

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 1 of 44

- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Harr Motors Ad
- 1- Schedule Changes
- 1- Dollar General is Open
- 1- Upcoming GDILIVE.COM events
- 1- Heifer Calf Missing
- 2 - Rep. Noem's Weekly Column
- 2- Santa at Subway today
- 3- Letter about GDILIVE.COM updates
- 3- Service Notice - Ed Fordham
- 4- 2016 BIG Idea finalists
- 5- Wind Chill Warning
- 5- Sign up for Groton Bucks
- 5- House for Sale
- 6- Today in Weather History
- 7 - Local Weather Forecast
- 8- Yesterday's Groton Weather
- 8- Today's Weather Climate
- 8- National Weather map
- 9 - Daily Devotional
- 10 - AP News

**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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Schedule Changes

The JH Girls B-ball games with Redfield/Doland will be played Tuesday, Dec 20th before the Boys JV/V games vs Britton-Hecla. Start time will be 4pm.

The Girls' Basketball Game with Redfield/Doland in Groton has been rescheduled for Friday, Feb. 10, 2017.

Bake Sale is postponed until Tuesday, December 20th with the Sugar Babes, Sweet Sensations, & Spice Girlz dancing halftime of the B game.

Emmanuel Lutheran Christmas Sunday School program will be held at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 18.

Dollar General is open

Groton's newest store, Dollar General, opened up its doors on Thursday. They are open daily from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. The store manager is Kim Bell and the assistant store manager is Janel Merkel.

GDILIVE.COM

GDILIVE.COM will have a busy week coming up. It starts out Sunday with the Emmanuel Lutheran youth Christmas program at 3 p.m. Monday it's the city council meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday it's the girls basketball game in Groton with Britton-Hecla. Wednesday it is the elementary Christmas program at 2 p.m. And Christmas Eve it's the Christmas service at Heaven Bound Ministries at 5 p.m.



www.harrmotors.com

605-225-3078 ~ 1-800-658-3463

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 2 of 44

KRISTI NOEM
REPRESENTATIVE FROM SOUTH DAKOTA



Just wanted to catch up before everyone gets in the full swing of the holiday season. The last few months have set us up for some big changes come January. You can already feel a shift in Washington – and that’s a very good thing.

Last week, Congress adjourned for the year. While most members won’t return until January, I was back this week to sit down with the 24 Republican members of the House Ways and Means Committee to hammer out the details of a comprehensive tax reform package and a replacement for Obamacare. We made progress on both fronts, which gave me a lot of optimism for what is to come in 2017.

On tax reform, we drafted a detailed framework for a much simpler tax code, eliminating many loopholes and lowering the tax rate. With every provision discussed, the focus was put on the impact it would have on families and the American economy’s ability to grow.

On Obamacare replacement, we ironed out plans for creating a healthcare system that no longer relies on mandates, but instead ensures affordable access so families can choose what works best for them. Our plan also includes tools that drive down the actual cost for delivering healthcare, an expense that is higher per person in the U.S. than almost any nation in the world. The only way health insurance is going to be affordable is if the delivery of healthcare becomes less expensive too.

There are challenges that come with being the only member of the House from a particular state (places like Texas, for instance, have dozens of colleagues who can represent the state’s interests on any given issue). Being South Dakota’s lone voice in the House has been the honor of my lifetime and sitting around the table with just a handful of my colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee this week made sure that our small state had a big impact.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you. I hope you have a blessed Christmas season and a very happy New Year.

- Kristi

P.S. Learn more about what we accomplished last Congress >>> <http://tinyurl.com/zvh8cxh>



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 3 of 44

Greetings everyone from the Groton Daily Independent and GDILIVE.COM.

Well, as you may know, we had some technical difficulties at Redfield on Thursday. We had a weak signal so it was tough to send out a high quality stream. When I got home last night, I ordered a cellular enhancer which will increase our signal strength. So I'm hoping the next time we go to Redfield, it should be dramatically improved!! And anywhere else that may have a weak signal! One thing I should note - we did record the game, so if you go to the Redfield game now, you will see four files - one for each quarter, in HD. We eliminated the livestream files from Redfield and uploaded the recorded files. As always, that is our backup plan in case we are unable to go live. So we hope you enjoy watching the game again!

The second thing we will be doing is streaming not only to GDILIVE.COM, but also to Facebook Live! Yes, starting with our next event, not only can you view it at GDILIVE.COM (which will have the higher quality), but also on Facebook Live! That should be exciting. The Facebook Live will be posted on the Groton Daily Independent Facebook Page.

Also new is a button you will notice with our streams. You will see a "Donate" button. Everything we do is streamed for free, paid for by the advertisers, but we are now taking this one step further. Even though we have the advertisers, our expenses are quite high and often times not covered by the advertisers, or we do events where we have no advertisers as part of our community service. So here is going to be the new feature! We will take half of what we make from donations and give it to the event that we are streaming. For example, if you are watching the Emmanuel Lutheran Christmas Program on Sunday and you donate during that event, we will donate half to the Sunday School program. Likewise for sporting events, we will take half and donate it to the school for those events. If you watch a music event, we'll donate half to the music department, etc. We hope this will help cover some of our costs with the new upgrade and will also help the programs as well. It should be a win-win situation for everyone involved.

Thanks to everyone who watches the events on GDILIVE.COM and make sure you thank the advertisers and patronize them as well. Without their support, GDILIVE.COM would not be possible.

Sincerely,
Paul Irvin Kosel
GDILIVE.COM

Service Notice: Ed Fordham

Mass of Christian Burial for Edward Fordham, 69, of Groton will be 10:30 a.m., Monday, December 19th at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, Groton. Father Mike Kelly will officiate.

Visitation will be held at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel on Sunday from 5-7 p.m. with a prayer service at 7:00 p.m.

Ed passed away December 15, 2016 at Avera St. Luke's Hospital, Aberdeen.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 4 of 44



2016 BIG Idea Finalists:

Front row-- Christian Westhoff, Mercedes Peterson, McCook Central; Claire Mischel, Milbank; Jasmine Green, Ipswich; Gameillia Becker, Meghan Odegaard, Aberdeen Central

Second Row—Madison Andersen, Miranda Luze, Lead- Deadwood; Hunter Matthaei, McCook Central Grace Bakken, Ipswich; Jessiah Paul, Pierre T.F. Riggs; Kylee Mogen, Monique German, Monica Argo, Wilmot

Third Row—Franklin Wuestewald, Groton; Conner Torrence, Aberdeen Central Noah Steinlicht, Jake Sandvig (Photo by Dawn Sahli Photography)

The 10th BIG Idea Competition was a BIG success with 303 entries involving over 460 students from 40 schools. The event wrapped up Thursday, December 8th, on the campus of Northern State University and the winners were determined from among the eight final entries with over \$5,000 in cash and scholarships awarded.

Mercedes Peterson, Hunter Matthaei, and Christian Westhoff of McCook Central High School took first place with MCH Design, which creates spirit bands and key chains to show school pride. Their prizes included a \$1,000 cash prize, a \$1,000 scholarship to NSU, and a \$1,000 scholarship to Presentation College. Second place went Claire's Sweet Treats by Claire Mischel of Milbank High School, a made-to-order bakery. Second place prizes include \$500 cash, \$500 Presentation College scholarship and \$500 NSU scholarship. The \$250 third place prize went to Jasmine Green of Ipswich High School with Green Décor which makes home décor out of scrap steel.

The other finalists included Once Upon a Memory by Monique German, Monica Argo, and Kylee Mogen of Wilmot High School; Bakken's Bakery by Grace Bakken of Ipswich High School; ACE's Tattoo Shop by Franklin Wuestewald of Groton Area High School; Bright Blasters by Jessiah Paul of Pierre T.F. Riggs High School; and Open Cage by Madison Andersen and Miranda Luze of Lead-Deadwood High School.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 5 of 44

Wind Chill Warning

URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE ABERDEEN SD
846 AM CST SAT DEC 17 2016

.ARCTIC HIGH PRESSURE WILL BUILD ACROSS THE REGION THROUGH EARLY SUNDAY...LEADING TO DANGEROUSLY LOW WIND CHILLS.

CORSON-CAMPBELL-MCPHERSON-BROWN-MARSHALL-ROBERTS-WALWORTH-EDMUNDS-DAY-DEWEY-POTTER-FAULK-SPINK-CLARK-CODINGTON-GRANT-HAMLIN-DEUEL-INCLUDING THE CITIES OF...MC-INTOSH...HERREID...EUREKA...ABERDEEN...BRITTON...SISSETON...MOBRIDGE...IPSWICH...WEBSTER...ISABEL...GETTYSBURG...FAULKTON...REDFIELD...CLARK...WATERTOWN...MILBANK...HAYTI...CLEAR LAKE
846 AM CST SAT DEC 17 2016 /746 AM MST SAT DEC 17 2016/
...WIND CHILL WARNING REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL NOON CST /11 AM MST/ SUNDAY...

* WIND CHILL VALUES...EXPECT WIND CHILLS TO RANGE FROM 25 BELOW ZERO TO 45 BELOW ZERO THIS MORNING THROUGH NOON SUNDAY...WITH THE COLDEST WIND CHILLS OCCURRING AROUND 11 PM THIS EVENING THROUGH SUNRISE SUNDAY.

* IMPACTS...THE DANGEROUSLY COLD WIND CHILLS WILL CAUSE FROSTBITE IN AS LITTLE AS 10 MINUTES TO EXPOSED SKIN.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

A WIND CHILL WARNING MEANS THE COMBINATION OF VERY COLD AIR AND THE WIND WILL CREATE DANGEROUSLY LOW WIND CHILL VALUES. FROST BITE CAN OCCUR QUICKLY AND EVEN HYPOTHERMIA OR DEATH IF PRECAUTIONS ARE NOT TAKEN.



House for Sale

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

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

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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 6 of 44

Today in Weather History

December 17, 1993: A prolonged period of snow occurred from December 15th through the 19th over the western half of South Dakota. Several accidents leading to injuries occurred due to ice on the 15th, and many vehicles slid into ditches. Snowfall amounts were 4 to 10 inches. McIntosh received three inches of snow; Timber Lake, Murdo, and Selby received five inches of snow; and six inches accumulated at McLaughlin. Eagle Butte recorded seven inches of new snow.

December 17, 1903: Wilbur and Orville Wright made four brief flights at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina with their first powered aircraft on this day. After having success with their 5-foot biplane kite, the brothers realized the weather conditions in Dayton were not ideal for their flying experiments. They wrote the Weather Bureau in Washington, D.C. requesting a list of suitable places on the east coast where winds were constant. Below is the response the Wright Brothers received from Joseph Doshier, who staffed the Weather Bureau office, wrote in August of 1900 regarding the suitability of Kitty Hawk.

December 17, 1924: From the Monthly Weather Review, "a severe glaze storm occurred in west-central Illinois on December 17 and 18, the area of great destruction embracing a territory about 75 miles in width and 170 miles in length. In the affected area, trees were badly damaged, wires broken, and thousands of electric poles went down. Electric services were paralyzed, and it required weeks to restore operation and months to permanently rebuild the lines.

The street railway company and the Illinois Traction System resumed complete operation 17 days after the storm. Electric light service was completely restored January 10. The ice had practically disappeared from the trees and wires by January 4, but on January 20, there was still considerable ice on the ground.

The Western Union Telegraph Co. lost 8,000 poles and the Illinois Bell Telephone Co. about 23,000. The total damage to wire service in Illinois probably equaled or exceeded \$5,000,000." If the loss of business, the damage to trees and possible injury to winter grains, the storm may be considered one of the most disastrous of its kind in the history of Illinois."

1884 - A three week blockade of snow began at Portland, OR. A record December total of 34 inches was received. (David Ludlum)

1924 - A severe icestorm struck central Illinois. It coated the ground with nearly two inches of glaze at Springfield. The storm caused 21 million dollars damage along with much hardship. Ice was on the trees until the 4th of January, and electricity was not restored until January 10th. (David Ludlum)

1929 - An icestorm in western New York State resulted in much damage and hardship. A Buffalo report stated, "one was kept awake by the breaking limbs, which snapped off with a report much louder than a rifle shot." (17th-18th) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A storm in the southwestern U.S. brought heavy rain and heavy snow to parts of California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah and New Mexico. Charleston NV was blanketed with 12 inches of snow. Lake Havasu City AZ was drenched with 2.26 inches of rain. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Squalls brought locally heavy snow to the southeastern shores of Lake Michigan. Totals in Michigan ranged up to 14 inches at Harvey. Totals in Ohio ranged up to 16 inches at Chardon. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Twenty-one cities from Kentucky to Pennsylvania reported record low temperatures for the date, including Columbus OH with a reading of 12 degrees below zero. Heavy snow continued in the Colorado Rockies. Vail received 65 inches of snow between the 14th and the 18th of December. Steamboat Springs was buried under 74 inches, and reported a total of 108 inches of snow between the 10th and the 18th of the month. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2002 - Thunderstorms preceding a strong cold front pushed into the U.S. Mississippi Valley, producing severe weather and tornadoes. Three people were killed in Missouri and Arkansas with more than 40 injuries (Associated Press).

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 7 of 44

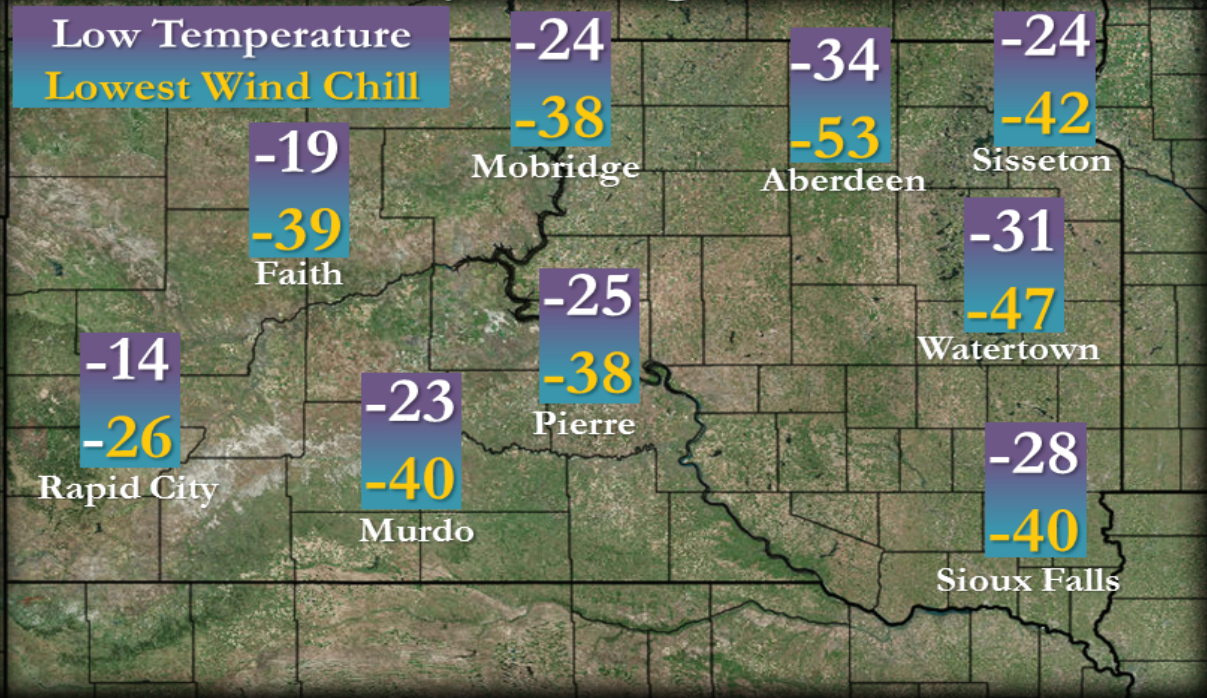
Groton, South Dakota, Weather Forecasts - Metric Units

