans in your family – ask them to share their story. Spencer Kimball once said, "I promise that if you will keep your journals and records, they will indeed be a source of great inspiration to your families, to your children, your grandchildren, and others. Each of us is important to those who are near and dear to us and as our posterity reads of our life's experiences, they too will come to know and love us." It is important for the legacy of our veterans to be shared with all generations. We need to hear first-hand the entries in their journal in life.

How many of you know how many veterans you have in your church, your school, your neighborhood, your community? The "Veterans Bucket List" is a great way to help you find those heroes in your community and show your appreciation.

If you own your own business, how about adding hiring a veteran to your bucket list or put a sign in your window that thanks veterans for their service.

Alexander Graham Bell once said, "The achievement of one goal should be the starting point of another." You can achieve your first goal by attending a Veterans Day program in your community and your starting point could be your "Veterans Bucket List." Let's remember our heroes all year around, not just on Veterans Day.

Larry Zimmerman, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

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★ **One Voice** ★ **for Free Enterprise, Gun Rights, and Life**

These candidates support protecting family values, the right to life,
and earned the endorsement of the National Rifle Association



**Brock
Greenfield**
State Senate



**Burt
TULSON**
State House
Thank You



**LANA
GREENFIELD**
DISTRICT 2
FOR HOUSE

**You can early vote now at your county courthouse
Election day is November 8th at your regular polling place**

SAMPLE GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT

A November 8, 2016	B SOUTH DAKOTA
<p>For State Representative District 02 you may vote for up to two or leave it blank</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Lana Greenfield</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Burton "Burt" Tulson</p> <p><small>Paid for by Greenfield Campaign Committee and Tulson for House</small></p>	<p>Instructions to the Voter: To vote for a person FILL IN the oval next to the name. To vote on a ballot question FILL IN the oval next to "yes" or "no". Use only a pencil or pen. If you make a mistake, give the ballot back and get a new one. DO NOT cast more votes than are allowed in each race.</p> <p>For State Senator District 02 you may vote for one or leave it blank</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Brock L. Greenfield</p>

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Groton Post No. 39 American Legion



Annual



Turkey Party

Saturday, Nov. 12, 2016

Starting at 6:30 p.m.

Groton Legion Post Home, 10 N. Main.

Turkey, Ham and Bacon
to be given away

FREE ADMISSION

**DOOR
PRIZE!**

Lunch served
by Auxiliary



Groton United Methodist Church Fall Dinner

Sunday, November 6, 2016

11 am to 1:30 pm

Roast Beef Dinner

Adults \$10 Children 6 - 10 \$5

Children age 5 and under Free



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Today in Weather History

November 3, 2003: Heavy snow fell across the area. Snowfall of 6 to 9 inches fell across Big Stone County in Minnesota, with nine inches in Ortonville. Heavy snow of up to eight inches fell across Grant County in South Dakota. Six inches fell at Big Stone City and 8 inches fell at Milbank. Heavy snow also fell from the early morning to around noon across parts of central South Dakota. Six inches of snow fell at Kennebec, Fort Thompson, Gann Valley, and Miller.

1927: Historical flooding occurred across Vermont from November 2nd through the 4th. This flood washed out 1285 bridges, miles of roads and railways, and several homes and buildings. Eighty four people were killed from the flooding, including Lt. Governor S. Hollister Jackson.

1966: An early season snowfall, which started on the 2nd, whitened the ground from Alabama to Michigan. Mobile, Alabama had their earliest snowflakes on record. Louisville, Kentucky measured 13.1 inches, Nashville, Tennessee reported 7.2 inches and Huntsville, Alabama had 4 inches of snow.

1890 - The temperature at Los Angeles, CA, reached 96 degrees, a November record for 76 years. (David Ludlum)

1927 - Somerset VT was deluged with 8.77 inches of rain to establish a 24 hour record for the state. (3rd-4th) (The Weather Channel)

1961 - A rare November thunderstorm produced snow at Casper, WY. (3rd-4th) (The Weather Channel)








1987 - Twenty-one cities, mostly in the Ohio Valley, reported record high temperatures for the date. The afternoon high of 80 degrees at Columbus OH was their warmest reading of record for so late in the season. Showers and thundershowers associated with a tropical depression south of Florida produced 4.28 inches of rain at Clewiston in 24 hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A sharp cold front brought about an abrupt end to Indian Summer in the north central U.S. Up to a foot of snow blanketed Yellowstone Park WY, and winds in the mountains near the Washoe Valley of southeastern Wyoming gusted to 78 mph. Unseasonably warm weather continued in the south central U.S. Del Rio TX tied Laredo TX and McAllen TX for honors as the hot spot in the nation with a record warm afternoon high of 91 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Cold weather prevailed in the central U.S. Six cities in Texas, Minnesota, and Michigan, reported record low temperatures for the date. The low of 7 above zero at Marquette MI was their coldest reading of record for so early in the season. (The National Weather Summary)

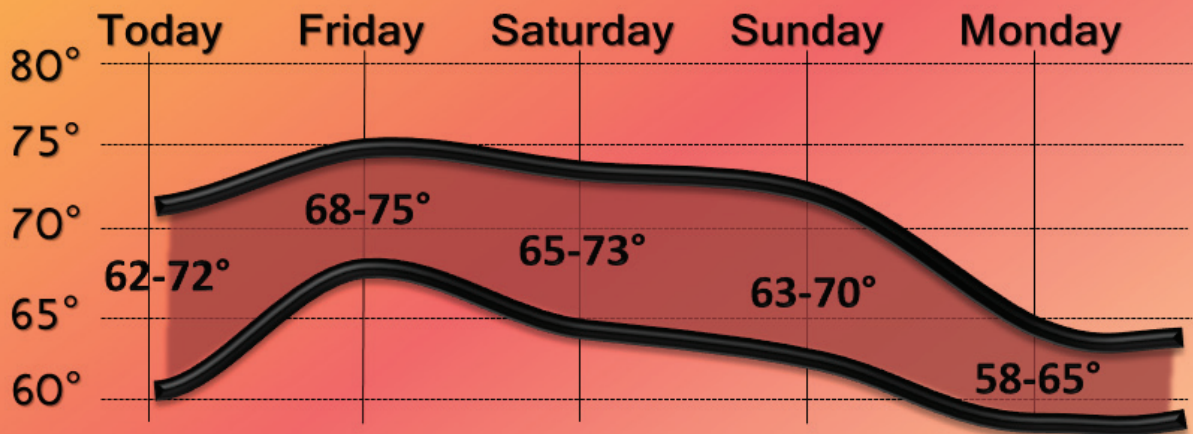
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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Partly Sunny then Slight Chance Rain
High: 67 °F	Low: 33 °F	High: 70 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 46 °F	High: 64 °F

MILD THROUGH THE WEEKEND

High Temperature Forecast



 Average Highs
Upper 40s & Low 50s



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD

weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 11/3/2016 4:08 AM Central

Published on: 11/03/2016 at 4:13AM

Very mild and dry air will remain with us through the next several days, with temperatures topping out some 15 to 25 degrees above average through the weekend. Records will be difficult to achieve, and we'll likely fall a few degrees shy. The only chance for moisture comes Sunday with an isolated light shower or two.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 63.2 F at 4:35 PM

Low Outside Temp: 39.2 F at 11:56 PM

High Gust: 10.0 Mph at 1:07 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 75° in 1903

Record Low: 1° in 1991

Average High: 48°F

Average Low: 25°F

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.09

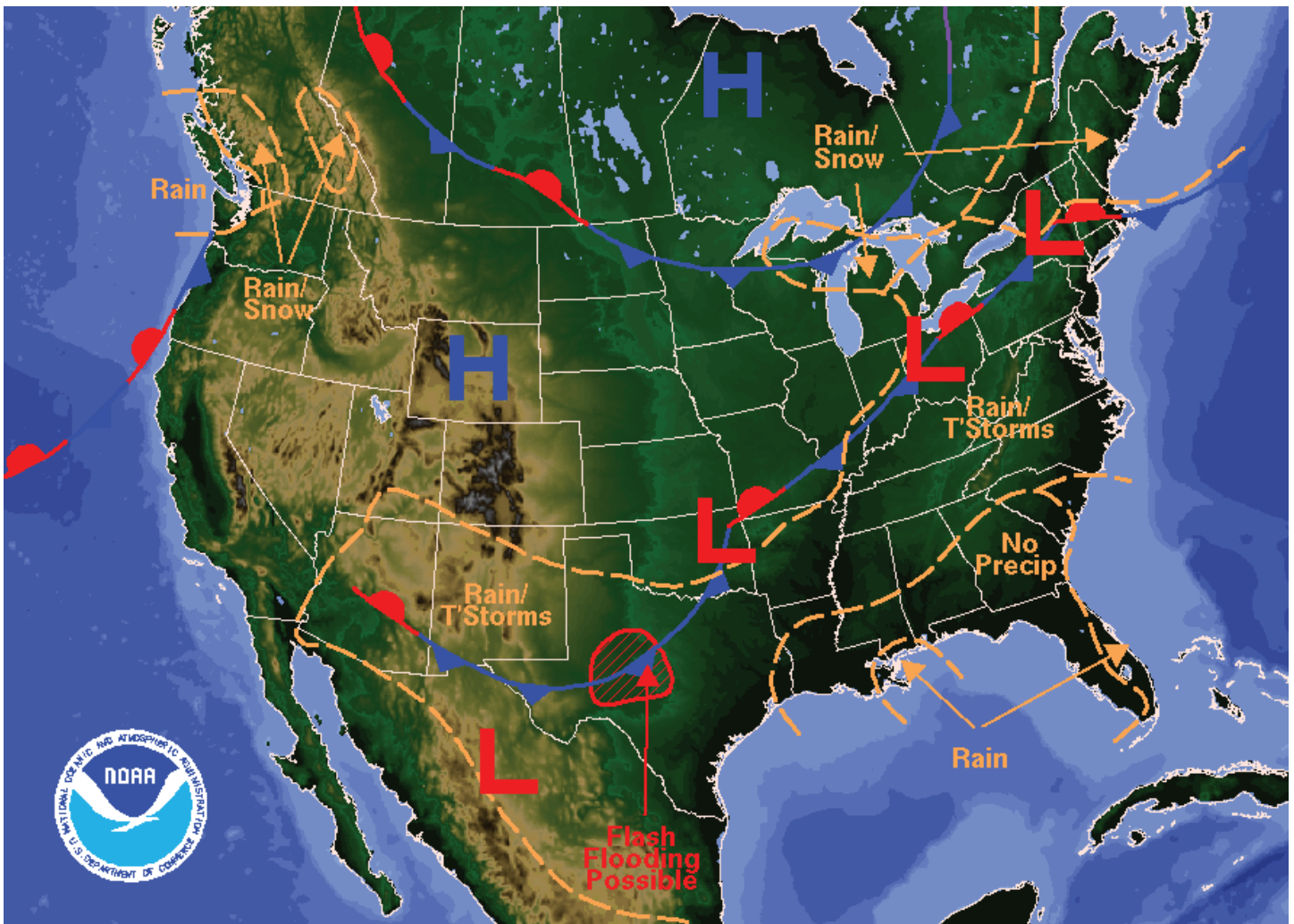
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 20.56

Precip Year to Date: 15.00

Sunset Tonight: 6:17 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:17 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Thu, Nov 03, 2016, issued 4:35 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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GIVE UP OR GO ON?

Little Margie was having a difficult time learning to skate. It seemed as though the skates her father gave her far exceeded the strength and coordination of her legs and muscles. A neighbor watching her fall down and get up was amazed at her tenacity and determination. Finally he said to her, "Why don't you give up?"

"Because," she said with tears in her eyes, "my father didn't give me these skates to give up with but to go on with."

How like our Heavenly Father. He does not "give" things to us to cause us to fall down, but to help us "go" with Him and grow into the likeness of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

We speak often about Paul's "affliction" – not ever knowing what it was or the problems it may have caused him personally. But we do know that he said, "So I am glad to boast about my weaknesses...for when I am weak, then I am strong."

The great lesson for us to learn from Paul is that if and when we are willing to admit our weakness, God can and will fill us with His power and strength. There is always the temptation for us to try to "do it on our own." It is the natural thing to do. But that is not how God created us. God created us with the need to depend on Him for everything.

Prayer: Father, give us a willingness to recognize that in You, with You and through You, we can overcome any weakness that may defeat us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses...For when I am weak then I am strong.



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605/397-2365**

News from the Associated Press

Minnesota man to stand trial in South Dakota slaying

HURON, S.D. (AP) — A Minnesota man charged in the slaying of a man in eastern South Dakota is set for trial early next year.

Thirty-two-year-old Jose Vega, of Montevideo, Minnesota, pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder in June in the May beating death of 49-year-old Keith Houck at a rural Cavour home.

KOKK radio reports that Vega's trial is scheduled to begin Jan. 17.

Information from: KOKK-AM, <http://www.kokk.com>

If Dakota Access pipeline were to move, where?

By JAMES MacPHERSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — President Barack Obama has raised the possibility of a reroute of the four-state Dakota Access oil pipeline in southern North Dakota to allay the concerns of American Indians and others who have demonstrated against the project for months. The president says the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is examining alternatives but the agency has not disclosed them and a spokeswoman declined comment.

Some questions and answers about a possible reroute:

WHAT'S THE CURRENT ROUTE, AND WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

The 1,172-mile, \$3.8 billion pipeline being built by Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners would carry oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa to a shipping point at Patoka, Illinois. It will skirt the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

The Standing Rock Sioux object to the project, saying it could threaten drinking water and destroy sacred sites.

About 350 miles of the pipeline would pass through North Dakota at a cost of about \$1.4 billion, making it the longest and most expensive leg of the project. It crosses the Missouri River twice and the Little Missouri once in North Dakota.

Construction of the pipeline is nearly done across North Dakota, with the exception of about a mile-long section across federal land and beneath Lake Oahe, a Missouri River reservoir. The company is still awaiting an easement from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to start work there.

DID THE COMPANY LOOK AT OTHER ROUTES IN NORTH DAKOTA?

Yes. The company said in documents to North Dakota regulators that it considered other possible routes but none of them were considered a "viable alternative." The route picked in North Dakota parallels the existing Northern Border Pipeline, which crosses the Dakotas as it carries natural gas from Canada and the U.S. to the Chicago area.

The Dakota Access pipeline uses a nearly identical route as the natural gas pipeline to cross Lake Oahe near the Standing Rock reservation. The company did consider — but did not propose — deviating from the natural gas route, through a crossing of the Missouri River north of Bismarck, and about 50 miles upstream of the current location. But the Corps said in an environmental review that the crossing wasn't viable since it was more than 10 miles longer and required crossing more water, wetlands and real estate, and posed a potential threat to Bismarck's water supply.

IS THE TRIBE OPPOSED TO ANY ROUTE?

Not necessarily. Standing Rock Sioux Chairman Dave Archambault has said that the tribe does not oppose oil pipelines if they do not threaten water sources, environmentally sensitive areas or sacred sites. He said a route that would follow existing west-east and north-south oil pipeline corridors that avoid Missouri River crossings would be acceptable to him.

COMPANY'S POSITION

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Energy Transfer Partners isn't eager to embrace a reroute.

The company warned in court documents months ago that a one-year delay in construction would mean \$1.4 billion in lost revenue. On Wednesday, it said in a statement it's not aware of any plans for a new route in North Dakota, and it remains "confident we will receive our easement in a timely fashion."

The company has been confident of building the pipeline since it was first announced about two years ago and days after Republican Gov. Jack Dalrymple called on the industry and government officials to build more pipelines to keep pace with the state's oil production.

Energy Transfer Partners was so eager to build the pipeline that it began staging mountainous piles of steel pipe across the four-state route before it had gotten all necessary easements and regulatory approval from federal regulators, as well as those in North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois.

NORTH DAKOTA REGULATORS' VIEW

North Dakota's Public Service Commission, a state regulatory agency with jurisdiction over everything from pipelines to auctioneers, doesn't like the idea of a reroute or going through the permit approval process again.

Chairwoman Julie Fedorchak said Wednesday she has "grave concerns" about requiring more regulatory hoops for "a company that has already completed the process and received the permits. I just don't think that's good public policy."

Commissioner Brian Kalk said the concerns of the Standing Rock Sioux are legitimate but "this is a very good route. If you're going to build a pipeline, this is as safe as it can be built."

Great Plains Zoo strives to conserve and protect animals

By Christopher Dexter, Argus Leader

GREAT PLAINS, S.D. (AP) — Take one step inside the Rare Rhinos of Africa exhibit at the Great Plains Zoo, and immediately you forget how old you are. Standing before you is a nearly 2,500-pound animal not indigenous to South Dakota, the United States or even North America.

It's not every day you get to see an Eastern black rhino, let alone twice in two weeks, all while working.

Imara, as she's called, has been at the zoo since 1999. She's slowly munching on some hay as our group passes the sliding glass doors into the exhibit.

The zookeeper opens a side door that leads down to the pen. Imara forgets all about the hay and slowly heads toward the loose bars of the fence. She knows the zookeeper has something much better than hay: fresh vegetables.

While she plays a major part in this story, it's the quiet little guy next to her that was the catalyst for it all.

In September, Imara gave birth to her third rhino calf. At the time, the calf was just one of 57 Eastern black rhinos in zoos across North America, a species that has only 740 left in the wild.

Over the course of our time at the exhibit, we were able to get an up-close look at the pair. The calf honestly reminds you of a clumsy puppy, constantly moving, darting around, all the curiosity in the world.

He has no idea that in the wild his species is being hunted to extinction because the horn he eventually will grow is worth nearly \$30,000. The horn is used for traditional medicinal purposes in Asia, but it has shown no medical value.

"Our fear is that if rhinos continue to be poached, be shot, three or four a day, all of the rhinos will be gone in the wild in our lifetime," said Elizabeth Whaley, president and CEO of the Great Plains Zoo.

It's tough to accept that as you watch him playfully rub his head back and forth on the bars, or be full of energy one minute and plop down on a bed of hay the next.

But it's also a good reminder that while the calf is fun to look at, there's also a complex conservation program at work behind the scenes of the zoo.

Imara and her male companion, Jubba, have produced two other offspring since they have been at the zoo, and they have in turn started their own families.

The first calf born to the pair, Kapuki, gave birth to a male rhino in 2013 at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago. It was the first rhino born at that zoo in 24 years.

