

# Groton Daily Independent

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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 **Closed**

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### Monday, Dec. 12

**Senior Menu:** Swiss steak, mashed potatoes, cauliflower, apricots, whole wheat bread.

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

**School Lunch:** Popcorn chicken, sweet potato tots, carrots and dip, fruit.

6:30 a.m.: Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study

6:30 p.m.: Girls JH BB host Warner (7th at 6:30, 8th at 7:30).

7 p.m.: School Board Meeting

### Tuesday, Dec. 13

**Senior Menu:** Lemon baked fish, rice blend, California blend veggies, peaches, whole wheat bread.

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

**School Lunch:** Chili, corn bread, broccoli and dip, fruit.

Debate at Watertown High School

10 a.m.: United Methodist Bible Study

6:30 p.m.: Boys Basketball at Tulare

7 p.m.: Emmanuel Lutheran Council

7 p.m.: United Methodist Evening Bible Study

### Wednesday, Dec. 14

**Senior Menu:** Goulash, peas, apple crisp, whole wheat bread.

**School Breakfast:** Cheese omelette, muffin, fruit, juice, milk.

**School Lunch:** Hot dogs, baked beans, romaine salad, fruit.

3:30 p.m.: United Methodist Sunday School Christmas Program practice

3:45 p.m.: St. John's Lutheran Confirmation

## Groton Chiropractic Clinic

Carol McFarland-Kutter, D.C.  
1205 N 1st St., Groton 397-8204

## Friends . . . Near and Far

*Editor's Note: This is the 40th in a series featuring your friends, near and far.*

### Matt Johnson

**Job** **Wise** what are you doing today? I'm the Assistant Manager at Ken's Foodfair in Groton.

**How long have you been working at the current job?** I have been at my job for 23 years.

**How did you get your current job?** I applied and started my job when I turned 14.

**What year did you graduate from high school and name of high school:** I graduated from Groton High School in 1998.

**What advice would you give the high school students today?** I would tell them to work hard for what they want in life.

**List your major accomplishments that you have had so far in life.** Having a family of my own and a job I enjoy.

**Are you married? If so what is your spouse's name and where was she from?** Yes, I married my wife in May of 2014. Casey is originally from Aberdeen.

**How did the two of you meet?** We met at Salon Remix where she works. Her friend and coworker, Kelly Kampa, was my stylist. I went in for a haircut and ended up with a wife, two kids, a pug and a lab!

**Do you have any children?** We have a son, Bentley, who is 21 months. We just had a daughter, Paisley, in August. Both are named after our favorite country singers.

**Do you feel that your high school and college education prepared you adequately for post education life?** Yes, I feel that my high school helped me prepare for post education life.



**Pictured are Bentley, age 21 months, Paisley, age 4 months, Casey and Matt Johnson.**

## Badass Rooter Guy

by Osman Parvez

<http://boulderrealty.blogspot.com>

## Destry at TeeGee Rooter

If you've ever wondered... this is what a badass rooter guy looks like.

Last week, I bought another investment property in Boulder, Colo.. On my lengthy to-do list was to have the roots in the sewer line cleaned out.

When I called to schedule, I learned my usual rooter guy had moved on to other things. So, I did what most people would do. I tried the discounter.

Bigly mistake.

They showed up, made a mess, and after 30 minutes, claimed they couldn't get through. There was a lot of hand waving and head shaking. Eventually, they gave up and hauled their equipment back up my steps, leaving marks and banging dents into each riser along the way.



**Destry Schumacher, GHS Graduate**

**Son of Derrick Herther**

"Something is seriously wrong with your sewer line," the tech said as he took my money. "Good luck."

"Uh... OK," I said, relieved that they were leaving.

Issues with residential sewer lines can be pricey. Seriously pricey. Worried, I called up Jeff Anderson, my trusted line repair guy. He said I should try another company. He recommended Tee Gee Rooter.

"If anybody knows how to properly clean out a residential sewer line, it's Destry," he said. He even referred to him as "a badass."

A badass. I had no idea what that meant, but it sure sounded good. I called and scheduled. A few hours later, Destry showed up. He was careful and conscientious about his work. He cleaned up after himself. Within 20 minutes, the line was cleared, the equipment was hauled carefully back out of the house, and I had peace of mind. Apparently, that's what it takes to be a badass rooter guy.

Phew!

Remember: When in doubt, always go with the trusted referral. As Momma used to say, "you get what you pay for."

Destry, if you're reading this - thank you. Looks like I have a new rooter guy.

## Weekly Vikings Roundup By Jordan Wright

The Minnesota Vikings defeated the Jacksonville Jaguars on Sunday, 25-16. Interestingly, there have been only three games in the entire history of the NFL that ended in a 25-16 score, and the Vikings have been a part of two of them this season (week 1 versus Tennessee). The Vikings are now 7-6 on the season and two full games behind Detroit for the NFC North lead.

Minnesota's offense showed signs of life on Sunday, moving the ball against a decent Jacksonville defense at will. The biggest surprise was the offensive line, who didn't allow a sack and only gave up two quarterback hits. With a clean pocket, Sam Bradford was able to hold the ball a little longer and find receivers downfield, completing five passes of 20 yards or more. Bradford finished the day completing 24 of 34 passes (71%) for 292 yards and a touchdown.

The offense picked up big chunks of yards, but were unable to do much of anything where it counted, in the red zone. The Vikings reached the red zone five times on Sunday, but only came away with points on two of those trips. As we have seen all season, the team is unable to pick up a yard or two when they really need it. In the second quarter, the Vikings had first and goal at the Jaguars' three-yard line and ended up turning the ball over on downs. Later, in the fourth quarter with the Vikings only leading by two points, the offense had first and goal at the Jaguars' one-yard line. Matt Asiata ended up losing the ball on third down, and once again the Vikings came away with zero points when all they needed was 12 inches.

The Vikings defense played a great game, even without their leader Harrison Smith (ankle). It all started with the defensive line, who accumulated all of Minnesota's sacks (4) and quarterback hits (7). On the back end, Xavier Rhodes had an up and down day. Rhodes was consistently lined up against Marqise Lee, Jacksonville's best wide receiver, who finished with five catches for 113 yards.

This week the player of the game is Everson Griffen, who was a one-man wrecking crew on Sunday. Griffen had two sacks, three quarterback hits, two tackles for a loss, and a pass deflection against the Jaguars, leading the Vikings in all four categories. Everson Griffen was the highest rated player in purple and gold per Pro Football Focus, earning an 84.1 player grade. Newly signed kicker Kai Forbath deserves some recognition as well after making all four of his field goal attempts.

The player who needs the most improvement this week is once again Anthony Barr. As I mentioned previously, Anthony Barr has done a complete turn-around from last season. Barr was ranked as the second-best linebacker in 2015, and is one of the worst linebackers in the NFL this season. There were multiple plays on Sunday where Barr was either out of position or unable to make the play, which resulted in sustained drives by the Jaguars. According to PFF, he was on the field for 66 plays in week 14, yet was only able to amass four tackles. Anthony Barr used to be a difference-maker on defense, but is becoming a liability.

Looking ahead, the Vikings will welcome Andrew Luck and the 6-7 Indianapolis Colts to Minnesota next Sunday, December 18. Andrew Luck is a phenomenal young quarterback, but is surrounded by mediocre players. Great quarterbacks can always make a game competitive, so this game will not be an easy one to win. However, if the Vikings' defense can continue to get pressure on opposing quarterbacks and the offensive line can keep Sam Bradford upright, the Vikings will have a good chance to win their second in a row. After Indianapolis, the Vikings will travel to Green Bay before finishing the season at home against Chicago. The Vikings are still in the playoff hunt, but can't afford to play at anything less than 100 percent.



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South Dakota Governor  
Dennis Daugaard



## An Overview Of The Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Proposal

The week of the annual Budget Address is always a busy time in the Capitol Building, and this year is no exception. The halls are filled with Christmas trees and with hundreds of visitors who come to see them. We also welcome newly-elected legislators, incumbents, and those whose legislative service is ending, to discuss the state budget for the upcoming year. After the address, I travel to different parts of the state for my budget tour where I lay out the good news and the bad news of South Dakota's economy.

The news came as no surprise to those who attended Tuesday's Budget Address. Our state's revenue for the first several months of the current fiscal year has fallen short of projections, in large part because of lower sales tax collections. Recent revenue weakness is a problem many other states share.

The good news is that the South Dakota Council of Economic Advisors projects South Dakota will see steady but slow economic growth in the next few years. According to the council's economic forecast, although farm income is weak, nonfarm income is expected to grow at rates that are near historical highs.

Additionally, the state won't need to spend all of the money that was appropriated by the Legislature last year. Total state spending in the current budget year is projected to be \$34.7 million less than what was budgeted last session. Over the past several years, the state has also received stocks in the unclaimed property fund, and converting those stocks to cash will also generate funds on a one-time basis.

Through these savings, the state will be able to meet the revenue shortfall and appropriate modest increases for our priority areas. For the upcoming fiscal year, I am proposing a 1 percent increase for education, health care providers and state employees.

I am also proposing that the state add more money to our rainy day funds. It has been my goal to keep the state's reserves at 10 percent of general fund spending, and right now the reserves are at 9.8 percent. I am recommending that the state add \$2.4 million of one-time money to reserves to bring the funds back to the 10 percent level. Among the 50 states, the median rainy day fund is 5 percent.

I am also recommending that we use one-time money to help fund the state Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory, which is South Dakota's animal health laboratory, located on the SDSU campus. The lab's purpose is to provide critical research and diagnostic support to protect our citizens and livestock industry from disease outbreaks. Most recently, the lab responded to outbreaks of Avian Influenza in poultry and PEDV in swine. The facility is out of date and needs to be modernized to meet operating standards.

Given our current revenue situation and what other states are dealing with right now, South Dakota is fortunate not to be looking at spending cuts or freezes this year. It is thanks to our adherence to conservative budget practices that, even in a year like this one, we are in a position to balance our budget and slightly increase spending for education and Medicaid. I look forward to a good debate about the proposed budget with the Legislature and the public over the next few months.



## The Need for a Strong Military

The number one responsibility of the federal government is to provide for the defense of our country. One way we do that is by passing the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) each year. The NDAA, which has passed the Senate every year for more than 55 years, is a vital piece of legislation that shows our service members and their families that they have the full backing of Congress. I am pleased that the NDAA for fiscal year 2017 passed the Senate with overwhelming support and now heads to the president's desk to be signed into law.

Like years past, this year's NDAA includes policies to support our wounded warriors, our troops and their families. It also provides our armed forces with the tools needed to deter our adversaries and combat our enemies around the globe. It increases the Department of Defense (DOD) operations and maintenance authorized budget which will allow for more ground and aviation training, additional flight hours to train pilots and better ship maintenance to keep our fleet in good condition for years to come. It also stops the Pentagon's proposed drawdown of 15,000 soldiers, 2,000 marines and approximately 4,000 airmen. This is important at a time when our military is the smallest it has been since World War II.

As a member of the Senate Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees, providing our troops and veterans with the tools they need and care they've been promised are top priorities. The NDAA includes amendments that I offered this year, including language from my Cyber Act of War Act that would require the president to submit a report to Congress defining when an act in cyber space requires a military response. It also includes provisions to improve DOD's monitoring of prescriptions dispensed at military treatment facilities for the treatment of PTSD and legislation to require training of DOD hiring officials so they can hire qualified civilian cyber security professionals in an expedited manner.

As we mark the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor this December, we are reminded of the need to protect our homeland from devastating attacks at the hands of our enemies. Pearl Harbor marked a pivotal turning point in the United States' approach to national security strategy, and our success in World War II established the United States as a world superpower. In recent years, the size of our armed forces has shrunk to levels that increase the risk that we may not be able to deter adversaries or, with deterrence having failed, defeat them in combat. This year's NDAA begins to reverse that trend.

While not perfect, the NDAA we passed this year authorizes the resources that our armed forces need to remain capable of adequately defending the United States. We owe nothing less to our service members than to give them all they need to succeed.



## South Dakota Energy

People get the “Dakotas” confused all the time. I can’t tell you how many times people in DC have asked me about the impact of the oil boom in our state, having little idea that the Bakken oil field largely rests north of South Dakota’s border. Even without the oil reserves, however, our state plays a role in filling the nation’s gas tanks, contributing the resources needed to produce renewable fuels, like ethanol and biodiesel.

As many reading this know, I have spent most of my life growing corn and soybeans. These crops are staples of the American food supply, but these commodities are becoming a part of our domestic fuel supply too. With advances in technology, we are growing more on fewer acres and are using that efficiency to diversify the market. This year, about 26 percent of the soybean oil consumed in the U.S. will be used for biodiesel production and around 5 billion bushels of corn will be used for ethanol. Turning corn and soybeans into fuel not only opens the door for better prices and greater market stability, but also offers broader benefits for our national economy and security.

The biodiesel industry alone supports nearly 50,000 U.S. jobs and ethanol supports tens of thousands more. These are plant workers, researchers and engineers. They’re truckers and salespeople. They’re members of our community who turn around and support local economies, spending money at area businesses and supporting schools and infrastructure with their tax dollars. It’s a fuel that invests – and then reinvests again – in America.

