

Groton Daily Independent

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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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Tuesday, Jan. 3

Senior Menu: Meatballs, mashed potatoes and gravy, carrots, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

Boys' Basketball at Webster Area (C game at 5:15 p.m., JV at 6:30 p.m. with varsity game to follow)

City Council meeting at Groton Community Center at 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 4

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, buttermilk biscuit, peas, pineapple/mandarin orange sauce, peanut butter cookie.

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

School Lunch: Hamburgers, wedge fries, fruit, carrots and dip.

United Methodist Church, Groton: Kid Zone at 3:30 p.m., Evening Bible Study at 7 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton: Sarah Circle at 5 p.m., League at 6:30 p.m., Confirmation at 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran Church: Ladies Aid/LWML at 1:30 p.m., Confirmation at 3:45 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 5

Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff noodles, mixed vegetables, fruited Jell-O salad, whole wheat bread.

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

School Lunch: Turkey gravy, mashed potatoes, corn, tea bun, fruit.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church: Nigeria Circle at 2 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran Church: Nursery Circle at 1:30 p.m., Good Cheer Circle at 1:30 p.m.

Removal, Grinding, Chipping, Trimming

605-725-WOOD

Mason Dinger: 605-216-6098

Trevor Zeck: 605-216-8910





8th Grade Team Awards

Front row from left; Holgate, 1st place, Cole Burris, Melanie Jacobs, Brooklynn Kusler, and Mason Meyers .

Back row from left; Groton, 2nd place, Tanae Lipp, Samantha Pappas, Isaac Smith, and Grace Wombach.

Several students place at Roncalli MathCounts

The Roncalli Invitational MathCounts Countdown Competition was held on Wednesday, December 7, 2016. Students from Aberdeen area schools participated in the event, which was sponsored by 3M of Aberdeen. Four separate countdown competitions were held simultaneously in the gymnasium.

Groton's eighth grade team placed second: Tanae Lipp, Samantha Pappas, Isaac Smith, and Grace Wombach. Isaac Smith (eighth grade) and Madeline Flihs (seventh grade) were awarded first place certificates in their respective brackets of the competition.

MathCounts is a nationwide coaching and competition program for middle school students that promotes excellence in mathematics. Simmons hosts the next junior high competition on Wednesday, January 11, 2017.

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Individual Awards

The 7th grade 1st place individual winners were, Front row from left: Drew Comstock, Holgate; Sam Groft, Northwestern; Madeline Flihs, Groton; Carsten Johnson, Holgate.

The 8th grade 1st place individual winners were, Back row from left: Isaac Smith, Groton; Hong Wang, Simmons; Cole Burris, Holgate; Isaac Johnson, Milbank.

Groton Area girls 42, Britton-Hecla 39

Groton Area Scoring: Audrey Wanner 10, Jessica Bjerke 10, Alex Stange 9, Katie Koehler 6, Jennie Doeden 3, Harleigh Stange 2, Taylor Holm 2.

Britton-Hecla Scoring: Laken Olson 20, Ashley Fosness 10, Brianna BEck 5, Shyla Henricks 2, Maggie Dahme 2.

Three-pointers: Wanner 2, Bjerke 1.

Groton Area made 13 of 35 field goals, seven of 19 free throws, had 40 rebounds with Wanner and Doeden each having eight, 14 steals with Bjerke having six, 10 assists with Stange having four, 22 turnovers and 13 team fouls.

Groton Area won the JV game, 40-17. Scoring: Miranda Hanson 11, Payton Maine 10, Portia Kettering 5, Jennie Doeden 4, Sam Menzia 3, Payton Colestock 3, Kaycie Hawkins 2, Nicole Marzahn 1.

Ipswich 48, Groton Area 45

Scoring for Groton Area: Jennie Doeden 12, Audrey Wanner 10, Harleigh Stange 9, Katie Koehler 7, Jessica Bjerke 5, Taylor Holm 2.

Scoring for Ipswich: Kumryn Heinz 23, Abby Grabowska 13, Allison Severson 8, Aleah Steger 2, Bailey Hammrich 2.

Groton Area won the JV game, 33-10. Scoring: Miranda Hanson 7, Taylor Holm 7, Sam Menzia 6, Payton Maine 5, Tady Glover 3, Jennie Doeden 2, Caitlyn Barse 2, Nicole Marzahn 1.

Weekly Vikings Roundup By Jordan Wright

On New Year's Day, the Minnesota Vikings defeated the Chicago Bears, 38-10. The score indicates a lopsided victory, which it was, but it should be taken with a grain of salt, considering Chicago was 3-12 entering the game. The Vikings were able to avoid a losing season, finishing with an 8-8 record. This past year, along with the Vikings' season, had a few ups but was mostly disappointing. We should all consider ourselves lucky that they are both over.

The Vikings' offense got the ball rolling against the Bears. Sam Bradford completed 25 of 33 passes for 250 yards and three touchdowns, and a large part of his success is due to the offensive line, who didn't allow a single sack. Tight end Kyle Rudolph led the team in receiving, catching 11 passes for 117 yards (both career highs) and a touchdown. On the ground, Jerick McKinnon led the way with 16 carries for 89 yards (5.6 yards per carry) and a touchdown, while also adding three receptions for 21 yards and a score.

The Vikings' defense only allowed 10 points, but were going against Matt Barkley which certainly helped. The Bears' game plan was to put the offense on the shoulders of their rookie running back Jordan Howard, who finished with 135 yards on 23 carries. The Bears continually shot themselves in the foot, turning the ball over five times which led to 24 points for the Vikings. Eric Kendricks had a great game, leading the team once again in tackles. The best player on defense was Trae Waynes, who showed incredible coverage skills and came away with an impressive interception to go along with his three pass deflections. Waynes is starting to show why the Vikings spent a first round pick on him, and he should get plenty of time to shine next year.

The player of the game this week is Sam Bradford. Not only did Bradford get and keep the Vikings' offense rolling, he also put up some impressive season-long stats. Bradford surpassed Daunte Culpepper for most completions by a Vikings' quarterback, even though he only played in 15 games. Bradford is also in position to set the NFL record for highest completion percentage in a season with 71.6% (as of this writing, Drew Brees can still overtake Bradford, but it's unlikely). Bradford has been a huge asset for the Vikings this season, and has been well worth the draft picks they gave up to get him.

The player who needs the most improvement is... nobody. There wasn't a single player who stood out in a negative way. Sure, the defensive line should've gotten more pressure, but they still contributed to the win. Harrison Smith didn't seem like the same player, but he's coming off injury so there is some regression to be expected. Jeff Locke was the player I was leaning towards putting in this section, since he only averaged 32 yards per punt. But at the end of the day, the Vikings played a great game and have earned themselves a pat on the back.

Next week I'll be breaking down the playoff games, while also including any Vikings' news or notes that come about. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to reach out to me on Facebook: [facebook.com/SkolJWright](https://www.facebook.com/SkolJWright)

Thanks for following along with me all season. I can't wait to bring you offseason news, including free agency and the draft!



Back: Caleb Hanten, KaSandra Pappas, Isaac Smith, Seth Johnson
Front: Landon Marzahn, Madilyn Wright, AnneMarie Smith

November Students of the Month

The student council is sponsoring Student of the Month. Each month the faculty select students who show outstanding academic achievement. These students receive certificates and have an end of the year lunch with the principal.

