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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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Thursday, Dec. 15

Senior Menu: Christmas dinner: Ham with raisin sauce, baked sweet potatoes, Malibu blend vegetables, Christmas cookie, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: Mini pancakes, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Turkey dinner, dressing, mashed potatoes, corn, pumpkin pie.

Noon: United Methodist UMW Christmas Luncheon

5:15 p.m.: Boys Basketball at Redfield (C game at 5:15, JV at 6:30, Varsity at 8:00)

Friday, Dec. 16

Senior Menu: Spanish rice with hamburger, green beans, Mandarin oranges, chocolate pudding, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Cereal, yogurt, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Chicken sandwich, French fries, carrots and dip, fruit.

Debate at Brookings

4 p.m.: Groton girls host Redfield-Doland (7th at 4:00, 8th at 5:00, JV at 6:30, Varsity at 8:00)



Kristi Peterson Bookkeeping

Simple Solutions for YOU

605/216-4474 ~ peterson4@nvc.net

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Santa will be coming to Groton's Subway on Saturday, Dec. 17, 1-4 p.m.

Cookies for all the kids



At the mini mall in north Groton

Groton Prairie Mixed

Team Standings: Jackelopes 18, Shih Tzus 15, Chipmunks 14, Cheetahs 14, Foxes 13, Coyotes 10

Men's High Games: John Sippel 230, 202, Brad Waage 223, 204, Ron Belden 212, Brad Larson 210, Doug Jorgensen 200

Women's High Games: Dar Larson 171, Sue Stanley 169, Brenda Waage 166

Men's High Series: Brad Waage 609, John Sippel 601, Mike Siegler 518

Women's High Series: Dar Larson 457, Vicki Walter 440, Sue Stanley 429

GROTON KIWANIS CLUB

Eleven members and two guests attended the weekly dinner meeting of the Groton Kiwanis Club, on Wednesday noon, Dec. 14.

Orville Schaller was program chairman. The speaker was Lanny Mielke, who showed slides and told of his recent trip to China.

Some facts he presented were that China is an all communist country, the great wall China is over 600 years old, and over 1500 miles long, and the country has only had cars for about 15 years now.

Monetary donations were made to the robotics team, and the Salvation Army.

Next week's program chairman is Larry Schelle, followed by Sharon Simon, and Lee Schinkel.

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The City of Groton public works department has been busy hauling away snow before the next snow storm moves in. Cardboard was placed in front of the truck to protect it from the cold weather and someone put "Merry Christmas" on the front. In the background is a sundog indicating there are ice crystals in the atmosphere as the temperature continues to dip to near record breaking temperatures.

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The skating pond has been flooded and the temperature is prime for making some fast ice. So far, 117,400 gallons have been used.



House for Sale

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

GROTON
Chamber Of Commerce

Sign Up for Groton Chamber Bucks at the Holiday Boxes Located This week at the Olde Bank Floral 'N More and Subway

Week of Dec. 19: Lori's Pharmacy and Groton Ford

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Today in Weather History

December 15, 1983: A storm system impacted the region on the 14-15th with five inches of snow and strong winds to produce blocked roads and numerous school closings on the 15th throughout most of the eastern third of South Dakota. No travel was advised from late afternoon on the 14th due to low visibility and blocked roads in Roberts and Brookings Counties. The conditions contributed some to several traffic accidents. Meanwhile, snow also spread across Minnesota on December 13th and diminished late on the 15th. Snow accumulations ranged from 1 to 2 inches in west central Minnesota to higher amounts over 10 inches to the east. Winds increased and temperatures began to fall on December 14th as an arctic cold front pushed through the state. The strongest winds occurred during the night of December 14th and into the morning of December 15th. Near-blizzard conditions developed in the southwest and west central sections of Minnesota where the visibility was reported to be near zero with winds of 20 to 30 mph. The wind chill index dropped to 30 below to 60 below zero. Blowing and drifting snow conditions occurred to some degree throughout all of Minnesota. Many roads were closed due to drifts. Drifting snow continued during the evening of December 15th as the winds and snowfall gradually diminished. This event, associated with an arctic cold front, was the beginning of what would become, and still remains, the coldest stretch of December days on record across most of the area. For the next nine days, beginning on December 16th, Aberdeen did not warm above -6 degrees, enduring temperatures as low as -34 F and high temperatures as low as -15 F. Other stations around the region had very similar cold temperatures during the December 16th through December 24th time period, with temperatures warming into single digits above zero on Christmas Day.

December 15, 1992: Cyclone John hit the sparsely populated northwest coast of Australia with winds gusting to 185 mph. John was the strongest cyclone to hit Australia in over 100 years.

1839 - The first of triple storms hit Massachusetts Bay. The storm produced whole gales, and more than 20 inches of snow in interior New England. There was great loss of life at Gloucester MA. (David Ludlum)

1901 - An intense cold front swept across the eastern U.S. The cold front produced heavy rain in Louisiana, and heavy snow in the northeastern U.S. (David Ludlum)

1945 - A record December snowstorm buried Buffalo, NY, under 36.6 inches of snow, with unofficial totals south of the city ranging up to 70 inches. Travel was brought to a halt by the storm. (14th-17th) (The Weather Channel)








1987 - A major winter storm hit the Great Lakes Region, intensifying explosively as it crossed northern Illinois. High winds and heavy snow created blizzard conditions in southeastern Wisconsin. Winds gusted to 73 mph, and snowfall totals ranged up to 17 inches at LaFarge. The barometric pressure at Chicago IL dropped three quarters of an inch in six hours to 28.96 inches, a record low reading for December. Up to a foot of snow blanketed northern Illinois, and winds in the Chicago area gusted to 75 mph. O'Hare Airport in Chicago was closed for several hours, for only the fourth time in twenty years. High winds derailed train cars at Avon IN. Light winds and partly sunny skies were reported near the center of the storm, a feature typical of tropical storms. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - High pressure in the Pacific Northwest and low pressure in the southwestern U.S. combined to produced high winds from Utah to California. Winds gusting to 70 mph in the San Francisco area left nearly 300,000 residents without electricity. Winds in Utah gusted to 105 mph at Centerville. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A couple of low pressure systems spread heavy snow across the northeastern U.S. Up to two feet of snow was reported along Lake Erie in northeastern Ohio, and up to ten inches was reported in Connecticut. Heavy snow squalls developed over Michigan for the third day in a row. Three Oaks MI reported 25 inches of snow in two days. Twenty-six cities in the north central U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. The low of 10 degrees below zero at Wichita KS was a December record for that location. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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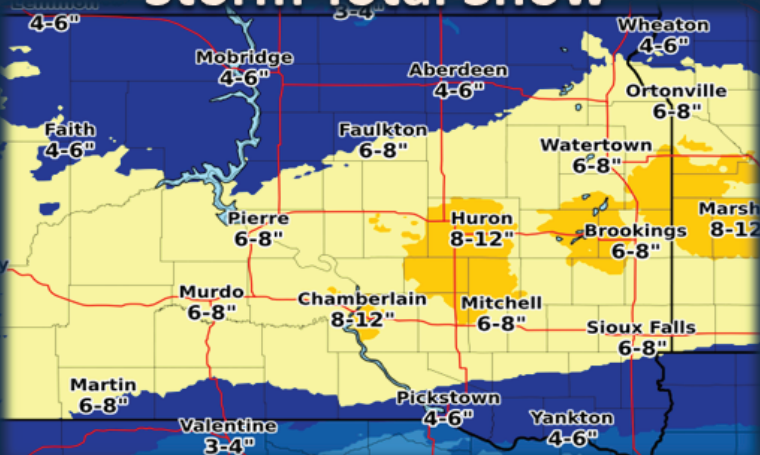
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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
40%	60% → 30%	70% → 100%	80% → 40%			
Partly Sunny then Chance Snow	Snow Likely then Chance Snow	Snow Likely then Snow	Snow and Patchy Blowing Snow then Chance Snow	Cold	Mostly Clear	Cold
High: 10 °F	Low: 5 °F↑	High: 11 °F	Low: -10 °F	High: -7 °F	Low: -29 °F	High: 0 °F



Winter Storm Watches & Warnings Friday through Saturday Morning

Storm Total Snow



Timing

Friday morning: Snow starting west to east

Friday afternoon-evening: Most snow expected to fall winds/blowing snow increasing

Saturday morning: Snow ending west to east

Snowy Commute Friday Afternoon



National Weather Service, Aberdeen SD Issued: December 15, 2016 530am

Published on: 12/15/2016 at 5:39AM

Light snow will be possible today, before a round of more moderate snow slides in from the west Friday into Saturday morning. It could be a very slow and snowy Friday afternoon commute across the area, with most of the storm total 3 to 8 inches of snow falling Friday afternoon and evening. Dangerously cold air will slide in Saturday morning through Sunday morning, with wind chills of around 25 to 45 below zero. Do you have a winter emergency kit in your vehicle? The time to prepare is now!

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 9.4 F at 12:11 AM
Low Outside Temp: -10.5 F at 11:33 PM
Low this morning: -18.9 at 2:44 AM
High Gust: 24.0 Mph at 12:44 PM

Snow: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 60° in 1939
Record Low: -24° in 1917
Average High: 25°F
Average Low: 6°F
Average Precip in Dec.: 0.25
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.59
Average Precip to date: 21.45
Precip Year to Date: 17.93
Sunset Tonight: 4:51 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:07 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Thu, Dec 15, 2016, issued 5:01 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



ANYONE ELSE UP THERE?

A man was looking over a cliff when he slipped and began to fall. Sliding down the ledge he grabbed a branch and was hanging on for dear life. Shouting loudly he cried, "Is anyone up there?"

"I am the Lord and I am here," came the answer. "Do you believe in Me?"

"Yes, Lord, I do. But I can't hang on much longer."

"I'll save you," said the Lord. "Just let go."

There was a pause. Finally the man asked, "Is anyone else up there?"

How like so many of us. We doubt the Lord and put our trust in others.

Early in life we are taught to depend on ourselves, to be self-sufficient, strong and solve problems on our own. We also learn to rely on others, look to them for strength and help. Eventually we reach our limits and those we look to for insight, come up lacking. Then, when we become fearful or frustrated, we learn to look to God first and foremost.

Do you remember learning to swim? Can you recall someone standing in front of you in the water and saying, "Jump!" Knowing that they were able to catch us is the faith factor. Jumping in becomes the trust factor.

God's Word constantly encourages us to have faith in Him. It gives us many examples of those who have faith in Him. It is the "letting go" by knowing that He is there to "catch us" that makes faith work. It's the "trust factor."

Prayer: Teach us, Father, to realize our need to let go and let God meet us at our point of need. May our knowing give way to believing. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture: Psalm 60:11, 12 Give us aid against the enemy, for human help is worthless. With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies.

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News from the Associated Press

Dangerous wind chills, snow in Midwest; cold grips Northeast

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Dangerously cold temperatures gripped the Upper Midwest in advance of a storm that's expected to bring several inches of snow in coming days, while schools and officials in the Northeast braced for their own blast of wintry weather.

A wind chill advisory enveloped North Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin on Wednesday and stretched into parts of Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Those advisories remained in effect through Thursday morning and beyond.

The cold claimed at least one life: A 34-year-old woman died of hypothermia in St. Paul, Minnesota. She was found Monday, when temperatures dropped to 3 below zero and wind chills were minus 19.

In western Wisconsin, Thursday morning's wind chills were expected to range from 15 to 30 degrees below zero. Several inches of snow were expected to begin tracking into the region on Friday and into Saturday, the National Weather Service said. Several warming shelters had opened up to help get people out of the cold.

Low temperatures in Fargo, North Dakota, were expected to be around minus 12 Thursday, while Duluth, Minnesota was expected to see an overnight low of minus 5.

With the arctic air tracking northeast, Connecticut Gov. Dannel P. Malloy said he would activate the state's severe cold-weather protocol on Thursday, calling for state police and other agencies to work with shelters and community groups to protect vulnerable residents. Malloy also encouraged communities to open warming centers.

Vermont public safety officials warned residents to limit their time outdoors Thursday and Friday due to dangerous wind chills forecast at 35 below. In upstate New York, some schools and government offices were closing early ahead of expected lake-effect snow expected to dump 1 to 2 feet.

Much of the northern Mid-Atlantic and Northeast will stay cold for the next couple of days as the arctic air remains stuck over the northern Appalachians, the National Weather Service said.

The system also is expected to bring widespread snow from the Great Lakes to the Northeast on Thursday. Much of the central U.S. will be dry but cold.

Below-normal temperatures are expected this weekend and into Monday across the entire northern half of the country, from the Pacific Northwest to Maine and as far south as Oklahoma, Arkansas and Virginia, according to the Climate Prediction Center.

Up to half a foot of snow could fall from the Upper Mississippi Valley to the Northeast on Friday and Saturday, and areas east of the Appalachian Mountains could see freezing rain and sleet on Saturday.

Another arctic air mass on the heels of this cold front is expected to bring temperatures to the northern Plains over the weekend and into early next week that will be as much as 24 degrees below normal, according to Climate Prediction Center forecaster Stephen Baxter.