On the flip side, around one-third of petroleum used in America is derived from foreign sources. This means the United States spends more than \$300 billion each year on imported crude oil. Many times, the oil is coming from volatile areas of the world and countries that are wary of America’s continued prosperity. Every step we take toward energy independence is a step we take toward security. That’s why we need to invest in both fossil fuels and renewable fuels.

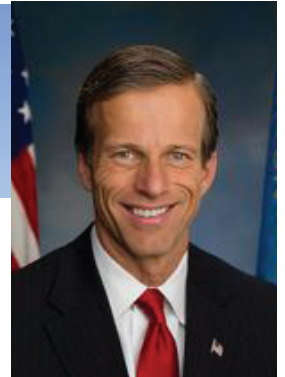
While biofuel production has grown quite a bit in recent years, it still makes up only a small portion of the overall market. Since our nation’s founding, America has invested in new technologies like this, offering help until they’re strong enough to stand on their own. Today, as part of an all-of-the-above American energy strategy, we must do the same for biofuels.

One of the ways in which we encourage biofuel growth is through the Renewable Fuel Standard – or RFS. The RFS sets annual goals for the amount of ethanol and biodiesel that must be incorporated into America’s fuel supply. The EPA has often fallen short of what Congress proposed, particularly when it comes to ethanol requirements. Last month, however, for the first time in a number of years, the EPA brought the RFS in line with congressional goals. Since the RFS is re-examined each year, we must continue to hold the EPA accountable, ensuring the agency makes American-grown energy a priority for the future.

Various forms of energy also have different provisions in the tax code. For biodiesel, we offer a \$1-per-gallon tax credit, which can result in cheaper fuel at the pump. Legislation I’ve proposed would give more certainty regarding the tax credit’s availability while also adjusting how the support is distributed. The change would ensure the incentive is encouraging American biodiesel production, not the importation of foreign biodiesel – a move consistent with our goal of achieving American energy independence.

My number one responsibility is to keep the American people safe. Protecting economic opportunities comes in at a close second. By supporting homegrown fuels, we accomplish both while also distinguishing South Dakota as an energy-rich state.

**John Thune**  
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



## Finishing Strong and Looking Ahead

I've worked hard over the last two years delivering on my promise to help get the Senate working more efficiently and effectively for the people of South Dakota. Because when hard-working taxpayers ask themselves if Washington is listening – if Washington is paying attention to their struggles – I want them to know the answer is yes, loud and clear. An accountable government begins with accountable representatives, and my work in Washington is committed to that end.

One of the most effective and gratifying ways for me to be responsive to South Dakotans is to fight for policy initiatives that correct problems they've encountered or help avoid those problems from happening again in the future. The work I've done to help prevent future out-of-control prescribed burns is a good example.

The Pautre fire was supposed to be a small 100-acre prescribed burn in Western South Dakota. And while prescribed burns can be an effective land management tool, this particular fire did far more harm than good. Because of unsafe fire conditions, the fire quickly grew beyond the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS's) control and torched 16,000 acres of public and private land and destroyed millions of dollars of property along the way.

Thanks to legislation I authored, the USFS will now be required to consult with state and local officials – the people who know the land better than anyone else – prior to starting a prescribed burn in South Dakota or any other state when fire danger is extreme and conditions are unsafe. It's a common-sense idea that will have a real and meaningful impact on ranchers and property owners with property adjoining or near USFS land.

Another good example is my nearly year-long fight to ensure South Dakota schools that depend on the Impact Aid program didn't face hundreds of thousands of dollars in funding cuts, which would have had a negative effect on the students those schools serve. I teamed up with a bipartisan group of senators whose states would have also faced massive funding cuts to correct an error in the law and protect these schools and students.

These are just a few items Congress tackled in the final days of the 114th Congress, and there are a lot more wins where these came from. We've been able to get a lot of big things over the finish line over the last few years, and in the areas where there's more work to do, I'll keep my nose to the grindstone, continuing to work hard to deliver the positive results South Dakotans want and expect.



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## Today in Weather History

December 12, 1968: An intense blizzard visited most of South Dakota and Minnesota on the 12th and 13th of December. The storm began in the western part of South Dakota on the morning of the 12th then spread into the eastern part of the state and west central Minnesota by that afternoon, where it continued into the morning of the 13th. Freezing rain preceded snow, and in west central Minnesota, with thunder and lightning as well. Winds of over 50 mph caused blowing and drifting snow, which occasionally reduced visibilities to near zero. Gusts reached 70 mph in many places. Temperatures were falling to near zero during the day also resulted in dangerously low wind chills, particularly in Minnesota. The eastern half of South Dakota into west central Minnesota experienced the most severe blizzard conditions. Many schools were closed, and most other activities were greatly curtailed.

Automobile accidents were numerous across the area. Multiple utility lines were downed, and power and telephone outages were numerous due to the high winds. Power outages from less than an hour up to 12 hours were common across Minnesota. Snowfall ranged from around one inch in western South Dakota, to five inches in eastern South Dakota, to five to ten inches in west central Minnesota. One death in South Dakota was attributed to the storm when a man died of exposure to the cold near Allen in southwest South Dakota. In Minnesota, one man was found frozen to death near his car after it had run into the ditch several miles northwest of Boyd in Lac Qui Parle County. Another man was killed by a train when his vehicle became stalled on a railroad crossing at Hancock. 5 inches of snow fell at Watertown, Sisseton, and Webster with 6 inches at Clear Lake.

December 12, 1967: From December 12th through the 20th, Flagstaff, Arizona, a series of snow storms buries Flagstaff with nearly 85 inches of snow.










## House for Sale

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

A promotional graphic for the Groton Chamber of Commerce. It features a Christmas tree background with red and gold ornaments. The text is centered and reads: **GROTON** Chamber Of Commerce. Sign Up for Groton Chamber Bucks at the Holiday Boxes Located This week at the Olde Bank Floral 'N More and Subway. At the bottom, it says: Week of Dec. 19: Lori's Pharmacy and Groton Ford.

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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
 60%						
Snow Likely	Partly Cloudy	Cold	Partly Cloudy	Cold	Mostly Clear	Cold
High: 8 °F	Low: -13 °F	High: 9 °F	Low: -5 °F	High: 4 °F	Low: -12 °F	High: 7 °F



## Light Snow Today, Bitter Cold Wind Chills Tonight

Follow us on *Social Media*

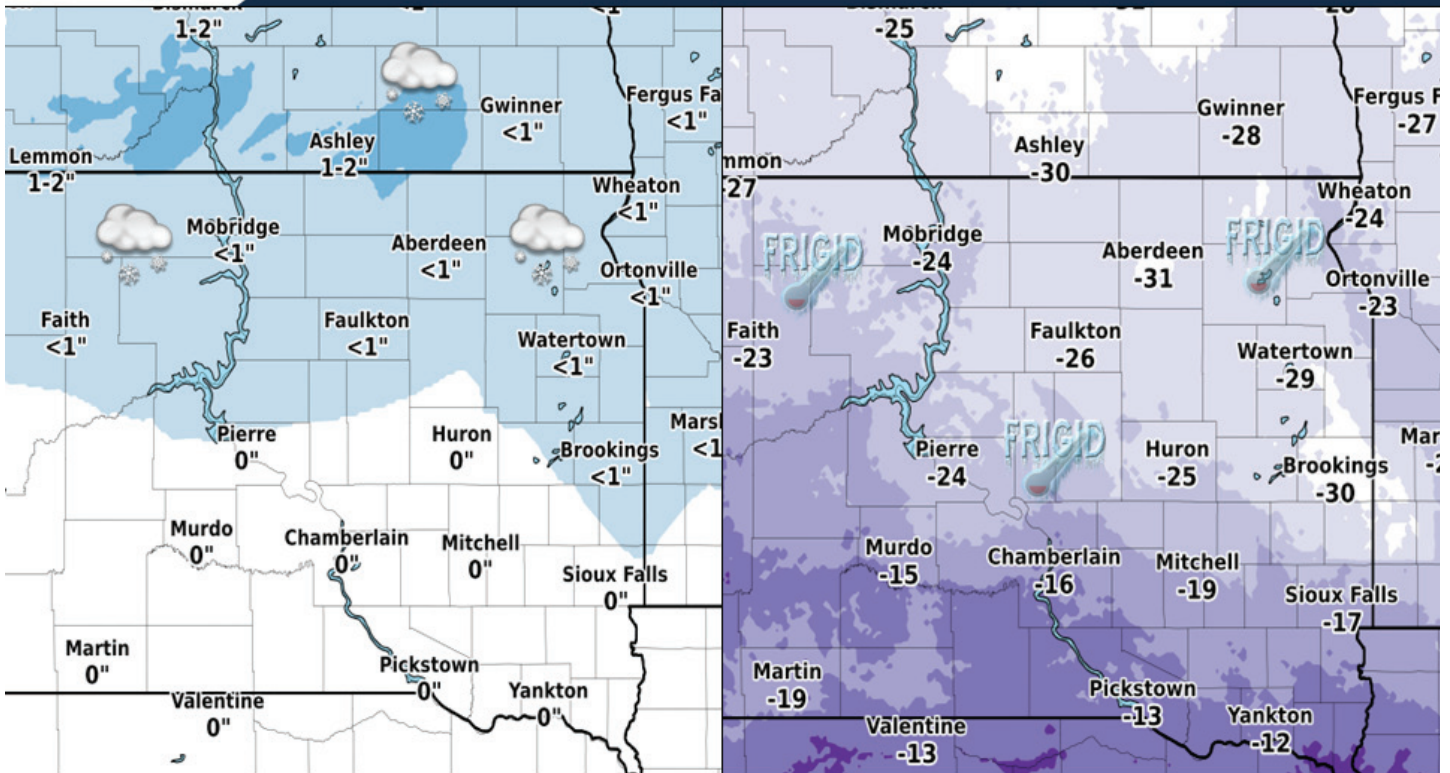
[weather.gov/Aberdeen](http://weather.gov/Aberdeen)



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen



Published on: 12/12/2016 at 5:55AM

An upper level disturbance will slide east across the Dakotas today and bring light snow to northern South Dakota and west central Minnesota. Accumulations will be light, with most areas receiving about a half inch to 1 inch. For the overnight, bitterly cold air will settle in as lows drop into the single digits below and teens below zero. But, 5 to 15 mph winds overnight will bring wind chill values in the 20 below to 30 below zero range from much of the forecast area.

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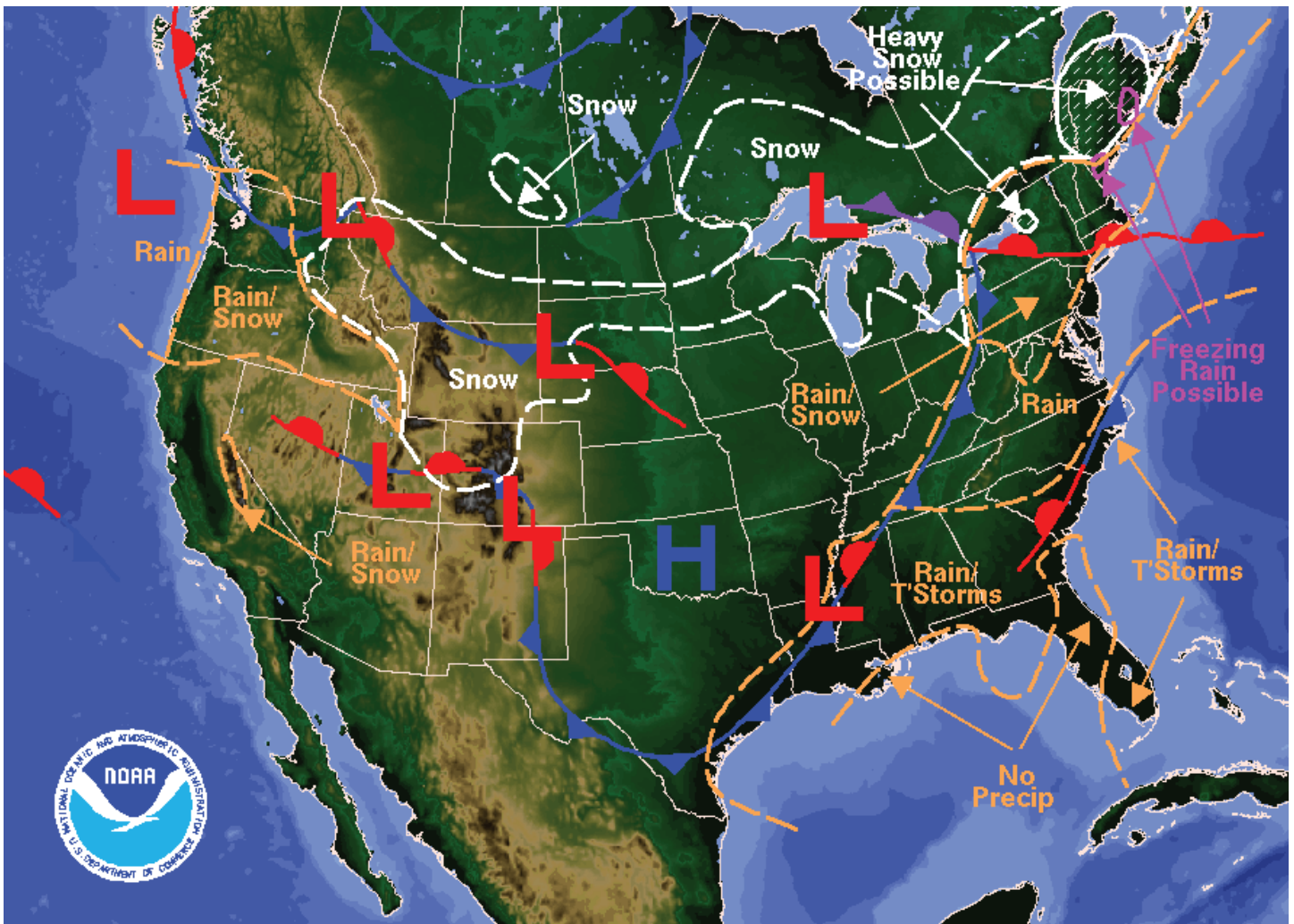
## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 11.7 F at 4:16 AM**  
**Low Outside Temp: -16.9 F at 11:42 PM**  
**High Gust: 17.0 Mph at 11:22 AM**

Precip:

## Today's Info

**Record High: 54° in 1924**  
**Record Low: -28° in 1893**  
**Average High: 26°F**  
**Average Low: 7°F**  
**Average Precip in Dec.: 0.21**  
**Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00**  
**Average Precip to date: 21.41**  
**Precip Year to Date: 17.34**  
**Sunset Tonight: 4:50 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:05 a.m.**



Weather Forecast for Mon, Dec 12, 2016, issued 4:43 AM EST  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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## IT'S AS BIG AS WE WANT IT TO BE!