Sat Dec 17	Sun Dec 18	Mon Dec 19	Tue Dec 20	Wed Dec 21	Thu Dec 22	Fri Dec 23
-6°F	0°F	21°F	32°F	32°F	27°F	28°F
-31°F	0°F	18°F	19°F	14°F	14°F	16°F
NNW 15 MPH	S 14 MPH	SW 13 MPH	W 15 MPH	W 14 MPH Precip 20%	WSW 9 MPH	WSW 9 MPH

Extreme Cold Continues



Sunday Morning Forecast



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD

weather.gov/Aberdeen



NWS Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 12/17/2016 5 am Central

Published on: 12/17/2016 at 5:39AM

The coldest air in several years will remain across the region through Sunday morning. Wind Chill Warnings are in effect for much of the region for wind chill values of 35 below to 50 below zero. The coldest air and lowest wind chills will be overnight tonight into early Sunday morning, as temperatures fall into the 20s below and even 30s below zero.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 8 of 44

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 12.0 F at 3:18 AM

Low Outside Temp: -0.3 F at 10:26 PM

High Gust: 25.0 Mph at 8:53 PM

Snow: 4"

Today's Info

Record High: 53° in 1939

Record Low: -24° in 1951

Average High: 25°F

Average Low: 6°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.28

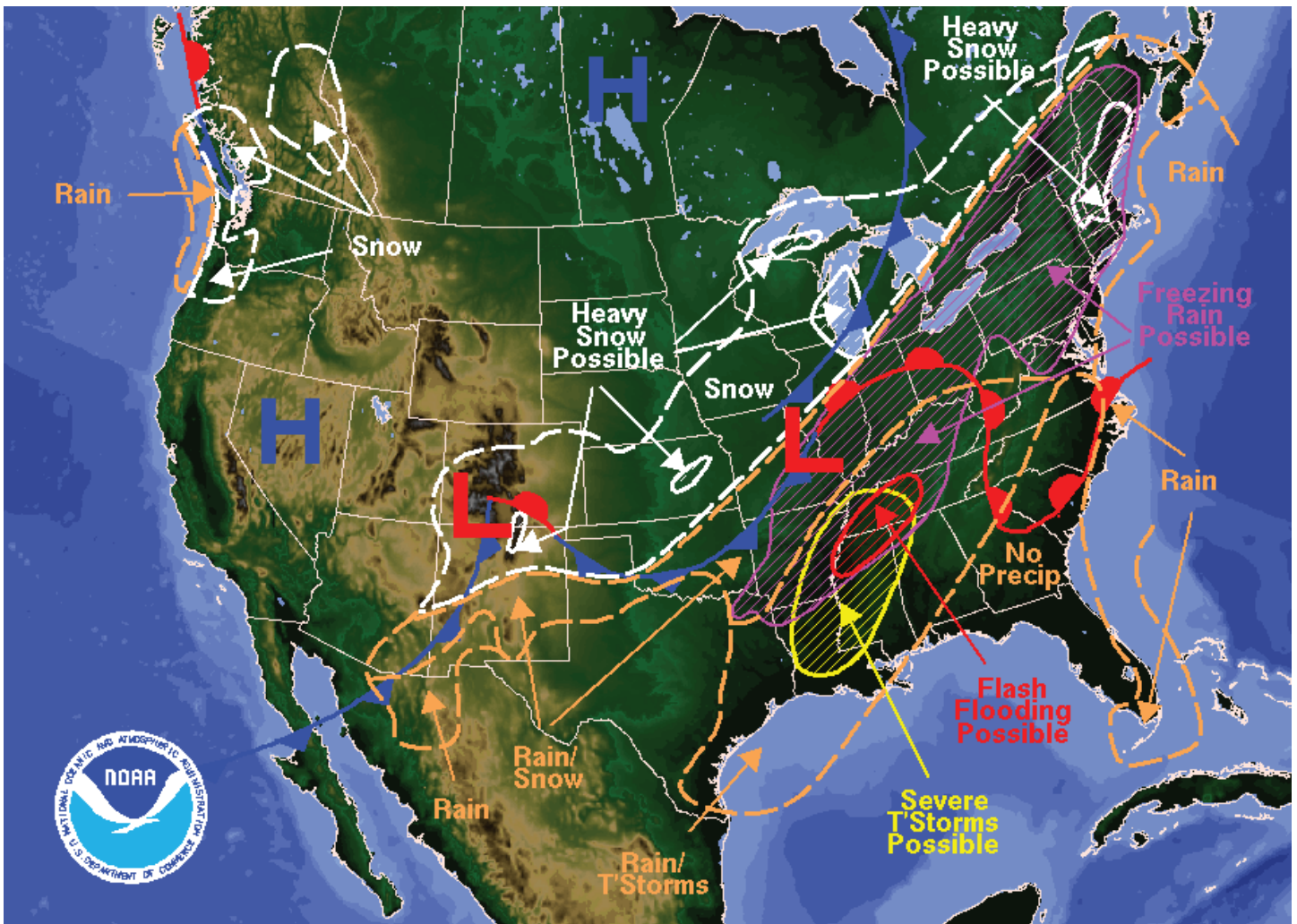
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.59

Average Precip to date: 21.48

Precip Year to Date: 17.93

Sunset Tonight: 4:51 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:09 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Sat, Dec 17, 2016, issued 4:36 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



GIVING OTHERS A CHOICE

A mother gave her son two beautiful apples. One, however, was larger and shinier than the other. Placing them in his hands, and wishing to teach him about sharing, she instructed him to "Give your little sister her choice."

A short time later, she noticed that he had kept the bigger one for himself. So, she asked, "Why didn't you give your sister her choice?"

"I did," came the reply. "I gave her the choice of the little one or none at all. And she took the little one."

There is a lot of selfishness even in the smallest of us. Size has little to do with whether or not we are self-centered or God-centered. It is easy to keep rather than to share, to get rather than to give, to hoard rather than to help, to protect rather than to promote.

Paul reminds us that "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Prayer: Help me, Heavenly Father, to realize that the needs of others are an opportunity for me to give to them as You have given to me. May I be sensitive to others who are without the necessities of life, and share with them out of the abundance You have given me—especially Your salvation. In Your Name, Amen.

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-8 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others...

News from the Associated Press

Decline of in-state public college students worries regents

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — The state Board of Regents is concerned about the future of higher education and unfilled jobs because more South Dakota residents are foregoing college after graduating high school.

Executive Director Mike Rush said the state needs to make an effort to recruit students and train workers, especially for health care and educational services, which state Labor Department projections show will be in high demand through 2022.

"The supply of new jobs is growing, and those new jobs will be increasingly knowledge based," said Rush, according to the Yankton Daily Press and Dakotan (<http://bit.ly/2hM3Der>).

Regent Kathryn Johnson says those not seeking higher education are most often minorities, from low-income families or high school graduates who don't want more training. Those groups may include families where no relatives attended college, she said.

"We're seeing tremendous demographic shifts," she said. "During the last 10-15 years, our enrollment has been steady, but the components are shifting."

She said the "traditional type" of student is declining and more students are taking online courses.

Enrollment at public colleges has been flat, and Rush said that's because there are more out-of-state students.

Most of the students who graduate from South Dakota's six public universities remain in state after completing a degree.

In 2014, about 72 percent of in-state graduates remained in the state through 2015. For out-of-state graduates, the figure was more than 29 percent. To raise those figures, the regents have adopted a goal that calls for ensuring 65 percent of residents ages 25 to 34 hold some type of post-secondary degree or diploma by 2025.

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

Bridge near pipeline protest likely to reopen _ eventually

By BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Reopening a bridge near the main Dakota Access pipeline protest encampment is key to restoring better relations between the state and the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, according to North Dakota's now-former governor and the tribal chairman, but the effort will take weeks if not months.

The bridge, unofficially called the Backwater Bridge, has been closed since late October, when protesters of the four-state, \$3.8 billion pipeline blocked the bridge with burning vehicles, damaging the structure. It's also the site of several clashes, including on Nov. 20, when authorities used tear gas, rubber bullets and water sprays on protesters who they say assaulted officers with rocks and burning logs.

The state Transportation Department has said they can't inspect the bridge until they know their workers will be safe, though pipeline opponents believe the closure is meant to block the north end of the federal land, where hundreds of protesters are camped out.

Before he left office Thursday, Gov. Jack Dalrymple met with Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault, agreeing to enlist the Bureau of Indian Affairs to help ensure the safety of inspectors so that the bridge can reopen.

Dalrymple in a statement said reopening the bridge "will be a strong signal of cooperation to return area living conditions to a more normal state," while Archambault told The Associated Press that doing so removes a roadblock to emergency services and commerce. The bridge, on state Highway 1806, is the main route to get to the tribe's casino.

"If there's a way that we can help so that this bridge is opened, it's a step forward," Archambault said.

A timeline hasn't been finalized, but Transportation Department spokeswoman Jamie Olson indicates it will be a slow process, with testing of the bridge being done "in the next few weeks."

Core sampling to evaluate the concrete requires temperatures around the freezing mark for machines

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 11 of 44

to work properly, she said, and the state has been blanketed by frigid arctic air for weeks.

"Special equipment will need to be brought to the bridge site and may require a shelter or structure to be placed on the bridge in order for an adequate testing environment," she said, adding that the samples will be sent to a special lab.

The highway itself also has been damaged and will need to be repaired before the roadway can be opened, Olson said.

With the protest camp thinning out to a few hundred people due to the stalled pipeline work and harsh winter weather, officers have moved back from the bridge to de-escalate tensions but are monitoring it from afar and will respond if protesters try to cross a blockade of cement barrier and razor wire, Morton County sheriff's spokesman Rob Keller said.

The pipeline that is to carry North Dakota oil 1,200 miles to Illinois is stalled while Texas-based developer Energy Transfer Partners and the Army battle in federal court over permission for the pipeline to cross under the Missouri River. The Standing Rock Sioux and its supporters say the pipeline threatens cultural sites and drinking water; ETP says the pipeline will be safe.

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

Friday's Scores By The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Sioux Falls O'Gorman 61, Sioux Falls Lincoln 57

Lakota Nation Tournament (Makosica Bracket)

Consolation Semifinal

White River 53, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 49

Semifinal

Winnebago, Neb. 80, Pine Ridge 57

Lakota Nation Tournament (Paha Sapa Bracket)

Consolation Semifinal

Standing Rock, N.D. 73, Tiospa Zina Tribal 58

Semifinal

Lower Brule 61, Custer 53

Omaha Nation, Neb. 72, St. Francis Indian 64

POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

Aberdeen Christian vs. Northwestern, ppd. to Dec 19.

Arlington vs. DeSmet, ppd.

Avon vs. Bridgewater-Emery, ppd. to Jan 24.

Bon Homme vs. Scotland, ppd. to Dec 22.

Centerville vs. Baltic, ppd. to Jan 9.

Clark/Willow Lake vs. Britton-Hecla, ppd.

Dell Rapids vs. Tea Area, ppd.

Estelline vs. Dell Rapids St. Mary, ppd.

Gayville-Volin vs. Alcester-Hudson, ppd.

Gordon/Rushville, Neb. vs. Bennett County, ppd.

Lyman vs. Rapid City Christian, ppd.

McCook Central/Montrose vs. Howard, ppd. to Feb 9.

Miller vs. Winner, ppd. to Jan 26.

Morrill, Neb. vs. Edgemont, ppd.

Oldham-Ramona/Rutland vs. Colman-Egan, ppd.

Parkston vs. Chamberlain, ppd. to Feb 13.

Pierre vs. Aberdeen Central, ppd. to Feb 7.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 12 of 44

Rapid City Central vs. Mitchell, ppd. to Feb 23.
Rapid City Stevens vs. Huron, ppd. to Dec 30.
Sioux Falls Christian vs. Elk Point-Jefferson, ppd.
Tri-Valley vs. Chester, ppd.
Viborg-Hurley vs. Irene-Wakonda, ppd.
Wagner vs. West Central, ppd.
Wall vs. Jones County, ppd.
Stateline Shootout
Newcastle, Wyo. vs. Lead-Deadwood, ppd. to Dec 19.
Sundance, Wyo. vs. Belle Fourche, ppd. to Dec 19.
Saturday's games
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS
Garretson vs. Parker, ppd. to Dec 29.
Walthill, Neb. vs. Freeman Academy, ppd. to Dec 22.
Yankton vs. Brandon Valley, ppd. to Dec 29.
Stateline Shootout
Sundance, Wyo. vs. Lead-Deadwood, ppd. to Dec 20.
Belle Fourche vs. Newcastle, Wyo., ppd. to Dec 20.
GIRLS' BASKETBALL
Sioux Falls Washington 64, Moorhead, Minn. 46
Lakota Nation Tournament (Makosica Bracket)
Consolation Semifinal
Red Cloud 61, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 43
Semifinal
Pine Ridge 60, Omaha Nation, Neb. 46
Lakota Nation Tournament (Paha Sapa Bracket)
Consolation Semifinal
St. Francis Indian 53, Tiospa Zina Tribal 45
Semifinal
Crow Creek 59, Winnebago, Neb. 35
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS
Aberdeen Central vs. Pierre, ppd. to Feb 17.
Arlington vs. DeSmet, ppd.
Clark/Willow Lake vs. Britton-Hecla, ppd.
Dupree vs. Kadoka Area, ppd.
Gordon/Rushville, Neb. vs. Bennett County, ppd.
Gregory vs. Platte-Geddes, ppd. to Dec 20.
Howard vs. McCook Central/Montrose, ppd. to Feb 9.
Huron vs. Rapid City Stevens, ppd. to Jan 23.
Ipswich vs. Langford, ppd.
Irene-Wakonda vs. Viborg-Hurley, ppd.
Milbank Area vs. Aberdeen Roncalli, ppd. to Jan 12.
Morrill, Neb. vs. Edgemont, ppd.
Parkston vs. Chamberlain, ppd. to Feb 6.
Redfield/Doland vs. Groton Area, ppd. to Feb 10.
Sioux Falls Christian vs. Elk Point-Jefferson, ppd.
Waverly-South Shore vs. Waubay/Summit, ppd. to Feb 6.
West Central vs. Wagner, ppd. to Dec 22.
Lakota Nation Tournament (Makosica Bracket)
Consolation Semifinal

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 13 of 44

Custer vs. McLaughlin, ppd.

Semifinal

Little Wound vs. Todd County, ppd.

Lakota Nation Tournament (Paha Sapa Bracket)

Consolation Semifinal

Crazy Horse vs. Lower Brule, ppd.

Semifinal

Standing Rock, N.D. vs. White River, ppd.

Stateline Shootout

Newcastle, Wyo. vs. Lead-Deadwood, ppd. to Dec 19.

Sundance, Wyo. vs. Belle Fourche, ppd. to Dec 19.

Saturday's games

POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

Freeman vs. Platte-Geddes, ppd. to Dec 22.

Scotland vs. Ethan, ppd. to Jan 10.

Walthill, Neb. vs. Freeman Academy, ppd. to Dec 22.

Sanford Classic

Aberdeen Roncalli vs. Dakota Valley, ppd.

Avon vs. Hanson, ppd.

Wynot, Neb. vs. Parker, ppd. to Dec 29.

Stateline Shootout

Belle Fourche vs. Newcastle, Wyo., ppd. to Dec 20.

Sundance, Wyo. vs. Lead-Deadwood, ppd. to Dec 20.

Taylor's 3-pointer give Portland 85-82 win over South Dakota

By ANNE M. PETERSON, AP Sports Writer

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Gabe Taylor hit a 3-pointer with 2.2 seconds left and the Portland Pilots defeated South Dakota 85-82 in the Dam City Classic at Portland's Moda Center on Friday night.

Taylor finished with 22 points and 11 rebounds for the Pilots (6-3), who have won three of their last four games under new head coach Terry Porter, the former Trail Blazers' great whose jersey hangs from the rafters at the former Rose Garden Arena. Alec Wintering added 24 points.

Tyler Flack led the Coyotes (8-5) with 14 points and 10 rebounds. Flack has scored in double figures in 16 straight games dating back to last season.

Portland led by as many as 14 points in the second half but Flack narrowed the gap to 78-77 with 2:25 left.

