

Groton Daily Independent

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Saturday, Dec. 3

NE Area Honor Band
State Oral Interp Festival at Harrisburg
10 a.m.: 7th/8th GBB Jamboree at Groton Area
10 a.m.: Wrestling at Clark
4 p.m. to 8 p.m.: Olive Grove Holiday Party and Tour of Homes

Sunday, Dec. 4

9 a.m.: St. John's Lutheran Worship with Communion
10:00 am: St. John's Lutheran Christmas Program practice
9 a.m.: Emmanuel Lutheran Worship
10 a.m.: Emmanuel Lutheran Sunday School
10 a.m.: Heaven Bound Ministries worship at Pierpont Church
Open Gym (2:30-4:30 for JK-8, 4:30-6:30 for 6-12)

Monday, Dec. 5

JHGGB at Clark (7th at 5 p.m., 8th at 6 p.m.)

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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Dr. Geoffrey Rath - Optometrist

Eye Exams Glaucoma Tests Rx's Filled
- All Types Contact Lenses -

Doctor here Mondays Only - Office open Thursdays.
701-349-3223 to make appointments & adjustments

Hours at Ellendale, N.D. are:
Monday 9 - 12 & 1 - 5 Thursday 1:00 - 4:00

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Fall 2016 Weather Summary

The climatological fall (September through November) of 2016 was one of the top five warmest falls across the region since records began. Interestingly, the fall of 2015 also ranked in the top five warmest on record for many across central and northeastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota (with the exception of Pierre). Watertown had its warmest fall on record last year, while both Mobridge and Kennebec tied or set their warmest fall on record this year. Before these past two falls, you have to go back over 50 years to 1963 to find another comparable one.

Precipitation amounts varied across the region for the fall of 2016 – generally above normal (by ~1-2”) in the far northeast to near to below normal (by ~1-2”) across the rest of the region.

Location	2016 Fall Temp	Normal Fall Temp	Dep from Normal	2016 Ranking	2015 Ranking	Record Warmest	Year
Watertown	50.4	44.8	+5.6	4th	Warmest	51.8	2015
Aberdeen	50.9	44.5	+6.6	3rd	2nd	52.9	1931
Pierre	53.5	48.4	+5.1	5th	10th	54.5	1963
Sisseton	51.4	45.6	+5.8	4th	3rd	53.6	1963
Mobridge	53.1	46.6	+6.5	Tied 1st	3rd	53.1	1963/2016
Timber Lake	51.3	46.7	+4.6	2nd	2nd	52.0	1963
Kennebec	55.0	49.4	+5.6	1st	2nd	55.0	2016



House for Sale

3 bedroom house for sale. Groton S. D. Detached garage. 1/2 block from high school. Call (605) 397-8405.

GROTON
Chamber Of Commerce

Sign Up for Groton Chamber Bucks at the Holiday Boxes Located This week at the Groton Vet Clinic and Ken's Food Fair

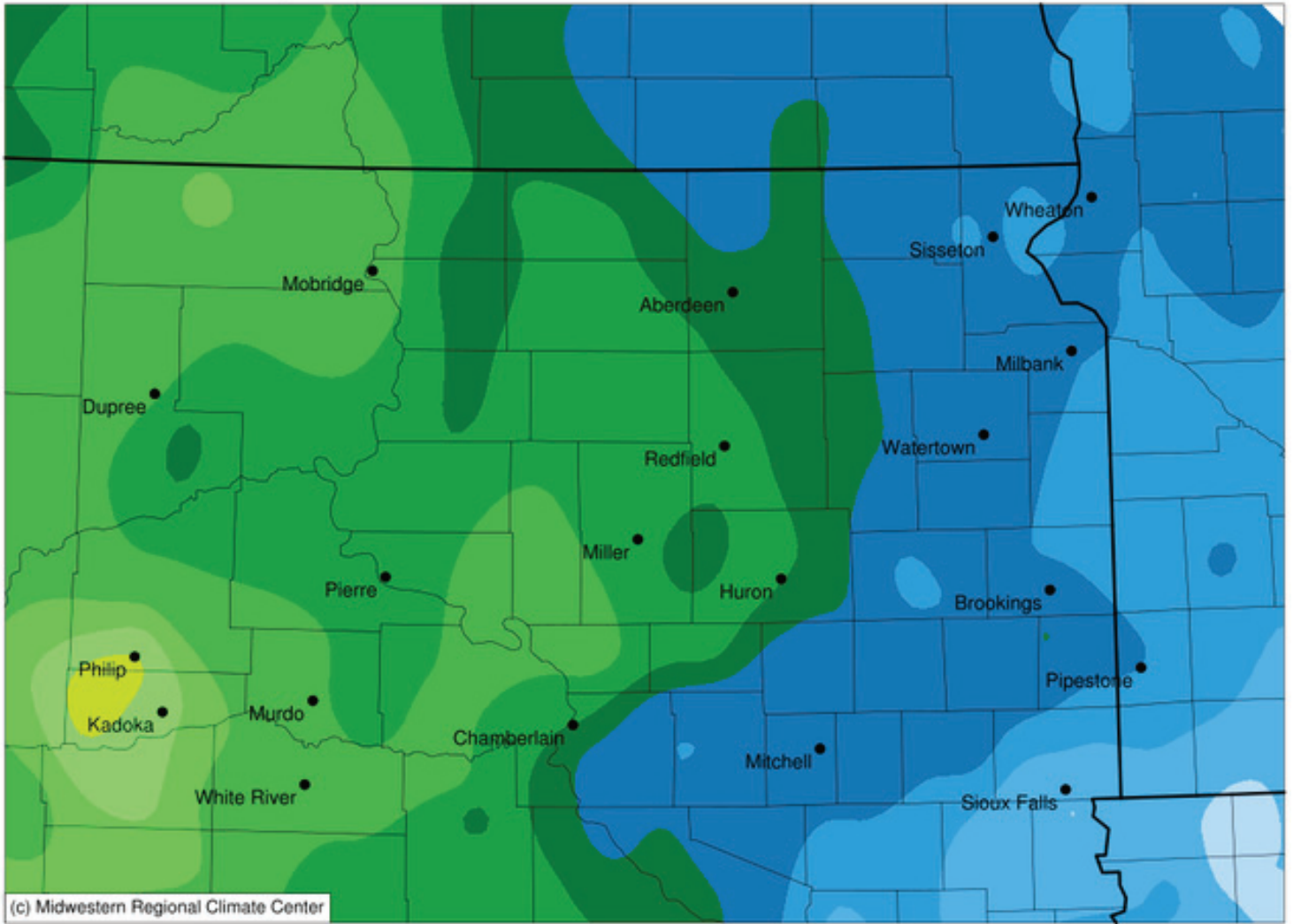
Week of Dec. 5: JVT and Professional Management Ser.

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Accumulated Precipitation (in)

September 01, 2016 to November 30, 2016



(c) Midwestern Regional Climate Center



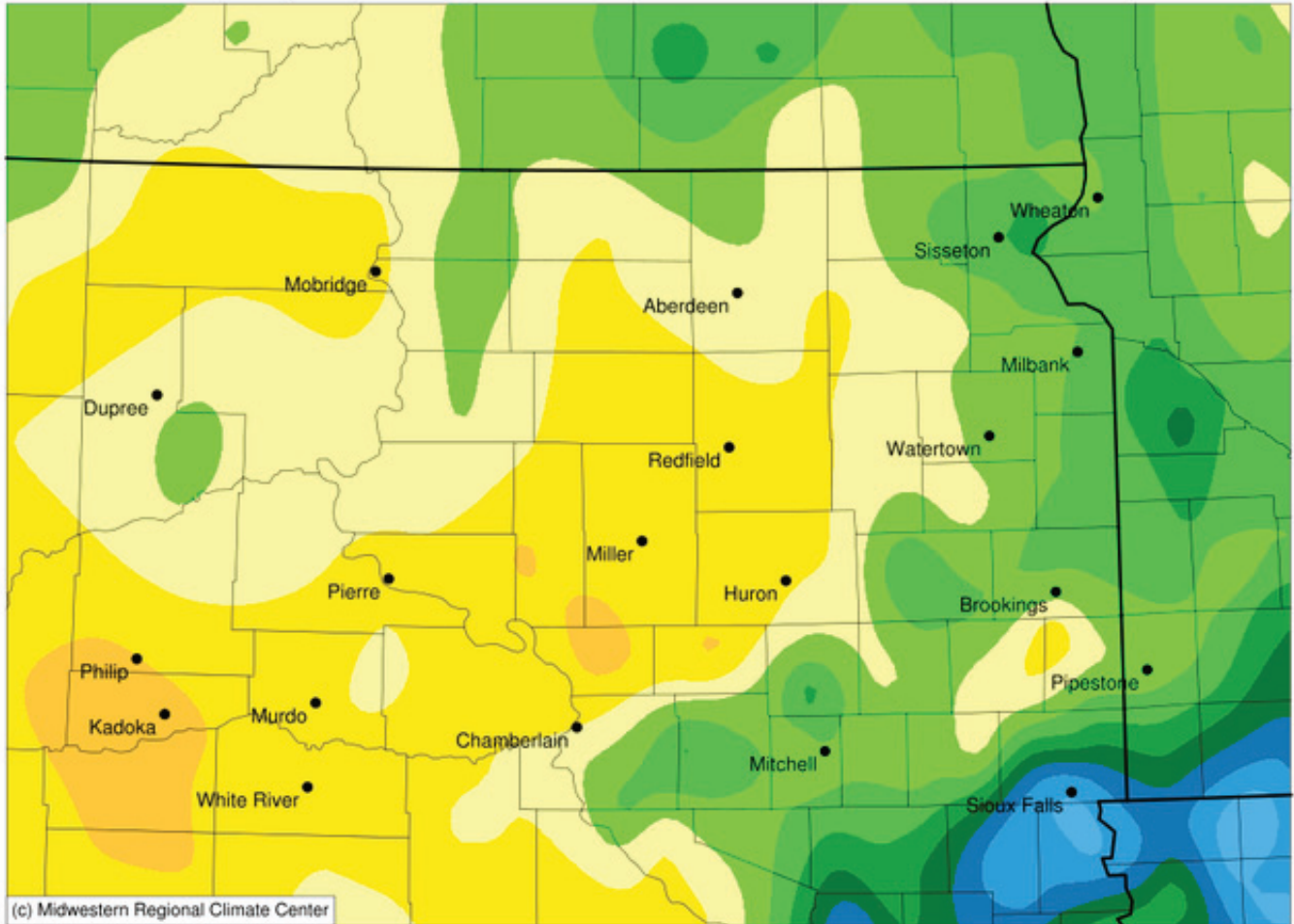
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Accumulated Precipitation (in): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals

September 01, 2016 to November 30, 2016

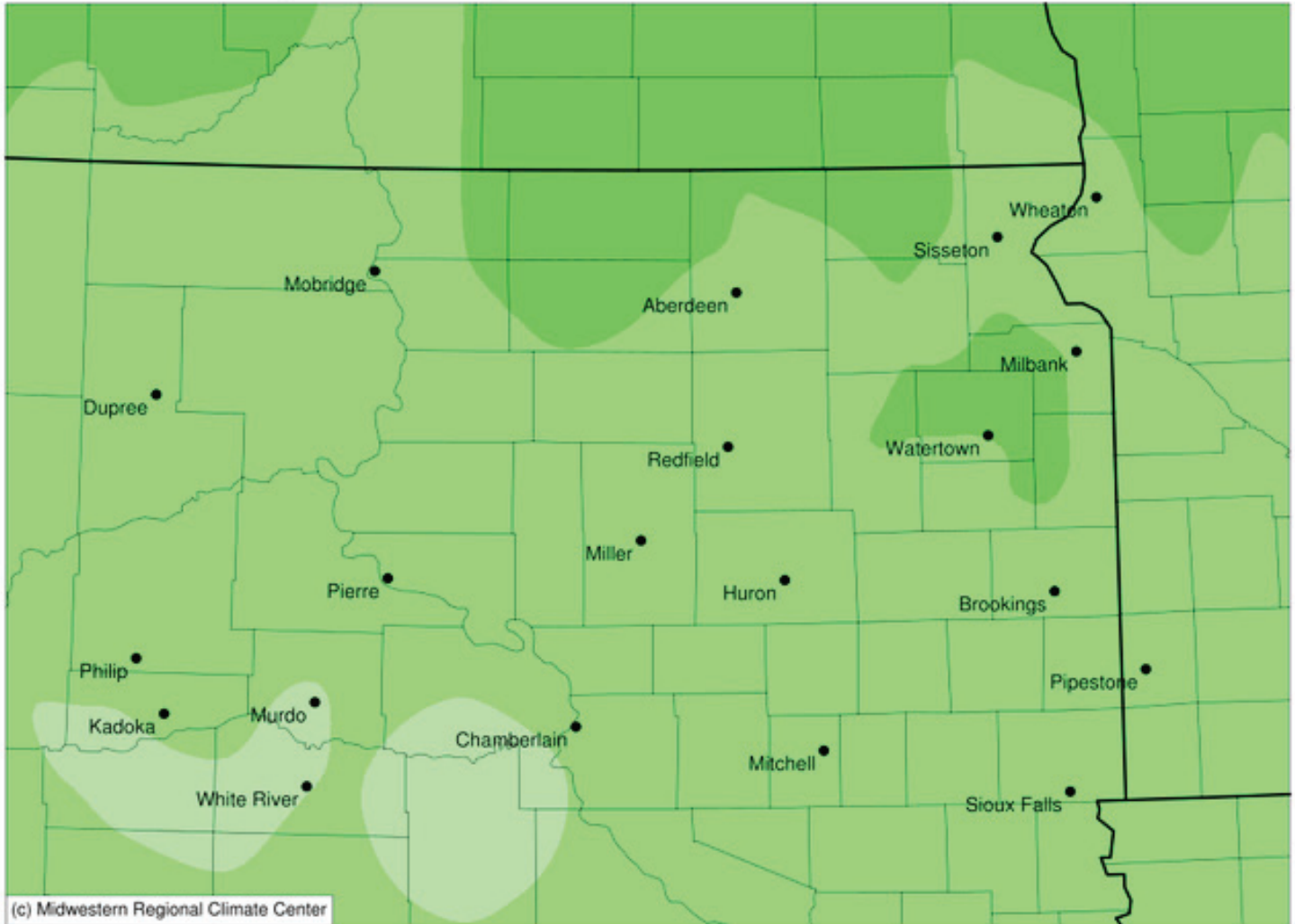


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Average Temperature (°F)