Wednesday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Lakota Nation Tournament

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 41, Lower Brule 38

Crow Creek 68, St. Francis Indian 60

Little Wound 76, Crazy Horse 57

Pine Ridge 70, Custer 46

Red Cloud 86, Omaha Nation, Neb. 37

Todd County 69, McLaughlin 48

White River 74, Standing Rock, N.D. 33

Winnebago, Neb. 94, Tiospa Zina Tribal 54

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GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Lakota Nation Tournament

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 50, Tiospa Zina Tribal 35

Crazy Horse 107, Little Wound 19

Custer 57, Winnebago, Neb. 32

McLaughlin 66, Crow Creek 57

Pine Ridge 54, Standing Rock, N.D. 50

Red Cloud 53, St. Francis Indian 44

Todd County 76, Lower Brule 37

Jones leads No. 8 Louisville in rout of South Dakota State

By STEVE BITTENBENDER, Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Not much went wrong for No. 8 Louisville on Wednesday night as it caught a dangerous foe at a vulnerable time.

Jazmine Jones scored a career-high 15 points to lead the Cardinals to a dominating 83-30 victory over South Dakota State.

The Cardinals (9-2) extended their winning streak to three games thanks to a strong start and finish to the first half. Louisville scored the game's first 11 points and then finished the first half on a 15-0 run to take a 38-14 lead.

Jones played a big role in getting the huge lead as she scored 12 points on 5-of-5 shooting in the first half, easily surpassing her previous high of eight points against Chattanooga on Nov. 21.

"It'll definitely boost my confidence as we go along this season," Jones said.

South Dakota State (8-3), which announced Wednesday that Macy Miller would miss the rest of the season, struggled without their leading scorer. The Jackrabbits committed a season-worst 30 turnovers and shot 19.6 percent from the field.

Even without Miller, Louisville coach Jeff Walz said he told his team to not let the Jackrabbits dictate the pace. The Cardinals responded, he said, by playing their best defense all season.

"I was just really, really pleased with our physical and mental effort tonight," he said.

Kerri Young's 13 points led South Dakota State.

Jackrabbits coach Aaron Johnston said the biggest enemy his team has had since Miller's leg injury, which she suffered last Friday against Green Bay, has been time. Louisville marked the second game South Dakota State has played in less than a week and the team has also had finals to take.

"We've had about three hours in the gym to redefine a lot of roles," he said.

Myisha Hines-Allen and Sydney Zambrotta added 10 points each for Louisville.

BIG PICTURE

South Dakota State: Granted the Jackrabbits played one of the top teams in the country, but they seemed lost for major stretches of the game. Some of that could be due to missing Miller. Since she went out on Friday, the Jackrabbits have yet to shoot better than 33 percent from the field.

Louisville: What was considered a possible upset threat at the beginning of the season turned into a laughter early against the short-handed Jackrabbits. While the Cardinals struggled for a stretch in the first half, they still put on an impressive display against one of the top mid-major programs in Division I.

STAT OF THE NIGHT

Louisville entered Wednesday having held opponents to single-digit scoring quarters six times this season. On Wednesday, they added three more to that total, with the Jackrabbits getting 11 points in the third quarter. When you factor in the fourth quarter against Western Kentucky, the Cardinals have had four such periods in the past five quarters.

INJURIES

In announcing Miller's status, school officials said the junior guard, who was averaging 14.9 points a game, would seek a medical redshirt for this season.

POLL IMPLICATIONS

Beating a team like South Dakota State, which Walz said will still likely pile up victories even with Miller's absence, will only serve to boost Louisville's profile among voters. In the last 10 days, Louisville has registered solid victories over Kentucky, Western Kentucky and the Jackrabbits, all teams which figure to be in the running for tournament bids come March.

UP NEXT

South Dakota State returns home to face Bowling Green on Sunday, a team Louisville beat 83-58 on Nov. 19.

Louisville hosts Charleston on Friday in the fifth of six straight home games.

Japan moves to allow casino gambling at 'integrated resorts'

By **KELVIN CHAN** and **ELAINE KURTENBACH**, AP Business Writers

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's parliament approved Thursday a law on "integrated resorts" that is the first major hurdle in allowing casinos to set up shop in the wealthy nation.

Supporters of the casino legislation say it would enhance Japan's allure as a tourism destination and draw in wealthier travelers. Big players in the industry welcomed the news, with Wynn Resorts saying it was "extremely pleased" by its passage.

Opponents object to an expansion of legalized gambling, saying it will fuel organized crime and encourage gambling addiction. Surveys have shown a majority of Japanese oppose the plan.

Casinos are unlikely to start operating in Japan until 2021 or beyond, after the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. The new legislation would authorize the drafting of regulations for details such as the number and location of casinos, entry restrictions for Japanese and tax rates, which are expected to take up to a year to gain approval.

The approval of the final version of the legislation came in the wee hours Thursday, after a failed attempt by opposition lawmakers to pass a no-confidence motion against its top supporter, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Abe has sought passage of the long-delayed legislation for years, over the objections of many in his own ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

Tokyo, Osaka and Yokohama are among the cities said to be planning to seek casino licenses.

Casino operators view Japan as a lucrative "final frontier." In a report this month, analysts at investment bank CLSA estimated the potential market at \$30 billion a year in gross revenue.

"This is a landmark occasion and should be a shot in the arm as it relates to investor sentiment in all gaming names that could be players in Japan," Grant Govertsen, a Macau-based analyst at investment firm Union Gaming, said in a commentary.

CLSA's forecast is based on revenues from Japan's existing forms of gambling, which include lotteries, pachinko — a kind of pin-ball machine — and wagering on horse, auto, bicycle and power boat racing, which combined rake in more than \$30 billion.

Billionaire U.S. casino moguls such as Sheldon Adelson, head of Las Vegas Sands Corp., and Steve Wynn of Wynn Resorts, or their representatives have often visited Japan to lobby for legalization.

The American Gaming Association, a trade group representing the \$240 billion U.S. casino industry, said it had been working to inform Japanese lawmakers about various issues.

Facing down fierce objections from opposition lawmakers, Abe argued that gambling would amount to only a small fraction of the total business of the hoped-for integrated resorts, which combine casinos with hotels, convention space, theme parks and shopping malls.

"It's not like the whole city will be taken over by casinos," Abe said in response to sharp jibes from Renho, an opposition leader. "These facilities will attract investment and do much to help create jobs.

Japan could become the world's second largest gambling market behind No. 1 Macau, Govertsen said.

"Quite simply, it represents the next and perhaps only other large opportunity to develop large-scale integrated resorts in Asia for a lot of these companies," said Govertsen. "Some of these companies, their revenues and cash flow are so large today that it would take an opportunity like Japan to move the needle for them."

Adelson told analysts in 2014 that his company was "willing to commit substantial capital investment to

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develop large-scale, truly iconic integrated resorts" if Japan legalizes casinos.

"The reason why everyone's spending the time on this is that the potential is absolutely enormous," James Murren, chairman of Las Vegas-based MGM Resorts International, said in a recent conference call with analysts.

Japan is taking a gamble as the market cools elsewhere.

A sweeping anti-graft campaign by Chinese President Xi Jinping has crimped lavish spending by high-rollers from mainland China, causing gambling revenue in Macau, which provides the bulk of profits for companies like Wynn and Sands, to fall for 26 straight months until August.

Macau raked in about \$29 billion in casino revenue last year, about five times more than the Las Vegas strip, but down about a third from the year before.

Japan's casinos are expected to follow Singapore's model in some areas, perhaps charging an entry fee to local residents. Some other Asian nations with legalized gambling, such as Vietnam and Malaysia, have tighter restrictions on their own citizens visiting casinos. Other places like the Philippines and Macau have no restrictions.

Public opposition to the casinos is mainly based on concerns over gambling addiction. In a 2014 study, researchers with Japan's health ministry found that nearly 5 million people, or 5 percent of the adult population, were thought to be addicted to gambling. That's far higher than the 1 percent rate found in many other countries, said the researchers, who said pachinko was the main problem.

Chan reported from Hong Kong.

Defenders of Black Hills disband after 14 years

By Tom Griffith, Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Following 14 years of stalwart efforts to preserve Native American sacred sites from desecration and to protect natural resources from fracking, uranium mining and overharvesting of timber, the nonprofit Defenders of the Black Hills has decided to call it quits.

The organization's final meeting was conducted Saturday at the Mother Butler Center in Rapid City, and with smiles, hugs and a few tears likely. At the farewell, supporters celebrated nearly a decade and a half of volunteer activism and partnerships developed, all in the name of protecting the environment.

The decision to disband was not made without careful thought, said Charmaine White Face, one of the group founders and its coordinator since its inception.

"I'm getting old and tired," said White Face, who turns 70 in March. "There are other groups now but, when we started, there were hardly any. Others will take up the mantle, but we feel like it's time now. It's time to back out."

Defenders of the Black Hills was founded in 2003 to counter federal legislation passed that opened up the last 3 percent of the Black Hills to logging, including a wilderness area and two roadless areas that were supposed to be preserved untouched for time immemorial.

In the ensuing years, the Defenders group has pestered those promoting mineral extraction and fracking, successfully promoted legislation funding the cleanup of abandoned uranium mines and worked to prevent water pollution in the region, the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2hfSSQj>) reported.

In January 2003, White Face said the Defenders had 32 issues on its docket, all intended to protect, preserve and restore the environment. Among those issues was a firing range proposed within sight of Bear Butte, a sacred site to several Native American tribes. So the newly formed group held a prayer gathering at Bear Butte, followed by a dinner at Sturgis Brown High School attended by 200, she said.

At that session, a local attorney stepped forward and offered his services pro bono to the Defenders. Further investigation of the planned firing range found it was going to be financed through a Community Development Block Grant, a federal funding mechanism designed to assist poor people, White Face explained.

"We pushed it hard and took it to court," she said. "We discovered that 12 of the 16 CDBGs in South Dakota were illegal, the state and the businessmen backed out, and the firing range was dropped in the

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fall of 2003.”

A writer and scientist who holds a double major in biology and physical sciences from Black Hills State University, White Face also serves as a spokesperson for the Sioux Nation Treaty Council, a lifetime position. Disbanding the Defenders, she said, would allow her to devote more time to the oldest treaty council in the region.

“Who am I?” the self-effacing woman asked rhetorically. “I’m just a little grandma.”

In fact, White Face is the mother of four biological and eight adopted children, as well as 13 grandkids and four great-grandchildren. But her friends and fellow environmental advocates say she is so much more.

“Charmaine deserves all the recognition she gets,” said Liliias Jarding of the Rapid City-based Clean Water Alliance. “She and the Defenders leave a legacy of the focused defense of the resources and the people of the Black Hills.”

Jarding said White Face and the Defenders were instrumental in the establishment of the Clean Water Alliance and have worked in tandem on issues involving “unwise projects” over the years. She said she worries about the group disbanding.

“I think we will lose the skills and talents that were brought to bear on defending the vision of what the Black Hills can be; Lakota values and a broad natural resources viewpoint,” said Jarding, who planned to attend Saturday’s final meeting of the Defenders.

Michelle May, director of the Oglala Lakota College Academic and Public Library and Archives at Kyle, lauded White Face for making monthly treks to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation to make environmental presentations to students and interested community members.

“Charmaine and the information she conveys are so relevant to our world and, not just the reservation, but the world of humanity,” May said. “Personally she is such a blessing and such a good friend. She always goes the extra mile and shares her information. It’s incredible the generosity she has.”

May said the legacy of the Oglala Sioux scientist, environmentalist and activist, and the organization she helped establish, will live on through videos captured of White Face’s presentations, which have been archived in the tribal library.

Over the years, efforts by White Face and the Defenders have been recognized far and wide.

In 2007, the organization won the Nuclear Free Future Award, described as “the Nobel Prize for Environmentalists.” Last summer, White Face was named a Giraffe Hero by the Giraffe Heroes Project, a nonprofit organization that encourages people to “stick their necks out for the common good.”

White Face was chosen for the latter award due to her battles that have extended from her fight against corruption within tribal governments stretching back to the 1980s, as well as her more recent opposition to uranium mining in the Black Hills.

Her work has been met with threats as well as plaudits. White Face said that the brake lines on her car have been cut, and that people have told her to “watch out” or a bomb would be placed in her car.

But White Face doesn’t dwell on negatives and, despite the disbanding of the Defenders she said she’d continue to fight “the good fight” for as long as she can.

“Why was it all so important?” she asked last week. “I love the earth. They told me I’ve been like this since I was a tiny girl. I don’t like to see the earth ruined and I’m sorry, but I get a little choked up.”

Speaking of Mother Earth, she said: “Nothing can live if she’s sick.”

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

South Dakota high schools introduce students to health care

By Jaci Conrad Pearson, Black Hills Pioneer

LEAD, S.D. (AP) — In an effort to introduce students to a growing and understaffed field, Lead-Deadwood has added a health occupations class to its high school lineup.

“The purpose of the class is to explore different health careers, jobs, skill development, and job descriptions,” said class instructor Dr. Bree Oatman, who has a background in public health. “To help kids think about careers they might be interested in and how to prepare in high school and post high school.”

In order to develop the background needed to make educated decisions regarding possible careers in health-related fields, students spend an immersive semester visiting locales like Lead-Deadwood Regional Hospital, the Black Hills Pioneer (<http://bit.ly/2gRL6ZO>) reported. Among other new skills, students learned how to intubate a patient and perform CPR, planned ambulance ride-alongs, received an overview of anatomy and physiology from a vocational perspective, and even took a trip to the pharmacy to learn how prescriptions are measured out.

As a practical everyday experimental lesson students grew bacteria in petri dishes in order to demonstrate how bacteria grows on cell phones, door knobs, etc., and learned why hand washing is so important in battling bacteria. They then took their findings and shared them with Lead-Deadwood Elementary School third graders, demonstrating the importance of hand washing.

As part of the health occupations class, students will also enjoy a fair amount of career exploration through job shadowing and problem-based learning modules, in addition to learning about the history of medicine in the United States and completing a brochure on the career of their choice.

