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Groton Area Kindergarten



Kaedy Bonn is the daughter of Cody and Kristi Bonn of Groton. What Christmas means to me is being with my family and opening presents.



Porter Jones is the son of Jarrett and Stacey Jones of Bath. What Christmas means to me it's about gingerbread houses.



Zachary Fliehs is the son of Jeff and Bridget Fliehs of Groton. What Christmas means to me. Christmas means my Grandma and Grandpa come to my house, It is also Jesus' birthday.

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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Bridger Bliese is the son of Kristi and Kevin Bliese of Bath. What Christmas means to me, Christmas is getting together with my family. It means Santa.



Arianna Dinger is the daughter of Weston Dinger and Elizabeth Dinger of Groton. What Christmas means to me, you get to spend time with your family and friends.



Adeline Kotzer is the daughter of Kevin Kotzer and Nikki Kotzer of Groton. What Christmas means to me, getting presents and being with my family.



Abby Fjedheim is the daughter of Ryan and Susan Fjedheim of Groton. What Christmas means to me, it means Jesus and it's birthday.



Wyatt Hagen is the son of Lenny and Theresa Hagen of Columbia. What Christmas means to me, is presents and toys



Tevan Hanson is the daughter of Justin and Chelsea Hanson of Groton. What Christmas means to me, is presents and spending time with my family.



Sam Crank is the son of Tom and Rachael Crank of Groton. What Christmas means to me, giving and caring about people who don't have any food.



Madison Herrick is the daughter of Randy and Angie Herrick of Bristol. What Christmas means to me sharing and loving.

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Grayson Flores son of Jackie Krueger of Groton. What Christmas means to me, our family gets together. It is Jesus' birthday.



Novalea Warrington is the daughter of Neil and Amy Warrington of Groton. What Christmas means to me is family.



Donovan Sealey is the son of Hope Block of Groton. What Christmas means to me, is sharing and giving.



Luke Gauer is the son of Will and Jordi Gauer of Groton. What Christmas means to me It means Jesus and Jesus' birthday.



Neely Althoff is the daughter of Scott and Dana Althoff of Groton. What Christmas means to me is Jesus' birthday. I get to see all of my family.



Jordan Schwan is the son of Joe and Jodi Schwan of Groton. What Christmas means to me. I get to see my cousins and my family. It means presents.



Parker Lambertz is the son of Shawn and Heather Lambertz of Groton. What Christmas means to me is that Jesus' was born on Christmas. It means Santa also.



Tenley Frost is the daughter of Christopher and Samantha Frost of Groton. What Christmas means to me it means Christmas lights and it's about presents.

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Kyrie Yeigh is the daughter of Caleb and Desiree Yeigh of Aberdeen. What Christmas means to me, Santa is watching and you won't get presents if you are naughty!



Korinna Bohlmann is the daughter of Tara Bohlmann and Derrick Furman of Claremont. What Christmas means to me It means presents and santa. It means Christmas tree and lights



Grant Cleveland son of Justin and Gretchan Cleveland of Groton. What Christmas means to me, is Santa does hard work, I like to open presents.



Korbin McKane is the son of James and Ashley McKane of Antover. What Christmas means to me is getting presents and we have decorations and a Christmas tree and getting a new toy.



Ian Kutter is the son of Ryan and Carol Kutter of Groton. What Christmas means to me is getting presents and seeing Santa.



Asher Johnson is the son of JR. and Paula Johnson of Groton. What Christmas means to me, you get to be with your family and Christmas trees and presents.



Drake Osterman is the son of Loren and Katie Osterman of Conde. What Christmas means to me is presents and elves and the Christmas tree.



Connor Kroll is the son of Joel and Jessica Kroll of Groton. What Christmas means to me, it is winter and there is snow, and we get presents.

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Brooklyn Spanier is the daughter of Roger and Darci Spanier of Groton. What Christmas means to me, is people love me and give me lots of presents.



Kolton Antonsen is the son of Travis and Angela Antonsen of Groton. What Christmas means to me is his family comes for Christmas.



Lincoln Shilhanek is the son of Bill and Nicole Shilhanek of Groton. What Christmas means to me, you stay with your family and you get presents.



Aurora Washenberger is the daughter of Dan Washenberger and Laura Arth of Bath. What Christmas means to me, is it means you share and you give people presents.



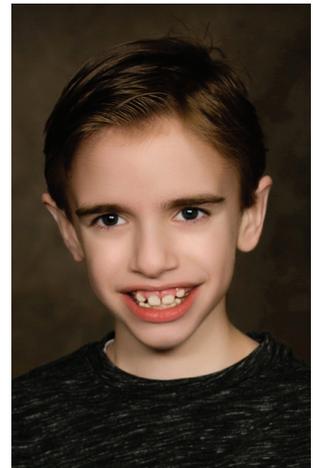
Aspen Beto is the daughter of Lance and Cassie Haskell of Conde. What Christmas means to me, it's Jesus birthday, and Santa might bring me a real puppy for Christmas!



Wesley Morehouse is the son of Brent and Jessica Morehouse of Andover. What Christmas means to me is about being together and it's about giving.



Logan Olson is the son of Ryan and Carrie Olson of Groton. What Christmas means to me is it's Jesus' birthday.



Drake Dosch son of Jeremy Dosch and Kelsie Ehresmann of Columbia. What Christmas means to me, Drake is thankful for presents, reindeer, Christmas movies, scarves, snowmen, and loving my family.

State Officials Urge Caution with Holiday Storm

PIERRE, S.D. – Those traveling for Christmas are being urged to prepare for a holiday storm that could produce both rain and snow in parts of South Dakota.

Officials of the state Departments of Public Safety and Transportation have been tracking the Christmas Day storm for several days. A Blizzard Watch has already been issued for western South Dakota while a Winter Storm Watch has been issued for central and northeastern South Dakota. More advisories are possible.

Latest forecasts predict heavy snow, rain or freezing rain throughout the state from late Saturday night through mid-day Monday. High winds late Sunday into Monday, blowing snow and below zero wind chills also are expected.

“We still are not fully certain of the storm’s path and the precipitation amounts, but we are expecting a major storm,” says DPS Secretary Trevor Jones. “We are advising people who are traveling to make sure they reach their destination by Saturday night, Christmas Eve. It will be difficult or impossible to travel on Christmas Day and into Monday in the western, central and possibly northeastern parts of the state.”

DOT Secretary Darin Bergquist says snow plows will be on duty as needed. He says motorists should watch for changing road conditions and other factors like black ice.

“If you are going to travel this weekend, remember that winter driving conditions will exist,” he says. “Motorists are asked to reduce speed, turn off cruise control, wear your seat belt and leave extra space between you and other vehicles.”

Throughout the holiday weekend, the public is encouraged to watch for the latest weather forecasts. Before traveling, motorists should check road conditions at www.safetravelusa.com/sd or by dialing 5-1-1.

Travelers are also encouraged to sign up for ClearPath511 to receive text or email alerts for No Travel Advisories and road closures.

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Ice Storm Warning URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE ABERDEEN SD 404 AM CST SUN DEC 25 2016

...SIGNIFICANT CHRISTMAS STORM EXPECTED...

.A STRONG LOW PRESSURE AREA WILL MOVE NORTHEAST ACROSS THE CENTRAL AND NORTHERN PLAINS TODAY THROUGH MONDAY. THIS WILL BRING EVERYTHING FROM RAIN...FREEZING RAIN...SLEET AND SNOW...ALONG WITH VERY STRONG NORTHWEST WINDS CAUSING BLIZZARD TO NEAR BLIZZARD CONDITIONS IN SOME AREAS.

TRAVERSE-BIG STONE-MCPHERSON-BROWN-MARSHALL-ROBERTS-EDMUNDS-DAY-INCLUDING THE CITIES OF...WHEATON...ORTONVILLE...EUREKA...ABERDEEN...BRITTON...SISSETON...IPSWICH...WEBSTER...ICE STORM WARNING REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL 6 AM CST MONDAY...

* TIMING...FREEZING DRIZZLE EARLY THIS MORNING WITH FREEZING RAIN ARRIVING AROUND MID MORNING. WARMER TEMPERATURES AROUND NOON COULD CHANGE FREEZING RAIN OVER TO RAIN. FAR NORTHEAST SOUTH DAKOTA COULD SEE A PROLONG PERIOD OF FREEZING RAIN INTO THE AFTERNOON HOURS. WITH TEMPERATURES FALLING OVERNIGHT...ANY WET SURFACES HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO REFREEZE. LIGHT SNOW AND STRONG WINDS ARE ALSO EXPECTED TO DEVELOP ACROSS THE WARNED AREA LATER SUNDAY NIGHT INTO MONDAY MORNING.

* PRECIPITATION RATES...THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF ICE ACCUMULATION WILL OCCUR BETWEEN NOON AND 6 PM THIS EVENING.

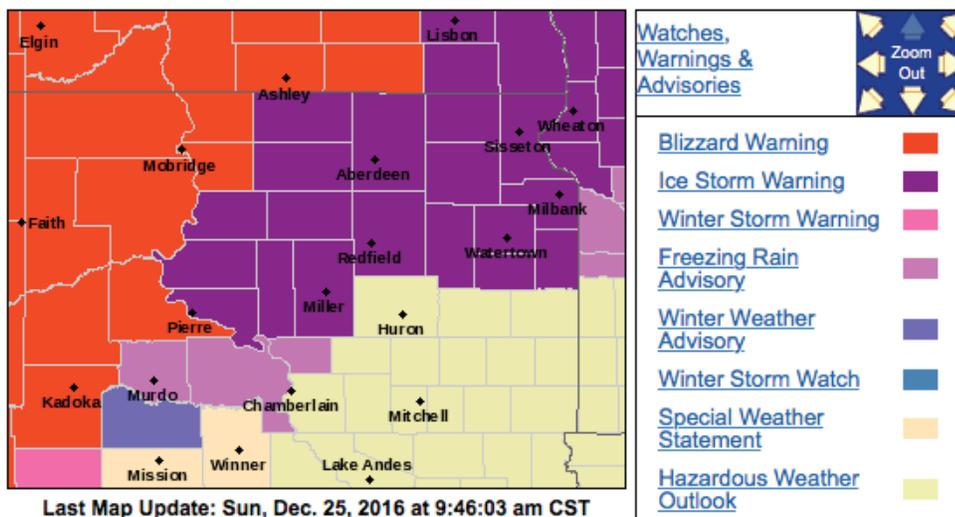
* ICE ACCUMULATIONS...TOTAL ICE ACCUMULATIONS OF 1/4 OF AN INCH ARE EXPECTED.

* SNOW ACCUMULATIONS...ALONG WITH THE ICE...WET SNOW ACCUMULATIONS OF UP TO 1 INCH ARE ALSO EXPECTED TONIGHT.

* IMPACTS...POWER OUTAGES AND TREE DAMAGE ARE LIKELY DUE TO THE ICE. TRAVEL WILL BE DANGEROUS AND NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

AN ICE STORM WARNING MEANS SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF ICE ACCUMULATION WILL MAKE TRAVEL DANGEROUS OR IMPOSSIBLE. TRAVEL IS STRONGLY DISCOURAGED. IF YOU MUST TRAVEL...KEEP AN EXTRA FLASHLIGHT...FOOD AND WATER IN YOUR VEHICLE IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY. SNAPPED POWER LINES AND FALLING TREE BRANCHES ARE ALSO POSSIBLE. THE LATEST ROAD CONDITIONS FOR THE STATE YOU ARE CALLING FROM CAN BE OBTAINED BY CALLING 5 1 1.



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Today in Weather History

December 25, 1983: Winds of 20 to 30 mph, with occasionally higher gusts, combined with very light falling snow and loose surface snow to cause near-blizzard conditions and dangerously low wind chills in most of South Dakota, as well as in southwest and west central Minnesota, from the early evening of the 23rd into Christmas morning. Visibilities were frequently near zero and four- to five-foot drifts closed the vast majority of roads, making travel impossible. Hundreds of motorists became stranded during the evenings of December 23rd and 24th. In Minnesota, many holiday travelers heading west from Minneapolis and St. Paul drove to central Minnesota before conditions became too severe to continue. Winds and severe cold in the western part of Minnesota caused several power outages as well as the loss of livestock.

In South Dakota, at least 70 vehicles were stalled at one point over a 14-mile stretch of Interstate 90 between Kennebec and Reliance in Lyman County. The Pierre Airport in Hughes County was closed twice on the 23rd as visibility was reduced to zero. Most flights were canceled at Sioux Falls Airport in Minnehaha County, stranding numerous holiday travelers. Sub-zero temperatures, combined with gusts of over 60 mph, produced wind chill indices in the 60 to 100 below zero range. Several cases of frostbite were reported, propane gas solidified, fuel jelled, and water pipes and tanks froze as a result of the extreme cold. In Minnehaha County at Wall Lake, electrical outages of 12 hours were experienced from power lines snapping as a result of the cold and winds.