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Imara and Jubba's second calf, Kiano, just became a father Oct. 11 at the Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines. If you are keeping track at home, that means the little calf at the Great Plains Zoo is already an uncle. It's this kind of family tree that personifies the conservation efforts at the zoo. Of the 139 species there, 24 are endangered.

"For a zoo our size to do that kind of endangered species and management is really aggressive, and we're proud of that," Whaley said.

For the past 25 years, the zoo has been accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, or AZA. Of the more than 2,400 zoos in the United States, only 216 zoos are a part of the association, the Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2f2CWNT>) reported.

To become a part of the AZA is no easy process. Once the organization has decided to apply, they go through an eight-month application process.

"By being accredited, it means that we meet these very high, very stringent standards for care," Whaley said. "And it's everything from animal care and how we do our veterinary work through how we support our institution to how we engage the public. They look at every single thing."

If approved, the accreditation lasts for five years. However, to renew means the organization must through the entire process again.

It's something that Rob Vernon, senior vice president of the AZA, said sets them apart from other accrediting organizations.

"The standards that they went through the first time are not going to be the same standards that they go through five years later," Vernon said. "Our standards are continuously evolving and changing and adapting to modern geological practices."

Because their standards are constantly evolving, the AZA has someone designated at each facility to keep up with the changes and the new standards that are implemented. By doing this it allows for a zoo to not only stay current with the standards, but also, so they aren't caught off guard when they re-apply for accreditation.

In the AZA, the zoo is in the middle in terms of size, but their conservation efforts have not gone unnoticed by their peers.

"I think for a zoo of their size, their conservation efforts are very aggressive and the successes that they have are significant," Vernon said.

The rhinos, along with the 23 other endangered animals in the zoo are part of Species Survival Plans. The plans are complex collaborations between the AZA network of facilities to maintain a healthy and genetically diverse animal populations across the Association.

Each plan is headed up by a coordinator who is an expert in the field. The coordinator works with a team of experts including trained population biologists and species experts from across the country.

For the rhinos, the program has been very successful, but they aren't alone.

The Red Wolf is another species benefiting from the conservation efforts of the zoo.

Once considered extinct in the wild, the Red Wolf has since been reintroduced, but their numbers are extremely low. There's an estimated 50 in the wild and 225 in zoos.

Those numbers grew in April when Ayasha, who was also born in the Great Plains Zoo, gave birth to a litter of three female pups.

Another family tree started because of the Great Plains Zoo and the AZA.

As you wind the paths of the zoo, going from exhibit to exhibit, past the towering giraffes, over the Big Sioux River to the penguins and stopping by the tigers and flamingos, it's easy to forget each and every one of those species is endangered in some form or another.

The zoo's hope is that while you and your family enjoy everything it has to offer, that you also get some knowledge out of the visit; to care and help protect them.

"If we want our kids to be able to see these amazing animals in person or hopefully even in the wild and rather than on an iPad or on the flat page of a book, we're going to work to save these animals," Whaley said.

Information from: Argus Leader, <http://www.argusleader.com>

South Dakota pheasant producers preserve pheasant population

By Jake Shama, The Daily Republic

STICKNEY, S.D. (AP) — Row by row, Randall Kuyper drove past thousands of birds waiting for their meal, stopping every few yards to fill a bin with feed.

With his dog, Toby, by his side, Kuyper cares for his poultry like any other farmer, but his birds have one extra step before they end up on someone's plate.

Kuyper was feeding nearly 20,000 pheasants soon to be released into the wild, which he sees as crucial to maintain South Dakota's place as the pheasant capital of the nation.

"South Dakota wouldn't have very good hunting if it wasn't for that," said Randall Kuyper, owner of Kuyper Pheasant Hatchery southwest of Stickney. "There's just too much hunter pressure for the birds than the wild can produce."

Kuyper Pheasant Hatchery has approximately 14,000 roosters and 4,000 hens, and Kuyper said he is among the five largest pheasant producers in the state. He sells roosters for \$16 and hens for \$12, and while he has sold quite a few birds already this fall, he expects sales to pick up quickly after season opener.

Statewide pheasant season opens at noon Saturday, but private shooting preserves, which purchase many captive game birds, may host hunts from Sept. 1 to March 31. For the 2015-16 pheasant season, 432,304 birds were released on 200 private shooting preserves, according to South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks (GF&P), but there was no record of how many were roosters or hens, The Daily Republic (<http://bit.ly/2fjqAjG>) reported.

For the same season, 276,383 birds were harvested, 243,000 — 88 percent — of which were formerly captive, usually identifiable by a hole through both nostrils where a blinder was attached to avoid pecking in captivity.

In 2015, hunters harvested 1.26 million birds, meaning pheasants released on shooting preserves accounted for more than 19 percent of the total pheasant harvest. GF&P has approved 203 shooting preserves for the 2016-17 season, making up 193,463 acres.

But while GF&P keeps detailed records about birds released and harvested on shooting preserves, purchases and hunting on other lands are harder to track, meaning the percentage of the harvest made up by released birds is likely higher.

According to Janelle Blaha, GF&P private shooting preserve and permits coordinator, 623,026 captive pheasants, including hens, were sold last year by 95 commercial game breeders in South Dakota and 15 from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas and North Dakota, but that doesn't mean they were all released.

"Not all of these birds are released into the wild. Some are breeding stock, some are butchered and sold, some are used for display mounts," Blaha said. "However, I would guess that a majority of them are released into the wild."

But because the department doesn't track captive birds released on non-preserve lands, a landowner could supplement his own pheasant population, and GF&P has no way to track the number.

"I am sure that there are more birds released by individuals or by unpermitted captive game breeders, but we do not have a way to track them at this time," Blaha said.

Kuyper believes the number may be much higher than GF&P estimates. He believes as many as 1.2 million birds are sold in South Dakota each year, based on estimates of approximately 10 other pheasant farms in South Dakota and major exporters from other states.

According to Todd Tedrow, with the South Dakota Animal Industry Board, 390,166 pheasants and pheasant-hatching eggs were imported into South Dakota from July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016.

Add that total to the GF&P count, and more than one million game birds were sold in South Dakota. But Tedrow expects some or all of those birds have already been counted in the 623,000 birds sold by licensed breeders.

In addition, a bird may have been purchased from a breeder and then sold multiple times to other breed-

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ers or landowners, adding to GF&P's total each time, but GF&P Law Enforcement Administrator Andy Alban believes the number is an accurate count of the number of birds sold.

There are also some breeders who raise pheasants with a non-commercial license, meaning they are not sold to others, and anyone holding a captive game bird for just a few days does not need a license, Alban said, making some activities difficult to track and keeping the department from knowing exactly how many farm-raised pheasants are released or harvested each year.

Plus, Alban said, the department has investigated instances of people selling game birds illegally, so there may be more birds released than recorded as sold.

"I can't say that number is, with a great deal of confidence, that it's accurate just because of all the nuances that come into that," Alban said. "Certainly, the actual number would be higher than that."

Still, GF&P Upland Game Biologist Travis Runia said the state was committed to improving habitat and production of wild pheasants, and he believes those make up a much greater percentage than farm-raised ones.

"I am confident our pheasant harvest estimate is dominated by wild birds, but I cannot estimate the exact breakdown," Runia said.

Runia said GF&P develops both grasslands and taller habitats, like food plots or cattails, to protect pheasants at different times of year, and the department allows cows to graze on the lands every five to seven years to disturb the grass and promote the growth of other plants, making the land more productive.

GF&P makes habitat improvements using money from license sales. In 2015, GF&P sold 93,240 resident small-game and combination small-game/fishing licenses for \$3.9 million and 89,576 non-resident small-game licenses for \$10.6 million. There were more than 65,000 licensed resident pheasant hunters that year and almost 85,000 nonresidents, bringing in a total of \$14.5 million.

According to Habitat Program Administrator Paul Coughlin, GF&P spends about \$3.5 million per year on habitat improvements on public lands, but 75 percent of that money is provided by the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, which collects an excise tax from arms and ammunition. That means \$850,000 of the \$14.5 million license money is spent on improving public habitat.

The department also works with private landowners on habitat improvements through the Wildlife Partners Program and walk-in areas, Coughlin said, spending \$625,000. Again, the programs are supplemented by Pittman-Robertson funds, bringing the total to about 2.5 million.

Runia said the department will continue to use funds to improve habitat, but he said there are no plans to buy captive birds to release in public hunting areas. Runia said he sees people harvesting pheasants on public lands well into the season, and while it may not be a shooting-preserve experience, he said there are enough public land opportunities to continually find success.

"If hunters want to have that experience of shooting tame birds, they can do that on preserves or buy those birds on their own. Right now, our priority is definitely to try to manage for the wild birds and that wild-bird hunting experience," Runia said.

He also cited studies claiming released birds produced three broods from every 100 hens, compared to 30 broods from 100 wild hens, meaning releasing birds is not an effective way to increase population.

Kuyper believes the birds can adapt to the wild more successfully within a day or two. He said it's not unusual to see an escaped bird with a blinder survive year-round and reproduce.

And to ensure his pheasants act like wild birds, Kuyper said he waits until birds are 18 weeks old before selling them. Although the industry standard is to wait 15 weeks, Kuyper said many sell them younger, when they cannot fly as well.

Wayne Haines, a farmer and hunter from White Lake, doesn't believe there are enough pheasants on public lands throughout the season. He said a large portion of pheasants harvested in South Dakota were originally pen-raised.

"The fact that the state provides the birds is more of a hoax than it is a reality. Public shooting areas don't have any birds. It's that simple," Haines said.

Haines didn't complain about the cost of licenses because hunters that travel to South Dakota "can afford it or else most of them wouldn't do it." Instead, he is concerned that private landowners are providing

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more birds than the state.

"After the first two or three trips through that (public) property, the birds are either gone or dead, and the state still says, 'Hey, we got plenty of places for you to hunt,'" he said. "The only places where the birds are left is the private property that makes sure they provide for the hunters that come to their farm year after year."

Haines operated a shooting preserve 20 years ago and planted 40,000 trees on his 3,000-acre property. He decided to leave the program, but he still buys 1,000 pheasants every year to supplement his population.

Wild birds usually provide strong hunting during opening weekend, but with roughly 200 guests stopping by throughout the season, the natural population cannot stand up to the pressure.

"We have four sons, and when they come back and bring friends, we have to make sure they have something to shoot," Haines said. "You won't find it on state and federal grasslands."

But what upsets Haines most is road hunting. South Dakotans who own land next to a highway pay taxes on land up to the center of the road, but they are not allowed to plant crops or make improvements on either side of the asphalt.

Landowners are allowed to cut the grass in the ditch for agricultural benefit, but Haines thinks he should have the exclusive right to hunt the pheasants there as well.

"They're not shooting the state's bird. They're shooting the farmer's bird. The bird grew up on the farmer's land and we farmed for them," Haines said.

Runia disagreed, and praised landowners who provide habitat. But, Runia said, as soon as a bird is released, it changes from poultry to a wild animal and is regulated by the state.

"We obviously have a lot of landowners doing a lot of great things for wildlife as far as providing habitat and doing things to manage those birds, but pheasants are a public trust resource, and they are not owned by any individual. Those birds are on public property, and they are certainly available for harvest by anybody," Runia said.

Runia said hunting quality may be better on private lands with good habitat that are hunted less frequently than state lands, but according to a 2012 public opinion survey, 55 percent of hunters said public lands were important, very important or critical to their ability to hunt pheasants.

Additionally, 58 percent of hunters utilized public land during the season and 64 percent hunted road right-of-ways. Private shooting preserves had the lowest percentage with 13.

The survey did not ask hunters to rate the quality of public hunting lands, but Runia said that could be a question for hunters in the future.

Equally frustrating for Haines is the method some use to road hunt. He's seen several people drive up the road, quickly pull over, hop out of the vehicle and shoot a pheasant before quickly driving off.

The vehicle is supposed to be parked and hunters are required to stay 660 feet away from livestock, churches or occupied dwellings, which Haines called an "unenforceable rule." Prosecuting such cases is difficult because if a law enforcement officer doesn't see it occur, there's typically no way to prove it.

"It's not road hunting. It's drive-by shooting," Haines said.

Alban expressed frustration with "run-and-gun" shooting as well, but said 50 citations were issued for the offense last year. Including the offense of shooting from a vehicle, he said close to 100 citations were issued, and those numbers do not include anyone who was simply given a warning.

But if anyone sees a hunter breaking any game law, Alban urged them to call the Turn in Poachers hotline.

While farm-raised pheasants may play a large role in South Dakota's most well-known pastime, Runia said population indexes show wild pheasants are still more abundant than in all other areas in the nation and populations have responded positively to conservation programs. So, Runia said, GF&P will continue to seek new opportunities to provide public hunting access and produce a sustainable population of wild birds.

"There is a lot of research that shows we can successfully manage wild pheasants through habitat management," Runia said. "Just like the hunters, we certainly like to see more public hunting opportunities, both the habitat and that access, and we're constantly exploring opportunities to add more."

US attorney in the Sioux Falls serves as election officer

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF, Yankton Daily Press and Dakotan

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — Kevin Koliner isn't running for office in South Dakota, but he'll be keeping close watch on the Election Day balloting.

For that matter, he has already started monitoring for any fraud or improper activity.

The Yankton native works as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Sioux Falls office. He will serve as the U.S. Department of Justice's district election officer (DEO) in South Dakota.

In his position, Koliner will serve as the Justice Department's point person on Election Day. He will oversee any potential election fraud complaints and voting rights abuses that may crop up in the Nov. 8 general election, the Yankton Daily Press and Dakotan (<http://bit.ly/2e3DoOY>) reported.

"We're federal officers, and we handle questions related to federal offenses," he said.

The Justice Department has conducted its Election Day monitoring program for years, Koliner said. This includes the Justice Department placing monitoring officials at different locations if something happens during any federal election.

"It's nothing new to this election. It's no reaction to the national conversation, and it has nothing to do with the news of the day or comments made in the news cycle," he said.

"There's always someone designated as the district election officer. It's a role that's been offered by the Department of Justice for many generations."

South Dakota hasn't seen many federal election offenses, Koliner said. "We don't have a history of violations rising to the level of federal prosecution in South Dakota," he added.

U.S. Attorney Randy Seiler appointed Koliner as the district election officer for the South Dakota district. Election officers are appointed in each Justice Department district, such as Nebraska and Iowa.

"Every citizen must be able to vote without interference or discrimination and to have that vote counted," Seiler said in a news release. "The Department of Justice will act promptly and aggressively to protect the integrity of the election process."

With early voting under way, Koliner's duties as a district election officer have already begun. He has coordinated efforts with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

"I'm available at any point in time to answer questions or complaints to be lodged in any of these matters," he said. "It's not just Election Day, when we do intend to have devoted duty stations where we are managing the phones.

"I'll be positioned with an FBI agent designated for that day. We're blocking off (our schedule) for Election Day, at the very least when the polls are open. We're ready if anything happens."

Koliner has served since 2006 with the U.S. Attorney's office in Sioux Falls. However, the appointment as a district election officer is new to him.

"This is my first federal election (in this role). Randy Seiler formerly served as the district election officer. When he became U.S. attorney, he appointed me," Koliner said. "We receive a list of information from the Department of Justice, and I have gone to various training. As part of the job, I went out to training in South Carolina."

Koliner's training has covered a full range of federal election laws.

"We learn what constitutes potential federal election crimes," he said. "A big part of the training is on the laws, statutes, elements and case studies, along with past prosecutions in the courts."

The Justice Department becomes involved in elections involving federal offices, Koliner said. Those federal offices include the presidential, Senate and House races.

"We hold federal criminal jurisdiction over any election where a federal candidate's name is on the ballot. That applies to any federal or non-federal race," he said. "As long as a single ballot has a federal race, then the election process itself confers federal jurisdiction on us."

Election fraud and voting rights violations can take many forms, Koliner said. Federal offenses include providing false information for voting or registration, falsely claiming citizenship and preventing qualified voters from casting their ballots.

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"We're concerned about individuals being paid to vote for certain candidates," he said. "We're concerned about bribery and offenses such as multiple voting."

In addition, federal law protects against such crimes as buying and selling votes, impersonating voters, altering vote tallies, stuffing ballot boxes and marking ballots for voters against their wishes or without their input.

"We're also watching for people who are intimidating voters through physical force or through threats of force, or people who are intimidating persons trying to register," Kolinier said.

For example, the federal voting rights law may be violated by actions designed to interrupt or intimidate voters at polling places by questioning or challenging them. Another federal offense may come from photographing or videotaping voters on the pretext of uncovering illegal voting.

Further, federal law protects the right of voters to mark their own ballot or to be assisted by a person of their choice, Kolinier said.

"We're also concerned about things that may not rise to the level of federal crimes," he said. "Those areas include access to voting and (handicapped accessibility) compliance."

As part of the Election Day effort, Kolinier works with the FBI on establishing a contact list. Letters are sent to the Department of Homeland Security, the South Dakota secretary of state's office, attorney general's office and Division of Criminal Investigation (DC I), county auditors, state's attorneys and tribal offices.

"The FBI oversees the investigation of federal election crimes with one exception," he said. "The Department of Homeland Security agency is designated to handle any cybersecurity concerns with elections."

In addition, face-to-face meetings are held with officials at some levels, Kolinier said.

"We had a variety of meetings with folks from the state side, and I was impressed by their level of preparedness," he said.

Kolinier emphasized his role focuses on federal matters.

"I don't work with state election law. There are a number of state violations that are not federal violations," he said. "I also don't answer calls about things like, 'We opened the polling place a half-hour late, so do we stay open another half-hour? What do we do?' Those questions are referred to the secretary of state's office."

The U.S. Attorney's office also works with the American Indian tribes in the state, he said.

"We work with Indian Country, but where there is a purely tribal election, the federal government has no jurisdiction," he said.

In order to prevent Election Day problems, people can choose early voting and studying the ballot beforehand, Kolinier said. That's particularly important where the ballot contains a large number of races and measures.

In approaching Election Day, Kolinier sees himself as a link between state and federal officials.

"I hope to be a source of information but also a conduit of information," he said. "That's whether I'm helping state officials get in touch with the right law enforcement or with helping Washington D.C. on matters that rise to national significance."

The sanctity of voting must be protected in each election, Kolinier said. In fact, the Justice Department contains divisions devoted to election law enforcement.

