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**Missing North of Groton, a black
600 lb. Heifer Calf.
Yellow Ear Tag #955
If found or seen,
call 605/290-1019.**

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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Friday, Dec. 9

Senior Menu: Lemon chicken breast, creamy noodles, spinach salad, apple slices, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg biscuit sandwich, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Chicken drummies, French fries, broccoli and dip, fruit.

4 p.m.: Basketball doubleheader with Deuel in Groton. 4 p.m. - Boys C game, 5 p.m., Boys JV game, 6:30 p.m.: Varsity girls game, 8 p.m.: Boys varsity game (no girls JV game)

Saturday, Dec. 10

ACT Test in Aberdeen

CFC Debate

Robotics at Rapid City Stevens

10 m.: Wrestling at LaMour High School

2 p.m.: Basketball doubleheader at Frederick (2 p.m. Girls JV, 3 p.m. Boys JV, 4:30 p.m. Girls Varsity game, 7 p.m. Boys varsity game)

4:30 p.m.: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church mass

Sunday, Dec. 11

9 a.m.: Emmanuel Lutheran Worship

9 a.m.: St. John's Lutheran Worship

9 a.m.: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church mass

9 a.m.: Conde United Methodist Worship

10 a.m.: Heaven Bound Ministries worship at Pierpont Church

10 a.m.: Coffee Fellowship at Groton United Methodist

10 a.m.: Groton United Methodist Sunday School Program Practice

10 a.m.: St. John's Lutheran Christmas Program practice



Dakota Outdoors

Erik Dean

402 N Main St
Aberdeen, SD 57401
605.229.0123

dakoutdoors@midconetwork.com

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Get ready for the one, two punch!

Winter weather has returned to South Dakota and it's coming in like a roaring lion! The first is winter storm Caly which is expected to dump 3-4 inches of snow in the local area, up to six inches between Brookings and Sioux Falls. Then the Polar Vortex will be arriving. One meteorologist says the cold will be similar in scale and magnitude to the infamous January 2014 Polar Vortex.

The Polar Vortex is a large area of cold air high up in the atmosphere that normally lives over the poles (as its name suggests) but — thanks to a meandering jet stream — parts of the vortex can slosh down into North America, helping to funnel unspeakably cold air into the central and eastern U.S., like what's forecast next week.

The daytime highs next week is expected to be in the single digits with lows reaching only four below. But it's only Friday and that can change as the Polar Vortex closes in on us.



Jr. Class Prom Fundraiser

PORK FEED

Friday, December 9th
serving starting @5pm

Groton HS Arena

Groton Tigers vs. Deuel Cardinals

GBB/BBB Double Header

Pork Loin Sandwich Meal \$6

sandwich, chips, bar & lemonade

70th Wedding Anniversary



Open House 70th Wedding Anniversary for Robert and Ruth Pray Sr. on December 11, 2016 from 2-4 pm at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church in Groton. Hosted by their children Jeanette, Jill and Bobby. Anniversary wishes may be sent to them at 1502 N Broadway Groton, SD Lot 9

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Middle/High School Christmas Concert

If you couldn't make it, you can still watch it at GDILIVE.COM



The Sixth Grade Choir, under the direction of Cody Swanson, sang, "The Holiday Rock" and "Five Favorite Holiday Songs." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The junior high choir, under the direction of Cody Swanson and accompanied by Joy Voss, sang, "Sing We All Noel," "Ding Dong! Merrily On High" and "Over the River." (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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The Sixth Grade Band, under the direction of Desiree Yeigh, performed, "Who Let The Elves Out?," "Jingle Bones" featuring the Trombone section, and "African Noel." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The Junior High Band, under the direction of Desiree Yeigh, performed, "Winter Wonderland," "Believe" and "Deck the Halls with Chips and Salsa." (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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The High School Choir, under the direction of Cody Swanson, sang, "Can You See the Light in Bethlehem?" with soloists Tylan Glover and Aleaya Worlie, "Et In Terra Pax (And On Earth, Peace)," and "Can You Hear the Angels?" (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The Chamber Choir, under the direction of Cody Swanson, sang, "Veni, Veni Emmanuel." (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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The High School Band, under the direction of Austin Fordham, performed, Themes from "The Nutcracker," "Adventum with Keri Pappas as a flute soloist, and "Christmas Can-Can."

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



At the end of the concert, there was a Holiday Sing-A-Long as everyone joined in singing, "Deck the Hall," "Jingle Bells," "O Christmas Tree," and "We Wish You A Merry Christmas."

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

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2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Statistics

"People who live in rural areas are more likely to own their own homes, live in their state of birth and have served in the military than their urban counterparts, according to the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey."

The release features data collected between 2011 and 2015 on more than 40 demographic, housing, social and economic topics, including commuting, educational attainment and home value. By pooling multiple years of data, the American Community Survey is able to produce a rolling sample of estimates for cities, towns, counties and other geographies, regardless of their population size.

The Census Bureau's national news release on the data features an analysis of differences between rural and urban populations. To see the Census Bureau's national news release on the data, [click here](#). See infographic for more information. This is the kind of analysis for which the ACS 5-year estimates are uniquely qualified, as it gathers data from every county in the U.S. and can produce meaningful statistics by pooling multiple years of data. These statistics are available to explore on the Census Bureau American FactFinder.

The State Data Center compiled rural-urban comparisons in South Dakota:

There were 42.9 percent of the state population living in rural areas. The national estimate is 19.3 percent.

The median age of people who live in rural areas is older than that of the urban population (42 compared with 34).

Native Americans comprise 13.0 percent of the rural population while in urban areas the share is 5.3 percent.

Rural communities had fewer adults born in other countries compared with those in urban areas (1.4 percent compared with 4.2 percent).

People living in rural areas are more likely to own their own homes than their urban counterparts (78.1 percent compared with 60.9 percent), but less likely to have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher (23.8 percent compared with 29.5 percent).

The labor force participation rate is lower in the rural population aged 16 and over (65.9 percent compared with 71.4 percent).

People who live in rural areas are more likely to work in industries related to agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining than their urban counterparts. [Click here](#) to see a detailed table of comparison.

More people in rural areas are uninsured

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!

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(11.6 percent compared to 10.6 percent), especially the group aged 19 to 25 (29.7 percent compared with 17.7 percent).

People living in rural and urban areas have similar rates of poverty (about 14 percent).

Compared with households in urban areas, rural households had high median household income (\$54,090 compared with \$48,695), higher median home values (\$158,100 compared with \$155,300), and higher monthly housing costs for households paying a mortgage (\$1,216 compared with \$1,207).

To explore more comparisons of rural and urban populations in South Dakota, click demographic comparisons, housing comparisons, economic comparisons, and social characteristics comparisons.

New: For the first time, the 5-year dataset includes "Comparison Profile" tables. These data compare differences between the latest set of American Community Survey 5-year statistics (2011-2015) and the most recent, nonoverlapping five-year dataset (2006-2010). The tables note statistically significant differences. The comparisons are made for populations of 5,000 or more.

To see the South Dakota State and place comparison profiles of the two reference periods tabulated by the Data Center, click Demographic Data, Housing Data, Economic Data.

This is the second set of American Community Survey data released this year. The first, in September produced estimates based on data collected in 2015 for areas with populations of 65,000 or more. For South Dakota, the 2015 ACS 1-Year Estimates are available for the State, Minnehaha County, and Pennington County. Summary reports of median household income can be extracted and downloaded: South Dakota, Minnehaha County, and Pennington County.

To learn more about the American Community Survey - how it works and what it's used for, you can also visit us at <http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>. To learn how to tabulate comparisons for Rural-Urban components or the two reference periods of 2006-2010 and 2010-2015, contact Dr. Weiwei Zhang at the State Data Center. Email: Weiwei.Zhang@sdstate.edu; Office: 605-688-4901

Groton population near 1500

Population in 2014: 1,495 (0% urban, 100% rural). Population change since 2000: +10.3%



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 James Valley Telco and Professional Mgt. Services

Week of Dec. 12: Olde Bank Floral 'n More and Subway

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Change in Venues for GBB and Track Regions

Due to circumstances beyond anyone's control, venues have changes for these Region events. GBB will be on the same dates, February 21 and 23. The new site will be SISSETON. Region Track will also be on the same date, May 18, The new site will be MILBANK.

Commercial Applicator Recertification Classes Start in January

PIERRE, S.D.- Recertification classes for commercial pesticide applicators start next month in South Dakota.

The recertification training involves reviewing safety procedures, application rules and guidelines and information about new products and techniques. Commercial applicators must recertify every other year.

South Dakota Department of Agriculture ag program specialist Valerie Mitchell says, "First time commercial applicators and those adding a category to their certification must first take a proctored exam at one of the local SDSU Extension offices in the state. This year we have finished providing most of these testing sites with computers, resulting in faster results and less paperwork than prior paper testing."

A list of commercial recertification dates and locations can be found in the "Happening Now" section on the SDDA website homepage, <http://sdda.sd.gov>. Registration for the recertification classes as well as license renewal can also be completed online through the SDDA website.

Agriculture is a major contributor to South Dakota's economy, generating \$25.6 billion in annual economic activity and employing over 115,000 South Dakotans. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture's mission is to promote, protect, preserve and improve this industry for today and tomorrow. Visit us online at <http://sdda.sd.gov> or find us on Facebook and Twitter.

GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting December 12, 2016 – 7:00 PM – GHS Conference Room

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of minutes of November 14, 2016 school board meeting.
2. Approval of November 2016 Financial Report, Agency Accounts, and Investments.
3. Approval of November 2016 School Transportation Report.
4. Approval of November 2016 School Lunch Report.
5. Approval of North Central Special Education Co-Op (NCSEC) agenda items...as fiscal agent.
6. Approval of November District bills for payment.

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Update on Groton Area Elementary project progress.
3. Presentation of considerations for Groton Area High School project.
4. 2nd Reading on proposed amendments to MS/HS Student Handbook.
5. Approve Memorandum of Understanding for Associated School Board Protective Trust.
6. School Board Committee Reports:
 - a. Building, Grounds, & Transportation: Clint Fjelstad, Merle Harder, Marty Weismantel
 - b. Personnel, Policy, & Curriculum: Deb Gengerke, Grant Rix
 - c. Negotiations: Kelly Kjelden, Steve Smith
7. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approve budget amendment to capital outlay fund to accommodate receipt of capital outlay certificate revenue.
2. Approve transfer of capital outlay certificate revenue from capital outlay fund to capital projects fund.
3. Appoint ASBSD 2017 LAN Member.

ADJOURN

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Today in Weather History

December 9, 1961: A snowstorm moved through the area and dropped 3 to 6 inches of snow east of the Missouri River and 1 to 3 inches to the west of the river from late afternoon on the 8th through late afternoon on the 9th. The storm was accompanied by high winds, blowing snow, icy highways, and temperatures falling to near zero. Three men were killed and one injured in a two-car crash near Watertown as snow and blowing snow sharply reduced visibilities. A skidding accident on a slippery highway near Winner resulted in an automobile fatality of one man. In a rural area near Vale, in Meade County, one man abandoned his stalled vehicle and was found the next day, frozen to death. 6 inches of snow fell at Sisseton and Wheaton, with 5 inches at Aberdeen and Watertown and 3 inches at Mobridge. Only an inch fell at Pierre.

December 9, 1917: A severe winter storm struck the Ohio Valley and the Great Lakes Region. It produced 25 inches of snow and wind gusts to 78 mph at Buffalo NY. The storm produced 26 inches of snow at Vevay Indiana, with drifts fourteen feet high.

December 9, 2003: Although it never threatened land, a subtropical storm became Tropical Storm Peter approx. 700 miles WNW of the Cape Verde Islands. Combined with Tropical Storm Odette from earlier in the month, this is the first time since 1887 that two tropical storms formed in the Atlantic Basin in December.

1786 - A second great snowstorm in just five days brought another 15 inches of snow to Morristown NJ, on top of the eight inches which fell on the 7th and 8th, and the 18 inches which fell on the 4th and 5th. The total snowfall for the week was thus 41 inches. New Haven CT received 17 inches of new snow in the storm. Up to four feet of snow covered the ground in eastern Massachusetts following the storms. (9th-10th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1917 - A severe winter storm struck the Ohio Valley and the Great Lakes Region. It produced 25 inches of snow and wind gusts to 78 mph at Buffalo NY. The storm produced 26 inches of snow at Vevay IND, with drifts fourteen feet high. By the 16th of the month people could walk across the frozen Ohio River from Vevay into Kentucky. (8th-9th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)






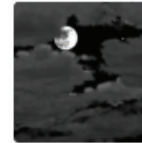

1987 - The fifth storm in nine days kept the northwestern U.S. wet and windy. Winds along the coast of Washington gusted to 75 mph at Oceans Shores and at Hoquiam, and the northern and central coastal mountains of Oregon were drenched with three inches of rain in ten hours, flooding some rivers. Snowfall totals in the Cascade Mountains of Washington State ranged up to 36 inches in the Methow Valley. High winds in Oregon blew a tree onto a moving automobile killing three persons and injuring two others at Mill City. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A winter storm blanketed the Southern and Central Appalachians with up to ten inches of snow. Arctic air invaded the north central U.S. bringing subzero cold to Minnesota and North Dakota. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A strong storm produced wind gusts of 40 to 65 mph from the Alaska Peninsula to the North Gulf Coast of Alaska. Southeasterly winds gusted to 75 mph in the Anchorage hillside. Gusty winds associated with a strong cold front caused a power outage across much of the island of Hawaii. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

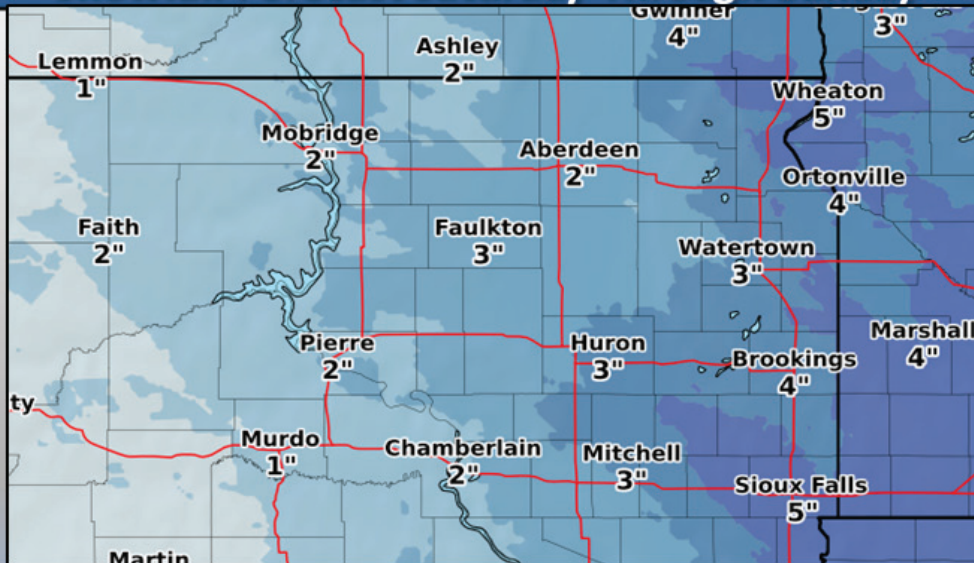
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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
						