After Matt Mooney's 3-pointer tied it at 80 with 1:13 to go, Wintering answered with a jumper for the Pilots. Mooney hit a layup to tie it again before Taylor's 3-pointer.

"It felt pretty good when it left my hands, yeah," Taylor said afterward.

Portland took an early 20-14 lead on Wintering's layup and led by as many as eight points early, but Fleck hit a layup that tied it at 25 for South Dakota. The Coyotes pulled ahead on Mooney's basket.

The Pilots recaptured the lead and went into the break with a 36-33 advantage. Portland opened the second half with an 11-2 run, capped by Gabe Taylor's 3-pointer, to push the lead to 47-35.

Earlier this season Wintering passed former Pilot Erik Spoelstra — the current coach of the Miami Heat — on the school's all-time assist list.

Embattled reservation hospital fails inspection again

By REGINA GARCIA CANO, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — An embattled government-run hospital whose leadership had promised to significantly improve its operation has again been found in violation of quality-of-care standards.

The Indian Health Service, which administers the hospital on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, announced Friday that federal inspectors determined the failures, primarily in the emergency department, constituted an "immediate jeopardy" situation. That's a term used when a hospital's actions have caused or are likely to cause serious injury or death to a patient.

Neither the Indian Health Service nor the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, whose representatives conducted the inspection, released a copy of the document detailing the infractions Friday. The Indian Health Service, however, said that it "immediately began instituting improvements" upon learning of the inspection results.

"For instance, Pine Ridge is implementing improvements to its medical provider credentialing and privileging process; improving its quality monitoring in the emergency department and implementing a clinical decision tool so medical providers have access to the most current standards of practice," the agency, commonly referred to as IHS, said in a statement released Friday evening. The IHS provides free health care to enrolled tribal members as part of the government's treaty obligations to Native American tribes.

The inspection findings are a setback for the agency and raise questions over the efficacy of some of the changes that the agency promised and implemented throughout 2016, including the privatization of emergency rooms at three hospitals and changes in leadership at a regional office based in South Dakota.

Willie Bear Shield, vice president of the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Health Board, said the contractor selected to run the emergency rooms, including the one on Pine Ridge, faced a November deadline to fully staff the departments.

"This makes us more leery of that (staffing) agency and its ability to provide the quality health care that it was contracted to bring to our people," Bear Shield said.

The IHS began making changes and got a new leader after unannounced inspections at the hospital in Pine Ridge and the one in the adjacent Rosebud Indian Reservation uncovered serious failures. Inspectors cited the Pine Ridge facility for safety deficiencies, including unsecured drugs and medical records, while an inspection of the Rosebud hospital found conditions so alarming the ER was closed for seven months.

The findings jeopardized the agency's ability to bill the government for services provided to Medicare- and Medicaid-eligible patients. As a result, the IHS in April entered into what constitute last-chance remediation agreements for each facility with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

IHS's obligations in both agreements include ensuring that an "effective system" is in place to identify "unsafe situations and other barriers to safe, high quality care, adverse events and near misses" and to be able to immediately report those issues to hospital and IHS management.

"I think it's safe to say that by Pine Ridge getting immediate jeopardy status, the inadequacies of quality health care continue on," Bear Shield said. "It's another black eye on them, so to speak. It tells that their yearlong effort to combat these inadequacies is failing."

Follow Regina Garcia Cano on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/reginagarciaKNO>

3 bighorn sheep in Deadwood herd die of pneumonia

DEADWOOD, S.D. (AP) — State wildlife officials said three dead bighorn sheep from a Deadwood herd transplanted from Canada have tested positive for a highly virulent strain of pneumonia.

Other bighorns have died in recent weeks, and one official said the positive tests are a "big concern," the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2hOt0Ms>) reported.

The South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks regional wildlife manager Trenton Haffley said the department received test results from the Washington Animal Disease and Diagnostic Laboratory on Tuesday that confirmed the most recent bighorn death was from mycoplasma ovi-pneumonia. The deadly bacterial disease is often the primary cause of pneumonia in sheep.

The bighorn was euthanized on Nov. 7 after being found near U.S. Highway 85. Since then, at least two bighorns from the herd have died. The department is waiting on results from the same laboratory.

"The 2016 lambs and the yearlings are all still doing really well, and those are the ones we would expect to be most susceptible to this disease — the older and younger bighorns," Haffley said. "It's a bummer

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 15 of 44

we have the disease up there, but at this point we are somewhat hopeful we will be OK.”

According to Haffley the most recent updates of the herd shows 11 of 26 original bighorns transplanted from Canada in February 2015 are still alive. He added that 13 of the 15 born in 2015, and four of five lambs born last spring, have been observed as recently as last week, which have given wildlife managers hope.

“It’s not total doom and gloom,” said Haffley. “We are hopeful that a bunch of sheep will survive and that we’ll continue to have a herd up there.”

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

Wagner farmer finds stolen boat while combining corn

WAGNER, S.D. (AP) — Police in Wagner got a break in one of their cases when a boat turned up in a sea of corn.

Farmer Seth Fischer was combining corn east of Greenwood on Monday night when he saw something reflecting light. He went to investigate and came across the boat.

The Daily Republic reports (<http://bit.ly/2hCyQQO>) that the boat and a trailer were two of the items stolen from storage sheds in Wagner last month.

No arrests have been made in the case. Wagner police are asking anyone with information to contact them.

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

Dangerous wind chills puts parts of US in the deep freeze

By KATHY McCORMACK, Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Low temperatures and high winds have put the Northeastern U.S. in a deep freeze.

Dangerous wind chills of 20 to 30 below in parts of the region made for some crippling conditions Friday.

“You are talking about 30 degrees below normal highs. That is pretty darn cold,” said National Weather Service meteorologist James Brown in Maine. “This is pretty much a piece of Arctic air that came off the North Pole and came into New England.”

Forecasters said a storm will follow the frigid weather, bringing chances for snow, sleet and freezing rain across much of the country.

Some schools closed early Thursday and many others delayed opening Friday to avoid a bone-chilling wait at the bus stop.

“We’re not strangers to these sorts of bitter temperatures on Mount Washington’s summit,” senior weather observer Mike Carmon said in the weather observatory’s blog at the highest peak in the Northeast. “However, over the last few winters, it’s generally late January or February before we experience this sort of polar air outbreak.”

The wind chill was down to 85-below at the summit early Friday.

Utility workers were prepared for power outages due to fallen trees. David Flener, field safety manager at Eversource, New Hampshire’s largest utility, said workers are well-educated on how to stay warm in the coldest weather, starting before they even arrive on a job site. They are urged to make sure they carry an emergency kit with clothing and food in case they get stranded, and once they arrive, there is a discussion about on-the-job safety.

“We’re oftentimes up in buckets, so you’re sometimes above the trees and there’s a little more wind up there,” he said. “You’d be surprised how much heat you lose from the top of your head.”

Sara Sankowich, who oversees tree crews for Unital, said workers are encouraged to watch out for one another to see if they show signs of hypothermia or frostbite. “We’ll take every step to make sure they are staying safe out there and that they’re not overexposing themselves to the elements,” she said.

In upstate New York, along the Lake Ontario shore, wind gusts approached 70 mph and the National

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 16 of 44

Weather Service issued a blizzard warning effective through early Friday morning. Lake-effect snow was accompanied by winds of up to 50 mph, causing whiteout conditions in some places.

In suburban Syracuse, a woman's body and vehicle were found in a creek, apparently after a crash during whiteout conditions from the lake-effect story.

Authorities say the body of 50-year-old Daphne Washburn, of Liverpool, was found under ice in 4 feet of water Onondaga Lake Park, along with her partially submerged SUV on Thursday night.

Elsewhere in New York, parts of the Adirondack Northway, north of Albany, were closed for more than four hours after a crash involving a tractor-trailer and a snowplow. No injuries were reported.

In western Pennsylvania, lake-effect snow bands were blamed for slick roads and poor visibility. Fifty-nine vehicles crashed in a snowy pileup and three people were hurt. The crash was one of three that shut down different stretches of Interstate 80.

Park officials in one Massachusetts town decided it was too cold to open an outdoor ice rink. The Worcester Common Oval was to open Friday night for public skating.

The Telegram & Gazette reports Worcester city officials decided that with wind chills expected to be below zero, a decision was made to keep the rink closed for the health and safety of those who use it. The rink is expected to open Saturday.

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.

In Oklahoma, authorities said three people died in separate wrecks and more than 100 traffic crashes were reported after freezing drizzle slickened roads in the Oklahoma City area.

The Oklahoma Highway Patrol reported the fatal crashes on three interstates in the metro area Thursday night. The Oklahoma City Fire Department says its crews responded to multiple wrecks, including an eight-vehicle pileup that shut down traffic.

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.

This story has been corrected to fix the spelling of Sara Sankowich, not Sankowicz.

Associated Press writers Holly Ramer and Michael Casey in Concord, New Hampshire, and David Sharp in Portland, Maine, contributed to this story.

The Latest: Frigid weather too cold to open outdoor rink

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — The Latest on the dangerously cold temperatures and strong winds that have hit the U.S. (all times local):

1 p.m.

Park officials in one Massachusetts town have decided it's too cold to open an outdoor ice rink.

The Worcester Common Oval was to open between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Friday for public skating.

The Telegram & Gazette reports Worcester city officials decided that with wind chills expected to be below zero, a decision was made to keep the rink closed for the health and safety of those who use it.

The oval is scheduled to reopen at noon on Saturday.

9:50 a.m.

Authorities say an Upstate New York woman whose body and vehicle were found in a suburban Syracuse creek apparently crashed during whiteout conditions.

Rescuers found the woman's body in 4 feet of ice-covered creek water in Onondaga Lake Park on Thursday night. Fifty-year-old Daphne Washburn, of Liverpool, was pulled from the water and pronounced dead at the scene.

Authorities believe she was driving when she encountered extreme whiteout conditions from Thursday's lake-effect storm. Deputies say she drifted off the road and crashed then apparently got out of her sport

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 17 of 44

utility vehicle not knowing she was in a creek and was unable to get out of the water.

7 a.m.

Authorities say three people died in separate wrecks and more than 100 traffic crashes were reported after freezing drizzle slickened roads in the Oklahoma City area.

The Oklahoma Highway Patrol reported the fatal crashes on three interstates in the metro area Thursday night. The Oklahoma City Fire Department says its crews responded to multiple wrecks, including an eight-vehicle pileup that shut down traffic.

Temperatures have warmed overnight, melting any remaining ice on the roadways. But more wintry weather is in the forecast, with subzero wind chills and 1 to 3 inches of snow and sleet expected this weekend.

In the Oklahoma Panhandle, a wild swing in temperatures is expected with Friday highs predicted in the mid-70s followed by wind chill values of 20 below zero on Saturday afternoon.

12:15 a.m.

Low temperatures and high winds have put the Northeastern U.S. in a deep freeze.

Dangerous wind chills of 20 to 30 below in parts of the region will make for some crippling conditions Friday.

A weather observer atop Mount Washington, the highest peak in the Northeast, says it's generally late January or February before this sort of Arctic blast arrives.

Forecasters say a storm will follow the frigid weather, bringing chances for snow, sleet and freezing rain across much of the country.

Some schools closed early Thursday and others delayed opening to avoid a bone-chilling wait at the bus stop.

Authorities search for suspect in Brookings kidnapping

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities are searching for a 20-year-old man who allegedly assaulted and kidnapped a 17-year-old boy near Brookings.

The Brookings County Sheriff's Office says the 20-year-old allegedly fired a gunshot that hit the 17-year-old's vehicle after forcing the teenager off the road during a car chase early Tuesday, then struck the teen in the face with the gun.

The older man then allegedly took the teen away from the scene and later released him at a Sioux Falls gas station.

The sheriff's office says the suspect and victim knew one another. An arrest warrant has been issued for the suspect.

Judge to decide soon on Berget's request to drop appeal

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A circuit judge will decide by the end of the month whether to uphold the wishes of convicted prison guard killer Rodney Berget to drop his death penalty appeal.

Berget made the request to Judge Doug Hoffman in August. His attorneys oppose the motion.

Berget and another inmate, Eric Robert, were convicted of killing guard Ronald Johnson in 2011. Robert was executed in 2012.

The Argus Leader reports (<http://argusne.ws/2hWO8MP>) that Berget chose not to appear in circuit court Thursday morning in front Hoffman for a hearing about his appeal. Berget's attorney, Eric Schulte, again asked the judge to go against his client's wishes to drop the appeal and give him additional time to determine Berget's mental capacity.

Prosecutors say there's no evidence to suggest Berget isn't competent.

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

Police look for kidnapers in bizarre Rapid City case

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City police are looking for two men they say kidnapped two other men outside of a convenience store at gunpoint, forced them into the trunk of their own car, then requested their help pushing the car out of a ditch when it became stuck.

Authorities say the two victims were able to flee and contact police upon being let out of the trunk. Police don't know what the suspects planned to do with the men they abducted.

The incident happened in the early morning hours of Dec. 3. Police didn't release details until they could verify the kidnapping account was accurate.

Authorities recovered the vehicle in Meade County but are still searching for the kidnapers.

Minnesota team ends boycott threat, will go to Holiday Bowl

By JON KRAWCZYNSKI, Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The University of Minnesota football team will play in the Holiday Bowl, reversing a threat to boycott the game because of the suspension of 10 players accused of sexual assault.

The players made the announcement at a news conference Saturday after a group of seniors from the team met with the board of regents, university President Eric Kaler and athletic director Mark Coyle on Friday night.

The school declined the players' request to reinstate the suspended players. However, the team rescinded its boycott and will play Washington State on Dec. 27 in San Diego.

The players said they made their decision after they were assured by the university the suspended teammates would receive a fair hearing.

"As a team we understand that what has occurred these last few days and playing football for the University of Minnesota is larger than just us," receiver Drew Wolitarsky said.

Said Kaler: "I'm very pleased that the football team has realized the opportunity to represent the university and come out strong in support of the victims of sexual violence. I have promised a fair hearing and I attend to have that be true."

The players said the school promised to "show support for our team and the character of the shown by the great majority of our players" while working to highlight the issue of sexual assault.

No criminal charges were filed against the players for what happened on Sept. 2 after a season-opening win over Oregon State. Four players were initially suspended for three games earlier this season while the police conducted their investigation. They were reinstated after a judge lifted a restraining order.

The school, however, ruled the players violated a school policy adopted last year that defines sexual assault as anything without a "clear and unambiguous" expression of consent.

On Wednesday, the university announced the suspensions of those four players and six additional players. On Thursday, players said they wouldn't practice or play unless their teammates' suspensions were revoked.

University investigators wrote they generally found her account more credible than those of the accused students. The investigators concluded that several students had failed to provide full and truthful information.

Sexual misconduct already has been a sensitive subject for the university and for its athletic department. Former athletic director Norwood Teague resigned in August 2015 amid allegations of sexual harassment. His replacement, Coyle, was brought in with orders to not tolerate such behavior and played a key role in the decision to suspend the players.

University officials have declined to say why the players were suspended or provide any details of the internal investigation, citing student privacy rules. But an attorney for several of the suspended players and the father of one of them confirmed the action was taken in connection with an alleged sexual assault in an apartment near campus.

According to police reports, the woman who made the complaint attended a few parties before ending

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 19 of 44

up in the off-campus apartment of players Carlton Djam and Tamarion Johnson. The reports said she accompanied Djam and a male, whose name was redacted, to Djam's room, where she had sex with both of them at the same time.

After the unidentified male left, she said Tamarion Johnson entered the room and that she had sex with him, too. She said she remembered seeing several people watching.

"She described it as a line of people, like they were waiting for their turn. ... She recalls yelling for them to stop sending people in the room because she couldn't handle it," one of the reports said.

The woman said she recalled at least three other men forcing themselves on her, including players Dior Johnson and Ray Buford Jr. She told police the sexual contact between her and Djam and the unidentified man may have been consensual, but that it was not consensual with the others.

The men all told police their sexual contacts with her were consensual.