"It's a bedrock of our democracy," he said. "Few things are more important than ensuring our elections are fair and free, and that all of those who have that franchise have the ability to vote without intimidation."

In that respect, Kolinier feels prepared for next week's general election.

"My office and department have prioritized this," he said. "We have a system in place that ensures elections without interference. I also feel confident (people's) votes will be counted."

Information from: Yankton Press and Dakotan, <http://www.yankton.net/>

Pipeline company could face fines; protesters pepper-sprayed

By BLAKE NICHOLSON and JOHN L. MONE, Associated Press

CANNON BALL, N.D. (AP) — Officers in riot gear clashed again Wednesday with protesters near the

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Dakota Access pipeline, hitting dozens with pepper spray as they waded through waist-deep water in an attempt to reach property owned by the pipeline's developer.

The confrontation came hours after North Dakota regulators criticized the pipeline company for not immediately reporting the discovery of American Indian artifacts and a day after President Barack Obama raised the possibility of future reroutes to alleviate tribal concerns.

Public Service Commission Chairwoman Julie Fedorchak said she was "extremely disappointed" that Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners waited 10 days before reporting last month's discovery of stone cairns and other artifacts. The panel could decide to levy fines of up to \$200,000, Fedorchak said, though she said such a high amount would be unlikely.

After an inspection, company consultants decided to divert the construction by about 50 feet, even though they determined there was a "low likelihood" any additional artifacts were buried nearby. The State Historic Preservation Office did concur with the company's plan on how to proceed after the artifacts were found.

Although that change was relatively minor, Obama said it was possible the Army Corps of Engineers could eventually examine much larger ones that would reroute the pipeline in southern North Dakota to alleviate tribal concerns. He made the remarks during an interview Tuesday with the online news outlet NowThis.

On Wednesday afternoon, protesters tried to build a wooden pedestrian bridge across a creek to enter the property, then attempted to swim or boat across when officers dismantled the bridge, Morton County Sheriff's spokeswoman Donnell Hushka said. Two arrests were reported.

Volunteer medics treated some of the protesters for hypothermia during the confrontation near the mouth of the Cannonball River.

About 140 people were arrested on the property last week in a law enforcement operation that cleared the encampment.

The potential for damage to American Indian sites and artifacts has been a flashpoint in a monthslong protest over the pipeline, which is intended to carry crude from western North Dakota almost 1,200 miles to a shipping point in Patoka, Illinois. The Standing Rock Sioux, whose reservation lies near the pipeline route, have led a protest over that issue and the pipeline's potential hazard to drinking water.

Tribal officials said in September they had identified cultural artifacts on private land along the route. After that finding, North Dakota's chief archaeologist, Paul Picha, inspected the area and said no sign of artifacts or human remains had been found.

Picha said he was notified in a timely manner of the most recent discovery in a new area but didn't report it to the commission because he thought the pipeline company would. Both Picha and Fedorchak said the site itself was properly handled, with Energy Transfer Partners moving the pipeline route to avoid the artifacts.

"We reviewed the information, wrote a letter of correspondence ... saying we agreed with the avoidance plan," Picha said.

He also noted that the rerouting isn't unusual. During development of the project, "there were multiple reroutes of the pipeline corridor for various reasons — cultural, environmental, landowner concerns — 140, 150 reroutes," he said.

Company spokeswoman Vicki Granado didn't immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press about the potential for fines over the lag in reporting about the artifacts. The company would have an opportunity for a hearing to dispute any allegations. A company attorney said in an Oct. 27 letter to the PSC that the company didn't intentionally delay notifying the agency.

Although there's no set time frame for reporting such a discovery, PSC Commissioner Brian Kalk said that typically "the intent is immediately."

Fedorchak said the company could potentially be fined either for the reporting delay or for moving on with construction without getting PSC clearance. Both will be investigated, she said.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe has not weighed in on the find. Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault and tribal Historic Preservation Officer Jon Eagle Sr. did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The 1,772-mile pipeline is largely complete outside of North Dakota. The federal government in Sep-

tember ordered a temporary halt to construction on Corps land around and underneath Lake Oahe, a Missouri River reservoir in the Dakotas. The Corps is reviewing its permitting of the project but has given no timetable for a decision.

Follow Blake Nicholson on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/NicholsonBlake>

Nicholson and Associated Press writer James MacPherson reported from Bismarck.

School teaches students Native American tradition

By Mike Anderson, Rapid City Journal

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (AP) — The Pine Ridge Girls' School is embarking on a mission to prepare young Lakota women for a college education and a fruitful life beyond the borders of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

The Porcupine-based school — the country's first non-denominational all-girls college prep school on a Native American reservation — had its grand opening on Sept. 23. And since then, the teachers have been bonding with their first class of sixth and seventh graders.

The girls — 11 in total in the inaugural class — will spend the rest of their K-12 educational careers at the school, and new classes will be brought on every year.

Apart from it being a school just for girls, it is also unique in its approach to Native American tradition, the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2eWjJjb>) reported. Every lesson at the fledgling school — be it science or U.S. history — is communicated to the girls through the lens of Lakota language and culture.

"We're trying to teach them to be proud of who they are," said the school's head, Cindy Giago.

The school's name in Lakota is Anpo Wicahpi, which translates to "Morning Star."

On a warm day in late September, Helene Gaddi led the day's science lesson into the overgrown wilderness behind the Pine Ridge Girls' School. Wading through knee-high prairie grass, the six girls in Gaddi's class turned and looked when she pointed and said "What kind of trees are these?"

"Chokecherry trees," one of the girls chimed in immediately.

Resourcefulness and a deep connection to the natural world: These are important qualities for Native American women, Gaddi said.

The privately funded college-preparatory school is designed to create a nurturing environment for young women on the reservation to learn in ways that suit them best. While taught through the lens of Lakota culture, the science in Gaddi's outdoors classroom is sound, practical, and like every subject taught at the school by the staff of three teachers, based on established curriculum, she said.

Earlier in the month, she taught the girls how to make lip balm from plant ingredients harvested in the greenery behind the school. Another day's lesson had to do with floral morphology and stream ecology, Gaddi said. As part of that, she guided the girls down deer paths to a creek winding beneath a formation rocky of bluffs, taking note of different herbs and a bleached cow bones on the way.

"We need more Native women scientists," Gaddi said.

Getting their hands dirty, being able to see, smell, hear and touch the subjects of their lessons; the girls learn better this way, the teacher said before leading her students back up to the school in time for math class. Once back, they learned about circumferences using a drawing of a sweat lodge, or "inipi," in preparation for building one themselves.

The meditative smoke and darkness of the sweat lodge are already familiar to the girls, as are many other Lakota rituals, all taught to them by the school's elders, Gene Giago — Cindy's husband — Rick Two Dogs, and Ethleen Iron Cloud Two Dogs.

Before eating a lunch of pasta with buffalo meat and corn-on-the-cob (homemade in the school's open-air kitchen), the quiet elders looked on as the girls gathered in a circle, smudged with sweet grass, and presented a small offering of food for the spirits. Then one of the girls took a plate to Gene, who smiled and nodded in thanks.

"In a spiritual sense, I watch over the girls," he said. "In a physical sense, I do the laundry and take out the dishes."

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The girls refer to their spiritual instructors as “kaká” and “unci” respectively, the Lakota words for grandfather and grandmother. The intimate titles have arisen organically as a result of the serene and familial atmosphere that Cindy and her small band of teachers have created at the school.

“They treat each other like family,” Cindy said of the girls.

“It makes me feel like home,” said sixth-grader Breiana High Wolf, 12, while her classmates laughed and batted a volleyball between themselves during recess. “It makes me feel comfortable, that I can tell my teachers and classmates everything.”

Like all of her fellow students, Breiana used to attend school elsewhere on or near the reservation. At her old school, Lakota language and culture were taught only during a single period in the day. At the Pine Ridge Girls’ School, it is all around her.

“We get to learn to sing the songs and speak fluently,” she said. “I’m learning our way of life.”

Cindy and the teachers agree that immersion in the language and culture is essential to the learning process and is all too often deficient or altogether missing in schools like the one Breiana used to attend. At the Pine Ridge Girls’ School, all of the students get their own Lakota names, granted to them during spiritual ceremonies. Pasted on each girl’s locker is the name of a Native American woman significant in U.S. history: Winona LaDuke. Jodi Collette. Maria Tallchief. Buffalo Calf Road Woman. Nellie Red Owl. Marie Randall.

“We want to normalize being Lakota, where it’s not separate in our minds,” said Dusty Nelson, the school’s Lakota language and writing teacher. “We are always Lakota. It’s not something we do on the side. A lot of times when people think of academic rigor, they don’t think it includes Lakota thought and philosophy.”

On the dry-erase board in Nelson’s classroom was a Lakota medicine wheel, often used as a sort of flow chart for organizing ideas and schedules. The room was brimming with Lakota books. While the girls wrote in their journals for the day, they bobbed their heads and hummed along to the Native pop music on Nelson’s Bluetooth speaker.

“I love it. It’s beautiful,” Cindy said. “I don’t want to go home; we’re allowing them to create their own identities from what’s inside them.”

The girls have already gone on several field trips, including to Bear Butte near Sturgis and Fort Robinson, Nebraska, to learn how Tashunka Witko, the Lakota name for the war chief Crazy Horse, was captured and killed by U.S. soldiers. They are in the midst of planning another trip, this time to Cannon Ball, North Dakota, where a large group of Native American activists are camped in protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

The trip was the girls’ idea, the teachers said.

“It’s really amazing to see these girls; it’s a miracle happening before our eyes,” Nelson said. “They’ve bonded and they’re being themselves and they’re happy to learn about all this. These girls are really lucky. When I was younger, I feel like if I had a place to go like this, to be who I want to be and comfortable around other girls, I would have had a stronger foundation and I wouldn’t have struggled so much.”

Information from: Rapid City Journal, <http://www.rapidcityjournal.com>

Supporters of payday rate cap campaign fear voter confusion

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Cathy Brechtelsbauer often gives out flyers calling on voters to end payday loan “debt traps.” The small squares showing an illustrated man standing in a bear trap spell it out: One lending measure on the ballot is real, while the other is a fake.

The South Dakota campaign to cap interest rates is relying on volunteers and church denominations across the state — not large TV advertising buys — to explain the difference to voters. But supporters worry that a competing constitutional amendment funded by a car title lender will confuse people.

“The payday lending industry is all about tricking consumers,” said Steve Hildebrand, who is helping lead the rate cap push. “Their constitutional amendment is all about tricking voters.”

Constitutional Amendment U, which is funded by Georgia-based Select Management Resources LLC,

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would let lenders charge any interest rate that a borrower agrees to in writing. Loans without written agreements would be capped at 18 percent annually.

Instead, activists say people who want to curb rates should vote in favor of Initiated Measure 21, which would limit interest charged by businesses such as payday, auto title and installment lenders licensed in South Dakota to 36 percent annually.

Lenders argue that the cap would destroy the industry in South Dakota, while measure supporters say people have options for help other than a snare engineered to profit off the poor.

It's an added wrinkle to the campaign. Organizers have to train supporters to vote for one measure with a bureaucratic name and against another with an equally inscrutable title.

Brechtelsbauer said she's heard of several cases where people voted in ways they didn't intend, only to realize it later.

"It's very frustrating, and so we hope more people will be getting out the word," she said.

Select Management Resources CEO Rod Aycox hasn't returned 16 months of telephone messages from The Associated Press. A company attorney hasn't answered telephone calls or returned emails and voice-mails from the AP.

Seeing the two measures confused 59-year-old Anne Sirovy, who ended up voting in favor of both while recently casting an absentee ballot in Sioux Falls.

The Renner resident favored the 36 percent rate cap, and even signed a petition to get it on the ballot. But, in the end, Sirovy didn't pay much attention and voted for Amendment U because she didn't think it mattered.

"They really both should not have been on there because it is confusing," Sirovy said.

There are indications that rate cap activists are in a stronger position than their foes. A KELO-TV poll found that 58 percent of respondents support Initiated Measure 21, with 22 percent against and 20 percent undecided. Forty-nine percent of respondents opposed Amendment U, while 24 percent supported it and 27 percent were undecided.

The poll of 400 registered South Dakota voters was conducted Oct. 18-20 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points.

Initiated Measure 21 supporters are at a severe fundraising disadvantage, though they have made a small radio ad buy. In contrast, it appears that Select Management Resources is preparing for a big play to end the campaign.

The company, which has at least nine locations in South Dakota under the name North American Title Loans Inc., made a contribution of \$400,000 reported Tuesday to Give Us Credit South Dakota, a group that's opposing Initiated Measure 21.

Federal Communications Commission records show that Give Us Credit South Dakota is airing more than 120 ad spots across KELO-TV, KSFY-TV and KDLT-TV. The committee has also sponsored mail advertising attacking the rate cap as a liberal-backed assault on freedom.

Select Management Resources has pumped more than \$3 million total into the two ballot measure campaigns since last year, including nearly \$1.2 million to Give Us Credit South Dakota and almost \$1.9 million to an organization backing Amendment U.

The heads of both groups haven't returned emails and telephone messages from the AP.

Amendment U appears to be drawn from a playbook used in a 2012 election fight over interest rates in Missouri.

During an unsuccessful campaign to get a 36 percent rate cap on the ballot, two competing initiatives appeared, including one that would have capped annual interest rates at 13.99 percent unless a different agreement was made in writing.

The proposals were submitted by Jefferson City lobbyist Jewell Patek, who said he couldn't disclose the law firm that sent the matter to him because of attorney-client privilege.

"We just file the paperwork," he said.

—

Follow James Nord on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/Jvnord>

American bison designated national mammal of US

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The American bison has been designated the national mammal of the U.S. during a ceremony at Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota.

Congress approved the designation last spring, and it became official Tuesday, the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2faKK2N>) reported. Federal lawmakers have called the bison — North America's largest land animal — the embodiment of American strength, resilience and the nation's pioneer spirit.

The Wildlife Conservation Society worked with Congress for about six years to make the designation happen, said Kelly Aylward, director of the agency's office in Washington.

"It was a long journey, working through the system. But we had great champs in both the House and the Senate," Aylward said, adding that she hopes the designation will help bring more awareness and support to conserving and reviving bison herds across the country.

Tens of millions of bison, also known as buffalo, once thundered across a range stretching from central Canada through the Great Plains and northern Mexico. After a century-long slaughter driven by commercial hunting for buffalo pelts, the population dwindled to a thousand or fewer by the late 1800s.

About 30,000 wild bison now roam the country, with the largest population in Yellowstone National Park. Bison also are scattered in public, tribal and private lands in the U.S. and Canada.

InterTribal Buffalo Council executive director Jim Stone said he hopes greater awareness will also lead to education about the importance of bison to Native Americans.

"It allows for a greater platform for having the conversations and allows for education and outreach and getting people to understand," he said. "There's something that exists in our view of the animal that doesn't exist in (federal systems)."

There had not previously been an official mammal of the United States.

Tuesday's ceremony was scheduled to coincide with Native American Month in November, as well as National Buffalo Day, which is the first Saturday in November.

Information from: Rapid City Journal, <http://www.rapidcityjournal.com>

Ball-hawk Gerry leading No. 9 Huskers' defensive improvement

After needing a year to adjust to a new system, safety Nate Gerry is the leader of Nebraska's defensive resurgence. Gerry picked off two passes in last week's overtime loss at Wisconsin and is closing in on the school career record for interceptions. The Big Ten West-leading and ninth-ranked Huskers visit No. 6 Ohio State on Saturday night.

By ERIC OLSON

AP College Football Writer

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — It was spring practice in 2015, Nathan Gerry's first with Nebraska's new coaching staff, when defensive coordinator Mark Banker pulled him aside one day and told him he should have been able to make a difficult play.

"He almost bit my head off," Banker recalled. "He said, 'How am I supposed to make that play?'"

"Because you're Nate Gerry," Banker replied.

Sure, Gerry's reputation preceded him in the changeover of coaching staffs. He started every game in 2014 and was the team's defensive co-MVP.

Even though he led the Cornhuskers in tackles and interceptions last year, Gerry admits he struggled to learn Banker's pass-coverage system. Banker has taken over coaching the safeties this season, and Gerry has thrived.

He has four interceptions, including two on back-to-back series last week against Wisconsin, and his seven tackles for loss are second-most on the team. This week he was among three Big Ten players named

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semifinalists for the Chuck Bednarik Award as the nation's top defensive player.

Ohio State coach Urban Meyer, whose sixth-ranked Buckeyes (7-1, 4-1 Big Ten) host the No. 9 Huskers (7-1, 4-1) on Saturday night, said his co-offensive coordinator, Tim Beck, told him all about Gerry. Beck was the OC at Nebraska until Bo Pelini's firing in 2014.

"He's a draftable player, very draftable player, and just real fast and physical," Meyer said.

With at least five games left in his career, the senior from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, is one interception from tying Dana Stephenson (1967-69) for most picks in a career (14) by a Nebraska player. Gerry already holds the school record for career tackles for loss by a defensive back with 19, and he needs five more to break the single-season record of 11 by Ciente Evans (2010-13).

"Me being a kid from South Dakota, given the opportunity from coach Pelini, just being able to get on the field and playing one of my years here, I thought that would have been cool for me," Gerry said. "I'm pretty excited for myself. I think it's obviously a cool accomplishment. There is a lot more that needs to be done for this football team."

Gerry is in his second year as a team captain and leader of a secondary that has allowed only seven pass plays of 30 yards or longer through eight games. Last season, the Huskers gave up 26 in 13 games.

Gerry's first two interceptions of the season came against Wyoming, and he had a team-high nine tackles the following week against Oregon.

He was even better the next week in his eight-tackle game against Northwestern. He made one of those exceptional plays Banker has come to expect from him when he walked up to line to cover the running back. He took two steps forward after the snap but noticed the quarterback looking to pass to a receiver cutting across the field behind him. Gerry backed up, stretched out and swatted away the pass with his left hand.

"Saved a touchdown," Banker said.

In last week's overtime loss at Wisconsin, Gerry was playing center field when Alex Hornibrook threw a ball right to him. Gerry showed excellent instincts on the second pick, getting in front of the intended receiver as the right-handed Bart Houston awkwardly threw back toward the middle of the field while moving left.

"When it's pass coverage," Badgers coach Paul Chryst said, "he's where he should be. He's an opportunist."