Cold	Mostly Cloudy	Snow Likely 60%	Chance Snow 50%	Chance Snow then Mostly Cloudy 40%	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Snow 20%
High: 10 °F	Low: -3 °F	High: 12 °F	Low: 6 °F	High: 15 °F	Low: 4 °F	High: 13 °F

Snow Moving In This Weekend

Snowfall Forecast Saturday Through Sunday



- Light snow Saturday through Sunday morning
- Generally 2 to 4 inches east of the Missouri River
- Winds 10 to 25 mph – minor blowing snow impacts

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD



weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 12/9/2016 5:53 AM Central

Published on: 12/09/2016 at 5:57AM

A trough of low pressure will move across the region this weekend, bringing prolonged light snow beginning by Saturday morning and persisting through Sunday morning. In general, 2 to 4 inches can be expected east of the Missouri River, with the highest amounts across far eastern South Dakota and into Minnesota. Winds will not be a huge factor with this system, and remain in the 10 to 25 mph range. Therefore, we are not expecting major impacts from blowing snow.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 13.7 F at 1:23 PM

Low Outside Temp: -4.5 F at 10:49 PM

Wind Chill: -10 at 7:48 PM

High Gust: 27.0 Mph at 12:18 AM

Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 61° in 1939

Record Low: -27° in 1955

Average High: 27°F

Average Low: 8°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.16

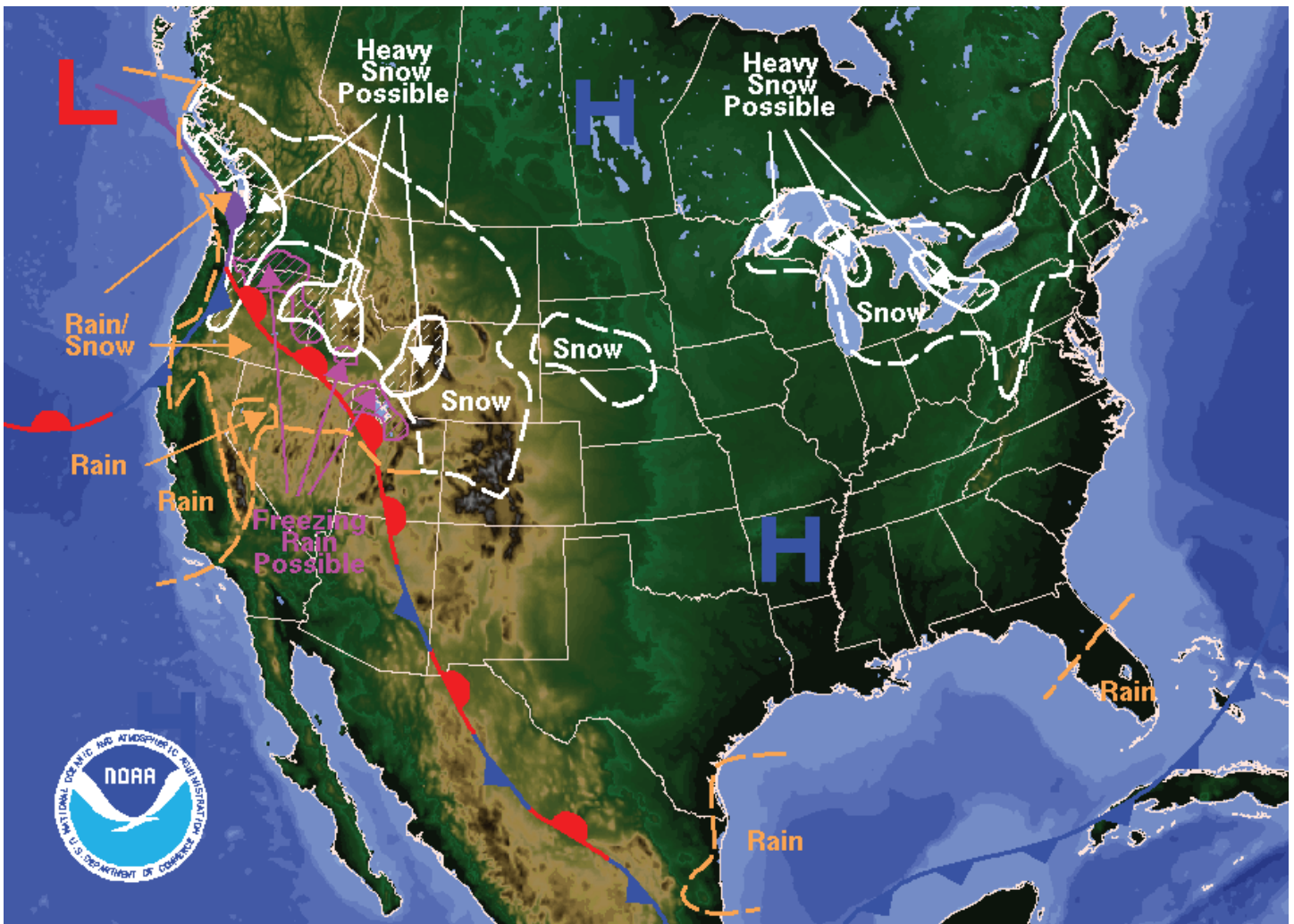
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.36

Precip Year to Date: 17.34

Sunset Tonight: 4:50 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:03 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Fri, Dec 09, 2016, issued 4:42 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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MY ONE AND ONLY LOVE

A shopper once said to a sales associate, "I want the most beautiful gold heart that you have in your store and I want you to hang it on the finest gold chain available. It's for my fiancée."

After considering many different choices, he made his decision, and said, "I'll take that one."

"Shall I inscribe her name on it?" asked the sales associate.

"Oh no!" came the instant reply. "If we break up, I may want to use it again."

How different is God's love. We hear it in the words of Jesus when He said, "I have loved you with an everlasting love." How comforting it is to know that God's love is permanent. How fortunate we are to know that God's love is guaranteed by His Word. How wonderful it is to know that God's love is for everyone. And finally, how grateful it is to know that His love makes our salvation through Jesus Christ possible.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to understand how much You love us. May those who read this "Seed" come to know You and accept Your Son as their Savior and love Him because He first loved us and gave Himself for us. Amen.

Scripture: 1 John 4:11-12 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

News from the Associated Press

Tribes suing over pipeline willing to put claims on hold

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Two Sioux tribes suing over the Dakota Access pipeline say they're willing to put their claims on hold while the Army considers whether to allow the pipeline to cross under a Missouri River reservoir in North Dakota.

The Army on Sunday declined to approve an easement for the crossing, citing a need for more study and consideration of alternative routes.

Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners believes it already has the necessary permission and has asked a federal judge to concur.

The Standing Rock and Cheyenne River tribes are challenging pipeline permits at numerous water crossings. They say in court documents that they're willing to suspend the litigation during the study process. The tribes also intend to oppose ETP's request to the judge for permission to drill under the lake.

Eagle Butte man sentenced to 15 years for fatal stabbing

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — An Eagle Butte man has been sentenced to 15 years in prison for the fatal stabbing of another man last year on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation.

Federal authorities say Corbyn Big Eagle stabbed Austin Miner in the chest on June 16, 2015, during a fight at Big Eagle's apartment involving several people. Miner later was pronounced dead at a hospital.

U.S. Attorney Randy Seiler says Big Eagle will be on supervised release for five years following his prison term.

Thursday's Scores By The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

All American Indian Shootout

Lame Deer, Mont. 74, Takini 16

Gillette Invitational

Cheyenne Central, Wyo. 44, Rapid City Central 40

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Bison 51, McIntosh 42

Castlewood 45, Colman-Egan 30

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 50, Mobridge-Pollock 41

Custer 49, Hill City 34

DeSmet 74, Lake Preston 26

Deubrook 60, Estelline 30

Faith 46, Wall 30

Freeman 64, Parker 45

Hanson 56, Bridgewater-Emery 26

Hitchcock-Tulare 58, Highmore-Harrold 40

Howard 47, Sioux Valley 46

McLaughlin 73, Herreid/Selby Area 51

Milbank Area 57, Tiospa Zina Tribal 21

Miller 58, Potter County 42

Northwestern 57, Aberdeen Christian 17

Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 43, Dell Rapids St. Mary 40

St. Francis Indian 55, Bennett County 29

Tri-State, N.D. 62, Great Plains Lutheran 34

Tripp-Delmont/Armour 59, Kimball/White Lake 35
Waverly-South Shore 48, Florence/Henry 43
Webster 53, Redfield/Doland 14
Wessington Springs 51, James Valley Christian 36
West Central 61, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 38
White River 64, Kadoka Area 50
Gillette WY Tournament
Rapid City Central 64, Bismarck Legacy, N.D. 51

Stay or go? Tribe gives conflicting messages to protest camp

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON**, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — For protesters fighting the Dakota Access pipeline, the messages from the Standing Rock Sioux reservation are confusing: The tribal chairman tells demonstrators that it's time to leave their camp and go home. Another leader implores them to stay through the bitter North Dakota winter.

The conflicting requests show how the camp's purpose has widened beyond the original intent of protecting the tribe's drinking water and cultural sites into a broader stand for Native American rights.

Camp occupants are working through the confusion, said Jade Begay, an organizer with the Indigenous Environmental Network. "The rest of the world just needs to hold tight and be patient," she said.

Since August, the camp on federal land near the reservation and the pipeline route has been home to thousands of people protesting the four-state \$3.8 billion pipeline designed to carry oil to a shipping point in Illinois.

After the camp endured two recent severe storms, Standing Rock Chairman Dave Archambault declared this week that it's time for the demonstrators to disband.

Archambault said there's no reason for people to put their lives at risk because no additional pipeline work is expected for months. The company building the project, Energy Transfer Partners, and the Army Corps of Engineers are battling in court over permission to dig under the Missouri River reservoir that provides the tribe's drinking water. It's the last big unfinished segment of the 1,200-mile pipeline.

"We understand this fight is not over," Archambault said. "But the fight is not here, at this moment."

Native American rights activist Chase Iron Eyes, an enrolled Standing Rock tribe member who made an unsuccessful bid for Congress this fall, implored pipeline opponents to stay in a social media post this week.

The camp rejoiced Sunday when the Army announced that it would not issue an easement for the pipeline to cross under Lake Oahe, but it's unclear what might happen when pipeline supporter Donald Trump enters the White House in January. The dispute also could be decided by a federal judge.

"We are not in the clear by any means whatsoever," Iron Eyes said. "This is not a time for celebration. If it's a time for anything ... it's a time to honor all the sacrifices that have been made" by camp occupants. More than 500 have been arrested since August.

The camp began as a peaceful, prayerful protest of the pipeline. It has since drawn in people who believe the dispute represents an overall stand for American Indian rights.

Iron Eyes said protesters need to stand up for other tribes and treaty rights. "We don't stand in a place to tell people to leave," he said.

State Emergency Services spokeswoman Cecily Fong said the state isn't surprised by the competing messages, noting the "different agendas" of people in camp.

Camp occupants are "working on finding a middle ground and some sort of compromise" through informal discussions, according to Begay, who lives in Tesuque, New Mexico.

"These kinds of decisions don't happen in just a day or two," she said. "We need to consider everybody's safety, everybody's goals, the different points of view."

The Corps recently declared the camp area closed to public access and said those who remain are trespassing, but the agency is not issuing citations. North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple has also called on camp occupants to leave, and Sen. John Hoeven issued a similar plea Wednesday from the floor of the Senate.

Iron Eyes said he believes the calls for people to leave the camp are aimed at limiting liability, and he

said those who stay do so at their own risk. But he implored people "who understand the inherent risks of staying in a North Dakota winter to stand with us, because this pipeline is not finished, and we have to stand strong and stay vigilant."

Archambault acknowledged the efforts of people who came from around the world to support the tribe. But, he said, "their purpose has been served."

Watch a 360 video from the protest camp in Cannon Ball, N.D., here: <https://youtu.be/wxxrg5CgqO0>

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

Ohio lawmakers pass Republican 20-week abortion ban proposal

By **ANDREW WELSH-HUGGINS, Associated Press**

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Abortions would be banned after 20 weeks under a bill Republican lawmakers passed Thursday, adding to legislation already on its way to Republican Gov. John Kasich that would prohibit abortions once a fetal heartbeat is detected.

The House voted 64-29 to pass the bill already approved by the Senate.

During early debate the House rejected a Democratic proposal to add rape and incest to exceptions in the bill.

Rep. Greta Johnson, an Akron Democrat, asked the House to add the amendment, saying it would honor women who show the courage to go on after sexual assaults. Rep. Ron Hood, a Republican from Ashville, opposed the amendment, saying children conceived in assaults shouldn't be punished.

The House Community and Family Advancement Committee voted Wednesday to pass the 20-week ban. That followed House approval Tuesday of the so-called Heartbeat Bill, clearing the way for what would be one of the nation's most stringent abortion restrictions.

That legislation would prohibit most abortions as early as six weeks into pregnancy after the first detectable fetal heartbeat.

Kasich, who opposes abortion rights, has voiced concerns about whether such a move would be constitutional, but he has not said whether he plans to sign either measure.

Similar 20-week bans are on the books in 17 states, including South Dakota, whose governor signed it into law in March, and South Carolina, whose governor signed it in June. Arizona and Idaho's bans are blocked from enforcement by the federal courts, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a research group that supports abortion rights.

Earlier this week, Republican lawmakers in New Jersey introduced a similar 20-week ban, with its outcome uncertain in that state's Democrat-led Legislature.

Ohio's proposed 20-week ban would allow for abortion in some cases to protect a woman's life and health.

State Senate President Keith Faber, a Republican from Celina, said the twice-defeated Heartbeat Bill came back up because of Republican Donald Trump's presidential victory and the expectation he will fill Supreme Court vacancies with justices who are more likely to uphold stricter abortion bans.

Faber, asked if he expects the Ohio proposal to survive a legal challenge, said Tuesday: "I think it has a better chance than it did before."

The ban would make an exception if the mother's life is in danger but not in cases of rape or incest, he said.

NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio said the move would block access to abortion before most women even know they're pregnant.

Federal courts have rejected similar Heartbeat Bills in Arkansas and North Dakota.

Under the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling establishing a nationwide right to abortion, states were permitted to restrict abortion after viability, the point when the fetus has a reasonable chance of surviving under normal conditions outside the uterus.

The ruling offered no legal definition of viability, saying it could range from 24 to 28 weeks into a pregnancy.

The Latest: House OKs bill to ban abortion after 20 weeks

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — The Latest on a proposed ban on abortions after 20 weeks (all times local): 7:30 p.m.

The Republican-controlled Ohio House has voted to pass a bill that would ban abortions after 20 weeks. The House voted 64-29 Thursday night to approve the bill, which will be added to legislation already on its way to Republican Gov. John Kasich (KAY'-sihk) that would prohibit abortions once a fetal heartbeat is detected.

Kasich opposes abortion rights but hasn't said whether he plans to sign either measure.

Similar 20-week bans are on the books in 17 states.

Ohio's proposed 20-week ban would allow for abortion in some cases to protect a woman's life and health.

The Ohio House voted earlier to reject a Democratic proposal to add an exception for rape and incest to the bill.

11:25 a.m.