"We also play a board game called Pandemic," Oatman said. "It deals with cure and prevention of disease outbreaks around the world. It's kind of like Risk."

Junior Jachin Ruth said he signed up for the class because he had a vague interest in health care.

"I'm interested in becoming a doctor and helping people," Ruth said. "I'm hoping to learn more about all the different occupations and steps I need to take to get into said occupation. Pharmacy is another one I'm interested in and want to see it first-hand."

As an accompaniment to the class and other science classes, Oatman also started a HOSA: Future Health Professionals Club, the only one in West River South Dakota.

"We want to introduce kids to the numerous occupations out there related to the health care fields and introduce kids to those fields," said Principal Tony Biesiot. "A lot of schools do this class as a club, but with a small school and kids being busy, we decided to make it part of the curriculum."

Biesiot said that the class has benefited students in a variety of ways thus far.

"I was talking to a student who was interested in going into the health care field," Biesiot said. "Through this experience, they were able to decide that it was not for this student. We've also developed great relationships with Lead-Deadwood Regional. It's opened the doors to it and a lot of other occupations out there, not just at the hospital, but they're checking out other careers, as well."

Information from: Black Hills Pioneer, <http://www.bhpioneer.com>

Twin nurses retire after over 30 years of service

By Victoria Lusk, Aberdeen American News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — As twin sisters in the same profession — with almost the same name — it seems fitting that Janice Patterson and Janet Reich would decide to retire from the same employer at virtually the same time.

Reich started at Avera St. Luke's Hospital Feb. 6, 1980. Her last day was Dec 2. Patterson began her Avera career Jan. 2, 1985. She retired Nov. 22.

As twins, "We both always knew that we wanted to be nurses," Patterson said.

After graduating from Redfield High School, they started schooling at South Dakota State University in Brookings. Patterson later switched to the University of South Dakota in Vermillion before the sisters graduated with their nursing degrees in 1975.

They both later earned master's degrees.

When Reich's husband Gene retired roughly a year ago, he said he just felt like it was time to call it quits.

"I see that in my sister-in-law (that she's ready to retire), but I'm a little worried about my wife," Gene Reich joked.

"I know what the kicker was. They both had to do it," he said. "Everything they say about twins, I've experienced it."

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Indeed, that's how it happened, the sisters said. Once Patterson announced her retirement, Janet Reich followed suit.

"I'm the oldest so I just said I'm done on this day," said Patterson, who was born six minutes before her younger sister.

And that was it.

Gene Reich thinks the same mentality will hold true in retirement.

"If the Pattersons decide to go someplace, then we'll go too. (The twins) will have to decide together," he said.

While neither woman is setting plans in stone, there is talk of visiting family in Norway, as well as enjoying the Patterson grandkids.

The sisters aren't the only experienced St. Luke's workers who have recently retired. The hospital is now shy four employees who accounted for more than 140 years of experience in all, said Avera CEO Todd Forkel.

Jill Hanley retired Friday after hitting a milestone 40 years with Avera. Lee Ann Tople retired in October, after 31 years.

Forkel called Avera's four recent retirees "intertwined," while emphasizing that each woman has been instrumental to getting Avera to where it is today.

Supervisors and administrators alike spoke to each of the retiree's mentoring skills, their commitment to Avera's mission, and how each was a leader for the health care system. Avera hosted a retirement tea Dec. 1 to honor the women, Aberdeen American News (<http://bit.ly/2hw0DCz>) reported.

When he first met "The Jans," Forkel said he thought something was up. They looked alike, but how could they be sisters if they are both named Jan, he wondered.

Both Patterson and Reich are known as "Jan" at the hospital, which sometimes required clarification.

During his tenure, Patterson came in as the chief nursing officer and handled many challenges in the health care industry with steady leadership that always had an emphasis on patient care, Forkel said.

Reich focused much of her career on educating others.

"When I think of my work with Janet, it is based around education of the patient, education of us as staff members and taking ownership over that in terms of how we can carry out the work we do every day," Forkel said.

Bernie Reddy, lab tech supervisor, said Hanley was instrumental in the Avera lab network and its outreach program.

"The work she did implementing lead philosophies ... is something we carry forward today, and that made such a profound impact," Forkel said.

Tople actually hired Forkel in 1991.

"She saw something in me," he said. "I would not be a CEO today without her.

"Really, for all four of these ladies, and I personally felt this from Lee Ann, was mentoring others, seeing something in others that they themselves didn't see and help craft that," he said.

Through the work that they've done by being such good mentors, each retiree is leaving Avera better than they found it, Forkel said.

Because of that, the hospital is confident about the future, Forkel said. He described the retirees as being owners, not renters, who will always have a chapter in the book of Avera.

All gave at least six months notice. Not all of them, though, know yet just how they'll spend their extra free time.

"I'm not scheduling myself for anything," Patterson said.

And that's the beauty of it.

"You don't have to have a plan," Hanley said.

Information from: Aberdeen American News, <http://www.aberdeennews.com>

Forward Operating Base divides security and protesters

By CAROLINE GRUESKIN, The Bismarck Tribune

FORT RICE, N.D. (AP) — There are two tent cities in southern Morton County.

One is filled with teepees, colorful flags and the smell of burning wood and sage. The other is home to army tents, Humvees and heavy dirt-moving machinery.

Known as the Forward Operating Base, it's been the main hub for police and National Guard patrolling the Dakota Access Pipeline protests since late October. It's located on the campground at Fort Rice, where people usually come to go fishing in the summer, a place 8 miles north of the main protest camp.

Police and protesters have faced off as if enemies over the past several weeks, but their makeshift worlds are more similar than may be expected, The Bismarck Tribune (<http://bit.ly/2gspq5t>) reported. And their proximity to each other and the pipeline construction hint at the intermediary role law enforcement has undertaken.

"We have been kind of caught in the middle," said North Dakota Highway Patrol Lt. Tom Iverson.

At both places, there are tents for eating, trailers for medical equipment and rooms full of supplies — essentially, what is needed to keep people fueled, ready and warm in the plunging temperatures.

On Thursday afternoon, two dozen officers and guardsmen line up for food then sit in clusters at long tables in the main mess hall. Its lunchtime and many are glad that vegetables came with the cheese steaks.

As part of the larger operation, for which North Dakota has borrowed \$17 million to fund, health and emergency departments provide food, medical care and other wraparound services to the hundreds of law enforcement and guardsmen rotating through there.

Chinese stir fry and an amalgam of tater tots, meatballs and gravy are among the favorite dinners, said Doug Murphy, of the state health department, who helps coordinate food at the camp. On the very busiest day, he served 2,000 meals.

"They take this, this and dump this on it," he said. "Everybody lives off coffee, let me tell you that."

Another tent, used for the twice-daily briefings, has cots stacked toward the left side, in case officers get stuck as they did during the blizzard Monday. In the protest camp, a dining tent similarly serves as extra sleeping quarters.

"It's crazy and sleep-deprived," said Murphy, who, tending to lunch, showed a close eye for what the soldiers and officers liked and wanted. He's usually called to assist in floods, marathons and tornadoes.

Boxes of supplies are everywhere. Some are filled with the same as the protesters have: hand warmers, car batteries, snacks. While others, filled with riot helmets, flex cuffs, rubber bullets and buckets of tear gas canisters, are crude reminders of the most violent and tense standoffs that are the reason law enforcement is staged here.

Throughout the camp, there is a sense of readiness. School buses for transporting guardsmen are constantly running. Small groups of soldiers meet in hushed circles. Tactical maps are pinned to walls in an operations hub.

Officers typically start their day at this staging area, where they get briefed on what happened yesterday and what to expect today, Iverson said. Then they go on their assignments: observing the camp, staging behind the police line in case of arrests and shuttling supplies out to officers at the front.

Out-of-state law enforcement has been scaled back "substantially," according to Iverson, but many here still have commuted from several hours away. And the National Guard recently stepped up its presence to 500 soldiers, who work highway barricades and surveillance, according to spokeswoman Maj. Amber Balken.

As of now, the law enforcement presence remains the same as it has been for the past few weeks, Iverson said, but the cold weather and anecdotal evidence that people are leaving the camps once estimated to contain 3,000 to 5,000 people may lead to changes soon.

"At that point, we do need to reassess our numbers that are involved and decide if we need to scale back as well," Iverson said.

The FOB, as it's known, is situated just off Highway 1806, a once pastoral drive, now lined with forbidding concertina razor wire and trenches to keep people off the Cannonball Ranch, where protesters established a camp in October atop the pipeline route.

The operation, which appears as if out of a war zone, is also the launching point for a police response widely criticized as militarized and aggressive.

On Thursday afternoon, radio transmissions came in to the base: There are a couple people on the Backwater Bridge. The police would know, as they have several Humvees and police cars stationed at a second base at the entrance to Cannonball Ranch and above the camp at all times. They watch for activity that could signal a protest or a move toward Turtle Island, a hill on Army Corps of Engineers Land, which protesters have attempted to climb multiple times in order to pray at a site they see as sacred and potentially to access the drill site a mile north.

Lately, tensions have reduced some, with police backing away from the bridge and up to their bases and observation points. And protesters have, by and large, stayed off the bridge.

Iverson said the extended protests have been stressful and "life-consuming" for the officers, who are often hours away from family and friends. On a personal level, Iverson, who has worked nearly every day since mid-August, recounted his son tearing up when he had to leave him at church to work on a recent Sunday.

"You're either pro-DAPL or no-DAPL, and somehow it's transformed into anti-police," Iverson said. "We're finding ourselves in the position where some are treating us as the enemy."

Iverson maintains that law enforcement has acted professionally and with restraint, though many protesters, civil liberties groups and others have criticized them as taking a heavy-handed approach, favoring the rights of the pipeline company and using unnecessary force, including tear gas, water hoses and rubber bullets.

He said part of the goal has been to keep the protesters and pipeline security apart and avoid conflict between them, as happened on Sep. 3, when protesters clashed with security personnel armed with dogs and several people on both sides were reportedly injured.

"We don't want to see a protester group get into a confrontation with the private security group," Iverson said. "So we need to be in the middle."

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

Judge's move putting ethics law on hold eases event worries

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Immediate concerns over attending interest group events during the upcoming legislative session are receding because of a judge's decision last week to put on hold a new law that included gift limits for public officials, according to legislative leaders.

Circuit Judge Mark Barnett issued a preliminary injunction, delaying the government ethics overhaul's implementation while a court challenge moves forward. That includes a provision limiting gifts from lobbyists to \$100 annually for lawmakers, a regulation that had spurred hesitation over whether such events should be held and whether lawmakers should attend. There were previously no caps.

The injunction means that, for now, it's as though the law hadn't passed, South Dakota Chamber of Commerce and Industry President David Owen said. The ruling could be appealed to the state Supreme Court.

"As far as I'm concerned, right now, my life is back to normal," said Republican Sen. Brock Greenfield, who has been nominated to serve as Senate president pro tempore.

Greenfield said Senate Republican leadership would notify members that the law is on hold and that the situation has changed. The incoming Senate GOP leader, Blake Curd, had sent an email to caucus members last month saying top Republicans weren't attending any events until they got more guidance.

Incoming House Majority Leader Lee Qualm said he thinks if lawmakers decide to attend events, there won't be "dire consequences" because of the injunction. Still, Qualm said he feels cautious headed into session.

Curd, Qualm and Greenfield are among a group of two dozen GOP lawmakers and others who challenged the ethics overhaul in a lawsuit filed against the state. Barnett found that provisions of the law, including

an ethics commission, public campaign funding and the gift limitations, may be unconstitutional.

Opponents argue that the gift provisions are poorly written to the point of confusion and attempt to fix a conjured-up crisis of corruption in Pierre.

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

Under the new law, a gift includes compensation, employment, beverages, food and things of value. Lobbyists and their employers are subject to the limitations when giving gifts to lawmakers, state officials and legislative and executive department staff.

Don Frankenfeld, a former GOP senator who helped pass the measure, acknowledged that perhaps \$100 isn't the right limit. But he said the goal is to hold lawmakers accountable.

"I think legislators are there to do serious work," he said. "They're not there to be indulged in by special interests."

Last session alone, lawmakers were invited to dozens of breakfasts, dinners and gatherings held by groups ranging from trade associations to local chambers of commerce.

The state Chamber of Commerce, which compiles a legislative social calendar, sent out a letter Tuesday to groups who haven't sent in information for 2017 noting that the judge put on hold the new rules. The letter advises that it will be easier to cancel an event than to try put one together at the last minute if something changes.

"I don't think we see the massive wave of relief, yet, but I think the word's getting out that this session will be not affected by" the law, Owen said.

The group's Business Day at the Legislature will go on as usual, he said. South Dakota Retailers Association Executive Director Shawn Lyons said the judge's move will allow the organization's banquet the night before the legislative session to proceed as it has in the past.

The Pierre Area Chamber of Commerce had changed its upcoming legislative welcome gathering to require attending lawmakers to purchase their own tickets. CEO Laura Schoen Carbonneau said local businesses and organizations will again be allowed to sponsor lawmakers.

But Lyons said he knows other groups are still wary. "I think that's unfortunate," he said.

North Dakota oil spill raises questions about safety

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON** and **JAMES MacPHERSON**, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The discovery of an oil pipeline spill earlier this month in western North Dakota has received heightened attention because of the battle over the Dakota Access oil pipeline being built about 150 miles to the southeast.

While the spill was on a different pipeline, the Standing Rock Sioux and its supporters say a spill on the Dakota Access pipeline could threaten the tribe's drinking water, which is drawn from the Missouri River.