The school's policy says consent may be initially given, but can be withdrawn at any time and "sexual activity must stop" at that point or even if there is confusion over consent.

China says it seized US Navy drone to ensure safety of ships

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China said Saturday that its military seized a U.S. Navy unmanned underwater glider in the South China Sea to ensure the "safe navigation of passing ships," in one of the most serious incidents between the two militaries in years.

The Chinese navy on Thursday seized the drone, which the Pentagon said was being operated by civilian contractors to conduct oceanic research. The U.S. said it issued a formal diplomatic complaint over the seizure and demanded the drone's return.

Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman Yang Yujun issued a statement late Saturday saying that a Chinese navy lifeboat discovered an unknown device in the South China Sea on Thursday. "In order to prevent this device from posing a danger to the safe navigation of passing ships and personnel, the Chinese lifeboat adopted a professional and responsible attitude in investigating and verifying the device," Yang said.

The statement said that after verifying that the device was an American unmanned submerged device, "China decided to transfer it to the U.S. through appropriate means."

The statement also accused the U.S. of long deploying ships "in China's presence" to conduct "military surveying."

"China is resolutely opposed to this and requests the U.S. stop such activities," it said. "China will continue to maintain vigilance against the relevant U.S. activities and will take necessary measures to deal with them."

Earlier Saturday, China's foreign ministry said the country's military was in contact with its American counterparts on "appropriately handling" the incident, though it offered no details on what discussions were underway.

The drone was seized while collecting unclassified scientific data about 92 kilometers (57 miles) northwest of Subic Bay near the Philippines in the South China Sea, which China claims virtually in its entirety, Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, said Friday.

"It is ours. It's clearly marked as ours. We would like it back, and we would like this not to happen again," Davis told reporters. He said the drone costs about \$150,000 and is largely commercial, off-the-shelf technology.

The USNS Bowditch, which is not a combat ship, was stopped in international waters Thursday afternoon and recovering two of the gliders when the Chinese ship approached, Davis said. The two vessels were within about 450 meters (500 yards) of each other. He said that the USNS Bowditch carries some small arms, but that no shots were fired.

According to the Pentagon, as the Chinese ship left with the drone, which is about 3 meters (10 feet) long, its only radio response to the U.S. vessel was, "We are returning to normal operations."

President-elect Donald Trump blasted the seizure. Apparently misspelling "unprecedented," he tweeted Saturday: "China steals United States Navy research drone in international waters - rips it out of water

and takes it to China in unpresidential act.”

He later reissued the tweet, correcting the spelling to “unprecedented.”

Last weekend, Trump was criticized on social media for bad spelling in a tweet in which he accused CNN of reporting “rediculous” fake news. Hours later, he put out a fresh tweet correcting the spelling to “ridiculous.”

Bonnie Glaser, senior adviser for Asia at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said the seizure of the glider occurred inside the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines, not China, and appeared to be a violation of international law.

China delineates its South China Sea claims with a roughly drawn sea border known as the “nine-dash line” that runs along the west coast of the Philippines. However, it hasn’t explicitly said whether it considers those waters as sovereign territory, and says it doesn’t disrupt the passage of other nations’ shipping through the area. The U.S. doesn’t take a position on sovereignty claims, but insists on freedom of navigation, including the right of its naval vessels to conduct training and other operations in the sea.

Davis said that the incident could be the first time in recent history that China has taken a U.S. naval vessel. Some observers have called it the most significant dispute between the sides’ militaries since the April 2001 mid-air collision between a U.S. Navy surveillance aircraft and a Chinese fighter jet about 110 kilometers (70 miles) from China’s Hainan island that led to the death of a Chinese pilot.

Whatever the outcome, the incident is likely to fray the already tense relations between U.S. and China. Beijing was angered by Trump’s decision to talk by phone with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen on Dec. 2, and by his later comments that he did not feel “bound by a one-China policy” regarding the status of Taiwan, unless the U.S. could gain trade or other benefits from China. China considers the self-governing island its own territory to be recovered by force if it deems necessary.

There also have been increased tensions over Beijing’s ongoing military buildup in the South China Sea, mainly the development and militarization of man-made shoals and islands aimed at extending China’s reach in the strategically vital area, through which about \$5 trillion in global trade passes annually.

In one of the few reports in state media about the drone’s seizure, a newspaper published by China’s ruling Communist Party cited an unidentified military official as saying that a “smooth resolution” to the matter is expected.

A Chinese navy ship discovered an “unidentified device” Thursday and was checking on it for the sake of maritime safety, the Global Times quoted the official as saying.

“China has received the U.S. request to return the device, communication is open between the relevant departments of the two sides and I believe this matter will obtain a smooth resolution,” the official was quoted as saying.

In a separate report, the paper quoted retired Chinese admiral Yang Yi as saying China considered itself well within its rights to seize the drone.

“If China needs to take it, we’ll take it. (America) can’t block us,” Yang was quoted as saying.

Yang said he was unsure of the purpose of seizing the drone, but didn’t think the matter qualified as a “military conflict.” However, he added that the chances of a confrontation had risen following Trump’s recent comments, which were seen as testing China’s bottom line on Taiwan and other sensitive issues.

“It’s natural for us to take possession of and research for a bit these types of things that America sends to our doorstep,” Yang said. “The louder they shout, the more their protests ring hollow.”

Car bomb kills 13 Turkish soldiers on bus; 7 suspects held

By DOMINIQUE SOGUEL, Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — A suicide car bomber set off an explosion Saturday that demolished a public bus transporting off-duty soldiers in Turkey’s central province of Kayseri, killing 13 troops and wounding 56 other people, authorities said.

Saturday’s blast comes a week after a car bomb attack claimed by Kurdish militants killed 44 people, mainly riot police, and wounded over 150 others near a soccer stadium in Istanbul.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 21 of 44

Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said the identity of the Kayseri attacker was known and that seven people had been taken into custody in connection with the attack. Police were searching for five others.

Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said the suicide bomber ambushed a commando brigade on weekend leave in the city of Kayseri.

The Turkish army said 48 troops were among the wounded in Saturday's "treacherous attack." The state-run Anadolu Agency said the explosion at the entrance gate to Erciyes University hit a bus transporting off-duty soldiers.

Speaking in Kayseri, Health Minister Recep Akdag told reporters 56 people had been wounded in the attack, including four who were in critical condition.

Images taken moments after the explosion showed a smoking public bus, still in flames, with its windows blown open and its interior blackened.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility but the statements of top officials suggested suspicion was focused on the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which Ankara and the West consider a terrorist organization. Kurdish militants have claimed multiple attacks against soldiers and police across Turkey this year in violence that has also caused many casualties among civilians.

"Turkey is under a combined attack by terrorist organizations, especially the divisive terrorist organization," President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said in a statement Saturday, referring to the PKK.

Turkey has fought the PKK for decades in a conflict that has claimed tens of thousands of lives. The collapse of a two-and-a-half year cease-fire in July 2015 set the stage for a violent new chapter and ushered vast security operations in Turkey's predominantly Kurdish southeast.

Turkey is also at odds with Western-backed Kurdish factions fighting against Islamic State extremists in neighboring Syria and Iraq. Turkey views these groups as extensions of the PKK.

"We know that these attacks we have endured are not unrelated to happenings in Syria and Iraq, or even our economical fluctuations," Erdogan said.

A state of emergency was declared following a botched July 15 coup attempt in Turkey and remains in force. The Turkish government has detained tens of thousands of people and fired tens of thousands of others for alleged ties to a cleric-led movement it says was behind the attempted coup, a claim the group denies.

As usual with attacks in Turkey, the prime ministry office imposed a temporary blackout on coverage of Saturday's explosion and urged media to refrain from publishing anything that may cause "fear in the public, panic and disorder and which may serve the aims of terrorist organizations."

Ayse Wieting, Bulut Emiroglu and Neyran Elden in Istanbul also contributed reporting.

Trump wants SC Rep. Mick Mulvaney to be his budget director

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — As he prepared for the final stop on his postelection "thank you" tour, President-elect Donald Trump on Saturday announced his pick for White House budget director, a tough-on-spending conservative congressman who advocates balancing the federal books.

South Carolina Rep. Mick Mulvaney, elected in the 2010 tea party wave and a founder of the hard-right House Freedom Caucus, is a "very high-energy leader with deep convictions for how to responsibly manage our nation's finances and save our country from drowning in red ink," Trump said in a statement.

Trump said that with Mulvaney on his team, his administration will make "smart choices" and "renew the American taxpayer's trust in how their money is spent."

The announcement came hours before Trump's rally at a football stadium in Mobile, Alabama, and he tweeted: "THANK YOU ALABAMA AND THE SOUTH. Biggest of all crowds expected, see you there!"

In Orlando, Florida, on Friday night, Trump told a crowd full of a military veterans that he would build up the forces but would use them sparingly as commander in chief.

After that event, Trump was expected to return to Mar-a-Lago, his Palm Beach estate. Aides said the president-elect probably would spend Christmas week there, taking meetings and relaxing with his family, and could remain at the coastal resort until New Year's.

His budget pick, the 49-year-old Mulvaney, is one of the more hard-charging members among House conservatives. Lawmakers in the House Freedom Caucus helped push former House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, from power and have caused heartburn for current Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis.

As director of the Office of Management and Budget, a post that requires Senate confirmation, Mulvaney would be responsible for crafting Trump's budget and overseeing the final issuance of major regulations.

Mulvaney has taken a hard line on budget matters, routinely voting against increasing the government's borrowing cap and pressing for major cuts to benefit programs as the path to balancing the budget.

Actually balancing the federal budget requires deeper spending cuts than the GOP-controlled Congress can probably deliver on, especially if Trump prevails on revenue-losing tax cuts and a big infrastructure package next year.

Mulvaney, in a statement released by Trump's transition team, pledged to help restore "lingering budgetary and fiscal sanity ... after eight years of an out-of-control, tax and spend financial agenda" under President Barack Obama.

"Each day, families across our nation make disciplined choices about how to spend their hard earned money, and the federal government should exercise the same discretion that hardworking Americans do every day," he said.

Reach Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire>

Protesters rip GOP for taking away next governor's 'power'

By GARY D. ROBERTSON, Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Protesters say the North Carolina legislature's actions limiting the next governor's influence before he even takes office were unconstitutional power grabs by GOP legislators unhappy their candidate didn't win re-election.

"We voted for a new governor and they're choosing to come and ... take away the power," said Caren Parker of Carrboro, among the crowd who demonstrated this week against the Republican-controlled General Assembly, leading to more than 50 arrests.

So what's next for Gov.-elect Roy Cooper and other fellow Democrats now that a special session is over that passed laws designed to weaken them?

Lawsuits and more demonstrations are likely, although it's unclear how effective those will be.

"Once more, the courts will have to clean up the mess the legislature made, but it won't stop us from moving North Carolina forward," Cooper said in a statement after the legislature adjourned an extraordinary three-day special session Friday.

McCrory, who lost to Cooper by about 10,000 votes in November, quickly signed into law a bill that merges the State Board of Elections and State Ethics Commission into one board composed equally of Democrats and Republicans. The previous state elections board law would have allowed Cooper to put a majority of Democrats on the panel.

The law would also make elections for appellate court judgeships officially partisan again, which could favor Republicans. A Democrat's win last month in an officially nonpartisan Supreme Court race will give the party its first majority on the court in almost 20 years.

Another bill that received final legislative approval would subject Cooper's Cabinet choices to Senate confirmation and would allow Cooper to designate only up to 425 state employees as his political appointees, compared with a cap of 1,500 for McCrory.

The Cabinet bill apparently remains on McCrory's desk. Emails and a phone call to McCrory's office seeking comment weren't returned. With 30 days to decide whether to sign or veto a bill, McCrory could kick the bill to his successor Cooper, although that's unlikely. Republicans will continue holding veto-proof

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 23 of 44

majorities in 2017.

Republicans call their approval of legislation reasonable actions to rebalance state government before a new administration takes office. The North Carolina governor's powers have expanded since the state became the last in the country to give the veto to its executive in 1997.

"It is proper for the legislative branch to adjust that so that the legislative branch has more checks and balances," House Speaker Tim Moore said Friday. "The more that can be reviewed by the legislative branch, I would submit, the better."

Several pieces of legislation passed by Republicans since they took control of the General Assembly in 2011 have been struck down by courts.

House Democrats are convinced any new laws also will be thrown out. They formally protested all three days because they said the method by which Republicans called themselves in — minutes after an earlier special session McCrory announced for disaster relief legislation ended — wasn't initiated properly. The issue involves the collecting the signatures from enough House and Senate members.

"This ain't right; you can't make it right," said House Minority Leader Larry Hall of Durham. "The people of North Carolina aren't being treated right."

Bob Orr, a former state Supreme Court justice, doubts the success of a challenge of the constitutionality of holding the extra special session if there are enough signatures.

But Orr said the bills passed by the legislature that address the confirmation of Cabinet officials and transferring power from the State Board of Education to the new Republican state school superintendent aren't as cut and dry.

While the state Constitution gives the Senate power for "advice and consent" of the governor's officers, "where that balance of power lines between the legislative branch and the executive is not settled," said Orr, also a previous Republican gubernatorial candidate.

Lawmakers' veto-proof majorities since 2013 and the uncompetitive election districts they drew have allowed legislative Republicans to ignore Democratic viewpoints.

Retired school librarian Carolyn White, a longtime demonstrator who was arrested two years ago as part of the "Moral Monday" protests against GOP-led legislative policies. She said that arrest didn't seem to make a difference, but she's still speaking out.

"Just like the civil rights movement, it's forward together," White said Friday. "You just have to keep going forward."

Associated Press writer Meg Kinnard in Columbia, South Carolina, contributed to this report.

Central American migrants await asylum in southern Mexico

By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN, Associated Press

TENOSIQUE, Mexico (AP) — Carlos Mejia sleeps on a bare mattress in an otherwise unfurnished room with his girlfriend and spreads a sheet on the cool tile for their two young children, a small respite from the sweltering heat. Their neighbors on both sides are Hondurans like them.

He earns \$8 a day working 12 hours slicing plastic bottles to put into a compactor, enough to pay the electricity and water and buy some food. But the U.N. refugee agency picks up the rent and that of a growing number of immigrant families in this Mexican city of 32,000 people near the Guatemalan border.

Mejia is among more than 8,000 immigrants expected to seek asylum this year from Mexico, the majority fleeing gang violence in Honduras and El Salvador and to a lesser extent Guatemala. The exodus is turning southern Mexico towns like Tenosique as well as Palenque and Tapachula in neighboring Chiapas state into informal refugee camps.

The decision to settle in Mexico and not continue to the United States is tied to increased recognition of the risks of crossing Mexico and more recently the hostile rhetoric of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, the immigrants and their advocates say.

The number of those seeking asylum in Mexico this year is more than double the 3,423 applicants last year — itself a 65 percent increase from 2014. Applications have risen by about 9 percent each month

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 24 of 44

this year, says the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, or UNHCR.

According to the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid, or COMAR, about 4,000 of the 6,898 applications it received through October this year made it to the end of the process and of those, 2,162 applicants got refugee status. Another 414 applicants who did not qualify as refugees received other kinds of government protection and escaped deportation.

More migrants are seeking asylum as information about the possibility spreads, said Rafael Zavala, director of the UNHCR office that opened here a year ago as the number of Central Americans seeking protection rose.

"We expect this year's trend of people seeking protection here in Mexico to continue," he said.

Mejia, 27, and his girlfriend Saimi Julio, 19, surrendered in October to Mexican immigration authorities at the El Ceibo border crossing, along with their 2-year-old daughter and 3-year-old son. They spent 26 days separated in immigration detention before being released to the migrant shelter here.

The couple had applied for asylum as well as a permit letting them seek work, so they only spent a week at the shelter before getting their room with the U.N. agency's help. It took Mejia another month to find a job.

A response to their asylum requests could take up to three months. Applicants cannot leave the area in the meantime, each week signing in at the local immigration office. If amnesty is denied, they can appeal and continue waiting.

Mejia said he never considered going to the United States.