An Ohio House committee has voted to pass a bill that would ban abortions after 20 weeks.

The committee voted Wednesday night to pass the ban, which now heads to the full House for consideration Thursday.

That follows House approval Tuesday night of the so-called heartbeat bill, which would prohibit abortions as early as six weeks into pregnancy once a fetal heartbeat is detected. That clears the way for what would be one of the nation's most stringent abortion restrictions.

Republican Gov. John Kasich is an abortion-rights opponent who has previously voiced concerns about the heartbeat bill's constitutionality.

Kasich hasn't said yet if he'll sign either bill.

South Dakota judge puts government ethics overhaul on hold

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota judge put on hold a voter-approved government ethics overhaul Thursday, handing a victory to foes who have criticized the wide-ranging new law as an unconstitutional, unworkable mess.

Circuit Judge Mark Barnett issued a preliminary injunction at the request of a group of two dozen Republican lawmakers and others who filed a lawsuit against the state challenging it. Barnett's decision to delay the law's implementation could be appealed to the state Supreme Court.

"This is just a stop on the bus route," Barnett said. "This is going to a much higher power and a much higher pay grade than me."

Foes of the measure contend that provisions of the law including an ethics commission, public campaign funding and limitations on lobbyist gifts to lawmakers run afoul of the state or federal constitutions — or both. The decision is largely what those who brought the lawsuit expected and reflects "how poorly drafted the measure was," said GOP Rep. Mark Mickelson, a plaintiff.

Attorneys representing the state and sponsors of the ballot measure argued against the decision, saying that the measure is constitutional.

Supporters billed it to voters as an anti-corruption package. They successfully pitched that it would help improve transparency and empower regular people.

John Hinrichs, an attorney for the ballot measure supporters, said South Dakota would benefit from it.

"We hope that the people of the state continue to press for ethical reform and for meaningful measures that will hold state officials and legislators accountable and limit the influence of lobbyists and limit the influence of big money and wealthy contributors," he said.

Barnett also invited input on portions of the law that could be "saved," saying an injunction could be amended. Supporters plan to ask the judge to re-instate portions of the law not challenged by the plaintiffs, including lower caps on campaign contributions.

Even as the court challenge simmers, backers of the new law face another obstacle — Republicans in control of state government who loudly oppose it.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard proposed a budget plan this week that doesn't include millions of dollars of funding for a public campaign finance system established under the overhaul. The roughly \$5 million cost next budget year would eat up significant revenue growth for other areas, he said, taking a detour in his budget speech to bash the new law.

Daugaard has said he'd support rolling back the measure if it isn't struck down in court. The governor views the order as a good step that will give the courts and the Legislature time to sort out the "mess," Chief of Staff Tony Venhuizen said in email.

Sioux City officer shoots, kills man during traffic stop

SIOUX CITY, Iowa (AP) — Officials say a Sioux City police officer has shot and killed a South Dakota man during a traffic stop in the northwestern Iowa city.

Police Chief Doug Young says the shooting happened around 10:30 p.m. Wednesday when the officer pulled over a car carrying two people. Young says one was Daniel Riedmann, of Dakota Dunes, South Dakota, who appeared to have an outstanding warrant and was considered to be armed and dangerous.

Young said the officer reported seeing movement from inside the stopped car and firing his gun, hitting Riedmann, who was later pronounced dead at a hospital.

Young declined to name the officer who fired his gun, saying only that the officer is a three-year veteran of the Sioux City force and has been placed on administrative leave.

Bond set at \$2M cash for stepfather charged in toddler death

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Bond is set at \$2 million cash-only for a 36-year-old man charged in the death of his 18-month-old stepson in southeastern South Dakota.

Keith Cornett was charged Thursday with first-degree murder, second-degree murder, manslaughter, child abuse and possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia. He remains in jail.

Officers were called to a Dell Rapids home Wednesday afternoon where they found the child unresponsive with traumatic injuries. The toddler, Hayden Wigton, could not be revived.

The Argus Leader reports Minnehaha County State's Attorney Aaron McGowan says an autopsy found six blows to the child's head and bite marks.

Authorities say the boy's mother and her husband had been staying at the home with a couple who was renting the house. The mother, Kristine Cornett, and the couple renting the house traveled to Sioux Falls Wednesday morning. The couple later returned and found the child unresponsive.

SD Attorney general: Police chief on leave after shooting

LAKE NORDEN, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's attorney general confirms it was the police chief of Lake Norden who was involved in a shooting that injured a woman this week.

The attorney general's office said in a statement Thursday that city officials have placed Police Chief Jimmy Murphy on administrative leave until further notice.

The officer-involved shooting happened at a home early Wednesday. The 22-year-old woman was being treated at a hospital.

Attorney General Marty Jackley has said the Division of Criminal Investigation will investigate the shooting at the request of Lake Norden police. No details of the shooting have been released.

Murphy told The Associated Press he had no comment.

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FCS playoff matchup gives Bison chance to clear lone blemish

North Dakota State's run of five straight Football Championship Subdivision titles has included four playoff victories over teams the Bison played in the regular season. Now the Bison have a chance to go 5-0. The Bison host an FCS quarterfinal game Saturday against South Dakota State, the only team to beat North Dakota State this season.

By DAVE KOLPACK
Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — The only thing that's been worse than playing Football Championship Subdivision powerhouse North Dakota State in the last five years is playing the Bison more than once.

Thanks in part to a playoff system that once grouped teams from the same region, the Bison have faced four teams in the postseason after seeing them a few weeks earlier. They have won all four times (South Dakota State in 2012 and 2014, Montana and Northern Iowa in 2015).

The five-time defending FCS champion (11-1) can up its record in FCS rematches to 5-0 when it hosts a quarterfinal game Saturday against South Dakota State (9-3), which happens to be the only team to beat the Bison this season.

Neither Bison coach Chris Klieman nor his players are interested in publicly playing up the revenge factor. "Just stay out of it," is how Klieman put it. "It's a new game. It's a new week. We can't worry about all that stuff."

Even Bison running back and kickoff return standout Bruce Anderson, who was injured against the Jackrabbits after his ankle was twisted during a tackle, said he's more interested in performance than payback. Anderson sat out six weeks before returning for the playoffs.

"I don't really think about it. It's in the past," Anderson said. "It was frustrating to be out and not playing, but I would say that it would be frustrating for anybody. I am just looking at this game as another opportunity to play football."

South Dakota State head coach John Stiegelmeier said his team was happy to win the game in October, but there's no discussion about it this week.

"We don't talk hardly ever about the past," he said.

The Jacks defeated the Bison 19-17 at the Fargodome, but piled up some impressive statistics. Quarterback Taryn Christian had 444 yards of total offense, including 303 yards passing and 141 yards rushing. He caught the Bison off guard with his running game, after coming into the contest with just 29 yards rushing in five games.

Less surprising were the numbers of Christian's two large targets, 6-foot-4, 250-pound tight end Dallas Goedert and 6-4, 215-pound wide receiver Jake Weineke. Goedert caught 11 passes for 150 yards and Weineke had six catches for 108 yards, including the winning 2-yard touchdown reception on the final play from scrimmage.

"They are just really exceptional. If there's anything in the ZIP code, they're catching it," Bison defensive end Greg Menard said of the South Dakota State receivers. "We have to make sure we get more pressure on the quarterback this time around."

After scoring a season-low 17 points against the Jacks, the Bison offense turned its focus toward the running game and has rushed for 1,368 yards in the past five games. That has loosened up defenses for big plays, including four of the 10 longest of the year against San Diego last weekend. There was a 61-yard touchdown run by Anderson, a 56-yard touchdown run by Lance Dunn, a 52-yard run by quarterback Easton Stick, and a 49-yard touchdown pass from Stick to Chase Morlock.

"We've just got to finish better," Bison receiver RJ Urzendowski said of the rematch. "We moved the ball pretty well for third quarters the first time. We're going to have to be consistent throughout the game."

This is the 106th meeting between the two schools that have become rivals since moving up to Division I ahead of their in-state counterparts, the University of North Dakota and University of South Dakota. The Bison have a 35-15-3 advantage over the Jacks at home and have won 27 of the last 29 in Fargo, including a 13-2 mark in the Fargodome.

"There's no love in this game," North Dakota State defensive end Brad Ambrosius said. "We're ready to go."

Gas deliveries slowed due to North Dakota blizzard

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A petroleum trade group is monitoring gas supplies in North Dakota in light of the blizzard conditions that have slowed deliveries.

The Cannon Ball Pit Stop ran out of gas Wednesday. Its owner, Standing Rock Sioux Chairman Dave Archambault II, says the adverse weather has so far prevented gas deliveries.

North Dakota Petroleum Marketers Association President Mike Rud tells the Bismarck Tribune (<http://bit.ly/2geq6LP>) the organization is monitoring the situation closely. Rud says truckers are behind schedule after a difficult week of weather, but he had so far not heard of any widespread problems.

A blizzard this week dumped more than a foot of snow on some parts of the state and temporarily closed hundreds of miles of interstate. The National Weather Service says another system is expected to hit the southern half of the state late Friday.

Information from: Bismarck Tribune, <http://www.bismarcktribune.com>

Alabama inmate coughs, heaves, during execution by injection

By KIM CHANDLER, Associated Press

ATMORE, Ala. (AP) — Thirteen minutes into his execution by injection, an Alabama inmate heaved and coughed and appeared to move during tests meant to determine consciousness.

Ronald Bert Smith Jr., 45, was finally pronounced dead at 11:05 p.m. Thursday night — about 30 minutes after the procedure began at the state prison in southwest Alabama.

Alabama uses the sedative midazolam as the first drug in a three-drug lethal injection combination. Smith and other inmates argued in a court case that the drug was an unreliable sedative and could cause them to feel pain, citing its use in problematic executions. The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the use of the drug.

Smith was convicted of capital murder in the Nov. 8, 1994, fatal shooting of Huntsville store clerk Casey Wilson. A jury voted 7-5 to recommend a sentence of life imprisonment, but a judge overrode that recommendation and sentenced Smith to death.

At the beginning of his execution, Smith heaved and coughed repeatedly, clenching his fists and raising his head.

A prison guard performed two consciousness checks before the final two lethal drugs were administered. In a consciousness test, a prison officer says the inmate's name, brushes his eyelashes and then pinches his left arm. During the first one, Smith moved his arm. He slightly raised his right arm again after the second consciousness test.

The meaning of those movements will likely be debated. One of Smith's attorneys whispered to another attorney, "He's reacting," and pointed out the inmate's repeated movements.

The state prison commissioner said he did not see any reaction to the consciousness tests.

"We do know we followed our protocol. We are absolutely convinced of that," Alabama Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn said Thursday evening.

When asked if the movements indicated the state's process should be changed, Dunn said: "There will be an autopsy that will be done on Mr. Smith and if there were any irregularities those will hopefully be shown or born out in the autopsy. I think the question is probably better left to the medical experts."

Alabama's execution recalled memories of a botched 2014 execution in Oklahoma. In that execution, inmate Clayton Lockett writhed on the gurney, moaned and pulled up from his restraints after being administered the state's three-drug execution protocol. Execution team members considered trying to save his life and took Lockett to an emergency room before he finally died, 43 minutes after his initial injection.

Just before Thursday night's execution began, Smith replied, "No ma'am" when asked by the prison warden if he had any final words. A member of Wilson's family, who was not identified, witnessed the

execution. The victim's family did not make a statement.

Wilson was pistol-whipped and then shot in the head during the robbery, court documents show. Surveillance video showed Smith entering the store and recovering spent shell casings from the bathroom where Wilson was shot, according to the record.

In overriding the jury's recommendation at the 1995 trial, a judge likened the slaying to an execution, saying Wilson had already been pistol-whipped into submission and Smith ignored his pleas for mercy. Wilson had a newborn infant at the time of his death.

"The trial court described Smith's acts as 'an execution style slaying.' Tonight, justice was finally served," Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange said in a statement after the execution.

U.S. Supreme Court justices twice paused the execution as Smith's attorneys argued for a delay, saying a judge shouldn't have been able to impose the death penalty when a jury recommended he receive life imprisonment.

Four liberal justices said they would have halted the execution, but five were needed to do so.

Smith's attorneys had urged the nation's highest court to block the planned execution to review the judge's override.

Smith's lawyers argued a January decision that struck down Florida's death penalty structure because it gave too much power to judges raises legal questions about Alabama's process. In Alabama, a jury can recommend a sentence of life without parole, but a judge can override that recommendation to impose a death sentence. Alabama is the only state that allows judicial override, they argued.

"Alabama is alone among the states in allowing a judge to sentence someone to death based on judicial fact finding contrary to a jury's verdict," attorneys for Smith wrote Wednesday.

Lawyers for the state argued in a court filing Tuesday that the sentence was legally sound, and that it is appropriate for judges to make the sentencing decision.

Smith, the son of a NASA contract employee, became an Eagle Scout at 15, but his life spiraled downward because of alcoholism, according to a clemency request to Alabama's governor. He had a final meal of fried chicken and french fries and was visited during the day by his parents and son.

Alabama has been attempting to resume executions after a lull caused by a shortage of execution drugs and litigation over the drugs used.

The state executed Christopher Eugene Brooks in January for the 1993 rape and beating death of a woman. It was the state's first execution since 2013. Judges stayed two other executions that had been scheduled this year.

Doping report details 'institutional conspiracy' in Russia

By **STEPHEN WILSON**, AP Sports Writer

LONDON (AP) — A new report into systematic Russian doping details a wide-ranging "institutional conspiracy" that involved more than 1,000 athletes across more than 30 sports, including evidence corroborating large-scale sample swapping at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.

World Anti-Doping Agency investigator Richard McLaren said Friday the conspiracy involved the Russian Sports Ministry, national anti-doping agency and the FSB intelligence service, providing further of state involvement in a massive program of cheating and cover-ups.

"It is impossible to know just how deep and how far back this conspiracy goes," McLaren said at a news conference in London. "For years, international sports competitions have unknowingly been hijacked by Russians. Coaches and athletes have been playing on an uneven field. Sports fans and spectators have been deceived. It's time that this stops."

McLaren said his conclusions were based on irrefutable forensic evidence, including DNA analysis proving that samples were swapped and other tests showing that doping bottles were opened.

The Canadian law professor's investigation found that 15 Russian medalists in Sochi had their doping bottles tampered with, including athletes who won four gold medals. Names were not given.

McLaren also reported that Russia corrupted the 2012 London Olympics on an "unprecedented scale" but the full extent will "probably never be fully established."

No Russian athlete tested positive at the time of the games, but McLaren said the sports ministry gave athletes a "cocktail of steroids ... in order to beat the detection thresholds at the London lab."

The findings confirmed and expanded on much of the evidence contained in McLaren's first report issued in July.

His first report led WADA to recommend that Russia be excluded from the Rio de Janeiro Olympics. The IOC rejected calls for an outright ban, allowing international federations to decide which Russian athletes could compete.

McLaren's latest report will put pressure on the International Olympic Committee to take action ahead of the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea. His findings will be sent to the IOC, which has two commissions looking into the allegations.

IOC President Thomas Bach has said stiff sanctions will be taken against any athletes and officials implicated in doping. He said he favors lifetime Olympic bans for anyone involved.