Banker said Gerry's game is similar to those of some of the top safeties he coached at Oregon State, including Sabby Piscitelli, a second-round draft pick in 2007 who played five years in the NFL.

"I'm pleased with some of the things he's done, obviously. At the same time, there were three plays in the last game that I thought he could have made and made a difference on," Banker said. "He along with everybody else, there's a ton of room for improvement."

On that, Banker gets no argument from Gerry, who said he's determined to finish strong for the Big Ten West-leading Huskers.

"Last year I didn't fulfill my role how I wanted to," he said. "This year I've flipped the switch a little bit."

More AP college football: <http://collegefootball.ap.org>

Obama says Army Corps examining Dakota oil pipeline route

By JAMES MacPHERSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — President Barack Obama has called for "peace" and "restraint" on the disputed Dakota Access oil pipeline, and says the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is examining whether the four-state project can be rerouted in southern North Dakota to alleviate the concerns of American Indians.

Obama told the online news outlet NowThis that his administration is monitoring the situation closely but will "let it play out for several more weeks."

"As a general rule, my view is that there is a way for us to accommodate sacred lands of Native Americans, and I think that right now the Army Corps is examining whether there are ways to reroute this pipeline," Obama said in an interview Tuesday.

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said Wednesday the agency had no immediate comment on the

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president's remarks. She said a statement by the agency was expected later in the day.

The White House said the Corps was exploring a range of options that would address concerns raised by tribal officials and others. Separately, the Army, the Justice Department and the Interior Department are discussing with tribal governments how to prevent future disputes with the federal government over public works projects, according to the White House.

Standing Rock Sioux Chairman Dave Archambault welcomed Obama's statement but said the administration and the Corps should go farther and stop work on the pipeline and do a full environmental impact study.

The 1,172-mile, \$3.8 billion pipeline will carry oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa to a shipping point at Patoka, Illinois. It will skirt the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

The tribe objects to the project, saying it could threaten drinking water and destroy sacred sites. The tribe has sued federal regulators for approving permits at more than 200 water crossings.

Protests that have included clashes with police and pipeline security also have gone on for several months in North Dakota, where hundreds and at times thousands of people have set up a large camp on corps land. More than 400 protesters have been arrested since August. No serious injuries have been reported.

Obama called it "a challenging situation."

"There's an obligation for protesters to be peaceful, and there's an obligation for authorities to show restraint," he said. "I want to make sure that as everybody is exercising their constitutional rights to be heard, that both sides are refraining from situations that might result in people being hurt."

The Dakota Access pipeline's capacity is about half of North Dakota's current production at present. The state, the No.2 oil producer behind Texas, this summer slipped below 1 million barrels daily for the first time in two years due to a slump in world oil prices.

About 350 miles pipeline would pass through North Dakota at a cost of about \$1.4 billion, making it the longest leg of the project and its most expensive.

The pipeline's path in North Dakota would cross beneath the Little Missouri River once and the Missouri River twice, near Williston and at under Lake Oahe, a river reservoir, near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation. The company said the pipeline would include safeguards such as leak detection equipment. Workers monitoring the pipeline remotely in Texas could close block valves on the pipeline within three minutes if a breach is detected, the company said.

The federal government in September ordered a temporary halt to construction on corps land around and underneath Lake Oahe, a Missouri River reservoir in the Dakotas. The corps is reviewing its permitting of the project, but has given no timetable for a decision.

The company still needs federal permission to build the pipeline for about a mile stretch on either side of the reservoir and under it.

The corps also asked that the pipeline company voluntarily stop construction within 20 miles of Lake Oahe, but the company has ignored the request and continued construction.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple said Tuesday that construction on private land was slated to be completed by this weekend, leaving only the small section near the reservoir and under it remaining.

Associated Press writer Josh Lederman in Washington contributed to this

Group fighting payday rate cap pumps over \$63K into TV ads

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A group opposing a ballot measure that would cap short-term loan interest rates is spending more than \$63,000 on TV advertising as Election Day nears.

Federal Communications Commission records show that Give Us Credit South Dakota is airing more than 120 ad spots across KELO-TV, KSFY-TV and KDLT-TV.

The group, which is funded by a Georgia-based title lender, has also sponsored a mail advertisement attacking the rate cap as a liberal-backed assault on freedom.

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The mailer says Initiated Measure 21 would end access to short-term loans. It would cap interest rates at 36 percent annually.

The pickup in campaigning comes as Georgia-based Select Management Resources LLC contributed an additional \$400,000 toward opposing the ballot measure.

Measure supporters say payday lenders will do whatever they can to protect their profits.

Tribe ends public safety agreement with state, cites protest

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota tribe is ending a public safety agreement with state authorities over the Highway Patrols' presence at the Dakota Access pipeline protests in North Dakota.

In a recent letter to the South Dakota governor, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe Chairman Brandon Sazue says the state has chosen to stand against its citizens in the name of big oil.

The tribal council voted Monday to rescind the mutual aid agreement with the Highway Patrol for coordinating law enforcement activities between the tribe and the patrol. Sazue says the tribe is also nullifying a state-tribal tax agreement.

The Highway Patrol sent assistance under a mutual aid compact at North Dakota's request. The South Dakota Department of Public Safety declined to disclose the number of troopers provided, but says they returned Sunday.

'Next year' is here! Cubs fans elated after World Series win

By DON BABWIN, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Next year is here.

Long-suffering Chicago Cubs fans erupted in cheers at exactly 11:47 p.m. on Wednesday and swarmed into the streets when the Cubs won the World Series title that had eluded them for 108 years.

Fans who packed bars to watch the games on television near Wrigley Field — neither of which existed back in 1908 — celebrated in the shadows of the statues of Cubs greats Ernie Banks, Billy Williams, Ron Santo and legendary announcer Harry Caray.

As the game ended, the roar from inside the bars and the throng of fans on the streets was deafening. The crowds inside and out sang Chicago singer-songwriter Steve Goodman's "Go Cubs Go," a standard chorus after Cubs wins, at the top of their lungs.

"This was torture," said Mike Delmanowski, a lifelong Cubs fan who flew to Chicago from California just to be surrounded by other Cubs fans. "I would not have missed it for anything."

"I am so proud to be a part of it," added his wife, Sue, who was crying off and on from the fifth inning.

As the celebration progressed, thousands of fans poured into the streets leading away from Wrigley, many of them singing, "We Are The Champions."

Fans hugged each other — many of them crying — and took pictures of each other and themselves. Many fans took turns writing their names and words of congratulations in chalk on Wrigley Field's brick walls. Some got on friends' shoulders to find spots high up on the walls that were not yet covered with names.

Thousands of people were still in the ballpark neighborhood, known as Wrigleyville, at least an hour after the game ended, as fireworks exploded every few minutes. Chicago police said Thursday morning that it didn't immediately have details of possible arrests.

"To finally see this in my lifetime with my son here with us, it means everything," said Craig Likhite, who drove to Chicago with his wife, April, and their 10-year-old son, Cade, because they wanted to see history made with other fans as close to Wrigley as possible.

"This game with all the ups and downs showed him exactly what it is to be a Cubs fan," the 50-year-old Likhite said. "My dad passed away this year. He would have loved this."

Judy Pareti flew in from New York City to watch the game at Murphy's Bleachers, a neighborhood sports bar in a building where her grandfather lived and operated a hot dog stand.

"My dad and grandfather owned it, and I was born here," she said. "I would never want to be anywhere but here for this."

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The 8-7 extra-inning victory over the Cleveland Indians in Cleveland came after the emptiness and bitterness of years past when the Cubs found spectacular and sometimes downright strange ways to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

The setbacks prompted the annual refrain of "Wait until next year."

Comedian and long-time Cubs fan Bob Newhart, who grew up in the Chicago area, celebrated by alluding to the curse allegedly placed on the team during the 1945 World Series by the owner of the Billy Goat Tavern after he was told his pet goat wasn't welcome at Wrigley.

"The billy goat is dead!! As I've said, from the beginning, I'm getting too old for this!" the 87-year-old actor tweeted.

Every Cubs fan knows those stories of defeat, starting with the 1969 team loaded with Hall of Famers that amassed a 9 1/2-game lead in mid-August before they started losing game after game in such numbers that the Miracle Mets not only caught them but ended up winning the National League East by 8 games.

Then came 1984. After taking the first two games of the National League Divisional Series against the Padres at Wrigley, the Cubs needed just one win in San Diego to advance to the NLCS. They were swept in three games on the West Coast.

There were other playoff losses but none as painful as in 2003 when in a where-were-you-when-it-happened moment that Cubs fans still have trouble comprehending, Steve Bartman deflected a ball that seemed destined for Moises Alou's glove with the Cubs just five outs from reaching the World Series.

Fans watched in horror as the Cubs fell apart, and few who left the park that night believed the team would win Game 7 the next night. They didn't.

But that was all in the past as Cubs fans throughout Chicago and beyond celebrated into the morning hours Thursday.

"People always said if the Cubs win the World Series it would be like hell freezing over," said Liz Wolfe, a 36-year-old physical therapist. I'm still in shock. This is the most exciting thing in my life."

Garth Brooks wins top award, Beyonce performs at CMA Awards

By MESFIN FEKADU, AP Music Writer

Garth Brooks, who lost entertainer of the year at last year's Country Music Association Awards when he returned to music after a 13-year break, won the top prize at the show Wednesday, where Beyonce and the Dixie Chicks' surprise duet performance was met with love and hate.

Brooks beat out Carrie Underwood, Chris Stapleton, Keith Urban and last year's winner, Luke Bryan.

"We are so damn lucky to part of this thing called country music," Brooks yelled loudly at the Bridgestone Arena in Nashville, Tennessee.

Taylor Swift presented Brooks the award, but she wasn't the only pop star in the building: Beyonce sang her twangy song "Daddy Lessons" on a night celebrating the CMA Awards' 50th anniversary. It was the first time Beyonce, a Houston native, performed at the country awards show. The performance also marked a return for the Dixie Chicks, who hadn't attended the CMA Awards in some time.

"Everybody get on your feet. Put your hands together," Beyonce told the crowd.

The diva sported a sheer champagne-colored dress that plunged in the center and layered pearls around her neck. Faith Hill sang along, Trisha Yearwood clapped and Miranda Lambert moved side to side during the song, which the Dixie Chicks have also covered at their live shows.

Beyonce and the trio's appearance, though, wasn't cheered by everyone: On social media some fans tweeted angrily about the performance — some country music fans have disliked Dixie Chicks since band member Natalie Maines criticized former U.S. President George W. Bush over a decade ago.

The night featured a number of other memorable performances, too: A mix of classic and contemporary country stars kicked off the show with 12 performances to celebrate its milestone anniversary, which included Randy Travis, Vince Gill, Charley Pride, Roy Clark, Alabama, Charlie Daniels, Ricky Skaggs, Alan Jackson, Dwight Yoakam and Merle Haggard's youngest son, Ben.

Dolly Parton, who earned the Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement Award, was honored by Reba, Underwood, Martina McBride, Jennifer Nettles and Kacey Musgraves, who all sang a rousing rendition of "I Will

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Always Love You.”

“I would have cried, but I didn’t want to mess up my eyelashes,” said Parton, sporting a bright yellow dress.

Chris Stapleton, who won big at last year’s show, was the night’s top winner with two: He took home male vocalist and music video of the year.

“What a wonderful night ... I’ve cried just watching everybody,” said Stapleton, who walked into the show as the top nominee along with Eric Church and newcomer Maren Morris.

Underwood won female vocalist of the year, ending Lambert’s six-year consecutive winning streak since 2010.

“Glory to God, thank you Jesus,” said a teary Underwood, who also thanked her husband and son.

Church won album of the year for “Mr. Misunderstood” and Morris picked up new artist of the year.

“Last year, I sat across the street at a bar and watched this show. I never thought as a songwriter I’d be standing here today,” she said.

A number of celebrities were in the audience and presented awards, including Matthew McConaughey, Peyton Manning, Jennifer Garner, Olivia Newton-John, Nicole Kidman, Lily Tomlin, Sharon Stone and the Final Five Olympic gymnasts: Simone Biles, Aly Raisman, Gabby Douglas, Laurie Hernandez and Madison Kocian.

Paisley and Underwood, returning as hosts for the ninth time, told jokes about politics, Wikileaks, Brangelina’s breakup and more.

“We’re so sick of politics, we don’t even care who wins,” they sang in harmony. At one point, Paisley called Underwood a “nasty woman,” mocking Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump.

The three-hour-plus show, which aired on ABC, also featured performances by George Strait, Brooks & Dunn, Jason Aldean and Little Big Town, who sang their new song “Better Man,” written by Swift.

The first award of the night went to Thomas Rhett, who won single of the year for “Die a Happy Man.”

“I gotta first thank the Lord ... my lovely wife in the blue dress; she was the full inspiration of this song,” said Rhett.

Lori McKenna won song of the year for writing Tim McGraw’s “Humble and Kind,” a tune she said was based on a prayer she wrote for her five children. McKenna co-wrote Little Big Town’s megahit “Girl Crush,” earning a Grammy Award this year and last year’s song of the year honor at the CMAs.

“I have a job in this town because of this guy’s wife, Faith Hill,” said McKenna, who was escorted to the stage by McGraw.

Kenny Chesney, who released a new album last week, earned the Pinnacle Award. Little Big Town and Brothers Osborne won vocal group and vocal duo of the year, respectively, while Dierks Bentley and Elle King’s “Different for Girls” won musical event of the year.

Online:

<http://www.cmaworld.com/>

Islamic State group leader rallies his fighters in Mosul

By ADAM SCHRECK, Associated Press

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) — The shadowy leader of the Islamic State group has released a new message urging his followers to keep up the fight for Mosul as they defend the city against a major offensive aimed at routing the militants from their last urban stronghold in Iraq.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s rallying cry came in a sermon-like recording, more than half an hour long, released by the militant group’s al-Furqan media arm late on Wednesday. It was not clear when the recording was produced. Al-Baghdadi’s whereabouts are unknown.

Iraqi special forces stormed into Mosul’s eastern outskirts on Tuesday after two weeks of advances through surrounding IS-held territory.

The city of more than one million people and the surrounding territory fell to IS fighters during the militant

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group's surprise attack in June 2014. Al-Baghdadi visited the city soon after the takeover, and from inside Mosul declared an Islamic caliphate that at one point covered nearly a third of Iraq and Syria.

In his recording, al-Baghdadi rallies his fighters — especially in Mosul — and calls on them to obey orders while remaining resilient and steadfast.

"Oh you who seek martyrdom! Start your actions! Turn the night of the disbelievers into day," he says, according to a translation provided by the SITE Intelligence Group, a U.S. organization that monitors militant activity online which reported the al-Baghdadi recording first.

"Totally decimate their territories, and make their blood flow like rivers," al-Baghdadi also says.

Hours after his call, an explosives-laden vehicle sped out of an IS-controlled area in Mosul and attacked Iraqi special forces positioned in the city's easternmost Gogjali neighborhood on Thursday. The special forces fired a rocket that blew up the car, killing the attacker.

A second suicide attacker also emerged from the same area, the more central Samah district, Brig. Gen. Haider Fadhil said, but that vehicle managed to get away. Islamic State fighters were also using explosives-laden drone aircraft, he said, adding that the militants deployed two since the previous night but that both had been destroyed.

Troops in Mosul are stationed at the eastern city limits, and have yet to enter the densely packed urban areas less than a kilometer (mile) away.

By midday, Iraqi forces continued to consolidate their gains, looking for any IS fighters who may have stayed behind, checking houses and streets for booby traps, and handling an influx of hundreds who fled IS-held territory deeper in the city.

In his recording, al-Baghdadi also urges Islamic State militants elsewhere to carry out attacks in Saudi Arabia, whose leadership IS opposes, and Turkey, which has deployed troops and artillery north of Mosul and is training Sunni Arab and Kurdish forces there.

The recording was the reclusive al-Baghdadi's first released message to supporters since Iraqi forces launched the decisive battle to retake Mosul, the country's second-largest city, from IS.

It's an attempt to harness the feelings of Sunni disenfranchisement that preceded the 2014 IS takeover of Mosul, a largely Sunni city in Shiite-majority Iraq. Using a derogatory term for Shiites, he says followers of the Muslim sect want to drive "empty Iraq of Sunnis and replace them with the worst of people."

He calls on fighters to "respond to all attacks," and to "target all in their media and forces, and all who belong to them."

The audio message could not be independently verified, though the speaker's voice and style of delivery sounded like that in previous recordings of al-Baghdadi.

The Islamic State group is fighting to hold Mosul as Iraqi forces and allied Kurdish forces advance on the city from multiple directions with U.S.-led coalition support. It is the Iraqi military's largest offensive since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion.

Iraqi forces have proceeded cautiously since breaching Mosul's eastern outskirts this week. They have yet to move into more densely populated areas that could lead to weeks, if not months, of clearing booby-trapped buildings and bloody house-to-house combat.

On Wednesday, residents in the easternmost district of Gogjali cautiously welcomed liberating Iraqi troops, with some raising white flags and flashing the "V" for victory sign. Men in the area celebrated by shaving the beards they were forced to grow under IS rule.

Associated Press writer Qassim Abdul-Zahra on Mosul, Iraq, contributed to this report. Follow Adam Schreck on Twitter at www.twitter.com/adamschreck .

Early voting: Tighter race, but still good signs for Clinton

By HOPE YEN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hillary Clinton may not be accumulating the type of early-vote advantage her

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campaign wanted, but she continues to maintain an apparent edge over Donald Trump, with roughly one-fourth of all expected ballots cast in the 2016 election.

The Democrat's campaign once hoped to bank substantial votes from Democrats in North Carolina and Florida before Election Day. Both are must-win states for Donald Trump.

But data about the early vote suggest she's not doing as well as President Barack Obama in 2012. Ballot requests from likely supporters have been weak in parts of the Midwest, and African-American turnout has fallen, too.

Still, the tens of millions of early votes cast also point to strength from Democratic-leaning Latino voters, potentially giving Clinton a significant advantage in Nevada and Colorado. With more than half the votes already cast in those states, Democrats are matching if not exceeding their successful 2012 pace, according to data compiled by The Associated Press.

"We are seeing the trajectory of the election change in some states, but Democrats are also making up ground," said Michael McDonald, a University of Florida professor and expert in voter turnout.