September 01, 2016 to November 30, 2016



40

45

50

55

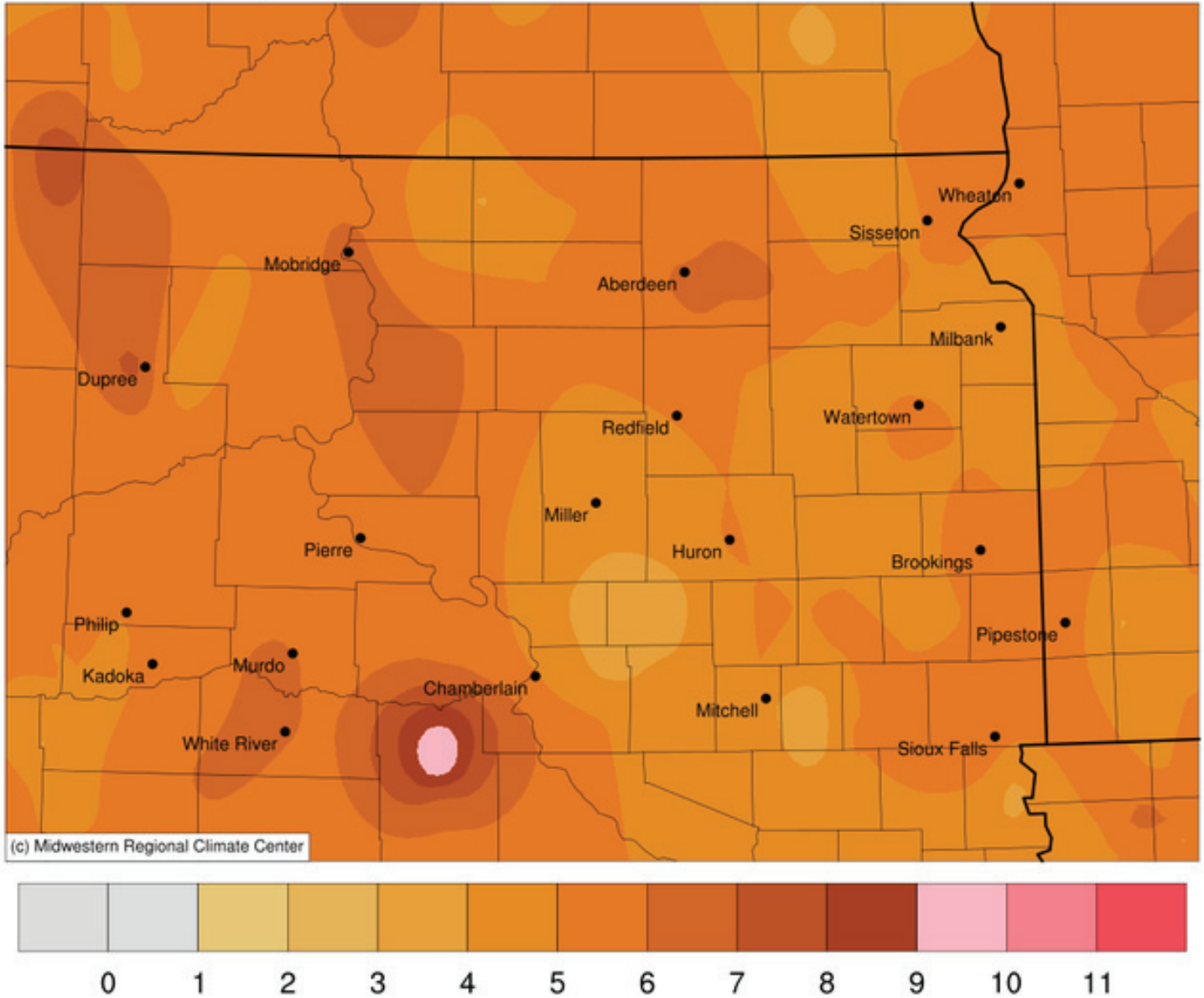
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Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals

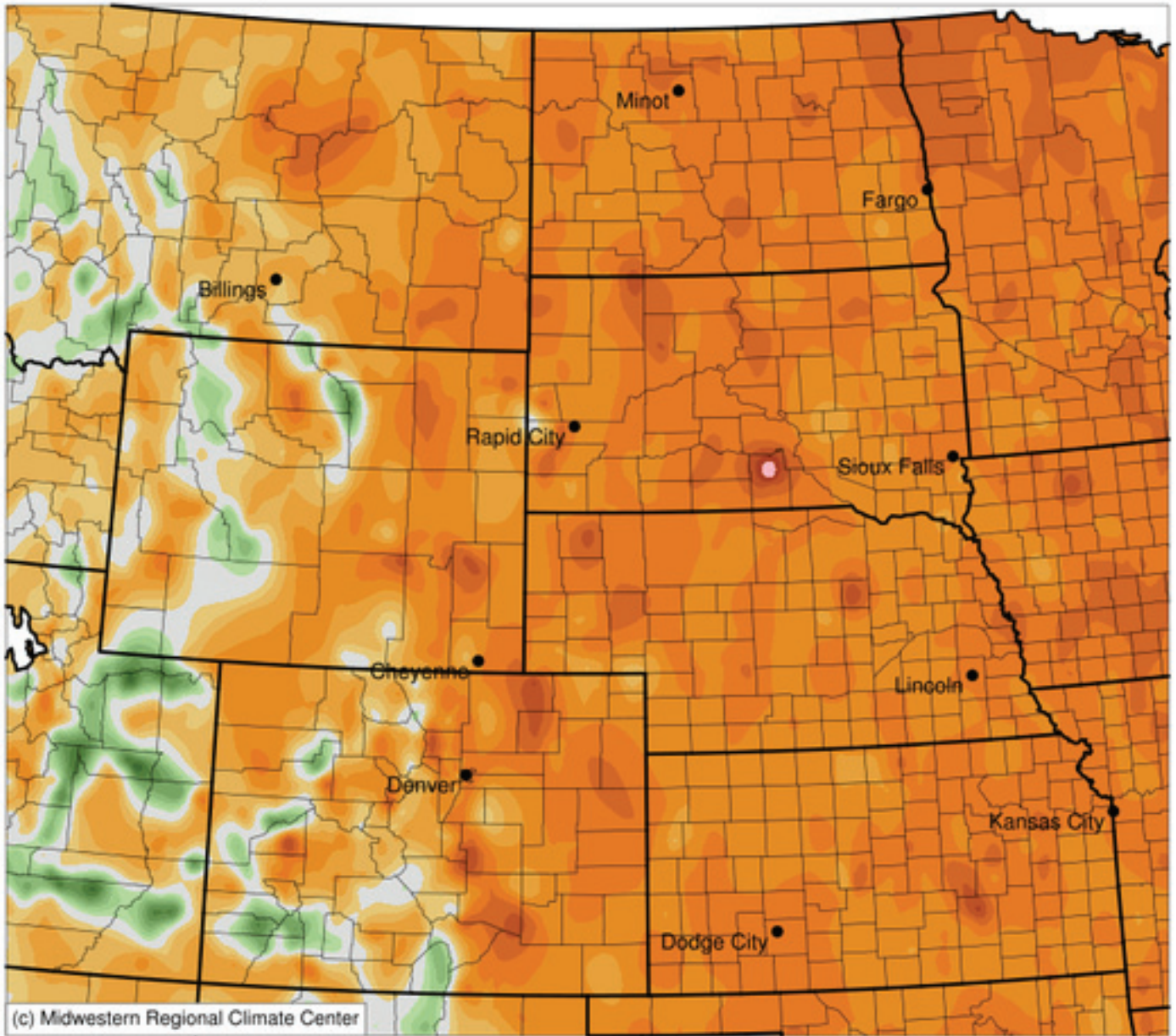
September 01, 2016 to November 30, 2016



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Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals
September 01, 2016 to November 30, 2016

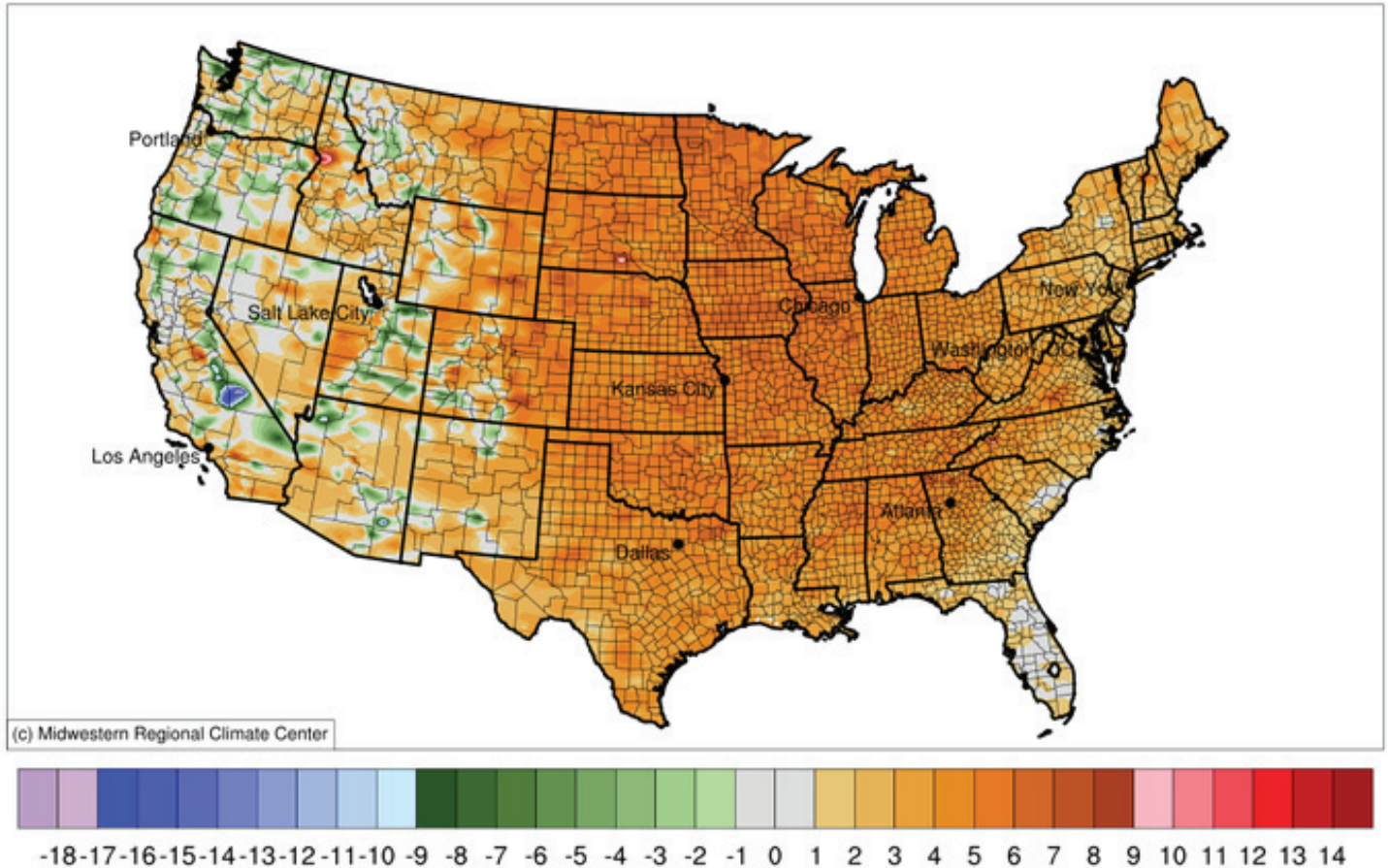


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Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals
September 01, 2016 to November 30, 2016



GROTON CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

December 5, 2016 - 7pm
Groton Community Center

- 1) Minutes
- 2) Financial Report
- 3) Bills
- 4) Department Reports – Herron, Zerr, Lambertz
- 5) Rubble Site Costs & Prices
- 6) Joint Util Training School – Sioux Falls – Dan Sunne
- 7) Holiday Lighting Contest
- 8) WEB water meeting report
- 9) NECOG joint powers agreement
- 10) SDSU architectural program
- 11) January Meeting Dates – Jan 3 & 16 or Jan 9 & 23
- 12) Exe Session – Personnel & Legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
- 13) Hire Skating Rink Employees
- 14) 2nd Reading Ordinance #708- 2017 Salary Ordinance



By Richard P. Holm M.D.

Noise Induced Hearing Loss

Of the 40 million people with hearing loss in the United States, 25% of those, or 10 million, have lost part or all of their hearing as a result of excessive exposure to too much noise. But how much noise is too much?

Measured as decibels (dB), the acceptable manufacturing noise standard is to allow a daily exposure up to but not over 85 dB in an eight-hour period of time. More than that can cause permanent injury to our hearing. This is likely due to wear and tear on the tiny cells in the ear, called hair cells, that vibrate when sound is introduced. It's like a daily line of college kids walking too often across one path on the grass. A little is fine; too much kills the grass.

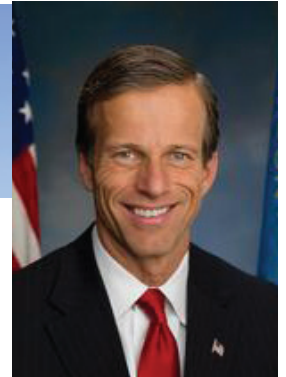
The average conversation, for example, is usually around 50-60 dB, street noises at 70-80 dB, and an operating lawnmower at about 90 dB. Single loud sounds like gunfire at about 150 dB can also be damaging, but realize that the time exposed to lower volumes are the unrecognized danger we face daily. Noise levels above 90 dB come from surprising places like screaming babies, convertibles driving at 60 mph, marching bands, leaf blowers, hand and hair driers, and those noisy electronically amplified concerts.

Now a new threat has turned up. Tuning out the world with ear buds, while turning up the tunes for hours, can be like riding on a two-cylinder John Deere Tractor with no cab all day while cultivating corn. Those old two-cylinders were loud, and so it can be with ear buds! Ear bud volumes at 100 dB for as short as 15 minutes can damage hearing. Again, it's the volume multiplied by the time of exposure that makes it so bad. One study showed that 97% of third graders had documented exposure to hazardous sound levels, while another showed that 12.5% of 6-19 year olds in the U.S. already had hearing loss directly attributed to noise exposure.

What's more, ear buds can be even more dangerous if the volume is too high and blocking out the ambient outside noise, which is needed to avoid danger. For example, walkers, runners, and bicyclists need their ears to hear when a truck might be coming from behind.

Of course, it isn't just noise that can reduce our hearing. Infections, trauma, and even medications like antibiotics, chemotherapy drugs, or pain medications can do it too, and we need to be aware. But the take home message for today is to protect ears by avoiding exposure to too much noise, and that the noise from ear buds is a new and dangerous threat.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Fighting for What Matters

If you tuned in to C-SPAN today, you'd find a much different Senate than the one that existed just a few short years ago. In 2013 and 2014, under Democrat leadership, the Senate repeatedly chose politics and partisanship over bipartisanship and efficiency. The legislative process, including the important work done in our committees, nearly ground to a halt. Only backroom, cherry-picked bills chosen by Democrat leaders made it to the floor. The Senate wasn't passing the important pieces of legislation that it should have been, and senators were often backed into take-it-or-leave-it scenarios created by politically orchestrated cliffs and countdown clocks.

Republicans told the American people that if we were given the opportunity to lead in the Senate, we would do things differently. We would focus on the issues that mattered to the people. We would help give them the voice they deserved. After Republicans regained the majority in January 2015, we quickly got to work. Republicans and Democrats were able to participate in the legislative process and offer proposals they thought would make bills better for the people they served. Ideas were debated and considered in committee, and bills that were sent to the floor were better for it.

We passed a balanced budget, appropriations bills, and the first major energy bill in more than a decade. The Commerce Committee, which I chair, worked hard to get a Federal Aviation Administration bill with major airport security provisions through the Senate and onto the president's desk. And the committee delivered the same result on the first long-term transportation bill since 2005. I've always believed that hard work delivers positive results, and there's no better proof than what we've accomplished in the last two years in the Senate.

We're just getting started, though, and I'm glad Republicans will have the chance to continue working toward our goal of creating greater economic and national security for the American people. That starts with rolling back some of the Obama administration's most onerous regulations, particularly the Waters of the United States rule. We'll work toward repealing and replacing Obamacare, which has been a huge drag on family budgets in South Dakota and across the country. And we'll continue to protect our nation's borders and address the threats posed by terrorist groups like ISIS.