Defense Secretary Carter makes surprise visit to Afghanistan

By **ROBERT BURNS, Associated Press**

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan (AP) — Defense Secretary Ash Carter said Friday that the United States will stick with Afghanistan for years to come.

"America is and will remain committed to a sovereign and secure Afghanistan," Carter said in a joint appearance in Kabul with Afghanistan's president, Ashraf Ghani, during his final visit to the country as head of the Pentagon.

It is Carter's last planned trip to Afghanistan before handing off his Defense Department responsibilities to his designated successor, retired Marine Gen. James Mattis.

The top US commander in Afghanistan said Friday "the fundamental logic" of the U.S. counterterrorism mission is solid, suggesting it should continue after the change of administrations in Washington.

"Our policy of having an enduring counterterrorism effort alongside Afghan partners is, in my view, very sound — something that we need to continue," Army Gen. John Nicholson told a news conference in Bagram.

President-elect Donald Trump has given little public indication of how or whether he will alter the U.S. course in Afghanistan.

Appearing alongside Nicholson, Carter also suggested the U.S. cannot afford to give up on Afghanistan after more than 15 years of U.S. involvement, the deaths of more than 2,200 U.S. troops, and the expenditure of hundreds of billions of dollars.

"The interests we are pursuing here are clear and enduring," he said, citing the goals of preventing another 9/11-type of attack on American soil and helping Afghanistan attain enough stability to remain a long-term security partner for the U.S. and the West.

"To have a stable security partner that is eager and willing to work with the United States is an asset for the future for us," Carter said.

The U.S. has about 10,000 troops in Afghanistan to train and advise Afghan security forces combatting a resilient Taliban insurgency. U.S. special operations forces are hunting down al-Qaida and Islamic State militants.

Carter's visit comes amid concerns that despite improvements in Afghan government defenses, Taliban forces are gaining leverage and are continuing to use neighboring Pakistan as a sanctuary. By U.S. estimates, the Afghan government controls slightly less than two-thirds of the country's population.

The Taliban holds sway over about 10 percent, and the remainder of the population is "contested." U.S. commanders have praised Afghan soldiers for taking the lead in battles against the less-well equipped Taliban, but they have been suffering heavy casualties across the country.

Prior to Carter's arrival, his press secretary, Peter Cook, said Carter wants to get a full rundown on operations. "In his meetings with senior Afghan officials, the secretary will discuss the growing capabilities and resilience demonstrated by Afghan security forces in recent months," Cook said. "He will also discuss

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ongoing efforts to continue building Afghan combat capacity including aviation.”

President Barack Obama had planned to reduce U.S. troop numbers to about 1,000 by the time he left office in January, but he scrapped that approach in the face of Taliban gains.

The U.S. military has been in Afghanistan since it led an invasion force in October 2001 to overthrow the Taliban regime. The U.S. has suffered more than 2,200 deaths in Afghanistan, including more than 1,800 killed in action, since the war began.

President-elect Donald Trump has not said how he will approach the Afghanistan problem but has denounced what he calls U.S. nation-building projects.

Chiefs come through to take control of division race

By DAVE SKRETTA, AP Sports Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Charcandrick West was playing for Joe McKnight. Tyreek Hill was playing for the fans chanting his name. The Chiefs defense was playing for its injured leader.

Everybody on the Kansas City sideline was playing for control of the AFC West.

“This was a big game,” Chiefs cornerback Steven Nelson said, stripping off his uniform after a 21-13 victory over the Oakland Raiders on Thursday night. “It means a lot of things down the road.”

The ramifications begin with the division race, where the Chiefs (10-3) forged a tie with Oakland (10-3) at the top. But they also hold the tiebreaker by virtue of their two head-to-head wins and are positioned for a first-round playoff bye with three regular season games left.

“It’s huge,” Chiefs linebacker Dee Ford said. “It probably won’t hit until afterward and we are unwinding. We have 10 days to actually enjoy it and celebrate it.”

There were plenty of story lines at cold, wind-swept Arrowhead Stadium.

West scored in the first half as Kansas City raced to a 21-3 lead, and then pulled up his jersey to reveal a white shirt that said “Long Live Joe” — a tribute to McKnight, his fellow Louisiana native and a former Chiefs running back who was shot to death last week.

“He was out there with me tonight,” West said.

Hill scored twice, once on a long touchdown reception and later on a punt return. The dynamic score on special teams came after Hill had fumbled a punt earlier in the game, and as thousands of fans who had bundled up against the cold had begun to say his name in unison.

“It was crazy, man. I didn’t know what to do,” Hill said.

After the Raiders got within 21-13 in the second half, the Chiefs defense kept making a stand, even though Derrick Johnson was no longer there to help them. The veteran linebacker’s season came to a sudden and frustrating end when he ruptured his Achilles tendon late in the first half.

“It was one of those next-man-up things,” Nelson said. “Fill your role.”

The Chiefs did that perfectly in beating Oakland for the seventh time in eight meetings. They held Derek Carr to 17 of 41 for 117 yards passing, prevented Amari Cooper and Michael Crabtree from having any impact on the game, and held Latavius Murray in check most of the night.

He finished with 103 yards and a touchdown.

“We had no doubt in our mind we were going to get back in the game. But again, we didn’t make enough plays to do that,” Murray said. “Like coach said, ‘What we want in our goals and what we’re after, they’re still there for us.’ We won’t let this determine who we are and what we want to accomplish.”

Here are some of the other takeaways from the Chiefs’ crucial victory:

CATCHING KELCE: Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce had five catches for 101 yards, his fourth straight game with at least 100 yards. That matches the franchise record set by Tony Gonzalez, and allows him to join a group of tight ends that also includes Jimmy Graham who have accomplished that feat.

OSEMELE OUT: Raiders offensive lineman Kelechi Osemele woke up Thursday sick enough that he went to the hospital for treatment. Coach Jack Del Rio declined to say what was wrong, but did say that Osemele was going to be able to return to Oakland with the team. “Not trying to get into specifics,” Del Rio said, “but it was significant enough we wanted to make sure we got him to the proper care.”

MACK TRUCKING: Khalil Mack had a strip-sack for the third consecutive game, though for the first time

he didn't recover his own fumble. The sack also gave him one in eight straight games, matching Lance Johnstone for the longest streak in franchise history since sacks became official in 1982.

TRY SOME STICKUM: The Raiders were plagued by dropped passes, including one by Seth Roberts that would have resulted in a touchdown. Roberts only hauled in two catches on nine targets, while Cooper had five catches on 10 targets and Crabtree had four catches on seven targets. "We just didn't execute how we normally could," Cooper said. "We just have to find a way to execute and move the ball."

NO EXCUSES: Even though the wind chill approached single digits by the end of the game, the Raiders were unwilling to use the weather as an excuse. "That's football weather," offensive tackle Donald Penn said. "Weather didn't have anything to do with it. I've played in the cold. Everybody's played in the cold once. Weather had nothing to do with it."

For more NFL coverage: <http://www.pro32.ap.org> and http://www.twitter.com/AP_NFL

Civilians stream out of crumbling rebel enclave in Aleppo

By **ZEINA KARAM, Associated Press**

BEIRUT (AP) — Hundreds of civilians streamed out of eastern Aleppo by foot on Friday as Syrian troops and allied forces waged a relentless campaign to drive rebels from their rapidly crumbling enclave.

Russia announced Thursday that the Syrian army was suspending combat operations to allow for the evacuation of civilians from besieged rebel-held districts, but residents and medics inside eastern Aleppo said there was no letup in the bombardment.

Syrian state TV showed families emerging from ravaged districts, some of them with children, as civilians continued to stream out of the ever-shrinking enclave that had been held by rebels since 2012. Efforts to evacuate hundreds of wounded people faltered, however, despite pleas from medical officials earlier this week.

A hospital administrator in eastern Aleppo said medics have submitted lists of patients who need to be evacuated from hospitals.

"There hasn't been a response yet, and the shelling continues," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

Rebel defenses have collapsed in the face of a wide-ranging government offensive preceded by an intensive aerial campaign. More than three-quarters of the rebel sector has now fallen, including the symbolically important ancient Aleppo district.

Tens of thousands of residents have fled to western Aleppo, and those remaining are now cornered in the southern part of the formerly rebel-held east.

The U.N. human rights office said it is deeply concerned about reports that hundreds of men have gone missing after crossing from eastern Aleppo into government-controlled areas of the city.

Spokesman Rupert Colville said that family members have reported losing contact with the men, who are between the ages of 30 and 50, after they fled opposition-held areas of Aleppo around a week or 10 days ago.

Colville said the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights is also concerned by reports that some civilians trying to flee are being blocked by armed opposition groups and in some cases being fired upon.

"Civilians are being used as pawns and prevented from leaving," he said at a briefing in Geneva.

An opposition official disputed government claims that the army now holds 90 percent of eastern Aleppo, saying that more than a dozen neighborhoods remain in rebel hands.

"More than thirty percent of east Aleppo is controlled by us," said Osama Abu Zayd, an adviser to the loose rebel umbrella group known as the Free Syrian Army. Speaking from Turkey, where he is based, he said the Syrian army and Russians were still targeting rebel positions on the front lines.

Russia's military, meanwhile, said it has helped more than 8,000 civilians leave the rebel-controlled eastern part of Aleppo in the last 24 hours.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, speaking in Germany after talks with U.S. Secretary of State

John Kerry, said military experts and diplomats would meet Saturday in Geneva to work out details of the rebels' exit from Aleppo's eastern neighborhoods, along with civilians who are willing to leave the city.

Associated Press writer Dominique Soguel in Istanbul contributed to this report.

South Korean president impeachment tarnishes family legacy

By FOSTER KLUG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Park Geun-hye could always rely on one unwavering gift throughout a political career that saw a triumphant return as South Korea's first female president to the palatial Blue House where she'd lived as a girl: She always enjoyed the reflected devotion, some might say worship, that half the country felt for her late dictator father.

In the end — isolated, mocked and loathed by millions of protesters who swarmed the streets around her presidential fortress on the side of a sacred granite mountain — even the conservative adulation that had been her political bedrock failed to save her.

Parliament impeached Park and stripped her of all power Friday amid fury over prosecution claims that she had handed over extraordinary power to a corrupt friend. Her prime minister takes over while the nation's Constitutional Court reviews whether to accept the lawmakers' vote and drive her permanently from office.

Park could still wriggle out of the noose if the court goes against the overwhelming sentiment most of the country seems to share and restores her presidency. But her dream of extending the legacy of her father, Park Chung-hee, is ruined.

It is hard to imagine a more absolute fall for a woman who conservatives had long cherished as the self-sacrificing "Daughter of the Nation," a woman who survived a knife attack a decade ago on the campaign trail that left her face slashed, and who rose above widespread sexism to build a political juggernaut.

Her supporters admired the adolescent who put aside girlish dreams to serve as first lady after her mother was assassinated in 1974; the leader who shunned her brother and sister to avoid the corruption that had brought down so many other leaders; the spinster who shut down any semblance of romantic love to devote herself entirely to public service.

None of it, though, was enough to efface the public anger and shame that has flooded over her as the details of a remarkable scandal emerged.

The speed of the collapse has been as remarkable as it has been comprehensive.

It was only a month and a half ago that Park made a surprise apology to the nation and acknowledged that she had relied on an old friend to help edit speeches and conduct unspecified "public relations."

As the weeks wore on and the crowds grew at Saturday rallies staged within screaming distance of the Blue House, prosecutors built a more sinister case against her, one that shocked a country.

Park was accused of allowing the daughter of a cult leader, Choi Soon-sil, a close friend long mired in corruption scandals, to extort companies and play an extraordinary role in government affairs, even though she had no official position.

Choi was said to have chosen the president's outfits, decided which aides should be trusted and steered official thinking on major policy decisions.

This struck a nerve, even with Park's conservative supporters.

If the president couldn't dress herself or compose speeches without this mysterious woman's help, the critics argued, let alone decide how to handle nuclear-armed North Korea, how could she be trusted? What did it say about South Korea's hard-won democracy that she allegedly allowed Choi, an unelected, corrupt product of the bad old days of nepotism, cronyism and elitism, hold such sway over their leader?

It was too much, even for many of the elderly conservatives who'd seen her as the champion of a father who they saw not as a dictator who tortured and executed dissidents but as a savior who'd dragged the country from poverty and shame and, through force of will, created the economic "Miracle on the Han"

(the river that bisects Seoul) in the 1960s and '70s.

Park Chung-hee, his supporters have always maintained, gave the nation pride by rescuing millions from poverty with his industrialization policies at a time when South Korea was poorer than North Korea and just emerging from decades of Japanese colonialism and total war.

His daughter, after triumphing against her liberal opponent in the 2012 presidential election, began her single, five-year term as the standard bearer of her father's legacy. Hopes were high that she would boost economic growth and find a way to cow a perennially belligerent North Korea.

Even before the Choi scandal, however, complaints about her "imperial" leadership style, ineffectiveness in curbing North Korean provocations, attacks on free speech and dissenters, and government mismanagement of rescue operations after a deadly ferry sinking blamed in part on corruption and incompetence had dinged those hopes.

The totality of Park's fall was reflected in polls that showed her popularity dipping as low as 4 percent, the worst of any leader in South Korea's modern democratic history.

In a recent column, Herald Business, a conservative daily, said public calls to remove the president were also a demand to end the "Park Chung-hee myth," which was "based on an imperial kind of leadership."

In another sign of just how battered the Park legacy is, a ceremony celebrating the 99th anniversary of Park Chung-hee's birth in his hometown of Gumi last month drew around 500 people; last year saw nearly 2,000.

Associated Press writer Kim Tong-hyung contributed to this story.

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South Korean president is impeached in stunning fall

By **FOSTER KLUG, KIM TONG-HYUNG and HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean lawmakers on Friday impeached President Park Geun-hye, a stunning and swift fall for the country's first female leader amid protests that drew millions into the streets in united fury.

After the vote, parliamentary officials hand-delivered formal documents to the presidential Blue House that stripped Park of her power and allowed the country's No. 2 official, Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn, to assume leadership until the Constitutional Court rules on whether Park must permanently step down. The court has up to six months to decide.

"I'd like to say that I'm deeply sorry to the people because the nation has to experience this turmoil because of my negligence and lack of virtue at a time when our security and economy both face difficulties," Park said after the vote, before a closed-door meeting with her Cabinet where she and other aides reportedly broke down in tears.

Hwang separately said that he wanted "the ruling and opposition political parties and the parliament to gather strength and wisdom so that we can return stability to the country and people as soon as possible."

Once called the "Queen of Elections" for her ability to pull off wins for her party, Park has been surrounded in the Blue House in recent weeks by millions of South Koreans who have taken to the streets in protest. They are furious over what prosecutors say was collusion by Park with a longtime friend to extort money from companies and to give that confidante extraordinary sway over government decisions.

Organizers said about 10,000 people gathered in front of the National Assembly to demand that lawmakers pass the impeachment motion. Some had spent the night on the streets after traveling from other cities. Scuffles broke out between angry anti-Park farmers, some of whom had driven tractors to the assembly from their farms, and police. When impeachment happened, many of those gathered raised their hands in the air and leapt about, cheering and laughing.

"Can you hear the roar of the people in front of the National Assembly?" Kim Kwan-young, an opposition

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lawmaker said ahead of the vote, referring to South Korea's formal name. "Our great people have already opened the way. Let's make it so we can stand honorably in front of history and our descendants."