The developer of the Dakota Access project, Energy Transfer Partners, and the Army are battling in court over permission to cross under Lake Oahe, a Missouri River reservoir — the last large chunk of construction for the \$3.8 billion project.

Here are some questions and answers about the spill on the Belle Fourche Pipeline:

HOW BIG WAS THE SPILL?

About 176,000 gallons of oil spilled, with about 130,000 gallons that flowed into Ash Coulee Creek. The spill went about 5½ miles down the creek, which feeds into the Little Missouri River, a tributary of the Missouri River. A photo released by the North Dakota Department of Health shows the brown muck on the creek's surface, and another photo shows what appears to be the pipeline break with oil oozing out.

As of Wednesday, about 46,000 gallons had been recovered. Regulators don't expect the cleanup to be completed until spring.

It appears no oil got into the Little Missouri River, and no drinking water sources were threatened, according to Bill Suess, an environmental scientist with the health department. The creek was free-flowing when the spill occurred but has since frozen over.

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The spill was in a remote area of the southwest part of the state, far from any major population centers. It fouled an unknown amount of private and U.S. Forest Service land along the waterway.

HOW WAS THE SPILL DISCOVERED?

A landowner spotted the spill Dec. 5. Electronic monitoring equipment failed to detect the rupture, but it's not clear why, according to Wendy Owen, a spokeswoman for Casper, Wyoming-based True Cos., which operates the pipeline.

The pipeline was shut down as soon as the leak was discovered. Owen said erosion of a hillside might have ruptured the pipe, but the cause is still being investigated.

IS THIS A BIG SPILL?

It's sizeable, but there have been much larger oil spills in North Dakota. In September 2013, a Tesoro Corp. pipeline break spilled more than 840,000 gallons of oil into a wheat field near Tioga. That spill is still being cleaned up.

True Cos. has a history of spills in North Dakota and Montana, including a January 2015 pipeline break into the Yellowstone River. That 32,000-gallon spill temporarily shut down water supplies in the downstream community of Glendive, Montana, after oil was detected in the city's water treatment system.

IS THIS PIPELINE LIKE THE DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE?

It's much smaller. The 6-inch steel Belle Fourche Pipeline, built in the 1980s, is mostly underground but crosses Ash Coulee Creek above ground.

It's one of a network of thousands of miles of similar pipelines that crisscross western North Dakota's oil patch to pick up oil from wells and carry it to collection points, where it ultimately moves into larger pipelines or railroad tankers destined for refineries across the U.S.

The Dakota Access pipeline is a 30-inch steel pipeline that will carry nearly 20 million gallons of North Dakota oil daily through South Dakota and Iowa to a shipping point in Illinois.

It is largely complete except for a segment, blocked by the federal government, that's near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation, where it would be buried 90 to 115 feet below Lake Oahe. Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners says the line will have modern leak detection equipment, and that workers monitoring the pipeline remotely could close valves within three minutes if a breach was detected.

The Standing Rock tribe argues that putting the pipeline under the lake imperils drinking water for more than 8,000 tribal members and millions downstream. ETP and other pipeline advocates maintain that transporting oil through pipelines is safer than shipping it by truck or train.

Justice Department won't send officers to pipeline protest

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The federal government won't send 100 federal officers to help police protests against the Dakota Access oil pipeline in North Dakota as requested, drawing a sharp rebuke Wednesday by the county sheriff who wanted the help as well as the head of the National Sheriffs' Association.

Sending border patrol and members of the U.S. Marshals Service Special Operations Group might escalate, not ease, tensions between law enforcement and protesters who've camped on federal land for months, Justice Department spokesman Wyn Hornbuckle told The Associated Press.

A dozen North Dakota law enforcement officials implored President Barack Obama in a letter released Monday to send in-person help plus financial assistance, citing costs, fatigue and a growing fear of vigilante justice. The officers, led by Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier, said they fear for the safety of themselves, area residents and protesters.

In explaining that DOJ won't fill the request, the agency noted it offered training and technical assistance to local law officers and has worked to facilitate dialogue among law enforcement and opponents of the four-state, \$3.8 billion pipeline.

"As Attorney General Lynch has said, the department is committed to supporting local law enforcement, defending protestors' constitutional right to free speech and fostering thoughtful dialogue on the matter," Horbuckle said. "The safety of everyone in the area — law enforcement officers, residents and protesters alike — continues to be our foremost concern."

But Kirchmeier, who has long been critical of what he perceives to be a lack of federal aid, told the AP that the Justice Department's efforts have not defused tensions and that local officers who have policed the protests for 127 days and made 571 arrests are stretched beyond capacity.

"Only in Washington, D.C., would facilitating meetings be considered 'action' in response to the kind of aggression our law enforcement officers and North Dakota citizens have had to face over these past months," Kirchmeier said in a statement.

The federal government has not been inactive: U.S. Customs and Border Protection at one point last month provided 11 Border Patrol agents to help with policing.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe and other opponents of the pipeline, which will carry North Dakota oil to a shipping point in Illinois, say the project threatens cultural sites and the tribe's drinking water, which is drawn from the Missouri River. Pipeline work is stalled while Texas-based developer Energy Transfer Partners and the Army battle in court over permission for the pipeline to cross under the river — the last big chunk of construction.

The protest encampment has thinned out in recent days from several thousand people to a few hundred due to the work stoppage and harsh winter weather, but there have been a handful of arrests over the past week.

National Sheriffs' Association Executive Director Jonathan F. Thompson said the group is grateful for the efforts of the DOJ's Community Oriented Policing Services, which sent teams to Bismarck in September and October for training and technical assistance. However, Thompson said it's not enough.

"The critical value sheriffs need, and have asked (for) dozens of times, is for federal law enforcement officers to be on the ground," he said, adding that "we have asked, pleaded and nearly begged."

The DOJ also has told North Dakota officials that it will consider allowing the state to repurpose more than \$1 million in Justice Assistance Grant money, which is for efforts to prevent and control crime and improve the criminal justice system.

Considering the state has dedicated up to \$17 million in emergency spending for protest-related costs, Thompson said the monetary offer is "a Band-Aid on a hemorrhage."

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

Several agencies adopt new policy on crime victims' names

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Several government agencies have adopted a policy on releasing crime victims' names that's meant to comply with a new constitutional amendment.

Confusion has swirled since the passage of the amendment, which gives victims the right to privacy.

Officials in Sioux Falls, Minnehaha and Pennington counties and the state Department of Public Safety have agreed to the plan. The policy announced Wednesday says authorities will tell victims they have the right to prevent their information from being released. If victims don't request privacy within three days, their names will be disclosed.

Pennington County State's Attorney Mark Vargo says officials want to ensure victims have time to make a decision while also getting information out.

Attorney General Marty Jackley said in an opinion last week that the amendment requires victims to invoke their right to prevent disclosure.

Judge won't reject statements by suspect in trooper assault

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A judge has refused to throw out statements allegedly made to authorities by a Washington state man accused of trying to kill a Highway Patrol trooper in South Dakota.

Attorneys for Donald Willingham, 34, of Renton, Washington, unsuccessfully argued that the statements were obtained illegally, the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2hiCXRa>) reported.

In his written decision, 7th Circuit Judge Wally Eklund responded to the defense's assertions in three points. He said the Miranda warnings issued before Willingham's interrogations were adequate, investigators' interrogations were valid and the statements obtained during Willingham's booking were not improperly obtained.

Willingham has pleaded not guilty to attempted murder and other charges in the October 2015 beating of Trooper Zachary Bader during a traffic stop on Interstate 90 east of Rapid City. Bader recovered from skull and facial fractures.

Authorities said the traffic stop led to the recovery of more than 50 pounds of marijuana, \$33,000 in cash and a handgun.

Three others charged with possession of marijuana with intent to distribute and being an accessory to a crime in the case have pleaded guilty and agreed to testify against Willingham.

Willingham and the three others charged are scheduled to appear in court on Monday. Eklund approved Willingham's request to be tried separately from the other defendants, who he says have made incriminating statements against him.

Willingham also faces a separate assault charge against a fellow inmate from August. According to a report filed in court, Willingham sprayed a chemical disinfectant into another cell that hit another inmate in the eye.

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

Mistrial declared after juror dies at federal courthouse

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A federal judge declared a mistrial in a case involving a Huron medical clinic and a former surgeon after a juror died at the courthouse in Sioux Falls.

Federal Clerk of Courts Chief Deputy Matt Thelen tells the Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2htChJu>) that the juror died Tuesday morning as jurors were coming into the courtroom to hear testimony in the case.

Thelen says the cause of death wasn't immediately known. The person's name wasn't released.

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

Warden of South Dakota women's prison announces retirement

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The warden of South Dakota's state women's prison in Pierre has announced her retirement.

Brenda Hyde has worked at the lockup since it opened in 1997. She's been the top official there since October 2009.

The state Corrections Department has appointed an interim warden. Brent Fluke is an associate warden at the Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield. He previously served as unit manager of the Rapid City Community Work Center.

Nebraska sanctions Whiteclay beer store for selling to minor

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — One of the four Nebraska liquor stores that sell millions of cans of beer near the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation has been sanctioned for selling to a minor.

The Nebraska Liquor Control Commission decided Tuesday to penalize the Arrowhead Inn. The business is expected to pay a \$600 fine for the Oct. 1 violation to avoid a 12-day suspension of its liquor license.

A 19-year-old told a Nebraska State Trooper he bought beer at the Arrowhead Inn. The commission's Hobert Rupe says the suspension will be considered in the Arrowhead Inn's license renewal application, but the business' last violation before this case was in 2010. The four stores in Whiteclay sold the equivalent of 3.5 million cans of beer last year near the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

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California, Uber in legal showdown over self-driving cars

By JUSTIN PRITCHARD and MICHAEL LIEDTKE, Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Uber is riding its self-driving cars into a legal showdown with California regulators. The ride-hailing company is refusing to obey demands by the state's Department of Motor Vehicles that it immediately stop picking up San Francisco passengers in self-driving cars.

Hours after Uber launched a self-driving service Wednesday morning with a handful of Volvo luxury SUVs, the DMV sent the company a letter saying the move was illegal because the cars did not have a special permit the department requires for putting autonomous vehicles on public roads.

As of Wednesday night, the Volvos — distinctive in look with sensors protruding from their tops — were still roaming San Francisco's streets. The company did not respond to a request for comment about the state's legal threat.

"If Uber does not confirm immediately that it will stop its launch and seek a testing permit, DMV will initiate legal action," DMV Chief Counsel Brian Soublet wrote the company. He referenced the possibility of taking Uber to court.

Uber knew about the DMV's permit requirement but argues that its cars do not meet the state's definition of an "autonomous vehicle" because they need a person behind the wheel to monitor and intervene if needed.

Parsing the definition of an autonomous vehicle is in line with Uber's history of testing legal boundaries. During its meteoric rise into a multibillion dollar company, Uber has argued with authorities in California and around the world about issues including driver criminal background checks and whether those drivers should be treated as contractors ineligible for employee benefits.

As the two sides planned to meet Thursday, both seemed dug into opposing positions.

The argument centers around whether the cars — tricked out with sensors so they can steer, accelerate and brake, and even decide to change lanes — are, legally speaking, "autonomous vehicles."

The company argues that its cars aren't covered by the permit requirement, which says an "autonomous vehicle" requires a permit if it can drive itself "without the active physical control or monitoring of a natural person."

According to Anthony Levandowski, the leader of Uber's self-driving program, Uber's cars aren't advanced enough to drive themselves without human monitoring. Therefore, he said, the Volvos are not autonomous — and do not require a permit.

California has issued permits to 20 companies for tests of autonomous vehicles on public roads, mostly traditional automakers and tech companies.

Getting a permit for prototype testing is part of legal language negotiated between the state and industry, and DMV lawyer Soublet argued in an interview that the permit process helps maintain public confidence that the technology is safe.

"Don't start doing this stuff. Apply for the permit. Follow the rules," Soublet said of Uber.

To receive a permit, a company must show proof of insurance, pay a \$150 fee and agree that a human driver can take control of the vehicle.

Operating without a permit arguably gives Uber a competitive advantage. Companies with one must report to the state all crashes and every instance in which a person takes control during testing. All that information is public.

Uber is sending another message to California: Other places want us if you don't.

In a blog post Tuesday, Levandowski warned that "complex rules and requirements could have the unintended consequence of slowing innovation" and named several places outside California he characterized as being "pro technology."

The launch in San Francisco, the city where Uber is headquartered, expanded a deployment of self-driving cars the company started in Pittsburgh in September. The testing lets everyday people experience the cars as Uber works to identify glitches before expanding the technology's use in San Francisco and elsewhere. The company wouldn't say the exact number of cars, calling it a "handful."

The cars have an Uber employee behind the wheel to take over should the technology fail. Users of the app may be matched with a self-driving car but can opt out if they prefer a human driver. Self-driven rides cost the same as ordinary ones.

Uber's fleet of Volvo XC90s aren't the first self-driving cars on San Francisco streets — several other companies visit regularly with test prototypes, though none offers public rides.

Once testing is complete, the ultimate vision is to sell to the public technology that supporters argue will save thousands of lives because it doesn't drink, text, fall asleep or take dangerous risks.

Pritchard reported from Los Angeles. Contact him at <https://twitter.com/lalanewsman>. Liedtke can be reached at <https://twitter.com/liedtkesfc>

Residents in eastern Aleppo start boarding buses, ambulances

By PHILIP ISSA, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Residents in eastern Aleppo started to board buses and ambulances as the long-awaited pullout from the last rebel enclave in the embattled Syrian city got underway on Thursday.