Republicans plan to start the 115th Congress in January the same way we're ending the 114th this month – with a lot of hard work and determination. We're going to have a long list of items to tackle, including confirming a Supreme Court nominee who will judge based on the law and the Constitution. January will be here in no time, and I'm looking forward to hitting the ground running and advancing our pro-growth, pro-jobs, pro-America agenda in 2017 and beyond.

###

NorthWestern Reminds Customers to Take Winter Safety Steps

Butte, Mont. – Dec. 2, 2016 – A significant wave of snow and cold weather is expected to affect a large swath of Montana, South Dakota and Nebraska in the coming days and NorthWestern Energy is reminding customers of important safety measures.

Electric Customers:

Use caution around electric lines that are sagging or downed. Never attempt to touch or move a low-hanging wire as lines may still be energized even if they are on the ground. Contact NorthWestern Energy to report sagging or downed lines.

In Montana, customers should call (888) 467-2669. In South Dakota and Nebraska, customers should call (800) 245-6977.

Natural Gas Customers:

Heavy wet, blowing snow can block heating and appliance exhaust vents, which can cause equipment to malfunction resulting in a loss of heat or a build-up of deadly carbon monoxide in the structure.

Outdoor natural gas meters and equipment are designed to withstand winter weather conditions. However, heavy build-up of snow or ice, icicles falling from building eaves, or water dripping from a roof and freezing on a natural gas meter or appliance vent, may disrupt the flow of natural gas or create a potentially dangerous situation inside the structure.

If your home has an outside natural gas meter, check it for accumulation of ice or snow. Look for your natural gas appliance vents – which often are on the roof – to ensure they are clear of snow. Also remember that clearing snow and ice from meters or vents needs to be done carefully and gently to avoid damaging the equipment.

If at any time if you smell a strong and persistent odor similar to rotten eggs, leave your home immediately and avoid using any electric appliances such as light switches, garage door openers and phones—including a cell phone. When you are at a safe distance away, call NorthWestern Energy or 9-1-1 to report the concern. Stay away from the building until someone from the utility or a first responder tells you it's safe.

Unlike natural gas, carbon monoxide is odorless and may be present when a fuel is not burned completely due to inadequate combustion or when exhaust vents become clogged. Carbon monoxide symptoms include headache, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, and confusion. If you suspect carbon monoxide may be present, seek fresh air immediately and call NorthWestern Energy.

Other safety reminders include:

- Ensure your natural gas meter is visible at all times and accessible for maintenance and emergency responders.
- Avoid using a snow blower near a meter to keep from burying the meter with snow.
- Gently remove the snow or ice around the meter with your hands or use a broom to brush it away.
- Never kick or hit your natural gas meter or its piping with a hammer or other hard object in order to dislodge snow or ice.
- Keep natural gas vents clear, unobstructed and free of debris. Some direct-vent and high-efficiency appliances have direct side wall outdoor vents and air intakes that could become obstructed during heavy snowfall. Other vents may be on the roof.
- If you have a seasonal property or are away on vacation, ask someone to check your natural gas meters and vents—especially after a significant storm. A covered meter, in addition to being potentially dangerous, can disrupt service leading to loss of heat to the structure.

In Montana, customers should call (888) 467-2669. In South Dakota and Nebraska, customers should call (800) 245-6977.

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Today in Weather History

December 3, 1991: Strong northwesterly winds behind a departing surface low brought blizzard conditions and dangerously cold wind chill readings across west central and southwest Minnesota on the 3rd. A general 1 to 3-inch snowfall occurred across the area and combined with winds gusting to 50 mph at times to generate whiteout conditions from the morning into the evening. Air temperatures coupled with the strong wind to produce wind chill values ranging from 30 to 50 below zero. Some schools and businesses were closed during the morning as the storm intensified. Several car accidents and jack-knifed tractor-semitrailers littered roadways. Many roads were closed at the height of the storm. Power outages occurred over a small portion of the area due to the strong winds downing ice-covered power lines.

December 3, 1838: Cleveland Abbe, an American meteorologist, and advocate of time zones was born on this day. He was trained as an astronomer and was appointed the director of the Cincinnati Observatory in 1868. He eventually turned to meteorology and inaugurated a public weather service that served as a model for today's National Weather Service.

1856 - A severe blizzard began to rage across Iowa and Kansas. It produced as much as 16 inches of snow in Iowa. (David Ludlum)

1926 - Yuma, AZ, was soaked with 1.10 inch of rain, and by the 10th of the month had received 4.43 inches, making it the wettest December of record. The average annual rainfall for Yuma is 3.38 inches. (3rd-10th) (The Weather Channel)

1983 - Birmingham, AL, was drenched with 9.22 inches of rain in 24 hours. The rains caused severe flash flooding which literally submerged traffic. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Stormy weather in the northwestern U.S. finally began to abate, but not before Gold Beach OR was drenched with 7.94 inches of rain in 24 hours. Low pressure spread snow from the Upper Mississippi Valley to the Central Appalachians. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Gale force winds ushered cold air into the northeastern U.S., and produced snow squalls in the Lower Great Lakes Region. Winds gusted to 48 mph at Buffalo NY. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Hey Kids! Come see Santa!



Saturday, Dec. 10, 9-11 a.m.
**Professional Management
Services**

Downtown Groton
Cookies & Juice for the kids
Photographer Available

GROTON

Chamber Of Commerce

Made it possible for Santa to come to Groton!

**Olive Grove Golf Course
Holiday Party
includes Tour of Homes &
Silent Auction**

Saturday, Dec. 3, 4-8 p.m.

Hors d'oeuvres, coffee & Cider at Clubhouse
\$12/Person

Homes on Tour

Travis & Angela Antonsen

JR & Paula Johnson

Roger & Darci Spanier

Bob & Val Wegner

Base Camp Lodge

Tickets can be purchased at

Lori's Pharmacy

Olde Bank Floral 'N More

Groton Ford

Hair & Company

423 Moccasin Creek Dr., Aberdeen (Terri Kjellsen)

or by calling

Vicki Walter: 380-0480

Brenda Waage: 397-8385








Patty Tastad: 397-7388

Holiday Party & Silent Auction at Clubhouse

4 p.m. - ????

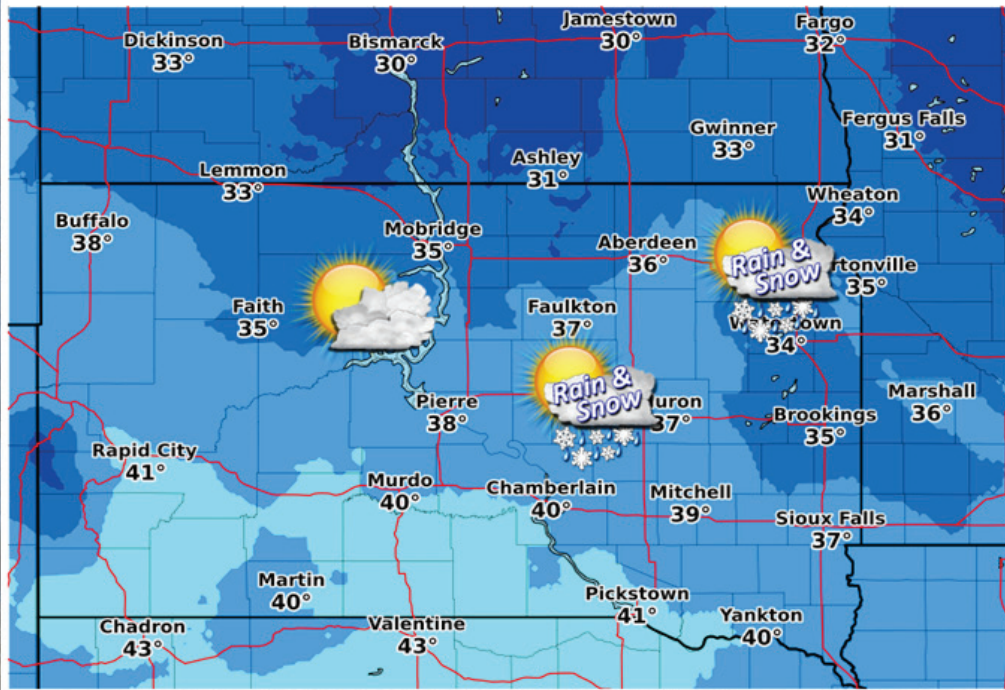
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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Partly Sunny then Slight Chance Rain/Snow	Chance Snow	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Rain/Snow	Slight Chance Snow then Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 36 °F	Low: 25 °F	High: 40 °F	Low: 24 °F	High: 36 °F	Low: 17 °F	High: 17 °F

Morning Fog & Partial Clearing Scattered Light Snow & Sprinkles Passing Through Today

Afternoon Highs Valid: December 03, 2016



HIGHLIGHTS

Temps Above Average Sunday & Early Monday

Arctic Blast Late Monday

Below Average Temps Through Friday



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD



Updated: 12/3/2016 4:31 AM Central

Published on: 12/03/2016 at 4:40AM

Partial clearing has resulted in pockets of dense fog this morning. A weak system will generate very light rain and snow, but generally we'll see dry conditions today. There may also be some light snow this evening/overnight as the system departs but no accumulation. Warm temperatures continue into Sunday and early Monday before the Arctic blast hits the region. Temperatures will only top out in the teens and single digits for Tuesday through Friday!

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 28.9 F at 12:00 AM

Low Outside Temp: 22.0 F at 11:21 PM

High Gust: 11.0 Mph at 7:17 AM

Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 63° in 1941

Record Low: -18° in 1905

Average High: 30°F

Average Low: 10°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.05

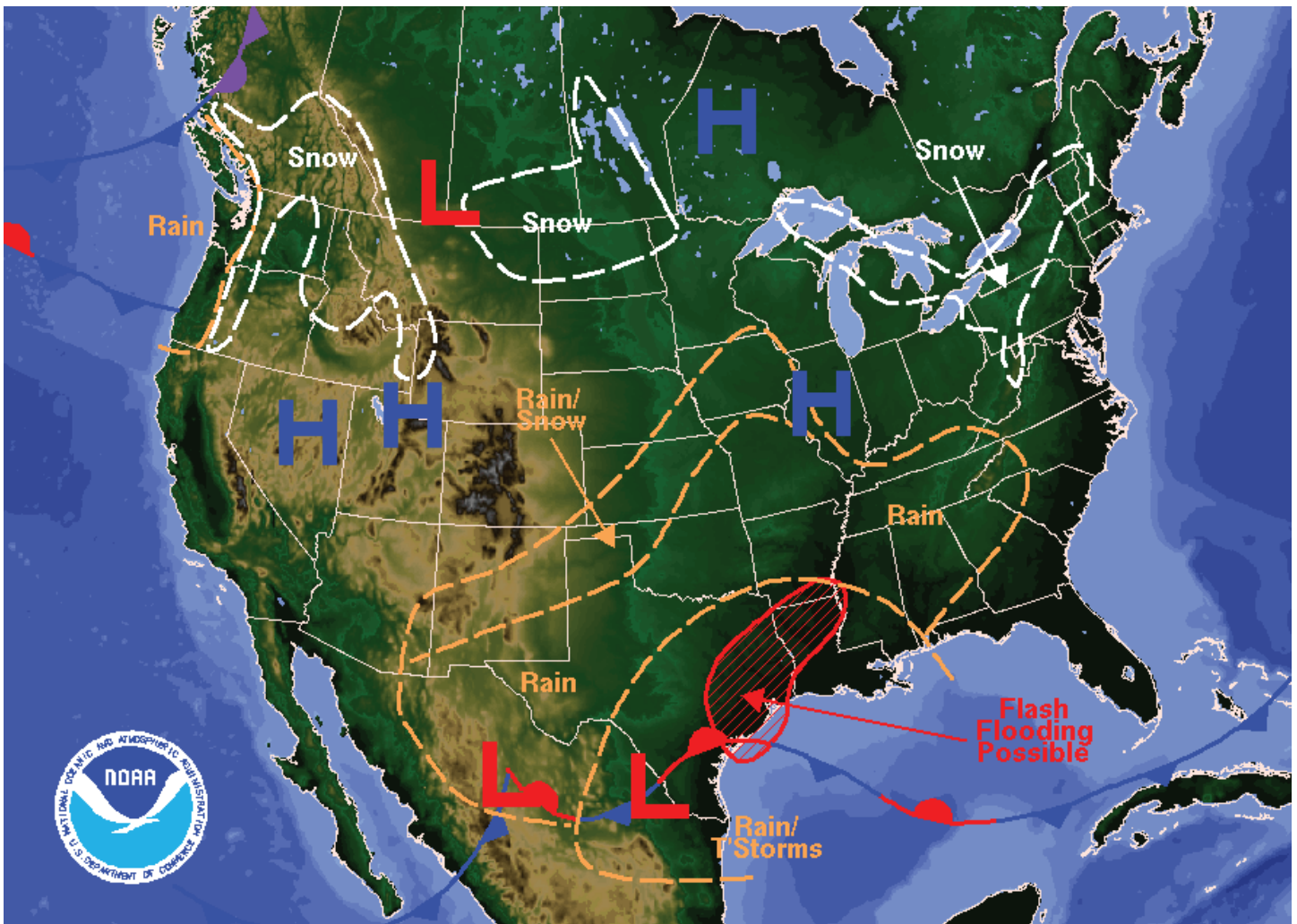
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.25

Precip Year to Date: 16.02

Sunset Tonight: 4:51 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:57 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Sat, Dec 03, 2016, issued 3:42 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Krekeler based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



THE WHISTLER AND HIS WIFE

A new preacher came to town. Each day as he passed one particular home on his walk to the post office he heard a man whistling happily and loudly.

Day after day he heard the whistler. He became so fascinated with the sounds that he decided to discover where they came from. One morning the preacher opened the gate quietly and looked inside. Hearing the gate creak, "the whistler" approached the preacher asking him to come inside.

"Why do you whistle so loudly when you work?" asked the preacher.

"My wife's a cripple," he answered, "and she is also blind. I want her to know as she sits alone on the porch that I'm always close by and thinking about her. When she hears me whistling, she knows I'm not only nearby but available."

Our Lord is just like "the whistler" – always nearby and available. Although we may not hear Him or see Him, we know that He is always present in our world. However, we must reach out to Him and call on Him when we need Him. Knowing that He cares is one thing. Trusting Him to bring us hope, help and healing is quite another thing.

Prayer: Thank You, Heavenly Father, for always being nearby, for always watching over us and protecting us, and meeting our every need. May we always sense Your presence in our lives and Your love that surrounds us. In Your Name, Amen.

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Attorney general issues video appeal over pipeline protests

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch has issued a video just days before a federal deadline, calling on all parties in the Dakota Access pipeline dispute to avoid violence.

Her video, released Friday evening, doesn't refer to an order for protesters to leave federal land by Monday. Authorities have said they won't physically enforce it.

Nor did she refer to her phone call to Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier. He issued a statement urging fewer words and more action. He says she offered neither assistance for law enforcement, nor a timeline for resolution.

Sen. John Hoeven disputed Lynch's claim she's working with the state and its congressional delegation to find a resolution. He says the administration needs to provide more actual law enforcement personnel, not just advisers, and let construction resume.

Missing man's body found in collapsed South Dakota building

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Rescue workers found the body of a construction worker Friday evening in the rubble of a building that had collapsed hours earlier in South Dakota's largest city.