The handover of power prompted the prime minister to order South Korea's defense minister to put the military on a state of heightened readiness to brace for any potential provocation by North Korea. No suspicious movements by the North were reported, however.

Park will be formally removed from office if at least six of the Constitutional Court's nine justices support her impeachment, and the country would then hold a presidential election within 60 days.

National Assembly speaker Chung Sye-kyun said the bill on Park's impeachment was passed by a vote of 234 for and 56 opposed, with seven invalid votes and two abstentions. That well surpassed the necessary two-thirds vote needed in the 300-seat assembly, with the opposition getting strong support from members of Park's party.

Present for the vote were relatives of the victims of a 2014 ferry disaster that killed more than 300 and was blamed in part on government incompetence and corruption; they cheered and clapped after the impeachment was announced. Most lawmakers left the hall quietly, though some could be seen taking selfies as they waited to vote.

Lawmakers from both parties faced huge pressure to act against Park, the daughter of a military dictator still revered by many conservatives for lifting the country from poverty in the 1960s and 1970s.

Her approval ratings had plunged to 4 percent, the lowest among South Korean leaders since democracy came in the late 1980s, and even elderly conservatives who once made up her political base have distanced themselves from her. An opinion survey released earlier Friday showed 81 percent of respondents supported Park's impeachment.

South Korean lawmakers last voted to impeach a president in 2004, when they accused late liberal President Roh Moo-hyun of minor election law violations and incompetence. The Constitutional Court restored Roh's powers about two months later, ruling that his wrongdoings weren't serious enough to justify his unseating.

The chances of the court reinstating Park are considered low because her charges are much graver. Some legal experts say the court might need more than a couple of months to decide. This is because Park's case is much more complicated than Roh's, and because her lawyers will likely press the court not to uphold the impeachment unless the suspicions against her are proven.

Hundreds gathered Friday night at a boulevard in front of an old palace gate in downtown Seoul, which has been the center of demonstrations in recent weeks calling for Park's removal. Protesters planned to march close to the Blue House.

The impeachment is a remarkable fall for Park, who convincingly beat her liberal opponent in 2012. Park's single, five-year term was originally set to end Feb. 24, 2018.

The political turmoil around Park comes after years of frustration over a leadership style that inspired comparisons to her father, Park Chung-hee. Critics saw in Park an unwillingness to tolerate dissent as her government cracked down on press freedom, pushed to dissolve a leftist party and allowed aggressive police suppression of anti-government protests, which saw the death of an activist in 2016.

She also was heavily criticized over her government's handling of the 2014 ferry sinking; most of those victims were school kids.

Park has repeatedly apologized over the public anger caused by the latest scandal, but has denied any legal wrongdoing. She attempted to avoid impeachment last month by making a conditional offer to step down if parliament could come up with a stable power-transfer plan, but the overture was dismissed by opposition lawmakers as a stalling ploy.

In indicting Park's longtime friend, Choi Soon-sil, and two former presidential aides last month, state prosecutors said they believed the president was "collusively involved" in criminal activities by the suspects. Choi and the two former aides were accused of bullying large companies into providing tens of millions of dollars and favors to foundations and businesses Choi controlled, and enabling Choi to interfere with state affairs.

Park's lawyer has called the accusations groundless.

Park first met Choi in the 1970s, around the time Park was acting as first lady after her mother was killed

during a 1974 assassination attempt on her father. Choi's father, a shadowy figure named Choi Tae-min who was a Buddhist monk, a religious cult leader and a Christian pastor at different times, emerged as Park's mentor.

The Choi clan has long been suspected of building a fortune by using their connections with Park to extort companies and government organizations. Choi's ex-husband is also a former close aide of Park's.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. SOUTH KOREAN LAWMAKERS IMPEACH PRESIDENT

The stunning and swift fall for Park Geun-hye, the country's first female leader, follows protests over a corrosive corruption scandal that drew millions into the streets in united fury.

2. WHY BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS PRESSURING TRUMP

Some employers want him to abandon campaign-trail pledges of mass deportation and other hard-line immigration policies because such moves could hurt the economy.

3. JOHN GLENN REMEMBERED AS ALL-AMERICAN HERO

First American to orbit the Earth. War hero fighter pilot. Record-setting test pilot. Longtime senator. Glenn died Thursday at 95.

4. SHELLING BELIES REPORTED HALT IN COMBAT IN ALEPPO

Syrian troops and allied forces shell eastern neighborhoods of the city despite Russia's announcement that the Syrian army was suspending combat operations to allow for the evacuation of civilians.

5. HOW FIGHT AGAINST ISLAMIC STATE GROUP IS SHIFTING

Iraqi security forces intend to focus on intelligence work to counter the extremists' expected move back to a dispersed, underground terror organization after they are driven out of Mosul.

6. EXECUTION CARRIED OUT, WITH DIFFICULTY, IN ALABAMA

The execution requires two consciousness tests as the inmate heaves and coughs 13 minutes into the lethal injection.

7. KEY SPENDING BILL STALLS IN US SENATE

Hours to a government shutdown, coal-state Senate Democrats block action on the stopgap bill over benefits for retired miners and press Trump, a self-proclaimed coal champion, to intervene with Republicans.

8. EX-NEO-NAZIS AIMING TO REHAB EXTREMISTS

Across Germany, a small but effective network of former neo-Nazis is working to help those who want to leave the far-right scene.

9. WHICH SOCIAL ILL HILLARY CLINTON IS SPEAKING OUT AGAINST

In her first speech since losing the presidential election, she calls the rise of fake news an "epidemic."

10. LAMAR JACKSON CAPTURES MAXWELL AWARD

Winning the award as the nation's top college football player gives the Louisville quarterback a leg up in the race for the Heisman Trophy.

S. Korea's interim leader was Park defender; powers unclear

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The man who takes over as government caretaker in the wake of President Park Geun-hye's impeachment is seen by critics as a stiff and uncompromising defender of the fallen leader.

How loyal is Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn? As the corruption scandal that would bring Park down raged last month, popularly called "Choi Soon-sil Gate" after the confidante Park was alleged to have ceded government power to, Hwang suggested that it was really all his fault, not Park's, because he had failed to support her properly.

"Amazing," opposition lawmaker Roh Hoechan sarcastically replied. "So this was 'Hwang Kyo-ahn Gate'"

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all along?"

Hwang, 59, was a state prosecutor for nearly 30 years before starting a career in politics and policymaking. He was regarded as the staunchest loyalist in Park's cabinet. The prime minister is the country's No. 2 position but ordinarily lacks major power.

Now Hwang assumes presidential duties, including serving as commander-in-chief of South Korea's 630,000-member military, while the country's Constitutional Court decides whether to approve or reject Park's impeachment. The court has half a year to decide, and if it removes Park, a presidential election would be held within 60 days.

The prime minister's powers in such situations, however, are not spelled out clearly in the law, leaving the question of what comes next open to interpretation.

Some legal experts say Hwang's authority should be constrained because he is merely keeping the seat warm for either a reinstated Park or a new president. Though filling in as president, his title remains prime minister.

But while opposition lawmakers don't particularly care for Hwang, some claim that he should at least have the authority to appoint senior officials.

The terms of two of the Constitutional Court's nine justices end early next year. Lawmakers worry this could cause problems if the court's review of Park's impeachment drags on. Removing Park from office would require the support of at least six justices.

Opposition lawmakers say they plan to propose a law to make it more clear what Hwang can and cannot do as interim leader.

The last time South Korean lawmakers voted to impeach a president, Roh Moo-hyun in 2004, Prime Minister Goh Kun quietly handled presidential duties and refrained from exercising presidential powers on personnel appointments and diplomacy until the court reinstated Roh two months later.

Some experts believe the court will need more time to decide Park's case than Roh's. While Roh was accused of minor election law violations and incompetence, Park is facing spiraling allegations that she helped Choi extort money and favors from large companies and manipulate state affairs from the shadows. Park apologized over the public anger caused by the scandal and for putting trust in Choi, but has denied any legal wrongdoing.

Her lawyers are likely to press the court not to uphold impeachment unless suspicions leveled against the president are proven, experts say.

Hwang became Justice Minister in 2013 and successfully drove a government attempt to eliminate a leftist political party accused of pro-North Korea views. The party was dissolved following a Constitutional Court ruling in December 2014, a move some saw as a setback for freedom of speech.

Hwang became prime minister in June of last year, succeeding Lee Wan Koo, who resigned amid allegations that he was among several members of Park's administration who received bribes.

In July this year, Hwang was pelted with eggs and water bottles during a visit to a rural town over a decision to deploy an advanced U.S. missile defense system in the area to better cope with North Korean threats. The plan angered locals who feared possible health hazards from the system's powerful radar.

Hwang seemed on his way out when Park early last month nominated Kim Byong-joon, a former policy adviser for late President Roh, as her new prime minister in an effort to reach out to liberals for bipartisan support amid the scandal. However, Hwang kept the job after the opposition-controlled parliament refused to approve Kim as prime minister and went on to push for Park's impeachment.

Even before Park's parliamentary impeachment, Hwang had already filled her role to some degree. He was in Peru last month for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, which Park decided to skip amid the political turmoil, becoming the first South Korean president to miss the annual leaders' meeting that began in 1993.

South Korean law requires the Constitutional Court to apply the standards of criminal litigation when proceeding with impeachment trials. The chairman of the National Assembly's Legislation and Judiciary Committee serves as the chief prosecutor, which means a lawmaker from Park's own party, Kweon Seong Dong, will lead arguments in court to impeach her.

Kweon will work closely with opposition lawmakers who authored the impeachment motion and likely be backed by a large team of legal experts. There is speculation that Park might struggle finding lawyers to defend her because of public anger.

It's not yet clear if Park will appear in court to testify. In 2004, conservative lawmaker Kim Ki-choon, who acted as the chief prosecutor, demanded that Roh testify in court, but the justices concluded that his appearance wasn't necessary.

Trump mobilizing Louisiana Republicans in final Senate race

By KEN THOMAS and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Tending to party politics, President-elect Donald Trump is rallying supporters in Louisiana on Friday ahead of the state's Senate runoff election, aiming to pad the Republican majority he will inherit.

Trump was campaigning for Republican John Kennedy in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and then making another stop on his "thank you" tour in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a state that helped him prevail against Democrat Hillary Clinton in last month's election.

On Thursday Trump met in Columbus, Ohio, with the victims of an attack by a knife-wielding Ohio State University student. By evening he was at a rally in Des Moines, Iowa, alongside Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad, his pick to be the next ambassador to China.

"The script is not yet written. We do not know what the page will read tomorrow. But for the first time in a long time we know the pages will be authored by each and every one of you," Trump said at Des Moines' Hy-Vee Hall, where he offered promises to heal a divided nation along with trademark boasts about the size of his victories.

While candidate Trump was often at odds with the establishment wing of his party, the incoming president has reason to consolidate any lingering factions within the party, most immediately in Louisiana.

Kennedy, the state treasurer, faces off Saturday against Public Service Commissioner Foster Campbell, a Democrat, for the seat of retiring Republican Sen. David Vitter. Neither won a majority in the November primary, leading to the runoff. Polls have shown Kennedy with a comfortable lead.

Republicans will have a narrow 52-48 Senate majority next year if they maintain the Louisiana seat. Trump has backed Kennedy and Vice President-elect Mike Pence campaigned for him last week in New Orleans, saying a Kennedy win would "put an exclamation point at the end of a great American victory in 2016."

Yet even as he professes unity, Trump's Cabinet announcements have drawn harsh criticism from Democrats.

Trump's selection Wednesday of fast-food executive Andrew Puzder to lead the Labor Department was panned by workers' rights organizations and labor unions. Puzder, who heads CKE Restaurants Holdings, the parent of Carl's Jr., Hardee's and other chains, brings yet another wealthy business person and elite donor into his administration-in-the-making.

Trump said in a statement that as labor secretary, Puzder will "save small businesses from the crushing burdens of unnecessary regulations that are stunting job growth and suppressing wages." He later defended his decision to stack his Cabinet with the extremely wealthy, saying in Des Moines: "I want people who have made a fortune! Now they're negotiating for you!"

But the choice could lead to a confirmation fight.

"American families need a Labor Department that stands up for workers' wages, retirement security and safety, not one focused on reducing their pay. Andy Puzder has a long record of fighting against the wages of working families," said House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi of California.

Trump has selected retired Marine Gen. John Kelly to head the Department of Homeland Security, according to people close to the transition; he officially picked Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, a climate-change denier whose policies have helped fossil fuel companies, as head of the Environmental Protection Agency; and he named the former chief executive of World Wrestling Entertainment, Linda McMahon, to head the Small Business Administration.

Pruitt, whose selection demoralized some environmentalists and Democrats, came not long after Trump

met with former Vice President Al Gore, a leading environmental activist, and said he had "an open mind" about honoring the Paris climate accords.

Trump, in Iowa, vowed to that he would "end the EPA intrusion into your lives," prompting cheers from the crowd.

Major decisions remain on the horizon for Trump.

He is still considering his choice for secretary of state, and has said he intends to name his choice for the key Cabinet post next week.

Trump is also determining the future of his business empire, which he has said he will leave although he could shift control to his adult children. Business-ethics specialists have said that type of arrangement could carry enormous conflicts of interest.

Trump has not yet provided any details on how his business interests will function while he's in the White House but said legal documents are being prepared ahead of an announcement next week.

It was also revealed Thursday that even after Trump moves into the Oval Office, he will retain an executive producer credit on the reality show "Celebrity Apprentice." The news, which was first reported by Variety, raised questions about a conflict of interest since Trump will have an interest in a show broadcast on NBC while he is being covered by the network's news division.

The show will now be hosted by Arnold Schwarzenegger. Requests for comment were not returned by Trump's spokeswoman.

Lemire reported from Des Moines, Iowa. Associated Press writers Julie Pace, Julie Bykowicz and Lolita Baldor in Washington contributed.

Reach Thomas and Lemire on Twitter at www.twitter.com/KThomasDC and www.twitter.com/JonLemire

Big business warns Trump against mass deportation

By STEVE PEOPLES, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Still grappling with Donald Trump's surprise election, the nation's business community has begun to pressure the president-elect to abandon campaign-trail pledges of mass deportation and other hardline immigration policies that some large employers fear would hurt the economy.

The push, led by an advocacy group backed by New York billionaire Michael Bloomberg and media mogul Rupert Murdoch, is still in its infancy as the business world struggles to understand the tough-talking Trump's true intentions on an issue that defined his outsider campaign. Some groups, such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, are holding off, doubtful that Trump will actually create a deportation force, as he suggested before his election, to expel those estimated 11 million immigrants in the country illegally.

But others are assembling teams of public officials and industry leaders on the ground in key states to encourage Trump to embrace a more forgiving immigration policy — in the name of economic development, if not human compassion.

"This election clearly showed that Americans are wildly frustrated with our broken immigration system," said Jeremy Robbins, executive director of the New American Economy, a group whose board includes Bloomberg, Murdoch and leaders of business giants Marriott, Disney and Boeing. "But it would be a mistake to equate their desire for someone to secure the border with support for mass deportation or other hardline policies that would both devastate the economy and undermine core American values."