Early voting — by mail and at polling stations — is underway in 37 states. More than 31 million votes have been cast, representing nearly 25 percent of the total votes expected nationwide if turnout is similar to 2012. In all, more than 46 million people — or as much as 40 percent of the electorate — are expected to vote before Tuesday, according to AP data.

The results of those votes won't be known until polls close next week. But early voting data — party affiliation, race and other details — are being carefully examined for clues about the ballots that have been cast so far.

A look at the latest trends:

RACE TIGHTENS IN NORTH CAROLINA, FLORIDA

In North Carolina and Florida, Democrats did better with mail balloting than they had in previous elections. They expected to build on that with the start of in-person voting, where Democrats traditionally do well. But the big turnout — especially among black voters — hasn't yet happened.

In North Carolina, with nearly half of the expected vote already cast, Democrats lead in ballots submitted, 43 percent to 32 percent. But that's slightly below the same period in 2012, when Mitt Romney narrowly won the state.

This year, fewer polling locations were open in Democratic-leaning counties in the first week of early voting. More locations have since opened, but Democrats are still trying to catch up. Voting by African-Americans has declined to 22 percent of the early vote, from 28 percent in 2012. The white vote has risen to about 73 percent from 67 percent.

In Florida, more than half of voters have already cast ballots. Democrats remain virtually tied with Republicans. At this point in 2008 and 2012, Democrats held an advantage in ballots cast. Obama won the state both years.

The black share of ballots is down, while the Latino share is up.

Democrats and Republican analysts say they see signs that Republican early voters are those who previously voted on Election Day, while Democrats are drawing new voters. That would be good news for Democrats.

"I'm still bullish that Clinton will get to the 270 electoral votes" needed to win the White House, said Scott Tranter, co-founder of the Republican data firm Optimus.

RISING LATINO VOTE MAY BOOST CLINTON

Latinos may be providing Clinton with support she needs in key Western states.

In swing-state Nevada, where half the total ballots have been cast, Democrats lead with 43 percent to 37 percent.

That's comparable to the party's share at this point in 2012, good news for Clinton since Obama ultimately won the state by 6 percentage points. Ballots from Latinos and Asian-Americans — another group

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that tends to vote Democratic — are up, while ballots from African-American and white voters are down. More than 1.2 million residents have cast ballots in Colorado, or half the expected vote. Democrats hold the advantage, 37 percent to 35 percent. Colorado, for the first time in a presidential election, is voting mostly by mail. At this point in 2012, Republicans held the edge.

In Arizona, where more than half the votes have been cast, Democrats trail by 5 percentage points. But at this point in 2012, Republicans had opened a 10 percentage point lead. The share of independent or voters whose party affiliation is unknown is also up slightly.

Turnout rose among all races, but at higher rates among Hispanics.

"Arizona is close," Tranter said.

In Republican-leaning Texas, 3.3 million votes have been cast in the top 15 counties, up 36 percent. The state does not present breakdowns by party. Voter modeling by Catalist, a Democratic analytical firm, found ballots increasing by all race groups, but at sharper rates among Latinos.

WHITES BUOY TRUMP IN OHIO, IOWA

Trump may hold an edge in Ohio and Iowa, two states he's counting on to reach 270.

In Ohio, the heavily Democratic counties of Cuyahoga and Franklin are posting declines in ballot requests compared to 2012, while Republican-leaning counties such as Warren have increased. The state does not break down ballots by party. Voter modeling by Catalist found the white share of Ohio ballot requests was up to 90 percent from 87 percent. The black share fell to 8 percent from 11 percent.

Obama won Iowa in 2012 due to his strength in early voting. This year, Democrats lead there in both ballots requested and returned, 43 percent to 34 percent. But Democrats are running behind 2012 levels based in requested ballots, while Republicans are mostly on pace.

But Republicans may be having trouble flipping another state, Wisconsin, that voted for Obama in the last two elections. Overall turnout in Wisconsin is outpacing 2012, with bigger shares coming from major Democratic counties such as Dane and Milwaukee.

DEFENDING REPUBLICAN TURF

Trump also may be holding ground in two Republican-leaning states that Clinton targeted.

In Georgia, the number of ballots submitted has increased mostly among whites, while the black share declined.

In Utah, Republicans lead in returned ballots, 46 percent to 15 percent; no party voters made up 35 percent. The Republican share in ballots is down from 2012 but improved from a week ago.

AP's Election Research and Quality Control Group in New York contributed to this report.

Follow Hope Yen on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/hopeyen1>

'Next year' finally arrives for joyous Chicago Cubs fans

By DON BABWIN, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Next year is here.

At exactly 11:47 p.m. local time, the Chicago Cubs won the World Series that has eluded them for 108 years. Fans who packed bars to watch the games on television near Wrigley Field — neither of which existed back in 1908 — erupted in cheers before swarming onto the streets just before midnight Wednesday to celebrate in the shadows of the statues of Cubs greats Ernie Banks, Billy Williams, Ron Santo and legendary announcer Harry Caray.

As the game ended, the roar from inside the bars and the throng of fans on the street was deafening, before the crowds both inside and out sang "go Cubs go" at the top of their lungs.

As the celebration progressed, thousands of fans poured into the streets leading away from Wrigley, many of them singing "We Are The Champions."

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Fans hugged each other, many of them crying. They took each other's picture and pictures of themselves, and took turns writing their names and words of congratulations in chalk on Wrigley's brick walls. Some got on friends' shoulders to find spots high up on the walls that were not yet covered with names of fans.

An hour after the game ended there were still thousands of people in the ballpark neighborhood, known as Wrigleyville, and there were still fireworks exploding every few minutes.

"This was torture," said Mike Delmanowski, a lifelong Cubs fan who flew to Chicago from California just to be surrounded by other Cubs fans. "I would not have missed it for anything.

"I am so proud to be a part of it," said his wife, Sue, who was crying off and on from the fifth inning.

Mike Dillon said all he could think about was his father, who died without ever seeing what Dillon witnessed.

"I came here by myself, but I'm not alone at all," said Mike Dillon, 57, of Joliet.

Craig and April Likhite drove to Chicago from Evanston with their 10-year-old son, Cade, because they wanted to see history made with other fans as close to Wrigley Field as possible.

"To finally see this in my lifetime with my son here with us, it means everything," Craig Likhite said. "This game with all the ups and downs showed him exactly what it is to be a Cubs fan."

"My dad passed away this year. He would have loved this," said Likhite, 50.

Judy Pareti flew in from New York City to watch the game at Murphy's Bleachers, a neighborhood sports bar in a building where her grandfather lived and where his hot dog stand was located. "My dad and grandfather owned it, and I was born here," she said. "I would never want to be anywhere but here for this."

Liz Wolfe, a 36-year-old physical therapist, said, "People always said if the Cubs win the World Series it would be like hell freezing over. I'm still in shock. This is the most exciting thing in my life."

Long-time Cubs fan Bob Newhart, who grew up in the Chicago area, tweeted his congratulations to the team. "The billy goat is dead!! As I've said, from the beginning, I'm getting too old for this!" the 87-year-old comedian wrote, alluding to one of the oldest alleged curses on the team.

The 8-7 extra-inning victory over the Indians at Progressive Field in Cleveland came after the emptiness and bitterness of years past when the Cubs found spectacular and sometimes downright strange ways to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

Every Cubs fan knows those stories, starting with the 1969 team loaded with Hall of Famers that amassed a 9 1/2-game lead in mid-August before they started losing game after game in such numbers that the Miracle Mets not only caught them but ended up winning the National League East by 8 games.

Then came 1984. After taking the first two games of the National League Divisional Series against the Padres at Wrigley, the Cubs needed just one win in San Diego to advance to the NLCS. They were swept in three games on the West Coast.

There were other playoff losses but none as painful as in 2003 when in a where-were-you-when-it-happened moment that Cubs fans still have trouble comprehending, Steve Bartman deflected a ball that seemed destined for Moises Alou's glove with the Cubs just five outs from reaching the World Series.

Fans watched in horror as the Cubs fell apart, and few who left the park that night believed the team would win game seven the next night. They didn't.

But that was all in the past as Cubs fans throughout Chicago celebrated into the early hours of Thursday.

This story has been corrected to state the final score was 8-7.

Indians fans again must wait until next year

By BRIAN DULIK, Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) — Tens of thousands of fans flocked to downtown Cleveland for a celebration.

The Chicago Cubs crashed the party, beating the Indians 8-7 in Game 7 of the World Series to claim their first championship since 1908. The Indians now own the longest title drought in the majors at 68 years.

When reliever Mike Montgomery recorded the final out in the 10th inning, Cubs fans became unglued, jumping for joy 350 miles away from their beloved Wrigley Field. Indians fans slowly headed for the exits after being forced to wait for next year yet again.

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"It truly was an experience of a lifetime and it could have gone either way, all the way to the last pitch," said Brandon Rapp, 34, of Brunswick. "Obviously, I wish the Indians would have won, but I'm happy for the Cubs. My wife is from Chicago, so at least one of us is going home happy. For me, there's always next year."

A boisterous sellout crowd — nearly half of them rooting for Chicago — packed Progressive Field an hour before the first pitch. Revelers also stood shoulder-to-shoulder at adjacent Gateway Plaza on the unseasonably warm evening, watching the game on large screens.

Dueling chants between Indians and Cubs fans were prevalent in the early innings before the visitors built a 5-1 lead, then returned to a fever pitch when Rajai Davis hit a game-tying, two-run homer in the bottom of the eighth.

"Just when all hope seemed lost, Davis hit that homer and you started to believe that the Cubs were still cursed," said Adam Daher, 27, of Lakewood. "It felt like we had won, so when the Cubs won, it was like someone taking away something from Cleveland."

Nearby bars filled up by late afternoon in advance of the 8 p.m. start, while a sizable number of Chicago partisans toured the city's arts district, Playhouse Square and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame on the lakefront.

After Chicago won the game in extra innings, their fans took over the majority of seats in the lower deck. Long before the Cubs were done celebrating on the field, the Indians' team store closed for the night because customers were so sparse.

The so-called "Cleveland Curse" was vanquished on June 19 when the Cavaliers won Game 7 of the NBA Finals at Golden State for the franchise's initial championship. Prior to this summer, the 1964 Browns were the city's most recent title team.

"The Cavs winning was a life-changing experience, but this would have been the best day of my life," said Joseph Wiencek, 18, a men's basketball player at Washington & Jefferson College. "Being here with my parents and sister made it very special because we've had season tickets for 25 years, but you would hope to come out on top at the end."

The Indians have only won two World Series championships in 116 years in the American League.

S Korea prosecutors detain ex-presidential aide amid scandal

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean prosecutors have detained a former senior aide of President Park Geun-hye as they widen their investigation into a snowballing scandal centering on whether the president's close friend controlled the government from the shadows, officials said Thursday.

Ahn Jong-beom is the second person detained in connection with a scandal that has plunged Park's approval rating to record lows and triggered mounting calls for her resignation. Earlier this week, prosecutors detained Park's friend, Choi Soon-sil, and requested an arrest warrant for her.

South Korean media speculate Choi, who has no government position, secretly made policy recommendations for Park and pushed businesses to donate millions of dollars to two foundations she controlled.

The detention of Ahn wasn't unexpected — he's been connected in media reports to Choi — but it is another investigative step closer to the presidential Blue House. Park may survive what has become the worse patch of an already rocky four years in office, but a major test will be whether opposition parties reject her recent nomination for a new prime minister. If she's forced to name a prime minister chosen by the opposition, it would hamstring her authority and might end her ability to govern.

Prosecutors investigating the scandal detained Ahn on Wednesday night after they summoned him for questioning over whether he was involved in extracting \$70 million in donations, according to the Seoul Central District Prosecutors' Office. Prosecutors have 48 hours to determine whether to seek an arrest warrant for Ahn or release him.

Ahn was among the eight presidential advisers fired by Park in an attempt to regain public trust in the wake of the scandal. On Wednesday, Park nominated a new prime minister and two other top officials, but opposition lawmakers quickly criticized the reshuffling as a diversion.

Much of the public frenzy over the scandal is associated with Choi's family background. Her father led a

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religious cult and reportedly was a private mentor for Park, whose parents each were assassinated in the 1970s. Park's father was a military dictator who ruled South Korea for 18 years.

While acknowledging her ties to Choi Soon-sil last week, Park said Choi helped her "when I had difficulties" in the past. Park acknowledged that Choi had edited some of her speeches and provided public relations help. South Korean media speculate Choi may have had access to sensitive information and played a much larger role in government affairs.

A Seoul court will likely determine by Friday morning whether to approve an arrest warrant for Choi.

Park has already been criticized for an aloof manner and for relying on only a few longtime confidantes. That she may have outsourced sensitive decisions to someone outside of government, and someone connected with a murky, lurid backstory, has incensed many.

Miss. fire chief: Blaze at African-American church was arson

By ROGELIO V. SOLIS and BILL FULLER, Associated Press

GREENVILLE, Miss. (AP) — Somebody set the fire that heavily damaged an African-American church that was also spray-painted with the phrase "Vote Trump," and an \$11,000 reward is being offered for information leading to the conviction of whoever did it, a Mississippi fire chief said Wednesday.

The FBI has opened a civil rights investigation of the Tuesday night fire at the 200-member Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church, and Greenville Mayor Errick Simmons called the fire and graffiti a hate crime.

Officials announced the reward and the investigators' conclusion that the fire was arson at the church, Greenville Fire Chief Ruben Brown Sr. said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press.

The church's beige brick walls still stand, but the pulpit and pews are burned black, and soot stains the brick above and next to some windows. Brown estimated that it was "80 percent destroyed."

"It definitely will have to be reconstructed from front to back," he said.

Simmons called the arson a "heinous, hateful, cowardly act."

"We consider it a hate crime ... because of the political message which we believe was intended to interfere with worship and intimidate voters," Simmons said. "This act is a direct assault on people's right to freely worship."

The mayor said the FBI and the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation are assisting the investigation in the Mississippi River city, where about 78 percent of the 32,100 residents are African-American.

Mississippi's top elections official, Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann, a Republican, said people shouldn't jump to the conclusion that the church was vandalized for political reasons. Initial reports suggest "this is not of a political nature," he told WDAM-TV (<http://bit.ly/2eAUERb>).

The culprits should be prosecuted "to the fullest extent of the law," he said.

State FBI spokesman Brett Car said the agency is "working with our local, state and federal law enforcement partners to determine if any civil rights crimes were committed."

He did not comment on whether it was being investigated as a possible hate crime. "At this point, it is too early in the investigation to determine what type of crime this could be," he said.

Gov. Phil Bryant, a Republican who has been campaigning for his party's presidential nominee Donald Trump, said "we expect a suspect will be identified and brought to justice."

"First, anyone who burns a place of worship will answer to almighty God for this crime against people of faith. But they should also answer to man's law," Bryant's statement said.

U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson, a Democrat whose district includes Greenville, said the fire and graffiti "harkens back to a much darker day in Mississippi."

"The political message of the vandalism is obviously an attempt to sway public opinion regarding the upcoming election," he wrote in an emailed statement. "I encourage all citizens not to be deterred by this cowardly act and exercise your right to vote at the ballot box."

The Mississippi chapter of the NAACP released a statement Wednesday night saying the fire was reminiscent of a dark period in the state's history.

"During the historically black church's 111-year history, Hopewell served as a meeting place for organizers during the civil rights movement," the statement said. "It is important to remember this same violent

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action was taken to intimidate and impede African-Americans from voting in the 50's and 60's."

Brown said water from the hoses and heat from the fire also damaged the church's kitchen and the pastor's study. It was put out within 12 minutes, but it took an hour and a half to extinguish hot spots, he said.

Arson investigators also were at the scene Wednesday collecting evidence. Brown said the cause remains under investigation.

"We don't have any suspect at time, but we are possibly talking to a person of interest," Police Chief Delando Wilson said.

The mayor said "we will not rest until the culprit is found and fully prosecuted."

The congregation has existed for 111 years, and will rebuild on the same site, said pastor Carilyn Hudson.

"The act that has happened has left our hearts broken but we are strong together," Hudson said. "We are not angry, but our hearts are broken."

Bishop Clarence Green called the fire troubling. He said that in his 21 years as bishop, the church had never been vandalized.

"The last time someone was at the church was Tuesday around 3," Green said.

Asked where the church members will meet this Sunday, Green said: "We'll have to work on that."

Fuller reported from New Orleans.

This story has been corrected to show that the color of the church is beige, not red and that the pastor's given name is spelled Carilyn rather than Caroline.

Safety violations found after deadly China coal mine blast

BEIJING (AP) — Regulators found several safety violations in a coal mine in western China where 33 people died this week after being trapped underground in a gas explosion.

China's State Administration of Work Safety said Wednesday the mine in the municipality of Chongqing was using outdated equipment and miners were sent more than 100 meters (328 feet) beyond the approved drilling area, causing gas to accumulate.

Only two miners were able to escape Monday's blast.

Gas explosions inside mines are often caused when a flame or electrical spark ignites gas leaking from the coal seam. Ventilation systems are supposed to prevent gas from becoming trapped.

The correct boundaries were not marked on drawings of the mine, and operators did not submit the necessary paperwork or set up proper supervision, the safety administration found. It called for coal mining operations to take more precautions and follow existing safety laws.

"We cannot pursue development at the price of safety," an agency statement said.

The operators of the mine did not answer phone calls Thursday.

China is the world's top producer and consumer of coal but has announced plans to shutter more than 1,000 outdated mines as part of a broader plan to cut down on overproduction.

The Chinese mining industry has long been among the world's deadliest. The head of the safety administration said earlier this year that struggling coal mines might be likely to overlook maintenance.

Baltimore school bus driver had traffic violation history

By BRIAN WITTE, Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — The Baltimore school bus driver who died along with five others in a collision with a commuter bus was found at fault in three traffic-related cases in the last eight years, according to civil and criminal court records and an attorney interviewed by The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Glenn R. Chappell, 67, lost a civil case over hitting a parked car in Baltimore in 2008. Nationwide Insurance said in its complaint that Chappell's vehicle "veered from the roadway" and struck the car.

The complaint alleged he was negligent for "failing to pay full time and attention to the roadway, operating at excessive speed, failing to maintain control of his vehicle, failing to avoid colliding with other vehicles."

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The court ordered Chappell to pay about \$2,400, which he did, according to Nationwide's lawyer, Michael David Johnson.