He was deeply in love with his fiancé and saved as much money as he could to buy her a beautiful engagement ring. Finally, he took his savings to the jeweler and bought the biggest diamond he could afford.

As he presented it to her he said, "I'm sorry dear, that it is not bigger. It's all that I had."

"It's perfect!" she exclaimed in her excitement. "It is as big as we make it!"

What a beautiful response. Sincerity is much more important than size and thoughtfulness more than any "thing." When you think of it, size had nothing to do with our salvation. Our salvation depended on someone's sacrifice. And, the beauty of our salvation is that one size fits all – because of who that One was.

If we want more from God, we must give more to God. That's His way. And He invites us to make His way, our way. "Give and it will be given to you," Jesus said.

When we share our time, He will increase our talents so we can do more. When we share our treasures, He will make up the difference – and then some. When we share our strength, He will enable us to reach far beyond the limits we place on ourselves. But we must give in faith, believing and trusting that He will provide for our every need in ways we never imagined.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to have enough faith to trust, knowing that You will never fail us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture: Colossians 3:14-25 ...Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

## Broken rail likely cause of 2015 derailment near Scotland

SCOTLAND, S.D. (AP) — A broken rail is the likely cause of a fiery train derailment near the South Dakota town of Scotland in September 2015 that caused more than \$1 million in damage.

Seven cars of a BNSF Railway train derailed and three leaked nearly 50,000 gallons of ethanol onto a pasture, causing a fire that spread along an adjacent creek bed. No one was hurt.

The Daily Republic reports (<http://bit.ly/2hveSrN>) that the Federal Railroad Administration in its final report on the incident says investigators discovered several deficiencies in the track in the area of the derailment. BNSF spokeswoman Amy McBeth says the railroad came to the same conclusion.

Information from: The Daily Republic, <http://www.mitchellrepublic.com>

## Good Samaritan wraps up two-year renovation project

By Jodi Schwan, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — It's a half-mile hike from one end of the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society campus to the other.

Most days, senior director of communications Mark Dickerson tracks that he has walked at least 10,000 steps.

It was only recently, though, that the entire trip could be made through a newly connected trio of buildings on the southwest Sioux Falls campus.

Good Samaritan is wrapping up a two-year, approximately \$30 million project to expand and renovate more than 200,000 square feet of space, the Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2fieN4E>) reported.

"We really were in construction pretty much everywhere on campus," said Greg Amble, director of construction and design. "Everyone relocated at least once."

The 607 people who work on the national campus now mostly have moved into their new office space. The project was designed to connect all the buildings but also modernize them, adding more energy efficiency and amenities including a larger cafeteria and fitness center.

There's more technology, too. Conference rooms include digital scheduling on small monitors outside the door that synch with employees' Microsoft Outlook calendars. Inside meeting rooms, laptops easily plug in and work with large monitoring for video conferencing.

Good Samaritan has 164 teleworkers and 21,000 employees nationwide. Its national campus used to serve as a training center with accommodations for overnight visitors. A shift to more video conferencing created the need for additional meeting rooms equipped to handle the demand.

It all ties to the organization's mission "to change the experience of aging in America," president and CEO David Horazdovsky said, adding that part of the vision is to create a place where thought leaders can gather and collaborate.

"We wanted to create a place in the Midwest where that type of meeting can occur and we can provide leadership to those important developments as our population ages."

The campus also houses growing areas for Good Samaritan including its foundation and a connections center that takes thousands of calls from people of all ages nationwide.

Horazdovsky describes them as people journeying through aging and in need of guidance on everything from how to handle the heat being turned off to issues of isolation.

While they aren't residents at Good Samaritan properties or sometimes even in geographic areas served by Good Samaritan, he says assisting is part of the organization's mission.

"We stay connected with the pulse of the country that way."

While Good Samaritan traditionally has been associated with providing housing and care for seniors,

the organization has been innovating around attempting to keep people in their homes. With that also has come a focus on isolation, which Horazdovsky said one in three members of the elderly experience.

"We can do better as a country to try and connect with them," he said. "When we have people falling through the gaps of health care, we can do better and better collaborate to make sure a person has a full experience without falling through the gaps. When we think of ways technology can touch peoples' lives in different ways, we think we can do better."

In designing the new space, Good Samaritan put thought into how the current and next generation in the workplace wants to work, he added.

"We have found that workforce today likes to be collaborative. They want to be face to face with one another. That's how they have gone through as education has changed," Horazdovsky said.

The office buildings are designed with many collaborative areas, a lot of natural light and features designed to draw people into conversations.

"It's through relationships people feel a sense of community and through that relationship and meaningful work that engagement occurs," he said. "When that happens, great things can happen to those we serve. Don't look at this as just a beautiful building. We've very proud of it, but we're mostly proud of the work being accomplished in it and what it represents."

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

## Report shows ranchers and farmers paid less and hired fewer

By Stephen Lee, Capital Journal

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Farmers and ranchers in the Northern Plains hired fewer workers this year than in 2015, and paid them less this October during the key harvest period than they did a year earlier.

That's the news from a farm labor report issued on Thursday by the U.S. Department of Agriculture ag statistics office in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The report said farmers and ranchers in South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas hired 34,000 workers this summer, down 8 percent from the same week in 2015.

They kept the same number of workers the week of Oct. 9-15, this year; but that was 15 percent below the 40,000 they hired the same week in 2015.

Comparing July 2016 to July 2015, farmer labor earned more this year and livestock workers earned less, and worked fewer hours.

But the October wages fell this year from last year's figures, the Capital Journal (<http://argusne.ws/2fieN4E>) reported.

It follows lower cattle and crop prices this year over 2015, for the most part.

USDA officials have said they expect net farm income to fall again this year for the second year in a row.

Cattle producers in the state said prices for the feeder calves coming off pastures this fall are about 50 percent of the record levels seen two years ago at sale barns.

USDA reported that farm operators in the Northern Plains Region paid their hired workers an average wage of \$14.49 per hour during the July 2016 reference week, up 4 percent from the July 2015 reference week.

Field workers received an average of \$15.17 per hour, up \$1.51. Livestock workers earned \$12.83 per hour, down 48 cents.

The field and livestock worker combined wage rate at \$14.10, was up 60 cents from the 2015 reference week. Hired laborers worked an average of 44.0 hours during the July 2016 reference week, compared with 39.6 hours worked during the July 2015 reference week.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$14.56 per hour during the October 2016 reference week, down 1 percent from the October 2015 reference week.

Field workers received an average of \$15.33 per hour, up 74 cents. Livestock workers earned \$12.50 per hour, compared with \$13.86 a year earlier.

The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at 14.15, was down 15 cents from the October 2015

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reference week.

Hired laborers worked an average of 44.8 hours during the October 2016 reference week, compared with 41.0 hours worked during the October 2015 reference week.

Information from: Pierre Capital Journal, <http://www.capjournal.com>

## **Messy commute as snow, freezing rain, rain move eastward**

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — Snow, freezing rain and rain made for a messy commute Monday as a winter storm pushed eastward.

The National Weather Service has issued winter storm warnings and winter weather advisories for parts of the Great Lakes and the Northeast.

Snow fell throughout northern New England, with speeds reduced on snow-packed roads and numerous schools canceled or delayed.

The National Weather Service forecast snow across Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine with up to a foot of snow forecast for parts of southern Vermont. At least several inches were on the ground in parts of the region by Monday morning. Some rain was expected to mix with the snow in southern New Hampshire.

Into early Monday, the storm had dumped more than a half-foot on several states in the Midwest and Great Lakes regions, causing dangerous travel conditions.

It's a "slap of reality" after a mild November, National Weather Service meteorologist Dave Schmidt in La Crosse, Wisconsin, said.

Hundreds of Michigan schools closed Monday as the state dug out from more than 10 inches of snow that fell over the weekend.

In southeastern Michigan, schools are closed Monday in Detroit and surrounding Wayne County, as well as counties including Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw and Monroe. Wayne State University in Detroit is closed. And schools are shut in St. Clair and Lapeer counties.

The National Weather Service reports more than 10 inches fell in Lake Orion and Flat Rock. Parts of Macomb County got more than 9 inches.

Snow generally cleared out of the Chicago area on Sunday night, though there was snow falling on Monday morning in some other parts of Illinois. The storms left Chicago-area freeways with patches of snow and ice, making travel more difficult. The area received more than 6 inches of snow as of Sunday night.

The storm forced many schools to cancel classes on Monday and prompted the University of Connecticut to postpone some final exams.

The Ohio River Valley and Mid-Atlantic regions were expected to receive a mix of snow, freezing rain and rain through the day on Monday.

"For the rest of the day the best advice is just to stay off the road if you can, and otherwise go slow and give yourself more time to reach your destination," National Weather Service meteorologist Mark Steinwedel said. "If you don't have to drive or go somewhere, stay home."

Temperatures 15 to 30 degrees below average will follow the cold rain and snow in the coming days through much of the Midwest and East.

Associated Press writers Jeff Baenen in Minneapolis and Rick Callahan in Indianapolis contributed to this report.

## **Trump faces an early test with Republicans over Russia**

**By KEN THOMAS, Associated Press**

NEW YORK (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump is facing an early test with fellow Republicans over U.S. relations with Russia, as lawmakers seek to investigate a CIA assessment that Russia interfered in the November election and issue warnings over the incoming president's potential pick for secretary of state.

Trump said Sunday the recent CIA assertion that Russian hacking had sought to help his candidacy was

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"ridiculous," and he praised ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson, who has emerged as the leading contender to lead the State Department.

But two key Senate Republicans — John McCain of Arizona and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, a leading Trump critic — joined with two Democrats in seeking a bipartisan investigation into the Kremlin's activities during the election. And McCain, the party's 2008 presidential nominee, questioned whether Trump should nominate Tillerson, citing the executive's longstanding business ties with Moscow.

"It's a matter of concern to me that he has such a close personal relationship with Vladimir Putin," McCain said of Tillerson. "And obviously they've done enormous deals together." In an interview with CBS' "Face the Nation," McCain said, "That would color his approach to Vladimir Putin and the Russian threat," the announcement said.

Russia expects to figure prominently at the start of a week in which Trump is expected to name more members of his Cabinet, which also has vacancies in the departments of Energy, Agriculture and Veterans Affairs.

Trump's transition team announced Monday that his choice to head the Department of Homeland Security is, as expected, Gen. John Kelly. Kelly is a former commander of U.S. Southern Command with "unique insight into some of the challenges the United States faces at its southern border," the announcement said.

Trump is also planning a news conference on Thursday to outline how he intends to separate himself from his sprawling business enterprise.

During his campaign, Trump weathered turbulent relations with fellow Republicans but has since forged a more united front with GOP lawmakers since his November victory over Hillary Clinton.

The CIA recently concluded with "high confidence" that Russia sought to influence the U.S. election on behalf of Trump, raising red flags among lawmakers concerned about the sanctity of the U.S. voting system and potentially straining relations at the start of Trump's administration.

In a wide-ranging interview with "Fox News Sunday," Trump dismissed those concerns as little more than partisan griping. "I think the Democrats are putting it out because they suffered one of the greatest defeats in the history of politics in this country. And frankly, I think they're putting it out. And it's ridiculous," Trump said.

The incoming president said he did not necessarily oppose calls from President Barack Obama for an inquiry into the 2016 campaign hacking but said it should not be solely focused on a single culprit.