Recovery of the body came hours after authorities managed to pull a woman, injured but alive, from the debris of the brick building in downtown Sioux Falls. The woman, 22-year-old Emily Fodness, was rushed to the hospital, and her family said in a statement that she's in good condition.

Sioux Falls Fire Rescue Chief Jim Sideras said officials found the body of the man in a void using a search dog. Officials don't believe anyone else is in the debris and don't know what caused the building to collapse.

"After we moved all that rubble, we did find him, and it just didn't work out for us, unfortunately," said Sideras, who didn't identify the man. Rescue workers also pulled the woman's dog alive from the rubble of the building where she lived.

Sioux Falls Mayor Mike Huether said in a statement that "the family of the young man who passed needs to know they are not alone tonight in their sadness."

The city said cleanup would continue into the weekend.

Mike Klatt, 39, was getting coffee across the street when he saw bricks coming down from the top of the building. The bottom gave way, and it collapsed into the street, he said. Klatt said people ran out of the coffee shop to see if anyone was trapped, but nobody was visible.

Beckie Hurley, of Sioux Falls, was across the street when she saw a wall of bricks collapsing and then a wave of dust. The 34-year-old who works at a manufacturing company left her belongings in a coffee shop to run outside, thinking there were probably people in the structure.

"For a couple of minutes, it was just a stunned silence," Hurley said, before first responders arrived.

Sideras said the woman who was rescued had been able to communicate by phone with her mother during the ordeal. He said she couldn't see daylight so rescue crews knew she was buried deeply in debris.

The building was being turned into a drugstore. The city of Sioux Falls said in a statement that the building was constructed in 1916. Hultgren Construction, the company working on the building, declined to comment to the Argus Leader newspaper.

The city issued a permit authorizing Hultgren Construction to take out interior finishes such as ceiling tiles, furnishings, floor coverings and a bar area, according to the statement.

Sheila Stanley, area director of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Sioux Falls area office, told the newspaper that OSHA records show the construction company doesn't have any prior workplace safety violations.

EPA to require mines to offer cleanup assurances

By MATTHEW BROWN, Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — The Environmental Protection Agency on Friday said it plans to require mining companies to show they have the financial wherewithal to clean up their pollution so taxpayers aren't stuck footing the bill.

The proposal follows a 2016 agreement reached under court order for the government to enforce a long-ignored provision in the 1980 federal Superfund law.

The requirement would apply to hardrock mining, which includes mines for precious metals, copper, iron, lead and other ores. It would cover mines and processing facilities in 38 states, requiring their owners to set aside sufficient money to pay for future clean ups.

The EPA is considering similar requirements for chemical manufacturers, power generation companies and the petroleum refining and coal manufacturing industries.

From 2010 to 2014, the EPA spent \$1.1 billion on cleanup work at abandoned hardrock mining and processing sites across the U.S.

The new rule "would move the financial burden from taxpayers and ensure that industry assumes responsibility for these cleanups," EPA Assistant Administrator Mathy Stanislaus said.

Companies would face a combined \$7.1 billion financial obligation under the new rule, the EPA estimated. The agency said the amount could be covered through third parties such as surety bonds or self-insured, corporate guarantees.

Contaminated water from mine sites can flow into rivers and other waterways, harming aquatic life and threatening drinking water supplies. Companies in the past avoided cleanup costs in many cases by declaring bankruptcy.

Last year, an EPA cleanup team accidentally triggered a 3-million gallon spill of contaminated water from Colorado's inactive Gold King mine, tainting rivers in three states with heavy metals including arsenic and lead.

Representatives of Earthworks, an advocacy group that has pushed for mining companies to be held accountable, said the EPA proposal would give the industry an incentive to reduce its pollution. But key to its success, said Earthworks' Bonnie Gestring, will be making companies post cleanup bonds rather than offer corporate guarantees that they might not make good on.

The National Mining Association blasted the rule as "unnecessary, redundant and poorly constructed," because existing programs prevent mines from becoming Superfund sites.

The group accused government officials of overstating the potential risks from modern mining techniques, in a rushed attempt to put a new rule in place before President Barack Obama leaves the White House next month.

Echoing the industry's concerns were U.S. House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop of Utah and Energy Committee Chairman Fred Upton of Michigan. The Republicans said programs in place at the state level already ensure the environment is protected.

In documents released with the new rule, the EPA said that since 1980, at least 52 mines and mine processing sites using modern techniques had spills or other releases of pollution.

There are about 300 hardrock mines in the U.S. Combined they produced about \$26.6 billion worth of metals last year, according to mining association Senior Vice President Ashley Burke. Of those mines, the EPA said 221 would be subject to the rule.

The agency took the first step toward seeking financial assurances on cleanups from hardrock mining companies in 2010 in response to a lawsuit from environmental groups.

In 2014, frustration with the agency's slow progress prompted Earthworks, the Sierra Club and other groups to file a second suit that resulted in last year's court order. A subsequent order in that case requires the EPA to finalize its rule by Dec. 1, 2017.

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, Yankton, Nov. 29

The Unintended Impact Of A Law

Even the best intentions can be laced with land mines.

That sentiment could apply to South Dakota's newly minted Amendment S, which was approved by the state's voters earlier this month. For those who can't quite pick out this snowflake from the blizzard of ballot measures we faced three weeks ago, this measure was popularly known as "Marsy's Law," which puts into the state constitution certain new rights for the victims of crimes.

However, the measure could also forbid the public from certain information which, until now, it has had the right to know.

The problem resides in a section of the law that guarantees ". the right to prevent the disclosure of information or records that could be used to locate or harass the victim or the victim's family, or which could disclose confidential or privileged information about the victim, and to be notified of any request for such information or records ."

That sounds reasonable enough, but the right to have certain information remain private may mean that law enforcement could be forbidden to release information about traffic accidents, for instance. This is a prospect with which state and local law enforcement are now grappling, and no one has a clear answer. On Tuesday, the state Department of Public Safety (DPS) issued a press release stating that detailed information regarding accidents will no longer be issued. "DPS officials say a review of the new amendment by state government attorneys indicates that records of state reportable crashes can no longer be made available," the release stated. "The Office of Highway Safety's Accident Records Reporting website has been suspended."

But the new law may not stop there.

The Mitchell Daily Republic reported that, in the wake of a bank robbery, for example, the name of the bank could be withheld from the public.

Also, if a retail store is hit by shoplifters, that store could have the same rights and protections that a rape victim would have in concealing information, according to a story in the Pierre Capital Journal.

Or, if a crime occurs somewhere in your neighborhood, you may not learn about it from law enforcement, which may be forbidden to disclose that information to the public. You would be left in the dark about what may be lurking near your own front door.

Suddenly, the transparency we all want and need in our governmental system may vanish in favor of a more opaque structure — a legal obstruction that has been democratically inserted into the state's constitution. It was a well-intended addition, but it is a problem all the same, and we doubt this was the true intent of the law or the voters.

While concerns were expressed before the election about the law's bureaucratic impact on local governmental and legal agencies — most agree it will require more time and manpower, and thus tap resources, which is why many state officials opposed the measure — the issue of closed records and withheld information was rarely mentioned.

But, upon closer inspection, here it is.

The matter is still being scrutinized and, hopefully, some inroads around this lack of essential transparency can be found.

If not, the people of this state will be victims, too, as their access to what should be open information will be lost. And that isn't good or healthy for anyone.

Rapid City Journal, Dec. 1

Sexual-violence project good for district

The Rapid City School District's recent decision to participate in a \$1.8 million sexual-violence prevention initiative gives our community the chance to be at the forefront of an effort to combat one of society's most pressing problems.

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is footing the bill for the project that is being administered by University of New Hampshire researchers. Middle and high school students who agree to participate will be interviewed every six months for three years starting next spring. Researchers say the information and insights gleaned from the interviews will lead to a plan to help communities nationwide reduce sexual violence and promote "positive youth development."

Sexual violence among teenagers is a public health issue, according to the CDC. A national study conducted in 2012 said that an estimated 10 million girls and 791,000 boys were raped or were victims of an attempted rape. Sexual violence includes physical, psychological and emotional violence that can occur on the school grounds, on social media platforms or while teenagers are dating or after a relationship ends.

The consequences can be devastating and last a lifetime in the form of alcohol and drug abuse, low self-esteem, sexual promiscuity and anti-social behavior. In some cases, it has led teenagers to take their own lives.

For parents and students who might be concerned about participating in the project, they will have the option of opting out of it. Those students who participate will be asked about sexual violence and abuse and risky behavior while discussing the importance of positive youth development and civic engagement.

While this topic is one that most people would prefer to push aside, it doesn't change the reality that too many of our youth are victims of sexual assault or harassment. They also are unlikely to have the tools to cope with it or know where to turn once they are victimized, which all too often is at the hands of someone they know and perhaps even trust.

It also is happening in Rapid City whether we want to acknowledge it or not. As school board member Matt Stephens said, "This discussion needs to happen."

This project also opens the door for parents to discuss the issue of sexual violence and what constitutes appropriate behavior with teenagers who will be dating, going to dances and attending parties while in high school.

Without information, proper support and the appropriate tools to protect oneself, teenagers could become unsuspecting victims of a sex crime and have no idea how to respond or where to turn.

The school board deserves credit for having the courage to approve the program. It will give our youth a better chance to protect themselves while being part of a plan that could help others, as well, and that's good for everyone.

The Daily Republic, Mitchell, Nov. 24

Our view: Districts need to discuss mandating seat belt use on buses

In wake of a tragic crash earlier this week in Tennessee, school boards around the nation need to consider whether it's time to mandate seat belts for students riding on buses.

We hope the majority of school boards at least discuss what happened Monday afternoon in Chattanooga, where a kindergartner, a first-grader and three fourth-graders died in the crash. There were 37 students on the bus. Five died and 12 were hospitalized.

Six states require seat belts on school buses and South Dakota isn't among them. The six states — Florida, California, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York and Texas — have varying regulations within the law. But the common theme is that students must wear seat belts while riding on the public school bus.

It's safe to say many of the students who died or suffered injuries earlier this week would not have sustained such a harsh fate had they been wearing seat belts. And that's why we're calling for South Dakota school districts to consider changing their policy.

Nationwide, there were 1,222 fatal motor vehicle crashes classified as school-transportation-related between 2003 and 2012, according to a report by the National Traffic Highway Safety Administration. There was none in South Dakota.

And since 2003, there have been 1,353 people killed in school-transportation-related crashes across the country, which averages 135 fatalities per year.

It is refreshing knowing our state has been safe in recent years, but hundreds of busloads of students go to and from school every day. And a crash could happen at any time.

We realize the mandate would be hard to institute due to lack of funding and would be difficult to enforce on each student.

Many rural districts in our state struggle with funding, and mandating the use of seat belts would add another expense for many schools whose buses aren't properly equipped. Though, some states with seat belt mandates have stipulations that it applies only to new buses, meaning each time a district buys a bus, seat belts should already be installed.

And while we understand there's no way to enforce each student to buckle up even if there's a mandate in place, the district would be doing its part to promote the safety of its bus-riding students.

Certainly we hope never to hear about tragedy like the one earlier this week in Tennessee. But we must learn from these incidents. That's why a discussion on seat belt mandates is the first step to ensure the safety of our students.

Minnehaha County man charged in death of his mother, nephew

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A grand jury in Minnehaha County has indicted a 24-year-old man accused of killing his mother and his 7-year-old nephew.

KELO-TV (<http://bit.ly/2g1hBab>) reports that Heath Otto was arrested last week. He faces the death penalty or life in prison if convicted in the case.

Minnehaha County State's Attorney Aaron McGowan says that anytime a child is killed or injured in the Sioux Falls area, it has a strong impact on the community.

Otto remains in the Minnehaha County Jail on a \$5 million cash bond.

It wasn't immediately clear if Otto has an attorney who can speak on his behalf.

Information from: KELO-TV, <http://www.keloland.com>

Pendleton Round-Up named best large outdoor rodeo

PENDLETON, Ore. (AP) — The Pendleton Round-Up has been named the best large outdoor rodeo by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association for the second year in a row.

The East Oregonian reports Friday (<http://bit.ly/2fQrtQR>) that to lasso the title two years running, the Round-Up made some changes this year.

Those included installing a gourmet pop up restaurant called the 1910 Room and changing where the families of contestants are seated.

Round-Up publicity director Randy Thomas says rodeo committees from as far as away as Salinas, California, and Deadwood, South Dakota have visited to pick up tips.

The Pendleton Round-Up began in 1910 and attracts thousands of rodeo fans to Pendleton each summer for days.

Information from: East Oregonian, <http://www.eastoregonian.com>

1 felony charge dropped in child death case

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Federal prosecutors have dropped a felony charge against a Pine Ridge man accused in the death of his 1-year-old son.

Thirty-four-year-old James Shangreaux is still charged with first-degree murder and felony child abuse in the boy's death last year, but one charge of felony child abuse and neglect has been dropped.

The Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2fT5rN3>) says the U.S. Attorney's Office asked a federal court to dismiss the charge "in the interest of justice."

Shangreaux is accused of inflicting head and abdominal injuries on the toddler, causing brain damage and internal bleeding. His trial is scheduled for Jan. 3.

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

Russia sees Trump as conduit for eased sanctions

By VIVIAN SALAMA, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russia's government denies that it tampered in the U.S. election or even took sides. But now that the results are in, members of President Vladimir Putin's United Russia party aren't holding back.

"It turns out that United Russia won the elections in America," Viktor Nazarov, the governor of Omsk, Russia, declared in a radio interview.

Long before Donald Trump was on the radar of American voters, Russia had deep interests in the outcome of elections around the world. But 2016 presented a unique window.

Motivated by years of crippling economic sanctions and decades of post-Soviet setbacks, the Russians were keener than ever to pounce; the race for the White House, plagued by party infighting and scandal, was easy bait.

For Putin, sanctions relief is a gateway to the ultimate goal of establishing Russia as the political and economic equivalent of the United States. Trump, who has extolled Putin's leadership and called for a tempered approach to U.S.-Russia relations, may be a conduit to achieving that.

"It's much more about institutions, not about personalities," said Robert Amsterdam, an international attorney who has a number of high-profile Russian clients. Putin "was seriously impacted by the sanctions because it targeted his closest friends and now they think Trump is going to change that."

U.S. intelligence agencies said in October they are confident that the Russian government hacked the e-mails of U.S. citizens and institutions, including political organizations, and handed them over to DCLeaks.com and WikiLeaks for distribution. Hacked Democratic National Committee emails in July, indicating that DNC leaders were favoring Hillary Clinton over Sen. Bernie Sanders in the primaries, prompted the resignation of chairwoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

"Weaponizing information is really about who gets to write the truth, who gets to write the narrative and who benefits from that narrative — and that is incredibly powerful," said Laura Galante, director of intelligence analysis at cybersecurity firm FireEye, Inc.

Russia has sought to put itself on an equal footing with the U.S. since the collapse of the Soviet Union, extending its territory where it can, countering U.S. military action and positioning itself as a rival to the world's biggest economy.

But its ambitions suffered a setback in 2014 when the Obama administration authorized sanctions against sectors of the Russian economy, including financial services, energy, mining and defense. The administration also sanctioned people in Putin's inner circle accused of undermining peace in Ukraine. Add to that falling oil prices and a weak ruble, and Russia's economy was shackled.

The impact has been extensive. Russia's sovereign wealth fund had \$87 billion in assets in December 2013, according to the Russian Finance Ministry. As of June 1, it was down to \$38 billion, following sell-offs by the Russian government to make up for budget deficits. U.S. trade with Russia tumbled to \$23 billion in 2015, from about \$34 billion the previous year.