"It's hard to go to the U.S.," he said sitting on the stoop outside his room. "You risk a lot of violence, so much crime along the way."

The number of asylum applicants remains a fraction of the overall flow. More than 400,000 immigrants — mostly Central Americans — were apprehended along the U.S. southwestern border during the fiscal year that ended in September.

But everything signals migrants are increasingly seeking asylum.

There is a precedent. In the 1980s and 1990s, Mexico took in more than 40,000 Guatemalans fleeing their country's civil war.

There is no sign Central America's current violence is letting up. El Salvador's homicide rate last year was 103 killings for every 100,000 residents, making it the most deadly country not at open war.

Honduras had 64 killings per 100,000 people in 2015. Two of Mejia's brothers were killed last year in a robbery and he received threats in their homeland.

Tenosique neighborhoods now teem with Hondurans. Narrow passageways lead to rows of rooms housing families.

Wendy Jimenez and her family met Mejia and Julio in Tenosique. They fled Honduras after her husband, Angel Castellon, refused to sell drugs for gang members who retaliated by setting fire to their home.

A large, twisting scar covers Castellon's upper arm and their 2-year-old daughter has burn scars on her legs and chest. Jimenez earlier lost an uncle and a brother in the country's violence.

Jimenez and her family made it to Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, across the border from Texas on a previous trip. But they were eventually deported back to Honduras. The day after they arrived, they left again.

"Our idea was the United States, but with the situation as it is, I don't think we can go to the United States," Jimenez said, referring to Trump's vows to deport millions of immigrants in the U.S. illegally. They heard about the possibility of asylum in Mexico, and on this journey they applied.

In a written response to questions, COMAR said that in September it signed a cooperation agreement with UNHCR, under which the Mexican entity is hiring more staff to keep up with increasing applications.

Tomas Gonzalez Castillo, a friar who founded the migrant shelter in Tenosique, said he has seen changes since it opened a few years ago.

There are more Central American families in Tenosique and they stay longer, unlike earlier waves that rested briefly and continued north. The number of visitors through the shelter is up by about a third this year.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 25 of 44

"It is an obligatory migration, forced by the generalized violence," Gonzalez said. "It is a terrible decomposition of the social fabric."

The U.N. is laying groundwork for more asylum seekers to stay in Tenosique and "avoid in the future any type of feeling of rejection toward the people who are arriving," said Zavala, head of the refugee agency's local office.

The agency has worked with city officials to open a gym and otherwise bring together local youth and their migrant peers, "so the foreigner won't become a threat, but rather an acquaintance."

Obama, rapping Putin, says US could strike back on cyber

By JOSH LEDERMAN and JULIE PACE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama has put Russia's Vladimir Putin on notice that the U.S. could use offensive cyber muscle to retaliate for interference in the U.S. presidential election, his strongest suggestion to date that Putin had been well aware of campaign email hacking.

"Whatever they do to us, we can potentially do to them," Obama declared Friday.

Caught in the middle of a post-election controversy over Russian hacking, Obama strongly defended his administration's response, including his refusal before the voting to ascribe motive to the meddling or to discuss now what effect it might have had. U.S. intelligence assessments say it was aimed at least in part on helping Donald Trump defeat Hillary Clinton, and some Democrats say it may well have tipped the results in his favor.

Though Obama avoided criticizing President-elect Trump by name, he called out Republicans who he said fail even now to acknowledge the seriousness of Russia's involvement in U.S. elections.

Obama expressed bewilderment about GOP lawmakers and voters who now say they approve of Putin, and he said unless that changes the U.S. will be vulnerable to foreign influence.

"Ronald Reagan would roll over in his grave," Obama said as he closed out the year at a White House news conference. Afterward he left for the family's annual vacation in Hawaii.

Obama declined to state explicitly that Putin knew about the email hacking that roiled the presidential race, but he left no doubt who he felt was responsible. He said that "not much happens in Russia without Vladimir Putin" and repeated a U.S. intelligence assessment "that this happened at the highest levels of the Russian government."

Obama said he confronted Putin in September, telling the former KGB chief to "cut it out." That was one month before the U.S. publicly pointed the finger at Russia. Suggesting his directive to Putin had been effective, Obama said the U.S. "did not see further tampering" after that date.

The president has promised a "proportional" yet unspecified response to the hacking of the Democratic Party and Clinton's campaign chairman. Emails stolen during the campaign were released in the final weeks by WikiLeaks. On Friday, CIA Director John Brennan said in a message to employees that the FBI agrees with the CIA's conclusion that Russia's goal was to help Trump win.

Trump has dismissed the CIA's assessment and talk about Russian hacking as "ridiculous," while arguing both Democrats and the CIA are trying to undermine the legitimacy of his victory. He made no mention of the hacking — or of Obama — during the latest stop on his "thank you" tour in Orlando, Florida, Friday night.

Clinton has even more directly cited Russian interference. She said Thursday night, "Vladimir Putin himself directed the covert cyberattacks against our electoral system, against our democracy, apparently because he has a personal beef against me."

Obama said he'd leave it to political pundits to debate the question of whether the hacking swayed the election outcome. He did, however, chide the media for that he called an "obsession" with the emails that were made public during the election's final stretch.

Accusations of Russian election interference have heightened the already tense relationship between Washington and Moscow. Separately, Obama has blamed Russia for standing in the way of international efforts to stop the civil war in Syria, where government forces have beaten back rebels in Aleppo.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 26 of 44

Obama said he feels "responsible" for some of the suffering in Syria, but he defended his decision to avoid significant military action there. He said that while military options short of invasion were tempting, it was "impossible to do this on the cheap."

Still, he pinned the bulk of the blame on Russia, as well as Iran, for propping up Syrian President Bashar Assad.

"This blood and these atrocities are on their hands," he said.

Meanwhile, the president rejected any notion that the dispute over hacking was disrupting efforts to smoothly transfer power to Trump. Despite fiercely criticizing each other during the election, Obama and Trump have spoken multiple times since the campaign ended.

"He has listened," Obama said of Trump. "I can't say he will end up implementing. But the conversations themselves have been cordial."

Associated Press writers Eric Tucker and Bradley Klapper contributed to this report.

Follow Josh Lederman at <http://twitter.com/joshledermanAP> and Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC>

5 ways North Korea has changed in 5 years under Kim Jong Un

By ERIC TALMADGE, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — It's been five years since North Korean leader Kim Jong Un took power following the death of his father, Kim Jong Il, whose demise was observed at monuments and on city center plazas across the nation Saturday. Here's a look at five ways the country that has now been ruled by three generations of Kim — starting with grandfather Kim Il Sung — has changed since the ascension of its 30-something "respected marshal."

THE MAN HIMSELF

Kim Jong Un is in some ways a lot more like his charismatic and gregarious, albeit brutal and megalomaniacal, grandfather than Kim Jong Il. He has gone out of his way to milk that resemblance, right down to adopting his trademark haircut from a seemingly bygone era. While his father almost never spoke in public, Kim Jong Un has done so on any number of occasions, including a four-hour address at his ruling party's congress in May. On the flip side, one of his most important moves to consolidate power — the execution of his powerful uncle and the purges that ensued — demonstrated both his personal independence and his willingness to employ the same kind of oppressive tools that were the hallmarks of both his father and grandfather. And, despite a short-lived friendship with former NBA bad boy Dennis Rodman, he has yet to travel abroad or meet a foreign head of state.

NUKES, MISSILES AND ROCKETS

Turning North Korea into a nuclear power wasn't Kim Jong Un's idea — it almost certainly originated with Kim Il Sung himself — but it's defined his first five years. Of the five nuclear tests North Korea has conducted, three have been under his watch and two, including its most powerful to date and its first of what Pyongyang claims was an H-bomb, were this year. Kim Jong Un's North Korea has been sprinting to the finish line of a viable nuclear arsenal and the advanced missile technology needed to attack South Korea, Japan and the 50,000 U.S. troops it hosts, the key U.S. military outpost of Guam and the U.S. mainland itself. At the same time, and some argue for largely the same reasons, the North under Kim has also joined the space race, putting satellites into orbit and aiming to reach the moon within the next decade.

SHIFTING PRIORITIES

North Korea's main motto under Kim Jong Il was "Military First." Under Kim Jong Un, the focus is now on building more and better nukes and bolstering the national economy, in large part through developing science and technology. To suit his goals, Kim has shifted more power to the ruling party and to his

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 27 of 44

Cabinet and put the nation on collective overtime with repeated "loyalty campaigns." It remains to be seen how sustainable his two-pronged nukes-and-butter policy will be in the face of international sanctions and internal, systemic weaknesses. So far, it has been at least workable. The North is already a de-facto nuclear state and its economy, though fragile and no doubt underperforming, is showing small but persistent growth.

FOSTERING MARKETS AND ENTREPRENEURS

Probably more out of pragmatic necessity than anything else, Kim Jong Un has allowed capitalist-style markets and entrepreneurialism to expand, invigorating the domestic economy and creating new revenue streams for the government, which profits by either taking a cut or by directly supporting such enterprises. Changes in farming policy that let individuals personally benefit from bigger harvests have boosted agricultural output. The relatively affluent capital of Pyongyang — home to the North's most fortunate — has seen a significant increase in everything from taxis to coffee shops and streets stalls. But the rise of the "cash masters," an empowered middle class more open to capitalist ideals, or just more determined to acquire material wealth, could prove to be a problem for Kim down the road.

KEEPING THE MASSES ENTERTAINED

Kim Jong Un has on several occasions vowed to make North Korea a "more civilized" nation. His signature development projects include an equestrian center and sprawling water park in Pyongyang and a luxury ski resort near the port city of Wonsan on the east coast. He has tried to give his regime something of a softer face through the all-female Moranbong Band, which sings its odes to him in a decidedly pop, and vaguely titillating, manner. Kim also generated a major national sensation by ordering a Disney-quality update to the "Boy General" anime series originally commissioned by his father. On another major front, Kim has made a big shift toward sports — vowing North Korea will become a major international sports power — presumably as a means of bolstering health and national pride and providing the masses with a relatively innocuous diversion from their daily lives.

Report: Chemical leak reported week before public was warned

By DAVID WARREN and FRANK BAJAK, Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — A chemical leak from an asphalt plant that led Corpus Christi officials to warn residents this week not to drink the water was apparently reported a week earlier, according to an email from a state environmental official that was obtained Friday.

The internal email sent Wednesday by Susan Clewis, a regional director for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, contained an incident report that described the leak as a "backflow incident from a chemical tank impacting the public water system." It was reported Dec. 7 at a plant run by Ergon Asphalt and Emulsions.

The email doesn't say who initially reported the leak on Dec. 7 or to whom. It says the state environmental agency was notified around 3 p.m. on Wednesday. City officials notified the public that evening.

"Obviously we are concerned about that initial report, that this may have been known for seven days and it may have been going on for that long. And why did it take so long for TCEQ to get notified?" asked Luis Moreno, chief of staff for state Sen. Juan Hinojosa, whose district includes Corpus Christi. "Those are all things that I think are starting to be figured out right now."

Dan McQueen, the mayor of the Gulf Coast city of about 300,000 people, has said local officials also only learned of the leak on Wednesday.

Neither Clewis nor city officials responded to requests for comment on Friday, when many schools remained closed for a second day.

The TCEQ report indicates that a combination of Indulin AA-86 and hydrochloric acid leaked into the water supply.

Indulin is an asphalt emulsifying agent that's corrosive and can burn the eyes, skin and respiratory tract

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 28 of 44

if a person comes into contact with concentrated amounts. The amber liquid is considered a hazardous material by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and could cause damage to internal organs.

"You don't expect to see it in water," said Terry Clawson, a spokesman with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Up to 24 gallons of it may have seeped into a pipeline carrying water, allowing it to move to other areas of the city, Kim Womack, a spokeswoman for the city, said Thursday.

Ergon has said in a statement that it has been in contact with the TCEQ and was "working cooperatively to provide all information to ensure state officials can remedy the situation as quickly as possible." Bill Miller, a company spokesman, declined to explain Friday how a hazardous chemical may have entered the water supply.

State and city officials have referred to a "backflow problem" at the plant, and Womack said inspectors didn't find a device in place that prevents contaminated water from flowing backward into a potable water supply. Ergon, though, has argued that the plant does have a prevention device, Womack said.

Miller said Ergon Inc. is leasing the property for manufacturing purposes. The privately held Flowood, Mississippi-based conglomerate's Corpus Christi subsidiary makes paving and pavement preservation products. The 62-year-old company also has refining, trucking and real estate businesses.

State and federal environmental records list no problems at the plant over the past five years. Nationwide, the Environmental Protection Agency reports no current "significant violations" at Ergon facilities but shows seven receiving fines since 2010, the highest \$17,200 paid by a Vicksburg, Mississippi, refinery.

A Texas Commission on Environmental Quality record lists an emergency response at the site on March 24 as having been closed. Clawson, the agency spokesman, said he had no details.

Meanwhile, city officials on Friday continued to ease restrictions on the use of tap water while workers flushed water pipes to make sure any remnants of the chemical are removed.

Limited use of water is allowed in some neighborhoods. Water can be used for showering and washing clothes, but not yet for drinking. They warn that young children and those with weakened immune systems should avoid bathing so as not to accidentally swallow the water.

Officials said Thursday that residents in some parts of the city can consume water however they wish, but there were still sections Friday where authorities urged no use at all.

In addition to shuttering schools, the leak also continued to disrupt commerce. Officials said plenty of bottled water has been donated to help residents.

City officials have said that no one has turned up at area hospitals with symptoms that might indicate they were sickened or burned by the chemical. A city councilman, Michael Hunter, told the Corpus Christi Caller-Times that it was unlikely the leaked chemical was concentrated enough to do harm, but that every precaution must be taken.

The incident is the latest in a string of water scares for Corpus Christi. In May, the city issued its third boil-water advisory in a year as a precaution after nitrogen-rich runoff from rain flowed into the water system, resulting in low chlorine disinfectant levels in the water supply.

Boil-water notices were issued last year because of elevated levels of E. coli and another for low chlorine levels, the Caller-Times previously reported. The notices mirrored two others that were issued in 2007.

City crews have worked to reconfigure some water mains to ensure that water keeps circulating and to prevent bacteria growth. But an overarching concern is an old water system where more than half of 225 miles of cast-iron pipe needs to be upgraded.

Bajak reported from Houston. Associated Press writer Paul J. Weber in Austin also contributed to this report.

Q&A: Secretary of state pick could affect climate policy

By **PATRICK WHITTLE** and **MATTHEW BROWN**, Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump this week tapped Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson to serve as his secretary of state. If confirmed by the Senate, where opposition is emerging, the move could have broad consequences for U.S. environmental policy and affect the role the U.S. plays in multinational discussions about climate change.

Here are some questions and answers about the selection of Tillerson.

Q. What's his background?

A. Tillerson, 64, is a Texas native and has spent his entire career at Exxon after graduating from the University of Texas with a civil engineering degree. He started as a production engineer and rose to become general manager of the company's oil production division in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Kansas in 1989. He was named president of Exxon Yemen in 1995 and was later put in charge of Exxon's operations in Russia and the Caspian Sea. After being named president of the corporation in 2004, Tillerson became chairman and CEO in 2006. He was expected to retire next year in line with the company's mandatory retirement age of 65.

Q. What's his relationship to Trump, and who was in the running for the post?

A. Trump has said he believes Tillerson's role as an international businessman for Exxon makes him uniquely qualified for the cabinet position. He has cited Tillerson's experience in "global enterprise" as evidence that Tillerson can represent U.S. interests around the world. The two share an established network of contacts in international government and business, while both lack public policy experience. Tillerson's selection for the nation's top diplomatic job came after former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney emerged as early favorites. John Bolton, a member of President George W. Bush's cabinet, was also mentioned.