Caleb Hanten, sixth grade, is the son of Cody and Sarah Hanten, Groton. His siblings are Alexis in eighth grade, Teagan in second grade and Gavin in preschool.

Caleb's activities include football, baseball, basketball, band, piano and 4-H. He has been on the honor roll and is interested in sports, hunting, fishing and farming. His favorite subjects are PE and band. He plans to attend college after high school and his role model is his dad, Cody Hanten.

Seth Johnson, seventh grade, is the son of Mary and Greg Johnson, Bristol. His brother is Cole.

Seth is involved in football and basketball, has been named to the honor roll and is interested in hunting, video games and snowmobiling. English is his favorite subject.

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Isaac Smith, eighth grade, is the son of Steve and Carol Smith, Groton. His siblings are Samuel, Luke, Erin and Anne Marie Smith and Marah Van Diest.

Isaac's activities include soccer, basketball, cross country, track and robotics. His accomplishments are being awesome, MathCounts team and individual awards, honor roll and the robotics team qualified for nationals. He is interested in sports and food and likes gym class. He wants to be an electrical engineer and his role model is Samuel Smith.

KaSandra Pappas, freshman, is the daughter of Val and Kelly Pappas, Groton. Her siblings are Johnna Hepola, Shannon Pappas, Keri Pappas and Samantha Pappas.

KaSandra's accomplishments are are multiple superiors in band and oral interp, being on the Principal's Honor Roll, Student of the Month, being named to Middle School All-State Band her eighth grade year and being accepted to North Area Honor Band this year. Her interests are reading occasionally, hanging out with friends and family, listening to Christmas songs, watching Netflix and sleeping. Band is her favorite subject and she plans to attend college to pursue a career in law or animal care. Valerie Pappas and Keri Pappas are her role models.

AnneMarie Smith, sophomore, is the daughter of Steve and Carol Smith, Groton. Her siblings are Sam and McKinsey Smith, Shane and Marah Van Diest, Luke Smith, Erin Smith and Isaac Smith.

Her activities include show choir, All-State Play, One-Act Play, cross country, Jazz Band, Chamber Choir, Destination Imagination, Robotics, Oral Interp and Marching Band. She has received a superior for Duo and Reader's Theatre for Oral Interp, State A Show Choir champions, superior for trumpet and piano solos at contests, and first a multiple robotics competitions. She likes playing the piano and trumpet, singing, reading, volunteering for church activities and spending time with friends and family. English is her favorite subject and her future plans are undecided. Her role model is Shane Van Diest.

Madilyn Wright, junior, is the daughter of Lynn and Stephan Wright, Houghton. Nathan Wright is her brother.

Madilyn is involved in show choir, cheerleading, FFA, 4-H and Dance Team. She earned Grand Champion Angus Steer at the 2016 State Fair and High Point Angus Steer in 2015. She likes singing, reading, dancing and hanging out with friends. Choir is her favorite subject and she plans to attend BHSU, USD or SDSU for accounting. Her brother, Nathan, is her role model.

Landon Marzahn, senior, is the son of Wade and Renee Marzahn, Groton. Her siblings are Breanna, Nicole and Andrew.

Landon is involved in golf, robotics, 4-H and church. He has been named to the honor roll, Student of the Month, National Honors Society, has qualified for state golf, and been nominated as DAR GHS representative. He likes playing sports, building robots, playing video games and hanging out with friends. Science is his favorite subject and he plants to take up Mechanical Engineering at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. His dad, Wade, is his role model.



Back: Jackson Dinger, Jackson Cogley, Erin Unzen, Kaylin Kucker
Front: Thane Henschel, Jenifer Fjelstad, Ashley Garduno

September Students of the Month

Jackson Dinger, sixth grade, is the son of Elizabeth Dinger and Weston Dinger, Groton. His siblings are Gretchen, Arianna, Roman, Nolan and Hunter.

Jackson's activities include being in Robotics, Oral Interp and band. He has been in the state oral interp contest three times and has been named to the honor roll. His interests are building Legos, computer, reading, and building robots. His favorite subject is social studies. He plans to own a bakery with Grandma Renee. His role model is Buddy from Cake Boss.

Jackson Cogley, seventh grade, is the son of Steve Cogley and Michele Cogley, Claremont. His siblings are Ryland Strom, David Strom, Chance Strom and Quinn Cogley.

Jackson is involved in basketball, baseball and football. His accomplishments are his grades and what he has achieved in sports. Jackson likes sports and math is his favorite subject. He had no future plans yet and his role model is Ryland Strom.

Erin Unzen, eighth grade, is the daughter of Jake and Tiffany Unzen, Groton. Her siblings are Haley, Megan and Nathan.

Erin's activities include volleyball, basketball, golf, band and MathCounts. She has placed in MathCounts, earned good grades, being selected Student of the Month in previous years, and being First Chair in Middle School Band for two years in a row. Erin is interested in sports, art, music, baking, baby-sitting, hanging out with friends and watching movies. English is her favorite subject and she plans to be a middle school teacher. Her role model is her mom.

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Kaylin Kucker, freshman, is the daughter of Chris and Amy Kucker, Groton. She has three brothers, Korbin, Keegan and Kyson.

Kaylin is involved in volleyball, soccer, softball and track. Her accomplishments include being selected as student of the month (September), principal's honor roll and 2017 Jr. snow queen. She is interested in hunting, being outdoors and hanging out with friends and family. English is her favorite subject and she plans to go to college in the medical field. Her role model is her grandma, Dianne.

Ashley Garduno is a sophomore. Her family members are Alfredo, Shannon and Kason Garduno, and her grandparents are Dwayne and Claudette.

Ashley's is involved in show choir, jazz band, Chamber choir, all school play, choir/bell choir at church, teaching Sunday School and music for first through sixth graders at her church, keeping stats for girls' basketball, and playing the piano and French horn. Her accomplishments include being on the honor roll (6-10 grade), Student of the Month (6-10 grade), honor roll in 2015, and being nominated for Ambassadors of Music. Band and choir are her favorite subjects.

Jenifer Fjelstad, junior, is the daughter of Clint and Tara Fjelstad, Groton. Nathan is her brother.

Jennifer's activities include show choir, cheerleading, dance team, oral interp, Destination Imagination, Chamber choir, cross country and youth group. Her accomplishments are All-State Choir, state oral interp, honor roll, global DI, and state choir champs. She is interested in dance, singing, music, movies and friendship. Chemistry is her favorite subject and is undecided for her future plans. Her parents are her role models.

Thane Henschel, senior, is the son of Vicki Renner and Thomas Henschel, Britton. Weston Henschel is his brother and Pat Renner is his step-dad.

Thane's activities include show choir, Chamber choir, school plays and oral interp. His accomplishments are receiving a superior for poetry at state oral interp, being selected for All State Choir, being on the A honor roll and receiving a superior at the music contest. He is interested in music, theatre, reading, friends and family. Organic chemistry is his favorite subject and he plans to attend SDSU for Human Biology and then go on to Medical School to be a pediatric psychiatrist. His mother is his role model.

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Help Wanted!