Robbins' organization has in recent days unveiled coalitions of business leaders and public officials that oppose an immigration crackdown — many of them Trump supporters — across Utah, California, South Carolina, Florida and Colorado with more coming in Arizona, Idaho, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Texas. Backed by its directors' deep pockets, the group is working to create a permanent infrastructure that will pressure the new administration and members of Congress in key battlegrounds even before the debate officially begins on Capitol Hill.

Trump railed against the dangers of illegal immigration throughout his campaign, several times sharing

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the stage with parents of children killed by immigrants in the country illegally. He also pledged to build a massive wall across the vast majority of the 2,100-mile border with Mexico. And, early in the campaign, he promised to create "a deportation force" to remove more than 11 million immigrants, although as Election Day approached, he left open the possibility for a pathway to legal status for some who entered the country illegally.

Trump's transition team declined to answer questions about his immigration plans this week.

He hinted at a softer approach in a Time magazine interview published this week, saying he would "work something out" to help immigrants who were brought to the United States illegally as children and granted work permits by President Barack Obama. On deportation, Trump told "60 Minutes" shortly after the election that he would prioritize deporting between 2 and 3 million "people that are criminal and have criminal records — gang members, drug dealers."

Such a plan would largely be in line with the Obama administration's current policy.

The business world was caught flat-footed when Trump won.

Business leaders had invested far more time coordinating immigration policy with Democrat Hillary Clinton before the election. None of the major players have had regular contact with Trump's transition team since his victory, even though Trump has vowed to make immigration a focus of the early days of his presidency.

"This is going to take a while," said Daniel Garza, executive director for the Koch Brothers-backed LIBRE Initiative, which supports a pathway to citizenship for immigrants in the country illegally and opposes mass deportation. "In the meantime we will make sure our voice is heard."

Trump faces political pressure on both sides. His most passionate supporters are unlikely to accept a Trump administration that embraces big business' softer approach.

"Donald Trump will lose all credibility," said Dan Stein, president of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, a group that pushes for strict immigration policies.

Stein, optimistic that Trump is putting immigration hardliners like Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions in his Cabinet, said Trump should pursue mass deportations to protect American workers.

"Under Donald Trump, this left-right business coalition thing is not going to work," he said.

Yet business groups note that experts have predicted negative economic consequences should Trump pursue mass deportation. A study released in February by the right-leaning American Action Network found that such a plan could reduce "real GDP by \$1 trillion" and cost taxpayers more than \$400 billion.

Public opinion appears to be on their side.

While the Pew Research Center found over the summer that eight in 10 Trump supporters want a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, an October survey found that 60 percent of Trump backers also said immigrants in the country illegally should be able to stay in the U.S. if they meet certain requirements. Roughly one third of Trump supporters said there should be a "national law enforcement effort to deport" all such immigrants.

Alabama inmate coughs, heaves 13 minutes into execution

By KIM CHANDLER, Associated Press

ATMORE, Ala. (AP) — A man who killed an Alabama convenience store clerk more than two decades ago was put to death Thursday night, an execution that required two consciousness tests as the inmate heaved and coughed 13 minutes into the lethal injection.

Ronald Bert Smith Jr., 45, was pronounced dead at 11:05 p.m., about 30 minutes after the procedure began at the state prison in southwest Alabama.

Smith was convicted of capital murder in the Nov. 8, 1994, fatal shooting of Huntsville store clerk Casey Wilson. A jury voted 7-5 to recommend a sentence of life imprisonment, but a judge overrode that recommendation and sentenced Smith to death.

Smith heaved and coughed repeatedly, clenching his fists and raising his head at the beginning of the execution. A prison guard performed two consciousness checks before the final two lethal drugs were

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administered.

In a consciousness test, a prison officer says the inmate's name, brushes his eyelashes and then pinches his left arm. During the first one, Smith moved his arm. He slightly raised his right arm again after the second consciousness test.

The meaning of those movements will likely be debated. One of Smith's attorneys whispered to another attorney, "He's reacting," and pointed out the inmate's repeated movements.

The state prison commissioner said he did not see any reaction to the consciousness tests.

"We do know we followed our protocol. We are absolutely convinced of that," Alabama Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn said Thursday evening. "There will be an autopsy that will be done on Mr. Smith and if there were any irregularities those will hopefully be shown or born out in the autopsy. I think the question is probably better left to the medical experts," Dunn said when asked if the movement's indicated the state's process should be changed.

Alabama uses the sedative midazolam as the first drug in a three-drug lethal injection combination. Smith and other inmates argued in a court case that the drug was an unreliable sedative and could cause them to feel pain, citing its use in problematic executions. The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the use of the drug.

Smith replied, "No ma'am" when asked by the prison warden if he had any final words. A member of Wilson's family, who was not identified, witnessed the execution. The victim's family did not make a statement.

Wilson was pistol-whipped and then shot in the head during the robbery, court documents show. Surveillance video showed Smith entering the store and recovering spent shell casings from the bathroom where Wilson was shot, according to the record.

In overriding the jury's recommendation at the 1995 trial, a judge likened the slaying to an execution, saying Wilson had already been pistol-whipped into submission and Smith ignored his pleas for mercy. Wilson had a newborn infant at the time of his death.

"The trial court described Smith's acts as 'an execution style slaying.' Tonight, justice was finally served," Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange said in a statement after the execution.

U.S. Supreme Court justices twice paused the execution as Smith's attorneys argued for a delay, saying a judge shouldn't have been able to impose the death penalty when a jury recommended he receive life imprisonment.

Four liberal justices said they would have halted the execution, but five were needed to do so.

Smith's attorneys had urged the nation's highest court to block the planned execution to review the judge's override.

Smith's lawyers argued a January decision that struck down Florida's death penalty structure because it gave too much power to judges raises legal questions about Alabama's process. In Alabama, a jury can recommend a sentence of life without parole, but a judge can override that recommendation to impose a death sentence. Alabama is the only state that allows judicial override, they argued.

"Alabama is alone among the states in allowing a judge to sentence someone to death based on judicial fact finding contrary to a jury's verdict," attorneys for Smith wrote Wednesday.

Lawyers for the state argued in a court filing Tuesday that the sentence was legally sound, and that it is appropriate for judges to make the sentencing decision.

Smith, the son of a NASA contract employee, became an Eagle Scout at 15, but his life spiraled downward because of alcoholism, according to a clemency request to Alabama's governor. He had a final meal of fried chicken and french fries and was visited during the day by his parents and son.

Alabama has been attempting to resume executions after a lull caused by a shortage of execution drugs and litigation over the drugs used.

The state executed Christopher Eugene Brooks in January for the 1993 rape and beating death of a woman. It was the state's first execution since 2013. Judges stayed two other executions that had been scheduled this year.

John Glenn, astronaut and US Senator, dies at 95

By **SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — He became a hero as the first American to orbit the Earth and then served as a longtime U.S. senator. But John Glenn, who died Thursday at age 95, continued to defy gravity decades after his initial flight.

The last survivor of the original Mercury 7 astronauts flew into space again at age 77. To his fellow crewmates on the space shuttle Discovery in 1998, the legend-turned-senator had to be called John. Or else.

"He didn't want any special treatment as a U.S. Senator," said crewmate Scott Parazynski. "He said, 'Don't call me Senator Glenn. I'm going to ignore you if you call me that. It's just John. Or it's payload specialist 2.'"

John Herschel Glenn Jr., who died at the James Cancer Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, had two major career paths that often intersected: flying and politics, and he soared in both of them.

Before he gained fame orbiting the world, he was a fighter pilot in two wars, and as a test pilot, he set a transcontinental speed record. He later served 24 years in the Senate from Ohio. A rare setback was a failed 1984 run for the Democratic presidential nomination.

His long political career enabled him to return to space in the shuttle Discovery in 1998, a cosmic victory lap that he relished and turned into a teachable moment about growing old. He holds the record for the oldest person in space.

More than anything, Glenn was the ultimate and uniquely American space hero: a combat veteran with an easy smile, a strong marriage of 70 years and nerves of steel. Schools, a space center and the Columbus, Ohio, airport were named after him. So were children.

In 1957, the Soviet Union leaped ahead in space exploration by putting the Sputnik 1 satellite in orbit, and then launched the first man in space, cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, in a 108-minute orbital flight on April 12, 1961. After two suborbital flights by Alan Shepard Jr. and Gus Grissom, it was up to Glenn to be the first American to orbit the Earth.

"Godspeed, John Glenn," fellow astronaut Scott Carpenter radioed just before Glenn thundered off a Cape Canaveral launch pad, now a National Historic Landmark, to a place America had never been. At the time of that Feb. 20, 1962, flight, Glenn was 40 years old.

During the four-hour, 55-minute flight, Glenn uttered a phrase that he would repeat frequently throughout life: "Zero G, and I feel fine."

"It still seems so vivid to me," Glenn said in a 2012 interview with The Associated Press on the 50th anniversary of the flight. "I still can sort of pseudo feel some of those same sensations I had back in those days during launch and all."

Glenn's ride in the cramped Friendship 7 capsule had its scary moments. Sensors showed his heat shield was loose after three orbits, and Mission Control worried he might burn up during re-entry when temperatures reached 3,000 degrees. But the heat shield held.

Glenn was born July 18, 1921, in Cambridge, Ohio, and grew up in New Concord, Ohio. His love of flight was lifelong; John Glenn Sr. spoke of the many summer evenings he arrived home to find his son running around the yard with outstretched arms, pretending he was piloting a plane.

Glenn's goal of becoming a commercial pilot was changed by World War II. He left Muskingum College to join the Naval Air Corps and soon after, the Marines.

He became a successful fighter pilot who ran 59 hazardous missions, often as a volunteer or as the requested backup of assigned pilots. A war later, in Korea, he earned the nickname "MiG-Mad Marine."

Glenn's public life began when he broke the transcontinental airspeed record, bursting from Los Angeles to New York City in three hours, 23 minutes and eight seconds. With his Crusader averaging 725 mph, the 1957 flight proved the jet could endure stress when pushed to maximum speeds over long distances.

In New York, he got a hero's welcome — his first tickertape parade. He got another after his flight on Friendship 7.

He first ran for the U.S. Senate in 1964 but left the race when he suffered a concussion after slipping

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in the bathroom and hitting his head on the tub. He tried again in 1970 but was defeated in the primary.

For the next four years, Glenn devoted his attention to business and investments that made him a multimillionaire. In 1974, Glenn ran for the Senate again and won.

Glenn represented Ohio in the Senate longer than any other senator in the state's history. He became an expert on nuclear weaponry and was the Senate's most dogged advocate of nonproliferation. He was the leading supporter of the B-1 bomber when many in Congress doubted the need for it.

Glenn said the lowest point of his life was 1990, when he and four other senators came under scrutiny for their connections to Charles Keating, the notorious financier who eventually served prison time for his role in the costly savings and loan failure of the 1980s. The Senate Ethics Committee cleared Glenn of serious wrongdoing but said he "exercised poor judgment."

He announced his impending retirement in 1997, 35 years to the day after he became the first American in orbit, saying, "There is still no cure for the common birthday."

Glenn returned to space in a long-awaited second flight in 1998 aboard the Discovery. He got to move around aboard the shuttle for far longer — nine days, compared with just under five hours in 1962 — as well as sleep and experiment with bubbles in weightlessness.

Flying with the Mercury legend "was like playing basketball with Michael Jordan or doing astrophysics with Albert Einstein," his crewmate Parazynski recalled. "He jumped right in and wanted to be part of everything."

Glenn was married to his childhood sweetheart, Anna Margaret Castor, who he wed in 1943. They had two children, Carolyn and John David.

The couple spent their later years between Washington and Columbus, where they were well-known and well-loved by their hometown's residents. Both served as trustees at their alma mater, Muskingum College.

Glenn also spent time promoting the John Glenn School of Public Affairs at Ohio State University, which also houses an archive of his private papers and photographs.

Online:

<http://www.osu.edu/glenninstitute>

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The Latest: McMahan donated \$7m to pro-Trump super PACs

NEW YORK (AP) — The Latest on President-elect Donald Trump (all times EST):

11 p.m.

The woman President-elect Donald Trump chose Wednesday to lead the Small Business Administration gave \$1 million in October to a super political action committee that supported him.

That brings Linda McMahan's total pro-Trump super PAC donations to \$7 million. The former wrestling executive gave \$6 million over the summer to the group Rebuilding America Now and another \$1 million in October to the group Future 45. Both spent money primarily on television advertising.

McMahan's most recent contribution was disclosed for the first time in a Federal Election Commission report filed late Thursday.

9:45 p.m.

Donald Trump's campaign spent about \$94 million in its final push for the White House, new fundraising reports show.

The Republican continued his campaign-long trend of spending far less than Democratic rival Hillary Clinton. Her campaign blew through more than \$131 million in its closing weeks, according to reports filed Thursday with the Federal Election Commission.

In all, the Trump campaign raised about \$340 million over the course of the primary and general elections. The billionaire businessman spent about \$66 million out of his own pocket. The Clinton campaign raised about \$581 million.

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The president-elect has continued raising millions of dollars for his campaign since the Nov. 8 election. That money is coming in mostly through purchased merchandise such as hats and ornaments and is paying for Trump's victory tour, which took him to Iowa on Thursday.

8:40 p.m.

President-elect Donald Trump is calling Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad to the stage in Des Moines to announce him as his choice to be the nation's next ambassador to China.

Trump was in Des Moines on the third stop of his "Thank you" tour to salute the states that gave him the White House.

Trump, who announced Branstad earlier this week, said he "knew how to get things done" and, with China, would improve "one of the most important relationships we have."

The stop in Des Moines also featured the first protests of the "thank you" tour. Several small groups shouted at Trump after he took the stage. One held a sign that read, "Iowa says no."

Trump dismissed them by saying, "They're on our side, they just don't know it yet."

8:15 p.m.

Donald Trump's pick to lead the Department of Housing and Urban Development says he doesn't plan to dismantle social safety net programs.

Dr. Ben Carson spoke Thursday night at Yale University, his alma mater.

He told an audience made up mostly of Yale students that suggestions he wants to end housing programs that help the poor are "crap."

But Carson says he does want to create mechanisms that would allow people to end their dependence on such programs and take care of their own needs.

Carson said those who believe that because he is a former doctor, he can only "know one little thing" show their own ignorance.

As HUD secretary, Carson would oversee a budget of nearly \$50 billion that provides rental assistance for more than 5 million households.

5:40 p.m.

President-elect Donald Trump is calling the survivors of last week's attack at Ohio State University "great people, amazing people."

Trump flew to Columbus, Ohio, to meet Thursday with several people who were slashed by Ohio State student Abdul Razak Ali Artan. The attacker first rammed a campus crowd with his car before getting out with a knife and stabbing students. He was fatally shot by police.

The president-elect spent about 30 minutes with some of the victims and their families.

He says, "The families have come through this so well." He is also paying tribute to the first responders who tended to the victims and subdued the attacker.

Trump met with the families privately and aides did not immediately provide an accounting of what was discussed.

5:05 p.m.

President-elect Donald Trump is announcing his plans to nominate fast food executive Andy Puzder as his labor secretary.

In a statement, Trump says Puzder will fight to make American workers "safer and more prosperous." The president-elect also says he expects Puzder to protect small businesses from "unnecessary regulations."