December 25, 1776: Thomas Jefferson noted that the first winter snow fell on Dec. 20, but did not last on the ground one day. Temperatures dropped to 30 degree or colder on Christmas Day. That night, 22 inches of snow fell. From the 25th of December until March 6, 10 snows covered the ground and some of them were deep. The first rain came on the 9th of March. In Frederick County, two feet of snow was recorded.

December 25, 1987: Since 1894, Tucson, Arizona has seen snow on Christmas Day four times. The most recent event occurred in 1987 when Tucson saw 2.6 inches.

1966 - A white Christmas was enjoyed by residents from North Carolina to New England in the wake of a major snowstorm. Even coastal Virginia was white. (David Ludlum)

1980 - It was the coldest Christmas Day of modern record in the northeastern U.S. Temperatures as cold as 36 degrees below zero were reported in New York State, and as the sharp cold front swept southeastward the temperature at Boston MA plunged from 34 degrees to seven degrees below zero during the day. (David Ludlum)

1983 - It was the coldest Christmas Day of modern record for the central and eastern U.S. More than 125 cities reported record low temperatures for the date, and thirty-four of those cities reported all-time records for the month of December. The temperature plunged to one degree below zero at Huntsville AL, and dipped to 14 degrees at Galveston TX. Snow covered the ground from the Pacific Northwest through much of the Great Plains Region to the Northern Appalachians. (The National Weather Summary)

1987 - Residents of Tucson, AZ, awoke to a white Christmas for the first time in forty-seven years of records, as a winter storm blanketed the area with up to four inches of snow. While heavy rain inundated Arkansas, freezing rain was reported from northwest Texas to southwestern Missouri, with an inch of ice reported at Harrison AR. Unseasonably mild weather prevailed in the southeastern U.S. Seven cities reported record high temperatures for the date. For the second day in a row McAllen TX was the hot spot in the nation with an afternoon high of 91 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A massive winter storm made for a very white Christmas in the western U.S. Las Vegas, NV, reported snow on the ground for the first time of record. Periods of snow over a five day period left several feet of new snow on the ground of ski areas in Colorado, with 68 inches reported at Wolf Creek Pass. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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Ice Storm Warning

Christmas Day **Tonight**



100% **80% → 50%**

Wintry Mix and Breezy

High: 36 °F

Wintry Mix and Patchy Fog

Low: 16 °F

Monday



20%

Slight Chance Snow and Windy then Mostly Cloudy and Blustery

High: 19 °F ↓

Monday Night



Mostly Cloudy and Blustery then Partly Cloudy

Low: 4 °F

Tuesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 23 °F

Tuesday Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 16 °F

Wednesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 32 °F



Impacts Today



This Morning

Later this Afternoon



Freezing Drizzle in the Morning...Freezing Rain And Rain Midday

Freezing rain NE SD. Snow in NC and NW SD. Very Strong Wind Tonight



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD



Updated: 12/25/2016 5:42 AM Central

Published on: 12/25/2016 at 5:50AM

A strong storm system will move across the region today through Monday. A mixed bag of precipitation can be expected from freezing rain, to sleet and snow. The freezing rain should be significant enough to cause hazardous conditions in northeastern South Dakota. Out west, blizzard conditions are still expected, mainly west of the Missouri River valley. Strong winds can be expected tonight through Monday.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 27.4 F at 11:26 PM

Low Outside Temp: 8.9 F at 1:28 AM

High Gust: 21.0 Mph at 7:14 PM

Snow:

Today's Info

Record High: 51° in 1999

Record Low: -25° in 1996

Average High: 23°F

Average Low: 4°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.41

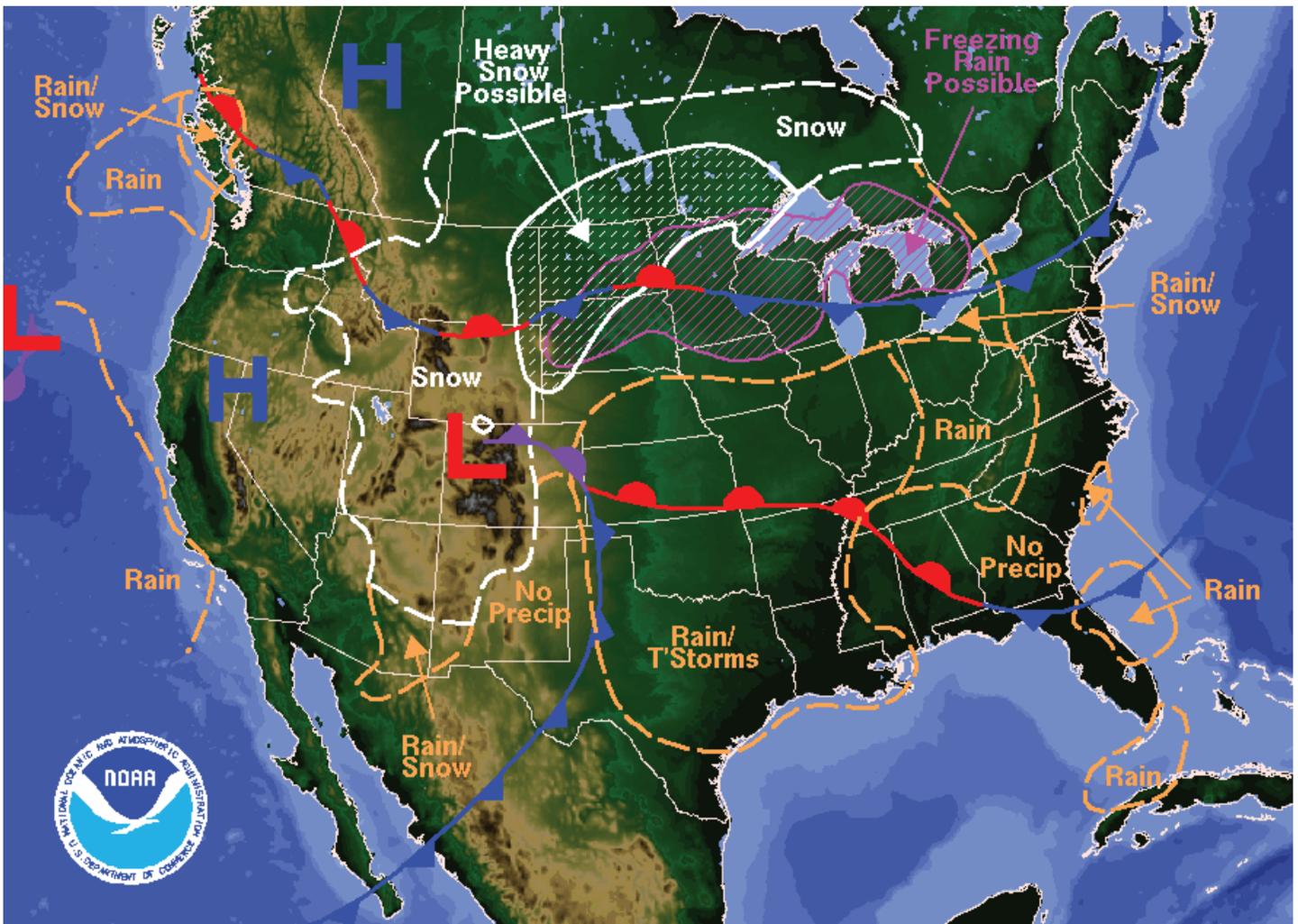
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.88

Average Precip to date: 21.61

Precip Year to Date: 18.22

Sunset Tonight: 4:55 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:12 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Sun, Dec 25, 2016, issued 4:38 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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THE BIRTH OF JESUS

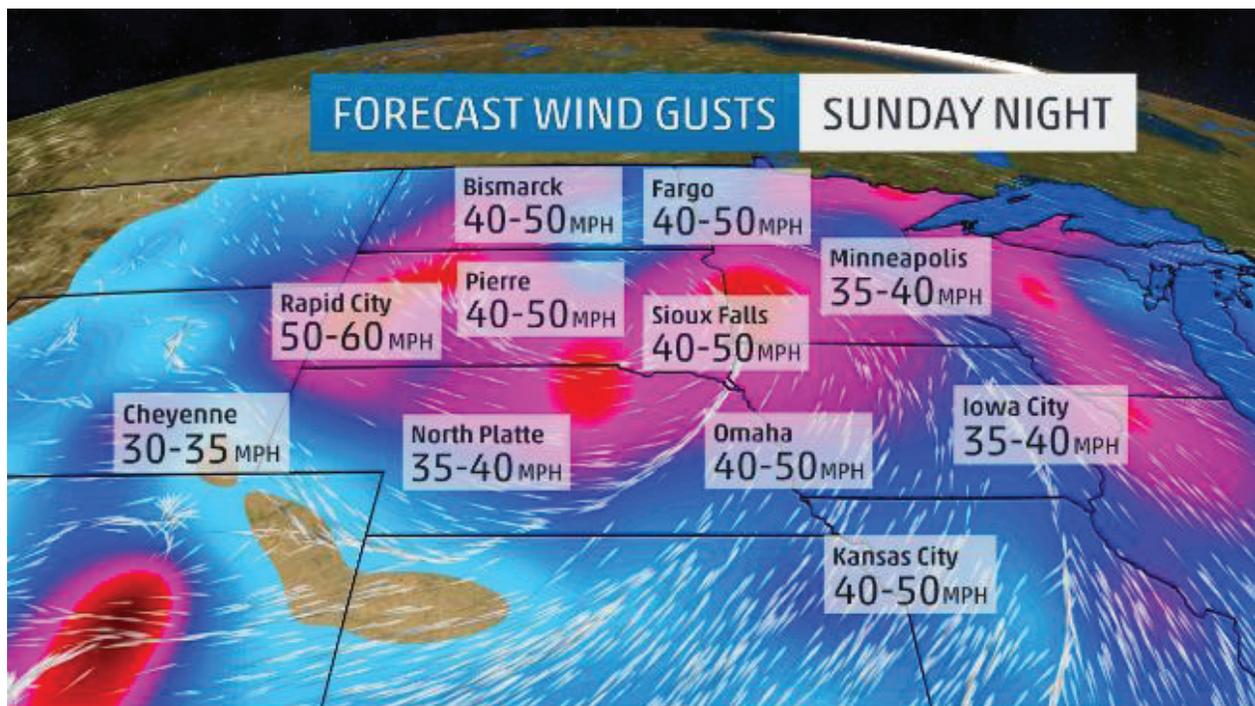
And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger.



News from the Associated Press

Translations, TV show connect a city's Hispanic community

By REGINA GARCIA CANO, Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — When Sioux Falls resident Alex Ramirez sees a news story or city announcement — be it about road closures or a building collapse — he makes a copy, translates the text into Spanish and posts it on Facebook for free.

He and a friend also bought TV air time recently and produce the only community-oriented Spanish-language show in South Dakota's biggest city, where Latinos make up about 5 percent of the population.

At first, his goal was to inform non-English speakers and connect them to organizations and government services. But with the hostile immigration rhetoric of President-elect Donald Trump causing some to feel unwelcome in the U.S., Ramirez says his work also is about unity.

"It is very important that we stick together," said the 49-year-old, who legally emigrated from Mexico when he was 17, "and if for some reason we can't find support from other people, we have to find it among ourselves and do business with each other and help each other in our community."

Yeshua Prestan, a Colombian native who moved to the U.S. as a refugee and is now a citizen, barely understands English and is visually impaired. He sometimes asks his children to read him the Facebook posts — which recently have detailed a planned listening session with Sioux Falls' mayor, the weather forecast and road closures following the collapse of a three-story building downtown.

"That's information that I couldn't access, not even in English, because I can't read," Prestan said in Spanish.

It used to be a challenge for him to find useful, reliable information because he can't watch TV and the information offered by some print outlets is "very basic" or about topics that he is "sincerely not interested in," he said.

Some cities, including Minneapolis, use a Google service to provide an approximate translation of their website's content. In Sioux Falls, an executive order requires the use of a certified translation service if content has to be produced in a language other than English. If a resident needs urgent assistance with language translation, the city can get an interpreter via phone, assistant city attorney Ryan Sage said in a statement, and if it's "for a meeting or appointment at a future time or date," an in-person interpreter is provided in most cases.

The 30-minute TV show, which airs Friday nights, has featured segments with a Spanish-speaking physician who addressed the consequences of poorly treated diabetes and a police officer who — in Spanish — gave viewers tips about how to interact with officers if a language barrier exists.

Ten episodes have aired since October, all with subtitles in English to make it accessible for Hispanics who don't speak Spanish and subtitles in Spanish when interviewees speak English.

Ramirez and his friend, Raul Guajardo, maxed out their credit cards to buy air time for a year. But they also received a \$6,000 grant from the regional health care system Avera Health, whose vice president of public relations, Lindsey Meyers, said was done to help improve "access and information for underserved audiences."

That money was used to partially repay themselves, buy needed equipment and pay two anchors. Guajardo is an anchor, but unpaid.