Q. What is Exxon's environmental record?

A. Eleven million gallons of oil spilled when the Exxon Valdez ran aground in Alaska's Prince William Sound in 1989. The accident fouled birds and marine life and left a lasting stain on Exxon's reputation. Tillerson last year described it as a turning point that ushered in a new "culture of safety." Nevertheless, accidents and violations of pollution regulations have continued. Since 2006, Exxon's pipelines have spilled roughly 350,000 gallons of oil, costing \$158 million in property damage and repairs, including major spills in Montana's Yellowstone River and in Mayflower, Arkansas. The Environmental Protection Agency lodged at least 73 enforcement cases against Exxon and related companies in the same period, resulting in \$11.3 million in assessed penalties and \$436 million in compliance costs, according to an Associated Press analysis.

Q. What is the status of the federal lawsuit involving accusations that Exxon hid climate change research?

A. Officials in Massachusetts and New York have said Exxon understood a connection between burning fossil fuels and global warming as far back as the 1970s. They contend the company deliberately misled the public about the issue. Exxon has denied the accusations, and pushed back. Exxon went to court in Dallas in June to throw out the Massachusetts request and later added a New York subpoena. Lawyers for the company have said in their lawsuit that the state investigations were politically motivated. Federal Judge Ed Kinkeade in Texas has the case.

Q. How has Exxon's position on climate change morphed?

A. Exxon was long considered a leading opponent of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from burning fossil fuels that scientists say is responsible for climate change. That changed over the past decade, coinciding with Tillerson's leadership and shifting energy markets, said David Levy, a manage-

ment professor at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. The company now supports imposition of a "carbon tax" that would put a price on each ton of carbon emitted. Criticism lingers. "While the world needs to go one direction, he's been hell-bent as CEO trying to go the other direction," said U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, an Oregon Democrat.

Q. What has Exxon's position been on President Barack Obama's efforts to protect the environment?

A. Exxon has been critical of some of Obama's efforts to safeguard natural resources. The company, under Tillerson's leadership, has questioned the wisdom of limiting offshore oil drilling off the Atlantic coast and Alaska. Tillerson told The Associated Press last year that drilling off Alaska is important despite disapproval from environmentalists because "eventually we are going to need it" to meet energy needs. U.S. policy about domestic drilling would fall under the Interior Department more than under Tillerson.

Q. How would Tillerson interact with other countries on climate change?

A. Tillerson would be responsible for representing U.S. interests in international meetings on climate policy and in dealings with world powers about issues that overlap with climate, such as energy, security and environmental protection. John Kerry has put a focus on climate change as secretary of state, in keeping with the agenda of Obama. The selection of Tillerson signals to other countries that the Trump administration is changing diplomatic priorities, said Varun Sivaram, director of the Program on Energy Security and Climate Change at the Council on Foreign Relations. But he added it's important to note Tillerson has acknowledged that the world is warming. "There certainly is symbolism to nominating the CEO of the biggest oil company in the world as secretary of state," Sivaram said. "I think it's important to separate the man from the symbolism."

Brown reported from Billings, Montana. Associated Press writer David Koenig in Dallas contributed to this report.

Trump salutes supporters in Florida, names budget director

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump, in the latest stop of his victory lap, told a military veteran-laden crowd in Florida on Friday that while he would build up the country's armed forces, he would use them sparingly as commander-in-chief.

"For too long, we've moving from one reckless intervention to another, to countries you've never heard of before," Trump said at a rally in Orlando. "It's crazy and it's going to stop."

Trump still vowed to defeat the Islamic State group, offering no details but promising a foreign policy strategy that "means crushing ISIS rapidly."

He also vowed to keep "radical Islamic terrorists" out of the country by banning immigration from regions afflicted by terror — and pledged that tragedies like June's mass shooting at a nearby Orlando nightclub, which left 49 dead, would never happen again. That shooter was a U.S. citizen born in New York and would likely have been unaffected by Trump's proposals.

Trump on Friday also selected South Carolina Rep. Mick Mulvaney, a budget hawk and conservative Republican, to be his budget director, according to a transition official not authorized to speak publicly about the decision before it was announced.

The stop in Florida, which drew thousands to a fairgrounds outside Orlando, was meant to salute Trump's Election Day victory in a must-win state for his upstart presidential bid. The Republican businessman, who owns multiple properties in Florida, calls it his "second home" and relentlessly campaigned across it, successfully turning out white voters from non-coastal areas to best opponent Hillary Clinton's strength among minority voters in the state's large cities.

On Saturday, Trump will make the final stop on his "Thank you" tour at a football stadium in Mobile, Alabama, revisiting the site of the largest rally of his campaign.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 31 of 44

That night, he will return to Mar-a-Lago, his palatial Palm Beach estate. Aides said the president-elect would likely spend all of Christmas week there, taking meetings and relaxing with his family, and could stay at the coastal resort until New Year's.

He was in vintage campaign form in Orlando, settling scores, belittling opponents and even conducting a poll from the stage as to whether the crowd liked the phrase "Made in America" or "Made in the USA" better. ("Made in the USA" won convincingly.)

The raucous crowd — which was double in size of the one in the same venue in late October — also acted as if the campaign was still ongoing, repeatedly chanting "Lock her up" about Trump's former Democratic foe Hillary Clinton. They also turned their scorn on the press pen, chanting "Move them back" when Trump bitterly noted that the reporters at the rally had better seats than most of the attendees.

Trump's pick to head the Office of Management and Budget helped found the House Freedom Caucus, the group of conservative lawmakers who frequently battled former House Speaker John Boehner. An early backer of Trump during the campaign, Mulvaney took a hard line on federal spending under the Obama administration.

A strong proponent of spending cuts, Mulvaney fought against raising the nation's debt limit and frequently expressed a willingness to shut down the federal government instead. Mulvaney, as budget director, would be tasked with steering Trump's promised tax cut and infrastructure investment as well as working to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

In Orlando, Trump pushed back against criticism that his Cabinet was too stocked with generals and billionaires, suggesting he only cared about effectiveness, not political correctness.

"I don't need an MBA at the border and I don't need a general negotiating our trade deals," he said.

Though he will now set up camp at Mar-a-Lago, he has conducted most of his Cabinet and White House interviews from his office in Trump Tower high above Manhattan. Those interviews, as well as meetings with his advisers, continued Friday morning and included a sit-down with Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, the only current member of President Barack Obama's Cabinet to make the trip to the tower.

Also on Friday, Trump's incoming staff — Reince Priebus — had lunch at the White House with President Barack Obama's current chief of staff, Denis McDonough. Other former chiefs of staff were also invited.

Meanwhile, three protesters who have sued Trump, claiming they were assaulted last March at one of his campaign rallies, are asking the president-elect to sit for a deposition before he takes office next month.

Trump's attorney says he intends to "oppose any efforts" to depose the president-elect.

Reach Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire>

N. Carolina GOP strips some of Democratic governor's power

By GARY D. ROBERTSON and MEG KINNARD, Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — North Carolina Republicans stripped the incoming Democratic governor of some of his authority on Friday and they were on the cusp of an even greater power grab, an extraordinary move that critics said flies in the face of voters.

Just last week, it appeared Republicans were ready to finally accept Democrats' narrow win in a contentious governor's race. As it turns out, they weren't done fighting. In a surprise special session in the dying days of the old administration, some say the Republican-dominated legislature has thrown the government into total disarray, approving two bills aimed at emasculating incoming Gov. Roy Cooper's administration. One of them was signed into law by the current governor.

Cooper, the current attorney general, has threatened to sue. And many in the state are accusing Republicans of letting sour grapes over losing the governor's mansion turn into a legislative coup.

"This was a pure power grab," said retired school librarian Carolyn White, 62, a long-time demonstrator once arrested as part of the "Moral Monday" protests against GOP-led legislative policies. "I got arrested two years ago. Did it make any difference? No. But just like the civil rights movement, it's forward together. You just have to keep going forward."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 32 of 44

The protesters were so loud that Senate and House cleared the galleries — a highly unusual move. More than 50 people were arrested this week, and as demonstrators were led away from the Legislative Building, some chanted “all political power comes from the people.” Those that remained behind could only watch the debate through glass windows or listen to it online.

Hundreds stomped their feet and yelled outside the gallery, causing several Republican lawmakers to note they were having trouble hearing during the debate. Democrats repeatedly stated their objections.

“The kindergartners are getting rowdy,” said Republican Rep. Dana Bumgardner.

He said Democrats were “creating out of thin air a talking point for the next election.”

Republican Gov. Pat McCrory, who lost to Cooper by about 10,000 votes, quickly signed into law a bill that merges the State Board of Elections and State Ethics Commission into one board comprised equally of Democrats and Republicans. The previous state elections board law would have allowed Cooper to put a majority of Democrats on the elections panel.

The law would also make elections for appellate court judgeships officially partisan again.

Another bill that received final legislative approval would force Cooper’s Cabinet choices to be subject to Senate confirmation and would allow Cooper to designate up to 425 state employees as his political appointees, compared to a cap of 1,500 for McCrory.

Before adjourning, lawmakers also confirmed a salaried appointment to the state Industrial Commission for the wife of McCrory’s chief of staff. McCrory nominated her.

McCrory must decide whether to sign the second law passed by the General Assembly, a body that has repeatedly tugged him to the right even though he campaigned as a moderate in 2012 as Charlotte’s former mayor.

Republicans insist the legislation is simply adjusting the constitutional powers already granted to the General Assembly. Many provisions had been debated for years but had either gotten blocked or the Democratic viewpoint previously won out.

“There’s probably no better time than to deal with it in the present,” Republican Rep. Bert Jones said of the judicial elections provision.

Democrats said it was an attempt by the GOP to cling to power a week after the Republican incumbent conceded.

“I really fear that we have harmed our reputation and integrity this week,” said Rep. Billy Richardson, a Democrat.

Republicans gained power of both legislative chambers in 2010 for the first time in more than a century, and they have veto-proof majorities, holding 108 of 170 seats even though the state has been more closely divided in recent statewide and federal elections.

North Carolina is a presidential battleground state that Barack Obama won in 2008 by just over 14,000 votes. Four years later, Mitt Romney edged Obama by about 92,000 votes. Donald Trump won in November.

GOP legislators have been able to expand their majorities thanks to approving redistricting maps in 2011. But nearly 30 of those legislative districts were struck down last summer. A federal court has directed updated maps be approved by March 15.

Cooper ran on a platform of defeating Republicans’ agenda, saying he would work to repeal a law known as House Bill 2 that limits LGBT rights.

“Once more, the courts will have to clean up the mess the legislature made, but it won’t stop us from moving North Carolina forward,” Cooper said in a statement late Friday.

Republicans pointed to past sessions of the General Assembly, when it was dominated by Democrats. Democrats stripped the powers of the first and only GOP lieutenant governor of the 20th Century in the late 1980s. But Democrats said there’s been no such widespread effort to limit the power of an incoming executive before he took office in such a session.

Still, Republican House Speaker Tim Moore said, “just because you disagree with something doesn’t mean it’s unconstitutional.”

Kinnard reported from Columbia, South Carolina. Follow her at <http://twitter.com/MegKinnardAP> and read more of her work at <http://bigstory.ap.org/content/meg-kinnard/>

Rapper kerfuffle leads to shake-up at Fla.'s tourism agency

By **BRENDAN FARRINGTON, Associated Press**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Florida's tourism marketing agency had a management shake-up Friday after Gov. Rick Scott asked for the CEO to step down for refusing to publicly disclose the agency had paid rapper Pitbull \$1 million to promote the state.

Visit Florida CEO Will Seccombe "was in agreement" with the governor's call for leadership changes and he planned to work with the board on that, Visit Florida spokesman Tim DeClaire said in an email.

DeClaire also said that the chief financial officer and chief marketing officer positions "were eliminated" on Friday.

Scott also asked Visit Florida to begin publishing its spending, contracts, salaries, audits and other financial information.

"The notion that Visit Florida spending would not be transparent to the taxpayers is just ridiculous. We must have major reforms at Visit Florida in the weeks ahead that require new leadership," Scott said in a letter to William Talbert, who chairs the agencies board of directors.

The letter comes one day after Pitbull, whose real name is Armando Christian Perez, used Twitter to make his contract with Visit Florida public. House Speaker Richard Corcoran had sued two days earlier to have the contract released. Visit Florida had refused to disclose it, citing trade secrets.

Seccombe has led the agency since 2012 after serving as its chief marketing officer for nearly five years.

Pitbull filmed a video for his song "Sexy Beaches" as part of the contract and agreed to promote the hashtag #LOVEFL on his social media sites and at concerts.

The video features images of women frolicking in the surf and sand as well as pictures of iconic Florida hotels such as Miami Beach's Fontainebleau and the pink Don CeSar Hotel in St. Pete Beach. It ends with an image of #LOVEFL written in the sand.

Legislative leaders have criticized the agreement, but Scott's concern was more over the transparency — not the video or hiring Pitbull.

"I appreciate Pitbull and his devotion to our great state. His willingness to help promote tourism in Florida is a great example for other entertainers to follow," Scott wrote.

Follow Brendan Farrington on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/bsfarrington>

John Glenn lies in honor at Ohio capitol for public goodbye

By **JULIE CARR SMYTH, Associated Press**

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — John Glenn's home state and the nation began saying goodbye to the beloved astronaut Friday starting with a public viewing of his flag-draped casket inside Ohio's Statehouse rotunda.

Politicians, including Secretary of State John Kerry, and ordinary citizens from across the country paid their respects to the first American to orbit Earth as a somber Marine honor guard kept watch. The normally festive holiday decor was bedecked with black bunting and the windows were covered in black.

Ryan and Cristin Hanson, of Holland, Michigan, brought their 10-month-old baby, Hilary.

"He's a hero who's continued to be remembered," said Ryan, 31, who said he and his wife, 29, were awed by Glenn's accomplishments. "When we were young, we learned about John Glenn from our folks, and we hope that's something that gets perpetuated as we move forward."

Glenn died last week at 95. He grew up in eastern Ohio before becoming a national hero when he orbited Earth in 1962. Before that he was a fighter pilot in World War II and Korea.

A Democrat, Glenn also spent more than two decades representing Ohio in the U.S. Senate and became the oldest man in space, at age 77 in 1998.

Kerry, who served with Glenn in the Senate, walked up with Ohio Gov. John Kasich late in the afternoon and put a hand on the casket.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 34 of 44

Glenn's widow, Annie, gently rubbed the flag covering the casket while seated in a wheelchair, accompanied by the couple's two children.

The public viewing Friday was scheduled to stretch at least eight hours. Visitors in the line, which grew as the day wore on, proceeded patiently as video screens and placards placed within view recounted his life of accomplishment, including a late-in-life civics education project he launched with the former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

Most paused for a moment in front of Glenn's closed casket. A few snapped photos. Some bowed their heads or crossed themselves. One man, holding the hand of a small boy, turned and saluted before walking away.

President Abraham Lincoln and seven others before Glenn have lain in repose in Ohio since its capitol building opened in the 1850s, according to the Ohio History Connection, a statewide history organization.

"This guy was one of our great Ohioans. I wasn't going to miss this event," said Holly Rogers, 62, who works nearby. "I wasn't here for Abraham Lincoln, so I can be here for John Glenn."

A series of events celebrating Glenn's life is planned, including a processional through the heart of downtown Columbus Saturday followed by a public memorial service at Ohio State University, where he helped found a public affairs college. Vice President Joe Biden, a former Senate colleague of Glenn's, was among those expected to attend the service.

Glenn will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C., in a private ceremony in the spring.

Aleppo evacuation halted as both sides trade blame

By **BASSEM MROUE**, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Diplomats sought to salvage the evacuation of eastern Aleppo after it stalled Friday amid recriminations by both sides in Syria's civil war, raising fears the cease-fire could collapse with thousands still desperate to escape the rebel enclave.

The Aleppo evacuation was suspended after a report of shooting at a crossing point into the enclave. The Syrian government pulled out its buses that since Thursday had been ferrying out people from the ancient city that has suffered under intense bombardment, fierce battles and a prolonged siege.

"The carnage in Syria remains a gaping hole in the global conscience," said U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. "Aleppo is now a synonym for hell."

The halt also appeared to be linked to a separate deal to remove thousands of people from the government-held Shiite villages of Foua and Kfarya that are under siege by the rebels. The Syrian government says those evacuations and the one in eastern Aleppo must be done simultaneously, but the rebels say there's no connection.