Puzder is the CEO of CKE Restaurants, the parent company of Carl's Jr., Hardee's and other chains. He says the right government policies "can result in more jobs and better wages for the American worker."

Puzder's nomination brings another wealthy businessman into Trump's Cabinet.

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3:50 p.m.

The United States has asked other nations to refrain from sending delegations to President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration.

The State Department says in a cable to embassies around the world that special delegations shouldn't head to Washington for the ceremony on Jan. 20.

A State Department official says the guidance is in line with long-standing practice for presidential inaugurations.

Foreign ambassadors posted in Washington are invited to the inaugural events.

The official wasn't authorized to speak publicly on the internal cable and spoke on condition of anonymity.

— By Associated Press Writer Bradley Klapper

3:25 p.m.

A local union president slammed by Donald Trump on Twitter says he won't stop saying the president-elect is inflating the number of jobs being saved in a deal with Carrier Corp. to stop the closing of an Indianapolis factory.

United Steelworkers Local 1999 President Chuck Jones says he finds Trump's barbs amusing and that won't back off despite harassing phone calls since Trump criticized him on Twitter Wednesday night.

Jones tells The Associated Press he's grateful Trump intervened to stop about 800 jobs from being outsourced to Mexico. But Jones says Trump gave workers false hope by saying 1,100 jobs were being saved. That figure includes positions which the company had always said would remain in Indianapolis.

Trump tweeted that Jones "has done a terrible job representing workers."

2:20 p.m.

The international president of the steelworkers union is defending the Indiana union leader who's been trading barbs with Donald Trump over the president-elect's deal to save jobs at a Carrier Corp. factory in the state.

Union President Leo Gerard says Local 1999 leader Chuck Jones was "simply clarifying what happened" in the deal that Trump and Vice President-elect Mike Pence made with Carrier.

Jones says about 800 jobs were saved — 300 less than the 1,100 jobs Trump claims.

Gerard says at a Capitol Hill news conference that Jones is "a very effective and well-qualified local president" who was merely "standing up for his members."

Trump slammed Jones on Twitter this week, saying he "has done a terrible job representing workers." Jones challenged Trump to back up his claim.

1 p.m.

Hillary Clinton's campaign checked out James Stavridis when she was considering a running mate, and now the retired Navy admiral has met with President-elect Donald Trump — who's looking for a secretary of state.

Stavridis was NATO's top commander in Europe from 2009 to 2013 — says he and Trump discussed the military, cybersecurity defense and global affairs.

Here's what Stavridis said as he walked through the lobby at Trump Tower: "When I first heard there was a short list, I thought they were referring to short people. I would definitely be on that list. But in terms of any job, I would say, why don't you talk to the people upstairs?"

Stavridis is dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

Last summer, after Trump said the U.S. might revisit NATO's policy of defending its allies against possible Russian aggression if he became president, Stavridis tweeted: "Trump on NATO: deeply dangerous will dismay our closest Allies but great cheer in Kremlin: I can hear Vladimir Putin chortling from here."

12:10 p.m.

President-elect Donald Trump is expected to pick fast-food executive Andrew Puzder to lead the Labor Department.

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That's according to a Republican official and a person close to Trump's transition.

Puzder heads CKE Restaurants Holdings, the parent company of Carl's Jr., Hardee's and other chains. His selection would bring another wealthy business person and elite donor into Trump's Cabinet.

The Californian was one of Trump's earliest campaign financiers. Puzder was a co-chairman of Trump's California finance team, and he was organizing fundraisers well before most major donors got on board with the Republican presidential nominee.

The Republican official and the person close to the transition weren't authorized to disclose the expected nomination before Trump's official announcement, and they spoke on condition of anonymity.

—By Alan Fram and Julie Pace

10:35 a.m.

Another day, another telephone conversation with a foreign leader for President-elect Donald Trump.

This time it's Finland's president, Sauli Niinisto. His office says the two leaders discussed U.S.-Finland relations, Russia and the Arctic Council.

Also noted was the Finland's independence anniversary — a reference to next year's celebrations of the Nordic country's 100th anniversary of independence from Russia.

On Twitter, Niinisto later wrote in English to thank Trump "for a great discussion. Until next time!"

Trump's transition team has provided no readout of the call — even though it's standard for current and past presidents to share some details of conversations with overseas leaders.

Firefighter: Warehouse missing from fire-inspection records

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and PAUL ELIAS, Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The illegally occupied Oakland warehouse where dozens of partygoers perished in a blaze does not appear in a database fire inspectors use to schedule inspections and may never have been checked for fire hazards, a firefighter with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press on Thursday.

Oakland fire officials are supposed to annually inspect commercial buildings for fire safety, with only single-family homes and duplexes exempted, according to a city website. Officials typically pull addresses from a database to request the yearly checks, said the firefighter, who feared retribution for disclosing the information and spoke only on condition of anonymity.

"Commercial inspections are conducted as time permits during a fire station's 24-hour shift and are not routinely scheduled on an appointment basis," the city's website explains.

There's a fire station right around the corner from the warehouse, which Derick Ion Almena, a sometimes-photographer who rented the building and sub-leased living space to artists, had dubbed the Ghost Ship.

The victims, ranging in age from 17 to 61, died while attending a \$10-a-head dance party at the warehouse. On the campus of the University of California at Berkeley on Thursday, family members and friends hugged one another and wept as they spoke of two students, two recent graduates and a campus volunteer who died in the blaze.

"There's a part of our heart that's missing today," Michael Morris, father of 21-year-old victim Jennifer Morris, a musician and media studies major who died along with her roommate, Vanessa Plotkin, 21. Surrounded by the girl's mother, older brother and cousin, Morris fought back tears. "She was so precious to us."

The fire department and Mayor Libby Schaaf each said Thursday they could not yet say when — or if — a fire inspector examined the warehouse.

Fire department spokeswoman Rebecca Kozak said Thursday she didn't know whether the warehouse's address was in the database of buildings to be checked.

Kozak said she was processing 40 to 50 public records request from news media and that confusion over the warehouse's address is slowing the process.

Erica Terry Derryck, Schaaf's spokeswoman, said the mayor's office was putting together "what contact

all city agencies have had with this property.”

At a press conference Wednesday night, Schaaf said she had requested the information from the fire department, but had not yet received it. It was also disclosed then that building department inspectors had not set foot in the warehouse since at least 1986.

A civil grand jury in 2014 report said 4,000 out of 11,000 buildings in Oakland were going without the yearly inspections and concluded the city’s website inaccurately implied all commercial buildings received annual inspections.

The department agreed with the finding. It said an annual inspection for each commercial business was a goal but emergency responses and staffing made that more difficult.

Jon Narva, with the National Association of State Fire Marshals, said cities generally decide for themselves how frequently to conduct inspections and some places do use line firefighters to help with inspections.

The mayor said Wednesday night that the city will look to strengthen regulations for smoke alarms and exits and clarify city employees’ responsibilities to monitor unsafe structures.

The structure had been converted to artists’ studios and illegal living spaces, and former occupants said it was a death trap of piled wood, furniture, snaking electrical cords and only two exits.

City and state officials fielded complaints for years about dangerous conditions, drugs, neglected children, trash, thefts and squabbles at the warehouse, raising questions about why it wasn’t shut down. The district attorney has warned of possible murder charges as she determines whether there were any crimes linked to the blaze.

Federal investigators said Wednesday the fire started on the ground floor and soon was raging, with smoke billowing into the second level and trapping victims whose only escape route was through the flames.

Snyder said investigators were examining a refrigerator and other potential sources of the fire but had not reached any conclusions. She indicated it would be at least several weeks before the investigation was completed.

Alameda County Sheriff’s spokesman Sgt. Ray Kelly said Thursday said that authorities had identified the final victim, one day after ending their search for bodies.

Almena has not responded to emails or calls by The Associated Press to phone numbers associated with him. He has said he didn’t attend the event Friday night, and that he is sorry.

Associated Press writers Sudhin Thanawala, Terry Chea and Tim Reiterman contributed to this report.

Russia says Aleppo combat suspended, residents say no let-up

By SARAH EL DEEB and VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Russia said the Syrian army was suspending combat operations in Aleppo late Thursday to allow for the evacuation of civilians from besieged rebel-held neighborhoods, but residents and fighters reported no let-up in the bombing and shelling campaign on the opposition’s ever-shrinking enclave.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, speaking in Germany after talks with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, said military experts and diplomats would meet Saturday in Geneva to work out details of the rebels’ exit from Aleppo’s eastern neighborhoods, along with civilians who were willing to leave the city.

Lavrov said the Syrian army suspended combat action late Thursday to allow some 8,000 civilians to leave the city in a convoy spreading across a five-kilometer (three-mile) route. However, opposition activists said there was no halt to the government offensive.

“Battles are intense,” said a message from a rebel operation room shared with The Associated Press. Other residents reported warplanes firing from machine guns at rebel positions and artillery shells falling in the remaining rebel-controlled districts.

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau said the U.S. was focused on de-escalating the violence in Aleppo to allow aid into the city and enable people wishing to stay in their homes to do so.

She said Kerry and Lavrov continued talks on Thursday with the goal of securing a cease-fire and the “safe departure of those who wish to leave the city.” She said details of Saturday’s U.S.-Russian technical

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discussions in Geneva were still being worked out.

Earlier, in Geneva, U.N. special adviser Jan Egeland said efforts to evacuate hundreds of wounded people from eastern Aleppo had stalled following a deadly attack this week on a Russian military hospital that left two Russian nurses dead and a doctor seriously wounded.

"It is with bitterness and frustration that we have to report that we have not been able even to evacuate the wounded," Egeland said. "The member states that are supposed to help us get access to civilians in the cross-fire are poles apart in how they regard what is happening in Syria."

He said Syrian President Bashar Assad's government had authorized U.N.-organized aid shipments into eastern Aleppo for the first time. However, he provided no details about how the aid might get in or where it would go, and past agreements have fallen through before any aid could be delivered.

Medical officials in the enclave issued a passionate plea for a cease-fire.

"Aleppo is finished. There is nothing left except a few residents and bricks," Mohammed Abu Jaafar, the head of the eastern Aleppo forensic authority, said in a recorded message shared with reporters. "This may be my last call."

By early afternoon, Abu Jaafar said 14 bodies had arrived at his facility from all over eastern Aleppo, although a comprehensive death toll for the day was not possible because of the intense fighting. Residents described streets littered with bodies as ambulances and rescue workers struggled to keep up.

The rebel defenses have buckled amid the wide-ranging government offensive, which opened a number of fronts at once and was preceded by an intensive aerial campaign. More than three-quarters of the rebel sector has now fallen, including the symbolically important ancient Aleppo quarters. More than 30,000 of the estimated 275,000 residents of the besieged eastern enclave have fled to western Aleppo.

The Syrian government has dismissed a proposal for a cease-fire put forward by the rebels Wednesday.

In comments published Thursday in the state-owned al-Watan newspaper, Assad said he would no longer consider truce offers, adding that such proposals, particularly by the Americans, often come when the rebels are in a "difficult spot."

"That is why we hear wailing and screaming and pleas for truces as the only political discourse now," Assad said.

He said that while a victory by Syrian government forces in the battle for Aleppo would be a "big gain," it will not end the country's civil war.

"Liberating Aleppo from the terrorists deals a blow to the whole foundation of this project," he said. But he added, "to be realistic, it doesn't mean the end of the war."

On Thursday, opposition activists reported intensive bombing in the al-Sukkari and Kallaseh neighborhoods still under rebel control.

Al-Sukkari is in the southern part of eastern Aleppo, an area that has become home to the majority of the displaced civilians who stayed behind; Kallaseh is near the Old City. Footage by the Syrian military showed intensive shelling of Bustan al-Qasr, a frontline neighborhood that links the rebel-held eastern and government-controlled western parts of the divided city.

The International Committee for the Red Cross said that it had evacuated 148 disabled civilians and others in need of urgent care from a facility in Aleppo's Old City after fighting calmed down there.

The evacuation, undertaken jointly with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, was completed late Wednesday, the Red Cross said in a statement. The people had been trapped in a facility that was originally a home for the elderly and included mentally and physically disabled patients, as well as injured civilians who had sought refuge there.

"They were forgotten," said Pawel Krzysiek, the agency's communication coordinator in Damascus. The evacuees were taken to a hospital and shelters in the western, government-held part of Aleppo.

Isachenkov reported from Moscow. Associated Press writers Nataliya Vasilyeva in Moscow, Jamey Keaten in Geneva and Bradley Klapper in Washington contributed to this report.

Woman described as Canada's Rosa Parks to appear on banknote

GATINEAU, Quebec (AP) — A black woman often described as Canada's Rosa Parks for her 1946 decision to sit in a whites-only section of a Nova Scotia movie theater will be the first Canadian woman to be celebrated on the face of a Canadian banknote.

Finance Minister Bill Morneau said Thursday that Viola Desmond will grace the front of the \$10 bill when the next series goes into circulation in 2018.

A businesswoman turned civil libertarian, Desmond built a business as a beautician and mentored young black women in Nova Scotia.

It was in 1946 when she rejected racial discrimination by sitting in a whites-only section of a New Glasgow movie theatre. She was arrested and fined. Her actions inspired later generations of black people in Nova Scotia and the rest of Canada.

Racial segregation in Canada in the 1940s was not enforced in the same way it was in the U.S. when Jim Crow laws were in place between the late 19th-century and the mid-1960s. But there was an informal practice of segregation that took place quietly in Canadian theaters, hotels and restaurants.

US life expectancy falls, as many kinds of death increase

By MIKE STOBBE, AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A decades-long trend of rising life expectancy in the U.S. could be ending: It declined last year and it is no better than it was four years ago.

In most of the years since World War II, life expectancy in the U.S. has inched up, thanks to medical advances, public health campaigns and better nutrition and education.

But last year it slipped, an exceedingly rare event in a year that did not include a major disease outbreak. Other one-year declines occurred in 1993, when the nation was in the throes of the AIDS epidemic, and 1980, the result of an especially nasty flu season.

In 2015, rates for 8 of the 10 leading causes of death rose. Even more troubling to health experts: the U.S. seems to be settling into a trend of no improvement at all.

"With four years, you're starting to see some indication of something a little more ominous," said S. Jay Olshansky, a University of Illinois-Chicago public health researcher.

An American born in 2015 is expected to live 78 years and 9½ months, on average, according to preliminary data released Thursday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. An American born in 2014 could expect to live about month longer, and even an American born in 2012 would have been expected to live slightly longer. In 1950, life expectancy was just over 68 years.

The United States ranks below dozens of other high-income countries in life expectancy, according to the World Bank. It is highest in Japan, at nearly 84 years.

The CDC report is based mainly on 2015 death certificates. There were more than 2.7 million deaths, or about 86,000 more than the previous year. The increase in raw numbers partly reflects the nation's growing and aging population.

It was led by an unusual upturn in the death rate from the nation's leading killer, heart disease. Death rates also increased for chronic lower lung disease, accidental injuries, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, kidney disease and suicide.

The only clear drop was in cancer, the nation's No. 2 killer.

Experts aren't sure what's behind the stall. Some, like Olshansky, suspect obesity, an underlying factor in some of the largest causes of death, particularly heart disease.

But there's also the impact of rising drug overdoses and suicides, he noted. Drug overdose deaths soared 11 percent to more than 52,000 last year, the most ever, driven by increases in deaths from heroin, prescription painkillers and other so-called opioids.