The evacuation is part of a cease-fire deal reached this week to have the opposition surrender their last foothold in Aleppo to Syrian government control in the face of a devastating ground and air offensive by government forces in the past weeks that chipped away at the rebel enclave. The rebel pullout will mark the end of the rebels' four-year control of eastern Aleppo.

Hundreds of civilians have been killed and tens of thousands displaced in the government's campaign to retake Aleppo.

Plans to evacuate on Wednesday were scuttled when the area erupted in violence, raising the haunting possibility that all-out war could consume the city again. Much of eastern Aleppo has been reduced to a scene of devastation and rubble.

Earlier Thursday, the International Committee of the Red Cross confirmed its staff arrived together with the Syrian Arab Red Cross to evacuate 200 wounded people from the enclave, some in critical condition.

Syrian state TV has broadcast footage showing a convoy of green-colored municipal buses rumbling toward the agreed-on evacuation point inside the opposition-held area. The Russian military, a staunch Assad ally, said 20 buses and 10 ambulances would take the rebels to the rebel-held areas in the province of Idlib later Thursday.

The Russian military said the government in Damascus had given security guarantees to all rebels willing to leave Aleppo and that the Russians were monitoring the situation using drones.

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Separately — but in a key addendum to the deal — Syria state TV said 29 buses and ambulances were heading to two Shiite villages besieged by rebels to evacuate those critically ill and other humanitarian cases. The TV quoted Hama provincial governor, Mohammed al-Hazouri, as saying that the medical teams were heading to Foua and Kfraya for those evacuations.

The Turkey-Russia brokered truce-and-evacuations deal for Aleppo was held up Wednesday over demands by Syrian government allies to evacuate the sick and other humanitarian cases from the two villages.

A rebel spokesman involved in the negotiation over Aleppo evacuations said that Iran had made the demands about the Shiite villages besieged by rebels at the last minute, holding up the deal. He spoke on condition of anonymity because of ongoing negotiations.

Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group said overnight negotiations had reinforced a cease-fire deal to allow the rebels and civilians to leave eastern Aleppo. Shiite Hezbollah militiamen are fighting in the Syrian civil war on the side of President Bashar Assad's forces.

The handover of Aleppo's remaining opposition-run neighborhoods to government control would be a turning point in Syria's civil war, allowing Assad control of most of the country's urban centers.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the fighting stopped in the city around 4 a.m. Thursday.

Initially, the evacuation from Aleppo was to have begun at dawn Wednesday, but quickly derailed, descending into terrifying violence. Residents said government buses arrived in the pre-dawn hours at agreed upon meeting points, where the wounded were first in line to be evacuated after surviving weeks of intense fighting amid destroyed medical facilities and depleted supplies.

But they were turned away by Shiite pro-government militias manning the checkpoints. Then violence erupted: shelling and then airstrikes. The rebels retaliated, at one point shelling the pro-government villages of Foua and Kfraya in Idlib and detonating a car bomb in a frontline area.

Residents, activists and medical staff described mayhem as volleys of shells rained down on the area where tens of thousands of civilians were trapped alongside rebels in gutted apartment buildings and other shelters.

On Thursday, a Syrian army official, speaking by telephone to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to reporters, said all preparations are ready for the evacuations.

"The evacuations will begin at any moment," he said.

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. EVACUATION POISED TO BEGIN ANEW IN ALEPPO

Warring sides confirm the evacuation of rebel fighters and thousands of civilians from the last sliver of the besieged eastern part of Aleppo is imminent.

2. WHAT CRITICS ARE SAYING ABOUT DRUGMAKERS' OPIOID SOLUTION

They say a nationwide lobbying campaign is distracting from more productive solutions and delaying crucial efforts to steer physicians away from prescription opioids, AP finds.

3. BORDER CITIES WORRY NAFTA'S END WOULD HURT ECONOMIES

Trump's vow to rip up the trade deal has unnerved many people in Texas and Arizona, which have boomed under the 1994 treaty.

4. YAHOO'S BIG BREACH HELPS USHER IN AN AGE OF HACKER ANXIETY

And since most of us are dependent on big organizations that hold our digital lives in their hands, in a broad sense that effectively means no one is safe.

5. DON'T EXPECT INSURRECTION IN ELECTORAL COLLEGE

There seems to be little appetite among Republican electors not to certify Trump as president, despite pleas by Democrats to abandon him.

6. REVOLUTIONARY GUARD FACES NEW FOE

The Iranian paramilitary force is facing diminished economic influence with the gradual opening of the country's economy after the nuclear deal with world powers.

7. FOR GITMO PRISONERS, UNCERTAIN TIMES

Guantanamo's future will soon be up to Trump, who has said he would prefer to keep it open and even "load it up with some bad dudes."

8. EARLY HOLIDAY PRESENT FOR POT SMOKERS

Massachusetts' voter-approved marijuana measure is now in effect, making it legal for adults to possess, grow and use limited amounts of weed.

9. DANGEROUSLY COLD TEMPS GRIP PARTS OF US

A storm in the Upper Midwest is expected to bring several inches of snow in coming days, while schools and officials in the Northeast brace for their own blast of wintry weather .

10. NBA HAPPY FOR NEW CBA

Around pro basketball, players are mostly thrilled by the news that the league and the union have struck a tentative deal for a new collective bargaining agreement .

Game on: NBA players pleased about proposed labor deal

By **TIM REYNOLDS** and **JON KRAWCZYNSKI**, AP Basketball Writers

MIAMI (AP) — Washington Wizards guard John Wall didn't even need to see the details of the tentative collective bargaining agreement between the NBA and its players before drawing his conclusion.

"It's a lot better than having a lockout," Wall said.

Such was the sentiment around much of the NBA on Wednesday night, when it was announced that the sides reached an agreement in principle on a new labor deal. All that remains before at least six more years of guaranteed NBA labor peace are ratification votes by owners and players, which are likely to be no more than formalities.

Basic details include increases in values of rookie-scale contracts and exceptions, with a 45 percent increase in minimum salaries across the board in the first year of the new agreement. The rookie deals will be proportionate to the salary cap, either rising or falling as that does. The average salary is expected to hit \$8.5 million next season and rise to \$10 million by 2020-21.

There's never been more money in basketball, and neither side wanted that disrupted. So on Wednesday, one day before the deadline for either side to opt out of the current deal, negotiations were wrapped up and the sort of strife that caused some seasons to be shortened in the past was avoided without drama or fanfare.

It was announced simply, in a short statement. And then 10 games went on as scheduled, just as they will now for years to come.

"The game is going great for both the owners and players," Chicago Bulls guard Dwyane Wade said. "We talked about having a real partnership in the last labor negotiations. These are definitely signs that things are going in the right direction."

Three people briefed on the terms said the proposed deal is for seven seasons, with an opt-out possible after six. The people spoke on condition of anonymity because neither side released specific details.

If the deal is ratified, the season will start a week earlier, preseason games would be capped at six and one of the most dreaded elements of the schedule — the four-games-in-five-days stretches — may be eliminated. The deadline for opting out is now Jan. 13, with the NBA saying that's "in order to give both sides enough time to review the terms of the agreement and vote to ratify."

"I think all players wanted to shorten the preseason," Toronto Raptors guard Kyle Lowry said.

Most players who were in games on Wednesday didn't find out until afterward about the announcement from the NBA and National Basketball Players Association. Many were not surprised that an arrangement was reached, although some said they expected the sides might have to extend the opt-out deadline to continue working toward a deal.

That's not necessary now.

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The last major hurdle was a group licensing agreement. Among the four major U.S. pro sports leagues, the NBA was the only one that controlled its players' marketing rights for sponsorships and media. Upon approval of this deal, that control will now shift to the players.

"Great for the league," Los Angeles Clippers coach Doc Rivers said. "You kind of felt it was going that way. Everyone is doing well. The league is doing well. That is just absolutely wonderful news."

Even while the news was widely perceived as good, the deal isn't done.

There's been no vote, nothing's been signed, and that left some not wanting to celebrate quite yet. San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich declined to comment on the proposed deal, and Spurs guard Danny Green kept his reaction on the cautious side.

"We're all hoping for the best," Green said, "and I think a good outcome is coming."

Both sides expressed optimism throughout this process, pointing to the league's skyrocketing revenue and salaries — thanks to a massive new television deal — and rising TV ratings. The last lockout lasted 161 days and shortened the 2011-12 season.

"It's good," Oklahoma City Thunder star Russell Westbrook said. "Better than last time."

Krawczynski reported from Minneapolis. AP Sports Writers Dan Gelston in Philadelphia, Howard Fendrich in Washington, Kristie Rieken in Houston and Kareem Copeland in Salt Lake City, and Associated Press Writers Terrance Harris in Orlando and Raul Dominguez in San Antonio contributed.

Putin, Abe hold talks on Japan-Russia territorial dispute

By EMILY WANG and MARI YAMAGUCHI, Associated Press

NAGATO, Japan (AP) — The leaders of Russia and Japan held talks at a hot springs resort in western Japan on Thursday on a territorial dispute that has divided their countries for 70 years.

For Russian President Vladimir Putin, the summit meeting in Nagato city marks his first official visit to a G-7 country since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe invited Putin even though the G-7 nations, including Japan, still have sanctions on Russia. The meetings will move to Tokyo on Friday.

Abe hopes to make progress on the territorial dispute and bolster ties through joint economic projects. A major breakthrough is seen as unlikely.

In brief remarks before the meeting, Abe told Putin that the hot spring waters of Nagato are famous for relieving fatigue.

"I can guarantee you that the hot springs here would fully remove fatigue from our summit talks," he said.

Putin replied, "Better not to get too tired." He also credited Abe's efforts for "a certain movement in the development of Russian-Japanese ties."

James Brown, a Japan-Russia expert at Temple University's Japan campus in Tokyo, said the meeting was "an extraordinary development. I think Prime Minister Abe is being really quite bold in announcing this new approach to relations with Russia, especially coming at such a difficult time in relations between Russia and the West."

The meeting started after 6 p.m., more than two hours behind schedule, because Putin's plane landed late. Putin has a reputation for late arrivals. He kept Pope Francis waiting at the Vatican for one hour and 20 minutes in 2015. Earlier this month, Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida waited for two hours when he visited the Kremlin.

Abe, who flew from Tokyo to Nagato in the morning, used the time to visit the grave of his father, Shin-taro Abe. As foreign minister, the elder Abe strove for a resolution of the territorial dispute in the 1980s.

Disagreement over four southern Kuril islands, which Japan calls the Northern Territories, have kept the countries from signing a peace treaty formally ending their World War II hostilities.

Japan says the Soviet Union took the islands illegally at the end of World War II, expelling 17,000 Japanese to nearby Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan's four main islands. Russia governs the islands and the Russians who now live there.

"I hope to negotiate thoroughly in a quiet atmosphere, in the silence of the night," Abe told reporters ahead of his departure for Nagato. "I head into negotiations keeping close to my heart the long-cherished desire of the former islanders" to resolve the dispute.

Putin told Japanese journalists earlier this week that progress hinges on Japan's flexibility to compromise, and that he doesn't mind the status quo. "We think that we have no territorial problems. It's Japan that thinks that it has a territorial problem with Russia," he said.

But Russia wants to attract Japanese investment, particularly to its far east. Japan hopes that stronger ties through joint economic projects will help resolve the thorny territorial issue over time.

Yamaguchi reported from Tokyo. Associated Press writer Nataliya Vasilyeva in Moscow and videojournalist Kaori Hitomi in Tokyo contributed to this story.

Iran sanctions renewal becomes law without Obama signature

By JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In an unexpected reversal, President Barack Obama declined to sign a renewal of sanctions against Iran but let it become law anyway, in an apparent bid to alleviate Tehran's concerns that the U.S. is backsliding on the nuclear deal.

Although the White House had said that Obama was expected to sign the 10-year-renewal, the midnight deadline came and went Thursday with no approval from the president. White House press secretary Josh Earnest said Obama had decided to let it become law without his signature.

"The administration has, and continues to use, all of the necessary authorities to waive the relevant sanctions" lifted as part of the nuclear deal, Earnest said in a statement.

Under the Constitution, the president has 10 days after Congress passes a bill to sign it, veto it or do nothing. If Congress has adjourned, failing to sign it is a "pocket veto" that prevents the bill from becoming law. But if Congress is still in session, the bill becomes law with no signature. Although lawmakers have returned home for the holidays, Congress technically is still in session and holding "pro-forma" sessions this week.

Though Obama's move doesn't prevent the sanctions renewal from entering force, it marked a symbolic attempt by the president to demonstrate disapproval for lawmakers' actions. The White House has argued that the renewal is unnecessary because the administration retains other authorities to punish Iran, if necessary, and has expressed concern that the renewal may undermine the nuclear deal.

Iran had vowed to respond if the sanctions were renewed, arguing they violate the nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, which eased sanctions in exchange for curbs on Iran's nuclear program. Iran's government has complained to the United Nations about the renewal, and on Tuesday, Iran's president ordered up plans to build nuclear-powered ships and to formally accuse the U.S. of violating the terms of the deal.

Yet U.S. lawmakers argued that renewing the law, first passed in 1996 and renewed several times since, was critical to maintaining pressure on Iran to abide by the deal and to pushing back on Tehran's other troubling behavior in the region. The bill passed the Senate unanimously and the House by an overwhelming margin.

The Obama administration stressed that Iran would be unaffected by the renewal, as long as it continues honoring the nuclear deal. Secretary of State John Kerry said he'd told his Iranian counterpart that "to ensure maximum clarity," he'd issued new, redundant waivers exempting Iran from sanctions lifted under the deal.