The South Dakota Creativity Association board (SD DI) is currently looking for people interested in filling open Affiliate and Regional Challenge Master positions for the upcoming tournament season. These positions involve studying a current Destination Imagination Challenge and being involved in insuring that consistency in appraising is maintained from tournament to tournament throughout our state. Many of these positions are open this year due to retiring long-time dedicated volunteers. This is a volunteer position, but the board helps defray some travel costs. The tournaments run from the end of February to the end of March, but we'd like these positions filled within the next month. Please pass this on to anyone that you think might be interested in a position. If interested yourself, or if you want more details as to what the position entails, please contact the SD Affiliate Director, Dean Fenenga at di.soda.ad@gmail.com. The board and hundreds of students across our state thank you for your support of South Dakota Destination Imagination.

Case IH Heaters

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Day 9: All Power Restored

Power has been restored to all rural electric cooperative members in South Dakota who were affected by the Christmas Day 2016 winter storm Europa.

The storm caused outages to more than 23,000 members of more than 20 South Dakota electric cooperatives, extending across most of the state of South Dakota.

In northeast South Dakota, ice accumulated on lines and roadways, hampering repair efforts.

"All members should have power!" officials at Lake Region Electric Association in Webster, S.D., wrote in their Facebook post shortly before noon Monday. "The additional crews that helped assist with restoration efforts have been sent home. The storm has stressed our system and there is still a lot of ice on the lines. Outages may occur as the ice starts to fall off. We will start the cleanup process and patrolling the lines this week. There is still a lot of work to do but restoring power to our members was everyone's main objective. We would like to thank everyone that helped Lake Region Electric through this process. Many farmers pushed snow for our crews, which sped up the restoration process and is greatly appreciated. Thank you to everyone for reporting damage. We rely on the many eyes of our members to quickly find the damaged areas. We would also like to thank the members that supplied baked goods to the crews."

Neighboring Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative in Milbank was able to restore power to the last of its members Sunday.

"The 2016 Christmas Day ice and wind storm left about 3,500 Whetstone Valley Electric services without power," wrote Dave Page, manager of the Milbank, S.D.,-based cooperative in a press release Monday. "Most of those services were restored late Thursday night and early Friday morning. Those remaining without power were scattered throughout our service territory; some in hard-to-reach locations. The last of these services was reconnected Sunday morning."

Page cautions that the remaining ice may cause additional problems.

"Heavy ice remains on many miles of line from Strandburg to Agency Village and may cause additional outages or power blinks. We ask our members to notify our office directly if they lose power."

Cooperatives urge people to stay away from downed or low-hanging power lines and report any new damage.

Hundreds of co-op employees at the cooperatives affected by the storm worked since the storm hit on Christmas Day to restore power. Additional workers from 16 South Dakota electric cooperatives assisted with repairs, as did workers from 14 cooperatives in Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin. Private contractors added approximately 100 more workers to the force.

For information on outages at electric cooperatives in the state, go to <https://outages.sdrea.coop/outages/maps>

South Dakota's 28 distribution cooperatives provide electricity in each of the state's 66 counties and serve more than 120,000 South Dakota homes, farms/ranches and businesses. South Dakota's electric cooperatives maintain more than 68,000 miles of distribution and transmission line and employ more than 960 people.

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Today in Weather History

January 3, 1997: A powerful area of low pressure and deep Arctic high pressure brought almost all winter elements to central and northeast South Dakota as well as west central Minnesota from the afternoon of the 3rd to the morning of the 5th. The storm began with widespread freezing rain, especially over northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota, where significant accumulations of ice occurred on roads, trees, and power lines. Late in the evening of the 3rd, the freezing rain changed to sleet and then snow, with substantial snowfall accumulations of 6 to as much as 27 inches by late on the 4th. As the deep Arctic high pressure pushed in through the morning and afternoon of the 4th, northwest winds increased to 25 to 45 mph gusting to 55 mph creating widespread blizzard conditions, drifts up to 20 feet, and wind chills from 40 to 70 below. The massive accumulation of ice and snow across parts of central and mainly across northeast South Dakota resulted in the roof collapse of over 150, mostly rural, buildings. The roofs collapsed onto farm machinery and livestock with a lot of the machinery damaged and a lot of livestock injured or killed. The collapse of so many buildings from snow and ice was believed to be the first in this area. On most other buildings, the snow had to be shoveled or blown off. One man was killed in west central Minnesota as he was trying to shovel snow off the roof of a building. One roof collapse near Lake Poinsett, seven west of Estelline, killed four horses, damaged a boat, and flattened a car. The huge snow drifts buried a few homes during the storm. Many power outages also occurred across parts of central and northeast South Dakota as power lines and poles were downed from the heavy ice accumulation. Some people were without power for several days in the extreme cold conditions. The cities of Miranda, Rockham, Zell, Garden City, Bryant, Vienna, Glenham, Hazel as well as other cities were without power for many hours. Some of the communities were out of power for up to 2 days.

In Aberdeen, heavy snow blocking a furnace exhaust vent sent three family members to the hospital for carbon monoxide poisoning. Also, in Aberdeen, the snowmobile club, the drift busters, were called upon for the first time in several years to deliver medicine, take patients to the hospital, and carry essential workers to work and home. Emergencies were difficult to respond to, taking many hours to short distances. Throughout central and northeast South Dakota, many businesses and grocery stores were closed. Interstates 29 and 90 were both closed for a few days along with most state highways. The rest of the roads were either blocked by huge drifts or had one-lane traffic. Snow plows were called off the roads until conditions improved and when they did start to clear the roads, they worked 12 to 18 hour days. Many vehicles went into the ditch, with mainly minor injuries. Some people had to be rescued. Travelers and truckers were stranded for several days until the roads opened. When Interstate-29 re-opened, there was a logjam of vehicles for 3 miles. One Watertown policeman said he has never seen a log jam as bad as this in 28 years. Area airports were closed or flights were canceled or delayed. The mail was delayed for several days, most activities were canceled or postponed, and many schools closed on the 6th. The heavy snowfall from this storm brought the widespread snowpack up to 2 to 5 feet. For the winter season so far, the area had record snowfall and record cold. Some of the snowfall amounts include, 6 inches at McLaughlin, 8 inches 22 SSW Keldron and 4 NW Onida, 9 inches at Pollock, Timber Lake, Highmore, Mobridge, and Kennebec, 10 inches at Castlewood, Clear Lake, Miller, Fort Thompson, and Clark. Snowfall amounts of 1 to over 2 feet include, 12 inches at Eureka, and Redfield, 13 inches at Selby and Aberdeen, 14 inches at Pierre and Roscoe, 15 inches at Ortonville MN, 16 inches at Mellette and Browns Valley, MN 18 inches at Faulkton and 1 ENE Stephan, 20 inches at Webster, 22 inches at Britton, 24 inches at Sisseton, 26 inches 10 NW Britton, and 27 inches at Wheaton.

1883: A remarkably brilliant meteor display occurred on the night of January 3rd. The phenomenon was observed at stations in Wisconsin, Michigan, Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. This meteor was described as having resembled a large, bright ball of fire.

1886: A severe ice storm struck portions of northeastern Iowa when heavy accumulations of freezing rain brought down trees and branches across the area. An observer near Garnavillo in Clayton County wrote that "the rain...mostly froze as it fell, and coated twigs of trees with ice an inch thick, and many trees were seriously broken. Our telephone wires were broken in many places. Large old trees and large limbs broken. In the woods many trees bent their tops so the ground, and the roads were impassible until the tree tops were cut off." In Fayette County, it was reported that "ice formed on the trees so thick that many limbs, from four to eight inches through, were broken and the tops of the trees, thirty feet high, rested on the ground in many instances blockading the roads." An observer at Waukon noted that "ice formed on the trees to such an extent that in very many cases our shade trees were ruined. All the afternoon and night it was a continual crash."