"If you're gonna to do that, I think you should not just say 'Russia.' You should say other countries also, and maybe other individuals," he said. The White House has said the probe would focus on any breaches by other countries along with hacking committed in previous elections.

Trump's decision-making on whom to select for secretary of state has stretched out over several weeks. He has been considering former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, a one-time vocal Trump critic, Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee, who leads the Foreign Relations Committee, and Tillerson, the oil industry executive who met twice with Trump during the past week.

In the television interview, Trump pointed to Tillerson's deep relations with Moscow as a selling point. As ExxonMobil's head, he maintained close ties with Russia and was awarded by Putin with the Order of Friendship in 2013, an honor for a foreign citizen.

"A great advantage is he knows many of the players, and he knows them well. He does massive deals in Russia. He does massive deals for the company," Trump said, while also citing Corker and Romney.

"These are all very different types of people," he said. "But when you ask me about Rex, I mean, he's a world-class player. There's no question about it." By Sunday afternoon, Tillerson had still not been formally offered the job, according to a person with knowledge of the process who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Democrats have warned that plucking Tillerson for State would put the leader of the world's largest oil company in a pivotal role on issues like climate change and the future of the Keystone XL pipeline. They also question whether he would apply diplomatic pressure on Russia's conflict with Ukraine.

Sen. Bob Casey, D-Pa., said the developments "raise serious questions about whether the incoming administration will adequately stand up to Russia's aggression."

The prospect of Tillerson also received a cool reception from some Republican members of the Senate



Foreign Relations Committee, which would consider his nomination.

Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, who unsuccessfully challenged Trump for the GOP nomination, wrote on Twitter, "Being a 'friend of Vladimir' is not an attribute I am hoping for from a (hashtag)SecretaryOfState."

Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., said he would reserve judgment. The committee also includes Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., a Trump detractor during the campaign.

Russia's influence has also been seized upon by a small group of Democratic electors who call themselves the "Hamilton Electors" and are trying to persuade electors to back another Republican because they contend Trump is unfit to be president.

Trump won 306 electoral votes in the election, a comfortable margin to make him the next president when the electoral college meets Dec. 19. But the Hamilton Electors want the CIA and FBI to provide more details on Russia's influence before that date.

Associated Press writers Laurie Kellman in Washington and Alex Sanz in Atlanta contributed to this report.

## Syrian troops say they control 98 percent of eastern Aleppo

By SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The Syrian military said on Monday it has gained control of 98 percent of eastern Aleppo, previously a rebel-held enclave, leaving only a small sliver of territory in the city packed with rebels and civilians who are being squeezed under fire.

The military statement came hours after Syrian forces, aided by Shiite militias from Lebanon, Iraq and Iran, took Sheik Saeed, one of the largest neighborhoods in the southern part of the rebel territory, tightening the noose on the enclave.

The military also said its multi-pronged ground offensive on Monday captured the al-Fardous neighborhood, one of the most populated districts to the north of Sheik Saeed. Rami Abdurrahman, the head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said the district remains under fire and that fighting continues there.

"The situation is very, very critical," said Ibrahim al-Haj, a member of the Syrian Civil Defense. "The military took many areas and we are now squeezed." Al-Haj had been on the move to find a place to keep him and his family away from the clashes and possible government capture.

In a map distributed by the military's media arm, a small sliver of land, a long rectangular shape in the city center abutting the western, government-held parts of the city, remained in rebel hands. It includes six neighborhoods, most of them still areas where fighting is still underway.

The Observatory said it estimates the rebels and the remaining civilians are now enclosed in seven percent of what was once the city's territory that rebels used to control.

Syrian troops backed by Russian airstrikes and militias from across the region launched a wide-scale offensive on eastern Aleppo last month and are on the verge of driving the rebels from the city. Doing so would hand President Bashar Assad his greatest victory yet in the Syrian civil war, now in its sixth year.

The offensive to retake rebel-held eastern Aleppo, which began on Nov. 26, followed an intensive aerial bombing campaign that knocked out most of the eastern sector's medical facilities, targeted civil defense and municipal vehicles and blocked roads with rubble. The eastern Aleppo rebel enclave was cut off from outside aid since July by a government siege.

Earlier on Monday morning, state TV aired footage from Sheik Saeed, one of eastern Aleppo's largest neighborhoods bordering some of the most crowded districts. A residential area, Sheik Saeed also has open agricultural fields that often gave an advantage to rebels fighting off past government advances.

The Observatory said government forces continued their bombing of the remaining rebel areas on Monday, including airstrikes on Bustan al-Qasr, near the government-controlled western part of Aleppo, and al-Fardous. The military later announced it seized al-Fardous.

State TV has lately been broadcasting every day images of hundreds of civilians fleeing areas where troops are advancing, pouring into western Aleppo. Those areas are only accessible through government-monitored crossing points.

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A total rebel defeat in Aleppo, Syria's largest city and once its commercial center, would reverberate across the war-torn country, where opposition forces continue to hold out in smaller, scattered areas.

It would cap a string of government successes over the past year and provide a turning point in a war that has killed more than a quarter of a million people, displaced more than half of the country's population and defied all international efforts for a political solution.

## 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. WHERE TRUMP IS FACING AN EARLY TEST

Lawmakers want to investigate Russian interference in the November election and issue warnings over the incoming president's potential pick for secretary of state. TRUMP

### 2. WHAT BEIJING IS SAYING ABOUT TRUMP'S ONE-CHINA TAKE

China has "serious concern" about the president-elect's latest comments suggesting he is reconsidering America's relationship with the island nation. CHINA-TRUMP

### 3. NOOSE TIGHTENS ON EAST ALEPPO

Syria's military says it has gained control of 98 percent of the besieged eastern enclave, leaving only a few neighborhoods packed with rebels and civilians.

### 4. MANSLAUGHTER VERDICT IN WILL SMITH TRIAL

Cardell Hayes faces a possible sentence of up to 40 years in prison for the slaying of the retired New Orleans Saints defensive star. SAINTS-WILL SMITH SHOT

### 5. MOSUL DOCTORS STRUGGLE TO SAVE CIVILIANS

Without the ability to perform surgery, physicians say they can only hope to stabilize the wounded as Iraqi forces battle to recapture the city from IS. IRAQ-MOSUL CLINIC

### 6. HOW DISMANTLING 'OBAMACARE' MIGHT PLAY OUT

Republican lawmakers likely will face angry voters, spooked health insurers and the possibility of tumbling off a political cliff. HEALTH OVERHAUL-GOP RISK

### 7. FOR TECH HUB IN RUSSIA'S RUSTBELT, RECESSION'S A GODSEND

The financial downturn even allowed the country's nascent tech sector in Voronezh to start competing with India and China for outsourcing contracts. RUSSIA-RUSTBELT TECH HUB

### 8. MIGRANTS ARRESTED IN ITALY FOR SMUGGLING MAY BE VICTIMS

Professional traffickers force them, sometimes at gunpoint, to drive the boats and navigate to Italy. ITALY-MIGRANTS FORCED INTO SMUGGLING

### 9. GREAT LAKES, NORTHEAST BRACE FOR WINTRY BLAST

Snow, freezing rain and rain could make for a mess morning commute as a winter storm pushes further east. WINTRY WEATHER

### 10. GOLDEN GLOBES NODS TO BE UNVEILED

Damien Chazelle's nostalgic Los Angeles musical "La La Land" and Barry Jenkins' lyrical coming-of-age tale "Moonlight" expected to be among the favorites. GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS

## China says Trump's Taiwan comments cause 'serious concern'

By NOMAAN MERCHANT, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China said Monday that it had "serious concern" about President-elect Donald Trump's most recent comments about Taiwan, and warned that any changes to how America deals with the self-governing island could damage diplomatic ties between Washington and Beijing.

China's comments came a day after Trump said in a television interview that he didn't feel "bound by a one-China policy."

Geng Shuang, a spokesman for China's foreign ministry, said that established policy is the "political foundation" of any diplomatic relationship between China and the U.S., and that any damage to it could

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render cooperation "out of the question."

"We urge the new U.S. leader and government to fully understand the seriousness of the Taiwan issue, and to continue to stick to the one-China policy," Geng said.

Since recognizing the People's Republic of China in 1979, the U.S. has adhered to the one-China policy, recognizing Beijing as the capital of China and maintaining only unofficial relations with Taiwan. American law, however, requires the U.S. to ensure that Taiwan has the means to defend itself and to treat all threats to the island as matters of serious concern.

China split from Taiwan amid civil war in 1949 and continues to regard the island as a breakaway province to be reunified with the mainland, by force if necessary.

Geng's comments are the strongest public condemnation China has made of Trump's criticisms of current American policy toward Taiwan.

Beijing was already angered by Trump's Dec. 2 phone call with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, the first time an American president or president-elect has publicly spoken to a Taiwanese leader in nearly four decades. China considers any reference to a separate Taiwanese head of state to be a grave insult.

Trump followed the call with two tweets accusing China of manipulating its currency, unfairly taxing American imports and provoking tensions in the South China Sea.

Over the weekend, he told "Fox News Sunday" that he wouldn't feel "bound by a one-China policy unless we make a deal with China having to do with other things, including trade."

Trump said his call with Tsai was "very nice" and strictly meant to congratulate him on his winning the presidential election.

"Why should some other nation be able to say I can't take a call?" he said. "I think it actually would've been very disrespectful, to be honest with you, not taking it."

Hours after the interview aired, China's Communist Party-controlled Global Times published a Chinese-language editorial headlined: "Trump, please listen clearly: 'One China' cannot be traded."

"China needs to launch a resolute struggle with him," the editorial said. "Only after he's hit some obstacles and truly understands that China and the rest of the world are not to be bullied will he gain some perception."

"Many people might be surprised at how the new U.S. leader is truly a 'businessman' through-and-through," the paper said, referring to Trump's suggestion of using the one-China policy as a bargaining chip. "But in the field of diplomacy, he is as ignorant as a child."

The Global Times, which is published by the party mouthpiece People's Daily, often runs commentaries that target nationalistic sentiment with provocative language.

Chinese officials have been more restrained so far. They may be still trying to learn how to make their positions clear to Trump without feeding a vicious cycle of insults and heightened tensions, said Dali Yang, a political science professor at the University of Chicago.

However, Trump's suggestion that he could negotiate on Taiwan likely went too far for China, Yang said.

"He expected for China to bargain again for the one-China position, perhaps by giving up something on trade or something of that nature," Yang said. "This is actually the foundation of the U.S.-China relationship, rather than something to be bargained over."

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Associated Press researchers Yu Bing and Liu Zheng contributed to this report.

## Manslaughter verdict caps trial of ex-NFL player's killer

By KEVIN MCGILL, Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The man who fatally shot retired New Orleans Saints defensive leader Will Smith faces a sentence of up to 40 years in prison after being convicted of manslaughter during a trial that made spectators of some of the city's sports heroes.

Cardell Hayes was convicted of manslaughter Sunday night, ending a week-long trial in which the defendant insisted he only fired because the popular football star was drunk, violent and had grabbed a gun

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following a traffic crash on the night of April 9.

Smith was part of the Saints team that lifted the stricken city's spirits in the years after Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, helping carry the team to a winning season in 2006 and a Super Bowl win four years later. His death at the hands of Hayes, 29, was stunning, even for a city where residents are accustomed to regular reports of gunfire deaths.

Hayes will be sentenced on Feb. 17. As bad as the conviction was for him, it could have been worse. He was tried on a second-degree murder charge that carried a mandatory life sentence.

Hayes also was convicted of attempted manslaughter for wounding Smith's wife, Racquel Smith.

"Because of the upcoming sentencing hearing, in which Racquel will provide a victim impact statement, she does not feel it is appropriate to comment on the facts of the case at this time," her lawyer said in an emailed news release. "The main focus of Will Smith's family is to see Mr. Hayes justly sentenced for the murder he so callously committed."

Hayes' family members and friends exited the court without commenting.

District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro said in a news release that he would have a news conference Monday.

Saints coach Sean Payton arrived at the courthouse and was present for the late Sunday verdict. Earlier, former Saints safety Steve Gleason, battling Lou Gehrig's disease, watched hours of closing arguments from his wheelchair in a center aisle of the courtroom. They were among a host of past and present Saints stars, including current quarterback Drew Brees and former running back Deuce McAllister, who attended proceedings at different points during the week.

That was one reason defense lawyer John Fuller had cautioned jurors Sunday against being "star-struck" by the NFL luminaries.

Hayes' defense lawyers said Smith's popularity led to a rush to judgment by police and prosecutors. Assistant District Attorney Laura Rodrigue said in turn that the defense was trying to smear Smith.

A pathologist report showed Smith was legally drunk with a high blood-alcohol level when he died at the end of a day in which he had spent time at the city's annual French Quarter Festival, a bar and two restaurants. He, his wife and two passengers were in his Mercedes SUV the night of the shooting. They were heading from New Orleans' Lower Garden District toward downtown when a series of events led to the shooting, beginning with Smith's vehicle appearing to lightly bump Hayes' Hummer — although the prosecution raised doubts that the two vehicles actually touched.

Hayes vehemently denied intentionally running into Smith's Mercedes SUV moments later — he said he was trying to dial 911 and didn't realize how close he was getting to Smith as he tried to report the apparent hit-and-run.