The foreign minister of Turkey, a main backer of the rebels, said he was talking to his counterpart in Iran, a top ally of the Syrian government, to try to resume the evacuation.

A closed emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council was held on the crisis in Aleppo, discussing a French proposal to have independent monitors oversee the evacuation of civilians and fighters. The council meeting ended with diplomats saying they would convene again this weekend.

The cease-fire and evacuation marked the end of the rebels' most important stronghold in the 5-year-old civil war. The suspension demonstrated the fragility of the cease-fire deal, in which civilians and fighters in the few remaining blocks of the rebel enclave were to be taken to opposition-held territory nearby.

In announcing the suspension, Syrian state TV said rebels were trying to smuggle out captives who had been seized in the enclave after ferocious battles with troops supporting President Bashar Assad.

Several opposition activists said Syrian troops shot and killed four people in one bus, but the incident could not be independently confirmed.

The Lebanon-based pan-Arab Al-Mayadeen TV broadcast images of the government buses apparently returning evacuees to eastern Aleppo after the road was closed.

Al-Manar TV, the media arm of the Lebanon-based Hezbollah militant group that supports Assad,

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 35 of 44

said Syrian government supporters had closed the road used by evacuees from Aleppo, demanding the wounded from Foua and Kfarya be allowed to leave.

Syrian state media said rebels shelled a road that was supposed to be used by people leaving the villages. But the opposition's Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Hezbollah fighters backed by Assad ally Iran had cut the road to protest a lack of progress in the evacuations.

Buses that arrived at a collection point in the Hama countryside to pick up evacuees from the villages waited for hours to no avail.

Later, two rebel spokesmen privy to the talks said the fighters besieging the villages, including the al-Qaida linked Fatah al-Sham Front, had agreed to evacuate several hundred wounded from the villages.

Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency said Prime Minister Binali Yildirim had called Iranian Presidential Deputy Ishak Cihangiri and told him he was ready to cooperate with Tehran on the evacuation issue.

Reports differed on how many people remain in the Aleppo enclave, ranging from 15,000 to 40,000 civilians, along with an estimated 6,000 fighters.

There also were contradictory reports on the number of evacuees. Syrian state TV put it at more than 9,000; the Syrian state news agency said 8,079 opposition fighters and their families have left; and Russia, a key Assad ally, said over 9,500 people, including more than 4,500, were taken out.

More than 2,700 children have been evacuated in the past 24 hours, including the sick, wounded and those without their parents, UNICEF said. Hundreds of other vulnerable children, including orphans, remain trapped, it added.

"We are extremely concerned about their fate. If these children are not evacuated urgently, they could die," UNICEF said in a statement.

There are still "high numbers of women and infants, children under 5, that need to get out," added Elizabeth Hoff, Syrian representative for the World Health Organization, speaking by phone from western Aleppo.

During Thursday night's evacuation, Pawel Krzysiek of the International Committee of the Red Cross told The Associated Press he could sense "fear, desperation (and) anxiety" among those waiting to escape.

The civilians — including children and the elderly, the wounded and the sick — were out in the cold, "burning the plastic, trying to get some sort of heat to warm themselves," said Krzysiek, who is still in Aleppo.

"It's the people leaving their house behind, their lives behind. It is very often they are facing impossible choices and this all occurs at the very individual level and it is difficult to compare with anything else," he said.

"This is what the people are going through with their families, their relatives. This is really something very personal for them. I have seen sadness. I have seen really sadness in the people eyes. Heartbreaking sadness, broken lives, heartbreaking stories," Krzysiek added.

Before the operation was suspended Friday, four convoys of ambulances and buses left Aleppo, Syrian state TV said, noting that some evacuees used their own vehicles.

At the United Nations, U.S. Ambassador Samantha Power said she favors a French-drafted resolution calling for independent international monitors to oversee the evacuation. But Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said "it takes weeks to deploy observers."

Power said the Security Council could possibly vote this weekend on the resolution, but if there was a stalemate, an emergency special session of the General Assembly was possible. Churkin said Russia opposed that idea.

In a year-end news conference, U.S. President Barack Obama said he feels "responsible" for some of the suffering in Syria, but he defended his decision to avoid significant military action there.

He put the bulk of the blame on Russia, as well as Iran, for propping up Assad.

"This blood and these atrocities are on their hands," he said.

In Japan, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a new peace initiative, saying he and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan were working to set up talks between Damascus and the opposition. Putin said they would take place in Astana, the capital of the Central Asian country of Kazakhstan.

Bassma Kodmani of the High Negotiations Committee, Syria's main opposition group, told the AP that her group supports the call for resumed peace talks but it wants them to take place under U.N. auspices and that it doesn't believe Astana was "the appropriate place."

Several rounds of U.N.-mediated indirect peace talks this year in Geneva were suspended with no progress.

Also on Friday, Syrian state media reported that a 7-year-old girl wearing a belt of explosives walked into a police station in the capital of Damascus, and her bomb was triggered by remote control, killing her and wounding a policeman.

Associated Press writers Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow, Jamey Keaten in Geneva and Edith M. Lederer and Dave Bryan at the United Nations contributed to this report.

Democrats eye confirmation fight over Trump's Treasury pick

By **JULIE PACE** and **JULIE BYKOWICZ**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats are eyeing the Senate confirmation hearings for Donald Trump's Treasury secretary pick selection as a prime opportunity to chip away at the Republican's populist appeal with working-class voters and begin rebuilding their own party's economic message.

Given the narrow GOP majority in the Senate, Steven Mnuchin is likely to be confirmed. But Democrats plan to rough him up along the way, grilling the former Goldman Sachs executive over his Wall Street ties and his stake in a bank that profited from the foreclosure crisis. Several people who lost their homes are seeking to testify in the upcoming confirmation hearings.

Some Republicans are privately questioning Mnuchin's readiness to face aggressive questioning by senators. He has no government background, and his media appearances immediately after being picked raised alarms about his political inexperience. Some of the president-elect's advisers were caught off guard by the bold promises Mnuchin made to reporters following the official announcement, including pledging the largest tax cut since President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s and up to 4 percent economic growth.

As of Friday, Mnuchin, a multimillionaire, had not yet turned in vetting materials to the senators who will be initially weighing his nomination, including three years of tax returns and other financial information.

To some Democrats, Mnuchin is an even richer target than Trump's State Department pick, Rex Tillerson, who forged close ties with Russia during his long career at Exxon Mobil. While Democrats are eager to question Trump's own connections to Russia, their ability to discredit his populist appeal is more central to the party's post-election rebuilding efforts.

"Is Mr. Mnuchin, a former long-time executive at Goldman Sachs, really going to re-establish Glass-Steagall and control Wall Street greed and illegal behavior? I doubt it," Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders said in a preview of some of the issues he and other Democrats plan to raise in the confirmation hearings.

Mnuchin's connections to OneWest, a bank that foreclosed on thousands of homeowners after the housing crisis, are expected to be at the forefront of the hearings. He headed a group of investors who owned the bank, which foreclosed on more than 36,000 families in California alone — most in minority neighborhoods — according to the California Reinvestment Coalition.

Some of those former homeowners say they hope to attend the Senate hearings, with some telling The Associated Press they would like to testify about their firsthand experiences with bank practices they considered unfair. Senate Democrats have launched a new website inviting people to share their personal experiences with OneWest, and could use the submissions in the hearings.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., compared Mnuchin to "someone out of a bad movie for what went wrong on Wall Street."

Mnuchin is one of several wealthy individuals from the private sector tapped for jobs in the new Cabinet. He spent nearly two decades at Goldman Sachs before creating his own hedge fund and financing Hollywood movies. Mnuchin then served as Trump's campaign finance chairman and is well-liked by the president-elect's team.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 37 of 44

Tom Korologos, one of Washington's most experienced hands when it comes to confirmation hearings, said wealthy, politically inexperienced Cabinet nominees can find the "arcane art" of the confirmation process a challenge.

"They may not be used to taking criticism, answering uncomfortable questions. They may feel that since the president picked them, why should the Senate get to second-guess?" he said. "But that's not how our system works. There is nothing like the confirmation process."

Trump's transition team began assigning "sherpas" — Washington lingo for the people who guide nominees through their meetings with lawmakers and help prep them for the hearings — to its picks around Thanksgiving. Mnuchin's sherpa is Mary Waters, a congressional liaison for the Agriculture Department during George W. Bush's administration.

Trump's pool of potential sherpas has been limited by his decision to ban lobbyists from his transition team. Korologos, for example, has helped more than 300 people with confirmation hearings but couldn't work with Trump because he is a registered lobbyist.

Mnuchin, 53, has met with some Republicans on the Senate Finance Committee, which will vet the Treasury nominee before likely recommending him for a vote before the full chamber. Democrats, including their ranking committee member Ron Wyden of Oregon, are expected to begin meetings with Mnuchin after reviewing his vetting documents.

AP writers Ken Thomas and Josh Boak contributed to this report.

Follow Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC> and Julie Bykowicz at <http://twitter.com/bykowicz>

Stores push deals, hope to lure shoppers for holiday stretch

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO, AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Stores are pushing deals and incentives like free shipping for the final week of the holiday shopping season, as new numbers show people are so far spending at a bit of a slower pace than last year.

Retailers pared down their inventories and offered more exclusive merchandise this season in a bid to avoid having to offer big discounts that shoppers have come to expect. But customers seem willing to wait, and so stores are once again counting on last-minute buyers for the final stretch, particularly Saturday, which could be the busiest day of the year.

"This has really become a game of chicken. In that game of chicken, retailers once again were the ones who flinched," said Joseph Schmitt, director at the retail consulting firm AlixPartners.

Retail spending is up 2 percent, slightly slower the 2.4 percent gain at this time last year, with the rate of online spending far outpacing buying at physical stores from Oct. 29 through Monday, according to First Data. The firm analyzed online and in-store payments from nearly a million merchants. The data captures about 40 percent of all card transactions in the U.S. but excludes cash.

Online sales growth was up 9 percent, while spending at physical stores was up a mere 0.1 percent. At the mid-season point, e-commerce made up about 22 percent of retail spending, up from 16 percent in 2015. Overall, the average dollar amount spent per person for the 45-day period was \$70.28, up slightly from last year's \$69.34.

"It's pretty decent growth, but the average shopper is moving online," says Rishi Chhabra, vice president for information and analytics at First Data.

Gregg Omoto, an information technology worker from Seattle, says he's been shopping more online.

"It's easier," he said. "You can tap into people's wish lists, so there's not a lot of guesswork involved."

Four of the seven categories First Data tracks showed sales growth this season: building materials, electronics and appliances, furniture and home furnishings and health and personal care. General merchandise stores suffered the biggest sales drop — 2.8 percent — because of deep discounts as well as less foot traffic. Within that category, department stores took the biggest hit, with overall sales down 8.8 percent.

While the Thanksgiving weekend has usually kicked off the holiday season, stores have been starting

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 38 of 44

their sales earlier and earlier. They also started the season with less inventory on hand than in years past.

Many hoped that shoppers would have more to spend with the economy improving and lower gas and food prices, and the uncertainty over the presidential election behind them. But many shoppers retain the habits they developed during the Great Recession, focusing on deals and more readily using technology to find them.

Stores needed to be more aggressive with discounts, particularly last weekend, said C. Britt Beemer, chairman of the consumer-focused America's Research Group.

"Consumers are saying, 'where is the deal?'" he said. "Retailers hurt themselves last weekend by not having more deals."

Stores were still aggressive. Sixty-seven percent of orders were placed online using a promotion from Nov. 1 through Nov. 30, up from 38 percent in the same timeframe a year ago, according to DynamicAction, which studied \$4 billion in online consumer transactions. For the first five days of December, 60 percent of orders were placed using a promotion, compared with 29 percent a year ago.

Shoppers are hoping for even better deals in the final stretch.

Nearly 156 million people — or 66 percent of Americans — plan to or are considering taking advantage of Saturday sales to complete their holiday gift lists, according to a survey released Friday by the National Retail Federation and Prosper Insights & Analytics. The survey found that more people said they planned to shop on Saturday than those who aimed to shop over Thanksgiving weekend in an earlier survey.

Still, given the quirk in the calendar that makes this weekend the last full weekend before Christmas, retailers including Best Buy, Gap and J.C. Penney, have set an earlier deadline to order holiday gifts this year, according to StellaService, which tracks online services at retailers. Wal-Mart, along with others, is encouraging online shoppers to pick up their merchandise at the store.

Target will be offering last-minute shoppers deals that are good only for a day on certain in-demand products like children's sleepwear and fragrance sets.

Still, plenty of shoppers plan to take their time.

Christine Bunker Tobia of Queens says she mostly shops at Macy's but likes to wait to get the best deals. She's been stopping by Macy's New York Herald Square store often to check the prices.

"I'm looking for a special sale," she said last weekend. "I may wait another week."

Associated Press Writer Gene Johnson in Seattle contributed to this report.

Follow Anne D'Innocenzio: <http://twitter.com/ADInnocenzio>

Trump's pick for Israel envoy signals break on US policy

By **BRADLEY KLAPPER, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump's selection of a hard-line pro-Israel advocate as his U.S. ambassador to the Jewish state could signal the end of decades of American support for the establishment of an independent Palestine.

The president-elect's transition team already has asked the State Department to assess how to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, according to one official, underscoring Trump's commitment to back Israel in ways no American leader has before.

Trump isn't the first incoming president to promise to move the embassy from Tel Aviv. But his team's State Department request and comments from aides and advisers suggest he will be the first to charge into what promises to be a diplomatic and political minefield.

The ambassador-designate, David Friedman, has long ties to Israel's settler movement and has supported stances on the far-right of Israel's political spectrum, well beyond those of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The Orthodox Jewish lawyer from New York has suggested Trump would support Israeli annexation of parts of the West Bank, effectively eliminating the possibility of a Palestinian state. He has served as president of American Friends of Bet El Institutions, which supports a settlement.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 39 of 44

"This is about as sharp a break with past policy as I've seen in the last 25 years," said Aaron David Miller, a Mideast adviser under five American presidents of both parties.

Incoming U.S. leaders have often massaged the long-recited policy points on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, such as when Bill Clinton's team stopped calling Israeli settlements in east Jerusalem and the West Bank "obstacles to peace" or when George W. Bush eliminated the high-profile position of special Middle East coordinator. Since President Jimmy Carter, however, each has stopped short of building a new embassy in Jerusalem.

Doing so could be perceived as recognizing Israel's right to the entire city, even though the U.S. has promised for years to help found a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital. And it would isolate the U.S. from almost the entire international community, including its closest European allies and the Arab states it relies on to fight the Islamic State group and other threats.

"Moving the embassy was always considered too risky, too sensitive, and it was never clear how it really advanced U.S. interests," Miller said. Going through with the move, he added, "will feed every jihadi's wildest dreams" because it will feed into the notion of a Jewish takeover of the city.

Trump advisers have insisted in recent days that the president-elect will follow through on his call for moving the embassy.

"He has made that promise," Trump adviser Kellyanne Conway told reporters Thursday. "I can guarantee you, just generally, he's a man who is going to accomplish many things very quickly."

Palestinian reaction was fierce Friday.

Moving the embassy "would be the end of the peace process as a whole," chief negotiator Saeb Erekat told reporters in the West Bank, having recently returned from Washington where he held talks with Secretary of State John Kerry.

Trump said Friedman would "maintain the special relationship" between the U.S. and Israel. Friedman said he looked forward to carrying out his duties from "the U.S. embassy in Israel's eternal capital, Jerusalem."

Also voicing anger were liberal Jewish and pro-peace organizations such as Americans for Peace Now, which said Friedman would add "fuel to the Israeli-Palestinian fire."

Rabbi Rick Jacobs, Union for Reform Judaism's president, posted a letter online he received from Friedman this summer in which the attorney says the long-time U.S. policy consensus on a two-state solution "is, to me, entirely irrelevant."