Ramirez is a native of Mexico's western state of Michoacan. He still remembers his first days at a high school in Berkeley, California, where he didn't understand a word his teachers and classmates were saying. These days, he owns a multimedia services company and sits on the boards of multiple organizations.

Ramirez hopes the TV show and Facebook page will help better expose the Sioux Falls area to the diversity of Latinos. Prestan noted that many falsely assume they are all Mexicans and, in his experience, treat people poorly if they hear Spanish being spoken.

"It is as if one were from another planet or another galaxy, and then they think that we've come here to steal from them," he said.

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With Trump soon taking office, many Latinos are worried about the future because many don't fully understand how the federal government operates and how immigration laws are enforced, Ramirez said. He sees his projects, which also reach parts of Iowa and Minnesota, as a way to keep people connected and stem their fears.

"We talk to them about the community and how the community works, and we make them feel a little better because we let them know that not just because he is going to be the president, he is going to change the way we do things here in our community," he said.

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

Badlands National Park to expand area where bison range

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Badlands National Park in South Dakota is expanding bison rangeland in the north unit by more than 35 square miles after a yearlong stewardship and environmental impact plan was finalized.

The new area — a total of more than 125 square miles — would extend west from the current boundary along Badlands Loop Road and stop before reaching the Ben Reifel Visitor Center.

One of the reasons for the expansion is to give visitors more opportunities to view the animals and provide for a better park experience, park officials told the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2hnZ6L5>).

Badlands superintendent Mike Pflaum said more than 90 percent of the park's visitors never see a bison.

The expansion plan comes during a year when injuries to people from bison spiked at Custer State Park, which is about 90 miles west of Badlands National Park. Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming also had at least five incidents of bison attacks this year.

Pflaum said public safety is a major priority of the park. To ensure that, new signage will be placed throughout the park warning visitors of the bison before they are moved into the extended rangeland.

"We also hope to have more staff spread throughout the park that can interact with visitors and warn them about getting too close," Pflaum said.

He said he hopes visitors will keep a "respectable distance" to avoid putting themselves in a hazardous situation.

The national park has no reports of a major injury from a bison attack in its history — despite having campground where bison routinely graze only a few yards away.

Pflaum said the park has been very fortunate.

While the bison will have more room to roam, park officials said there are no plans to increase the herd, which is currently about 1,000 head in the park.

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

Northern State University science building approved

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Board of Regents has approved a new science building at Northern State University, along with an option that requires fundraising by the school to foot the whole bill.

The university has received a \$15 million anonymous donation toward the project that will cost at least \$25 million, the Aberdeen American News (<http://bit.ly/2hUNjYi>) reported. The regents approved a total of \$27 million for the project, which is what the cost of the building might increase to over time.

"We're very excited about this opportunity to leverage this gift," NSU President Tim Downs said.

He added that the new building will help the university "affirm and further affirm the excellence at Northern and how Northern can be seen as a catalyst for advancing science education."

Plans call for the science building to be built on the north edge of campus where the football practice field is currently located. The building will be either L- or 7-shaped and have 50,000 feet over two stories. It'll feature 4,200 square feet of classroom space and 13,000 square feet of lab space.

The university's vice president of finance and administration, Veronica Paulson, said the building will be very welcoming and serve as a focal point on campus.

Legislative approval is needed before construction can begin.

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

News year: Big charges, teacher pay hike and Black Elk Peak

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A raft of criminal charges in high-profile financial misconduct cases were big news in 2016, but the year's top story may have been a historic sales tax hike to boost South Dakota's lowest-in-the-nation teacher pay.

It almost fell apart in the state House, coming in one vote short. After another try, the half-cent sales tax increase — the first permanent bump since 1969 — scraped through with none to spare and headed to the Senate.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard's package of education measures became law in March. Teachers cheered average pay projected to rise almost 12 percent to nearly \$47,000.

Other notable stories:

BIG BILLS

Daugaard started 2016 without having knowingly met a transgender person. By March, he had met with a group of transgender people and vetoed a bill that would have made South Dakota first in the U.S. to approve a law requiring transgender students to use bathrooms and locker rooms that match their gender at birth.

The bill drew national condemnation. Supporters said it would protect student privacy.

In another high-profile move during the 2016 session, Daugaard signed a bill prohibiting most abortions beyond 19 weeks of pregnancy.

BUILDING COLLAPSE

Construction worker Ethan McMahon, a 24-year-old former Marine, was killed in a December building collapse in downtown Sioux Falls that also trapped a woman for three hours under the debris. McMahon and his brother, who made it out of the wreckage, were working when the 100-year-old building fell down around them.

The trapped woman, 22-year-old Emily Fodness, was able to call her mother and eventually gave directions that helped rescuers find her.

BALLOT BOXING

The shine on a voter-approved government ethics overhaul didn't last long. A group of two dozen GOP lawmakers and others filed a lawsuit, and a state judge put the measure on hold while the challenge proceeds. In jeopardy are major political changes: an ethics commission, public campaign funding and limitations on lobbyist gifts to lawmakers.

The dispute appears likely to spill into the 2017 legislative session.

BIG COURT CASES

Joop Bollen, the man who once ran South Dakota's investment-for-visa program, was charged in March in a long-running and complicated financial misconduct case. Bollen, who has pleaded not guilty, is accused of diverting more than \$1.2 million from an account created to protect the state against costs or liability from South Dakota's EB-5 visa program. Authorities say he put back most of the money.

A tragedy in Platte stretched into this year, with charges filed in March against three people for allegedly aiding in an embezzlement scheme that eventually ended in Scott Westerhuis killing his wife, Nicole, and their children. Authorities believe the couple stole more than \$1 million beforehand.

Dan Guericke, Stephanie Hubers and Stacy Phelps have pleaded not guilty.

Two consultants who helped a Native American tribe plan the nation's first marijuana resort were charged with drug offenses in August, eight months after the Flandreau Santee Sioux destroyed their crop amid fears of a federal raid. Jonathan Hunt, who oversaw the first crop for the tribe, pleaded guilty to a drug conspiracy count. Eric Hagen, the CEO of the Colorado-based consulting firm Monarch America, has pleaded not guilty.

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Seth Jeffs, brother of Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints leader Warren Jeffs, was one of 11 people indicted in an alleged multi-million-dollar food stamp fraud scheme. Authorities say Seth Jeffs, who has pleaded not guilty, has led a compound of the faithful in rural Custer County, South Dakota.

BLACK ELK PEAK

A federal board surprised South Dakota by renaming the state's tallest peak after Lakota spiritual leader Black Elk, who died in 1950. The August decision by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names swept aside the old name, Harney Peak, removing the name of a man whose soldiers killed Native Americans.

The board determined that Harney was offensive to area Native Americans. The Oglala Sioux member in his 80s who pushed to rechristen the peak said the decision was a sign of compassion and reconciliation. The change to Black Elk Peak was panned by Republicans Daugaard and U.S. Sen. John Thune.

The Latest on week 16 of the NFL season on Saturday

By The Associated Press

Minnesota's Adam Thielen and Green Bay's Jordy Nelson are having big days at Lambeau Field, where the Packers have a 28-13 lead over the Vikings at halftime. Thielen has already reached a career-high 142 yards on six catches, including a 71-yard touchdown pass. Green Bay's secondary is getting torched again following a porous fourth quarter last week against the Chicago Bears. But the offense is clicking. Nelson has seven catches for 145 yards and two touchdowns.

2:27: p.m.

Minnesota's Adam Thielen and Green Bay's Jordy Nelson are having big days at Lambeau Field, where the Packers have a 28-13 lead over the Vikings at halftime.

Thielen has already reached a career-high 142 yards on six catches, including a 71-yard touchdown pass. Green Bay's secondary is getting torched again following a porous fourth quarter last week against the Chicago Bears.

But the offense is clicking. Nelson has seven catches for 145 yards and two touchdowns. The Packers have also capitalized on two Vikings turnovers with 14 points, including a 7-yard touchdown run by quarterback Aaron Rodgers set up by linebacker Clay Matthews' strip sack with 54 seconds left in the second quarter.

— Genaro Armas reporting from Green Bay

2:25 p.m.

The New England Patriots don't seem to be having any trouble filling in for tight end Rob Gronkowski.

Matt Lengel caught an 18-yard touchdown pass from Tom Brady late in the second quarter of Saturday's game against the New York Jets. It was the first touchdown and first catch of the 25-year-old tight end's career.

Lengel was an undrafted free agent who spent last season on the Cincinnati Bengals practice squad. The Patriots signed him last month when Gronkowski was injured. Gronkowski returned to play in two more games before having season-ending back surgery.

With the All-Pro tight end out, the Patriots have relied mostly on Martellus Bennet, who had 50 catches and five touchdowns heading into Saturday's game.

— Jimmy Golen reporting from Foxborough, Massachusetts

2:20 p.m.

Nobody could have seen this coming.

The Jacksonville Jaguars (2-12) played their best half of the season Saturday, taking a 19-7 lead into the locker room against Tennessee (8-6).

Maybe they're rallying around interim coach Doug Marrone or maybe they're playing for fired coach Gus Bradley. Either way, it says a lot about a team that dropped a bunch of close games during its nine-game losing streak.

Blake Bortles has been the key. He completed 18 of 23 passes for 217 yards, with a touchdown and no

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turnovers. It's the first time in his three-year career that Bortles has thrown for 200 or more yards in an opening half.

The Titans put together one touchdown drive, with Marcus Mariota finding Rishard Matthews for a 3-yard score, but have been otherwise quiet.

— Mark Long reporting from Jacksonville

2:01 p.m.

Chants of "Jordy! Jordy" can be heard at Lambeau Field.

Fans started chanting when Packers wide receiver Jordy Nelson caught his second touchdown of the afternoon from Aaron Rodgers, a 2-yarder to give the Green Bay Packers a 15-point lead over the Minnesota Vikings with 8:11 to go in the second quarter.

Nelson has five catches for 119 yards already, while Rodgers is 14 of 16 for 198 yards and three scores. The quarterback is looking more mobile after being limited the past couple weeks with a right calf injury.

The latest Packers score came off as Kenny Clark recovered a bad snap by center Nick Easton at the Vikings 42. But problems continue for the Green Bay secondary after the Vikings responded with a 71-yard touchdown pass from Sam Bradford to Adam Thielen to get Minnesota back within 21-13 less than a minute later.

— Genaro Armas reporting from Green Bay, Wisconsin

1:45 p.m.

Merry Christmas to all the little kiddies in New England.

Oh, and don't freeze your (cookies) off.

An embarrassing live mic incident at the Patriots game against the New York Jets on Saturday broadcast a naughty word to the rain-soaked Christmas Eve crowd at Gillette Stadium.

Referee Gene Steratore forgot to turn his microphone off when he told a colleague, "Get a towel." The next words over the loudspeaker were, "Did you put any of that warm skin s... on your hands?"

After one more remark, Steratore's microphone went silent.

— Jimmy Golen in Foxborough, Massachusetts

1:45 p.m.

The Jets say quarterback Bryce Petty has an injured left shoulder. His return questionable. He has been replaced by Ryan Fitzpatrick.

Petty made his fourth NFL start Saturday against the Patriots after his status was uncertain earlier in the week after suffering a bruised chest against Miami.

The Jets quarterback was forced out of that game after being sandwiched by Cameron Wake and Ndamukong Suh while completing a pass in the fourth quarter. X-rays and a CT scan were negative, and the second-year quarterback practiced fully during the week.

— Kyle Hightower in Foxborough, Massachusetts

1:25 p.m.

It hasn't taken Dolphins running back Jay Ajayi very long to pick up where he left off in October against the Buffalo Bills.

Ajayi already has 43 yards rushing on seven carries after opening the scoring on a 2-yard run with 6:24 left in the first quarter.

The second-year player had a career-best 214 yards rushing and a touchdown in a 28-23 win over Buffalo at Miami on Oct. 23. It was part of a three-game stretch in which Ajayi totaled 529 yards rushing and scored four times.

His production had tailed off over the past six games, in which he's combined for 361 yards rushing and a touchdown.

— John Wawrow reporting from Orchard Park, New York

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1:20 p.m.

Aaron Rodgers and Jordy Nelson have managed to top Brett Favre and Antonio Freeman.

Rodgers and Nelson connected on a 21-yard touchdown pass with 7:13 left in the first quarter for a 7-0 lead over Minnesota. It was the 58th touchdown for the duo, breaking the tie for the Green Bay mark previously held by Favre and Freeman.

The Packers quarterback threw about a short pass up the seam to Nelson, who found a soft spot in the zone and then made safety Andrew Sendejo miss on a tackle before lunging forward to get the ball into the end zone for the score.

— Genaro Armas reporting from Green Bay, Wisconsin

1:15 p.m.

Atlanta quarterback Matt Ryan has topped himself with a new franchise record.

Ryan has thrown his 33rd touchdown pass of the season and topped his record on the game's first series against Carolina when he connected on a 26-yard strike to tight end Josh Perkins to give the Falcons an early 7-0 lead. Ryan previously set the Falcons' record in 2012 with 32 touchdown passes.