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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
Patchy Blowing Snow and Blustery	Partly Cloudy	Cold	Mostly Cloudy	Cold	Mostly Cloudy	Cold
High: 5 °F	Low: -17 °F	High: 0 °F	Low: -16 °F	High: 1 °F	Low: -9 °F	High: 5 °F



Bitter Cold Has Arrived!

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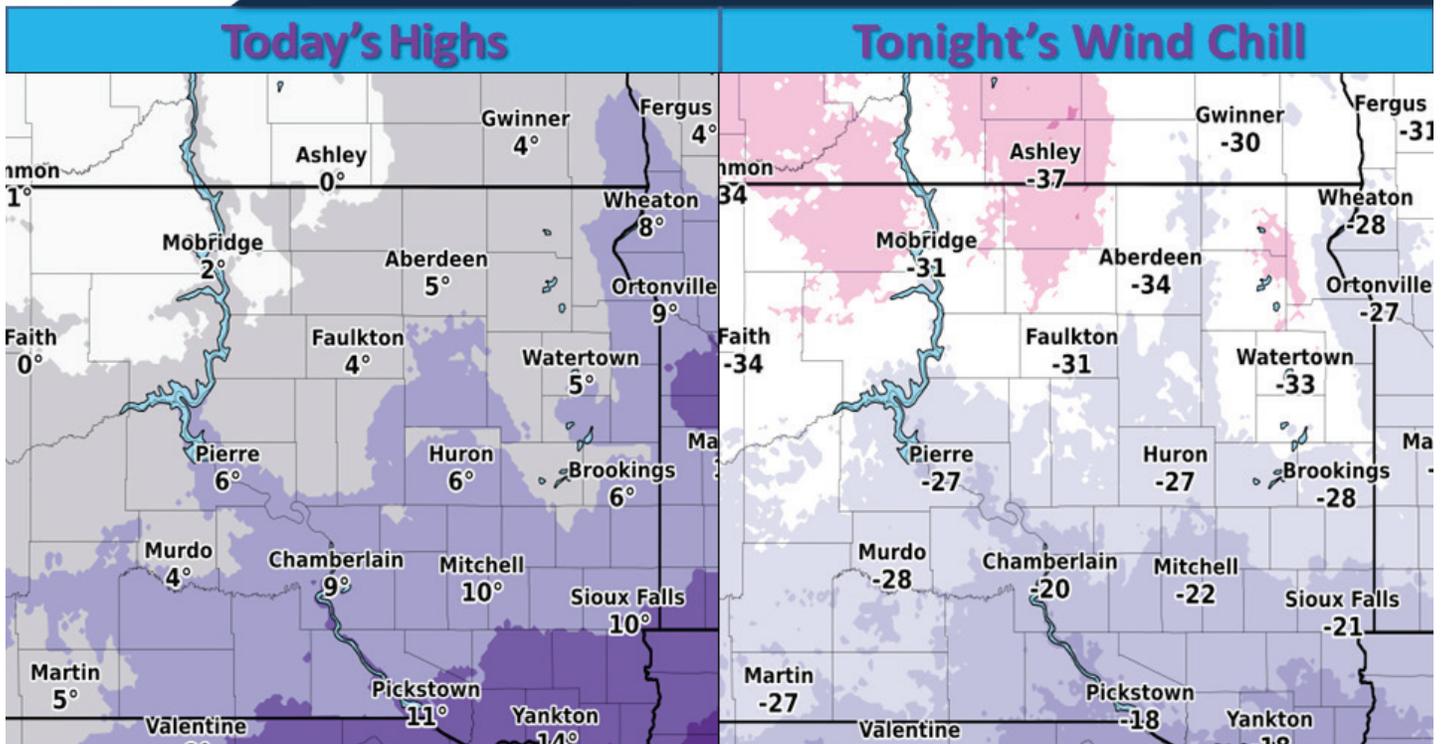
weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen



Published on: 01/03/2017 at 5:32AM

Arctic air has moved into the region, ushered in by brisk northwest winds. Highs today will only be in the single digits above zero, with wind chill values below zero due to the winds. Overnight, wind chills will become dangerously cold as readings drop to 25 below zero to 40 below zero for most areas. The arctic air mass looks to stick around for the entire week.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 26.3 F at 2:29 PM

Low Outside Temp: 9.1 F at 11:59 PM

High Gust: 16.0 Mph at 12:32 AM

Rain: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 51° in 1962

Record Low: -34° in 1912

Average High: 22°F

Average Low: 2°F

Average Precip in Jan.: 0.06

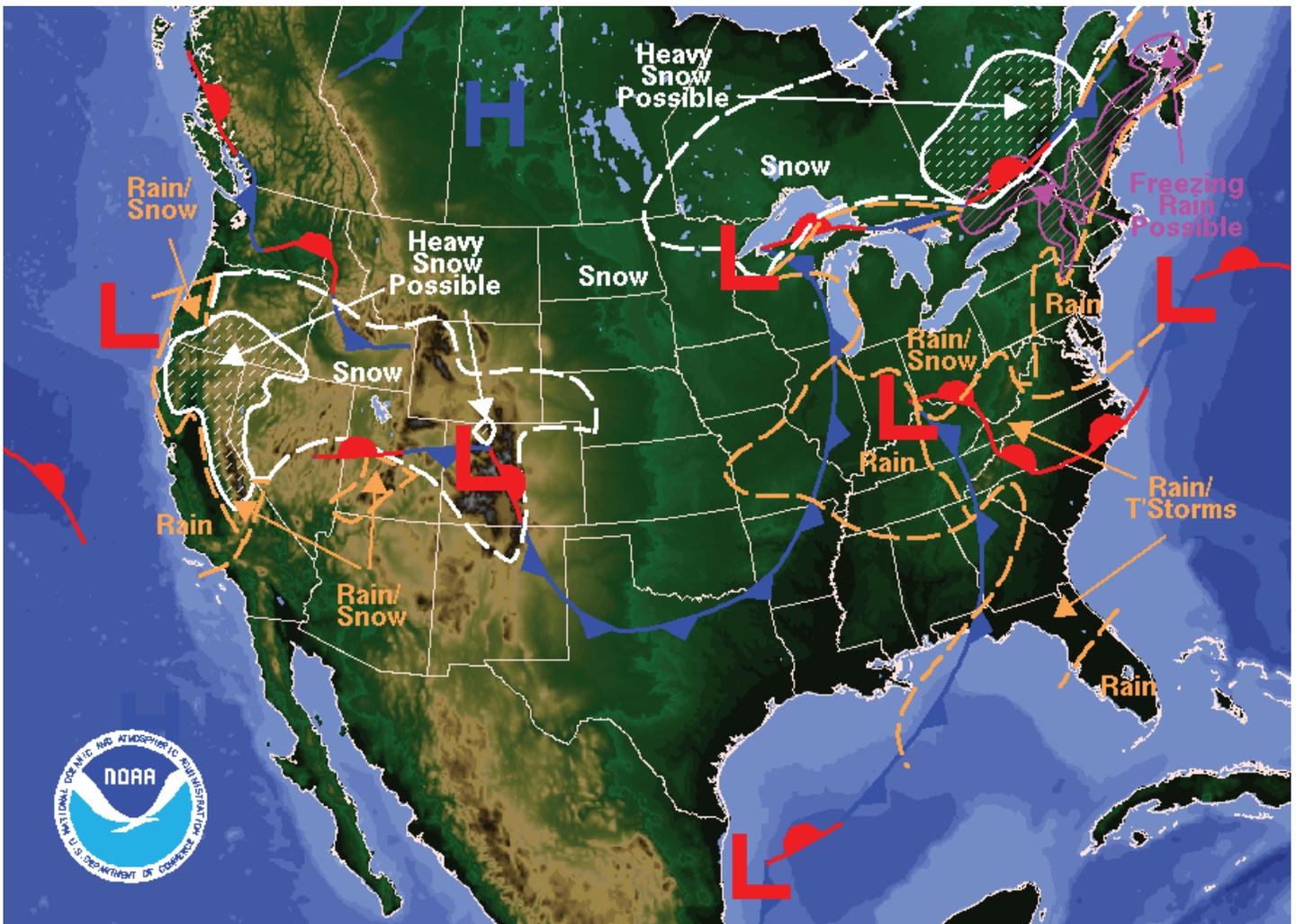
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.06