Sanctions that impede Russia's ability to acquire equipment for Arctic offshore drilling are of particular concern because they hold the key to Russia's rapid expansion in that sector.

"Lifting restrictions on exports of technology, software, things that really help their energy industry extract oil and gas" would be the top priority, said Boris Zilberman, a Russia expert at the Center on Sanctions and Illicit Finance at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

"Production is dwindling over time, so they're going into new, offshore, deep-water drilling in the Arctic and so on, and to do that, they really need Western technology," he said.

Sanctions relief is important to Russia's broader objective of superpower status, shown by its bullish Syria policy. Syria's Russian-backed military made major gains in rebel-held eastern Aleppo in recent days and rebel resistance appeared to be crumbling. While Moscow and Washington are continuously at odds over Syria, the Obama administration has not imposed any Syria-related sanctions.

Trump's promise of closer cooperation with Russia has created worries that the U.S. will have diminished

leverage. He said during the campaign that under his leadership the U.S. might not come to the defense of some NATO members if Russia were to attack them, indicating he would make that decision based on whether those Baltic republics "have fulfilled their obligations to us."

But Trump's positions are hard to assess because he's often stepped away from his more controversial proposals. Trump's choice as defense secretary, retired Gen. James Mattis, has called Russia's aggression in Ukraine a problem "much more severe, more serious" than Washington and the European Union are treating it.

Putin and Trump spoke soon after his victory and a statement from Trump's transition team said the president-elect told Putin he looked forward to "a strong and enduring relationship." Observers caution that Putin's interests are self-motivated and Russia's incentive to interfere in U.S. politics won't go away with Trump's victory.

"It's not that Putin is against the Democratic Party," Zilberman said. "He's more against the United States and (for) whatever may push Russian interests."

He added: "There's nothing saying that next time they won't hack Republicans and expose Trump administration emails if it benefits them."

Associated Press writers James Heintz and Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow contributed to this report.

Within hours, wildfires set Tennessee mountain city aflame

By ADAM BEAM and KRISTIN M. HALL, Associated Press

GATLINBURG, Tenn. (AP) — Tracey Mayberry told her boss to fire her.

It was 2 o'clock Monday afternoon in Gatlinburg, and the sky was dark with smoke. Mayberry's shift as a manager at the resort where she worked did not end until 5 p.m., but she could see a wildfire crawling down the mountain. Local officials said the city had nothing to worry about, and Mayberry's boss had no plans to close. But she knew something was wrong, so she walked home, coughing and crying through the smoke until a stranger handed her a mask.

That wildfire had ignited five days earlier on a steep, rugged peak known as Chimney Tops, about 4 miles away from Gatlinburg. In less than 24 hours, aided by 87 mph winds and months of suffocating drought, the blaze would spread, forging a path to this tourist mecca. In all, 13 people were killed, about 85 were injured and nearly 1,000 homes and businesses were charred or destroyed.

The flames came with little warning.

At 5 o'clock, there were no fires in Gatlinburg. Within an hour, 20 buildings were ablaze.

Over the next few hours, the fires transformed a city busily preparing for holiday festivities in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains into the scene of a grim, building-by-building search for the missing and the dead. Rain fell by midweek, dousing much of the fire but leaving hollow-eyed city officials, firefighters and police officers working around the clock. Many had to put news of their own gutted homes from their minds.

Tracey and her husband— also named Tracy — packed their 2007 Ford Escape with valuables. They stopped when a tree fell on their house and sparks from a downed powerline showered their yard. It was time to go.

They did not get far. Traffic was snarled on the parkway heading out of town. Tracy, sitting anxiously behind the wheel, watched as the wind blew a fireball into the Alamo Steakhouse just a few feet from his window. He gunned the engine and swerved into the middle turn lane, the speedometer racing toward 90.

"I wasn't stopping for nothing or nobody," he said.

Across the city, firefighters were locked in a hopeless battle. The wind was scattering chunks of flame across a thirsty landscape and knocking trees into power lines, creating new fires. At 6 o'clock, authorities shifted their focus from stopping the fire to evacuating the city. More than 700 people fled the Westgate Smoky Mountain Resort and Spa. At the Lodge at Buckberry Creek, a chef and an event planner evacuated more than a dozen people before the flames destroyed the property. At a local hospital, 57-year-old

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Mark Howard was recovering from pneumonia when a neighbor called to tell him his house was on fire. He dialed 911 from his hospital bed.

The operator said, "Are you kidding me? You're calling us?" Howard said. "I said, 'Yeah, is there another number I should call?'"

The fire had been burning for several days, mostly in the unreachable peaks of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park not far from the edge of one of the most popular hiking trails. The fire was so small and so remote that for days firefighters could not get to it. Instead they came up with a plan to contain it. But beginning Sunday afternoon and into Monday morning, the moisture vanished from the air, the temperature rose and the wind began galloping through the trees.

By Monday afternoon, "There was no stopping the fire," said Clayton Jordan, deputy superintendent for the park.

Wolf McLellan, a 30-year-old street magician, was re-stringing his guitar at the Rainbow Motel on Monday night when things got bad.

"The sky just lit up, like the sun was just on the other side of the tree line," he said. "The wind sounded like a freaking freight train. It was absolutely horrifying as it would whistle through the window gaps."

McLellan left with his guitar, two computers and two bags that he would later abandon on the side of the road. His dog Kylie — a bulldog, bloodhound mix with floppy ears — just stared at the flames. McLellan tried to pull her with the leash, but she wouldn't budge. He decided to leave her when he saw a deer streaking down the street away from the blaze.

About a mile away, Heather Stargle was on the phone with her mother at the Travellers Motel when there was a knock at her door. It was her neighbor, warning her that police officers were at the bottom of the hill asking people to leave. She took a red backpack and stuffed it with three changes of clothes, a hair brush, deodorant and two bottles of medicine. She grabbed a half case of Coke on the way out the door.

Flames surrounded the motel as she left. But Stargle had one more stop to make. She pounded on the door of another neighbor, Pamela Johnson — "Mama Pam" to those who frequented the McKinney Food Mart where she worked for the past 13 years.

"I sat there and said, 'Pam, please just open up the door and come on.' I said, 'The place is catching on fire,'" Stargle said. "She said, 'Get away from the door, I am not coming.' She said that if she was meant to live, she would live. If not, she wouldn't."

"And that was the last thing we had heard."

The Travellers Motel was completely destroyed. On Wednesday, authorities announced they had discovered an unidentified body at the scene. Behind the door that night, Johnson had been on the phone with Karyssa Dalton, her 19-year-old granddaughter. They had talked for five minutes at 7:40 p.m., and again for six minutes and 47 seconds at 8:45 p.m.

At 10:36 p.m., Johnson did not answer. It was the first of 29 unanswered calls.

"It's emotional. Very, very emotional," Dalton said. "I do not know where she is, I don't know if she is safe, I don't know if she is gone. I just need everybody to know she is still missing and that she needs help, that she needs family."

Jonathan Mattise contributed reporting from Nashville, Tennessee.

Trump speaks directly with Taiwan's leader, irking China

By GILLIAN WONG and JOHNSON LAI, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — In a break with decadeslong diplomatic tradition, President-elect Donald Trump spoke directly with the president of Taiwan, a move that drew an irritated response from China on Saturday and looked set to cast uncertainty over U.S. policy toward Asia.

It is perhaps unprecedented for a U.S. president or president-elect to speak directly with a leader of Taiwan, a self-governing island the U.S. broke diplomatic ties with in 1979. China said it lodged a stern complaint with the U.S. and reiterated its commitment to seeking "reunification" with the self-governed democratic island, which it considers a renegade province.

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In initial comments apparently meant to downplay the significance of the call, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Saturday that the contact between Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen and Trump was "just a small trick by Taiwan" that he believed would not change U.S. policy toward China, according to Hong Kong's Phoenix TV.

"The one-China policy is the cornerstone of the healthy development of China-U.S. relations and we hope this political foundation will not be interfered with or damaged," Wang was quoted as saying.

Taiwan's official Central News Agency said Edwin Feulner, former president of the Heritage Foundation, a Washington-based conservative think tank, was a "crucial figure" in setting up communication channels between the sides, leading to the call. Feulner could not immediately be reached to comment on the report, which cited anonymous sources.

Feulner had met with Tsai in October when he led a delegation from the think tank on a trip to Taiwan, according to a release at the time from Taiwan's presidential office. That release says Tsai called Feulner a "longtime friend to Taiwan" and conveyed her gratitude to his foundation for its support.

Washington has pursued a so-called "one China" policy since 1979, when it shifted diplomatic recognition of China from the government in Taiwan to the communist government on the mainland. Under that policy, the U.S. recognizes Beijing as representing China but retains unofficial ties with Taiwan.

After the phone conversation, Trump tweeted that Tsai "CALLED ME." He also grouched about the reaction to the call: "Interesting how the U.S. sells Taiwan billions of dollars of military equipment but I should not accept a congratulatory call."

The call also has drawn attention to Taiwanese media reports that the Trump Organization is interested in investing in the Taiwanese city of Taoyuan, near Taipei.

The city's mayor, Cheng Wen-tsan, said in a statement on the city government's website last month that a representative of the Trump Organization had visited the city and expressed interest in investing in hotels near the airport. The statement said the visit was too brief for both sides to get into details.

The Trump Organization has denied it has any projects planned in Taiwan.

The Taiwanese presidential office said Trump and Tsai discussed issues affecting Asia and the future of U.S. relations with Taiwan. "The (Taiwanese) president is looking forward to strengthening bilateral interactions and contacts as well as setting up closer cooperative relations," the statement said.

Tsai also told Trump that she hoped the U.S. would support Taiwan in its participation in international affairs, the office said, in an apparent reference to China's efforts to isolate Taiwan from global institutions such as the United Nations.

Taiwan's presidential office spokesman Alex Huang said separately that Taiwan's relations with China and "healthy" Taiwan-U.S. relations can proceed in parallel. "There is no conflict (in that)," he told reporters in Taipei.

China's foreign ministry said Beijing lodged "solemn representations" with the U.S. over the call.

"It must be pointed out that there is only one China in the world and Taiwan is an inseparable part of Chinese territory," Geng Shuang, a ministry spokesman, said in a statement. "The government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legitimate government representing China."

The call is the starkest example yet of how Trump has flouted diplomatic conventions since he won the Nov. 8 election. He has apparently undertaken calls with foreign leaders without guidance customarily lent by the State Department, which oversees U.S. diplomacy.

"President-elect Trump is just shooting from the hip, trying to take phone calls of congratulatory messages from leaders around the world without consideration for the implications," said Bonnie Glaser, senior adviser for Asia at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

China is likely to be trying to identify whether this signals any intent on the part of Trump to alter long-standing U.S. policy toward Taiwan, Glaser said.

"They will hope that this is a misstep, but I think privately, they will definitely seek to educate this incoming president and ensure that he understands the sensitivity of Taiwan," she said.

Last month, Trump had a call with Chinese President Xi Jinping during which Trump's office described

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him as saying he believed the two would have "one of the strongest relationships for both countries."

Despite China's muted response Saturday, concern about Trump's policy toward China is growing, said Shi Yinhong of Renmin University in Beijing, one of China's best-known international relations scholars.

Tsai was elected in January and took office in May. The traditional independence-leaning policies of her party have strained relations with Beijing.

The call with Trump could "convince people in Taiwan that the island can establish good relations with the U.S. and encourage (Tsai) to continue to resist pressure from Beijing," Shi said.

Over the decades, the status of Taiwan has been one of the most sensitive issues in U.S.-China relations. China regards Taiwan as part of its territory to be retaken by force, if necessary, if it seeks independence. It would regard any recognition of a Taiwanese leader as a head of state as unacceptable.

Taiwan split from the Chinese mainland amid civil war in 1949. The U.S. policy acknowledges the Chinese view over sovereignty, but considers Taiwan's status as unsettled. The U.S. has legal commitments to help Taiwan maintain the ability to defend itself.

Ned Price, a spokesman for the White House National Security Council, said Trump's conversation does not signal any change to long-standing U.S. policy on cross-strait issues.

In Beijing, a U.S. business group urged the new U.S. administration to respect the status quo.

"The new administration needs to get up to speed quickly on the historical tensions and complex dynamics of the region," said James Zimmerman, chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce in China.

Lai reported from Taipei, Taiwan. Associated Press writers Jonathan Lemire in New York, Matthew Pennington and Darlene Superville in Washington, and news researcher Henry Hou in Beijing contributed to this report.

Supreme Court hears cases about use of race in redistricting

By MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is returning to the familiar intersection of race and politics, in a pair of cases examining redistricting in North Carolina and Virginia.

The eight-justice court is hearing arguments Monday in two cases that deal with the same basic issue of whether race played too large a role in the drawing of electoral districts, to the detriment of African-Americans.

The claim made by black voters in both states is that Republicans packed districts with more reliably Democratic black voters than necessary to elect their preferred candidates, making neighboring districts whiter and more Republican.

A lower court agreed with the challengers in North Carolina that two majority-black congressional districts were unconstitutional because their maps relied too heavily on race. The state appealed to the Supreme Court, arguing in part that it made districting decisions based on partisan politics, not race.

The justices have been more forgiving of maps based on partisan advantage, though they soon may confront the issue of whether overly partisan districts can themselves violate the Constitution, in a case from Wisconsin.

In Virginia, a court upheld 12 state legislative districts and rejected a constitutional challenge, even though lawmakers made sure that at least 55 percent of the eligible voting-age population in each district was African-American. Redistricting follows the once-a-decade census, when population shifts require the adjustment of political districts to keep them close to equal in numbers.

The Virginia residents challenging their state districting plan said the lower court ignored a 2015 Supreme Court decision about Alabama in which Justice Anthony Kennedy joined the four more liberal justices to order a review of state legislative districts. Justice Stephen Breyer wrote for the court that the Alabama Legislature and the federal court that ruled on the plan had taken a "mechanically numerical" view, instead of trying to figure out what percentage of black voters were needed to elect a candidate of their choice.

The cases involve the use of a landmark voting rights law that led to the election of African-Americans across the South and Supreme Court decisions that limited the use of race to draw electoral maps. The

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1965 Voting Rights Act requires states to create and preserve districts in which minority voting groups can elect their candidate of choice.

In 2013, Kennedy sided with more conservative justices to effectively block a key component of the law, although its provisions prohibiting states from diluting minority voting rights remain in effect.

Both North Carolina and Virginia said they were trying to preserve majority-black districts in their maps. "There is a line between too little consideration of race and too much," said John J. Park Jr., a lawyer in Gainesville, Georgia, who wrote legal briefs in support of the states. "Courts need to be cautious of getting involved because they're not good at it."

But J. Gerald Hebert, director of the Voting Rights and Redistricting Program at the public-interest Campaign Legal Center in Washington, said the states drew districts with more black voters than necessary to "dilute their voting strength in order to achieve a partisan gain." Hebert signed on to briefs supporting the black voters in both states.

In North Carolina, the federal court also struck down some state House and Senate districts, and those judges recently ordered new districts drawn and special elections held next year.

North Carolina Republicans have used the current districts to achieve veto-proof majorities in both chambers. In addition, they hold 10 of the state's 13 congressional seats. By contrast, statewide contests suggest a narrower gap between the parties. Two Republicans won statewide elections last month — President-elect Donald Trump with just under 50 percent of the vote and Sen. Richard Burr with 51 percent. Republican Gov. Pat McCrory trails in his undecided re-election bid.