Chappell was convicted in 2014 of failing to show a registration card during a traffic stop, and convicted again last November of driving a vehicle with suspended registration. Neither of these offenses involved a school bus.

The records also show that Chappell was convicted of violating three protective orders issued in 2012. He spent much of the fall of 2012 in jail, awaiting judgment in those cases. In December 2012, he was sentenced to seven days for a second-degree assault conviction.

Chappell's employer, bus contractor AA Affordable Transportation, didn't immediately respond to calls and emails about Chappell's history.

Baltimore City Public Schools spokeswoman Edie House declined to comment on the court records, saying school officials needed to review them first.

None of the 18 elementary school students served by Chappell's bus was aboard when it hit a car and roadside pillar before crashing into an oncoming Maryland Transit Administration bus early Tuesday, killing both drivers and four mass transit riders.

On Wednesday, Baltimore police spokesman T.J. Smith released the names of five of the deceased, including Chappell and MTA bus driver Ebonee Baker, 33.

Federal records show that AA Affordable had no violations or other crashes reported during the two years ending this September. In 2012, an AA Affordable school bus was involved in a crash that injured at least 13 people, including students, when it collided with a minivan. Smith said the company was not at fault in that case, because another vehicle ran a red light.

The company's five-year contract with the school district ends in June 2018, according to online public records.

Investigators hope Chappell's autopsy will reveal whether he suffered a medical emergency, which Smith described Tuesday as a working theory, since there were no skid marks indicating hard braking.

"We don't know if the driver of the yellow bus suffered any type of medical condition," Smith said at a Wednesday news conference. "I do not have any information on a previous medical history to discuss."

Police released Wednesday 911 calls about the crash. A man who gave his name as Cameron described the scene, saying: "The school bus was going 90. The school bus tore off the street and kept on moving."

The only school bus passenger, an aide, survived with minor injuries, and police planned to interview her, Smith said.

"We've interviewed a number of people, but those are still ongoing," Smith said.

Investigators recovered recording equipment from the MTA bus, but the condition of the equipment after the crash was unclear, Smith said.

Police also identified three of the four deceased MTA bus passengers: Cherry Denise Yarborough, 51; Terance Lee Casey, 52; and Gerald Holloway, 51, all of Baltimore. Smith said police haven't yet reached relatives of the other deceased passenger, a 46-year-old woman.

He said three of the 10 people injured remain hospitalized at the University of Maryland Medical Center, in fair, serious and critical condition.

Michelle Kennedy, a 32-year-old house keeper at Spring Grove Medical Center who was injured in the crash, urged anyone with knowledge of the accident to reach out to her attorney, Billy Murphy, who obtained a \$6.4 million settlement for the family of Freddie Gray last year. Kennedy described losing consciousness after the accident.

"I woke up with glass in my mouth," Kennedy said, recalling the moments before she was carried out by emergency personnel.

Baker's sister Deonne Perry said in a telephone interview that Baker, a married mother of four, worked an overnight shift. She said she last spoke with her sister by phone around 3:45 a.m. Tuesday, about three hours before the crash.

"She loved her husband, her kids, and everyone else's kids," Perry said.

Baker was friendly, funny and "always wanted to shine," said the Rev. Donald Wright of the Greater

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Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church, where she was a member.

When Minnie Yarborough didn't hear from her daughter, Cherry, on Tuesday morning "like a mother knows," she could tell something was wrong. She saw reports of a bus wreck along her daughter's daily route to work and began calling hospitals. Later, she learned that her 51-year-old daughter, who loved sports, movies and puzzles was among the passengers killed.

"She was a loving daughter," Minnie Yarborough said by telephone. "She was kind, considerate and she truly loved her job."

Yarborough was riding the bus to her office at Spring Grove Hospital Center in Catonsville, Behavioral Health Administration Executive Director Dr. Barbara Bazron said in a statement. Yarborough, a secretary who always had a "ready smile and a kind word for everyone" had worked in various roles in the department for 30 years, she said.

Steve Gondol, executive director for Live Baltimore, which promotes city living, says Yarborough had been a fixture at its Buying in Baltimore events since 2008, greeting people at the registration table. Gondol says Yarborough "saw life as an education." He says she enjoyed living in the city and wanted to make sure others benefited too.

The National Transportation Safety Board is leading the investigation. Lead investigator Jennifer Morrison said her team will likely remain in Baltimore through the week, gathering facts to determine the cause of the crash and make safety recommendations.

The public transit riders were on the No. 10 route from Dundalk, a largely blue-collar community south-east of Baltimore, to Catonsville, a western suburb.

Bus fatalities are rare, accounting for less than 1 percent of all highway fatalities in 2013, according to a chart on the NTSB website.

Associated Press writers Kasey Jones in Baltimore; Sarah Brumfield in Washington; Sarah Rankin in Richmond, Virginia; David Dishneau in Hagerstown, Maryland, contributed to this story.

Trump-Pence campaign aide stays on Indiana payroll

By BRIAN SLODYSKO, Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A key aide to Donald Trump's vice presidential nominee, Gov. Mike Pence, continues to earn \$23,000 a month as Indiana's sole Washington lobbyist even as he has taken a paid position with the Republican presidential campaign and regularly travels with Pence to political rallies across the country during working hours.

The dual, simultaneous employment of Joshua Pitcock is unusual. Legal and ethics experts contacted by The Associated Press said the government lobbyist should be subject to the same ethics rules as rank-and-file state employees, which generally prohibit such double-dipping. A separate prohibition against moonlighting bans Indiana state employees from accepting outside employment or undertaking activities that are not compatible with their public duties, would impair their independence or judgment, or pose a likely conflict of interest.

The governor's office said Pitcock is exempt from most such rules because the Pence administration treats Pitcock as an independent contractor. It considers his contract for "professional services" different than contracts for "personal" services, which treat contractors as employees.

Pence defended the arrangement late Wednesday.

"The arrangement that the state of Indiana has with a firm in Washington, D.C., has been a great, great success for our state," he told television station KDVR in Denver in an interview. "That individual and his team have worked very effectively advocating Indiana's interest. But it's an individual firm, an individual contractor."

Pence said there was no conflict of interest. "He's not a state employee and so he's entitled to have other clients and I'm grateful to have his support and assistance for the state of Indiana," he said in the interview.

Pitcock continues to collect monthly lobbying fees — a total of nearly \$1 million since Pence won election

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in 2012 and took office in 2013. Since August, after Pitcock also began working as Pence's policy director for the election, Trump's campaign has paid Pitcock's firm \$32,374 for event consulting, according to the latest financial records from the Federal Election Commission. Pitcock told AP that he refunded to Trump's campaign \$15,612, which he described as an overpayment caused by an accounting error.

An employment law professor at Indiana University's Maurer School of Law, Kenneth Dau-Schmidt, said the distinction Pence's office was making was "novel under the law" but "a pretty bad argument."

"It is not in the statute, no one has raised it before and there is no existing case law that would recommend that a court accept that distinction," said Dau-Schmidt, who has contributed to Democrats, including \$300 to Barack Obama in 2007. "Professional services are personal services and there is no logical reason under the statute to distinguish between the two."

A former Democratic state lawmaker and professor at Indiana University's McKinney School of Law, David Orentlicher, said Indiana's ethics law was clumsily worded but said Pitcock should be included in its restrictions.

"I think you have an obligation to get an advisory opinion," said Orentlicher, who ran unsuccessfully for Congress as a Democrat earlier this year. "If we're going to grant you the ambiguity, the way to resolve that is to get clearance, not just go forward in the face of that kind of uncertainty."

Pitcock was hired to "help the state prosper — not to advance a political candidate," said Stuart Yoak, executive director for the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics at Indiana University. "State money should not be going to advance a single political party or a single political candidate."

Pitcock said he was working diligently for both his employers and there was no conflict or violation of state employment rules.

"My firm has a contract with the state of Indiana to perform certain duties related to federal affairs, including lobbying," Pitcock said in a statement. "Those duties have been and continue to be performed fully and completely. I am not a state employee. My firm's contract with the state does not preclude working with other clients. The Donald J. Trump for President campaign engaged my firm for services related to federal policy for the vice presidential nominee. There is no conflict in performing services for both clients."

Pence's spokesman, Matthew Lloyd, said the state was unconcerned about Pitcock's double employment. Pitcock's lobbying contract does not specify any minimum number of hours or days that Pitcock must spend working on state business, so it would be impossible to say he is working outside the scope of his official state duties while traveling with Pence on the campaign trail, Pence administration officials said.

As Indiana's lobbyist, Pitcock filed monthly summaries back to Indianapolis about congressional activity and current events in Washington and tracked the activities of Indiana's congressional delegation and interactions between state officials and U.S. executive agencies, according to an AP review of his emails obtained under Indiana's open records act. On occasion, he noted details about Hillary Clinton's latest entanglements over the use of her private email server. The director of Indiana's child-welfare agency asked Pitcock's help organizing tours for her relatives of the White House and Supreme Court.

The AP began examining Pitcock's employment as Indiana's lobbyist after Pence was named Trump's running mate and asked for copies of Pitcock's emails with top-level Pence staffers. State offices initially said it would take months before they could provide any records, but after AP objected as Election Day approached they produced some documents. Lloyd, the Pence spokesman, previously told the AP that its request to examine Pitcock's emails was "bulls---," saying Pitcock was a dedicated and tireless worker who served the state of Indiana well.

Indiana's administrative regulation prohibits any state officer, employee or special state appointee from working or directing others to work outside the performance of their official duties during working hours except as permitted by policy or regulation.

Under Indiana law, state employees include anyone who contracted with the state for personal services, but Pitcock's professional services contract specifically said he "shall not be considered a state employee or special state appointee for any purpose."

The Pence administration said Pitcock's lobbying contract was reviewed by the state's contracting agency and the office of Indiana's attorney general.

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Indiana's inspector general, Cynthia Carrasco said Pitcock never sought a formal opinion from the state ethics commission about his double dipping.

Members of Indiana's congressional delegation, including the office of Republican Sen. Dan Coats, said Pitcock was an effective lobbyist.

"Josh regularly communicates with Senator Coats and his staff on issues affecting Indiana and how to best advance Hoosier priorities," Coats spokesman Matt Lahr said in an emailed statement.

AP writers Chad Day and Ted Bridis in Washington and Nicholas Riccardi in Loveland, Colo., contributed to this reporting.

10 Things to Know for Thursday

By The Associated Press

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

1. ALL-TOO-FAMILIAR SWING STATE VITAL FOR TRUMP

Both sides agree the billionaire businessman has virtually no chance to win the presidency without Florida's trove of 29 electoral votes.

2. IRAQI SPECIAL FORCES PUSH INTO EASTERN MOSUL

As Islamic State fighters are driven out, celebrations include children flashing the "V" for victory sign.

3. CUBS-INDIANS JUST LATEST IN WORLD SERIES GAME SEVENS

Maybe the most memorable came in 1960 when Bill Mazeroski ripped a home run in the bottom of the ninth to lift Pittsburgh over the Yankees, 10-9.

4. SUSPECT IN CUSTODY IN POLICE KILLINGS

A white man with a history of racial provocations and interactions with police is accused of ambushing and fatally shooting two white Des Moines-area officers.

5. HOW FACEBOOK AIMS TO BOOST ADVERTISING REVENUE

The social network's latest strategy is to stress videos — and the ads that can be sold around them.

6. JURY SEATED IN TRIAL OF WHITE OFFICER WHO SHOT BLACK MAN IN BACK

The slaying in South Carolina stunned the nation after it was recorded by a bystander.

7. WHO'S UNDER GROWING PRESSURE TO QUIT

South African President Jacob Zuma faces calls to resign amid suspected corruption at the top levels of his government.

8. US, EUROPE AT ODDS OVER IRANIAN AIRLINE

The airline, backed by the notorious Revolutionary Guard, acquires rights to fly routes in more than a dozen countries despite U.S. terror-related sanctions.

9. WHY NEW CANCER TREATMENTS ARE PROBLEMATIC

In rare cases, some powerful new therapies that harness the immune system to fight cancer may cause potentially fatal heart damage.

10. CMAs CELEBRATE 50TH BIRTHDAY

A mix of classic and contemporary country music stars helps mark the milestone in Nashville at the annual awards show.

Cosby lawyers say comedian is too blind to defend himself

By MARYCLAIRE DALE and MICHAEL R. SISAK, Associated Press

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (AP) — Bill Cosby's eyesight has deteriorated to the point where he cannot identify his accusers in photographs or otherwise help with his defense, his lawyers said Wednesday as they waged a multipronged effort to get the sexual assault case against the 79-year-old comedian thrown out.

His attorneys also portrayed Cosby as a political pawn who is being prosecuted only because a suburban Philadelphia district attorney used the public furor over the comic to get elected last year.

And they renewed their argument that Cosby's lurid 2005 deposition from a related lawsuit should not

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be admitted at his trial, saying he answered questions under oath only after being assured he would not be charged with a crime.

Cosby leaned back in his chair as his lawyers made their case at the two-day pretrial hearing, which ended with no rulings from the judge and no indication of when he might issue one. Another set of hearings is scheduled for next month.

The "Cosby Show" star once known as America's Dad is scheduled to go on trial by June on charges he drugged and molested Andrea Constand, a former Temple University employee, at his home in 2004. He could get 10 years in prison.

Cosby has said the encounter was consensual. He is free on \$1 million bail.

Dozens of additional accusers have come forward, including 13 women whom prosecutors want to call as witnesses at the trial to show that they were drugged and violated in similar fashion. Cosby's lawyers are fighting that strategy.

Defense attorney Angela Agrusa argued that prosecutors unfairly prejudiced Cosby by waiting a decade to charge him. Cosby has memory problems and is also legally blind, according to the defense, which presented a medical report that said he is blind in his right eye and has glaucoma in both eyes.

"Mr. Cosby cannot look at a photograph or any evidence and help his counsel or explain who those people are," Agrusa said.

However, prosecutors said Cosby himself caused the delay by fighting efforts by The Associated Press — in 2006 and again in 2014 — to unseal his testimony in Constand's 2005 lawsuit. Prosecutors said that it was not until a judge unsealed the material last year that they learned that Cosby had admitted to a series of affairs and acknowledged obtaining quaaludes to give to women before sex.

"He had never admitted to using powerful drugs to facilitate sex with women. That's a big deal," Deputy District Attorney Robert Falin said. "In our case, it goes to what exactly did he give to Andrea. ... I think any reasonable prosecutor would have taken another look at the case."

Cosby's lawyers have also argued that he sat for the deposition only after then-District Attorney Bruce Castor promised he would never face arrest in the Constand case. Cosby's attorneys are using that supposed promise to try to get the case thrown out or, failing that, to keep the deposition out his trial.

They are also focusing on the campaign between Castor and the current district attorney, Kevin Steele, in last year's election in Montgomery County. Steele ran press releases and TV commercials attacking Castor for not prosecuting Cosby.

Steele made Cosby a "pawn in that election," Agrusa argued.

"His cause celebre became attacking Mr. Cosby, stating publicly that his opponent had not been aggressive enough, had not done his job," she said. "And now he's in a situation where he's got to act on it."

At another point, Agrusa said: "My client is not a meme. He's a human being. And his rights have been trampled by ego and ambition."

In another clash Wednesday, Steele charged that Cosby's lawyers have put the names of some of his accusers in public documents in an attempt to intimidate them.

Cosby attorney Brian McMonagle ridiculed the allegation and said many of the women were already publicly identified and some had even held news conferences.

Trump campaigning in stretch like it all depends on Florida

By STEVE PEOPLES and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

PENSACOLA, Fla. (AP) — With the turbulent White House race scrambled in new directions, Donald Trump is campaigning with rare discipline like his presidential campaign hinges on one all-too-familiar swing state: Florida.

"Stay on point, Donald, stay on point," the Republican nominee, in Pensacola, teasingly quoted his staff as saying. "No sidetracks, Donald. Nice and easy. Nice and easy."

There was late action Wednesday in such unlikely arenas as Arizona and Michigan, too — and in North Carolina, where President Barack Obama tried to energize black support for Hillary Clinton. But Trump

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marched ahead in his third multi-day visit to the Sunshine State in recent weeks.

The Republican nominee lashed out at "Crooked Hillary" in Miami, predicting that a Clinton victory would trigger an "unprecedented and protracted constitutional crisis" as federal investigators probe the former secretary of state's email practices. But Trump did not take the bait dangled by the Clinton campaign about his treatment of women.

Conceding nothing in the state, Clinton has also been a frequent visitor. She posed for pictures and shook hands during a surprise visit to a South Florida Caribbean-American neighborhood Wednesday morning.

Both sides agree the New York businessman has virtually no chance to win the presidency without Florida's trove of 29 electoral votes. Clinton has been ahead there in opinion polls, but Democrats acknowledge that the FBI's renewed attention to her has helped rally reluctant Republicans behind their nominee. That's given Trump an enthusiasm boost in Florida and across Midwestern battlegrounds long considered reliably blue territory.

"I'm definitely nervous," said former Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell, a Democrat. "Democrats in Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, if you heard it was over, if you thought those states were in the bag, don't believe it."

Perhaps heeding Rendell's warning, Clinton's team is devoting new resources to states like Michigan, which hasn't supported a Republican presidential nominee in nearly three decades.

Former President Bill Clinton was making an unannounced appearance in Detroit Wednesday night to meet privately with black ministers, the city's mayor and other local leaders. While Hillary Clinton had two appearances Wednesday in Republican-leaning Arizona, she planned to spend part of Friday in Detroit as well.

At the same time, a pro-Clinton super PAC was spending more than \$1 million on Michigan airwaves along with at least \$1 million more in Colorado, another state where Clinton has enjoyed a significant polling advantage for much of the fall.

Early voting numbers in some states suggest that her challenge stems, at least in part, from underwhelming support from African-American voters. Weak minority support could complicate her path in other states, too, including North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Michigan.

Early voting in North Carolina shows a 5 percentage point drop in ballots from black voters from 2012.

Obama, the nation's first black president, offered an urgent message to North Carolina voters on Wednesday: "The fate of the Republic rests on your shoulders."

He also criticized Trump's history of sexist comments and his initial reluctance to disavow white supremacists. They continue to rally behind the Republican nominee, though he rejects that support.

"If you accept the support of Klan sympathizers," Obama said, "then you'll tolerate that support when you're in office."