Hayes said he armed himself only after he and his own passenger were accosted by Smith and Richard Hernandez, a passenger in the Smiths' Mercedes.

Smith didn't initially notice the gun, Hayes said. At some point during the fast-unfolding melee, Hernandez alerted Smith to Hayes' gun, Hayes said under questioning from Fuller.

On cross examination, Assistant Orleans Parish District Attorney Jason Napoli repeatedly noted that no other witness said Smith had a gun and that Hayes never told investigators he saw a gun in Smith's hands that night.

"I never gave a full statement to anyone," Hayes said.

## Ahead for Michelle Obama? Figuring out what comes next

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It'll be one of the most watched mid-life career changes in recent memory. What does Michelle Obama do next?

After eight years as a high-profile advocate against childhood obesity, a sought-after talk show guest, a Democratic power player and a style maven, the first lady will have her pick of options when she leaves the White House next month.

Just as the first lady's role is undefined, with each woman molding it to her personality, interests and comfort level, there is no script for what comes after the first lady finishes the job.

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The widowed Jacqueline Kennedy remarried and became a New York book editor. Laura Bush continues her advocacy for literacy, women in Afghanistan and preservation issues. Hillary Clinton launched her own political career with her bid for the U.S. Senate, even before her family left the White House.

Here's a look at what Mrs. Obama is likely to do, or not do, when at 53 years old she becomes a private citizen again on Jan. 20.

## LIKELY TO DO:

### R&R

President Barack Obama says he's taking her on a "really nice vacation, because she deserves it. She's been putting up with me for quite some time." (Twenty-four years of marriage, to be exact.)

### WRITE A MEMOIR

Practically all first ladies do. As the first black woman in the role and as someone who has said little publicly about her private life in the White House, book publishers would offer to pay millions for the rights to Mrs. Obama's insider account. Clinton got an \$8 million advance for her 2003 memoir, "Living History."

### SET UP HER FAMILY'S NEW HOME

Breaking from post-presidential tradition, the Obamas plan to stay in Washington so their 15-year-old daughter, Sasha, can finish high school. Presidents usually leave Washington when they leave office, but the Obamas are renting a home in the wealthy Kalorama neighborhood, near what will be the official residence of Vice President-elect Mike Pence. The home is large enough to be a hub of social activity, but it's far from clear whether Mrs. Obama will become Washington's new power hostess. Ex-presidents tend to keep a low profile in the first year or so after they leave office.

The Obamas also still own a home in Chicago.

### STICK WITH HER INITIATIVES

Mrs. Obama has said she'll stay engaged in public service and will keep working on the issues she focused on during her tenure. They included childhood obesity and education for girls around the world.

"I've always felt very alive using my gifts and talents to help other people. I sleep better at night. I'm happier," she told Vogue for an interview in the fashion magazine's December issue. "So we'll look back at the issues that I've been working on. The question is: How do I engage in those issues from a new platform? I can't say right now, because we can't spend that much time really doing the hard work of vetting offers or ideas or options because we're still closing things out here."

## COULD DO:

### JOIN SPEAKER'S CIRCUIT

Mrs. Obama put her oratory on display with a well-received speech on opening night of the 2016 Democratic National Convention. She followed up with a series of campaign speeches criticizing Republican Donald Trump, now the president-elect, as unsuitable for the nation's highest office. Her friend, media mogul Oprah Winfrey, said the first lady will be "one of the most in-demand speakers" as a result of her convention performance. "That speaking fee just quadrupled," Winfrey joked during an interview with The Associated Press.

Clinton earned millions of dollars giving paid speeches after she stepped down as secretary of state. Laura Bush also keeps a robust public speaking schedule.

### HOST A TELEVISION TALK SHOW

Mrs. Obama has demonstrated a knack for talk-show banter, and an ease in front of the TV cameras. She co-hosted "The View" before the 2008 election and recently co-hosted Ellen DeGeneres' hourlong gabfest. Roy Ashton, head of television at the Gersh Agency in Los Angeles, says Mrs. Obama would be a "no-brainer" to have a show of her own.

"She could pick up where Oprah left off, or something else," Ashton said. "I think Michelle Obama has a ton to say."

### SERVE ON CORPORATE BOARDS

She has some experience with corporate America, but she'll want to choose carefully. Mrs. Obama resigned from the board of a food supplier for Wal-Mart Stores Inc. in 2007, shortly after her husband announced

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his presidential bid. He had been a critic of the retail giant. Mrs. Obama had cited the increased demands of the campaign for leaving the board of Illinois-based TreeHouse Foods Inc.

"It will be fun to see what she actually does," said Kimberly Archer, head of the Washington office of Russell Reynolds Associates, an executive search and assessment firm. "Wherever she does decide to focus, I would say, 'Lucky them.'"

## LIKELY WON'T DO:

### RUN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

Both the president and first lady repeatedly have said she will not run for president — despite pressure from Democrats wowed by her campaign speeches challenging Trump.

Obama has said she doesn't have "the patience or the inclination" to be a candidate and is "too sensible to want to be in politics." Mrs. Obama said "No, no. Not going to do it," when asked earlier this year about following in her husband's footsteps.

## RESUME PRACTICING LAW

Mrs. Obama, a Harvard law school graduate, practiced at a Chicago firm but abandoned a legal career after the deaths of her father and a close friend. She entered public service, working for the city of Chicago and running an AmeriCorps service program before she joined the University of Chicago Medical Center as a vice president for community and external affairs. It was the last paid position she held before become first lady.

Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap>

## Playoff picture: Texans get much-needed boost with win

By DAVE CAMPBELL, AP Pro Football Writer

The playoff race remains predictably crowded early in the fourth quarter of this NFL season, creating a complicated bundle of scenarios for the division crowns and wild-card spots available for the taking.

The afternoon game Sunday with the biggest impact on the postseason picture was likely Houston's 22-17 win at Indianapolis, considering the teams began the day in a three-way tie with Tennessee for first place in the underwhelming AFC South.

The Titans, meanwhile, got a big boost with their 13-10 win over defending Super Bowl champion Denver, which fell into a tie with Miami for the final AFC wild card. The Broncos hold a tiebreaker over the Dolphins.

Here's a closer look at the candidates:

### AFC EAST

#### NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS (10-2)

Remaining schedule: vs. Baltimore on Monday night, at Denver on Dec. 18, vs. New York Jets on Dec. 24, at Miami on Jan. 1.

Division record: 3-1. Conference record: 7-1.

Control top seed in AFC following Oakland's loss to Kansas City on Thursday night.

#### MIAMI DOLPHINS (8-5)

Remaining schedule: at New York Jets on Dec. 17, at Buffalo on Dec. 24, vs. New England on Jan. 1.

Division record: 2-1. Conference record: 5-4.

If the Dolphins are going to end an eight-year playoff drought, they'll probably have to do it with second-string quarterback Matt Moore. Miami starter Ryan Tannehill sustained a knee injury Sunday that will likely end his season.

With a brutal finish to the Broncos' schedule, Miami still has a chance to move up. Earlier win over Pittsburgh could come in handy, in case of head-to-head tiebreaker with Steelers. Rooting for Baltimore to win AFC North, because of loss last week to Ravens.

Miami has won seven of eight and Moore has made 25 career starts — but none since Tannehill was drafted in 2012.

#### BUFFALO BILLS (6-7)

Remaining schedule: vs. Cleveland on Dec. 18, vs. Miami on Dec. 24, at New York Jets on Jan. 1.

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Division record: 1-3. Conference record: 3-6.

Favorable final stretch of games gives Bills long-shot hope in wild-card chase, but record against AFC competition will make tiebreakers tough. Loss to Pittsburgh on Sunday likely extends streak of postseason absences to 17 in a row.

Thanks for playing: NEW YORK JETS (4-9).

## AFC NORTH

### PITTSBURGH STEELERS (8-5)

Remaining schedule: at Cincinnati on Dec. 18, vs. Baltimore on Dec. 25, vs. Cleveland on Jan. 1.

Division record: 2-1. Conference record: 6-3.

With potential tiebreakers not currently in favor and first wild-card spot under control of AFC West runner-up, division race is best route. Home game against Ravens in two weeks gives Steelers good chance. If they split season series, tiebreaker scenario could go all the way from division record, common games record, conference record to strength of victory at No. 5.

### BALTIMORE RAVENS (7-5)

Remaining schedule: at New England on Monday night, vs. Philadelphia on Dec. 18, at Pittsburgh on Dec. 25, at Cincinnati on Jan. 1.

Division record: 4-0. Conference record: 7-2.

With Christmas Day grudge game against rival Steelers looming in two weeks, Ravens will be challenged to avoid falling behind until then. Win that one, though, and they'll own the tiebreaker thanks to earlier victory against Pittsburgh. Wild card also in play for loser of division race, and strong conference record could help.

Thanks for playing: CINCINNATI BENGALS (5-7-1), CLEVELAND BROWNS (0-13).

## AFC SOUTH

### HOUSTON TEXANS (7-6)

Remaining schedule: vs. Jacksonville on Dec. 18, vs. Cincinnati on Dec. 24, at Tennessee on Jan. 1.

Division record: 4-0. Conference record: 5-4.

Most favorable remaining schedule of three AFC South competitors. Would need to pass three teams to get wild card, so this is all but certain to be a one-bid division.

### TENNESSEE TITANS (7-6)

Remaining schedule: at Kansas City on Dec. 18, at Jacksonville on Dec. 24, vs. Houston on Jan. 1.

Division record: 1-3. Conference record: 4-5.

Unlikely to win two or three-way tiebreakers with Texans and/or Colts, so win over Broncos helped greatly. Home game against Jaguars could be soft setup for division title game in Week 17 vs. Texans now that Colts have fallen behind.

### INDIANAPOLIS COLTS (6-7)

Remaining schedule: at Minnesota on Dec. 18, at Oakland on Dec. 24, vs. Jacksonville on Jan. 1.

Division record: 2-3. Conference record: 4-6.

Crushing loss to Houston on Sunday with consecutive daunting road games looming after. Four wins in past seven games after collapse at Houston on Oct. 16 could be too little too late, but momentum can be an amazing thing.

Thanks for playing: JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS (2-11).

## AFC WEST

### KANSAS CITY CHIEFS (10-3)

Remaining schedule: vs. Tennessee on Dec. 18, vs. Denver on Dec. 25, at San Diego on Jan. 1.

Division record: 4-0. Conference record: 7-2.

Took control of division race with win over Raiders on Thursday to sweep season series. Might be able

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to lose out and still get wild card, but Chiefs are chasing first-round bye and unlikely to let up. Monday night 14 rooting interest: Ravens to beat Patriots.

## OAKLAND RAIDERS (10-3)

Remaining schedule: at San Diego on Dec. 18, vs. Indianapolis on Dec. 24, at Denver on Jan. 1.

Division record: 2-2. Conference record: 7-2.

Loss to Chiefs eliminated chance of clinching first playoff spot in 14 years this weekend. One more win, plus a loss by Miami or Denver, would do it. Would have to finish one game ahead of Chiefs to win AFC West, but path to wild card could be clearer by Monday night.

## DENVER BRONCOS (8-5)

Remaining schedule: vs. New England on Dec. 18, at Kansas City on Dec. 25, vs. Oakland on Jan. 1.

Division record: 1-3. Conference record: 5-4.

Good news for Broncos is they've got the tiebreak edge over Miami at the moment. Bad news is their third-place status in division and daunting remaining schedule. Monday night rooting interest: Patriots to beat Ravens.

Thanks for playing: SAN DIEGO CHARGERS (5-8).

## NFC EAST

### DALLAS COWBOYS (11-2)

Remaining schedule: vs. Tampa Bay on Dec. 18, vs. Detroit on Dec. 26, at Philadelphia on Jan. 1.

Division record: 3-2. Conference record: 7-2.

Only team that's already clinched a postseason spot, Dallas had won 11 straight games before Sunday night's 10-7 loss to Giants prevented Cowboys from wrapping up division title and first-round bye — for now. New York won both meetings this season, and Cowboys might want to avoid Giants in playoffs. But two wins in their final three regular-season games would guarantee Cowboys No. 1 seed and home playoff games until the Super Bowl that's a mere 4-hour drive away in Houston.

### NEW YORK GIANTS (9-4)

Remaining schedule: vs. Detroit on Dec. 18, at Philadelphia on Dec. 22, at Washington on Jan. 1.

Division record: 3-1. Conference record: 6-3.

They own tiebreaker over Cowboys, but still need two losses by NFL's top team to have a shot at winning NFC East. Fortunately for Giants, wild-card race is in their control. Would lose head-to-head tiebreaker with Minnesota or Green Bay, but New York has a two-game lead on both those competitors.

### WASHINGTON REDSKINS (7-5-1)

Remaining schedule: vs. Carolina on Dec. 19, at Chicago on Dec. 24, vs. New York Giants on Jan. 1.

Division record: 3-2. Conference record: 5-4.

Dreaded tie with Cincinnati on Oct. 30 could be what dooms postseason bid, but remaining slate appears promising. Unless a wild scenario emerges with Cardinals surging forward and Vikings and Packers fading, tiebreaker rules won't need to be deciphered for Washington. Currently first team to miss cut in wild-card race.