— Steve Reed reporting from Charlotte, North Carolina

12:55 p.m.

If things break right Saturday, the Dolphins, Texans, Falcons, Lions and Buccaneers call can clinch playoff berths.

The Giants can even do so without playing and despite having lost on Thursday at Philadelphia.

Also at stake is home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs, which New England gets by beating the Jets.

And with a loss at home to San Diego, the Browns would become only the second NFL team with an 0-15 record. Detroit went 0-16 in 2008.

12:30 p.m.

The Washington Redskins will be without tight end Jordan Reed and linebacker Su'a Cravens for their key matchup with the Chicago Bears.

Reed is out with a sprained left shoulder, and Cravens is inactive due to an upper arm injury. Reed is one of the top pass-catching tight ends in the league with 61 receptions for 646 yards and five touchdowns, and Cravens has 34 tackles and a sack this year.

12:05 p.m.

The New York Jets say that Todd Bowles will coach from the sideline Saturday against the Patriots, a day after going to the hospital with a medical scare.

Bowles rejoined the team in New England on Saturday morning after not traveling on the team plane Friday.

The 53-year-old coach fell ill Friday afternoon and was taken to a hospital in New Jersey with what the team said was an "undisclosed illness."

Bowles is in his second season as coach of the Jets, who have struggled to a 4-10 record. Although it appears he will return next season, Bowles has faced increasing criticism in recent weeks, with some fans and commentators calling for his job.

This was the second health-related incident Bowles has had since joining the Jets. In February, he had a benign mass removed from his throat that was initially discovered during the season.

— Kyle Hightower reporting in Foxborough

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

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Rodgers, Nelson shred Vikings as surging Packers win 38-25

Aaron Rodgers threw for 347 yards and four touchdowns, Jordy Nelson shredded Minnesota's secondary for 154 yards and two scores, and the resurgent Green Bay Packers beat the Vikings 38-25. The Packers' fifth straight win set up a winner-take-all showdown next week with Detroit for the NFC North title, while extinguishing the Vikings' faint postseason hopes.

By **GENARO C. ARMAS**

AP Sports Writer

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) — Aaron Rodgers threw for 347 yards and four touchdowns, Jordy Nelson shredded Minnesota's secondary for 154 yards and two scores, and the resurgent Green Bay Packers beat the Vikings 38-25 on Saturday.

The Packers' fifth straight win set up a winner-take-all showdown next week with Detroit for the NFC North title, while extinguishing the Vikings' faint postseason hopes.

Green Bay (9-6) built a 28-13 lead at halftime, with Rodgers accounting for all four scores in the half. He finished 28 of 38, and shrugged off his right calf injury after scrambling for a 6-yard touchdown late in the second quarter and making a rare Lambeau Leap .

Rodgers and Nelson connected for scores from 21 and 2 yards in the first half. The veteran receiver found seams in Minnesota's defense, despite the return of safety Harrison Smith from an ankle injury.

Playing again without running back Adrian Peterson, the Vikings (7-8) had success through the air after Sam Bradford threw for 382 yards and three touchdowns, including a 71-yard touchdown pass to Adam Thielen in the second quarter.

Thielen had a career-high 202 yards and two scores.

But the Vikings made too many other mistakes to catch up to the Packers.

Maybe they were sluggish after the team plane got stuck in the grass on the way to the gate at a Wisconsin airport on Friday night after making a safe landing, forcing a delay of more than five hours.

Whatever the reason, the Vikings will miss the playoffs after a 5-0 start.

CASHING IN

The Packers cashed in on two Vikings turnovers in the second quarter with 14 points.

The first came with 9:50 left after center Nick Easton's bad snap was recovered by Kenny Clark at the Minnesota 42. Three plays later, Rodgers and Nelson connected on their 2-yard score.

Minnesota was threatening in Packers territory with 1 minute left in the quarter when linebacker Clay Matthews powered past left tackle T.J. Clemmings for a strip sack of Bradford recovered by Mike Daniels at the 46. Rodgers ran for his score five plays later.

THIELEN IT

Thielen went big play-for-big play with Nelson, finishing with 12 catches. The Packers secondary had shaky moments again a week after a porous fourth quarter in a win over the Chicago Bears.

RECORD

Rodgers and Nelson set a Packers record on their 21-yard score in the first quarter. It was the 58th touchdown for the duo, breaking the tie with the Brett Favre-Antonio Freeman combination. Rodgers threw about a 10-yard pass up the seam to Nelson, who found a soft spot in the zone and then made safety Andrew Sendejo miss on a tackle before lunging forward to get the ball into the end zone.

CLAY'S DAY

Matthews looked like his big-play self for the first time in weeks.

He has been limited since hurting his left shoulder in late November during a win over the Philadelphia Eagles. The Packers' most dynamic pass rusher said during practice this week that he was feeling better and hoped to get more snaps.

The long-haired Matthews made a difference against the Vikings, including the strip-sack of Bradford late in the second quarter, along with two key pass deflections and another pressure by early in the third quarter.

INJURY REPORT

Vikings: S Harrison Smith (ankle) played for the first time in two weeks. WR Stefon Diggs (hip) was ac-

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tive after being listed as questionable coming into the game, and finished with 29 yards and a touchdown on four catches.

Packers: CB LaDarius Gunter left the game with an elbow injury in the second quarter. RT Bryan Bulaga suffered a shoulder injury in the fourth quarter.

UP NEXT

Vikings: Wrap up regular season by hosting the Bears on New Year's Day.

Packers: At Detroit on Jan. 1 in game to decide the NFC North title.

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

Winter weather may be a bummer for jolly holiday travelers

CHICAGO (AP) — It'll be a white Christmas for the northern Plains and some Western states, but it's likely to cause troublesome travel.

Forecasters cautioned drivers to keep alternate routes in mind and prepare for possible delays.

Southern California even got a dose of snow, with about 2 inches falling in a mountainous region about 75 miles north of Los Angeles. It shut down the state's main north-south interstate — I-5 — for nearly four hours Saturday.

In Arizona, parts of Interstate 40 and other highways in the state's high country were closed after winter weather hit, leading to multiple crashes. A winter storm warning was issued for much of northern Arizona for elevations above 6,000 feet until late Saturday or early Sunday morning, depending on locations.

In the coming days, a large swath of the Dakotas is under a blizzard warning, with the National Weather Service forecasting heavy snow and strong winds Sunday and Monday. The Dakota Access pipeline protest encampment in southern North Dakota will be affected. Though many left during a blizzard earlier this month, Morton County Sheriff's Department spokesman Rob Keller said, there could be at least 500 people still at the camp.

To the east, parts of central Minnesota are under an ice storm warning. To the west, snow is also forecast for much of Idaho, Montana, Utah and northeast Colorado.

Air travel wasn't yet impacted Saturday at the nation's major airports. But snowy conditions Friday in Appleton, Wisconsin, caused the Minnesota Vikings' team plane to slide off a runway.

The Storm Prediction Center cautioned that warm, humid air could cause severe weather in the lower Plains, Arkansas and Oklahoma on Sunday.

Eureka shop students create playhouses for children

By Katherine Grandstrand, Aberdeen American News

EUREKA, S.D. (AP) — Work on the new school might be all done in Eureka, but there are still a few more structures being built.

Shop teacher Ray Tracy has his classes building a series of 4-foot-by-8-foot buildings — about the size of a backyard storage shed — that will resemble different structures found in any town. There's a bank, a general store, a school and a post office, among others.

The eighth grade was finishing up the first structure, a house, earlier this month, the Aberdeen American News (<http://bit.ly/2hAR44O>) reported.

Students are enjoying the challenge.

"We knew it would be a little bit harder, but we wanted to do it," said Tyler Raines, eighth-grader. "It's pretty fun. We've had some good experiences doing it."

Tyler said he thought that working on roofing would be his favorite part of the project, even though the class hadn't yet started doing so.

"I thought it was cool that we were going to build real buildings," said Kodi Retzer, eighth-grader.

Kodi said building the walls was her favorite part of the process.

Not only do shop students get to learn building techniques, they get to make something for younger children and future generations, Tracy said.

"Each building concept — how to lay out a structure, how to frame, how to use tools — eventually the building trades class I would like to take and plumb the building, and actually put electricity in the building itself," Tracy said.

The tiny village will then be landscaped, he said. The shop classes will add plants and shrubbery.

"It teaches kids how to build a structure and also how to maintain it," Tracy said.

"And then give back to the younger kids here at school," Superintendent Bo Beck said.

Shop teachers from other towns have been interested in the project, Tracy said.

When complete, all of the structures will be strategically placed to make them easy to monitor, Beck said. None of the structures will have doors. That's to avoid pinched fingers.

"The teachers, when they're out on the playground, they can look directly into each building and see what's going on," Tracy said.

The floors of the buildings are made with treated wood, meaning a wet floor won't be a problem, he said. The students will paint the structures inside and out.

The small size of the building makes them moveable. They're built on pallets and can be picked up with a pallet jack. As other projects come up, the buildings can be moved into other corners of the shop.

The new playhouses come with a whole new playground space, Beck said. The new high school was built on the old playground and, during that time, the playground equipment was put in storage and the kids played in an empty field near the school.

The playground equipment was installed after the old high school was razed and cleared. The playhouses are part of a complete playground makeover.

"It will be our little mini city of Eureka," Beck said.

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

Number of home-schooling families on the rise in Sioux Falls

By Megan Raposa, Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Home-school families are like red cars.

"You don't see them until you start looking," Sioux Falls home-school parent Chad Theisen said. "Then you're like, 'There's a red car; there's a red car.'"

And those red cars are starting to pop up everywhere.

The number of home-school families has been on the rise nationally for most of the past two decades, and it's a trend that has held true in Sioux Falls, where the number of home-schoolers has nearly doubled since 2009, the Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2h4naXx>) reported.

More parents are taking their children's education into their own hands for a variety of reasons, from dislike of Common Core curriculum, to wanting more family time, to wanting religion in children's education.

While South Dakota's laws are friendly to families choosing to keep school at home, home-school families still face stereotypes and social stigma.

But it's getting better, parents say, especially as the community grows through home-school groups and social media.

Cathy and Bernie Schock were the only people they knew home-schooling in Sioux Falls in 1981.

They knew they wanted to spend more time with their kids, and after hearing radio personality Paul Harvey talk about home-school families in Missouri, Bernie started getting excited about the prospect of teaching the couple's three children at home.

"A lot of people thought we were crazy," Bernie said.

At the time, the Schocks were the first family to fill out the state's alternate education application in the Sioux Falls School District. The application was added to state law in 1981—the same year the couple began home-schooling.

Cathy and Bernie were pioneers in home education. They lobbied in Pierre and met with legislators to make their case for home-schooling as a viable form of learning.

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"They had to see that we were normal parents with normal children," Cathy said. "That we wanted to give them a normal education."

Today, the Schocks are seeing their grandchildren among thousands of home-schooled kids in the state. Their daughter-in-law Barb Schock has been teaching her kids for nine years. She's also a board member of home-school group Living Legacy Academy (LLA), one of several parent groups in the state.

LLA started in 2005 with about 25 families. Today, it has 87 families, with 50 more on a wait list, said board member Marla Peters.

Statewide, home-school enrollment has risen 40 percent since 2010, according to a count from the South Dakota Department of Education.

Ask Natalie Michael why she home-schools, and she'll ask why the question wasn't framed another way. "Why does anybody put their kid in the school system that doesn't have to?" said Michael, a home-school parent and director of the eastern South Dakota chapter of Classical Conversations.

Not all home-school parents feel as strongly opposed to public schools as Michael, but most will mention Common Core curriculum as at least one reason influencing their choice to teach at home.

Joel Brunick, who serves on the Sioux Empire Christian Home Educators board with his wife, Kristin Brunick, said he sees Common Core as one of the biggest drivers of home-school growth in recent years.

Michael fought strongly against Common Core in South Dakota until she began the eastern South Dakota chapter of Classical Conversations home-schooling in 2013, a group that now has between 85 and 90 families.

"Instead of fighting Common Core directly . I decided to offer them a better solution, which is, in my opinion, home-schooling," Michael said.

Parents also choose home-schooling as a way to spend more time with their children.

Theisen and his wife, Brooke Theisen, always planned on having one stay-at-home parent with their three children. Though they didn't always plan on home-schooling, now they see their kids' education as a lifestyle.

"Nobody's more passionate about the education of my kids than I am," he said.

The Brunicks also saw home educating as a way to not only spend more time with their kids, but also to share with them the joys of learning.

Religion also plays a role in choosing to home-school for many families, but Joel Brunick said that often receives too much emphasis.

He said it's a stereotype that families only home-school their children for religious reasons.

"A lot of it has to do with families wanting to reconnect," Brunick said.

Many parents said that home educating is a "calling," but it's not a method that works for everybody, Theisen said.

Home-schooling isn't free, unlike public schools, but Marla Peters, an LLA board member and 10-year home educator, said it can be done on a "shoestring budget." Peters estimates spending \$250 annually on home-school supplies.