At the same time, Clinton allies are speaking directly to black voters in a new advertising campaign running in Ohio, North Carolina and Florida. The ad from the pro-Clinton Priorities USA shows white Trump supporters screaming at and pushing black protesters, along with Obama warning that voters would lose "everything" if Trump wins.

As the final-days scramble for votes intensifies, Florida remains perhaps the nation's most critical swing state.

The Trump campaign knows there is no realistic path to the White House without Florida, where polls give Clinton a narrow lead. The New York businessman campaigned in three Florida cities Wednesday — Miami, Orlando and Pensacola — and will follow up with a stop in Jacksonville on Thursday.

"We don't want to blow this," he told rowdy supporters in Miami. "We gotta win. We gotta win big."

While Trump has devoted perhaps his most valuable resource — his time — to Florida, Clinton has built a powerful ground game, backed by a dominant media presence, that dwarfs her opponent's. The Democratic nominee has more than doubled Trump's investment in Florida television ads. Overall, the state has been deluged with \$125 million in general election advertising — by far the most of any state.

Clinton, unlike Trump, can also afford to lose here.

Even with national polls narrowing, the Democratic contender has many more paths to 270 electoral votes. One example: Clinton campaigned Wednesday in Arizona, a state that has voted for Republican presidential candidates all but once since 1952.

Peoples reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Lisa Lerer, Julie Bykowicz and Josh Lederman in Washington, Julie Pace in Las Vegas, Thomas Beaumont in Des Moines, Iowa and David Eggert in Detroit contributed to this report.

Gasoline pipeline continues burning as Democrats seek probe

By JAY REEVES, Associated Press

HELENA, Ala. (AP) — A fire sparked by a huge explosion on a major gasoline pipeline continued burning Wednesday two days after the fatal blast as congressional Democrats sought an investigation of the Georgia-based operator.

Colonial Pipeline Co. said the fire in a rural area southwest of Birmingham, Alabama, was “significantly smaller” since Monday, and an environmentalist said the blaze had shrunk considerably from when it was shooting flames hundreds of feet in the air like a geyser of fire.

“It was about the size of a person last night when I saw it,” said David Butler of Cahaba Riverkeeper, who has worked closely with the company to help prevent environmental damage.

The company — which is letting the fire burn itself out — has said it hoped to restart the line as early as this weekend. But it can’t fully assess the damage and begin repairs until the blaze is out, and it’s unclear when that might happen.

Based in suburban Atlanta, Colonial Pipeline has said as much as 168,000 gallons of gasoline could have burned, spilled, evaporated or remained in the pipeline following the blast Monday afternoon. The pipeline supplies gasoline to the Southeast, and officials are worried about fuel shortages and possible price spikes.

North Carolina Republicans urged their supporters to vote early and avoid any gas-related disruptions on Election Day, but Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal urged people to stick with normal fuel usage rather than stocking up and causing a spike in demand.

Meanwhile, U.S. House Democrats asked for an investigation of Colonial Pipeline. Five ranking members of panels dealing with energy, transportation, infrastructure, pipelines and investigations released a letter to Transportation Secretary Anthony Fox seeking the review.

The House members cited the deadly explosion earlier this week and a large spill in September just a few miles away. The company said the pipeline exploded as a nine-person crew was attempting to make a temporary repair that would allow for a permanent repair to the area where the spill occurred.

The letter also mentioned smaller spills in 2015 in North Carolina and Virginia, where several thousand gallons of petroleum product spilled.

A statement by Colonial said it takes accidents seriously and already is cooperating with investigators.

“We have robust system integrity, inspection and maintenance programs that meet or exceed all federal regulatory requirements,” the statement said.

The damaged pipeline, which runs from the Gulf Coast to New York City, provides almost 40 percent of the region’s gasoline and usually operates at or near full capacity. Combined with a nearby pipeline for diesel and aviation fuel, the two lines carry more than 2 million barrels of fuel daily.

Colonial said it only took a few hours after the explosion to restart the pipeline carrying diesel and jet fuel.

Before the two recent events, Colonial Pipeline had reported 178 spills and other incidents since 2006 that released a combined 193,000 gallons of hazardous liquids and caused \$39 million in property damage. Most were caused by problems with materials, welding or some other equipment failure, according to federal accident records reviewed by The Associated Press.

The company paid \$381,000 in penalties for violating safety rules during the same period.

AP reporter Kathleen Foody in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Suspect in officer deaths has history of racial provocations

By SCOTT McFETRIDGE, Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — A white man with a history of racial provocations and confrontations with police ambushed and fatally shot two white officers Wednesday in separate attacks as they sat in their patrol cars, authorities said.

Police took 46-year-old Scott Michael Greene into custody hours after the killings and less than three weeks after he argued with officers who removed him from a high school football game where he had unfurled a Confederate flag near black spectators.

Greene flagged down an Iowa Department of Natural Resources employee in a rural area west of Des Moines, identified himself and asked that the employee call 911. Sheriff's deputies and state patrol officers took him into custody.

He's suspected in the early morning slayings of 24-year-old Justin Martin, who had been with the force in the Des Moines suburb of Urbandale since 2015, and 38-year-old Sgt. Anthony Beminiio, who joined the Des Moines department in 2005.

Greene was taken to a hospital for treatment of unknown health issues and was to be questioned later at Des Moines police headquarters, Sgt. Paul Parizek said.

Police responded to a report of shots fired shortly after 1 a.m. and found the Urbandale officer. Authorities from several agencies soon saturated the area. About 20 minutes later, they discovered the Des Moines officer, who had responded to the first shooting, Parizek said.

The shootings happened less than 2 miles apart, and both took place along main streets that cut through residential areas.

In the first shooting, investigators believe the gunman walked up to the officer's car and fired more than two dozen rounds.

"I wouldn't call it a confrontation," Urbandale Police Chief Ross McCarty said. "I don't think he may have even been aware that there was a gunman next to him."

The shootings follow a spate of police killings in recent months, including ambushes of officers in Dallas and Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Five officers were killed July 7 in Dallas. Three more were killed later that month in Baton Rouge.

Race was an issue in those cases and others involving unarmed black men killed by officers. Greene is white, as were the officers.

Greene appeared to have issues with people of other races.

In the confrontation at the Urbandale High School football game, which Greene videotaped and posted on social media, he appeared to be trying to antagonize African-American fans when he shook a Confederate flag in front of them during the national anthem, McCarty said.

In the video, officers can be seen asking Greene to leave school property while he insists he was assaulted and his flag stolen. He demands officers file theft and assault charges, saying someone hit his head and grabbed the flag.

In a back-and-forth with officers that lasts for nearly 11 minutes, officers said they could take a report but they cannot let Greene back inside the stadium because the school has banned him from the property. They also note they were returning his flag and ask if he purposely wanted to create a conflict by displaying it near African Americans.

"I was peacefully protesting," he responds. "That's my constitutional right."

The video ends with Greene promising not to "set foot on" school property and officers saying they will take down his information.

Ardis Gardner of Des Moines told The Associated Press he was at the Oct. 14 football game to watch his teenage son play.

Gardner, 47, who is black, sat with a group of other friends and family members when Greene, who was dressed in Army fatigues, approached them within a few feet and waved the flag at them during the national anthem.

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"I was angry," said Gardner, who typically sits during the national anthem and prays. "It was senior night, and the spotlight should have been on those senior players. This was calculated for him to do it at that moment."

A week later, Gardner said, Greene followed him and a group of black parents into another football game with a dog that was wearing a gun holster and a Confederate flag vest. Greene sat nearby again.

After the video was posted on YouTube, someone identifying himself as Scott Greene commented, "I was offended by the blacks sitting through our anthem. Thousands more whites fought and died for their freedom. However this is not about the Armed forces, they are cop haters."

In other incidents, court records show Greene was jailed and charged with interfering with official acts after resisting Urbandale police officers who tried to pat him down for a weapon on April 10, 2014. An Urbandale officer described him as hostile and combative. He entered a guilty plea and was fined.

Two days later, Urbandale police were called to answer a complaint of harassment at the apartment complex where Greene lived. The complaint said he threatened to kill another man during a confrontation in the parking lot and yelled a racial slur used against blacks. Greene was charged with harassment.

He pleaded guilty and received a suspended jail sentence and a year of probation. An officer wrote that Greene had complied with the terms of his probation, noting that he had obtained a mental health evaluation and "reports to have complied with the medication recommendations." The officer did not elaborate.

Soon after the football game incident, on Oct. 17, a criminal complaint indicates Greene was involved in an altercation with his 66-year-old mother. Greene accused her of scratching and hitting his face. He captured the fight on cellphone video, which he used as evidence of the assault. A judge ordered Greene's mother to stay away from her son, and she was released on \$1,000 cash bond.

The Urbandale police chief said Greene was well-known to officers.

Most officers in the city "have some understanding of Mr. Greene," McCarty said. "They've taken trips to his house, delivered service to him — never anything to this extent."

It was unclear if either of the shootings was captured on police cameras.

Greene has a daughter who attends Urbandale High School. The Urbandale shooting occurred near the school, and the city's entire school district closed for the day.

The attacks on police this summer in Dallas and Baton Rouge came in the wake of several high-profile police shootings of black men, fueling a national debate about police use of force, especially against minorities. It has been a frequent topic in the nation's presidential race.

Republican nominee Donald Trump has argued that police need the freedom to use greater force. Democrat Hillary Clinton has supported officers while calling attention to what she and others have called examples of bias in policing.

Parizek said the officers' deaths are a blow to the city.

"They are our friends and co-workers," he said. "Des Moines is not a big city. We all know each other. We're heart-broken."

Associated Press writers David Pitt and Barbara Rodriguez in Des Moines and Ryan J. Foley in Iowa City contributed to this report.

Obama worries black vote is not solid enough for Clinton

By BILL BARROW and DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (AP) — President Barack Obama twice generated a historic wave of African-American support on his way to the White House, but worries now the black vote "is not as solid as it needs to be" for Hillary Clinton.

Obama's and Clinton's travel schedules are taking them to swing-state metro areas with significant black populations, and the two officials are fixtures in black-audience media. Their message is consistent: Clinton will fight for the black community, while Republican Donald Trump would turn back the clock for voters that helped propel Obama to comfortable national victories. Former President Bill Clinton is pitching in too,

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with an unannounced stop in Detroit Wednesday night to meet privately with black ministers and boost his wife's chances in battleground Michigan.

"I need everybody to understand that everything we've done is dependent on me being able to pass the baton to somebody who believes in the same things I believe in," Obama told nationally syndicated radio host Tom Joyner in an interview broadcast Wednesday.

Obama said early voting is up among Hispanics, but not among black voters. The president warned that Trump would obliterate his record, even digging up first lady Michelle Obama's White House vegetable garden. "You think I'm joking?" Obama asked.

Hours later, he reminded an enthusiastic audience in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, that Republicans in the state tried to make it harder to vote with sweeping election law changes, only to have a federal court strike down the law because it "targeted black voters with surgical precision."

So "it's easier to vote than ever" in North Carolina, Obama said. "What's our excuse?"

An Associated Press analysis of early voting data in North Carolina shows blacks have cast 111,000 fewer ballots than at this point four years ago, when Obama lost the state by about 92,000 votes. Clinton aides note that GOP officials there reduced early voting sites for the initial week of early voting, and they say they can make up the difference by Election Day now that more sites are opening.

Black voters' share of early ballots request is also down a few percentage points in Florida and Ohio, though the Clinton campaign points to strong early turnout in key urban counties with large numbers of blacks and Hispanics.

To be clear, Clinton will win the black vote by overwhelming margins, just as Obama and a generation of Democratic presidential nominees before him. On her way to her party's nomination, Clinton won more than 3 out of 4 black voters. And even with an apparent tightening of the general election in the final weeks, Clinton still has many more paths to the required Electoral College majority of 270 votes than does Trump.

Yet, problems could arise for Clinton if Trump draws a surge of white support. That would make her African-American margins and the overall black turnout especially critical in Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Then, it could matter whether black voters make up 15 percent of the Ohio electorate, as they did in 2012, or something closer to 9 percent, as they did in 2004, when Republican President George W. Bush won the state and a second term. Nationally, black voters cast about 13 percent of presidential ballots for Obama's two victories, up from the 11 percent benchmark in previous decades.

Democrats are trying to leave nothing to chance.

Obama's appearance in North Carolina followed an appearance Tuesday in Ohio. He has two Florida rallies Thursday, in Jacksonville and Miami, and he plans to return to the state Sunday, visiting Orlando on the final day of early voting in the state. Vice President Joe Biden met earlier this week with black leaders in Philadelphia, and Michelle Obama has taken a prominent role in the campaign.

Clinton, meanwhile, warmly embraces Obama's sentiments. "I want to build on the legacy that President Obama has given us," she told radio host LeRoy Jones, another nationally syndicated black media personality, earlier this week.

Her campaign is broadcasting an ad on black-audience radio stations hailing the former secretary of state as "fighting for us," in contrast to Trump "demeaning our community." A female voice in the ad says, "Listen to how he talks about us." One audio clip has Trump singling out a black supporter at a rally in California: "Look at my African-American over here," he said. In another, Trump lambasted Obama as "the most ignorant president in our history."

As she travels to battleground states, Clinton has focused on nonwhite voters and encouraged early voting. Many of her events are near early voting sites.

She spent Sunday at a soul-food restaurant and a black church. On Tuesday, she traveled with Congressman John Lewis, a civil rights hero from Atlanta, who reminded Clinton supporters of the struggle to secure the right to vote.

"We must get out and vote like we've never voted before," Lewis told a crowd of about 4,000 people in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. "Don't let anyone keep you home."

Associated Press Writers Dave Eggert in Lansing, Michigan and Ken Thomas in Washington contributed to this report.

Barrow reported from Atlanta. Associated Press reporters Julie Pace in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Hope Yen in Washington contributed to this report. Follow Barrow and Superville on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/BillBarrowAP> and <https://twitter.com/dsupervilleap>.

Facebook gold streak continues in 3Q, boosted by video

By BARBARA ORTUTAY, AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Whether it's a video clip of your friend's dog or a live stream of the presidential debates, you are likely watching more videos on Facebook than ever. And that means you're also more likely to see video ads.

Facebook's latest strategy is to grow both user-generated and advertiser-created videos as it tries to get a firm foothold in this nascent but growing market. The strategy appears to be working. While Madison Avenue is not known for risky experimenting, advertisers are already testing the waters with live video. General Motors, for example, launched its electric Chevy Bolt EV through Facebook Live this year.

"People are spending more and more time on mobile, especially video," David Wehner, Facebook's chief financial officer, said in an interview.

He said this has been a big factor in helping drive up overall mobile advertising.

It helps on the video front that Facebook had successfully transitioned from desktop to mobile, despite early doubts. Now, when Facebook tries to sell video to its advertisers, it can simply point to past financial results. The percentage of ad revenue that came from mobile has increased every quarter since the company began reporting this figure in 2012.

In the July-September quarter, Facebook had \$6.8 billion in advertising revenue, a 59 percent increase from a year earlier. Mobile advertising accounted for 84 percent of this. Facebook had 1.79 billion monthly users as of Sept. 30, up 16 percent from a year earlier.

Facebook earned \$2.38 billion during the third quarter, or 82 cents per share, up sharply from \$896 million, or 31 cents per share, a year earlier. Adjusted earnings were \$1.09 per share, above the 97 cents that analysts polled by FactSet had expected.

Total revenue rose 56 percent to \$7.01 billion, surpassing analysts' expectations of \$6.92 billion.

Video ads will become more important as Facebook sees a slowdown in how many ads it shows between all the updates from friends, a measure known as ad load. Facebook's stock fell \$8.77, or nearly 7 percent, to \$118.20 in extended trading after Wehner told analysts that "ad load will play a less significant (role in) driving revenue growth" after mid-2017, leading to slower growth overall.

In addition, CEO Mark Zuckerberg said Facebook will "invest aggressively" to accomplish its goals and will continue hiring, especially engineers, in 2017.

Where Twitter failed with the quirky, killed-off video app Vine, Facebook is succeeding with Instagram, not to mention its main service. Users are posting and watching live and recorded videos, thanks to more powerful smartphones and a relentless prodding by Facebook to do so. If you use Facebook, for example, you likely received notifications that your friend "is live now" or "was live" — that is, broadcasting live video from wherever they happen to be, doing whatever they happen to be doing.

While Facebook does not break out how much money it makes from video advertisements, the Menlo Park, California, company needs them to keep growing revenue at the impressive rates it has since going public in 2012. Video ads make up a small but growing slice of the overall digital ad market. Research firm eMarketer expects U.S. mobile video ad spending to hit \$7.1 billion in 2018, up from \$4.5 billion this year. That's about 10 percent of the overall money spent on mobile advertisements.

Live and prerecorded videos are just one example of the new ways Facebooks is finding to show you ads. Down the road, expect ads on the messaging service WhatsApp, or on Oculus Rift, its virtual reality

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headset. If you are one of the 1 billion people who use Facebook Messenger, you are likely seeing the precursor of ads in the service, in the form of businesses messaging you with automated "chatbots."

EMarketer estimates that Facebook's global ad revenue will hit \$25.9 billion this year, up from \$17.1 billion in 2015. The company is the world's No. 2 digital ad publisher behind Google. Another tidbit: eMarketer estimates that each Facebook user, on average, will generate an estimated \$15.83 for the company this year.

There have been some hurdles. In September, Facebook disclosed that it overstated the average length of time users watched video ads on its site. The measurement didn't affect how much Facebook charges to run video spots, but analysts say ad agencies may have used the Facebook estimates as a key metric when they plan campaigns and decide how much advertising to place on Facebook or competing sites.

Sean Hannity sorry for fake story on Michelle Obama, Clinton

NEW YORK (AP) — Sean Hannity has apologized for reading a fake news story on his radio show that claimed first lady Michelle Obama had scrubbed her Twitter account of mentions of Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton.

The conservative radio talker and Fox News host also says one of his radio listeners called in to say President Barack Obama and Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren did the same. On Twitter Tuesday, Hannity said, "Fact is they didn't. I humbly apologize. Live radio."

Hannity is one of Donald Trump's biggest allies in the media and has acknowledged giving the GOP nominee campaign advice in private.

Hacked emails show Clinton campaign communicated with State

By MATTHEW DALY and STEPHEN BRAUN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A State Department official appeared to coordinate with Hillary Clinton's nascent presidential campaign hours before the former secretary of state's exclusive use of private emails was first detailed in a news account last year, newly released hacked emails show.