Thanks for playing: PHILADELPHIA EAGLES (5-8).

## NFC NORTH

### DETROIT LIONS (9-4)

Remaining schedule: at New York Giants on Dec. 18, at Dallas on Dec. 26, vs. Green Bay on Jan. 1.

Division record: 3-2. Conference record: 7-2.

Can clinch division crown with two more wins, or fewer with corresponding losses by Green Bay and Minnesota. Winning one more should put them in good position for wild card, at least. Strong finish could deliver No. 2 seed and first-round bye.

### GREEN BAY PACKERS (7-6)

Remaining schedule: at Chicago on Dec. 18, vs. Minnesota on Dec. 24, at Detroit on Jan. 1.



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Division record: 2-1. Conference record: 5-4.

To win division, need to make up one game on Detroit over next two weeks, beat Lions in finale and at least stay even with Minnesota, depending on upcoming results. Might need to win out but chances look pretty good — especially after impressive victory Sunday over Seattle.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS (7-6)

Remaining schedule: vs. Indianapolis on Dec. 18, at Green Bay on Dec. 24, vs. Chicago on Jan. 1.

Division record: 1-3. Conference record: 4-6.

To win division, must finish one game ahead of Detroit given two losses last month to Lions. Could also lose tiebreaker to Green Bay, depending on upcoming results. To get wild card, must pass two teams and stay ahead of Packers. Likely need to win out and even in that case could still need some help.

Thanks for playing: CHICAGO BEARS (3-10).

## NFC SOUTH

ATLANTA FALCONS (8-5)

Remaining schedule: vs. San Francisco on Dec. 18, at Carolina on Dec. 24, vs. New Orleans on Jan. 1.

Division record: 3-1. Conference record: 6-3.

Sudden surge by Tampa Bay has put Falcons and their playoff push on notice. Final four opponents all have losing records, giving them slight edge in division race, but momentum in December might be more important than schedule.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS (8-5)

Remaining schedule: at Dallas on Dec. 18, at New Orleans on Dec. 24, vs. Carolina on Jan. 1.

Division record: 3-1. Conference record: 6-3.

One of league's most surprising teams, particularly considering 3-5 record after losing at home to Atlanta on Nov. 3. Bucs currently control second wild-card spot even if Falcons were to win NFC South tiebreaker. Need to stay ahead of Washington, Minnesota and Green Bay.

Thanks for playing: NEW ORLEANS SAINTS (5-8), CAROLINA PANTHERS (5-8).

## NFC WEST

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS (8-4-1)

Remaining schedule: vs. Los Angeles on Thursday, vs. Arizona on Dec. 24, at San Francisco on Jan. 1.

Division record: 1-1-1. Conference record: 4-4-1.

Can clinch division title with one more win or Arizona loss. Looking to beat out NFC North and NFC South winners for first-round bye, but loss Sunday at Green Bay made task more difficult.

Thanks for playing: ARIZONA CARDINALS (5-7-1), LOS ANGELES RAMS (4-9), SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS (1-12).

For more NFL coverage: <http://www.pro32.ap.org> and [http://www.twitter.com/AP\\_NFL](http://www.twitter.com/AP_NFL)

## Manslaughter conviction in death of ex-NFL star Will Smith

By KEVIN MCGILL, Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The man who fatally shot retired New Orleans Saints defensive leader Will Smith was convicted of manslaughter on Sunday night, ending a week-long trial in which the defendant insisted he only fired because the popular football star was drunk, violent and had grabbed a gun following a traffic crash on the night of April 9.

Smith was part of the Saints team that lifted the stricken city's spirits in the years after Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, helping carry the team to a winning season in 2006 and a Super Bowl win four years later. His death at the hands of Cardell Hayes, 29, was stunning, even for a city where residents are accustomed to reports of multiple gunfire deaths every week.

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Hayes faces a possible sentence of up to 40 years in prison at his sentencing on Feb. 17. Jurors opted for the lesser charge rather than second-degree murder, which would have carried a mandatory life sentence.

Hayes also was convicted of attempted manslaughter for wounding Smith's wife, Racquel Smith.

"Because of the upcoming sentencing hearing, in which Racquel will provide a victim impact statement, she does not feel it is appropriate to comment on the facts of the case at this time," her lawyer said in an emailed news release. "The main focus of Will Smith's family is to see Mr. Hayes justly sentenced for the murder he so callously committed."

Hayes' family members and friends exited the court without commenting.

"We respect the jury's verdict ... we'll regroup tomorrow and see what the next approach is. We continue to pray for all families," Hayes' lawyer John Fuller said to reporters.

District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro said in a news release that he would have a news conference Monday.

Saints coach Sean Payton arrived at the courthouse and was present for the late Sunday verdict. Earlier, former Saints safety Steve Gleason, battling Lou Gehrig's disease, watched hours of closing arguments from his wheelchair in a center aisle of the courtroom. They were among a host of past and present Saints stars, including current quarterback Drew Brees and former running back Deuce McAllister, who attended proceedings at different points during the week.

That was one reason Fuller had cautioned jurors Sunday against being "star-struck" by the NFL luminaries.

Hayes' defense lawyers said Smith's popularity led to a rush to judgment by police and prosecutors.

"I knew for a fact that I was going to get shot," Hayes told the jury after taking the stand in his own defense Saturday. He said he not only saw the gun but heard what he believes was a gunshot before he began firing.

Hayes, however, was the only witness to say Smith armed himself that night. Prosecutors acknowledged that a loaded gun was found in Smith's car but said there was no evidence that it was ever fired or that Smith had grabbed it.

A pathologist report showed Smith was legally drunk with a high blood-alcohol level that night, the end of a day in which he had spent time at the city's annual French Quarter Festival, a bar and two restaurants. He, his wife and two passengers were in his Mercedes SUV the night of the shooting. They were heading from New Orleans' Lower Garden District toward downtown when a series of events led to the shooting, beginning with Smith's vehicle appearing to lightly bump Hayes' Hummer — although the prosecution raised doubts that the two vehicles actually touched.

Hayes vehemently denied intentionally running into Smith's Mercedes SUV moments later — he said he was trying to dial 911 and didn't realize how close he was getting to Smith as he tried to report the apparent hit-and-run.

Hayes said he armed himself only after he and his own passenger were accosted by Smith and Richard Hernandez, a passenger in the Smiths' Mercedes. Hernandez, he said, wildly stripped off his shirt and took something shiny from his pocket — Hayes said he was afraid it was a knife.

Smith didn't initially notice the gun, Hayes said. He said Smith, 34, threw a cup containing some type of alcohol at him and punched him repeatedly. At some point during the fast-unfolding melee, Hernandez alerted Smith to Hayes' gun, Hayes said under questioning from defense lawyer Fuller.

Hayes testified that Smith addressed him with a racial epithet and then told him, "... you got your gun. Well I'm going to get mine and I'll show you what to do with it."

Hayes said Hernandez, a white Hispanic who fled the scene, also used racial epithets.

However, race has not been raised as an alleged factor in the confrontation. Hayes and Kevin O'Neal, his passenger, are black, and so was Smith.

On cross examination, Assistant Orleans Parish District Attorney Jason Napoli repeatedly noted that no other witness said Smith had a gun and that Hayes never told investigators he saw a gun in Smith's hands that night.

"I never gave a full statement to anyone," Hayes said, growing testy as Napoli asked about inconsistencies in his testimony and past statements.

Hayes also insisted he never shot Racquel Smith, although Napoli said ballistics evident indicates otherwise.

Calm and sometimes smiling during his early testimony, Hayes' voice broke a bit as he talked about be-

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ing separated from his 6-year-old son. Hayes has been jailed since the shooting. Hayes owns a tow truck business and also said he breeds dogs. He discussed his high school and college football career, his time as a semi-pro football player and his admiration for Smith. He said he didn't recognize Smith the night of the shooting and grew despondent hours later upon learning he had killed the beloved football star.

"I cried like a baby," he said.

"I said my life's over with ... They're going to make me like I just shot and killed this man."

## Optimism remains as NBA CBA talks near critical deadline

By JON KRAWCZYNSKI, AP Basketball Writer

After months of optimism surrounding a potential new collective bargaining agreement that would allow the NBA and the players' union to avoid another work stoppage, the momentum has slowed a bit as a critical date approaches.

Both sides have until 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday to opt out of the current deal. If that were to happen, they would have until the end of June to negotiate a new contract. Neither the owners nor the players believe it will get to that point, with both sides seeking a deal to ensure the league keeps enjoying skyrocketing revenue and rising television ratings.

"We're working tirelessly," union president Chris Paul said this weekend.

Many of the major parts of the deal have been addressed, including keeping the basketball-related income split the same as it is in the current agreement. There was a belief in early November that an accord could be struck by Thanksgiving, but the complex negotiations have carried on well into December.

There remain a few issues for the sides to settle before a deal can be voted on, and the owners overseeing the league's side of the negotiations planned to meet on Monday for a progress report. If the two sides do not agree to a deal by the deadline, they could implement an extension to give them extra time.

While union vice president Carmelo Anthony told ESPN that he was "skeptical" that a deal would get done by Thursday, there remained a healthy amount of optimism from both sides of the negotiating table that a deal will eventually be reached.

"We still got a few days," union vice president LeBron James told reporters in Cleveland on Saturday. "Obviously, our game right now is the best it's ever been, from where it is right here domestically to all the way around the world, so hopefully both sides come to an agreement."

### GRIZZLIES ROLLING

When Mike Conley was diagnosed with a back injury that was expected to keep him out at least six weeks, the consensus was that the Memphis Grizzlies would have a difficult time remaining in the Western Conference playoff picture. But "Grit 'n Grind" has always been much more than just a catchy slogan for the Grizzlies, who have once again refused to give in when misfortune strikes.

Memphis (17-8) has won six straight since Conley went down, climbing to fifth place in the West, just a half-game behind Houston and the Los Angeles Clippers. First-year coach David Fizdale has inserted little-known Troy Williams into the starting lineup for Conley, while veterans Tony Allen, Marc Gasol and Zach Randolph have all stepped up their games to pick up the slack.

The Grizzlies are also missing free agent prize Chandler Parsons (knee) and veteran Vince Carter (hip), but they thumped the Golden State Warriors on Saturday by 29 points, the first time they won a game by more than five points during this streak.

### THE WEEK AHEAD

A look at some games to watch this week:

Memphis at Cleveland, Tuesday: The red-hot Grizzlies face the rolling Cavs in a home-and-home back-to-back starting at Quicken Loans Arena on Tuesday night.

Minnesota at Chicago, Tuesday: Timberwolves coach Tom Thibodeau coaches in Chicago for the first time since he was fired by the Bulls in an acrimonious split two years ago.

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New York at Denver, Saturday: It's been six and half years since the trade, but it's always worth watching when Carmelo Anthony returns to face the Nuggets.

Oklahoma City at Portland, Tuesday: The human triple-double against Damian Lillard? Sign us up.

## STAT LINE OF THE WEEK

Klay Thompson, Golden State Warriors: 60 points, 21-33 FG, 8-14 3s, 29 minutes. The Splash Brother may be the most explosive player on Golden State's star-studded roster, and proved it with an incredible scoring binge in just three quarters of work. Had coach Steve Kerr played him in the fourth quarter, Kobe Bryant's 81 points were certainly in jeopardy.

## 'La La Land' poised to sing out in Golden Globe nominations

By JAKE COYLE, AP Film Writer

Nominations for the 74th annual Golden Globes will be announced Monday morning from Beverly Hills, California.

The nominations will be streamed live at GoldenGlobes.com, beginning at 8:20 a.m. EST. Among the films expected to take in a number of nods are Damien Chazelle's nostalgic Los Angeles musical "La La Land," Barry Jenkins' lyrical coming-of-age tale "Moonlight," Kenneth Lonergan's New England drama "Manchester by the Sea" and Denzel Washington's August Wilson adaptation "Fences." On the television side, HBO's sci-fi puzzle "Westworld" could be in for a big morning.

Going into the Golden Globe nominations, no film has more momentum than Jenkin's celebrated "Moonlight," a staple of top 10-lists and the best film choice of the Los Angeles Film Critics Association and the Gotham Independent Film Awards.

But "La La Land," starring Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling, is viewed as the Oscar favorite. It's all but certain to dominate in the Globes' comedy/musical categories.

Some films that have so far been largely left out by critics' awards could benefit from the Golden Globes splitting of drama and comedy. The West Texas outlaw thriller "Hell or High Water," which the Hollywood Foreign Press Association may slot under comedy, could be a multiple nominee-getter, including a nod for Jeff Bridge's supporting performance. Warren Beatty's "Rules Don't Apply" and the Meryl Streep-starring "Florence Foster Jenkins" will also be hoping for some attention in the Globes' less predictable comedy categories.

Other dramatic films on the fringe of awards contention will have their fingers crossed. Those include the likes of the civil rights drama "Loving," the Dev Patel-led "Lion" and Jim Jarmusch's poetic "Patterson."

One thing that seems assured is that this year's awards season won't be nearly so white as last year's. "Moonlight," "Fences," "Loving" and possibly "Hidden Figures" are expected to lead a notably more diverse field.