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:03 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:13 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Tue, Jan 03, 2017, issued 4:56 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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NO LIMITS

Shortly after birth he became physically ill. Not long after that he developed some early childhood mental problems. He entered school two years late and was asked to leave three months after enrolling. The authorities felt he was "addled."

Discouraged but not defeated his mother began to teach him at home. But he learned so fast that she finally gave up. When he was nine years old, she purchased a chemistry book and encouraged him to read it. He was fascinated with its ideas, purchased some chemicals and began mixing them together to see what might happen. Unfortunately, one of his experiments started a fire and he burned down his father's barn.

Though deaf and considered by most to be "backward" he became one of the world's greatest inventors and was credited with 1,093 patents. Among his inventions are the motion picture camera, the phonograph, the long-lasting electric light bulb and what we now call industrial research parks. Thomas Edison did not allow any handicap or any person to stop him from doing what he was called to do. Because he persevered in spite of great obstacles, he was able to accomplish much.

We too can accomplish great and mighty things for God. Whatever He calls us to do we can do because His Word assures us that we can do "all things through Him."

Prayer: Father, we look to You for insight, inspiration and encouragement to do what You have called us to do. May we use our time, talents and treasures wisely. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: Philippians 4:13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

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News from the Associated Press

Midwest economic survey suggests big improvement in December

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Soaring numbers in a monthly survey of business supply managers suggest economic conditions are improving in nine Midwest and Plains states.

The Mid-America Business Conditions Index report released Tuesday says the overall economic index for the region jumped to 53.1 in December from 46.5 in November. The October figure was 43.8.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss oversees the survey, and he says the December and November increases point to an improving regional manufacturing economy.

The survey results are compiled into a collection of indexes ranging from zero to 100. Survey organizers say any score above 50 suggests growth in that factor. A score below that suggests decline.

The survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Monday's Scores By The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Hot Springs 63, Oelrichs 37

Lower Brule 82, Iroquois 35

Vermillion 84, Garretson 56

White River 48, Kadoka Area 22

POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

Eureka/Bowdle vs. Strasburg-Zeeland, N.D., ppd.

Mobridge-Pollock vs. Aberdeen Roncalli, ppd. to Feb 24.

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Andes Central/Dakota Christian 45, Corsica/Stickney 43

Harrisburg 48, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 39

Lower Brule 63, Iroquois 20

Miller 51, Kimball/White Lake 46

Oelrichs 50, Hot Springs 35

Parker 65, Bon Homme 33

POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

Eureka/Bowdle vs. Strasburg-Zeeland, N.D., ppd.

Hamlin vs. Deuel, ppd. to Jan 16.

Power restored to all rural electric co-op members in SD

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Officials say power has been restored to all rural electric cooperative members in South Dakota who were hit by a Christmas weekend winter storm.

The ice and wind storm caused outages to more than 23,000 members of more than 20 South Dakota electric cooperatives. The outages extended across most of the state of South Dakota.

In northeast South Dakota, ice accumulated on lines and roadways, hampering repair efforts.

Officials at Lake Region Electric Association in Webster wrote in their Facebook post shortly before noon Monday that all members should have power.

Lake Region says the additional crews that helped restore power have been sent home. But the co-op notes that outages still may occur as ice starts to fall off power lines.

3 released in Dakota Access pipeline stadium protest

By DAVE CAMPBELL, AP Pro Football Writer

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Three people who were arrested after Dakota Access pipeline protesters rappelled from the roof of the Minnesota Vikings' stadium to unfurl a banner were released from jail Monday with charges pending.

The Vikings' season finale against the Chicago Bears was not interrupted by the protest Sunday, but eight rows of fans seated below the banner at U.S. Bank Stadium were cleared as a precaution.

The banner urged Minneapolis-based U.S. Bank to divest from the four-state, \$3.8 billion pipeline. Opponents contend the pipeline could affect drinking water and Native American artifacts. Texas-based developer Energy Transfer Partners says the pipeline will be safe.

Minneapolis police spokesman Officer Corey Schmidt said a 32-year-old man and 26-year-old woman were arrested Sunday for allegedly sneaking up on a truss connected to the roof and rappelling down to unfurl the huge banner. Schmidt declined to discuss the alleged role of a third person who was arrested, a 27-year-old woman, citing the ongoing investigation.

Schmidt said a complaint with formal charges is expected to be filed Tuesday.

The Hennepin County Jail roster shows all three suspects were released from custody Monday. The two climbers — a man and a woman — plan to make a brief statement and answer questions outside of the downtown Minneapolis stadium on Tuesday, a spokeswoman for the protest group said in a news release.

One possible charge the trio could face is burglary. Minnesota's burglary law includes entering a building without consent and with the intent to commit a crime. Schmidt said the manner in which the suspects got inside the stadium was part of the ongoing probe.

The protesters rappelled into place during the second quarter, and hung in a seated position about 100 feet above the seats that were evacuated for safety. The pair watched the rest of the game, occasionally shifting positions or waving at spectators. One wore a purple Brett Favre Vikings jersey.

U.S. Bank Stadium operator SMG said in a statement that they apparently climbed over a guard rail to access the ridge truss. Police spoke with them from a catwalk in attempt to get them to stop, and by the fourth quarter about a half-dozen police and firefighters in rappelling gear were on the truss waiting to remove the pair.

The protesters willingly climbed up their ropes when the game ended, as fans booed them from below.

Vikings spokesman Lester Bagley said the team's only concern was for the "safety of our fans and guests."

Protesters say U.S. Bank has extended a large credit line to Energy Transfer Partners. U.S. Bank spokesman Dana Ripley declined comment.

The pipeline would carry oil from western North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa to a shipping point in Illinois. Protesters camped in North Dakota for months to try to stop completion of the project.

Associated Press reporters Blake Nicholson in Bismarck, North Dakota, and Jeff Baenen in Minneapolis contributed to this report.

American University moving statue that sparked criticism

WASHINGTON (AP) — American University is removing a statue of a man convicted of killing two FBI agents that has sparked criticism since it was installed.