Both Hebert and Park said they would be surprised if the court were to rule differently in the two cases since they are so similar. If the justices are evenly split, they could let the cases sit until a ninth justice joins them, possibly in the spring, and hold a second round of arguments.

The cases are Bethune-Hill v. Virginia State Board of Elections, 15-680, and McCrory v. Harris, 15-1262.

The "Two Trumps" surface in president-elect's transition

By JULIE PACE and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump's skeptics hope the presidency will reveal a serious side of the brash businessman. His supporters want him to keep the freewheeling style that rattled Washington.

In true Trump fashion, so far he's doing both.

Trump has soothed some Republican establishment anxieties with many of his early Cabinet picks, including the respected retired Gen. James Mattis to lead the Pentagon and Georgia Rep. Tom Price, an orthopedic surgeon tapped to head the Department of Health and Human Services. He's hinted that he's open to shifting some of his most controversial policies, including his rejection of climate change and support for torture. He's been full of praise for President Barack Obama and largely respectful of Hillary Clinton, his vanquished campaign rival.

But Trump is also refusing to abandon the raucous, stream-of-consciousness rallies and Twitter tirades that defined his presidential campaign. He's continued to level false statements, claiming without evidence that millions of people voted illegally in the election. And he's infused the normally staid Cabinet selection process with reality television drama, inviting cameras into his dinner with Mitt Romney, a leading candidate for secretary of state, and announcing the secretary of defense pick in an arena, seemingly off the cuff.

"He was a very unconventional candidate," House Speaker Paul Ryan said. "He's going to be an unconventional president."

Despite his tell-it-like-it-is reputation, Trump is fueled by a deep need to be liked, according to long-time associates. He often modulates his tone to his setting and frequently tries to curry favor with his audience by telling them what he thinks they want to hear. He often speaks in vague generalities, his policy plans short on details, and that allows supporters to read in what they wish.

And sometimes he seems to move in contradictions, as when he made simultaneous appointments of Reince Priebus — a nod to the Washington establishment — and Stephen Bannon — a shot across the establishment's bow — to fill two key roles in his administration, giving opposing factions of his coalition

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something to cheer.

People who meet with the president-elect personally talk about there being “two Trumps” — the self-promoting celebrity that’s seen in public and the amiable and courteous grandfather who emerges in private.

“He’s charming in person,” said John Allison, the former CEO of BB&T, who recently met with Trump. “He absolutely has a lot of personal charisma.”

Indeed, Trump has appeared to win over some of his toughest Republican critics since defeating Clinton. GOP lawmakers have praised all of his Cabinet nominees, some of whom hold more traditionally conservative views than Trump himself. Romney, who was one of Trump’s fiercest critics during the campaign, emerged from their dinner this week with warm words for a man he’d only recently called a “phony.”

“He continues with a message of inclusion and bringing people together and his vision is something which obviously connected with the American people in a very powerful way,” Romney said in a stunning turnabout for the 2012 GOP nominee.

But Trump appears acutely aware that the enthusiastic supporters who propelled him to the White House are watching carefully to see if he’ll back away from his pledges to shake up the political system. Supporters shouted their opposition to Romney being in the Cabinet Thursday as Trump stood on stage in Cincinnati for the kickoff of a “thank you” tour for voters.

Trump gave them plenty else to cheer about, fully re-embracing his firebrand and raucous campaign persona.

He took the stage full of swagger and as focused on score-settling as he was during the campaign. He spent more than 10 minutes bashing the press, recounting how the media doubted his chances of winning.

“These are very, very dishonest people,” said Trump, one of several times during the night when he incited the crowd to jeer the press gathered in the pen at the back of the arena. “Ok, I love this stuff. Should I go on with this just a little bit longer? I love it.” Shifting to how he broke Clinton’s so-called Midwest firewall, he said, “We didn’t break it, we shattered that sucker. We shattered it, man. That poor wall is busted up.”

Trump did hit some of the right notes in terms of unifying the nation when he managed to stick to the script rolling down the teleprompter. He called for a “truly inclusive society, where we support each other, love each other, and look out for each other.”

But he also reminisced how “fun” it was “fighting Hillary.” He stunned even his own advisers by announcing his nomination of Mattis from the stage. And facing the pressures of the presidency, he seemed to still be reliving and relishing his victory.

“We had a lot of fun,” he said, adding: “The bottom line is, we won.”

An all-encompassing need to win seems to be one thing the “two Trumps” have in common.

“Nothing is presidential except victory,” Trump said in March. “Victory is presidential.”

Pace reported from Washington.

Follow Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC> and Jonathan Lemire at <http://twitter.com/jonlemire>

Texas officials: 8 hurt when bus with cheerleaders crashes

BIG SPRING, Texas (AP) — Officials say eight people were injured when a bus carrying high school cheerleaders crashed with a tractor-trailer rig in Texas.

Multiple news media report the Iraan-Sheffield bus carrying the cheerleaders crashed in Howard County after a football game late Friday night.

Amanda Duforat with Scenic Mountain Medical Center in Big Spring told KWES-TV that eight people were brought in from the crash. She said two were in critical condition, two others were in serious condition and four were being transferred to another hospital for further treatment.

Photos from the crash scene showed an Iraan-Sheffield school bus with its front end crumpled against the damaged side of a tractor trailer rig.

The Texas Department of Public Safety said westbound lanes of Interstate 20 were closed and traffic

was being diverted from the scene.

Dazed Tennessee residents get first look at wildfire rubble

By ADAM BEAM and JONATHAN MATTISE, Associated Press

GATLINBURG, Tenn. (AP) — Charlotte Moore needed a phone charger.

"I'll just get it at home," she shrugged.

Then she remembered that her home was gone.

The realization came as she made the familiar drive up to the top of Laurel Mountain in the Roaring Fork neighborhood of Gatlinburg on Friday, where what lay ahead was anything but familiar. On the first day officials let property owners return to assess the damage from the wildfire that devastated their homes, the eastern Tennessee tourist destination was headed toward an uncertain future.

As people were allowed into the city, Sevier County Mayor Larry Waters raised the death toll to 13 and said the number of damaged buildings now approached 1,000. He also defended the response to the wildfires that spread rapidly Monday, saying it was not the time for "Monday morning quarterbacking." He promised a full review later.

Gatlinburg residents and business owners, meanwhile, got their first look at the wildfire destruction Friday, and many walked around the once-bustling city in a daze, sobbing.

They hugged each other and promised they would stay in touch.

"We love it up here so much," said Gary Moore, Charlotte's husband, his voice trembling. "We lost everything. But we're alive, thank goodness. Our neighbors are alive, most of them. And we're just so thankful for that."

Every home they passed on the drive up was a pile of unrecognizable rubble. They stopped to console some neighbors — Scott and Tammy Sherrod — who were seeing what was left of their home for the first time. Scott calmly walked through what remained of the home he bought with a VA loan four years ago. Tammy sat among the ashes and cried.

Tammy and her daughter salvaged a few items, including a pottery coaster that her daughter had made when she was a little girl. Half of it shined in bright colors, while the other half was charred black. Brianna's name was still written on the back.

"That's all we got," Tammy said.

Tammy and her family had escaped the flames just in time Monday night. As she drove her car down the road, she placed her hand against the window for a moment but had to jerk it away because the heat had burned her.

"It was like the gates of hell opened up," she said.

After days of waiting to see their homes, some of the shock gave way to anger.

"The city sure could have done a better job of getting us out of here," said Delbert Wallace, who lost his home. "When they got up that morning, when they seen that fire, we should have been on alert right then."

Authorities urged anyone who hiked the trail to give them a call.

Waters and other local officials said the fire moved so far so fast that it gave them little time to react.

The dead included a Memphis couple separated from their three sons during the wildfires. The sons — Jared, Wesley and Branson Summers — learned that their parents had died as they were recovering in a Nashville hospital.

"The boys, swaddled in bandages with tubes hanging out and machines attached, were allowed to break quarantine, and were together in the same room, briefly, when I confirmed their parents' death," their uncle Jim Summers wrote on a Facebook page set up for the family. Their injuries "pale in comparison with their grief."

Other fatalities included a couple from Canada, 71-year-old Jon Tegler and 70-year-old Janet Tegler, a woman named Alice Hagler, and May Vance, who died of a heart attack after she was exposed to smoke. Officials said she was vacationing in Gatlinburg, but an obituary posted online said she was from the area.

Other victims' names have not been released.

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In communities near Gatlinburg, signs of normalcy appeared. In Pigeon Forge, the Comedy House rented an electronic billboard message that said it was open, and Dollywood, the amusement park named after Dolly Parton, reopened Friday afternoon after it was spared any damage.

The Associated Press was allowed into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park — the most visited national park in the country — on Thursday. Soot, ash and blackened trees covered the forest floor, and the gorgeous vistas of tree-topped mountain ranges were scarred by large areas of blackened soil and trees. Small plumes of smoke smoldered from hot spots.

Deputy Park Superintendent Jordan Clayton said the initial fire started Nov. 23 near the end of the Chimney Tops hiking trail.

"Whether it was purposefully set or whether it was a careless act that was not intended to cause a fire, that we don't know," Clayton said. "The origin of the fire is under investigation."

At the top of the mountain, Charlotte Moore took a picture of her burned-out car. She found a favorite vase mostly intact, but the coins inside were melted together. She and her husband are better off than most because they also own a home in Florida, which is where they were at the time of the fire. But Gatlinburg had been their primary residence. On Friday, they spent most of their time at home comforting their neighbors.

"It just hits me in the gut," Gary Moore said.

Mattise reported from Nashville, Tennessee. Associated Press writers Rebecca Yonker in Louisville, Kentucky, and Kristin M. Hall in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, contributed to this report.

Duterte says Trump wished his drug crackdown 'success'

By JIM GOMEZ, Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — President Rodrigo Duterte said Saturday Donald Trump wished his deadly crackdown on illegal drugs would succeed during a telephone call, and he assured the U.S. president-elect the Philippines would maintain its ties with America — a departure from Duterte's hostility toward the Obama administration.

Duterte called to congratulate Trump late Friday in their first talk that was described by an aide of the Philippine president as "very engaging, animated conversation" in which both leaders invited each other to visit his country.

In a video released by Duterte's close aide, Bong Go, the Philippine leader is seen smiling while talking to Trump and saying: "We will maintain ... and enhance the bilateral ties between our two countries."

The other parts of the conversation were not aired in the video but in a statement released by his aides, Duterte said "he was wishing me success in my campaign against the drug problem."

"He understood the way we are handling it and I said that there's nothing wrong in protecting a country," Duterte said. "It was a bit very encouraging in the sense that I supposed that what he really wanted to say was that we would be the last to interfere in the affairs of your own country."

"He said that ... well, we are doing it as a sovereign nation, the right way," Duterte said in his statement. It was unclear whether he or Trump remarked that the widely criticized crackdown was being carried out properly.

Duterte has lashed out at President Barack Obama, the State Department, EU and U.N. officials and human rights groups for raising concerns over the crackdown, which has left more than 4,000 suspected drug dealers and user dead, including many who are feared to have been gunned down in gangland-style killings.

While being antagonistic to the U.S., his country's treaty ally, Duterte has reached out to China and Russia.

Obama canceled what could have been their first formal meeting in an Asian summit in Laos in September after Duterte unleashed an expletive-laden warning for the U.S. leader not to lecture him on human rights. In one speech, Duterte asked Obama to "go to hell."

Duterte has repeatedly threatened to scale back the presence of visiting U.S. troops and joint combat exercises with the Americans, but he and his defense officials have walked back on most of those threats.

In one speech while visiting Beijing, Duterte announced he would separate from the U.S. but later clarified that he meant he would chart a foreign policy that does not lean toward America.

During their talk, Trump invited Duterte to visit the White House next year and Duterte asked the incoming U.S. leader to attend an East Asian summit to be hosted by the Philippines next year, according to Go.

"He said that he will try his best to be here. He wants to attend the summit and that would be great for our country," Duterte said.

San Bernardino recalls terror attack with silence, speakers

By AMY TAXIN, Associated Press

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (AP) — Exactly a year to the moment that a pair of shooters unleashed a terrorist attack on San Bernardino, a bell rang 14 times Friday at the city's Inland Regional Center in honor of the people who died there.

"We will never forget that day or the victims of this senseless act of violence. We strive to move forward and search for the good that is in us all," said Lavinia Johnson, the center's executive director.

During the ceremony outside the center, employees of nearby businesses who sheltered people during the chaos were also thanked by Keith Nelson, the center's chairman.

In all, 14 people were killed and 22 wounded.

Among those attending the ceremony was Zen Martinsen, 56, a clerical supervisor for San Bernardino County. While she didn't know the victims who had gathered at the center for a county event that day, she said all county employees are like family.

"This affects everybody and I think it's just really important that terrorism doesn't win," she said. "We can't let it win."

The ceremony was just one of a series of events scheduled in the hardscrabble city of 216,000 people east of Los Angeles to mark the anniversary of the Dec. 2, 2015, attack by husband-and-wife assailants on a holiday luncheon for county health employees. Investigators say the attackers were inspired by the Islamic State group.

Earlier, cyclists conducted a 14-mile bike ride — one mile for each person who was killed.

Friday evening some 500 people gathered at California State University, San Bernardino's, Caussoulis Arena for a somber memorial for the victims.

Among the numerous speakers, which included the city's police chief and mayor, was Julie Swann-Paez, who was gravely wounded by the shooters.

Swann-Paez, whose pelvis was shattered by a bullet, spoke warmly, and sometimes humorously of each of those killed. Still, she choked up from time to time, while some in the audience wept.

Most of those killed in the attack by county health inspector Syed Rizwan Farook, and Farook's Pakistani wife Tashfeen Malik, were Farook's colleagues.

While the city of San Bernardino has been grappling with a spike in homicides this year, community residents have worked hard to prevent a hate-filled backlash to the terror attack. Clergy have formed an interfaith alliance, victims' families have encouraged tolerance and Muslim residents undertook a campaign to educate neighbors about Islam.

Since the attack, San Bernardino police Sgt. Emil Kokesh said he has also been reminded of the need to stay fit. Kokesh arrived at the scene of the onslaught minutes after the shooting and was there for more than a day. He said he was sore for two weeks, which prompted him to take up cycling to get in shape with some fellow officers.

That led to the memorial bike ride.

"On that day, it pushed a lot of us to our limits — physically, mentally, and emotionally," he said. Now, Kokesh said he often reminds his fellow officers: "You may work in an office, you may do investigations, and not do much field work anymore, but you are going to be the ones who respond to something like this, so stay fit, stay prepared."

The Inland Regional Center provides case management services for people with developmental dis-

abilities, cerebral palsy, epilepsy and autism. The building where the attack occurred is still closed and is undergoing remodeling. It is expected to reopen in early 2017, and a memorial to the victims is planned, Kevin Urtz, the center's associate executive director said.

Associated Press reporters Alicia Chang and John Antczak and AP photographer Mark Terrill contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to spell the center chairman's last name Nelson.

China hopes Trump call with Taiwan leader won't damage ties

By GILLIAN WONG and JOHNSON LAI, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China's foreign minister said Saturday he hopes Beijing's relations with the U.S. would not be "interfered with or damaged" after President-elect Donald Trump broke with decadeslong diplomatic tradition and spoke directly with Taiwan's leader.

It is highly unusual, probably unprecedented, for a U.S. president or president-elect to speak directly with a leader of Taiwan, a self-governing island the U.S. broke diplomatic ties with in 1979.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the call between Taiwan's president and Trump was "just a small trick by Taiwan" that he believed would not change U.S. policy toward China, according to Hong Kong's Phoenix TV.