"Extension of the Iran Sanctions Act does not affect in any way the scope of the sanctions relief Iran is receiving under the deal or the ability of companies to do business in Iran consistent with the JCPOA," Kerry said, using an acronym for the nuclear deal.

President-elect Donald Trump has been sharply critical of the nuclear deal and has threatened to try to

renegotiate it, and Israel's prime minister has said he plans to lobby Trump to undo the deal. Republican supporters of the sanctions had argued that renewing them would ensure that Trump would have the authority to reinstate penalties that Obama eased.

Under the nuclear deal, the U.S. and world powers suspended sweeping oil, trade and other financial sanctions that had devastated Iran's economy. In exchange, Tehran agreed to roll back its nuclear program, though the deal's critics say the agreement is flawed because it didn't halt all Iranian activity and because key restrictions eventually expire.

Reach Josh Lederman on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/joshledermanAP>

The electoral voters speak and they're not out for a revolt

By CALVIN WOODWARD and RACHEL LA CORTE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Although pestered to a fare-thee-well to abandon Donald Trump, Republican electors appear to be in no mood for an insurrection in the presidential campaign's last voting ritual. This most untraditional of elections is on course to produce a traditional outcome Monday — an Electoral College ticket to the White House for the president-elect.

Whether they like Trump or not, and some surely don't, scores of the Republicans chosen to cast votes in the state-capital meetings told AP they feel bound by history, duty, party loyalty or the law to rubber-stamp their state's results and make him president. Appeals numbering in the tens of thousands — drowning inboxes, ringing cell phones, stuffing home and office mailboxes with actual handwritten letters — have not swayed them.

The Associated Press tried to reach all 538 electors and interviewed more than 330 of them, finding widespread Democratic aggravation with the electoral process but little expectation that the hustle of anti-Trump maneuvering can derail him. For that to happen, Republican-appointed electors would have to stage an unprecedented defection and Democrats would need to buck tradition, too, by peeling away from Hillary Clinton and swinging behind a consensus candidate in sufficient numbers.

Still, people going to the typically ho-hum electoral gatherings have been drawn into the rough and tumble of campaign-season politics. Republicans are being beseeched to revolt in a torrent of lobbying, centered on the argument that Clinton won the popular vote and Trump is unsuited to the presidency. Most of it is falling on deaf ears, but it has also led to some acquaintances being made across the great political divide.

"Let me give you the total as of right now: 48,324 emails about my role as an elector," said Brian Westrate, a small-business owner and GOP district chairman in Fall Creek, Wisconsin. "I have a Twitter debate with a former porn star from California asking me to change my vote. It's been fascinating."

Similarly deluged, Republican elector Hector Maldonado, a Missouri National Guardsman, has taken the time to console one correspondent, a single mother and Air Force veteran who is beside herself with worry about what a Trump presidency will mean.

"Everything's going to be OK," he said he told her. "I know you're scared, but don't worry. Everything's going to be OK. And I know that it will be."

Maldonado, a Mexican immigrant and medical-equipment seller in Sullivan, backed Ted Cruz in the primaries but will cast his vote for Trump with conviction. "I took an oath once to become a U.S. citizen," he said, "and on Aug. 14, 1995, that was the first oath that I've taken to support the U.S. Constitution. A year later I took the oath again, to support the duties of being an officer in the U.S. Army. This was the third oath that I've taken to execute what I promised to do."

Even a leader of the anti-Trump effort, Bret Chifalo of Everett, Washington, calls it a "losing bet" — but one he says the republic's founders would want him to make. "I believe that Donald Trump is a unique danger to our country and the Founding Fathers put the Electoral College in place to, among other things, stop that from happening," said Chifalo, 38, an Xbox network engineer who backed Bernie Sanders in

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the Democratic primaries.

It takes 270 electoral votes to make a president. Despite losing the national popular vote, Trump won enough states to total 306 electoral votes. He would need to see three dozen fall away for him to lose his majority. Only one Republican elector told AP he won't vote for Trump.

Over the sweep of history, so-called faithless electors — those who vote for someone other than their state's popular-vote winner — have been exceptionally rare.

Nashville attorney Tom Lawless, who chose Marco Rubio in the primaries, described his vow to cast his electoral vote for Trump in blunt terms. "Hell will freeze and we will be skating on the lava before I change," he said. "He won the state and I've pledged and gave my word that that's what I would do. And I won't break it."

Nor will Jim Skaggs, 78, a developer from Bowling Green, Kentucky, despite deep concern about Trump. "His personality worries me," Skaggs said. "He is not open-minded." Skaggs knew Trump's father through the construction business, met the son in his 20s, and "I wasn't impressed."

"I hope he is far better than I think he is," Skaggs said. Even so, "I fully intend to vote for Donald Trump," he said. "I think it's a duty."

State law and practices vary for electors, but even in states where electors don't take an oath to vote a certain way or don't face legal ramifications for stepping out of line, the heavy expectation is for them to ratify the results. As much as they don't want Trump in office, some Democrats are as reluctant as Republicans to go rogue.

"We lost the election," said John Padilla of Albuquerque, New Mexico, a Democratic ward chairman. "That's how elections are and you shake hands with your opponent and you get on with what you have to do and support your candidate."

Yet Democratic electors, stung by losing an election to a Republican who trails Clinton by more than 2.6 million votes nationwide, spoke strongly in the interviews in favor of overhauling or throwing out the electoral system. Republican electors generally supported it, reasoning that it provides a counterweight to political dominance by coastal states with huge (and largely Democratic) populations, like California and New York.

Chiafalo is a co-founder of the Hamilton Electors, a group formed to steer other electors from both parties to a third candidate. "We've stated from Day 1 this is a long shot, this is a Hail Mary," he said.

But if the effort fails, it won't be from lack of trying. Most of the pleas to reject Trump are coordinated, automated, professionally generated and, for those reasons, none too persuasive.

"We got a stack of letters from idiots," said Republican elector Edward Robson, 86, a Phoenix, Arizona, homebuilder.

Fellow elector Carole Joyce, 72, a state committeewoman in Phoenix and retired public health nurse, was more charitable.

"They've caused me great distress on my computer, that's for sure," she said. "I average anywhere from a thousand to 3,000 emails a day. And I'm getting inundated in my regular mailbox out front — anywhere from 17 to 35 letters a day coming from Washington state, Oregon, all around the country. Hand-written, some of them five or six pages long, quoting me the Federalist Papers, the Constitution, asking me again out of desperation not to vote for Donald Trump.

"And that's their right," she said. "I've had nothing threatening, I'm happy to say. The election is over, they need to move on."

La Corte reported from Olympia, Washington. Associated Press writers who contributed: Scott Bauer in Madison, Wisconsin; Summer Ballentine in Jefferson City, Missouri; Erik Schelzig in Nashville, Tennessee; Morgan Lee in Santa Fe, New Mexico; Bob Christie in Phoenix, Arizona; and Michael Biesecker, Emily Swanson and Monika Mathur in Washington.

Yahoo's big breach helps usher in an age of hacker anxiety

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE, AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Yahoo has become the worst-case example of an unnerving but increasingly common phenomenon — massive hacks that steal secrets and other potentially revealing information from our personal digital accounts, or from big organizations that hold sensitive data on our behalf.

On Wednesday, Yahoo disclosed a gargantuan breach affecting more than a billion user accounts, the largest such attack in history. The company said that attack happened in August 2013, although Yahoo only discovered it recently. Worse, the company's announcement followed a similar announcement last September of a 2014 hack — one Yahoo ascribed to an unnamed foreign government — that affected 500 million accounts.

Neither Yahoo breach has yet been linked to online fraud or any specific repercussions for Yahoo users. But their disclosure closely follows U.S. intelligence concerns about Russian hacking of Democratic emails during the presidential campaign — not to mention other recent attacks on a major health insurer, a medical lab-test company and the government office that manages millions of federal employees.

"The lesson is clear: no organization is immune to compromise," said Jeff Hill, director of product management for cybersecurity consultant Prevalent. And since most of us are dependent on big organizations that hold our digital lives in their hands, in a broad sense that effectively means no one is safe.

GOVERNMENT ATTACKERS

Of course, it's not that simple. The most sophisticated break-ins are likely the work of digital burglars working for foreign governments that are mostly interested in manipulating their enemies, not emptying your bank account.

In the past few years, hackers tied to foreign governments are believed to have stolen emails to embarrass celebrities and Hollywood moguls (recall the Sony Pictures break-in during 2014) and possibly even to influence the 2016 presidential election.

"Espionage has gone digital like so many other things our world," said Steve Grobman, chief technology officer at Intel Security. "We're increasingly seeing data being used as a weapon, where leaked or fabricated information is being used to intentionally damage individuals and governments."

Yahoo's security breakdowns could turn into expensive deal breakers for the Sunnyvale, California, company.

Both lapses occurred during the reign of Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer, a once-lauded leader who found herself unable to turn around the company in the four years since her arrival. Earlier this year, Yahoo agreed to sell its digital operations to Verizon Communications for \$4.8 billion — a deal that may now be imperiled by the hacking revelations.

TWO HACKS, MORE THAN A BILLION ACCOUNTS

Yahoo didn't say if it believes the same hacker might have pulled off two separate attacks. The Sunnyvale, California, company blamed the late 2014 attack on a hacker affiliated with an unidentified foreign government, but said it hasn't been able to identify the source behind the 2013 intrusion.

Yahoo has more than a billion monthly active users, although some have multiple accounts and others have none at all. An unknown number of accounts were affected by both hacks.

In both attacks, the stolen information included names, email addresses, phone numbers, birthdates and security questions and answers. The company says it believes bank-account information and payment-card data were not affected.

But hackers also apparently stole passwords in both attacks. Technically, those passwords should be secure; Yahoo said they were scrambled twice — once by encryption and once by another technique called hashing. But hackers have become adept at cracking secured passwords by assembling huge dictionaries of similarly scrambled phrases and matching them against stolen password databases.

That could mean trouble for any users who reused their Yahoo password for other online accounts. Yahoo is requiring users to change their passwords and invalidating security questions so they can't be used to hack into accounts. (You may get a reprieve if you've changed your password since September.)

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Security experts said the 2013 attack was likely the work of a foreign government fishing for information about specific people. One big tell: It doesn't appear that much personal data from Yahoo accounts has been posted for sale online, meaning the hack probably wasn't the work of ordinary criminals.

That means most Yahoo users probably don't have anything to worry about, said J.J. Thompson, CEO of Rook Security.

QUESTIONS FOR VERIZON

News of the additional hack further jeopardizes Yahoo's plans to fall into Verizon's arms. If the hacks cause a user backlash against Yahoo, the company's services wouldn't be as valuable to Verizon, raising the possibility that the sale price might be re-negotiated or the deal may be called off. The telecom giant wants Yahoo and its many users to help it build a digital ad business.

After the news of the first hack broke, Verizon said it would re-evaluate its Yahoo deal and in a Wednesday statement said it will review the "new development before reaching any final conclusions." Spokesman Bob Varettoni declined to answer further questions.

At the very least, the security lapses "definitely will help Verizon in its negotiations to lower the price," Gartner analyst Avivah Litan predicted. Yahoo has argued that news of the 2014 hack didn't negatively affect traffic to its services, strengthening its contention that the Verizon deal should be completed under the original terms.

"We are confident in Yahoo's value and we continue to work toward integration with Verizon," the company said.

Investors appeared worried about the Verizon deal. Yahoo's shares fell 96 cents, or 2 percent, to \$39.95 after the disclosure of the latest hack.

Fed's forecast after raising key rate: 3 more hikes in 2017

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — After raising its benchmark interest rate in response to a strengthening U.S. economy, the Federal Reserve foresees three more hikes in 2017.

The Fed's move to raise its key rate will mean modestly higher rates on some loans.

Wednesday's action signaled the Fed's belief that the economy has improved over the past year after a rough start to 2016 and can withstand slightly higher borrowing rates. Its expectation of three rate increases in 2017 is up from two in its forecast three months ago.

The central bank said in a statement after its latest policy meeting that it's raising its benchmark rate by a quarter-point to a still-low range of 0.5 percent to 0.75 percent. The Fed had most recently raised the rate last December from a record low near zero set during the 2008 financial crisis.

Responding to a question at a news conference, Chair Janet Yellen said she didn't think the economy needed stimulus from President-elect Donald Trump's proposed tax cuts and infrastructure spending — the kind of fiscal support that Yellen and her predecessor, Ben Bernanke, had called for in the past.

Yellen said such policies would be unlikely to maximize employment, since the unemployment rate — 4.6 percent, a nine-year low — is now slightly below the Fed's own long-term target.

"My predecessor and I called for fiscal stimulus when the unemployment rate was substantially higher than it is now," she said.

The Fed chair stressed that she wasn't providing advice or guidance to the incoming Trump administration. And she downplayed any expectations that Trump's economic program could lead to faster rate hikes resulting from higher inflation.

The Fed's move Wednesday, only the second rate hike in the past decade, came on a unanimous 10-0 vote. The central bank also released updated forecasts that showed modest changes to its outlook for growth, unemployment and inflation, mainly to take account of a stronger economy and job market.

James Marple, senior economist at TDBank, said the Fed's forecast of three rate increases next year, up from two, was the "only real surprise" Wednesday.

"The move up is a signal that the Fed has become more confident in the economic outlook and that

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inflation will increasingly track closer to the 2 percent target," Marple said.