Local media report the statue of Leonard Peltier was erected last month by clemency activists who say prosecutors in his trial coerced witnesses and withheld evidence. Peltier was convicted in the 1975

killings of Jack Coler and Ron Williams on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

According to WTOP-TV (<http://bit.ly/2hIrNSD>), the piece was criticized as an insult to law enforcement. The president of the FBI Agents Association asked for its removal.

American said a statement Sunday that statue's placement improperly suggested that the university was advocating for clemency for Peltier.

The university said it would remove the statue and said it has offered to help find another organization willing to exhibit it.

Information from: WTOP-FM, <http://www.wtop.com>

Man fatally injured in Knox County crash, authorities say

NIOBRARA, Neb. (AP) — Authorities say a Crofton man has been fatally injured in a Knox County crash.

The Norfolk Daily News reports that (<http://bit.ly/2iHmaWu>) the accident occurred early Monday morning on Nebraska Highway 12. The Nebraska State Patrol says 55-year-old Kevin Jones was headed east when he lost control of his vehicle. It rolled down an embankment and landed on its top.

The patrol says Jones was pronounced dead on arrival at a hospital in Yankton, South Dakota.

Information from: Norfolk Daily News, <http://www.norfolkdailynews.com>

Roof found competent for sentencing, gets extra prep day

By MEG KINNARD, Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — After a judge ruled Monday that Dylann Roof is competent to represent himself, the same jury that last month unanimously found him guilty in the slayings of nine black parishioners at a South Carolina church will return to court to begin contemplating his punishment.

With the 22-year-old representing himself, the process is sure to be unconventional. But even if Roof is sentenced to death, it's highly unlikely he'd be executed anytime soon.

While prosecutors plan to call up to 38 people related to the nine people killed and three who survived the June 2015 slaughter during Bible study at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, Roof said last week he plans on calling no witnesses and presenting no evidence.

Roof was found guilty last month on 33 federal charges, including hate crimes and obstruction of the practice of religion. A jury took less than three hours to return its verdict, and a judge dismissed the jury for a break over the holidays. That same jury returns to court Wednesday.

Typically in what's known as the sentencing phase, defense attorneys call relatives and other witnesses to testify about their client's unsteady state of mind before and during the crimes. Given that background, the defense hopes, a jury might be more likely to spare the defendant's life and opt against the death penalty.

But Roof, who is acting as his own attorney, has said he plans to do no such thing.

In his journal, which was read in court during his trial, Roof said he doesn't believe in psychology, which he called "a Jewish invention" that "does nothing but invent diseases and tell people they have problems when they don't."

Roof also seems determined to try to keep evidence embarrassing to him or his family out. Not only did he take over his own defense, but he asked the judge at a hearing last week if he could file a motion limiting what prosecutors can introduce.

Roof also was adamant that a transcript of a hearing where he was found mentally competent not be

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released to the public.

"I know this is not a legal argument, but the unsealing of the competency hearing defeats the purpose of me representing myself," Roof said at last week's hearing.

Neither Roof, nor U.S. District Judge Richard Gergel nor prosecutors have given specifics on the evidence Roof is objecting to.

On Thursday, Gergel ordered another competency evaluation of Roof "in an abundance of caution," after his standby counsel filed a sealed motion again questioning Roof's mental ability to proceed.

On Monday, over the objection of an attorney representing media outlets including The Associated Press, Gergel ordered the competency hearing to be closed to the public. Saying he'd have to sequester jurors if he opened up the proceedings, the judge promised to release a transcript after Roof is sentenced.

"This is an incredibly sensitive moment in this proceeding," Gergel said. "We are putting in the hands of 12 people the life and death of a person."

After a daylong hearing, Gergel ultimately ruled Roof is competent to stand trial and also to represent himself at sentencing. He also granted Roof's request for an extra day to prepare for his case.

Roof's lawyers tried repeatedly both to stop him from being his own lawyer and to work mental health-related evidence into the first phase of his trial, saying they feared Roof fired them because he feared the attorneys would present evidence that would embarrass him when trying to save his life.

Prosecutors objected at every turn, and Gergel wouldn't allow any of it into court, ruling mitigation evidence is allowable during sentencing and not before.

Court papers show prosecutors are expected to present evidence showing Roof picked his victims because of their race, killed them to incite more violence, showed no remorse and killed three particularly vulnerable people who were 70 years old or older.

Evidence speaking to Roof's mental state, one expert argues, could make the difference between life and death.

"The Dylann Roof case is a classic example of the type of problem you can have when an obviously mentally ill or emotionally disturbed defendant is permitted to represent himself," said Robert Dunham, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center. "There's a huge difference in the eyes of a jury between someone they perceive as evil or despicable and someone they perceive as being seriously mentally ill. ... If you take mental health out of it, you are putting a thumb on the scale of death."

Both the judge's decision to allow Roof to represent himself and waive the introduction of mental health evidence are sure to be raised in an inevitable appeal, Dunham argued.

Roof also faces nine murder charges in state court, where prosecutors have also said they will seek the death penalty in a trial likely to begin later this year.

Whether he's sentenced to death or not, it's unlikely Roof would be executed anytime soon, in either jurisdiction. The federal government hasn't executed anyone since 2003, and there are years of appeals between a death sentence being levied and carried out.

South Carolina's death chamber hasn't been used since 2011, due at least in part to a lack of availability for the drugs the state uses for lethal injection.

This story has been corrected to show that Roof's trial on state murder charges is expected to begin later this year.

Associated Press writer Jeffrey Collins contributed to this report.

Republicans primed for push to dismantle Obama's policies

By RICHARD LARDNER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Members of the 115th Congress will be sworn in at noon Tuesday, setting off an aggressive campaign by Republicans who control the House and Senate to dismantle eight years of President Barack Obama's Democratic policies.

The first and biggest target is Obama's health care law, which Republicans have long sought to gut and blamed as a primary cause for a lackluster economic recovery. But decades-old programs that millions of Americans rely on every day, such as Social Security and Medicare, also will be in the crosshairs as congressional Republicans seek to shrink both the size of the federal budget and the bureaucracy in Washington.

"We have a lot to do — and a lot to undo," House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., said in a letter to fellow Republicans.

Democrats will try to block the far-reaching conservative agenda by swaying public opinion and using the power they have in the Senate to filibuster legislation. But that strategy has its political limitations. Twenty-three Senate Democrats are up for re-election in 2018, including 10 from states won by President-elect Donald Trump, and they could break ranks and side with the GOP.

"What we will always do is hold the president-elect and his Republican colleagues in Congress accountable," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York said in prepared remarks Tuesday. "We will be a caucus that works to make sure the president-elect keeps his commitment to truly make America great, in its finest sense and tradition."

Obama plans a rare trip to Capitol Hill on Wednesday to meet with congressional Democrats and discuss strategy for saving the health care law. Vice President-elect Mike Pence will meet with Republicans.

The first week of the new Congress will be a preview of the hectic pace planned by Republicans.

The House will vote on Tuesday on a rules package that would gut the independent Office of Congressional Ethics, placing it under the purview of the lawmaker-run House Ethics Committee. Democrats and watchdog groups angrily denounced the notion of Congress' self-policing.

The rules package, which Republicans drafted behind closed doors without public debate Monday, also would give GOP leaders the tools to punish lawmakers if there is a repeat of the Democratic sit-in last summer over gun control.