Sarah Kramer began home-schooling her children when private school tuition became too expensive. She said the initial curriculum investment was about \$1,000, but then materials can be reused.

For those who do feel the home-school "calling," the growth in home educators makes the choice to teach at home easier. There are about a dozen parent groups and co-operatives in the state, and countless resources online.

A Facebook group for home-schoolers in the Sioux Falls area alone has more than 550 members.

That's helpful for parents new to home-schooling or those looking for answers to curriculum questions, Theisen said. Ask a question, and within an hour, someone, somewhere is willing to help you.

Those groups also make it easier for home-school parents to find social outlets for their children.

Peters doesn't feel like there are many forces that work against home-school families — except the stereotypes that home-schooled children aren't social.

That's a stereotype that hits close to home for 13-year-old Na'ama McGowan.

The spunky short-haired teen said when she meets new people and tells them she's home-schooled, they dismiss her or assume that she's overly sheltered or shy. She wants the world to know that's not true.

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"People assume you're not going to be a rebel," she said. "(Or) you're not going to fight with your parents. ... Just because we learn in a different environment doesn't mean we're that different."

Peters' children are involved in 4-H, sports, church groups and the weekly LLA meetings, which allow home-schooled children to learn in a traditional classroom environment with each parent teaching different subjects.

Barb Schock's children also have plenty of outlets to socialize with children of all ages and with adults. She said she's surprised that people sometimes think kids have to go to school to develop social skills.

"My kids are not lacking in the slightest bit of socialization," Schock said.

As the primary educator in his household, Theisen also has heard plenty of generalizations about home schooling, including that parents who home-school aren't as educated.

"Yeah, there's stereotypes," said Theisen, who has a master's degree in education and previously worked for a university. "And I don't meet any of those."

Theisen doesn't see the rise in home-school families stopping any time soon.

Home-schooling is a way to adapt to each child's style of learning, he said, adding that he has a "class size of three." It's also empowered him to teach his children using the latest technologies, adapting to changes quicker than traditional schools are able.

As more people teach their own children, home-schooling is also continuing to become more widely accepted, Kristin Brunick said.

"I was always kind of embarrassed to admit that we home-school at first," Brunick said, adding that her mother taught in public schools for 30 years.

Today, people still ask questions, but Brunick said almost everyone she talks to knows somebody that has home-schooled.

"It's been more and more accepted," Brunick said. "It's just a lifestyle that I think people are really embracing."

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

Vacation home policy bothers some South Dakota residents

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Some South Dakota residents are worried about an influx of tourists in their neighborhoods after Pennington County commissioners expanded the areas where vacation home rentals may be located.

Pennington County commissioners approved some changes to the county's vacation home rental ordinance Tuesday to include allowing rentals in neighborhoods zoned suburban residential district. Those areas were excluded in the original ordinance passed in 2012, the Rapid City Journal reported (<http://bit.ly/2hAJ2st>).

This inclusion and a few other changes prompted a flurry of letters and emails opposing the changes for fear of a proliferation of rentals in their neighborhoods and problems that might accompany them, such as strangers near their homes, noise, traffic and garbage.

Most commissioners dismissed arguments against the changes as demonstrating a lack of understanding of the actual requirements.

Jeannie Bush, a vocal opponent to the changes, said the commissioners did not base their decision on research and facts.

"What the new ordinance does is make a bad situation worse," she said. "The commissioners did not address any of the concerns of us non-vacation home rental owners."

County officials received dozens of letters and more than quadruple that number of signatures in opposition to the changes from residents in areas of the Black Hills such as Silver City, Hill City and Mystic.

Some who argued against the changes said the previous ordinance was working just fine, and they complained that most of the citizens who volunteered to revise the ordinance operate rentals or have a vested interest in seeing the industry grow.

The major point of contention centers on the expansion into suburban residential zones and the fact

that if an owner obtains a conditional use permit to operate in that zone, it is now easier to transfer that permit as part of a sale.

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

Funds being distributed to victims of South Dakota wildfire

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Ranchers and farmers affected by a devastating October wildfire to the Cottonwood area of southwestern South Dakota are starting to receive money from a relief fund.

The Cottonwood fire scorched 65 square miles of land between Interstate 90 and U.S. Highway 14 east of Wall. Losses included huge swaths of grazing land, more than 300 head of cattle, 6,000 bales of hay, 200 miles of fence, and some barns, corrals and water tanks.

The disaster also brought out the best in people.

This week, Philip Charities announced it would begin distributing \$125,000 from money raised from hundreds of donations to benefit victims of the fire. Disbursements will be made according to criteria established by Philip Charities and based on losses of fences and grazing land, the Rapid City Journal reported (<http://bit.ly/2i1ODJo>).

The fund was bolstered recently with a joint \$15,000 donation from First Interstate Bank and The First Interstate Bank Foundation. Brett Blasius, president of the bank's branches in Wall and New Underwood, said in a news release that the bank followed the community's lead.

"I'm so grateful to live in a community where neighbors band together to help each other out," Blasius said.

Philip-area rancher John Neumann said about 90 percent of his land was burned. He lost about 600 bales and 11 miles of fence. So far, he's received about 300 donated bales and some donated fencing material that helped him rebuild 3 miles of fence. He expects to complete the rest in the spring.

Neumann said he expects to pull through if Mother Nature continues to cooperate.

"It should come back really well if it rains and we get some snow this winter," Neumann said. "It should be really good, actually."

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

Pipeline uncertainty illustrates broader concerns for tribes

By MARY HUDETZ, Associated Press

For hundreds of protesters, it was cause to cheer when the Obama administration this month declined to issue an easement for the Dakota Access pipeline's final segment. But that elation was dampened by the uncertainty of what comes next: a Donald Trump-led White House that might be far less attuned to issues affecting Native Americans.

"With Trump coming into office, you just can't celebrate," said Laundi Germaine Keepseagle, who is 28 and from the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, where the demonstrators have been camped out near the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Anxiety over the 1,200-mile pipeline illustrates a broader uncertainty over how tribes will fare under Trump following what many in Indian Country consider a landmark eight years.

President Barack Obama has won accolades among Native Americans for breaking through a gridlock of inaction on tribal issues and for putting a spotlight on their concerns with yearly meetings with tribal leaders.

Under his administration, lawmakers cemented a tribal health care law that includes more preventive care and mental health resources and addresses recruiting and retaining physicians throughout Indian Country.

The Interior Department restored tribal homelands by placing more than 500,000 acres under tribes' control — more than any other recent administration — while the Justice Department charted a process

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approved by Congress for tribes to prosecute and sentence more cases involving non-Native Americans who assault Native American women. Before Obama, a gap in the laws allowed for such crimes to go unpunished.

In addition, the federal government settled decades-old lawsuits involving Native Americans, including class-action cases over the government's mismanagement of royalties for oil, gas, timber and grazing leases and its discrimination against tribal members seeking farm loans.

"In my opinion, President Obama has been the greatest president in dealing with Native Americans," said Brian Cladoosby, chairman of the Swinomish Tribe north of Seattle and president of the nonpartisan National Congress of American Indians, based in Washington, D.C. "The last eight years give us hope going forward with the relationships we have on both sides of the aisle."

Trump, meanwhile, rarely acknowledged Native Americans during his campaign and hasn't publicly outlined how he would improve or manage the United States' longstanding relationships with tribes.

His Interior secretary pick, Republican Rep. Ryan Zinke of Montana, sponsored legislation that he says would have given tribes more control over coal and other fossil fuel development on their lands.

But some of Trump's biggest campaign pledges — including repealing health care legislation and building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border — would collide with tribal interests.

In Arizona, Tohono O'odham Nation leaders have vowed to oppose any plans for a wall along the 75-mile portion of the border that runs parallel to their reservation. And the nonprofit National Indian Health Board in Washington says it's aiming to work with lawmakers to ensure the Indian Health Care Improvement Act remains intact.

The law, which guarantees funding for care through the federal Indian Health Services agency, was embedded in Obama's health care overhaul after consultation with tribes.

The government's role figures prominently in Native Americans' daily lives because treaties and other binding agreements often require the U.S. to manage tribal health care, law enforcement and education.

Some tribal members say they're unsure how much Trump understands or cares about their unique relationship with the federal government.

"I think there was a great hope that we had here in Indian Country with the direct dialogue that President Obama had established with tribal nations," said Duane "Chili" Yazzie, president of the Navajo Nation's Shiprock Chapter. "If a similar effort to communicate with us were carried on by the Trump administration, I would be surprised."

Though most reservations lean Democratic in presidential elections, Trump does have some supporters in Indian Country. They hope the businessman can turn around lagging economies in rural reservations, such as the 27,000-square-mile Navajo Nation, which covers parts of Utah, New Mexico and Arizona.

"Trump is pro-job growth, and tribes need a healthy dose of business creation," said Deswood Tome, a former spokesman for the tribe from Window Rock, Arizona. "To do that, a lot of federal barriers must be removed. We're the only ethnic group who have so much federal control in our lives."

The Dakota Access pipeline illustrates another chasm between Obama and Trump.

This fall, the pipeline dispute led Obama's administration to begin tackling a final piece of its Indian Country agenda: guidelines for how cabinet departments should consult with tribes on major infrastructure projects.

A top complaint from the Standing Rock Sioux was that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers failed to properly consult with them before initially approving a pipeline route that ran beneath Lake Oahe, the tribe's primary source of drinking water.

After the administration halted construction on the project in September to review the complaint, it held seven meetings with tribal leaders and began drafting a report on how federal officials should consult with tribes.

U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell said the report will be completed before Obama leaves office, and she expects it to have a lasting impact, even with an incoming administration that promises to undo some of the president's policies.

What's unclear is whether Trump, who once owned stock in the pipeline builder, will seek to reverse the

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Army's decision this month to explore alternate routes.

A spokesman said only that the president-elect plans to review the move after he takes office. However, Trump's transition team said in a recent memo to campaign supporters and congressional staff that he supports the pipeline's completion.

In the meantime, Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault has begun lobbying for a meeting with Trump to make a case for his tribe's opposition to the project, which the chairman says threatens not just water but sacred cultural sites.

"You have to respect Mother Earth; she's precious," Archambault said. "You can still believe in capitalism, and you can still invest in infrastructure projects, but these infrastructure projects should be focused toward renewable energy rather than fossil fuel development."

Associated Press writers Susan Montoya Bryan in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Regina Garcia Cano in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, contributed to this report.

Follow Mary Hudetz on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/marymhudetz>. Her work can be found at <http://bigstory.ap.org/journalist/mary-hudetz>.

The Latest: Russia: All causes for plane crash being eyed

MOSCOW (AP) — The Latest on the crash of a Russian aircraft with 92 people on board en route to Russia's air base in Syria (all times local):

7:15 p.m.

Russia's transport minister says investigators are looking into all possible reasons why a Russian military plane crashed into the Black Sea with 92 people on board, including the option of a terror attack.

Earlier, a Russian official had downplayed any suggestion of a terror attack. But on Sunday afternoon, after being asked if investigators are looking into a possible terror attack, minister Maxim Sokolov said an "entire spectrum" of possible reasons is being considered.

He added it's premature to speculate about the cause of Sunday's crash.

The Tu-154 plane belonging to the Defense Ministry crashed into the Black Sea two minutes after takeoff Sunday morning from the Russian city of Sochi. The plane was heading to Syria, carrying members of the world-famous Russian army choir to a New Year concert at the Russian military base.

All aboard are believed to have died, and so far rescuers have recovered 10 bodies.

4:15 p.m.

Syrian President Bashar Assad has sent a condolence letter to his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, over the plane that plunged into the sea with 92 people aboard.

Assad says he received news of the crash "with deep grief and sadness."

There appeared to be no survivors after the Tu-154 passenger plane operated by the Russian Defense Ministry crashed into the Black Sea.

The jet was carrying members of the world-famous Alexandrov Ensemble army choir to a New Year's concert at the Russian military base in Syria.

Assad expressed his condolences to all the victims' families, adding that the countries are partners in the war against terrorism.

3:20 p.m.

The Russian Defense Ministry says rescuers are seeing no sign of any survivors of the crash of a Russian plane into the Black Sea.

Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov says that "no survivors are seen" at the crash site about 1.5 kilometers (less than a mile) from the shore.

The Tu-154 passenger plane with 92 people aboard plummeted into the sea two minutes after taking off from the city of Sochi. The plane belonging to the Russian Defense Ministry was heading to Syria,

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carrying members of the world-famous Russian army choir to a New Year concert at the Russian military base. The cause of the crash isn't immediately known.

Rescuers already have recovered several bodies, and dozens of ships, drones and divers are looking for more.

2:30 p.m.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has declared a nationwide day of mourning for victims of the crash of a Russian plane that plunged into the sea with 92 people aboard.

There appeared to be no survivors after the Tu-154 passenger plane operated by the Russian Defense Ministry crashed into the Black Sea Sunday minutes after taking off from Sochi. The jet was carrying members of the world-famous Russian army choir to a New Year concert at the Russian military base in Syria. The cause of the crash isn't immediately known.