It's hardly guaranteed that the Fed's forecast for three hikes in 2017 will prove accurate. Last year at this time, for example, the Fed predicted it would raise rates four times in 2016. It turns out it's raising them just once.

Wednesday's rate increase should have little effect on mortgages or auto and student loans. The Fed doesn't directly affect those rates, at least not in the short run. But rates on some other loans — notably credit cards, home equity loans and adjustable-rate mortgages — will likely rise soon, though only modestly. Those rates are based on benchmarks like banks' prime rate, which moves in tandem with the Fed's key rate.

After the Fed's announcement, several major banks announced that they were raising their prime rate from 3.50 percent to 3.75 percent.

"This single quarter-point move in interest rates will go largely unnoticed at the household level, but coupled with last year's hike, the cumulative effect could mount quickly if the Fed quickens the pace of rate hikes in 2017," said Greg McBride, Bankrate.com's chief financial analyst.

Mortgage rates have been surging since Trump's presidential victory last month on expectations that his economic program would accelerate economic growth and inflation.

Stock investors appeared disappointed by the Fed's forecast of three rate increases in 2017. The Dow Jones industrial average closed down about 118 points — 0.6 percent — a sign that stock investors are pricing in additional Fed rate hikes. The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 2.57 percent from 2.47 percent

Yellen attributed the Fed's higher number of estimated rate hikes for 2017 to a lower unemployment rate and possibly some changes in federal budget policy beginning next year. But she emphasized that any changes to the Fed's projections were "modest."

She said Fed officials, during their meeting, discussed Trump's economic plans as well as the surge in stock prices, bond yields and the dollar that's followed his election. She said they reached no conclusions.

"We are operating under a cloud of uncertainty at the moment, and we have time to wait and to see what changes occur and to factor those into our decision-making," she said.

In response to a question, Yellen said she plans to serve out her four-year term, which ends in February 2018. Most analysts don't expect her to remain after that.

The Fed's latest projections have the unemployment rate dipping to 4.5 percent by the end of 2017 and remaining at that level in 2018. It foresees economic growth reaching 1.9 percent this year and 2.1 percent in 2017, slightly more optimistic than it projected in September.

The central bank kept its long-term estimate for economic growth at 1.8 percent, far below the 4 percent pace that Trump has said he can achieve with his economic program.

Overall, the Fed's policy statement showed only modest changes in wording from the previous meeting. It did note that inflation expectations "have moved up considerably but still are low."

AP Business Writers Christopher S. Rugaber in Washington and Ken Sweet in New York contributed to this report.

The Latest: Senate to hold hearing on election meddling

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

11:25 p.m.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee plans to hold an open hearing in January that will examine possible meddling by Russia in last month's presidential election.

An aide to Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee says he and Ben Cardin of Maryland received a classified briefing on cyber threats prior to the Nov. 8.

Corker is the committee's Republican chairman and Cardin is the top Democrat on the panel.

The aide was not authorized to speak publicly and requested anonymity.

Corker said on MSNBC Tuesday that the Director of National Intelligence, the CIA and the FBI differ over whether Russia interfered to help Donald Trump win the White House. He says, "I know that's frustrating

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to people.”

10:45 p.m.

The agency that oversees U.S. intelligence says it will release more information to the public about Russia’s attempts to influence the election once a review ordered by President Barack Obama is complete — but not before.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence is responding to reports that the U.S. intelligence community is conflicted about whether Russian hacking was intended to help Donald Trump.

Obama has ordered a review of foreign interference in U.S. elections to be completed before he leaves office on Jan. 20. The office of DNI James Clapper says it will brief Congress on the conclusions and will also inform the public “consistent with protecting intelligence sources and methods.” That means some details may be withheld.

Clapper’s office says it won’t comment until then.

10:20 p.m.

President-elect Donald Trump’s transition team says a questionnaire sent to Energy Department officials “was not authorized or part of our standard protocol.”

The Trump team had sought information about the agency’s operations and personnel, including a list of employees and contractors who attended international meetings on climate change over the past five years.

An Energy Department spokesman said Tuesday that the agency “will not be providing any individual names to the transition team.” The spokesman said some of the questions asked left DOE workers “unsettled.”

Democrats have called the questionnaire a modern-day political witch hunt that could have a chilling impact on federal workers.

The transition team released a statement Wednesday evening saying the questionnaire was not authorized and “the person who sent it has been properly counseled.”

4:50 p.m.

President-elect Donald Trump is naming Michigan GOP leader Ronna Romney McDaniel deputy chairwoman of the Republican National Committee, in anticipation of her becoming RNC chairwoman next year.

Trump is praising McDaniel’s loyalty “to our movement” and says, “I look forward to her serving as the party’s chairman in 2017.”

McDaniel is the niece of 2012 GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney, who sharply criticized Trump throughout the 2016 election campaign. Trump was the first Republican presidential nominee to carry Michigan in 28 years.

The 168-member Republican National Committee is expected to select a new chairman at its winter meeting, scheduled for next month in Washington.

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus has been asked to serve as Trump’s White House chief of staff. Priebus had supported McDaniel as his successor.

4:20 p.m.

A bipartisan advocacy group sees President-elect Donald Trump as a potential leader in long-dormant efforts to reduce big money in politics.

Issue One has united more than 100 former lawmakers behind a plan to give small donors more power in the political process through tax rebates. The coalition is led by former Indiana Rep. Tim Roemer, who says lawmakers often describe their fundraising duties as “sickening.”

Lawmakers think the new president could use his political juice to help pass the first major campaign finance overhaul in more than a decade. The group hopes to break through to Trump, who has put forward no policy proposals on the issue even as he has repeatedly pledged to “drain the swamp” in Washington.

Issue One has passed along its proposals to Trump transition aides.

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2:45 p.m.

President-elect Donald Trump has told group of technology executives that he's "here to help you folks do well."

Trump assembled the leaders at Trump Tower in New York on Wednesday.

Many in Silicon Valley were among Trump's sharpest critics during the campaign, expressing concerns his policies could stifle innovation and compromise digital privacy.

But Trump struck a positive message at the top of the meeting. He put it this way: "We want you to keep going with the incredible innovation" and said, "We will be there for you."

Among those at the meeting: Apple's Tim Cook, Alphabet's Larry Page, Amazon's Jeff Bezos (BAY'-zohs) and Telsa's Elon Musk, as well as Trump's adult children.

2:35 p.m.

Donald Trump could have big legal or political problems if he doesn't dump his new hotel in the nation's capital.

Democrats say he'd be in breach of his lease to use the government-owned building that houses the hotel unless he sells his ownership interest before he assumes office on Jan. 20.

House Democrats cite a Dec. 8 briefing by a deputy commissioner at the government agency that's overseeing the lease.

The General Services Administration says in a statement that it won't make a decision on whether there's a breach until after Trump is in the White House.

A clause in the lease requires that "no elected official" shall be "admitted" to the lease. Some experts in government contracting law have said that means Trump must divest his ownership interest.

12:10 p.m.

Hundreds of inaugural planners are spending the day planted in front of a giant 60-by-40-foot floor map of Washington trying to game out how each moment of Inauguration Day will play out.

These aren't people who like surprises. They're trying to anticipate every scenario for a day that should be all about the peaceful transfer of power and not some pesky mix-up.

The military provides 13,000 active duty and National Guard members to help with the logistics associated with the swearing-in ceremony, massive parade, big protests, fancy balls and hundreds of thousands of spectators.

What really keeps the inaugural planners up at night? The weather.

One military commander jokes that they've put the chaplain in charge of that variable, and he's promised a beautiful day for Jan. 20.

12:04 p.m.

Democratic senators are calling on Betsy DeVos (dih-VAHS') — President-elect Donald Trump's nominee for education secretary — to ensure that a political action committee she controlled pays \$5.3 million in fines and penalties owed for campaign finance violations.

DeVos' All Children Matter PAC broke Ohio election law by funneling \$870,000 in contributions from its nationwide PAC to its Ohio affiliate in 2008. The state of Ohio later fined the group \$5 million. That fine hasn't been paid yet.

Five Democratic senators have written DeVos to express concern that she and her PAC would — in the lawmakers' words — "brazenly disregard election law and blatantly refuse to take responsibility and pay" the fines.

The senators note that, as education secretary, DeVos would oversee repayment of \$1 trillion in debt from millions of student-loan borrowers.

12 p.m.

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The chief government ethics agency says President-elect Donald Trump's plans to transfer management control of his business to his children wouldn't eliminate the issue of conflicts of interest.

That's the word from the Office of Government Ethics in a letter responding to questions from Democratic Sen. Tom Carper of Delaware. The office says transferring management control to Trump's children's wouldn't meet the requirements for setting up a blind trust or eliminate conflicts.

Other presidents have sold their financial assets and left the money in a blind trust overseen by a manager without ties to them. That's not required by federal law.

Presidents are generally exempt from federal rules on conflicts of interest.

Trump tweeted on Monday that he plans to hand managerial control of his business to two of his children.

11:30 a.m.

Trump Hotels says it'll no longer operate a Rio de Janeiro luxury hotel that's involved in a criminal investigation. The company also is pulling its name off the Brazilian property.

Trump Hotels spokeswoman Christine Lin tells The Associated Press that the decision was made because developers are behind schedule.

The beachside hotel in the upscale suburb of Barra da Tijuca was supposed to be finished in time for the Rio Olympics this past August. Today, only a portion of it is operational.

In October, prosecutors said they were investigating questionable investments in the hotel by two pension funds. Hotel owner LSH Barra has denied wrongdoing.

President-elect Donald Trump has faced criticism for investments overseas that many say present conflicts of interest.

11:03 a.m.

President-elect Donald Trump's team says he is receiving formal intelligence briefing three times a week.

Spokesman Sean Spicer says Trump is also meeting daily with incoming national security adviser Michael Flynn to be briefed on intelligence matters.

Trump has challenged the necessity of a daily intelligence briefing, telling Fox News Sunday in a recent interview that he doesn't need to hear the same information every day. He says he's told intelligence officials to let him know if situations change.

Trump has also publicly challenged the intelligence community's assessment that Russia interfered in the presidential election in order to help his prospects.

10:07 a.m.

"America's Got Talent" star Jackie Evancho will sing the national anthem at Donald Trump's inauguration ceremony in January.

The 16-year-old tells NBC's "Today" that she's excited, and "it's going to be awesome."

Her website says the Pittsburgh native is a soprano who has performed at the National Prayer Breakfast and the lighting of the National Christmas Tree in Washington.

Her Facebook page includes a photo of her with Trump at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida.

Trump adviser Boris Epshteyn tweeted a confirmation of Evancho's booking, calling her "an inspiration for all Americans."

9:27 a.m.

Donald Trump says he appreciates House Speaker Paul Ryan, but the president-elect also is warning the top congressional Republican not to cross him.

At a rally Tuesday in West Allis, Trump praised the Wisconsin politicians in attendance. When Ryan drew boos, Trump said he was "like a fine wine. Every day that goes by I get to appreciate his genius more and more." He added, however, "if he ever goes against me I'm not going to say that."

Trump and Ryan were at odds throughout the campaign, with the speaker declining to campaign for

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the GOP nominee after a video emerged of Trump making predatory remarks about women. Since the election, Ryan is all-in on Trump, even repeatedly using the Trump slogan, "Make America Great Again."

8:10 a.m.

Democrats on the House oversight committee say a government administrator told them that Donald Trump must divest himself of all financial interests in his Washington hotel or be in breach of his lease with the federal government.

That's according to a letter they wrote reflecting what they say is the General Service Administration's assessment. Led by Maryland congressman Elijah Cummings, the Democrats wrote that Trump's daughter, Ivanka, is the primary contact on the lease—and that presents "obvious" conflicts of interest.

The letter also says the GSA had not, as of Dec. 8, heard from the Trump Organization about how it will solve the contract issue.

Trump contracted with the GSA to redevelop the Old Post Office building as a hotel. A provision in the contract expressly prohibits any elected official from having a financial interest in the lease.

The property opened for business this fall.

6:10 a.m.

President-elect Donald Trump has announced his selection of former campaign rival Rick Perry to be the country's next secretary of energy.

In a statement early Wednesday on his decision, Trump said that Perry, a former governor of Texas, had led his state through "a sustained period of economic growth and prosperity" by developing its energy resources and infrastructure.

Trump says in his statement that his administration "is going to make sure we take advantage of our huge natural resource deposits to make America energy independent and create vast new wealth for our nation."

Perry calls it "a tremendous honor" to be chosen for Trump's Cabinet. Perry adds that he looks forward to "engaging in a conversation" about America's energy future.

'Growing Pains' star and TV host Alan Thicke dies at age 69

By LYNN ELBER, AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Alan Thicke's 1980s TV dad credentials were neatly in order on "Growing Pains." His Dr. Jason Seaver was an open-hearted parent and an enlightened husband, working from home to help tend the kids while his wife revived her career.

But Thicke's character anchored a sitcom that was also 1950s-retro, part of television's renewed embrace of the traditional nuclear family after a string of single-parent shows. "Growing Pains" debuted in 1985, one year after "The Cosby Show" showed the old formula could be made new.

While Bill Cosby's NBC series touched on social issues, ABC's "Growing Pains" was pure comfort food about a suburban family with a genial, father-knows-best patriarch, cheerful mom (Joanna Kerns) and a brood that included breakout heartthrob Kirk Cameron as teenager Mike and, in the show's final 1991-92 season, Leonardo DiCaprio.

Thicke said a 1985 interview with The Associated Press that he wouldn't have pitched a show like "Growing Pains" but suggested it fit the times.

"Ronald Reagan is president and there's no war, maybe that creates an environment for a show like ours," he said.