"There are a lot of things happening at the same time," he said.

Some years the CDC later revises its life expectancy estimate after doing additional analysis, including for its 2014 estimate.

Average life expectancy declined for men, falling by more than two months, to 76 years and 3 ½ months

in 2015. It fell by about one month for women, to 81 years and 2 ½ months, the CDC said.

Death rates increased for black men, white men, white women, and slightly for Hispanic men and women. But they did not change for black women.

The new CDC report did not offer a geographic breakdown of 2015 deaths, or analysis of death based on education or income. But other research has shown death rates are rising sharply for poorer people — particularly white people — in rural areas but not wealthier and more highly educated and people on the coasts.

“The troubling trends are most pronounced for the people who are the most disadvantaged,” said Jennifer Karas Montez, a Syracuse University researcher who studies adult death patterns.

“But if we don’t know why life expectancy is decreasing for some groups, we can’t be confident that it won’t start declining for others,” she said.

Trump picks fast food executive Andrew Puzder for Labor

By **JULIE BYKOWICZ and ALAN FRAM, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump plans to add another wealthy business person and elite donor to his Cabinet, saying he would nominate fast-food executive Andrew Puzder as labor secretary.

Puzder heads CKE Restaurants Holdings, the parent company of Carl’s Jr., Hardee’s and other chains. In 2010, he published a book called “Job Creation: How it Really Works and Why Government Doesn’t Understand It.”

“Andy will fight to make American workers safer and more prosperous by enforcing fair occupational safety standards and ensuring workers receive the benefits they deserve, and he will save small businesses from the crushing burdens of unnecessary regulations that are stunting job growth and suppressing wages,” President-elect Trump said in a statement.

Puzder, in the same statement, said he was honored “to help President-elect Trump restore America’s global economic leadership.”

The Californian was one of Trump’s earliest campaign financiers, serving as a co-chairman of his California finance team and organizing fundraisers well before most major donors got on board with the eventual Republican nominee. Together with his wife, Puzder contributed \$150,000 in late May to Trump’s campaign and Republican Party partners, fundraising records show.

As one of Trump’s most outspoken defenders, Puzder frequently appeared on cable news and Twitter to talk up the benefits of having a business leader in the White House.

A week after Trump’s election, Puzder said he agreed with Trump’s aim to ease business regulations.

“We’ve reached the point where overregulation is doing meaningful damage to our businesses,” he said last month at the Restaurant Finance & Development Conference in Las Vegas, citing high labor costs, increased health care costs and “political and social” policies as hindrances.

Union leaders decried Puzder as a secretary who would look out for millionaires — but not workers.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said in a statement that Puzder’s “business record is defined by fighting against working people.”

Incoming Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer said there’s reason to be skeptical about Puzder.

“Turning the Labor Department over to someone who opposes an increase in the minimum wage, opposes the overtime rule that would raise middle class wages, and whose businesses have repeatedly violated labor laws might be the surest sign yet that the next cabinet will be looking out for the billionaires and special interests, instead of America’s working class,” Schumer said in a statement.

Trump’s selection won praise from the National Retail Federation, however.

“Andrew Puzder is someone with the real-world experience to understand workforce issues and how jobs are created,” said David French, NRF’s senior vice president for government relations.

Trump’s recent appointments have reflected his desire to turn to business leaders — who also were campaign donors. Trump tapped former WWE chief executive and top campaign contributor Linda McMahon to lead the Small Business Administration. He also selected his campaign’s national finance chairman

Steven Mnuchin, a former Goldman Sachs executive and hedge fund investor, as Treasury secretary.

Puzder visited with Trump several times since the election, including a meeting Wednesday afternoon at Trump Tower.

He has long been a reliable GOP donor. He was a major financier for 2012 GOP nominee Mitt Romney and has remained close to him. At Romney's annual donor summit in June, Puzder was one of just a few attendees who aggressively promoted Trump to the dozens who were more squeamish about their party's new star.

He told The Associated Press at the Republican National Convention in late July that he enjoyed the challenge of raising money for Trump, saying he often sought common ground with reluctant GOP donors by talking up Trump's children.

"If he's such an evil villain," Puzder said he would tell would-be donors, "how do you explain the kids?"

AP White House Correspondent Julie Pace contributed to this report.

Carrier factory union chief standing ground against Trump

By TOM DAVIES, Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A local union president slammed by Donald Trump on Twitter stood his ground Thursday, maintaining the president-elect gave false hope to hundreds of workers by inflating the number of jobs being saved at a Carrier Corp. factory in Indianapolis.

United Steelworkers Local 1999 President Chuck Jones spent much of the day doing television interviews after Trump called out by name Wednesday night the leader of the union for a few thousand workers at the Carrier factory and 11 other plants.

Trump tweeted that Jones "has done a terrible job representing workers" following comments from Jones this week that Trump had lied to workers and put on a "dog-and-pony show" at the Carrier factory last week by taking credit for keeping 1,100 jobs from being outsourced to Mexico.

Jones called Trump's reaction "amusing" and said he wasn't backing off "one iota."

"Give the guy credit — he's got some spunk," Jones told The Associated Press. "Am I upset, worried, scared or anything? No. Does it faze me? No."

Trump was defending a deal that he and Vice President-elect Mike Pence — governor of Indiana — celebrated during a Dec. 1 visit to Carrier's Indianapolis factory. Trump then declared it was only the first of many business victories to come.

Jones said the number of Carrier jobs actually saved is about 800, while some 550 jobs will still be lost from the factory to Mexico.

The union leader said he sat in the third row of the crowd as Trump announced the deal last week and was "disgusted" by his use of the 1,100 jobs figure that included some 250 headquarters and engineering staff positions which the company had always said would remain in Indianapolis.

Jones said that gave false hope to employees, even though "I am very grateful, and I've said it numerous times, for him getting involved and saving 800 people's livelihood."

Indiana officials said Dec. 1 the deal involved "preserving 1,069 high-wage jobs" as Carrier kept furnace manufacturing at the plant and received \$7 million in tax incentives over 10 years. The AP reported then that the figure covered about 800 union and supervisor jobs that were set for outsourcing to Mexico.

Pence has continued to cite the higher figure, telling ABC's "This Week" on Sunday that "This was great news for over 1,000 families in Indiana who were going to see those jobs south of the border."

In a second tweet Wednesday night, Trump said: "If United Steelworkers 1999 was any good, they would have kept those jobs in Indiana."

But Pence said company executives told him soon after their February closing announcement to "don't even bother" coming up with a state incentive offer to reverse the decision.

Jones said Carrier negotiators suggested the union workers would have to accept pay below the U.S. minimum wage to match the savings the company expected from a move to Mexico. "We made every

attempt in the world to keep these jobs here and it didn't work," he said.

Kate Bronfenbrenner, director of labor education research at Cornell University, said she didn't know of any similar high-level personal spat involving a union leader since President Ronald Reagan's 1980s standoff with the air traffic controllers union.

"One of the things that the US is known for is that you can criticize the president and nothing happens to you," she said. "It's OK to criticize the president and Trump is making clear that it's not OK."

Soon after Trump's tweets went out Wednesday night, the union leader started getting harassing phone calls, Jones said.

"People want to say, 'Hey, I know what kind of car you drive. I know you've got kids. I know where you live,'" he said. "I ain't worried about that."

Defending his stance against the president-elect was taking something of a toll on Jones, who said: "I'm about talked out."

This story has been changed to correct Jones' first name to Chuck.

Attorney: Dylann Roof's mom had heart attack during trial

By BRUCE SMITH, Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — Dylann Roof's mother suffered a heart attack not long after prosecutors described how her son planned a cold and calculated killing of nine black church members in a racially motivated attack, the white man's attorney said in court documents Thursday.

Roof's mother collapsed and said "I'm sorry" several times on Wednesday as family members and court security came to help her during the opening of her son's federal death penalty trial.

Roof's attorney mentioned the heart attack in court documents asking for a mistrial, saying a survivor's testimony was so emotional that "spectators and even court personnel — including members of the prosecution and defense — were crying with her."

The documents didn't give the mother's current condition.

Later Thursday, in an eerily silent courtroom, 360-degree computer images of the crime scene were shown to the jury. The pictures showed the victims lying in pools of blood on the beige tile floor of the fellowship hall at Emanuel AME Church. Most were clustered around circular tables where they had been holding a Bible study.

Shell casings and cartridge magazines were scattered around as were Bibles and purses. One of the 15 scans showed a wall poster with the words "Faith, Hope and Love." Several people in a courtroom area for family members of the victims comforted each other while others dabbed tears from their eyes.

Roof's attorney David Bruck argued in the motion for the mistrial that Wednesday testimony from shooting survivor Felicia Sanders was inappropriate because it seemed to contain a statement on what Roof's sentence should be.

Sanders told jurors about the horror of seeing her son and her aunt shot to death and sheltering with her granddaughter beneath a table. At one point, she looked across the courtroom toward Roof and called him "evil, evil, evil."

Bruck asked her on cross-examination whether she remembered Roof saying anything in the aftermath of the shootings.

"He said he was going to kill himself," she said. "I was counting on that. There's no place on Earth for him other than the pit of hell."

U.S. District Judge Richard Gergel denied the mistrial request and said he interpreted Sanders' testimony as "a religious comment." He instructed jurors that any decision on guilt or a sentence is up to the jury — not the attorneys or witnesses in the case.

Also Thursday, jurors watched surveillance footage of Roof leaving a Charleston church with a gun in his hand. Charleston police Sgt. Dan English showed the jury more than 20 video clips taken from cameras at the church on June 17, 2015.

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The clips showed many of the victims and Roof entering the church. Roof is seen leaving the church 52 minutes later, and a final clip taken about 25 minutes after that showed one of the victims carried out on a stretcher.

Roof is charged with 33 federal counts, including hate crimes in the case. He sat again Thursday just staring down at the defense table. But instead of the striped prison jumpsuit he had worn during previous court appearances, he was wearing a gray sweater and light-colored slacks.

The defense has said Roof is willing to plead guilty if the death penalty is taken off the table. They have made a similar offer in state court where Roof is charged with nine counts of murder and faces another death penalty trial next year.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, Dec. 9, the 344th day of 2016. There are 22 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 9, 1916, actor, author, producer and director Kirk Douglas, known for such movies as "The Bad and the Beautiful," "Lust for Life," "Gunfight at the O.K. Corral" and "Spartacus," to name only a few, was born Issur Danielovitch in Amsterdam, New York.

On this date:

In 1854, Alfred, Lord Tennyson's famous poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade," was published in England.

In 1892, "Widowers' Houses," Bernard Shaw's first play, opened at the Royalty Theater in London.

In 1911, an explosion inside the Cross Mountain coal mine near Briceville, Tennessee, killed 84 workers. (Five were rescued.)

In 1935, the Downtown Athletic Club of New York honored college football player Jay Berwanger of the University of Chicago with the DAC Trophy, which later became known as the Heisman Trophy.

In 1940, British troops opened their first major offensive in North Africa during World War II.

In 1958, the anti-communist John Birch Society was formed in Indianapolis.

In 1962, the Petrified Forest in Arizona was designated a national park.

In 1965, Nikolai V. Podgorny replaced Anastas I. Mikoyan as chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, a job he would hold for almost 12 years. "A Charlie Brown Christmas," the first animated TV special featuring characters from the "Peanuts" comic strip by Charles M. Schulz, was first broadcast on CBS.

In 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed a \$2.3 billion seasonal loan-authorization that officials of New York City and State said would prevent a city default.

In 1984, the five-day-old hijacking of a Kuwaiti jetliner that claimed the lives of two Americans ended as Iranian security men seized control of the plane, which was parked at Tehran airport.

In 1987, the first Palestinian intefadeh, or uprising, began as riots broke out in Gaza and spread to the West Bank, triggering a strong Israeli response.

In 1992, Britain's Prince Charles and Princess Diana announced their separation. (The couple's divorce became final Aug. 28, 1996.)

Ten years ago: Discovery lighted up the sky in the first nighttime space shuttle launch in four years. A fire broke out at a Moscow drug treatment hospital, killing 46 women trapped by barred windows and a locked gate. Ohio State quarterback Troy Smith won the Heisman Trophy. Singer Georgia Gibbs, who'd reached the top of the charts in the 1950s, died in New York City at age 87.

Five years ago: The European Union said 26 of its 27 member countries were open to joining a new treaty tying their finances together to solve the euro crisis; Britain remained opposed. A jury in New Haven, Connecticut, condemned Joshua Komisarjevsky (koh-mih-sahr-JEV'-skee) to death for killing a woman and her two daughters during a night of terror in their suburban Cheshire home. (The other defendant in the case, Steven Hayes, had also been condemned to death.) A fire at a hospital in Kolkata, India, claimed the lives of at least 93 people.

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One year ago: Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel apologized for the 2014 police shooting of a black teenager during a special City Council meeting that he called to discuss a police abuse scandal at the center of the biggest crisis of his administration, and promised "complete and total" reform to restore trust in the police. A jury in Albuquerque, New Mexico, convicted a 20-year-old man of beating two homeless men to death with cinder blocks and other items as they slept in a vacant lot. The state of Georgia executed Brian Keith Terrell for murdering 70-year-old John Watson, a friend of his mother's, over forged checks.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Kirk Douglas is 100. Actor-writer Buck Henry is 86. Actress Dame Judi Dench is 82. Actor Beau Bridges is 75. Football Hall-of-Famer Dick Butkus is 74. Comedian-songwriter Neil Innes is 72. Actor Michael Nouri is 71. Former Sen. Thomas Daschle, D-S.D., is 69. World Golf Hall of Famer Tom Kite is 67. Singer Joan Armatrading is 66. Actor Michael Dorn is 64. Actor John Malkovich is 63. Country singer Sylvia is 60. Singer Donny Osmond is 59. Rock musician Nick Seymour (Crowded House) is 58. Comedian Mario Cantone is 57. Actor David Anthony Higgins is 55. Actor Joe Lando is 55. Actress Felicity Huffman is 54. Crown Princess Masako of Japan is 53. Country musician Jerry Hughes (Yankee Grey) is 51. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., is 50. Rock singer-musician Thomas Flowers (Oleander) is 49. Rock musician Brian Bell (Weezer) is 48. Rock singer-musician Jakob Dylan (Wallflowers) is 47. Country musician Brian Hayes (Cole Deggs and the Lonesome) is 47. Actress Allison Smith is 47. Songwriter and former "American Idol" judge Kara DioGuardi (dee-oh-GWAHR'-dee) is 46. Country singer David Kersh is 46. Actress Reiko (RAY'-koh) Aylesworth is 44. Rock musician Tre Cool (Green Day) is 44. Rapper Canibus is 42. Actor Kevin Daniels is 40. Actor/writer/director Mark Duplass is 40. Rock musician Eric Zamora (Save Ferris) is 40. Rock singer Imogen Heap is 39. Actor Jesse Metcalfe is 38. Actor Simon Helberg is 36. Actress Jolene Purdy is 33. Actor Joshua Sasse is 29. Actress Ashleigh Brewer (TV: "The Bold and the Beautiful") is 26. Olympic gold and silver medal gymnast McKayla Maroney is 21.

Thought for Today: "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." — John Milton, English poet (1608-1674).