Putin, speaking in televised remarks, announced there will be a day of mourning on Monday.

He says the government will "conduct a thorough investigation into the reasons and do everything to support the victims' families."

1:10 p.m.

Russia's Defense Ministry says a widely revered Russian charity doctor was on board a Russian plane headed to Syria that crashed into the Black Sea shortly after takeoff.

Yelizaveta Glinka, known as Doctor Liza in Russia, has won broad acclaim for charity work that included missions to the war zone in eastern Ukraine.

Her foundation, Spravedlivaya Pomoshch, or Just Help, says she was accompanying a shipment of medicines for a hospital in Syria.

The Tu-154 that belonged to the Russian Defense Minister crashed into the sea Sunday two minutes after taking off from the resort of Sochi. It was also carrying members of the Alexandrov Ensemble to a holiday concert at the Hemeimeem air base in Syria.

There is no indication anyone survived the crash.

11:25 a.m.

A Russian official says the crash of a Russian military passenger plane into the Black Sea could have been caused by a technical malfunction or a crew error, but he believes it could not have been terrorism because the plane was operated by the military.

Viktor Ozerov, head of the defense affairs committee at the upper house of Russian parliament, says in remarks carried by the state news agency RIA Novosti that he "totally excludes" terrorism as a possible cause of the crash.

The plane was en route to Russia's air base in Syria with 92 people on board when it crashed shortly after taking off from the resort town of Sochi. At least one body has been found and there is no word on whether anyone survived.

The Defense Ministry has released a list of the passengers. They include 64 members of the Alexandrov Ensemble, among them its leader, Valery Khalilov. The Alexandrov Ensemble is the official choir of the Russian military, and it also includes a band and a dancing company.

9:45 a.m.

The Russian Defense Ministry says rescuers have found fragments of the Tu-154 plane that was carrying 91 people en route to the Russian military base in Syria.

The ministry said earlier that the plane disappeared from radars shortly after takeoff from the Black Sea resort of Sochi on Sunday. It carried eight crew and 83 passengers, including members of the world-famous Alexandrov military choir.

The ministry says rescue teams found fragments of the plane at a distance of about 1.5 kilometers (less

than a mile) from shore at a depth of 50-70 meters.

Queen Elizabeth II misses Christmas service due to illness

By KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH and GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

SANDRINGHAM, England (AP) — A bad cold kept Queen Elizabeth II from attending the traditional Christmas morning church service near her Sandringham estate in rural Norfolk, England, raising some concerns about her health.

It's extremely rare for Elizabeth, now 90, to miss the service, which is a cornerstone of the royal family's Christmas celebrations and brings the monarch into contact with locals who gather outside for a glimpse of her.

"The Queen continues to recover from a heavy cold and will stay indoors to assist with her recovery," Buckingham Palace said. "Her Majesty will participate in the royal family Christmas celebrations during the day."

Those festivities included a gala lunch. In past years, the royal family would often go for extended walks in the countryside.

Elizabeth has been in generally good health and has maintained an active schedule in the last year despite traveling less often than in the past. Recently she stepped down as patron for about 20 charities and groups to lighten her work load.

Her husband, 95-year-old Prince Philip, has also cut back on his public schedule and his charitable works in the last few years. He was also suffering from a severe cold earlier in the week, the palace said.

Philip did attend the Sunday morning Christmas service, waving to well-wishers on his way out of the church in a car.

Prince Harry spent time talking to locals after the church service and stopped to pet a dog. There was no sign of his girlfriend, American actress Meghan Markle, who recently visited him in London.

Elizabeth and Philip were joined in Sandringham by other senior royals including Prince Charles. Prince William and his wife Kate, along with their two children, Prince George and Princess Charlotte, were celebrating Christmas with Kate's parents at their home in Bucklebury, a village west of London.

The queen used her annual pre-recorded Christmas Day message to praise British Olympic and Paralympic athletes and others who inspired her. The traditional message of goodwill was televised throughout Britain and much of the Commonwealth.

The broadcast included video of her 90th birthday celebrations and a gigantic street party attended by charity workers from across Britain. The soft-spoken queen praised ordinary people for pitching in to do good works.

"To be inspirational, you don't have to save lives or win medals. I often draw strength from meeting ordinary people doing extraordinary things — volunteers, carers, community organizers and good neighbors. Unsung heroes whose quiet dedication makes them special," she said.

She also praised the charitable foundations started by Philip and Charles some 60 and 40 years ago, respectively.

Katz reported from London.

Pope wishes Christmas peace for those scarred by war, terror

By FRANCES D'EMILIO, Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Decrying the suffering in Syria, Pope Francis on Sunday wished Christmas peace and hope for all those scarred by war and terrorism, which he said is sowing "fear and death in the heart of many countries and cities."

Some 40,000 tourists and Romans calmly endured long security lines to enter St. Peter's Square to see the pope on the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, where he delivered the traditional "Urbi et Orbi"

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("to the city and to the world") Christmas message and blessing.

Francis spoke sorrowfully of the suffering caused by the Syrian war, especially in Aleppo, pressing the international community to help negotiate a solution. He urged Israelis and Palestinians to "write a new page of history, where hate and revenge give way" toward building a future of understanding and harmony.

He also cited the "brutality of terrorism" in Iraq, Libya and Yemen.

In Nigeria, the pope lamented, "fundamentalist terrorism exploits even children," a reference to child suicide bombers. He expressed hope that dialogue would prevail over "the mindset of conflict" in both South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The heavy security at the Vatican reflected apprehension in much of Europe, which is reeling from extremist attacks. Last week, 12 people died in Berlin when a Tunisian man who had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group plowed a truck through a crowd at a Christmas market. He was killed a few days later in a shootout near Milan.

"Peace to all those who have been injured or have suffered the loss of a loved one due to the brutal acts of terrorism that have sown fear and death in the heart of many countries and cities," the pope said.

Referring to the meaning of Jesus' birth, Francis said: "Today this message goes out to the ends of the Earth to reach all peoples, especially those scarred by war and harsh conflicts that seem stronger than the yearning for peace."

His Christmas message also recalled Colombia, which has seen his personal intervention try to end Latin America's longest running conflict, and Venezuela, where a papal envoy has tried to facilitate talks between the government and the opposition as Venezuelans endure widespread food and medicine shortages.

Francis expressed concern over tensions on the Korean peninsula, and over Myanmar, which he said should "consolidate efforts to promote peaceful coexistence."

During Christmas Eve Mass in the basilica, Francis said Jesus' birth, in a humble stable, calls to mind how some children today must hide in underground bomb shelters, live on the street, lie on the bottom of overcrowded smugglers' boats, are given weapons instead of toys or aren't allowed to be born at all.

Throughout his papacy, Francis has denounced the Islamic extremist violence that has driven Christians from Mideast communities that date to Christianity's foundations. He has also demanded that Europe in particular do more to welcome refugees.

Reflecting the pope's concern for migrants, refugees and others on society's margins, Bologna's archbishop celebrated a Christmas Eve Mass for the homeless in a waiting room of that Italian city's main train station.

Follow Frances D'Emilio on twitter at www.twitter.com/fdemilio.

Trump adopting same behavior he criticized Clinton for

By LISA LERER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump spent the past two years attacking rival Hillary Clinton as crooked, corrupt, and weak.

But some of those attacks seem to have already slipped into the history books.

From installing Wall Street executives in his Cabinet to avoiding news conferences, the president-elect is adopting some of the same behavior for which he criticized Clinton during their fiery presidential campaign.

Here's a look at what Trump said then — and what he's doing now:

GOLDMAN SACHS

Then: "I know the guys at Goldman Sachs," Trump said at a South Carolina rally in February, when he was locked in a fierce primary battle with Texas Sen. Ted Cruz. "They have total, total control over him. Just like they have total control over Hillary Clinton."

Now: A number of former employees of the Wall Street bank will play a key role in crafting Trump's economic policy. He's tapped Goldman Sachs president Gary Cohn to lead the White House National Economic Council. Steven Mnuchin, the Treasury secretary nominee, spent 17 years working at Goldman Sachs and Steve Bannon, Trump's chief strategist and senior counselor, started his career as an investment banker

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at the firm.

Trump is following in a long political tradition, though one he derided on the campaign trail: If Cohn accepts the nomination, he'll be the third Goldman executive to run the NEC.

BIG DONORS

Then: "Crooked Hillary. Look, can you imagine another four years of the Clintons? Seriously. It's time to move on. And she's totally controlled by Wall Street and all these people that gave her millions," Trump said at a May rally in Lynden, Washington.

Now: Trump has stocked his Cabinet with six top donors — far more than any recent White House. "I want people that made a fortune. Because now they're negotiating with you, OK?" Trump said, in a December 9 speech in Des Moines.

The biggest giver? Incoming small business administrator Linda McMahon gave \$7.5 million to a super PAC backing Trump, more than a third of the money collected by the political action committee.

NEWS CONFERENCES

Then: "She doesn't do news conferences, because she can't," Trump said at an August rally in Ashburn, Virginia. "She's so dishonest she doesn't want people peppering her with questions."

Now: Trump opened his last news conference on July 27, saying: "You know, I put myself through your news conferences often, not that it's fun."

He hasn't held once since.

Trump skipped the news conference a president-elect typically gives after winning the White House. Instead, he released a YouTube video of under three minutes. This week, Trump abruptly canceled plans to hold his first post-election news conference, opting instead to describe his plans for managing his businesses in tweets. "I will hold a press conference in the near future to discuss the business, Cabinet picks and all other topics of interest. Busy times!" he tweeted in mid-December.

FAMILY TIES:

Then: "It is impossible to figure out where the Clinton Foundation ends and the State Department begins. It is now abundantly clear that the Clintons set up a business to profit from public office. They sold access and specific actions by and really for I guess the making of large amounts of money," Trump said at an August rally in Austin.

Now: While Trump has promised to separate himself from his businesses, there is plenty of overlap between his enterprises and his immediate family. His companies will be run by his sons, Donald Jr and Eric. And his daughter, Ivanka, and son-in-law, Jared Kushner, have joined Trump at a number of meetings with world leaders of countries where the family has financial interests.

In a financial disclosure he was required to file during the campaign, Trump listed stakes in about 500 companies in at least 25 countries.

Ivanka, in particular, has been caught making early efforts to leverage her father's new position into profits. After an interview with the family appeared on "60 Minutes," her jewelry company, Ivanka Trump Fine Jewelry, blasted out an email promoting the \$10,800 gold bangle bracelet that she had worn during the appearance. The company later said they were "proactively discussing new policies and procedures."

Ivanka is also auctioning off a private coffee meeting with her to benefit her brother's foundation. The meeting is valued at \$50,000, with the current top bid coming in at \$25,000.

"United States Secret Service will be Present for the Duration of the Experience," warns the auction site.

Trump on Saturday said he would dissolve his charitable foundation amid efforts to eliminate any conflicts of interest before he takes office next month.

CLINTON INVESTIGATIONS

Then: "If I win, I am going to instruct my attorney general to get a special prosecutor to look into your situation, because there has never been so many lies, so much deception. There has never been anything

like it, and we're going to have a special prosecutor," Trump said in the October presidential debate.

Now: Since winning office, Trump has said he has no intention of pushing for an investigation into Clinton's use of a private email server as secretary of State or the workings of her family foundation. "It's just not something that I feel very strongly about," he told the New York Times.

"She went through a lot. And suffered greatly in many different ways," he said. "I'm not looking to hurt them."

Powerful typhoon slams into Philippines, spoiling Christmas

By JIM GOMEZ, Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — A powerful typhoon slammed into the eastern Philippines on Christmas Day, spoiling the biggest holiday in Asia's largest Catholic nation, where a governor offered roast pig to entice villagers to abandon family celebrations for emergency shelters.

Typhoon Nock-Ten was packing maximum sustained winds of 185 kilometers (114 miles) per hour and gusts of up to 255 kph (158 mph) when it made landfall Sunday night in Catanduanes province, where fierce winds and rain knocked down the island's power and communications, officials said.

There were no immediate reports of injuries.

After Catanduanes, the typhoon, which had a 500-kilometer (300-mile) rain band, was expected to barge westward across the mountainous southern plank of the Philippines' main island of Luzon and blow close to the capital, Manila, on Monday, before starting to exit toward the South China Sea. Nock-Ten may weaken after hitting the Sierra Madre mountain range in southern Luzon.

Heavy rainfall, destructive winds and battering waves were threatening heavily populated rural and urban regions, where the Philippine weather agency raised typhoon warnings, stranding thousands of people in ports as airlines canceled flights and ferries were prevented from sailing. Officials warned of storm surges in coastal villages, flash floods and landslides, and asked villagers to evacuate to safer grounds.

Christmas is the biggest holiday in the Philippines, which has Asia's largest Roman Catholic population, making it difficult for officials to get people's attention to heed the warnings. With many refusing to leave high-risk communities, some officials said they decided to carry out forced evacuations.