Also already established: Streep, a 29-time nominee, will be the recipient of the Cecil B. DeMille Award for career achievement. Streep may also add a 30th nod to her resume for "Florence Foster Jenkins."

The Jan. 8 Golden Globes will be hosted by Jimmy Fallon and broadcast by NBC from the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills.

## Have travel plans? Prepare for cold rain and snow

CHICAGO (AP) — A blanket of snow will cover the Great Lakes and the Northeast ahead of an expected dip into Arctic-cold temperatures.

The wintry weather mostly moved out of the Plains overnight, leaving parts of Minnesota with up to a foot of snow as it pushed into Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana.

It's a "slap of reality" after a mild November, National Weather Service meteorologist Dave Schmidt in La Crosse, Wisconsin, said.

The Chicago area received 3 to 4 inches of snow as of Sunday morning, and could see another 3 to 5 inches Sunday. The city's aviation website said more than 1,200 flights had been canceled at O'Hare and

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175 at Midway as of late Sunday morning.

Michigan could see the heaviest snowfall, up to 10 inches. It caused problems Sunday when a Delta plane with 70 passengers and crew landed at Detroit Metropolitan Airport but then ended up in snowy grass while it was turning from the runway to a taxiway. No injuries were reported.

To the east, Cleveland could see up to 6 inches, while parts of Vermont could see up to a foot.

The Ohio River valley and Mid-Atlantic will see a mix of snow, freezing rain and rain.

"For the rest of the day the best advice is just to stay off the road if you can, and otherwise go slow and give yourself more time to reach your destination," National Weather Service meteorologist Mark Steinwedel said. "If you don't have to drive or go somewhere, stay home."

Temperatures 15 to 30 degrees below average will follow the cold rain and snow in the coming days through much of the Midwest and East.

Associated Press writers Jeff Baenen in Minneapolis and Rick Callahan in Indianapolis contributed to this report.

## Partial results: Romania's Social Democrats in strong lead

By ALISON MUTLER, Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — The left-leaning Social Democrats took a big lead early Monday in partial results from Romania's parliamentary elections a year after a major anti-corruption drive forced the last Socialist prime minister from power.

Election authorities said that with 44 percent of the votes from Sunday's balloting counted, the Social Democratic Party held about 47 percent and the center-right Liberals were second with just under 21 percent.

Exit polls pointed to similar results, and the chairman of the Social Democrats, Liviu Dragnea, greeted the news cautiously, saying he was "quite satisfied" and "overwhelmed" by what the exit polls predicted.

Saying he hoped there would be no conflict over the results, Dragnea said: "There should be no doubt who won the elections. Romanians want to feel at home in their own country and I want Romania to be a good home for all Romanians."

The exit polls predicted the Save Romania Union, a new party that ran on an anti-corruption ticket, would finish in third, allowing it to enter Parliament.

Save Romania Union leader Nicusor Dan called the exit poll forecast "a victory for Romanian democracy," noting people had left their jobs to volunteer to set up the party, which was created in February.

Dragnea got a two-year suspended prison sentence for voter fraud in April for inflating voter numbers in a July 2012 referendum to impeach then President Traian Basescu.

At the time Dragnea's party was pushing a populist tone, but on Sunday he sought to strike a conciliatory note, saying he wanted to end bitter divisions in the country.

He also said Romania would respect its international strategic and economic commitments. "Romania is an island of stability in the region," he said.

Final turnout for Sunday's election was about 39.5 percent, more than two points less than the parliamentary elections in 2012.

Former Prime Minister Victor Ponta, already the subject of a corruption probe, resigned after mass protests following a nightclub fire in October 2015 that killed 64 people. The country is currently run by a government of technocrats headed by Premier Dacian Ciolos, a former European Union agriculture commissioner.

The country of about 19 million people is one of the poorest in the European Union and perceived as one of the most corrupt.

## Militants retake ancient city of Palmyra from Syrian forces

By SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Islamic State militants recaptured the ancient city of Palmyra from Syrian troops Sunday, according to both sides in the battle, scoring a major advance after a year of setbacks in Syria and neighboring Iraq.

In winning back Palmyra, the extremist group appeared to be taking advantage of the Syrian and Russian preoccupation with Aleppo, timing its attack to coincide with a major government offensive to capture the last remaining opposition-held neighborhoods in the northern city.

Palmyra, with its towering 2,000-year-old ruins, holds mostly symbolic meaning in the wider civil war, although its location in central Syria also gives it some strategic significance.

Islamic State militants re-entered the city Saturday for the first time since they were expelled by Syrian and Russian forces amid much fanfare nine months ago. The government's first important win against the Islamic State group in the historic city gave Damascus the chance to try to position itself as part of the global anti-terrorism campaign.

The militants had spent 10 months in Palmyra, during which they blew up a number of temples and caused other destruction — severing the heads of statues and partially damaging two temples and famous arch.

Maamoun Abdulkarim, Syria's official for antiquities and museums, said his department had transferred the contents of Palmyra's museum to Damascus, but that he still worries about the safety of the ruins from the IS militants.

"I fear they will be more vengeful," Abdulkarim told The Associated Press.

Palmyra was a major tourist attraction before Syria's civil war began in 2011.

Sunday's takeover came hours after government troops and Russian air raids pushed the group out the city's perimeter. IS militants later regrouped and attacked from multiple sides, forcing government troops to retreat.

The militants went door to door, looking for any remaining forces loyal to President Bashar Assad, opposition activists in the city said.

Homs provincial Gov. Talal Barazi told the pan-Arab Mayadeen news channel that the IS attack on Palmyra is a "desperate" reaction to the Syrian government's recent military "victories."

Scores of Syrian troops reportedly have been killed in fighting around Palmyra in recent days. While a distraction from the battle for Aleppo, it is unlikely to affect the government's final push on the last rebel-held neighborhoods in the northern city. By Sunday evening, there was no sign the army was shifting significant resources from Aleppo.

The government and its allies reportedly have mobilized some 40,000 fighters for Aleppo.

"I don't think the regime would withdraw forces from Aleppo to Palmyra and risk losing Aleppo," said Rami Abdurrahman, the head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition monitoring group. "I think the regime's priority now is to finish the battle for Aleppo before the end of the month for sure. As for Palmyra, the whole international community would stand by it against IS."

In the last year, IS has suffered defeats in both Syria and Iraq, losing several towns and cities it had captured in 2014.

It is now under attack in Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city and the last major urban center it controls in the country. Since the Mosul offensive began nearly two months ago, Iraqi and U.S.-led coalition forces have killed or gravely wounded more than 2,000 IS fighters, said Lt. Gen. Stephen Townsend, the top U.S. commander in Iraq. He made his remarks at a news conference with U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter at Qayara air base in Iraq.

On Saturday, Carter announced he is sending another 200 troops to Syria to train and advise local fighters combatting IS. There are already 300 U.S. troops authorized for the Syria effort, and some 5,000 in Iraq.

A Kurdish-led Syrian force, backed by the U.S., is also pushing toward Raqqa, the group's de-facto capital in Syria, from the north. Meanwhile, Turkey is backing Syrian opposition fighters who have reached the outskirts of al-Bab, the IS stronghold in northern Syria.

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In going for Palmyra, IS picked a soft target to demonstrate that it retains the ability to carry out large attacks despite its battlefield losses.

Mohammed Hassan al-Homsi, who runs the Palmyra News Network, said IS was steering away from northern Syria, where Turkey and the anti-IS international coalition have focused their fight. The militants are eyeing new territory, and they chose Palmyra for its desert terrain linked to Iraq and its surrounding oil and gas fields, al-Homsi said.

The state news agency SANA, quoting an unidentified military official, reported that the militant group received reinforcements from Raqqa.

Russia's Defense Ministry put some of the blame on the coalition, saying it had scaled down its operation against Raqqa and allowed thousands of IS fighters to escape Mosul. The ministry said more than 4,000 militants have been deployed for the Palmyra takeover, implying those attacking the city recently had left Mosul.

The Observatory and the Palmyra Coordination group said IS militants used a multipronged assault, forcing government forces to retreat south. A map distributed by the Observatory shows the IS-controlled areas extend east, south and north of Palmyra. They encompass a number of strategic hills around the city and expand the group's presence in rural parts of Homs province, Syria's largest, which is mostly under government control.

Osama al-Khatib of the activist-run Palmyra Coordination group, which keeps in touch with residents, said remaining government and allied troops were escaping from the southwestern edge of the city, where the ancient ruins are. The few remaining families also are trying to leave, he said.

Al-Homsi's Palmyra News Network said intense airstrikes followed the IS takeover. The group said IS fired on fleeing civilian.

In a video by the IS-linked Amaq news agency, IS fighters were shown roaming a main square that appeared deserted below the citadel that overlooks the ruins and the Palmyra Museum.

Russia had earlier said it repelled an IS attack, launching 64 airstrikes overnight that killed 300 militants. But hours later, the activists said IS had seized a castle just outside the town that overlooks its famed Roman-era ruins.

Expelling the IS militants last year was seen as a major triumph for Assad's forces, which previously had little success against the extremists.

The government and its Russian allies have since focused on the opposition in Damascus and Aleppo. After tightening the siege on eastern Aleppo, government and allied troops have been steadily carving into the rebel-held enclave since late November.

Of the original 45 square kilometers (17 square miles) of rebel-held area, only 7 square kilometers (4 square miles) remain in opposition hands, Syrian media said.

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Associated Press writers Zeina Karam in Beirut, Howard Amos and Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow, Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria, and Robert Burns at Qayara air base in Iraq contributed to this report.

## Trump rejects intel, lawmakers vow probe of Russia hacking

By LAURIE KELLMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump on Sunday called a recent CIA assessment of Russian hacking "ridiculous" and says he's not interested in getting daily intelligence briefings — an unprecedented public dismissal by a president-elect of the nation's massive and sophisticated intelligence apparatus.

Trump's remarks come as key congressional Republicans joined Democrats in demanding a bipartisan investigation into the Kremlin's activities and questioned consideration of Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson — who has close business ties with Moscow — as head of the State Department.

Asked whether he's rejecting valuable intelligence on "Fox News Sunday," Trump was defiant.

"I get it when I need it," he said of the top-secret briefings sessions, adding that he's leaving it up to

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the briefers to decide when a development represents a "change" big enough to notify him.

"I'm, like, a smart person. I don't have to be told the same thing in the same words every single day for the next eight years," Trump said.

The CIA has concluded with "high confidence" that Russia sought to influence the U.S. election on behalf of Trump. The finding alarmed lawmakers, including Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain who said Sunday he planned to put Sen. Lindsay Graham, a staunch Trump critic, in charge of investigating the claim.

McCain also has questions about Tillerson's business relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, although it's not clear Tillerson will be nominated. Sunday afternoon, Tillerson had still not been formally offered the job, according to a person with knowledge of the process who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Exxon steadily expanded its Russian business on Tillerson's watch even as its rivals faced expropriation and regulatory obstacles. In 2013, Putin bestowed the Order of Friendship on Tillerson.

"Maybe those ties are strictly commercial and got to do with his business in the oil business. Fine," McCain told CBS "Face the Nation." And "we'll give him a fair hearing. But is it a matter of concern? Certainly it should be a matter of concern."

McCain wasn't alone in raising questions about whether there would be enough blowback to sink a Tillerson nomination.

"Being a 'friend of Vladimir' is not an attribute I am hoping for from a #SecretaryOfState," tweeted Florida Republican Sen. Marco Rubio, Trump's former campaign rival and a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Pennsylvania Democratic Sen. Bob Casey said the developments "raise serious questions about whether the incoming administration will adequately stand up to Russia's aggression."

Trump said Tillerson's relationship with Moscow was a selling point.

"A great advantage is he knows many of the players, and he knows them well. He does massive deals in Russia. He does massive deals for the company," Trump told "Fox News" in an interview broadcast Sunday. He called Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker impressive, and said former bitter rival Mitt Romney is still in the mix.

"These are all very different types of people," he said. "But when you ask me about Rex, I mean, he's a world-class player. There's no question about it."

Later Sunday, he Trump tweeted: "Whether I choose him or not for 'State'- Rex Tillerson, the Chairman & CEO of ExxonMobil, is a world class player and dealmaker. Stay tuned!"

Separately, Trump also rejected the CIA's conclusion that Russia tried to interfere with the presidential election and blamed "very embarrassed" Democrats for the public release of the assessment. The Washington Post first reported the CIA finding on Friday.

"It's ridiculous," Trump said of the CIA's assessment.

He added, however, that he doesn't necessarily oppose President Barack Obama's order for a review of campaign-season hacking. "If you're gonna to do that, I think you should not just say 'Russia.' You should say other countries also, and maybe other individuals." The White House has said the probe would focus on any breaches by other countries, and past elections.

Trump's incoming chief of staff, Reince Priebus shrugged off allegations that Russia helped Trump win.

He said: "The Russians didn't tell Clinton to ignore Wisconsin and Michigan," two states she was expected to win that went instead for Trump.

"She lost the election because her ideas were bad. She didn't fit the electorate. She ignored states that she shouldn't have and Donald Trump was the change agent," Priebus said on ABC's "This Week." Trump's win, he added, "had nothing to do with the Russians."