Votes also are expected on resolutions to denounce the United Nations for condemning the construction of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem. Republicans blasted the Obama administration for refusing to veto the decision. House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., pledged "to reverse the damage done by this administration, and rebuild our alliance with Israel."

James Clapper, the director of national intelligence, is scheduled to testify Thursday before the Senate Armed Services Committee on an intelligence community assessment that Russia interfered in the U.S. election by hacking into Democratic email accounts. Allegations of Russian meddling in the U.S. political process will be examined by individual congressional committees, but Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has rejected a bipartisan call for a special, high-profile select panel to investigate.

Obama last week slapped Russia with sweeping penalties over the hacking allegations, yet Trump has not publicly accepted the conclusion Moscow was behind the election year intrusions. Incoming White House press secretary Sean Spicer said Monday on Fox News Channel's "Fox & Friends" that "there doesn't seem to be conclusive evidence" that the Russians were responsible.

The House is slated to vote Friday to certify Trump's victory in the presidential election over Democrat Hillary Clinton. She is the fifth presidential candidate to win the popular vote and lose the Electoral College. She received nearly 2.9 million more votes than Trump, according to an Associated Press analysis,

giving her the largest popular vote margin of any losing presidential candidate and bringing renewed calls to abolish the Electoral College.

Other must-do items on the GOP's agenda are an overhaul of the U.S. tax code. Conservatives also want to scuttle rules on the environment and undo financial regulations created in the aftermath of the 2008 economic meltdown, arguing they are too onerous for businesses to thrive.

The Senate plans to begin repealing Obama's health care law on Tuesday, with consideration of a procedural measure that will shield the initiative from Democratic filibusters.

Lawmakers will then spend the next few months working on legislation canceling broad swaths of the law. Likely to go are its mandate that people buy health insurance or face IRS fines, and its expansion of Medicaid coverage to more lower-earning Americans. But several elements of the repeal likely wouldn't go into effect for two to four years.

Amid the busy legislative schedule, the Senate will exercise its advice and consent role and consider Trump's picks for his Cabinet.

Follow Richard Lardner on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/rplardner>

Grim selfie video said to show suspect in Turkey killings

By DUSAN STOJANOVIC, Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkish state media aired new footage on Tuesday of a man believed to be the Islamic State gunman who killed 39 people at a nightclub, showing a grim selfie video of the suspect as he circles Istanbul's most famous square.

The camera never leaves the man's unsmiling face as he walks through Taksim square, one of Istanbul's prime tourist spots, during the 44-second video broadcast Tuesday on state-run Anadolu television and other media.

It wasn't immediately clear if it was filmed before or after the New Year's massacre at the Reina nightclub, or how the footage was obtained.

The gunman is still at large. Authorities haven't publicly identified him, and police denied that Kyrgyz passport information circulating in Turkish media belonged to the gunman.

The Islamic State group claimed the attack on Monday, saying a "soldier of the caliphate" had carried out the mass shooting to avenge Turkish military operations against IS in northern Syria.

At least 14 people have been detained in connection with the attack.

Hurriyet newspaper said that a woman identified by Turkish media as the wife of the massacre suspect has told police she didn't know her husband was an IS member.

The woman was detained in the central town of Konya as part of the investigation. Neither she nor her husband has been identified by name. Hurriyet said on its online edition Tuesday that the woman said she learned about the attack on television and told police she didn't know her husband harbored "sympathies toward" IS.

Media reports say the gunman flew to Istanbul from Kyrgyzstan with his wife and children on Nov. 20. From there, they drove to the Turkish capital, Ankara, before arriving in Konya on Nov. 22.

The family rented a studio in Konya, paying three months of rent upfront. The gunman told the real estate agent he had arrived in Konya in search of work, according to the report.

Hurriyet said the gunman returned to Istanbul Dec. 29.

Several media outlets on Monday, citing unnamed security sources, said the man was believed to be from Central Asia and may have been part of the cell that staged a June attack on Istanbul's Ataturk Airport that killed 45 people.

Haber Turk newspaper on Tuesday said the man is thought to be a member of China's Muslim Uighur minority.

The nightclub assailant, armed with a long-barreled weapon, killed a policeman and a civilian in the early hours of 2017 outside the club before opening fire on the estimated 600 people inside. The establishment is frequented by famous locals, including singers, actors and athletes. Most of the dead on Sunday were foreign tourists.

Turkey has been rocked by violence in the past year, much of it blamed on IS. The government survived a failed coup over the summer and is also fighting against Kurdish insurgents. Parliament votes Tuesday on whether to extend the state of emergency declared after the coup attempt.

The country launched an offensive to northern Syria in August in hopes of clearing a strategic border area of IS militants and stemming the gains of Kurdish fighters. Turkish jets regularly bomb IS targets in the Syrian town of al-Bab in support of Syrian opposition forces try to re-capture it from the extremists.

Associated Press writer Suzan Fraser contributed to this report from Ankara.

South bracing for more severe storms, rain

By JEFF AMY, Associated Press

Parts of the South are bracing for more rain Tuesday, a day after severe storms killed four people in Alabama.

The line of severe thunderstorms spawned several possible tornadoes, and the threat continued into early Tuesday for southern Alabama, southwest Georgia and the Florida Panhandle.

Four people were killed Monday evening when a tree fell on their mobile home in Rehobeth, Alabama, said Kris Ware, a spokeswoman for the Dothan Houston County Emergency Management Agency.

Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley said in a statement on social media that the Houston County sheriff had told him about the deaths and he offered "prayers for those impacted."

In Georgia, some of the heaviest rains were hitting early Tuesday.

"There is a slight chance of damaging winds and tornadoes, however the highest probabilities are generally west of Interstate 75," said Sid King, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service outside Atlanta.

Parts of south Georgia could see as much as 3 inches of total rainfall from all the storms produced by the system now moving across southern states, King said.

State emergency officials reported no injuries or deaths in Louisiana and Mississippi, but a trip to Walmart was memorable for some shoppers in Marksville, Louisiana, as severe weather blew out skylights in the store, sending water and glass cascading onto shoppers.

Marksville Fire Chief Jerry Bordelon said a fireworks stand in the Walmart parking lot was tossed 30 or 40 yards and mangled. The storm also knocked over 18-wheel truck trailers and punched holes in the store's roof. The fire department ordered shoppers to leave the store, but some didn't want to leave even as managers closed it.

"Believe it or not, we had some people in there who were still trying to shop," Bordelon said.

Walmart spokeswoman Erica Jones said the Arkansas-based company hopes to reopen the store Tuesday, but wasn't sure that will happen, citing needed repairs to a natural gas line.

Storms in central Mississippi near Mendenhall and Mount Olive were preliminarily identified as tornadoes by the National Weather Service, based in part on radar signatures. Both storms damaged farm buildings and homes. Other possible tornadoes will be surveyed later.

In Louisiana, there was also relatively serious damage in the southwestern parishes of Beauregard and

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Allen, including the town of Reeves. Some wind damage was also reported in Houston and throughout East Texas. Though Arkansas had also been included in warnings, there was only a stray report of hail in Jackson County in the northeast part of the state.

Tens of thousands lost power in Louisiana and Mississippi at the height of the storm, according to utilities.