In the past 65 years, seven typhoons have struck the Philippines on Christmas Day, according to the government's weather agency.

Gov. Miguel Villafuerte of Camarines Sur province, which is in the typhoon's expected path, offered roast pig, a popular Christmas delicacy locally called "lechon," in evacuation centers to entice villagers to move to emergency shelters.

"I know it's Christmas ... but this is a legit typhoon," Villafuerte tweeted on Christmas Eve. "Please evacuate, we'll be having lechon at evacuation centers."

Camarines Sur officials had targeted about 50,000 families — some 250,000 people — for evacuation by Saturday night, but the number of those who responded was initially far below expectations.

In Catanduanes province, Vice Gov. Shirley Abundo said she ordered a forced evacuation of villagers, saying some "are really hard-headed, they don't want to leave their houses because it's Christmas."

"We need to do this by force, we need to evacuate them now," she told ABS-CBN television.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development, which helps oversee government response during disasters, said only about 4,200 people were reported to have moved to six evacuation centers by Sunday morning in the Bicol region, which includes Camarines Sur.

"It's difficult to force celebrations when our lives will be put at risk. Please prioritize safety and take heed of warnings by local government units," welfare official Felino Castro told The Associated Press by phone.

Food, water and other emergency supplies had been pre-positioned in areas expected to be lashed by the typhoon, Castro said. His department was to activate an emergency cluster comprising the military, police, coast guard and other agencies Sunday to oversee disaster-response plans.

In the farming town of Guinobatan in Albay province, which is near Nock-Ten's path, more than 17,600

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villagers moved to evacuation shelters without hesitation because of fears of a repeat of a typhoon several years ago that unleashed smoldering mudflows from nearby Mayon Volcano, leaving hundreds dead, the town's mayor, Ann Ongjoco, said by phone.

Josefina Nao, who evacuated to a Guinobatan school with her six children, grandchildren and siblings, said that Sunday was one of her bleakest Christmas holidays, but that poor people like her did not have much choice. She said it was tough to replicate Christmas away from home, adding that town officials tried to cheer evacuees by distributing holiday food such as spaghetti.

"We live in a flood-prone community near a river where many had been swept to their deaths by floodwaters during typhoons," the 60-year-old Nao said by phone from a classroom-turned-storm shelter that was void of any Christmas lights or decorations. "I wish it was a merrier Christmas, but this is our best option because we'll all be safe together."

About 20 typhoons and storms, mostly from the Pacific, lash the Philippines each year, making the poor country of more than 100 million people one of the most disaster-prone in the world.

In November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan struck the central Philippines with ferocious power, leaving more than 7,300 people dead or missing and displacing more than 5 million after leveling entire villages despite days of dire warnings by government officials.

Christmas Day blizzard takes aim at the Dakotas, Montana

CHICAGO (AP) — It'll be a white Christmas for the northern Plains and some Western states, but forecasters warn blizzard conditions are likely to affect holiday travel.

The National Weather Service issued a blizzard warning for most of North Dakota, western South Dakota and a small section of eastern Montana through Monday, with expected snow totals of 8 to 15 inches and winds up to 55 mph.

The weather service says that will make travel "very dangerous if not impossible."

An ice storm warning is in effect through late Sunday for central South Dakota, southwest North Dakota and much of central Minnesota, with up to a ½ inch of ice expected. Forecasters said anyone who "must travel" should have an extra flashlight, food and water.

Rain was due to move through parts of Kansas, Missouri, Texas, Oklahoma and Nebraska on Sunday.

Trump says he's closing foundation, but Democrats want more

By VIVIAN SALAMA, Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump says he will dissolve his charitable foundation before taking office to avoid conflicts of interest. The Democratic Party says that's not enough and is calling for the billionaire businessman to put his assets in a blind trust.

The New York attorney general's office has been investigating the foundation following media reports that foundation spending went to benefit Trump's campaign. A spokeswoman says the foundation cannot close until the investigation is complete.

Trump said in a statement Saturday that he has directed his counsel to take the necessary steps to implement the dissolution of the Donald J. Trump Foundation, saying that it operated "at essentially no cost for decades, with 100 percent of the money going to charity."

"The foundation has done enormous good works over the years in contributing millions of dollars to countless worthy groups, including supporting veterans, law enforcement officers and children," he said in a statement.

"I will be devoting so much time and energy to the presidency and solving the many problems facing our country and the world. I don't want to allow good work to be associated with a possible conflict of interest," he said.

Trump said he will pursue philanthropic efforts in other ways, but he didn't elaborate on how he'd do so.

The Democratic National Committee criticized Trump for what it called "a wilted fig leaf to cover up his

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remaining conflicts of interest and his pitiful record of charitable giving.”

The statement from party spokesman Eric Walker also took a jab at the president-elect over his controversial business holdings: “Shuttering a charity is no substitute for divesting from his for-profit business and putting the assets in a blind trust — the only way to guarantee separation between the Trump administration and the Trump business.”

A 2015 tax return posted on the nonprofit monitoring website GuideStar shows the Donald J. Trump Foundation acknowledged that it used money or assets in violation of IRS regulations — not only during 2015, but in prior years.

Those regulations prohibit self-dealing by the charity. That’s broadly defined as using its money or assets to benefit Trump, his family, his companies or substantial contributors to the foundation.

The tax filing doesn’t provide details on the violations. Whether Trump benefited from the foundation’s spending has been the subject of an investigation by New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman.

In September, Schneiderman disclosed that his office has been investigating Trump’s charity to determine whether it has abided by state laws governing nonprofits.

Documents obtained by The Associated Press in September showed Schneiderman’s scrutiny of The Donald J. Trump Foundation dated back to at least June, when his office formally questioned the donation made by the charity to a group supporting Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi.

Bondi personally solicited the money during a 2013 phone call that came after her office received complaints from former students claiming they were scammed by Trump University, Trump’s get-rich-quick real estate seminars.

The Trump Foundation check arrived just days after Bondi’s office told a newspaper it was reviewing a lawsuit against Trump University filed by Schneiderman. Bondi’s office never sued Trump, though she denies his donation played any role in that decision.

Trump later paid a \$2,500 fine over the check from his foundation because it violated federal law barring charities from making political contributions.

Amy Spitalnick, press secretary for Schneiderman’s office, said Saturday that the foundation “cannot legally dissolve” until the investigation is complete.

The charitable foundation was ordered to immediately stop fundraising in New York just weeks before the general election, Schneiderman’s office saying it wasn’t registered to do so. The N.Y. attorney general’s office said in October the Trump Foundation had a registration for an organization with assets in New York, but the law requires a different registration for those that solicit more than \$25,000 a year from the public. It complied with the order and stopped its fundraising activities.

Trump was highly critical of Democratic rival Hillary Clinton’s family charity, the Clinton Foundation, saying without evidence that she ran “a vast criminal enterprise run out of the State Department” while she was secretary of state. At the final presidential debate, he challenged Clinton to “give back the money” that came from donors in countries that fail to respect various human rights.

More than half the people outside the government who met with Clinton while she was secretary of state gave money — either personally or through companies or groups — to the Clinton Foundation. The proportion indicated possible ethics challenges had she been elected president.

Trump’s announcement to dissolve his own foundation came a day after the president-elect took to Twitter to declare it a “ridiculous shame” that his son Eric will have to stop soliciting funds for his charitable foundation, the Eric Trump Foundation, because of a conflict of interest.

“My wonderful son, Eric, will no longer be allowed to raise money for children with cancer because of a possible conflict of interest with my presidency,” Trump tweeted. “He loves these kids, has raised millions of dollars for them, and now must stop. Wrong answer!”

Trump was spending the Christmas weekend at his South Florida estate, Mar-a-Lago, his retreat for most holidays. He and his wife, Melania, attended services Saturday night at an Episcopal church in Palm Beach.

Associated Press writer Karen Matthews in New York contributed to this report.

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The Latest: Trumps attend church services on Christmas Eve

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — The Latest news from President-elect Donald Trump (all times local): 10:35 p.m.

Donald Trump is kicking off Christmas by attending midnight services at an Episcopal church in Palm Beach, Florida.

The president-elect and his wife, Melania, arrived Saturday night at the Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea. The soon-to-be first couple were married at the church in 2005.

Trump has bemoaned the increased use of the term "Happy Holidays" in place of "Merry Christmas" as a sign that Christianity is under attack. As president, he's said, he'll reverse the trend.

The president-elect is spending the holidays at his Florida estate, Mar-a-Lago, where he's been holding meetings with senior staff, advisers and business executives.

Trump tweeted wishes for a "Happy Hanukkah" earlier Saturday.

9:25 p.m.

The Democratic National Committee is criticizing President-elect Donald Trump for not doing more to address potential conflicts of interest as he prepares to assume the presidency.

Trump said Saturday that he will dissolve the Donald J. Trump Foundation amid efforts to eliminate any conflicts of interest.

In a response, the Democratic National Committee is dismissing Trump's move as "a wilted fig leaf to cover up his remaining conflicts of interest and his pitiful record of charitable giving."

The statement from Democratic Party spokesman Eric Walker also says that closing a charity "is no substitute for divesting from his for-profit business and putting the assets in a blind trust." The party says doing that is "the only way to guarantee separation between the Trump administration and the Trump business."

7:55 p.m.

One of Donald Trump's senior communications staffers says he will not take the job of White House communications director after all.

Jason Miller said in a statement Saturday that he's decided not to accept the role offered to him by Trump so he can spend more time with his family.

Miller was one of the main spokesmen for Trump's transition team. He says he and his wife are expecting their second daughter in January and "this is not the right time to start a new job."

He says that after spending the past week with his family, "it is clear they need to be my top priority right now."

Miller says he has handed all of his responsibilities to incoming White House press secretary Sean Spicer, who will serve as communications director as well as press secretary.

5:05 p.m.

Donald Trump says the decision by the United Nations to condemn Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem "will make it much harder to negotiate peace."

The president-elect took to Twitter on Saturday, a day after the U.N. Security Council vote on the settlements.

Trump says that the decision is "too bad, but we will get it done anyway."

Trump didn't elaborate, but a move by the Obama administration to abstain from Friday's U.N. vote brushes aside Trump's demands that the U.S. exercise its veto and provided a climax to years of icy relations with Israel's leadership.

Trump told The Associated Press a year ago that he wanted to be "very neutral" on Israel-Palestinian issues. But his tone on the issue became decidedly more pro-Israel as the presidential campaign progressed. He has spoken disparagingly of Palestinians, saying they have been "taken over" by or are condoning militant groups.

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5 p.m.

President-elect Donald Trump says he will dissolve the Donald J. Trump Foundation amid efforts to eliminate any conflicts of interest before he takes office next month.

Trump said in a statement Saturday that his charitable foundation "has done enormous good works over the years in contributing millions of dollars to countless worthy groups, including supporting veterans, law enforcement officers and children."

He said that given the conflicts of interest, he will pursue philanthropic efforts in other ways, without elaborating on how he'd do so.

Trump said he's directed his counsel to take the necessary steps to implement the dissolution.

The revelation comes a day after Trump lamented the fact that his son Eric would be stepping away from his charitable foundation due to conflicts of interest.

3 a.m.

President-elect Donald Trump is vowing to expand America's nuclear capacity while simultaneously urging Russia to avoid an "alternate path" away from stability and cooperation.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in a letter to Trump that "relations between Russia and the U.S. remain an important factor in ensuring stability and security in the modern world."

Trump said in response that he hopes "both sides are able to live up to these thoughts, and we do not have to travel an alternate path."

The exchange comes after both Trump and Putin spoke about the need to strengthen their countries' nuclear arsenals.

Tensions have been mounting between the U.S. and Russia in recent months after the FBI and CIA said Moscow interfered in the presidential election with the goal of supporting Trump.

Sri Lanka claims world's tallest artificial Christmas tree

By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI, Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Sri Lanka unveiled a towering Christmas tree, claiming to have surpassed the world record despite construction delays and a shorter-than-planned finished product.

The 73-meter (238-foot) artificial tree in capital Colombo is 18 meters (59 feet) taller than the current record holder, organizers said. The tree's steel-and-wire frame is covered with a plastic net decorated with more than 1 million natural pine cones painted red, gold, green and silver, 600,000 LED bulbs and topped by a 6-meter (20-foot)-tall shining star.

The tree costs \$80,000 and was criticized by the Catholic Church as a "waste of money." The church suggested that the funds better be spent on helping the poor.

Hundreds of port workers and volunteers struggled for four months to put up the tree in time for the holidays. Work was suspended for six days in early December after Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith — representing the island nation's 1.5 million Catholics — lambasted the project. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe responded to the criticism by saying the tree was not being built with public money, but with donations from individuals and private firms.

The Guinness World Records is yet to confirm if this is the tallest artificial Christmas tree. Currently, the record is held by a Chinese firm that put up a 55-meter (180-foot) tree-like tower of lights and synthetic foliage, ornaments and lamps in the city of Guangzhou last year.