Emails from the files of Clinton's campaign chairman John Podesta show that the department official provided Clinton aides with the agency's official response to a New York Times reporter in advance of the newspaper's March 2015 report that Clinton had used a private email account to conduct all of her work-related business as secretary.

The stolen emails were released Wednesday by WikiLeaks, part of a massive trove of emails released by the document-leaking group on a daily basis since last month. WikiLeaks has indicated it intends to leak emails stolen from Podesta's account every day through the election.

In a March 1, 2015 email, State Department press aide Lauren Hickey told Clinton's spokesman Nick Merrill and two other advisers that then-State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki had "just cleared" a reply to the Times. Hickey provided the agency's response to the Clinton aides and also appeared to agree to a change requested by the campaign, saying: "Yes on your point re records - done below." It is not clear what specific change was requested and made.

State Department spokesman John Kirby said Wednesday that the department would not comment on alleged leaked documents. But he said the department's effort to "provide accurate information to the media" about Clinton's tenure at the agency has "at times required communicating with her representatives to ensure accuracy."

The Clinton campaign has repeatedly warned that WikiLeaks has exploited emails stolen by hackers who may be working for the Russian government.

The Podesta emails follow a string of notable illicit caches released during the 2016 election campaign, including thousands of messages stolen from the Democratic National Committee and former Secretary of State Colin Powell. The FBI has opened a criminal investigation into the DNC thefts, but U.S. intelligence agencies are firmly pointing to the Russian government.

In a hacked email chain from March 17, 2015, Clinton's campaign advisers discussed how to respond to a request by a Times reporter for comment on an upcoming story about how top State Department aides

used private email accounts to communicate with Clinton.

Clinton aide Philippe Reines wrote: "There's a lot to respond to here, but first and foremost the premise is wrong. There is nothing wrong with anyone having personal email addresses or her emailing someone's private account or vice versa. Maybe she was wishing (longtime aide) Jake (Sullivan) a happy birthday. Or I was sending her a note about her mom. ... We're allowed to have personal lives."

Campaign spokeswoman Jennifer Palmieri wrote: "Strikes me as a big problem that the NYT is having selected emails leaked to them and I think we should do a call to discuss the proper way to handle." The email exchange occurred about a month before Clinton officially launched her presidential bid in a video released in April 2015.

In an August 2015 email exchange, Clinton aide Huma Abedin points out that Clinton wasn't prepared for all of the questions surrounding the use of her private email and asks for a longer list of questions and answers "so at least it's out there and maybe she won't have to do it verbally again?"

Separately, assistant attorney general Peter Kadzik wrote to Podesta in May 2015 to offer a "heads up" that a Justice Department official would be testifying before the House Judiciary Committee and would likely "get questions on State Department emails." Podesta forwarded the message to top campaign staff, writing: "Additional chances for mischief."

Kadzik, head of Justice's office of legislative affairs, wrote to Congress this week assuring lawmakers that the department will "dedicate all necessary resources and take appropriate steps as expeditiously as possible" as it renews its investigation into newly discovered emails that may be related to the dormant inquiry into Clinton's email practices.

Associated Press writers Russ Bynum, Paisley Dodds, Michael Rubinkam and Matthew Lee contributed to this report.

Some immune-boosting cancer drugs may pose rare heart risks

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE, AP Chief Medical Writer

Doctors have found a disturbing downside to some powerful new drugs that harness the immune system to fight cancer: In rare cases, they may cause potentially fatal heart damage, especially when used together.

"The problem is, no one has this on their radar," so patients are not routinely checked for it, said Dr. Javid Moslehi, head of a Vanderbilt University clinic specializing in heart risks from cancer therapies.

He led a report Wednesday in the New England Journal of Medicine describing two patients who died of heart trouble two weeks after receiving their first doses of two Bristol-Myers Squibb drugs, Opdivo and Yervoy, for the deadly skin cancer melanoma.

Two similar drugs also are on the market, and the study leaders believe they might pose heart risks, too. "My sense is that this is a class effect, not limited to one drug," Moslehi said.

The risks do not negate the huge benefits of these relatively new types of drugs, doctors stress. Called checkpoint inhibitors, they have transformed treatment of several types of cancer by helping the immune system see and attack tumors.

In rare cases, the immune system seems to attack not only the tumor but also the heart and other muscles, causing dangerous inflammation and heart rhythm problems. Patients need to be told of the risks, monitored closely and treated quickly with medicines to quell the immune response if trouble develops.

Besides melanoma, the Opdivo-Yervoy combination is used to treat some lung cancers, though at different doses. Other checkpoint inhibitors include Genentech's Tecentriq, for bladder cancer, and Merck & Co.'s Keytruda, which former President Jimmy Carter received for melanoma that spread to his brain. Many more are in testing.

There have been occasional, previous reports of heart troubles with these drugs. After the two recent deaths, doctors asked Bristol-Myers to check patient safety records on Opdivo and Yervoy.

As of April, 18 cases of serious heart inflammation were found among 20,594 patients receiving either or both drugs, a rate of 0.09 percent. It was more severe and more common among people on both drugs,

affecting 0.27 percent of those patients. Bristol-Myers scientists helped write the journal report, and some other authors consult for the company.

Studies have shown that the drug combination gives a stronger anti-cancer effect than either drug alone, but "we've known this is a double-edged sword" because of the risk of over-stimulating the immune system, said Dr. Jeffrey Sosman of Northwestern University in Chicago, who treated the two patients who died.

"The big question is, is there enough advantage to using the combination, which is much more toxic, than a single drug," he said.

That's a larger question facing the cancer field, not just with immune therapies. Some of the newer gene-targeting drugs also have produced major side effects when used in combination. Yet many doctors believe that combos may be the best way to get cancer to go into remission and stay there longer, by shutting down multiple pathways the tumor employs at once.

Dr. Michael Atkins, deputy director of the Georgetown-Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, believes the heart problems with checkpoint inhibitors will turn out to be treatable in most patients.

"It just gives us a moment of pause," said Atkins, who led a study that included one of the two patients who died. "This is a rare event ... but it's a particularly serious one."

Marilynn Marchione can be followed at <http://twitter.com/MMarchioneAP> .

Questions linger about Trump's relationship with Russia

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The questions have been a recurring undercurrent throughout the presidential campaign: What is Donald Trump's relationship with Russia? Why does he keep praising its president, Vladimir Putin? Is Russia meddling in the U.S. election? And is the FBI investigating any of this?

As the race enters its final stretch, a look at the situation:

TRUMP'S WORDS

Trump has raised eyebrows for repeatedly praising Putin's leadership and advocating a closer working relationship with Russia despite its record of human rights abuses and recent military incursions in Ukraine and Syria.

"At least he's a leader," Trump told MSNBC of Putin last December, "unlike what we have in this country."

Trump often bemoans the state of U.S.-Russia relations and argues the U.S. would be better off if the two countries put aside their differences and worked together to take on Islamic State militants. That's despite Russia's backing of Syrian President Bashar Assad, whom the U.S. opposes.

"I don't know Putin but wouldn't it be nice if we could get along actually with the other country?" Trump asked Sunday at a rally. "They want to get ISIS. We want to get ISIS. We'd put everything together, we knock the hell out of ISIS."

In recent days Trump has also escalated his criticism of rival Hillary Clinton for being too tough on Putin. "She speaks very badly of Putin, and I don't think that's smart," Trump recently said at a rally in Ohio. "How do you speak so badly of someone?"

WHAT'S THE RELATIONSHIP?

Trump has been contradictory when describing his relationship with Putin. He told ABC in July that he had "no relationship with" with the Russian leader and had no recollection of ever meeting him. But several times in prior years, he'd stated the opposite.

"I do have a relationship with him," Trump said in one 2013 interview in Moscow.

The ABC interview in which Trump said he'd "never met" Putin directly contradicted a 2015 interview Trump did with talk-radio host Michael Savage.

Asked point-blank by Savage whether he'd ever met Putin, Trump responded: "Yes. One time, yes. Long time ago."

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TRUMP'S HIRES

Throughout the campaign, Trump has repeatedly tapped top advisers with close ties to Russia. Among them: former campaign chair Paul Manafort.

Trump brought on Manafort in March. Manafort, a longtime Republican operative who'd spent recent years advising a pro-Russian Ukrainian political party before its ouster over alleged corruption, and his deputy Rick Gates took over functional control of managing the Trump campaign in June.

Given the Republican Party's generally hawkish stance on Russia, Manafort's past work repeatedly put him in the spotlight.

In August, The New York Times reported that a hand-written ledger of cash payments made by Ukraine's ousted government listed Manafort as being paid \$12.7 million. Ukrainian prosecutors said the payments detailed in the ledger were an effort to obscure bribes.

A few days later, The Associated Press reported that Manafort and Gates had orchestrated a secret Ukrainian lobbying campaign in Washington. Participants said the men had sought to obscure the true backer of the work — Ukraine's pro-Russian ruling party — by routing lobbying funds through a nonprofit front group.

Manafort and Gates denied having been involved in the lobbying. But emails obtained by the AP explicitly showed Gates giving orders to the lobbyists.

Manafort departed the campaign the following day.

RUSSIAN HACKING

Democratic Party officials learned in late April that their systems were attacked after discovering malicious software on their computers. A cybersecurity firm, CrowdStrike Inc., found traces of at least two sophisticated hacking groups on the Democrats' network — both with ties to the Russian government.

Those hackers took at least one year's worth of detailed chats, emails and research about Trump, according to a person knowledgeable of the breach who wasn't authorized to speak publicly.

CrowdStrike said one of the hacking groups, dubbed Cozy Bear, had previously infiltrated unclassified networks at the White House, the State Department and the Pentagon's Joint Chiefs of Staff. Another group detected, called Fancy Bear, had targeted private- and public-sector networks since the mid-2000s.

In addition to the Democratic Party hack, other emails were made public in recent months that detailed tens of thousands of messages from Democratic operatives.

Among those were emails of Clinton's campaign chair John Podesta, which contained thousands of messages to and from Clinton campaign insiders. Clinton's campaign has said it was notified by the U.S. government that it was investigating Russia for the Podesta hack.

The Podesta emails have been publicly released daily by WikiLeaks. They have provided a steady stream of questions about Clinton's policy positions, personnel choices and ties with her husband's charitable network.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Homeland Security Department have formally accused Russian state-sponsored hackers of the Democratic Party cyberattacks and accused them of trying to influence the presidential election.

Trump, meanwhile, has said there's no proof of Russian involvement in any of the hacking. He's taken a blase attitude toward a foreign power's attempts to influence the election, at one pointing calling on Russia to find emails Clinton had deleted. His campaign later said he was joking.

THE FBI'S REACTION

As the election enters its final stretch, Democrats have been pressing for action.

But the FBI's actions are unclear.

Sen. Harry Reid, the Nevada Democrat, accused FBI Director James Comey of a double standard by publicly discussing the FBI's investigation into Clinton's private email server without confirming whether it

had opened a probe into the Trump campaign's ties to Russia.

The New York Times reported that the FBI this summer had looked into links between the Russian government and the Trump campaign, but had so far found nothing conclusive or criminal. An FBI spokeswoman declined to comment on the report.

WHAT HAS RUSSIA SAID?

Russia, including Putin, has denied meddling in the U.S. election.

The AP learned that Russia's government did lodge an angry complaint in September with the United Nations over a top U.N. official's condemnations of Trump and several European leaders, an unusual intervention given that none of the criticized politicians were Russian.

Associated Press writers Jeff Horwitz, Jack Gillum and Eric Tucker in Washington contributed to this report.

Putin offers new pause, exits for Syrian's besieged Aleppo

By NATALIYA VASILYEVA and SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — The Russian president on Wednesday offered a new unilateral humanitarian pause for Syria's war-ravaged Aleppo, urging rebels to use it to leave the city's eastern, besieged districts. The Syrian rebels quickly dismissed Vladimir Putin's initiative.

Later in the day, at least eight civilians were killed in presumed government or Russian air strikes on the rebel-held town of Saraqib in Idlib province, a local search-and-rescue outfit reported.

Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his forces to open humanitarian corridors to eastern Aleppo this Friday, along with two routes for rebels to leave the city "in order to prevent a senseless loss of life," the Defense Ministry announced Wednesday.

One exit leads to the Turkish border, the other to the city of Idlib, according to the ministry.

The U.N. and other relief organizations declined to use the corridors two weeks ago, when Russia first opened them, saying rebels and pro-government forces would not guarantee their safety. Few rebels or civilians were seen leaving the city, either.

Chief of the Russian General Staff Gen. Valery Gerasimov said he was "calling on all leaders of armed groups directly to cease hostilities and leave Aleppo with their weapons."

Gerasimov also said the rebel offensive on the Syrian government-held districts in western Aleppo, which was launched last week, has failed to break through the siege.

"They have no chance to break out of the city," he added.

Rebel groups in Aleppo dismissed Russia's latest offer, with one of the groups describing it as a media stunt for "public consumption."

Yasser al-Youssef, a spokesman for the Nour el-Din el-Zinki rebel group, said Russia "is not serious" and its latest initiatives "don't concern us." He added that the Russian leader's comments do not reflect the reality on the ground.

"We need an international commission to check the Russian lies," al-Youssef said.

Molhem Ekaidi, deputy commander of Fastaqim group, one of the major rebel factions fighting inside Aleppo, also accused the Russians of lying. "The (Russian) shelling and crimes continue and their planes have not left the skies of Aleppo," he said.

The two factions, Nour el-Din el-Zinki and Fastaqim, were later reported clashing among themselves inside the besieged city over detentions, according to activists briefed on the situation.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory said at least one rebel was killed and 24 others wounded in the infighting that followed the arrest of several Nour el-Din el-Zinki fighters by Fastaqim fighters.

The Syrian media activist Ahmad Primo, who maintains contacts with rebels, described the fighting as a simple dust-up.

Meanwhile, the Idlib branch of the Syrian Civil Defense said warplanes launched a dozen strikes on the town in the afternoon. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the Syrian

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war through local contacts, said the death toll included four children.

The Idlib province has borne the brunt of Russian and government airstrikes since the two air forces relaxed their bombardment of Aleppo two weeks ago. The U.N. says 22 children and six teachers were killed in an air raid on a school in the village of Hass one week ago.

Also on Wednesday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said other countries involved in Syrian peace negotiations have "sabotaged" the process by backing militant groups intent on toppling Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Lavrov spoke Wednesday at the start of a visit to Greece, a NATO and European Union member that has maintained close ties with Russia. He did not name any countries. Peace talks on Syria have involved U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and foreign ministers of Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Iran.

El Deeb reported from Beirut. Associated Press Writer Derek Gatopoulos in Athens and Philip Issa in Beirut contributed to this report.

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Nov. 3, the 308th day of 2016. There are 58 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 3, 1986, the Iran-Contra affair came to light as Ash-Shiraa, a pro-Syrian Lebanese magazine, first broke the story of U.S. arms sales to Iran.

On this date:

In 1839, the first Opium War between China and Britain broke out.

In 1903, Panama proclaimed its independence from Colombia.

In 1900, the first major U.S. automobile show opened at New York's Madison Square Garden under the auspices of the Automobile Club of America.

In 1911, the Chevrolet Motor Car Co. was founded in Detroit by Louis Chevrolet and William C. Durant. (The company was acquired by General Motors in 1918.)

In 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt won a landslide election victory over Republican challenger Alfred M. "Alf" Landon.

In 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik 2, the second manmade satellite, into orbit; on board was a dog named Laika (LY'-kah), who was sacrificed in the experiment.

In 1960, the Meredith Willson musical "The Unsinkable Molly Brown" opened on Broadway with Tammy Grimes in the title role.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson soundly defeated Republican Barry Goldwater to win a White House term in his own right.

In 1970, Salvador Allende (ah-YEN'-day) was inaugurated as president of Chile.

In 1976, the horror movie "Carrie," adapted from the Stephen King novel and starring Sissy Spacek, was released by United Artists.

In 1979, five Communist Workers Party members were killed in a clash with heavily armed Ku Klux Klansmen and neo-Nazis during an anti-Klan protest in Greensboro, North Carolina.

In 1991, Israeli and Palestinian representatives held their first-ever face-to-face talks in Madrid, Spain; in another milestone, Syria opened its first one-on-one meeting with Israel in 43 years.

Ten years ago: U.S. Rep. Bob Ney, R-Ohio, who pleaded guilty in the Jack Abramoff influence-peddling investigation, resigned from Congress. French conductor Paul Mauriat, whose arrangement of "Love is Blue" topped U.S. charts in the 1960s, died in Perpignan, France, at age 81.

Five years ago: Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou abandoned his plan to put a European rescue deal to a popular vote. Former San Francisco Giants outfielder Matty Alou died in his native Dominican Republic at age 72.

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One year ago: Ohio voters rejected a ballot proposal that would have legalized both recreational and medical marijuana. U.S. auto safety regulators fined Japan's Takata Corp. \$70 million for concealing evidence for years that its air bags were prone to explode with potentially deadly consequences. Online retail giant Amazon opened its first brick-and-mortar bookstore, located in Seattle, two decades after it began selling books over the Internet. Ahmad Chalabi, a prominent Iraqi politician who helped persuade the Bush administration to invade Iraq and overthrow Saddam Hussein in 2003, died in Baghdad.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Peggy McCay is 89. Actress Lois Smith is 86. Actress Monica Vitti is 85. Former Massachusetts Gov. Michael S. Dukakis is 83. Actor-dancer Ken Berry is 83. Actor Shadoe Stevens is 70. Singer Lulu is 68. Comedian-actress Roseanne Barr is 64. Actress Kate Capshaw is 63. Comedian Dennis Miller is 63. Actress Kathy Kinney is 63. Singer Adam Ant is 62. Director/screenwriter Gary Ross (Film: "The Hunger Games") is 60. Actor Dolph Lundgren is 59. Rock musician C.J. Pierce (Drowning Pool) is 44. Olympic gold medal figure skater Evgeni Plushenko is 34. Actress Julie Berman is 33. Alternative rock singer/songwriter Courtney Barnett is 29.

Thought for Today: "You must be true to yourself. Strong enough to be true to yourself. Brave enough to be strong enough to be true to yourself. Wise enough to be brave enough, to be strong enough to shape yourself from what you actually are." — Sylvia Constance Ashton-Warner, New Zealander author and educator (1908-1984).