"The one-China policy is the cornerstone of the healthy development of China-U.S. relations and we hope this political foundation will not be interfered with or damaged," Wang was quoted as saying.

Washington has pursued a so-called "one China" policy since 1979, when it shifted diplomatic recognition of China from the government in Taiwan to the communist government on the mainland. Under that policy, the U.S. recognizes Beijing as representing China but retains unofficial ties with Taiwan.

A statement from Trump's transition team said he spoke with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, who offered her congratulations.

"During the discussion, they noted the close economic, political, and security ties ... between Taiwan and the United States. President-elect Trump also congratulated President Tsai on becoming President of Taiwan earlier this year," the statement said.

Trump tweeted later: "The President of Taiwan CALLED ME today to wish me congratulations on winning the Presidency. Thank you!"

The Taiwanese presidential office issued a statement early Saturday saying Trump and Tsai discussed issues affecting Asia and the future of U.S. relations with Taiwan.

"The (Taiwanese) president is looking forward to strengthening bilateral interactions and contacts as well as setting up closer cooperative relations," the statement said.

"The president also told U.S. President-elect Trump that she hopes the U.S. will continue to support Taiwan's efforts in having more opportunities to participate in and contribute to international affairs in the future," Tsai's office said.

It said the two also "shared ideas and concepts" on "promoting domestic economic development and strengthening national defense" to improve the lives of ordinary people.

The White House learned of the conversation after it had taken place, said a senior Obama administration official, who requested anonymity because of the sensitive diplomatic relations involved.

China's embassy in Washington, its foreign ministry in Beijing and Taiwan Affairs Office did not respond to requests for comment.

Friday's call is the starkest example yet of how Trump has flouted diplomatic conventions since he won the Nov. 8 election. He has apparently undertaken calls with foreign leaders without guidance customarily lent by the State Department, which oversees U.S. diplomacy.

Lai reported from Taipei, Taiwan. Associated Press writers Jonathan Lemire in New York and Matthew

Pennington and Darlene Superville in Washington contributed to this report.

Apparent tax arrangements of top soccer players released

By **TALES AZZONI, AP Sports Writer**

MADRID (AP) — A group of European media outlets on Friday published what it claims are details of tax arrangements made by several top soccer players and coaches, including Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo, Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho and Arsenal midfielder Mesut Ozil.

The news outlets, which include German weekly Der Spiegel and Spanish daily El Mundo, cited documents provided by the website Football Leaks, which has in the past claimed that some players and coaches made transactions that could suggest financial impropriety.

The group, which goes by the name European Investigative Collaborations, said it plans to release further reports in the coming days and weeks.

The company of Ronaldo's and Mourinho's agent, Jorge Mendes, released a statement denying any wrongdoing by his clients.

"Both Cristiano Ronaldo and Jose Mourinho are in compliance with their fiscal obligations in Spain and in the United Kingdom," said the statement by Mendes' company Gestifute, which was released Thursday after a report in Spain accusing Ronaldo of wrongdoing. "Cristiano Ronaldo and Jose Mourinho have never been involved in any legal process related to any fiscal crime."

It added that it would take legal action against "any insinuation or accusation of that nature related" to Ronaldo or Mourinho.

El Mundo reported that Spain's tax authority has been investigating some of Mendes' clients for some time.

Many top players in Spain have had to deal with local tax authorities recently, including Barcelona's stars Neymar and Lionel Messi.

In July, Messi and his father were sentenced to 21 months in prison for tax fraud, although they were not sent to jail because sentences of less than two years for first offences are usually suspended in Spain.

Neymar and his father recently found out that they are each facing a two-year prison sentence and a \$10.6 million fine on corruption charges related to alleged irregularities during his transfer from Brazilian club Santos to Barcelona in 2013. They have denied wrongdoing.

In June, Barcelona paid a fine of \$5.8 million in a separate case after acknowledging to the local tax authority it made "an error in the fiscal planning of the player's transfer."

Last month, Spanish prosecutors said they are seeking a prison term of more than 10 years for former Barcelona striker Samuel Eto'o for alleged tax crimes committed when he played for the Catalan club.

Also this year, Barcelona midfielder Javier Mascherano was handed a suspended one-year sentence for tax fraud, and former defender Adriano was also charged with tax irregularities.

Associated Press writer Frank Jordans contributed from Berlin.

Tales Azzoni on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/tazzoni>

Police: Marksman killed gunman after child ran to porch

By **MARTHA BELLISLE, Associated Press**

SEATTLE (AP) — The gunman had already shot a police officer, threatened to kill two children and barricaded himself upstairs in a house for 11 hours when one of the kids, a 6-year-old boy, escaped.

As the suspect held a little girl as a human shield, his movements exposed him to a sheriff's marksman who targeted him through a window and killed him with a shot to the head, allowing the 8-year-old girl to break free from his grasp and run to safety, authorities disclosed Friday about the killing of Bruce R. Johnson in Tacoma, Washington.

"Once we were able to assess that the kids were still alive, it went into play," sheriff's spokesman Ed Troyer said of the SWAT team's plan to end the standoff in a suburban neighborhood south of Seattle.

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"He had a choice to put the guns down. We weren't about to let those kids get hurt."

Authorities said Friday that about two weeks prior, Johnson had impersonated a law enforcement officer at the Tacoma Mall. He was spotted walking through the mall Nov. 15 carrying what looked to be a soft rifle case over his shoulder, wearing handcuffs on his belt and a hat reading "Sheriff's," The News Tribune reported (<https://goo.gl/f1wl8z>). Security officers confronted Johnson and called Tacoma police.

Police later sent a bulletin to area law enforcement agencies, notifying them that Johnson had been impersonating an officer.

The standoff began after Police Officer Reginald "Jake" Gutierrez, 45, was fatally shot Wednesday night when he and his partner went into the house to investigate a domestic violence call. Gutierrez's partner returned fire and helped get Johnson's wife safely out of the house.

Other officers came under fire as they worked their way into the house and pulled Gutierrez out. He later died in surgery.

Police escorted his body to a funeral home Friday as people lined the streets to pay their respects.

The 17-year veteran officer is survived by three daughters and a granddaughter. A fund has been set up to help the children, and the department is overseeing another fund to help with memorial services.

Police went to the house Wednesday after Johnson's wife told animal control officers that he had locked her out of the house. The officers called police.

Several adults and the two children had been in the home earlier in the day, but it was not initially clear whether everyone had escaped when the shooting started, Tacoma police spokeswoman Loretta Cool said.

"Others were saying the kids went down to the park, but nobody could confirm where they were," Cool said. "There wasn't a sighting of them the whole time, no noise."

As officials negotiated with Johnson, the SWAT team moved into the basement and then to the main floor of the house, cornering him upstairs, Troyer said.

That's when they confirmed the kids were still inside.

Johnson had threatened to kill the children, and officers heard screaming and gunshots during the stand-off, but once the officers determined the children were still alive, they executed a plan to get them out.

Before they could act, the 6-year-old boy bolted down the stairs and onto the porch. Johnson held onto the girl, but the activity exposed him to the marksman outside.

It only took one shot, and Johnson was dead.

Follow Martha Bellisle at <https://twitter.com/marthabellisle>

Colombia repatriates dead as airline's licensing questioned

By **LUIS BENAVIDES** and **CARLOS VALDEZ**, Associated Press

RIO NEGRO, Colombia (AP) — Victims of this week's tragic air crash in the Andes were flown home Friday as Bolivia's president called for "drastic measures" against aviation officials who signed off on a flight plan that experts and even one of the charter airline's executives said should never have been attempted because of a possible fuel shortage.

The move by President Evo Morales came after evidence emerged that the pilot reported the plane was out of fuel minutes before it slammed into a muddy mountainside, killing all but six of the 77 people on board. Among the dead were players and coaches from a small-town Brazilian soccer team that was headed to the finals of one of South America's most prestigious tournaments after a fairy-tale season that had captivated their soccer-crazed nation.

As an honor guard played taps early Friday, members of Colombia's military loaded five Bolivian crew members who died in the crash onto a cargo plane for the trip back home.

Later in the day, caskets containing the remains of 50 Brazilian victims, many draped with sheets printed with their team's green and white logo, began the journey to the Chapecoense club's hometown in southern Brazil. Fourteen Brazilian journalists traveling with the team and two passengers from other South American nations were being sent home on separate flights.

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Bolivian flight crew member Erwin Tumiri became the first of the survivors to be released from the hospital. Before leaving, he recorded a cellphone message thanking his rescuers and the medical staff who treated him.

The farewells came as details surfaced of possible negligence and unsettling family ties between the Bolivian-based charter company LaMia and the country's aviation agency, which approved the ill-fated flight Monday between Santa Cruz, Bolivia, and Medellin, Colombia, even though it exceeded the short-haul jet's maximum flying range.

Attention was focused on a former Bolivian air force general, Gustavo Vargas, who is one of LaMia's owners and whose son headed the office responsible for licensing aircraft in Bolivia's civil aviation agency. As part of the investigation, the younger Vargas was suspended Thursday along with several other high-ranking aviation officials. The airline, whose only operable aircraft was the British Aerospace 146 Avro RJ85 that crashed, was also grounded.

Morales said Friday that the elder Vargas served as his pilot in 2006. But he said that he had no knowledge of the airline's existence and called for a "profound investigation" to explain whether Vargas' son, also named Gustavo Vargas, favored the airline, which has transported the national teams of Argentina and Brazil, as well as many other top-flight South American clubs.

One of the suspended officials, Marcelo Chavez, the regional director of the agency that controls air traffic in Bolivia, told The Associated Press that an inspector pointed out irregularities in the airlines' flight plan, including the fact that the aircraft's fuel capacity was barely enough to fly directly to Medellin. Chavez said the airline decided to go ahead with the flight anyway and air traffic controllers had no authority to prevent them.

On Thursday, the airlines' operations director told an Argentine radio network that he also had disapproved of the flight plan. "I wouldn't have flown direct," said the executive, Marco Rocha.

At LaMia's main office in Santa Cruz, a secretary said the airline had yet to be notified of any sanctions. A black rose was left outside the door.

A recording of conversations between a pilot of the doomed flight and air traffic controllers, as well as the account of a surviving flight attendant, indicated the plane ran out of fuel before crashing just a few miles from Medellin's international airport.

In the flight's final minutes, pilot Miguel Quiroga, who co-owned the airline with Vargas, could be heard requesting permission to land because of "fuel problems," although at first he didn't make a formal distress call. He was told another plane with mechanical problems had priority to land at the airport's single runway and was instructed to wait seven minutes.

As the jetliner circled, the pilot grew more desperate. "Complete electrical failure, without fuel," he said. By then the controller had gauged the seriousness of the situation and told the other plane to abandon its approach to make way for the charter jet. But it was too late.

In Brazil, grieving fans and relatives in the soccer team's hometown of Chapeco prepared for the sad return of so many whose lives were cut short by the crash, hanging origami figures in the club's colors on the fence of the soccer stadium, where a memorial service was to be held Saturday.

Marissol Dias, who volunteers for the charity that organized the placing of the origami figures in the shape of a crane — considered to be a symbol of peace — said she was overwhelmed by the community's response. Some 100,000 people were expected at the stadium — about half of the city's population.

"This comes from a Japanese legend that says if you make 1,000 of these, a wish will be granted," she said. "Our community did much more than we asked."

Elsewhere, gravediggers prepared the ground for burial of some of the victims. At the Jardim do Eden cemetery, the caretaker said he was used to the business of death, but this felt different.

"We bury two people every day. I've done this job for a long time, but this is different," said Dirceu Correa. "It is a tragedy for the families, for the club, and also for us, because we are a part of the city."

Valdez reported from La Paz, Bolivia. Associated Press writers Hannah Dreier in Caracas, Venezuela;

Cesar Garcia in Bogota, Colombia, and Mauricio Savarese in Chapeco, Brazil, contributed to this report.

Trump, backers ask courts to halt or block 3 state recounts

By DAVID EGGERT and SCOTT BAUER, Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump and his supporters went to court Friday to prevent or halt election recounts in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, less than two weeks before the states would have to complete the tasks to meet a federal deadline to certify their election results.

The legal actions seeking to block or halt the recounts in three states Trump narrowly won could cause delays that would make them extremely difficult or impossible to complete on time. Even if the recounts happen, though, none would be expected to give Democrat Hillary Clinton enough votes to emerge as the winner.

The recounts were requested by Green Party candidate Jill Stein, who says they're necessary to ensure that voting machines weren't hacked, even though there's no evidence that they were. Critics say Stein is simply trying to raise money and her political profile while building a donor database.

"In an election already tainted by suspicion, previously expressed by Donald Trump himself, verifying the vote is a common-sense procedure that would address concerns around voter disenfranchisement," Stein said in a statement. "Trump's desperate attempts to silence voter demands raise a simple question: why is Donald Trump afraid of these recounts?"

Wisconsin is the only state where a recount is underway. It began Thursday, and one of the state's 72 counties had already completed its task by Friday, with Clinton gaining a single a vote on Trump. Clinton lost to Trump in Wisconsin by about 22,000 votes, or less than 1 percentage point.

Two pro-Trump groups, the Great America PAC and the Stop Hillary PAC, along with Wisconsin voter Ronald R. Johnson went to federal court late Thursday to try and stop the recount. U.S. District Judge James Peterson on Friday rejected their request for a temporary restraining order to immediately halt the recount, saying there was no harm in allowing it to continue while the court considers their lawsuit. A hearing on the lawsuit is scheduled for Dec. 9.

The lawsuit says Wisconsin is violating the U.S. Supreme Court's 2000 Bush v. Gore ruling because it doesn't have uniform standards to determine which votes should be counted in a recount. They also argue that it threatens due process rights because it may not get done by the federal deadline to certify the vote, putting Wisconsin's electoral votes in jeopardy.

If states miss the deadline, Congress would allot their electoral votes.

The Wisconsin Department of Justice was reviewing the lawsuit, said Johnny Koremenos, spokesman for Attorney General Brad Schimel.

Michigan's elections board deadlocked Friday on a Trump campaign request to deny Stein's recount request and on how a recount would be conducted. Both Republican members voted to prevent the recount while both Democrats voted to allow it, meaning it likely would begin Wednesday unless the courts intervene. It also would be conducted by hand, as Stein requested.

In separate lawsuits against the state, Michigan's Republican attorney general and Trump asked state courts to prevent the recount, saying Stein should not be allowed to seek one because she finished so far behind Trump and Clinton that she couldn't have won, even if some votes were miscounted. Stein got about 1 percent of the vote in all three states.

The Michigan courts appeared unlikely to rule immediately, with one asking for a response from state elections officials by Tuesday.

In Pennsylvania, a hearing is scheduled for Monday on Stein's push to secure a court-ordered statewide recount there. Republican lawyers filed a motion that was posted on the court's website Friday accusing Stein of engaging in legal antics and saying her recount request endangers Pennsylvania's ability to certify its electors by the federal deadline.

Stein has argued, without evidence, that irregularities in the votes in all three states suggest that there

could have been tampering with the vote, perhaps through a well-coordinated, highly complex cyberattack. Elections officials in the three states have expressed confidence in their results.

Trump defeated Clinton in Wisconsin by about 22,000 votes, or less than 1 percentage point. His margin of victory in Michigan was even slimmer, at about 10,700 votes out of 4.8 million cast.