Sri Lankan organizers said they wanted the tree to help promote ethnic and religious harmony in the Buddhist-majority island nation, where a long civil war ended in 2009 but reconciliation remains a challenge.

"This is just to show the world that we can live as one country, one nation," said Arjuna Ranatunga, a former cricket player and the minister of ports and shipping. He said Sri Lanka still is still grappling with issues regarding religion, caste and race.

Minority Christian and Muslim communities complain of state-sponsored discrimination, and there are

allegations of widespread abuses against minority ethnic Tamils both during and after the war.

Israel's Netanyahu lashes out at Obama over UN vote

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's prime minister lashed out at President Barack Obama on Saturday, accusing him of a "shameful ambush" at the United Nations over West Bank settlements and saying he is looking forward to working with his "friend" President-elect Donald Trump.

Benjamin Netanyahu's comments came a day after the United States broke with past practice and allowed the U.N. Security Council to condemn Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem as a "flagrant violation" of international law.

Although the U.S. opposes the settlements, it has traditionally used its veto power as a permanent member of the Security Council to block resolutions condemning Israel, saying that disputes between Israel and the Palestinians must be resolved through negotiations.

Welcomed by the Palestinians, the resolution, while mostly symbolic, could hinder Israel's negotiating position in future peace talks.

Trump also condemned the U.N. vote Saturday, taking to Twitter to say it "will make it much harder to negotiate peace." But, he added, "we will get it done anyway."

A year ago, Trump told The Associated Press that he wanted to be "very neutral" on Israel-Palestinian issues, but his comments became much more pro-Israel as the race progressed and he took a sharp tone against the Palestinians.

Netanyahu said the U.S. abstention was "in complete contrast" to U.S. commitments — including one that he said Obama made in 2011 — not to impose conditions for a final agreement on Israel at the Security Council. "The Obama administration conducted a shameful anti-Israel ambush at the U.N.," Netanyahu said.

The White House declined to comment on Netanyahu's criticism.

The U.S. and much of the international community consider Israel's settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem as an obstacle to peace. Netanyahu rejects such claims, blaming the failure of peace efforts on the Palestinian refusal to recognize Israel's Jewish identity.

The decision to abstain from vote was one of the biggest American rebukes of its long-standing ally in recent memory and marked a final chapter in the icy relations between Netanyahu and Obama over the last eight years.

Netanyahu called the decision "distorted" but said Israel will overcome it.

He said he had spoken with U.S. leaders, both Democrats and Republicans, who vowed to fight the move, including he said, from Israel's "friend" in the incoming administration, the president-elect.

"The decision taken at the U.N. yesterday was part of the swan song of the old world biased against Israel," Netanyahu said. "We are entering a new era and as the President-elect Trump said yesterday, this is going to happen much quicker than people think. In this new era there is a high price for those trying to harm Israel," he said.

After Berlin attack, Europe weighs freedom against security

By ANGELA CHARLTON, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Open borders symbolize liberty and forward thinking for many Europeans — but they increasingly look like the continent's Achilles' heel.

Europe's No. 1 terrorism suspect crossed at least two borders this week despite an international manhunt, and he was felled only by chance, in a random ID check in a Milan suburb. The bungled chase for Berlin market attack suspect Anis Amri is just one example of recent cross-border security failures that are emboldening nationalists fed up with European unity. Extremist violence, they argue, is too high a price to pay for the freedom to travel easily.

Defenders of the EU's border-free zone say the security failures show the need for more cooperation among European governments, even shared militaries — not new barriers. Hidebound habits of hoarding intelligence within centuries-old borders are part of the problem, they contend.

But their arguments are criticized by the likes of far-right leader Marine Le Pen, who is hoping to win

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France's presidency in May.

"The myth of total free movement in Europe, which my rivals are clinging to in this presidential election, should be definitively buried. Our security depends on it," she said in a statement Friday, calling Europe's free-travel zone a "total security catastrophe."

That poses a dilemma for European Union devotees like German Chancellor Angela Merkel, facing a re-election battle next year.

Merkel's defense of the EU, and the welcoming hand she extended to Syrian war refugees, were once seen as assets, signs of her moral authority. Today, with anti-immigrant, anti-establishment sentiment rising across Europe, they are threatening to become liabilities.

Countless numbers of people cross borders in the 26-country Schengen travel zone every day, thanks to a 31-year-old system encompassing nearly 400 million people that has dramatically boosted trade and job prospects across the world's largest collective economy.

It's a pillar of a system designed to prevent new world wars, yet it is a system under growing strain. While EU countries debated over how to manage an influx of migrants last year, eastern nations rebuilt border fences and exposed EU weaknesses.

The German far right is insisting on closing the country's borders. Merkel's conservatives are suggesting "transit zones" to hold migrants at the borders while their identities are confirmed, and making it easier to hold people in pre-deportation detention.

Berlin truck attacker Amri is a painful reminder of how Islamic extremists have used Europe's open borders to attack the principles of tolerance they are meant to epitomize.

After migrating illegally from Tunisia in 2011, he was imprisoned for burning down a migrant detention center in Italy. When freed, attempts to deport him to Tunisia failed for bureaucratic reasons. He subsequently traveled to Switzerland and then Germany, where he apparently fell under the influence of a radical network accused of recruiting for the Islamic State group.

Although Germany rejected his asylum application last summer and flagged him as a potential terror threat, authorities patiently waited for Tunisia to produce the required paperwork before deporting him.

Just as the deportation was being finalized Monday, Amri is believed to have hijacked a truck and rammed it into holiday crowds at a Berlin Christmas market, killing 12 and injuring dozens.

He evaded an international manhunt for more than three days, apparently slipping into France — possibly with a pistol in his pocket — and then Italy before stumbling into a standard ID check in suburban Milan, where he died in a shootout with police.

Germany, France and Italy have failed to explain how he escaped the dragnet.

"Movement from one country to another in Europe is easy, especially for someone like Anis Amri, who had lived in Europe for several years" and knew which borders were easier to cross, said Tunisian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bouraoui Limam.

France is especially embarrassed.

It has been under high security as part of a state of emergency since last year, and the French are acutely concerned about train security after American passengers thwarted an attack on an Amsterdam-Paris train in 2015.

Yet French President Francois Hollande visited the Alpine town of Chambéry on the same day that Amri is believed to have passed through its train station en route to Italy, unnoticed by border guards or the president's security detail.

The next morning, as Italian police were identifying Amri's body, France's interior minister visited a Paris train station to talk about the vigorous transport security in place for the holidays.

France's far right and the conservative opposition have assailed the Socialist government as lax.

"How could this person enter in Europe without being monitored? How could we let him settle in Europe?" said Eric Ciotti, lawmaker for the conservative Republicans.

What's worse, it was not the first time.

Last year, hours after Islamic State extremists killed 130 people at multiple targets in Paris, key suspect Salah Abdeslam fled to Belgium despite increased checks on both the French and Belgian borders. It took

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authorities four months to find him. Further, Abdeslam, a French national, had traveled through the Italian port of Bari on a roundtrip journey to Greece in August, months before the attack.

And in 2014, Mehdi Nemmouche allegedly killed four people at the Jewish Museum in Brussels, then crossed into France and traveled to the Mediterranean city of Marseille before being picked up in a police check.

Security and migration will be central issues in elections in the coming year in Germany, France and the Netherlands, all founding nations of the EU. And related fears could be key to fueling opposition calls for an early election in Italy after its recent political crisis.

The leader of Italy's anti-migrant Northern League, Matteo Salvini, called Saturday for closing and reinforcing Europe's borders after the Berlin attack.

"I don't want another two or three massacres before Europe wakes up," Salvini said.

A candidate for France's left-wing primary next month, Vincent Peillon, pleaded for joint European rules on borders, defense and intelligence.

"It's all of Europe that is being attacked," he said.

Le Pen's far-right National Front party wants to retrench rather than reach out, to "give France back full control over its sovereignty."

As Europeans head home for the holidays, many crossing multiple borders on the way without showing a single passport or changing any currency, people are asking themselves: Is it all worth it?

Associated Press writers Geir Moulson in Berlin and Colleen Barry in Milan, Italy, contributed to this report.

Germans must leave home Xmas morning as WWII bomb is defused

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — More than 54,000 people in the southern German city of Augsburg will have to leave their homes Christmas morning while authorities defuse a giant 1.8-ton aerial bomb from World War II.

The city's medieval cathedral and City Hall are in the area to be sealed off. Police said Saturday that no one would be allowed into the surrounding streets after about 8 a.m. Sunday and everyone must be out by 10 a.m.

Police say it was impossible to say exactly how long it would take to make the bomb safe.

Schools will be opened for people who can't stay with relatives or friends. Police said that people can bring their pets to shelters and that public transportation will be free Christmas morning.

Finding bombs from the war is not unusual in Germany. This evacuation, however, is even bigger than the 45,000 people temporarily evacuated to remove a bomb in Koblenz in 2011.

Large parts of Augsburg were destroyed on Feb. 25-26, 1944, when the city was attacked by hundreds of British and U.S. bombers.

Today in History **By The Associated Press**

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Dec. 25, the 360th day of 2016. There are six days left in the year. This is Christmas Day.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 25, 1991, Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev went on television to announce his resignation as the eighth and final leader of a communist superpower that had already gone out of existence.

On this date:

In A.D. 336, the first known commemoration of Christmas on Dec. 25 took place in Rome.

In 1066, William the Conqueror was crowned King of England.

In 1776, Gen. George Washington and his troops crossed the Delaware River for a surprise attack against Hessian forces at Trenton, New Jersey.

In 1818, "Silent Night (Stille Nacht)" was publicly performed for the first time during the Christmas Mid-

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night Mass at the Church of St. Nikolaus in Oberndorf, Austria.

In 1926, Hirohito became emperor of Japan, succeeding his father, Emperor Yoshihito.

In 1931, New York's Metropolitan Opera broadcast an entire live opera over radio for the first time: "Hansel and Gretel" by Engelbert Humperdinck.

In 1941, during World War II, Japan announced the surrender of the British-Canadian garrison at Hong Kong.

In 1946, comedian W.C. Fields died in Pasadena, California, at age 66.

In 1961, Pope John XXIII formally announced the upcoming convocation of the Second Vatican Council, which opened in Oct. 1962.

In 1977, comedian Sir Charles Chaplin died in Switzerland at age 88.

In 1989, ousted Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu (chow-SHES'-koo) and his wife, Elena, were executed following a popular uprising. Former baseball manager Billy Martin, 61, died in a traffic accident near Binghamton, New York.

In 1990, the World Wide Web was born in Geneva, Switzerland, as computer scientists Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailliau (KAH'-yoh) created the world's first hyperlinked webpage.

Ten years ago: James Brown, the "Godfather of Soul," died in Atlanta at age 73. Pope Benedict XVI used his Christmas Day address to call for a peaceful resolution of conflicts worldwide and appeal for greater caring of the poor, the exploited and all who suffer.

Five years ago: Five members of a family — three children and their grandparents — died in a Christmas morning blaze in Stamford, Connecticut, that was blamed on burning embers in a trash can. A 56-year-old man dressed as Santa Claus shot and killed his estranged wife, their two teenage children and three other relatives at an apartment in Grapevine, Texas, before taking his own life. A suicide bombing of a Catholic church near Nigeria's capital left at least 44 people dead.

One year ago: President Barack Obama paid tribute to six U.S. service members killed in a suicide attack in Afghanistan on Dec. 21 as he delivered a Christmas Day gesture of gratitude to U.S. troops at Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay. Pope Francis, in his Christmas Day greeting from the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica, encouraged U.N.-backed peace deals for Syria and Libya and praised those who welcomed migrants. Tennis star Serena Williams was named The Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year for the fourth time. Science-fiction writer George Clayton Johnson, 86, died in Los Angeles.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Dick Miller is 88. Author Anne Roiphe is 81. Actress Hanna Schygulla (SHEE'-goo-lah) is 73. Rhythm-and-blues singer John Edwards (The Spinners) is 72. Actor Gary Sandy is 71. Singer Jimmy Buffett is 70. Pro and College Football Hall-of-Famer Larry Csonka is 70. Country singer Barbara Mandrell is 68. Actress Sissy Spacek is 67. Former White House adviser Karl Rove is 66. Actress CCH Pounder is 64. Singer Annie Lennox is 62. Reggae singer-musician Robin Campbell (UB40) is 62. Country singer Steve Wariner is 62. Singer Shane MacGowan (The Pogues, The Popes) is 59. Baseball Hall of Famer Rickey Henderson is 58. The former Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, Christina Romer, is 58. Actress Klea Scott is 48. Rock musician Noel Hogan (The Cranberries) is 45. Singer Dido is 45. Rock singer Mac Powell (Third Day) is 44. Rhythm-and-blues singer Ryan Shaw is 36. Country singer Alecia Elliott is 34. Pop singers Lisa and Jess Origliasso (The Veronicas) are 32.

Thought for Today: "My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?" — Bob Hope (1903-2003).