Turning to business matters, Trump said he is leaving his worldwide enterprise to his executives and children, vowing, that he will "have nothing to do with management." He's expected to discuss the arrangement at a news conference on Thursday.

He also said he is "studying" the Paris climate agreement to reduce carbon emissions. But he doesn't



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want the agreement to put the U.S. "at a competitive disadvantage with other countries."

Trump also departed from Republican orthodoxy by vowing to heavily tax companies that leave the U.S. and then try to sell products here "like we're a bunch of jerks."

"That's the dumb market," he said. "I'm a big free trader, but it has to be fair."

Associated Press writers contributing to this report include Ken Thomas in New York, and Julie Pace, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar and Anne Flaherty in Washington.

Follow Kellman on <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman>

## Italy foreign minister tapped to be premier, form next govt

By **FRANCES D'EMILIO**, Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Italian Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni was tapped Sunday to form a new, Democrat-led government and end a political crisis so the country can quickly tackle pressing problems, which include troubled banks, an economy resisting growth and an electoral reform aimed at finally making the nation more governable.

"I'm aware of the urgency to give Italy a government in the fullness of its powers, to reassure the citizens and to face with utmost commitment and determination international, economic and social priorities," the 62-year-old Gentiloni said.

Italy is due to participate in a European Council meeting on Thursday in Brussels, where participants are expected to discuss key problems including migration, security and how to deal with Britain's decision to quit the European Union.

If no snags develop, Gentiloni could be sworn in as premier early this week. He declined to make predictions, saying only: "We're getting down to work."

Gentiloni would take the place of fellow Democrat Matteo Renzi in the premiership. Renzi has been acting in a caretaker role as premier since he quit on Dec. 7 after his nearly three-year-old government suffered a stinging defeat in a referendum on reforms he had staked his job on.

A new government faces a mandatory confidence vote in Parliament.

Given the banking crisis, Economy Minister Pier Carlo Padoan is widely expected to stay on.

The populist 5-Star Movement and other opposition forces have been clamoring for an early election. But Mattarella, in weighing who should replace Renzi, pointed out the center-left government still commands a majority in Parliament.

"The people feel as if they've been taken for a ride, and want to vote who will decide their lives," said a 5-Star lawmaker, Laura Castelli in a Facebook post that promoted the Movement's "elections immediately" hashtag.

Renzi became Italy's youngest-ever premier in February 2014 when he was 39. He still leads the Democratic Party, although faces internal party challenges should he bid for a return to the premiership when elections are eventually scheduled.

During his party leadership, Renzi, who leans toward the political center, saw defections, especially from Democrats with a past in the former Communist Party.

One defector, Stefano Fassina, of the small Democratic Left party, labeled the next government a "Renzi-encore" and pushed for "elections as soon as possible."

Mattarella has urged the next government to act on several urgent priorities. Those include a banking crisis stemming from badly performing loans amid an economy which resisted growing for several years, despite labor reforms and tax breaks during the Renzi administration.

Gentiloni also noted the pressing need for ambitious construction for several towns destroyed in recent months by earthquakes in central Italy.

The quake-struck area was rattled anew Sunday with a 4.3 quake. Reconstruction following quakes in decades past has been ripe for corruption.

As foreign minister, Gentiloni lobbied for international support to help end years of violence and fighting

in Libya. The North Africa nation's lawless coast has turned into a vast launching pad for lucrative people smuggling, which sends hundreds of thousands of migrants out in unseaworthy boats toward Italian shores.

Gentiloni also spearheaded Italy's demands that the Egyptian government determine and bring to justice who tortured and killed a young Italian researcher in Cairo this year.

The premier-designate is considered a staunch supporter of the outgoing Renzi.

But Renzi took Gentiloni to task earlier this fall, expressing displeasure that his foreign minister had abstained on a resolution of UNESCO, the U.N. cultural agency, instead of opposing it. The resolution angered Israel with its wording that put the Western Wall in Jerusalem — Judaism's holiest site — in quotation marks and described other Jewish sites as "so-called."

Frances D'Emilio is on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/fdemilio](http://www.twitter.com/fdemilio)

## **Bomb kills 25 at Egypt's main Coptic Christian cathedral**

**By MARIAM FAM and HAMZA HENDAWI, Associated Press**

CAIRO (AP) — Sunday morning Mass was drawing to a close at the chapel next to St. Mark's Cathedral, the seat of Egypt's ancient Coptic Orthodox Church, when Magdy Ramzy said there suddenly was a "shattering explosion like nothing I had ever heard before."

A bomb ripped through the chapel in the cathedral complex in central Cairo, killing 25 people and wounding another 49, mostly women and children, one of the deadliest attacks on the country's Christian minority in recent memory.

"It felt like the world has turned upside-down," said the 59-year-old Ramzy, who was wounded behind the ear by shrapnel. He frantically searched the wrecked chapel, and then outside, for his wife, Sabah Wadie. Only later did he learn that she was killed, and his daughter-in-law and three of his grandchildren were wounded.

Ramzy sobbed uncontrollably at the hospital as he leaned on relatives for support.

"This is one of the acts of terror that we used to watch on television. Now, we saw it with our own eyes," he told The Associated Press.

The bombing of the Boutrossyia chapel — and another one Friday that killed six police — were grim reminders of Egypt's struggle to restore security and stability after nearly six years of turmoil.

Egypt has seen a wave of attacks by Islamic militants since 2013, when the military overthrew President Mohammed Morsi, a freely elected leader and a senior Muslim Brotherhood official. Many of his supporters blamed Christians for supporting his ouster, and scores of churches and other Christian-owned properties in southern Egypt were ransacked that year.

Since 2013, authorities have waged a sweeping crackdown, outlawing the Muslim Brotherhood, jailing thousands of mostly Islamist dissidents and killing hundreds in street clashes.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Sunday's attack.

One of the worst previous attacks against Christians by Islamic militants was a 2011 bombing at a church in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria that killed 21.

The Islamic State group also has targeted Christians in the Sinai Peninsula, where it primarily goes after security forces. Most IS attacks in Egypt have been confined to security personnel and judicial officials.

Friday's police bombing was claimed by a group that authorities say is linked to the Muslim Brotherhood. That group — called "Hasm," or "Decisiveness" — distanced itself from Sunday's attack in a statement that said it does not as a principle kill women, children, the elderly or worshippers. The Brotherhood, in a separate statement, condemned the attack.

The bombings are almost certain to undermine the modest recovery in recent months by the vital tourism sector after years of slumping that followed the 2011 popular uprising that toppled autocrat Hosni Mubarak.

They also could bolster the argument used by the government of President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi that stability and security are top priorities if Egypt is to prosper economically and avoid sliding into the kind of chaos and violence now seen in countries like Libya, Syria and Yemen.

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Sunday's bombing was condemned by government and religious leaders, and drew calls for unity between Egypt's Muslim majority and Christians, who account for about 10 percent of the country's 92 million people.

Witnesses said the blast probably was caused by a bomb planted in the chapel. Bishop Moussa, a senior cleric, said there were unconfirmed reports of a woman posing as a worshipper leaving a bag in the women's section before slipping out.

AP reporters who went in the chapel noted that the side where women are routinely seated suffered the worst damage. Pews were smeared with blood and stained glass windows and wooden cabinets were blown out. A broken pair of glasses lay next to a girl's boots with leopard spots and a pink ribbon. A chandelier dangled precariously and a wall clock was stopped at 9:57 a.m.

"I found bodies, many of them women, lying on the pews. It was a horrible scene," said church worker Attiya Mahrous, who rushed to the chapel after the blast. His clothes and hands were stained with blood and his hair was matted with dust.

Men and women wailed and cried outside.

"I saw a headless woman being carried away," Mariam Shenouda said as she pounded her chest in grief. "Everyone was in a state of shock."

"There were children," she added. "What have they done to deserve this? I wish I had died with them instead of seeing these scenes."

Pope Tawadros II, spiritual leader of Egypt's Orthodox Christians, cut short a visit to Greece to return home.

State TV broadcast appeals by hospitals for blood donations, and el-Sissi declared three days of mourning.

"The pain felt by Egyptians now will not go to waste, but will instead result in an uncompromising decisiveness to hunt down and bring to trial whoever helped — through inciting, facilitating, participating or executing — in this heinous crime," a presidential statement quoted him as saying.

Several hundred angry people gathered outside the cathedral, chanting anti-government slogans and calling for the firing of the interior minister, who is in charge of security.

"We sacrifice our soul and blood for the cross," some chanted. Others sang hymns and, raising their hands, shouted, "Lord, have mercy."

Scuffles broke out when protesters tried to push police lines to move closer to the cathedral, but there were no immediate reports of arrests. Police in full riot gear arrived later.

Egypt's Christians have long complained of discrimination, saying they are denied top jobs in many fields, including academia and security forces.

The church and many Christians have rallied behind el-Sissi, although there have been growing voices of dissent in the community. They say little has changed under his rule, with authorities failing to halt attacks on their churches and property.

"This government must resign, and if the president insists on keeping it, then he'd better resign as well," said Gerges Wadie, the brother of Ramzy's wife. He said he initially supported el-Sissi but now sees him as a "failure."

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, Dec. 12, the 347th day of 2016. There are 19 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 12, 1946, a United Nations committee voted to accept a six-block tract of Manhattan real estate offered as a gift by John D. Rockefeller Jr. to be the site of the U.N.'s headquarters.

On this date:

In 1787, Pennsylvania became the second state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1870, Joseph H. Rainey of South Carolina became the first black lawmaker sworn into the U.S. House of Representatives.

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In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt nominated Oscar Straus to be Secretary of Commerce and Labor; Straus became the first Jewish Cabinet member.

In 1915, singer-actor Frank Sinatra was born Francis Albert Sinatra in Hoboken, New Jersey.

In 1917, Father Edward Flanagan founded Boys Town outside Omaha, Nebraska.

In 1925, the first motel — the Motel Inn — opened in San Luis Obispo, California.

In 1937, Japanese aircraft sank the U.S. gunboat Panay on China's Yangtze River. (Japan apologized, and paid \$2.2 million in reparations.)

In 1947, the United Mine Workers union disaffiliated from the American Federation of Labor.

In 1963, Kenya became independent of Britain.

In 1975, Sara Jane Moore asked a federal court in San Francisco to allow her to plead guilty to trying to kill President Gerald R. Ford. (After the judge ruled Moore competent to change her plea, she was sentenced to life. Moore was released on parole on New Year's Eve 2007 after serving 32 years behind bars.)

In 1985, 248 American soldiers and eight crew members were killed when an Arrow Air charter crashed after takeoff from Gander, Newfoundland.

In 2000, George W. Bush became president-elect as a divided U.S. Supreme Court reversed a state court decision for recounts in Florida's contested election.

Ten years ago: A suicide bomber struck a crowd of mostly poor Shiites in Baghdad, killing some five dozen people and wounding more than 200. A two-day conference questioning the existence of the Nazi Holocaust ended in Tehran. Actor Peter Boyle died in New York at age 71.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama met at the White House with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki (NOO'-ree ahl-MAHL'-ih-kee); afterward, the president declared that U.S. troops were leaving Iraq "with honor and with their heads held high." Bert Schneider, 78, a producer credited with inspiring a "New Hollywood" band of independent filmmakers in the 1970s and 1980s, died in Los Angeles.

One year ago: Nearly 200 nations meeting in Paris adopted the first global pact to fight climate change, calling on the world to collectively cut and then eliminate greenhouse gas pollution but imposing no sanctions on countries that didn't do so. Women across Saudi Arabia marked a historic milestone, both voting and running as candidates in government elections for the first time; voters elected 20 women for local government seats. Fire at a Russian home for mentally ill patients killed 23 men. Derrick Henry became the second Alabama player to receive the Heisman Trophy.

Today's Birthdays: Former TV host Bob Barker is 93. Basketball Hall of Famer Bob Pettit is 84. Singer Connie Francis is 79. Singer Dionne Warwick is 76. Rock singer-musician Dickey Betts is 73. Hall of Fame race car driver Emerson Fittipaldi is 70. Actor Wings Hauser is 69. Actor Bill Nighy (ny) is 67. Actor Duane Chase (Film: "The Sound of Music") is 66. Country singer LaCosta is 66. Gymnast-turned-actress Cathy Rigby is 64. Author Lorna Landvik is 62. Singer-musician Sheila E. is 59. Actress Sheree J. Wilson is 58. Pop singer Daniel O'Donnell is 55. International Tennis Hall of Famer Tracy Austin is 54. Rock musician Eric Schenkman (Spin Doctors) is 53. Rock musician Nicholas Dimichino (Nine Days) is 49. Author Sophie Kinsella is 47. News anchor Maggie Rodriguez is 47. Actress Jennifer Connelly is 46. Actress Madchen Amick is 46. Actress Regina Hall is 46. Country singer Hank Williams III is 44. Actress Mayim Bialik is 41. Model Bridget Hall is 39.

Thought for Today: "I have never known a man who died from overwork, but many who died from doubt." — Charles Horace Mayo, American surgeon and co-founder of the Mayo Clinic (1865-1939).