"The numerous proposals and initiatives for a two-state solution over the years have brought neither peace nor security to the State of Israel," Friedman wrote, blaming the conflict on "one thing only — radical Islamic jihadism, a cancer that infects Israel and much of the rest of the world."

While Israelis are "overwhelmingly well-intentioned, well-informed, and non-hateful," the Palestinians "teach their children to hate and murder Jews," he said. A Palestinian state in the West Bank "will bring missile attacks on the entire population of Israel."

The Palestinians want the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem — areas Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war — for their state. Nearly 600,000 Jewish settlers now live in the West Bank and east Jerusalem.

Trump appears serious about his intentions.

A U.S. official told The Associated Press that the State Department recently assessed the costs and logistics of moving the embassy, upon request from Trump's transition team. The document didn't address possible diplomatic ramifications, said the official, who wasn't authorized to speak publicly and demanded anonymity.

An embassy in Jerusalem would put America's Arab allies in a difficult position.

Although Saudi Arabia and other Sunni monarchies have edged closer to Israel, linked by their dislike for Iran, Jerusalem's status as Islam's third holiest city and the Palestinian cause's overwhelming support on the Arab streets would make it hard for them not to respond. One Saudi prince even has suggested the entire Islamic world would pull its ambassadors from Washington, although that is unlikely.

"Jerusalem is an emotional issue and one the Sunni Arabs can't really ignore," Dennis Ross, a top U.S. peace mediator under Presidents George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, said.

Moving the embassy isn't impossible, he said, if Trump lays the groundwork with Middle East partners. Presumably, that would entail offering the Palestinians something.

Ross seemed less concerned about Friedman specifically.

"Ambassadors to Israel carry out the policy," he said. "They don't make the policy."

Official: FBI backs CIA conclusion on Russian hacking motive

By JOSH LEDERMAN and BRADLEY KLAPPER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI is supporting the CIA's conclusion that Russia interfered in the presidential election with the goal of supporting Republican candidate Donald Trump.

In a message sent to employees, CIA Director John Brennan said he had spoken with FBI Director James Comey and James Clapper, the director of national intelligence.

Brennan said in the message that "there is strong consensus among us on the scope, nature, and intent of Russian interference in our presidential election."

A U.S. official who had seen the unclassified message from Brennan confirmed it to The Associated Press on Friday.

President Barack Obama is promising that the U.S. will retaliate against Russia for its suspected meddling in America's election process, an accusation the Kremlin has vehemently denied.

As the White House grew more bullish about suggesting President Vladimir Putin was personally involved, Obama said he'd spoken directly to Putin about his concerns about Russian meddling. He said whenever a foreign government tries to interfere in U.S. elections, the nation must take action "and we will at a time and place of our own choosing."

"We have been working hard to make sure that what we do is proportional, that what we do is meaningful," Obama said in an NPR News interview airing Friday.

Obama's remarks were the clearest indication that whatever response the U.S. is planning, it hasn't happened yet. The White House has insisted for months that when the U.S. did retaliate, it might not be made public, a position that has created uncertainty about the strength and timing of any response.

Obama was expected to face questions about the hacking and his response during a news conference at the White House on Friday afternoon.

White House officials said it was "fact" that Russian hacking helped Donald Trump's campaign against Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton. White House press secretary Josh Earnest on Thursday also assailed Trump himself over his refusal to acknowledge the hacking and his attacks on the U.S. intelligence community.

The tough talk from the White House fell flat in Moscow, where Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov called the accusations baseless and inappropriate.

"They should either stop talking about that, or produce some proof at last," Peskov told reporters Friday. "Otherwise it all begins to look unseemly."

There has been no specific, persuasive evidence shared publicly about the extent of Putin's role or knowledge of the hackings. That lack of proof undercuts Democrats' strategy to portray Putin's involvement as irrefutable evidence of a directed Russian government plot to undermine America's democratic system.

But the White House pointed to a U.S. intelligence assessment released publicly in October that asserted "only Russia's senior-most officials could have authorized these activities." And Obama's deputy national security adviser, Ben Rhodes, connected the dots further, saying Thursday Putin was responsible for the Russian government's actions.

"I don't think things happen in the Russian government of this consequence without Vladimir Putin knowing about it," he told MSNBC.

Trump has been under increasing pressure from both parties to acknowledge Russia's actions, despite his insistence that he doesn't believe Moscow was meddling. Trump has rejected the CIA's assessment that Russia's aim was to help him win and argued on Twitter that "these are the same people that said Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction."

The head of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Republican Sen. Richard Burr, defended the U.S. intelligence community in a statement Friday pushing back on the notion that the CIA was trying to undermine Trump for political reasons. Burr said intelligence officials "come from all walks of life and hold views across the political spectrum."

"We would all do well to remember the sacrifices they make on our behalf and keep in mind that what we do with the intelligence they provide is up to us," Burr said.

Yet Trump appeared undeterred, mockingly asking in a Twitter post "are we talking about the same cyberattack" in which embarrassing information about the Democratic National Committee was also revealed. His tweet invoked emails stolen from Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman and later released publicly in hacking that has been linked to Russia.

In the NPR interview, Obama sought to contrast the current incident with "a traditional understanding that everybody's trying to gather intelligence on everybody else."

"One of the things we're going to have to do over the next decade," he said, is find an international understanding on rules involving what has become "a new game." Obama said that U.S. officials should not let "the inter-family argument between Americans" obscure the need for people to "stand together" on this issue.

"My view is that this is not a partisan issue," the president said, exhorting people to "take it out of election season and move it into governing season."

The explosive accusation suggests Putin, the leader of perhaps America's greatest geopolitical foe, directly undermined U.S. democracy. U.S. officials have not contended, however, that Trump would have been defeated by Clinton on Nov. 8 if not for Russia's assistance. Nor has there has been any indication of tampering with the vote-counting.

Clinton says Putin's "personal beef" prompted election hacks

By LISA LERER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hillary Clinton is blaming Russian interference for her defeat in the presidential race, casting her loss as part of a long-running strategy by Russian President Vladimir Putin to discredit the fundamental tenets of American government.

In an address to donors at a Thursday night gathering in New York City, Clinton cited a "personal beef" with Putin as a possible reason for the country to meddle in the race. Echoing concerns raised by the White House, Clinton suggested Putin was personally involved an effort to hack the Democratic National committee and top campaign aide John Podesta.

"Vladimir Putin himself directed the covert cyberattacks against our electoral system, against our democracy, apparently because he has a personal beef against me," "He is determined not only to score a point against me but also undermine our democracy."

The former secretary of state attributed Putin's personal vendetta against her to national protests following her 2011 accusation that Russia's parliamentary elections were fraudulent.

In a call with supporters held the weekend after the election, Clinton cited the late-October release of a letter by FBI Director James Comey about her use of a private server as a reason for her loss.

While Clinton reiterated the impact of Comey's decision, saying that swing-state voters settled on a candidate in the final days of the race, she struck a far tougher line against Russia.

After spending weeks largely out of the public spotlight, Clinton and her team are taking a more visible profile on the Russia issue. Following an opinion piece in the Washington Post on Friday, Podesta is expected to appear on NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday.

"This is part of a long-drawn strategy to cause us to doubt ourselves and to create the circumstances in which Americans either wittingly or unwittingly will begin to cede their freedoms to a much more powerful state," she said. "This is an attack on our country."

Her remarks come as President Barack Obama promises that the U.S. will retaliate against Russia for the suspected interference — a charge the Kremlin denies.

In an interview with NPR News airing on Friday, Obama said whenever a foreign government tries to interfere in U.S. elections, the nation must take action "and we will at a time and place of our own choosing."

Japan, Russia agree on economic ties; stalemate on territory

By MARI YAMAGUCHI, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Russia and Japan agreed Friday to hold talks on joint economic development of four islands at the center of a decades-old territorial dispute between the countries.

It was a small step forward that fell far short of breaking the stalemate in a dispute that has prevented Russia and Japan from signing a peace treaty formally ending their World War II hostilities.

Joint development "would help foster trust toward a peace treaty," Russian President Vladimir Putin said at a news conference with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe after two days of meetings in Japan.

Asked about developments in Syria, Putin said he and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan are working to launch a new round of peace talks in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan.

For Putin, the summit meeting was his first official visit to a G-7 country since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. Abe, eager for progress on the territorial issue, invited Putin even though Japan and the other G-7 nations still have sanctions on Russia.

The dispute centers on four southern Kuril islands, which Japan calls the Northern Territories. The former Soviet Union took the islands in the closing days of World War II, expelling 17,000 Japanese to nearby Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan's four main islands.

Abe said Friday that he has his own idea of what is right for the islands, as does Putin.

"If we just insist on our own justice, we can never resolve the problem," he said. "We must make an effort to open a new future in Japan-Russia relations for the new generation."

Putin said he did not know how the dispute could be resolved, but that the islands should be seen not as a point of contention but "a place that brings Japan and Russia together."

Former island resident Koichi Iwata, 87, told Japanese public broadcaster NHK that change won't come easily.

"We are different people. We lost the war, and we feel that we were taken advantage of," he said. "But there is hope. They say win-win, which means that it is good for both peoples, right?"

In a statement, Japan and Russia said they will explore joint projects in fisheries, tourism, health and environment on the disputed islands, though details are yet to be worked out.

An agreement on joint economic development is far from a given because of the dispute over sovereignty. Similar ideas in the past have failed because of that. Russia says any development should be governed by Russian laws, while Japan is pushing for a special framework that in Abe's words would not "infringe on the sovereignty positions of either side."

"It's a huge problem," said James Brown, a Japan-Russia expert at Temple University's Japan campus in Tokyo. "There is every chance it will never happen."

The two countries also exchanged a number of broader economic, cultural, science and sports cooperation agreements.

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

Putin said Japanese involvement will be crucial to development of Russia's far east.

"Russia and Japan haven't had very much economic cooperation," Putin said earlier Friday. "It is necessary to expand the potential of our economic ties."

The talks began Thursday evening at a hot springs resort in western Japan. On Friday, Putin arrived about 45 minutes late in Tokyo because of a mechanical problem with his presidential aircraft. He used a backup plane, according to Japanese media.

After the news conference, Abe and Putin spoke at a Japan-Russia business forum and visited a judo center before Putin's departure. Putin is well-known for practicing judo.

Putin refuted suggestions that he is using the territorial issue to wrest economic cooperation from Japan

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 43 of 44

with no intention of making any concessions on the dispute.

"I believe, from a long-term prospect, that we could achieve a historic resolution," he said.

Abe said he and Putin also agreed to start discussing ways for former Japanese residents of the islands to visit their hometowns freely. Up until now, they have been allowed to go to the islands only under special arrangements.

Associated Press writers Ken Moritsugu in Tokyo and Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that the ex-islander's name is Koichi Iwata instead of Koiichi Iwata.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Dec. 17, the 352nd day of 2016. There are 14 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 17, 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright of Dayton, Ohio, conducted the first successful manned powered-airplane flights near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, using their experimental craft, the Wright Flyer.

On this date:

In 1777, France recognized American independence.

In 1865, Franz Schubert's Symphony No. 8, known as the "Unfinished" because only two movements had been completed, was first performed publicly in Vienna, 37 years after the composer's death.

In 1925, Col. William "Billy" Mitchell was convicted at his court-martial in Washington of insubordination for accusing senior military officials of incompetence and criminal negligence; he was suspended from active duty.

In 1939, the German pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee was scuttled by its crew, ending the World War II Battle of the River Plate off Uruguay.

In 1944, the U.S. War Department announced it was ending its policy of excluding people of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast.

In 1957, the United States successfully test-fired the Atlas intercontinental ballistic missile for the first time.

In 1969, the U.S. Air Force closed its Project "Blue Book" by concluding there was no evidence of extraterrestrial spaceships behind thousands of UFO sightings. An estimated 50 million TV viewers watched singer Tiny Tim marry his fiancée, Miss Vicky (Budinger), on NBC's "Tonight Show."

In 1975, Lynette Fromme was sentenced in Sacramento, California, to life in prison for her attempt on the life of President Gerald R. Ford. (Fromme was paroled in Aug. 2009.)

In 1979, Arthur McDuffie, a black insurance executive, was fatally injured after leading police on a chase with his motorcycle in Miami. (Four white police officers accused of beating McDuffie were later acquitted, sparking riots.)

In 1981, members of the Red Brigades kidnapped Brig. Gen. James L. Dozier, the highest-ranking U.S. Army official in southern Europe, from his home in Verona, Italy. (Dozier was rescued 42 days later.)

In 1986, Eugene Hasenfus, the American convicted by Nicaragua for his part in running guns to the Contras, was pardoned, then released.

In 1996, Peruvian guerrillas took hundreds of people hostage at the Japanese embassy in Lima (all but 72 of the hostages were later released by the rebels; the siege ended April 22, 1997, with a commando raid that resulted in the deaths of all the rebels, two commandos and one hostage). Six Red Cross workers were slain by gunmen in Chechnya. Kofi Annan of Ghana was appointed United Nations secretary-general.

Ten years ago: Gunmen in Iraqi army uniforms kidnapped some 30 people at the Red Crescent offices in downtown Baghdad (about half were released the same day). Searchers on Mount Hood in Oregon

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 166 ~ 44 of 44

found the body of missing climber Kelly James (two other climbers, Brian Hall and Jerry "Nikko" Cooke, were never found). Dodgers reliever Larry Sherry, the most valuable player of the 1959 World Series, died in Mission Viejo (vee-AY'-hoh), California, at age 71. Yul Kwon, a management consultant from San Mateo, California, emerged as the winner of CBS' "Survivor: Cook Islands."

Five years ago: North Korean leader Kim Jong Il (kim jawng eel) died after more than a decade of iron rule; he was 69, according to official records, but some reports indicated he was 70. Advocates for immigrants gathered outside Alabama's state Capitol in Montgomery to call for repeal of a controversial law they said harkened back to the state's segregationist past.

One year ago: Defense Secretary Ash Carter acknowledged that he sometimes used a personal, unsecured email account to conduct official business after he took office, a practice he called "entirely my mistake." Representatives of Libya's two rival factions signed a U.N.-brokered deal to form a unity government.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Armin Mueller-Stahl is 86. Pope Francis is 80. Singer-actor Tommy Steele is 80. Rock singer-musician Art Neville is 79. Actor Bernard Hill is 72. Actor Ernie Hudson is 71. Political commentator Chris Matthews is 71. Comedian-actor Eugene Levy is 70. Actress Marilyn Hassett is 69. Actor Wes Studi is 69. Pop musician Jim Bonfanti (The Raspberries) is 68. Actor Joel Brooks is 67. Rock singer Paul Rodgers is 67. Rhythm-and-blues singer Wanda Hutchinson (The Emotions) is 65. Actor Bill Pullman is 63. Actor Barry Livingston is 63. Country singer Sharon White is 63. Producer-director-writer Peter Farrelly is 60. Rock musician Mike Mills (R.E.M.) is 58. Pop singer Sarah Dallin (Bananarama) is 55. Country musician Tim Chewning is 54. Country singer Tracy Byrd is 50. Country musician Duane Propes is 50. Actress Laurie Holden is 47. DJ Homicide (Sugar Ray) is 46. Actor Sean Patrick Thomas is 46. Actress Claire Forlani is 45. Pop-rock musician Eddie Fisher (OneRepublic) is 43. Actress Sarah Paulson is 42. Actress Marissa Ribisi is 42. Actor Giovanni Ribisi is 42. Actress Milla Jovovich (YO'-vuh-vich) is 41. Singer Bree Sharp is 41. Singer-songwriter Ben Goldwasser (MGMT) is 34. Rock singer Mikky Ekko is 33. Actress Shannon Woodward is 32. Actress Emma Bell is 30. Actress Vanessa Zima is 30. Rock musician Taylor York (Paramore) is 27. Actor Graham Rogers is 26. Actor-singer Nat Wolff is 22.

Thought for Today: "Democracy is not an easy form of government, because it is never final; it is a living, changing organism, with a continuous shifting and adjusting of balance between individual freedom and general order." — Ilka Chase, American author, actress, humorist (1905-1978).