The Canadian-born TV host, writer, composer and actor died Tuesday at age 69 after suffering a heart attack and collapsing while playing ice hockey with his youngest son, Carter, the Los Angeles Times reported (<http://lat.ms/2gYseIM>).

Another son, pop-singer Robin Thicke, told the newspaper that one of the last things his father said was to compliment Carter on a shot.

He called his father "the greatest man I ever met" and "always a gentleman."

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Thicke's fictional son also mourned him.

"I spent Monday through Friday for seven important years with Alan Thicke as my 'TV dad,'" Cameron said in a statement. "I'm shocked and truly heartbroken today at the news of his death. Alan was a generous, kind and loving man. I am so blessed to have grown up with him."

DiCaprio, who played a homeless youngster taken in by the Seavers, said Thicke "knew how to harness the power of the entertainment industry to be a positive influence in so many lives — including mine. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity I had to work with Alan early in my career. ... I've seen him a number of times over the years and when Alan Thicke walked in the room, quite frankly, no one was cooler."

Other celebrities who had crossed paths with Thicke, whether through music, acting or simply as friends, expressed their sorrow at news of his death.

"I grew up watching him and got to know him through Robin. He was always so kind to me," John Legend posted on Twitter.

Thicke's fellow Canadians also responded quickly. William Shatner posted on Twitter that he was saddened by his loss, and singer Anne Murray's Twitter post said she was "shocked and devastated," recalling him as a friend and the writer-producer of many of her TV specials.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tweeted, "Alan Thicke was proudly Canadian, never forgetting his roots as he soared to stardom."

The Edmonton Oilers weighed in as well. "RIP to one of the great ones, Alan Thicke," was posted on the hockey team's website, with a photo of a youthful Thicke and Wayne Gretzky on the ice.

Born in Ontario, Canada, in 1947, Thicke was nominated for three Emmy Awards for his work in the late 1970s as a writer for Barry Manilow's talk show, and later for a satirical take on the genre in the variety show "America 2-Night."

He composed several popular theme songs, including the original theme for "The Wheel of Fortune" and other shows including "The Facts of Life" and "Diff'rent Strokes."

Perhaps his boldest assault on the U.S. market was as a virtual unknown taking on the King of Late Night, Johnny Carson. "Thicke of the Night" was a syndicated talk-music-and-comedy show meant to go head-to-head against NBC's "The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson."

It premiered in September 1983 with great fanfare, boasting an innovative format and regulars including Richard Belzer, Arsenio Hall, Gilbert Gottfried and Fred Willard. But all too quickly, it was evident that Carson wasn't going to be dethroned, and the ambitious "Thicke" disappeared into the night after one season.

"Certainly everything I needed to learn about failure, struggle, damage control, career rehabilitation and ego bashing I learned in that," he said in a 1995 interview with the AP.

He had the satisfaction of seeing his musical skills passed down to son Robin, a successful singer-songwriter and producer who, with brother Brennan, was born to Thicke and the first of his three wives, Gloria Loring.

In an email, Loring described Thicke's passing as "a shock. We were all just together for Thanksgiving. He was funny, talented and deeply devoted to his family."

In the 1990s and beyond, Thicke stayed busy as a celebrity TV host and with guest shots on dozens of series, including "How I Met Your Mother" and, this year, the Netflix series "Fuller House" starring Candace Cameron Bure and the NBC drama "This Is Us."

"You were a part of my family and hockey family. You will be greatly missed. My heart hurts," tweeted Bure, sister to Kirk Cameron.

A lifelong hockey fan, Thicke frequently attending LA Kings games and took credit for introducing the sport to celebrity friends.

National Hockey League Commissioner Gary Bettman called Thicke a "passionate" hockey fan, and more: "Alan was an energetic participant in many of our events, including All-Star, charity games and Awards shows. He frequently attended games, and was with us as recently as September's World Cup."

He began playing at age 5, but acknowledged he wasn't very good at it.

"You were expected to play," he said in 1998. "I was never good enough for the big time, but I always

had fun at it.”

In 2003, Thicke received 30 stitches and lost five teeth after he was struck by a puck while practicing for a celebrity fundraising hockey game. “I won’t be playing any leading men roles in the next couple of months,” he joked after the accident.

Thicke is survived by his wife, Tanya Callau Thicke; his sons Robin and Brennan from a previous marriage to Gloria Loring; and his son Carter from a previous marriage to Gina Tolleson.

AP Entertainment Writer Anthony McCartney in Los Angeles and Music Writer Mesfin Fekadu and Television Writer Frazier Moore in New York contributed to this report.

Trump tells anxious tech leaders: ‘We’re here to help’

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and MICHAEL LIEDTKE, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump, who faced fierce opposition from some Silicon Valley leaders during the election campaign, strove to assure the titans of tech on Wednesday that his administration is “here to help you folks do well.”

Trump, still savoring his election victory, convened a summit at Trump Tower for nearly a dozen tech leaders, whose industry largely supported Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton. Many in the industry are worried that Trump will stifle innovation, curb the hiring of computer-savvy immigrants and infringe on consumers’ digital privacy.

He immediately tried to allay those fears.

“We want you to keep going with the incredible innovation. Anything we can do to help this go on, we will be there for you,” Trump said. “You’ll call my people, you’ll call me. We have no formal chain of command around here.”

The CEOs who filled the table in Trump’s 25th floor conference room included Apple’s Tim Cook, Alphabet’s Larry Page, Google’s Eric Schmidt, Microsoft’s Satya Nadella, Amazon’s Jeff Bezos, Tesla’s Elon Musk, IBM’s Ginni Rometty, Oracle’s Safra Catz and Cisco Systems’ Chuck Robbins. Facebook’s chief operating officer, Sheryl Sandberg, attended instead of its CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, who is one of many tech executives who have expressed misgivings about Trump’s pledge to deport millions of immigrants who are in the country illegally.

The meeting remained amiable and the group, which agreed to meet quarterly, also had preliminary discussions about immigration and how to stay competitive with China, though no firm commitments were made, according to a person briefed on the meeting but not authorized to discuss it publicly.

Trump was joined by several members of his senior staff and his three eldest children, who are expected to help run his business once he takes office, again blurring the line between the president-elect’s personal and professional lives.

Reporters were allowed to witness only the first moments of the meeting and most of the attendees departed without comment. But Bezos, who is also owner of The Washington Post, which has been a frequent target of Trump complaints about campaign coverage, said he found the meeting to be “very productive” and said he “shared the view that the administration should make innovation one of its key pillars.”

No industry was more open in its contempt for Trump during the campaign. In an open letter published in July, more than 140 technology executives, entrepreneurs and venture capitalists skewered him as a “disaster for innovation.”

And Trump’s denigration of Mexicans, his pledge to deport millions of immigrants now living in the U.S. illegally and his crude remarks about women were widely viewed as racist, authoritarian and sexist by an industry that prides itself on its tolerance.

Trump, in turn, sometimes lashed out at the industry and its leaders, and — despite his reassurances Wednesday — questions remain about how he’ll govern.

He has lambasted Bezos for the Post’s campaign coverage and has suggested that Amazon could face

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antitrust scrutiny after his election. Trump also rebuked Cook for fighting a government order requiring Apple to unlock an encrypted iPhone used by a shooter in last year's terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California.

And Trump's repeated negative comments about immigrants raised fears that he might dismantle programs that have enabled tech companies to hire tens of thousands of foreign workers with the skills to write computer programs, design web pages and build mobile apps.

The industry is also worried that Trump might try to undermine "net neutrality," a regulation requiring internet service providers to offer equal access to all online services. Trump's harsh characterization of the media as dishonest and unfair has raised other fears that he might try to restrict free speech online.

Some in Silicon Valley think the industry's best move would be to keep its distance until Trump changes his tone. Former Google executive Chris Sacca, now a tech investor, argues that industry leaders should have steered clear of the meeting altogether.

Sitting down with the president-elect "would only make sense after Trump has given public assurances he won't encourage censorship, will stop exploiting fake news, will promote net neutrality, denounce hate crimes and embrace science," Sacca said. "If and until then, tech figures who visit are being used to whitewash an authoritarian bully who threatens not just our industry but our entire democracy."

One major tech company not invited, despite Trump's frequent use of its product, was Twitter. Sean Spicer, communications director for the Republican National Committee, disputed that they were singled out — Twitter has said it declined to make branded emojis on the campaign's behalf — and explained its absence by simply saying "the conference table was only so big, OK?"

Separately on Wednesday, Michigan's Republican Chairwoman Ronna Romney McDaniel was officially named Trump's choice to become the new RNC chair next year. The niece of 2012 GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney would be the first woman to hold the committee's top position in 40 years, and her promotion comes after Trump became the first Republican to carry Michigan in 28 years.

Trump also officially announced his selection of former Texas Gov. Rick Perry as his secretary of energy, leading a department Perry once suggested scrapping.

While Trump remained in his Manhattan skyscraper Wednesday, he was hitting the road Thursday for the latest stop in his "thank you" tour, this time in Hershey, Pennsylvania. The tour, which is designed to salute supporters in states that helped him win the White House, will continue Friday in Orlando, Florida, before wrapping Saturday at a Mobile, Alabama, football stadium which was the site of the biggest rally of his campaign.

Liedtke reported from San Francisco. Associated Press writer Lolita C. Baldor contributed from Washington

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Dec. 15, the 350th day of 2016. There are 16 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 15, 1791, the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, went into effect following ratification by Virginia.

On this date:

In 1814, the "Hartford Convention" began as New England Federalists opposed to the War of 1812 secretly gathered in the Connecticut capital. (America's victory in the Battle of New Orleans and the war's end effectively discredited the Convention.)

In 1864, the two-day Battle of Nashville began during the Civil War as Union forces commanded by Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas attacked Confederate troops led by Gen. John Bell Hood; the result was a

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resounding Northern victory.

In 1890, Sioux Indian Chief Sitting Bull and 11 other tribe members were killed in Grand River, South Dakota, during a confrontation with Indian police.

In 1938, groundbreaking for the Jefferson Memorial took place in Washington, D.C. with President Franklin D. Roosevelt taking part in the ceremony.

In 1939, the Civil War motion picture epic "Gone with the Wind," starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable, had its world premiere in Atlanta.

In 1944, a single-engine plane carrying bandleader Glenn Miller, a major in the U.S. Army Air Forces, disappeared over the English Channel while en route to Paris.

In 1965, two U.S. manned spacecraft, Gemini 6A and Gemini 7, maneuvered to within 10 feet of each other while in orbit.

In 1966, movie producer Walt Disney died in Los Angeles at age 65.

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter announced he would grant diplomatic recognition to Communist China on New Year's Day and sever official relations with Taiwan.

In 1989, a popular uprising began in Romania that resulted in the downfall of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu (chow-SHES'-koo).

In 1995, European Union leaders meeting in Madrid, Spain, chose "euro" as the name of the new single European currency.

In 2001, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, Italy, was reopened to the public after a \$27 million realignment that had dragged on for over a decade.

Ten years ago: Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld bid farewell to the Pentagon in a splashy sendoff featuring lavish praise from President George W. Bush. Gov. Jeb Bush suspended Florida executions two days after the prolonged death of a condemned inmate because the needles had been wrongly inserted. (Florida's moratorium was lifted in July 2007.) Executions in California were effectively put on hold when a federal judge in San Francisco declared the state's lethal-injection procedure unconstitutional.

Five years ago: The flag used by U.S. forces in Iraq was lowered in a low-key Baghdad airport ceremony marking the end of a war that had left 4,500 Americans and 110,000 Iraqis dead and cost more than \$800 billion. The Senate, in an 86-13 vote, joined the House in passing a massive \$662 billion defense bill. British-born author, essayist and polemicist Christopher Hitchens, 62, died at a Houston hospital.

One year ago: Sens. Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio clashed over U.S. military intervention, government spying on Americans' communications and immigration as front-runner Donald Trump defended his provocative call for banning Muslims from the United States during a Republican presidential debate held in Las Vegas. In a major policy change, Secretary of State John Kerry accepted Russia's longstanding demand that Syrian President Bashar Assad's future be determined by his own people.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-comedian Tim Conway is 83. Singer Cindy Birdsong (The Supremes) is 77. Rock musician Dave Clark (The Dave Clark Five) is 74. Rock musician Carmine Appice (Vanilla Fudge) is 70. Actor Don Johnson is 67. Actress Melanie Chartoff is 66. Movie director Julie Taymor is 64. Movie director Alex Cox is 62. Actor Justin Ross is 62. Rock musician Paul Simonon (The Clash) is 61. Movie director John Lee Hancock is 60. Acting Democratic National Committee Chairwoman Donna Brazile is 57. Country singer Doug Phelps (Brother Phelps; Kentucky Headhunters) is 56. Movie producer-director Reginald Hudlin is 55. Actress Helen Slater is 53. Actress Molly Price is 51. Actor Garrett Wang (wahnng) is 48. Actor Michael Shanks is 46. Actor Stuart Townsend is 44. Figure skater Surya Bonaly is 43. Actor Geoff Stults is 40. "Crowd-hyper" Kito Trawick (Ghostown DJs) is 39. Actor Adam Brody is 37. Actress Michelle Dockery is 35. Actor George O. Gore II is 34. Actress Camilla Luddington is 33. Rock musician Alana Haim (HYM) is 25. Actress Maude Apatow (AP'-ih-tow) is 19. Actress Stefania Owen is 19.

Thought for Today: "History is the record of an encounter between character and circumstances." — Donald Creighton, Canadian historian (1902-1979).