An updated count Friday by Pennsylvania election officials showed Trump's lead over Clinton in that state had shrunk to 49,000 from 71,000, as more counties wrap up final tallies. That put Trump's lead at 0.8 percent, down from over 1 percent, out of 6 million votes cast. It's still shy of Pennsylvania's 0.5 percent trigger for an automatic statewide recount.

Bauer reported from Madison, Wisconsin. Associated Press writer Marc Levy in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, contributed to this report.

Chains and branded skin: California kidnap case baffles cops

By PAUL ELIAS, Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Three weeks after Sherri Papini disappeared, the question of whether she was dead or alive was answered when the young mother and wife was spotted waving frantically for help along a California freeway early on Thanksgiving morning. But the mystery over what happened to her during those 22 days just seemed to grow stranger.

She was battered and bruised, her hands were chained, her long blond hair had been chopped off, and her flesh had been branded with a threatening message. The 34-year-old Papini told authorities that she had been kidnapped at gunpoint by two women Nov. 2 while she was out for a run near her home.

The bizarre turn of events — with many of the most sensational details released not by authorities but by her husband in an exclusive interview with ABC — has baffled police and set social media aflutter, with armchair detectives scouring the internet's darkest corners for clues and others arguing that the case is some kind of twisted hoax, like something out of the movie "Gone Girl."

Her husband, Keith Papini, has condemned the rumors as "exhausting and disgusting," and police have said they have no reason to doubt his wife's harrowing account. But they have a multitude of questions, among them: Who are these women? Where did they keep her? Was she selected at random or targeted?

And, most of all, why?

No ransom demand was ever received, and neither the Papinis nor their families are wealthy, according to Shasta County Sheriff Tom Bosenko. She is a stay-at-home mom, he a Best Buy store employee.

Detectives are tracking hundreds of leads but haven't elicited much information from Papini and have only the sketchiest description from her of her captors, who were said to be Hispanic. Authorities have not divulged the message burned into her skin, and she hasn't been seen publicly since she was found.

"Sherri did her best that she could in providing the descriptions, but she was not able to provide a detailed description due to the suspects covering their faces, and at times Sherri's head was covered," the sheriff said. He noted also that victims of traumatic experiences sometimes suffer memory loss.

Among the leads detectives are following up on is a 13-year-old blog post on a white supremacist site signed by someone using Papini's maiden name. The post claimed she and her family had white supremacist beliefs and disliked Latinos.

"We do not know that it has any relevance to this case or not," Bosenko said Wednesday.

Papini's former husband, David Dreyfus, defended her, saying it must have been written by someone else.

"People are bullies, and it's easy to poke at people online," Dreyfus told The Sacramento Bee. "With as diverse of a friends group as she and I had, that's not her."

Papini said she was seized about a mile from her rural home outside Redding, 215 miles north of San Francisco. She was found in Yolo County, about 140 miles from home, telling authorities that her captors shoved her out of an SUV near Interstate 5 with a bag over her head. Her hands were bound to a chain around her waist.

Keith Papini said his wife's nose was broken and she was emaciated, weighing 87 pounds, or 13 pounds

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less than her normal weight. As for her hair, "obviously, a very sick person who may have wanted to not only to cut it off to change her physical appearance but also as to humiliate them, wear her down," Bosenko told ABC.

She said her kidnapers spoke mostly Spanish. She said one was older, with straight dark hair and thick eyebrows, while the younger one had long curly hair and pierced ears.

Another curious part of the story has been the role played by a self-described "international kidnap and ransom consultant" named Cameron Gamble. Gamble posted a video offering an undisclosed amount of money as a "ransom" for Papini's safe return.

Then, when he got no response, Gamble posted another video offering the money as a reward for information leading to the kidnapers. He said the sum was put up by a concerned person who wanted to remain anonymous.

Papini turned up free the next morning, with Gamble claiming that his reward had put pressure on the kidnapers. Police said they don't believe it had anything to do with her release.

Papini's husband was considered a suspect until he passed a polygraph test, the sheriff said, and friends and family have described her as happily married and a devoted mother of two.

Still, police have been upset by some of the husband's actions, including contacting Gamble for help and divulging details of her injuries to media. Bosenko said the release of the details could compromise the investigation and the ransom offer could hinder it by bringing out scam artists.

Keith Papini, for his part, lashed out at the "rumors, assumptions, lies and hate" that have been circulating, saying: "Those people should be ashamed of their malicious, subhuman behavior."

A Cabinet of generals? Trump's choices get mixed reviews

By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump's move to pack his administration with military brass is getting mixed reviews, as Congress and others struggle to balance their personal regard for the individuals he's choosing with a broader worry about an increased militarization of American policy.

No fewer than three combat-experienced retired Army and Marine leaders, with multiple deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, are on tap for high-level government jobs normally reserved for civilians. Others are entrenched in Trump's organization as close advisers.

Retired Army Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn will serve as the president's national security adviser, and Trump announced retired Marine four-star Gen. James Mattis Thursday night as his secretary of defense. In addition, retired Marine Gen. John Kelly is a likely pick to head the Department of Homeland Security.

All three had high-profile military careers leading top commands, and they are known for their willingness to offer blunt policy assessments publicly and privately. But their strategic advice could be colored by their years on the battlefield watching soldiers and Marines fight and die battling insurgents in the mountains of Afghanistan and the deserts of Iraq.

Those experiences can have markedly varied effects, making some officers a bit cautious when considering plans to send troops into battle but making others more likely to urge aggressive military responses to national security crises and less patient with the slow pace of diplomacy.

The men Trump has chosen so far are familiar faces on Capitol Hill, having made frequent trips in their former jobs, and lawmakers are expressing personal respect. But some temper that with a wariness about the wisdom of putting so many military leaders at the helm of the country's national security when the nation was founded on the idea of civilian control.

In particular, some Democrats oppose passing a law overriding a prohibition on an officer leading the Defense Department before he has been out of the military for seven years. That law has been waived only once in American history, for George Marshall in 1950. Flynn's appointment does not require congressional approval, and there is no similar law for Homeland Security.

Mattis retired from the Marine Corps in June 2013, and Kelly retired early this year. Flynn retired in 2014 after being pushed out of his job as head of the Defense Intelligence Agency.

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"While I deeply respect General Mattis' service, I will oppose a waiver," said Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., a member of the Armed Services Committee. "Civilian control of our military is a fundamental principle of American democracy, and I will not vote for an exception to this rule."

Rep. Adam Smith, ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, echoed that concern, saying that while Mattis served with distinction, "civilian control of the military is not something to be casually cast aside."

It is unlikely, however, that those trepidations will threaten Mattis' nomination. He has broad support from Republicans, who hold the majority in both chambers, including from John McCain, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"America will be fortunate to have General Mattis in its service once again," said McCain, R-Ariz.

There were even positive words Friday from House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, who said, "We are grateful that the president-elect reportedly found General Mattis' argument against torture persuasive. We will need the secretary of defense to continue to uphold the laws, alliances and norms that protect our nation and enshrine our values as Americans."

Still, national security experts raise concerns about the possibility of a greater reliance on military solutions to international problems.

Vikram Singh, a former senior adviser at the Defense Department and now vice president at the left-leaning Center for American Progress, said the law requiring a gap between military service and leading the Pentagon "exists to preserve civilian control of the military, a cornerstone of American democracy, and appointing a general so recently retired from active service to be secretary of defense is a serious matter, no matter how qualified that general may be for the position."

Jon Soltz, who leads the liberal political action committee VoteVets, said that people with military service are needed in Washington, but "it is somewhat concerning that Donald Trump continues to eye recently retired generals for some of the most important traditionally civilian positions in government."

He added, "We should never lose sight of the balance in civilian and military roles that has served our nation well for centuries."

Spencer Meredith, an associate professor at the National Defense University, said Friday that military officers can bring vital strategic thinking and organizational skills to administration jobs. But he acknowledged possible concerns about a cadre of advisers with military viewpoints — the idea that "everything looks like a nail to a hammer."

The generals themselves have expressed little worry about any militarization of U.S. policy.

Military officers, said Kelly, spend their careers willing to give their lives to defend their country and the U.S. Constitution. He said civilian control is rooted in the president as commander in chief and the Congress, which controls spending.

Mattis, in a recent exchange, showed a sense of humor about his status as a career military officer. When a reporter addressed him as "General," he responded, "Please call me Jim. I was once a general, but it was long ago and I've happily rejoined the human race."

AP National Security Writer Robert Burns contributed to this report.

Job deals like Carrier's often fall short of political hype

By DAVID A. LIEB, Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — When President-elect Donald Trump announced a deal to save hundreds of jobs at a Carrier plant in Indiana, it came with a cost to state taxpayers of about \$7 million in tax breaks and grants.

Similar jobs-for-subsidies deals are struck nearly every day around the country by governors, mayors and other officials. But it's debatable whether the economic impact ultimately lives up to the political hype.

Some projects fall short of their promises. Economists say other business deals likely would have occurred even without the incentives. And in some places, it's hard for the public to track the exact amount

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of state and local subsidies that get provided.

In any given year, federal, state and local governments promise companies tens of billions of dollars in public subsidies in exchange for creating or saving thousands of jobs.

States offer more than 1,800 incentive programs for businesses, a figure that has declined slightly over the past five years as programs have been consolidated and revamped, according to the Arlington, Virginia-based Council for Community and Economic Research.

While some governments provide direct grants, the arrangements often allow companies to forgo paying property, income or sales taxes under the premise that the money the company saves will help it expand, hire workers and create an economic ripple effect in the community.

The announcement marked an extraordinary accomplishment for Trump, who had railed against Carrier's plans to shift jobs to Mexico while campaigning. The deal was unique because the president-elect became personally involved in it, and Vice President-elect Mike Pence was in a position as Indiana governor to help facilitate the incentives.

But "somewhere around the country it's probably highly likely that it is happening on a weekly basis," said Judith Stallmann, a professor of applied economics at the University of Missouri's Truman School of Public Affairs.

In fact, on the same day Trump tweeted his intent to make a "major announcement" about Carrier keeping jobs in Indianapolis, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey announced that startup electric vehicle company Lucid Motors will build an assembly plant there that could employ up to 2,000 people. The Arizona Commerce Authority said the company could receive up to about \$46 million in state incentives.

Lucid Motors hopes to compete with Tesla Motors, which previously received a \$1.3 billion incentive package from the Nevada Legislature to build a lithium battery factory near Reno employing 6,500 workers.

Such deals are no longer rare. Missouri has awarded a similarly sized incentive package for health care technology company Cerner to build a sprawling new office complex that could eventually employ 16,000 people on the site of an abandoned shopping mall in Kansas City.

Aircraft manufacturer Boeing holds the record, winning \$8.7 billion in incentives from Washington state in 2013.

"Demand in the form of elected officials anxious to be aggressive on the economy is up, because the recovery is so long and slow," said Greg LeRoy, executive director of Good Jobs First, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that tracks economic development incentives. So "the price of these megadeals goes up."

Indiana's \$7 million incentive package for Carrier's furnace manufacturing facility pales in comparison to some of those deals. But that's likely because it wasn't Trump's sole selling point.

And Trump, who has pledged to cut corporate tax rates, had leverage because Carrier's parent company, United Technologies, also owns Pratt & Whitney, which has contracts to produce fighter jet engines for the U.S. military.

The Carrier incentives also are significantly smaller than the \$80 billion federal bailout for the auto industry during the Great Recession, most of which was later repaid by the companies.

Follow David A. Lieb at: <http://twitter.com/DavidALieb> .

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Dec. 3, the 338th day of 2016. There are 28 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 3, 1926, a real-life mystery began as English novelist Agatha Christie, 36, drove away from her home in Sunningdale, Berkshire, and disappeared. (Christie turned up 11 days later at a hotel in Harrogate, Yorkshire, under an assumed name, for reasons never quite explained.)

On this date:

In 1818, Illinois was admitted as the 21st state.

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In 1828, Andrew Jackson was elected president of the United States by the Electoral College.

In 1833, Oberlin College in Ohio — the first truly coeducational school of higher learning in the United States — began holding classes.

In 1925, George Gershwin's Concerto in F had its world premiere at New York's Carnegie Hall, with Gershwin at the piano.

In 1947, the Tennessee Williams play "A Streetcar Named Desire" opened on Broadway.

In 1953, the musical "Kismet," featuring the song "Stranger in Paradise," opened on Broadway.

In 1960, the Lerner and Loewe musical "Camelot" opened on Broadway.

In 1965, The Beatles' sixth studio album, "Rubber Soul," was released in the United Kingdom by Parlophone (it was released in the U.S. by Capitol Records three days later).

In 1967, surgeons in Cape Town, South Africa led by Dr. Christiaan Barnard performed the first human heart transplant on Louis Washkansky, who lived 18 days with the donor heart, which came from Denise Darvall, a 25-year-old bank clerk who'd died in a traffic accident. The 20th Century Limited, the famed luxury train, completed its final run from New York to Chicago.

In 1979, 11 people were killed in a crush of fans at Cincinnati's Riverfront Coliseum, where the British rock group The Who was performing.

In 1984, thousands of people died after a cloud of methyl isocyanate gas escaped from a pesticide plant operated by a Union Carbide subsidiary in Bhopal, India.

In 1991, radicals in Lebanon released American hostage Alann (cq) Steen, who'd been held captive nearly five years.

Ten years ago: Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez (OO'-goh CHAH'-vez) won re-election, defeating Manuel Rosales. Marat Safin had 16 aces in beating Jose Acasuso 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (5) in the fifth and deciding match on, giving Russia a 3-2 decision over Argentina for its second Davis Cup crown.

Five years ago: In Atlanta, a defiant Herman Cain suspended his faltering bid for the Republican presidential nomination amid a drumbeat of sexual misconduct allegations which he condemned as "false and unproven." Oklahoma State defeated Oklahoma 44-10 to win the Big 12 championship. (Exultant Oklahoma State fans stormed the football field, resulting in a dozen injuries.)

One year ago: Congress approved a 5-year, \$305 billion bill to address the nation's aging and congested transportation systems (the bill was approved on a 359-65 vote in the House, and an 83-16 vote in the Senate). Defense Secretary Ash Carter ordered the armed services to open all military jobs to women, removing the final barriers that had kept women from serving in combat, including the most dangerous and grueling commando posts. Former Stone Temple Pilots frontman Scott Weiland was found dead in his tour bus in Bloomington, Minnesota; he was 48.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director Jean-Luc Godard is 86. Singer Jaye P. Morgan is 85. Actor Nicolas Coster is 83. Actress Mary Alice is 75. Rock singer Ozzy Osbourne is 68. Actress Heather Menzies Urich is 67. Rock singer Mickey Thomas is 67. Country musician Paul Gregg (Restless Heart) is 62. Actor Steven Culp is 61. Actress Daryl Hannah is 56. Actress Julianne Moore is 56. Olympic gold medal figure skater Katarina Witt is 51. Actor Brendan Fraser is 48. Singer Montell Jordan is 48. Actor Royale Watkins is 47. Actor Bruno Campos is 43. Actress Holly Marie Combs is 43. Actress Liza Lapira is 41. Actress Lauren Roman is 41. Pop-rock singer Daniel Bedingfield is 37. Actress Anna Chlumsky (KLUHM'-skee) is 36. Actor Brian Bonsall is 35. Actress Dascha Polanco is 34. Pop/rock singer-songwriter Andy Grammer is 33. Americana musician Michael Calabrese (Lake Street Dive) is 32. Actress Amanda Seyfried is 31. Actor Michael Angarano is 29. Actor Jake T. Austin is 22.

Thought for Today: "What the world really needs is more love and less paper work." — Pearl Bailey, American entertainer (1918-1990).