Freddie Zeigler, a meteorologist in the Weather Service's New Orleans office, said heavy winds were preceding the squall line, possibly contributing to power outages.

It was the second episode of heavy rain within days for some areas. An area stretching from Biloxi, Mississippi, through Alabama and across Macon and Augusta, Georgia, received more than 4 inches of rain Monday, according to radar estimates. Parts of southern Mississippi and southwest Alabama have received more than 8 inches of rain since Saturday. Though rivers along the Gulf Coast were rising rapidly Monday, only minor flooding was predicted.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. 115TH CONGRESS SET TO BE SWORN IN

Republicans who now control the House and Senate are poised to aggressively dismantle eight years of Obama's Democratic policies.

2. TURKISH MEDIA RUN 'SELFIE' VIDEO OF ALLEGED GUNMAN

The suspected assailant is seen filming himself with a cellphone at Istanbul's Taksim square, but it isn't immediately clear if it was taken before or after the New Year's massacre at the Reina nightclub.

3. GOLF CLUB SHOWS PITFALLS OF TRUMP PRESIDENCY

The course in Dubai will open next month, but concerns about security, financial agreements and other matters have yet to be answered by the incoming U.S. president, the AP finds.

4. WHY TRUMP'S TWEET MAY NOT ADD UP

The president-elect vows that North Korea's push to develop a nuclear weapon capable of reaching parts of the U.S. "won't happen," but it may already have.

5. SOUTH BRACING FOR MORE SEVERE STORMS, RAIN

A line of severe thunderstorms spawn several possible tornadoes, and the threat continues for southern Alabama, southwest Georgia and the Florida Panhandle.

6. DYLANN ROOF TO REPRESENT SELF FOR SENTENCING

The same jury that found him guilty in the slayings of nine black parishioners at a South Carolina church will return to court Wednesday to begin contemplating his punishment.

7. HOW TO KEEP THOSE DIET RESOLUTIONS

Weight-loss experts say the key to losing weight is to make small changes in the kitchen, at the grocery store and in restaurants.

8. WHERE IRAQ'S DEATH TOLL STANDS FOR 2016

Violence claims the lives of at least 6,878 civilian Iraqis last year, the U.N. says, as Baghdad struggles to maintain security nationwide and to dislodge Islamic State group militants from areas under their control.

9. REAL-LIFE CLIFFHANGER FOR GEORGE LUCAS

The legendary filmmaker will decide later this month whether to base his museum in San Francisco or Los Angeles.

10. PLAYOFF REMATCHES AREN'T ALWAYS AS GOOD

Alabama and Clemson put together a classic title game last season, and now face the challenge of recreating it for the sequel.

SKorean president refuses to testify in impeachment trial

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean President Park Geun-hye refused to testify Tuesday in the impeachment trial that will decide her future, prompting the prosecutors to question why she has publicly denied the charges of corruption but will not do so before the court.

After Park's refusal, the Constitutional Court delayed the start of oral arguments and asked her to testify on Thursday, when some of her current and former aides are also scheduled to testify. The court cannot force her to appear but can proceed without her if she refuses twice to appear at the hearings.

Lawmaker Kweon Seong Dong, the chief prosecutor in the trial, questioned why Park (pronounced Bahk) cannot defend herself in court when just two days ago she vehemently rejected the accusations of corruption in a hastily arranged meeting with reporters at Seoul's presidential Blue House.

"It's not good etiquette to the justices and also inappropriate for the president, as the defendant of the impeachment trial, to say this and that to the media outside of court," Kweon told reporters.

Lee Joong-hwan, Park's lawyer, said she does not plan to appear Thursday and will probably not testify during the impeachment trial.

The trial in the Constitutional Court must decide within six months of her Dec. 9 impeachment whether Park should permanently step down or should be reinstated to office. If the court formally removes Park from office, a presidential election will be held within 60 days.

Park has been accused of colluding with confidante Choi (pronounced Chwey) Soon-sil to extort money and favors from companies and allowing the friend to manipulate government affairs. Choi, Choi's niece, and several former government and presidential officials have been indicted, and a special prosecution team has been investigating bribery suspicions between Park and business giant Samsung.

The investigators want to bring home Choi's daughter, Yoorah Chung, who was arrested in Denmark on an international warrant, as they look into the suspicions that Samsung sponsored Choi in exchange for government favors.

Cho June-hyuck, Seoul's Foreign Ministry spokesman, said that the ministry is preparing for the extradition of Chung, and that her passport will be invalidated if she doesn't hand it in by next Monday.

Speaking to Korean reporters in Denmark, Chung said she's willing to return to South Korea if she could continue to be with her 19-month-old-son. She also said Samsung took back a horse and car it had provided her.

Her Danish lawyer, Jan Schneider, said Chung denied any wrongdoing and that an appeal of her arrest had been filed.

The country's former health minister was arrested on allegations he forced the National Pension Service to support a merger between two Samsung affiliates last year. The deal shaved the fund's stake in one of the companies by an estimated hundreds of millions of dollars, but allowed Samsung scion Lee Jae-yong to promote a father-to-son succession of leadership and boost corporate wealth at the group.

Lee has apologized for the use of corporate funds to buy a horse for Chung, an equestrian athlete, but denied that Samsung sought favors from Choi or Park's administration. There are also questions as to why Samsung financially supported a winter sports center run by Choi's niece and a sports management firm Choi established in Germany.

Associated Press writer Jan M. Olsen in Copenhagen, Denmark, contributed to this report.

China says some factories have violated anti-smog measures

BEIJING (AP) — China's environmental ministry said Tuesday that an unspecified number of companies had violated measures meant to reduce smog during a period of particularly noxious pollution in the country.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection said that 10 inspection teams found companies resuming production despite a government ban and not complying with emission reduction measures.

The announcement came as 24 cities were under a pollution "red alert," the highest warning level in China's four-tiered system. When authorities issue red alerts, some manufacturing companies are required to cut production and heavily polluting vehicles are banned from the roads.

The official Xinhua News Agency said the ministry had given out punishments after finding that more than 500 construction sites and enterprises, including metallurgy, agricultural chemical and steel plants, and 10,000 vehicles had breached pollution response plans. Xinhua gave no details on the punishments.

Beijing has been on "orange alert" — the second-highest alert level — since Friday. The alert was originally due to end on Sunday, but authorities extended it for three days as the smog persisted.

Residents in the capital said the gray air left them feeling depressed.

"I have a child, but I can only keep him at home and he can't even go out for sunshine, which really worries me," said salesman Zhan Yan.

"The smog has a big negative impact on people's emotions," said another man, Gao Yan, who works for a consulting company. "We really hope we can live with a blue sky and be healthy."

China has long faced some of the worst air pollution in the world, blamed on its reliance of coal for energy and factory production, as well as a surplus of older, less efficient cars on its roads. Inadequate controls on industry and lax enforcement of standards have worsened the pollution problem.

George Lucas museum cliffhanger: LA or San Francisco?

By JOCELYN GECKER, Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — George Lucas is no stranger to epic struggles on the big screen, but he didn't expect one off-camera when it came to his art collection.

For nearly a decade, the filmmaker has tried to build a museum to house an extensive personal collection that includes 40,000 paintings, illustrations and film-related items. But legal entanglements and other complications have thwarted his efforts.

After several false starts, Lucas and his art team say they will decide later this month whether to put the museum in San Francisco or Los Angeles, a strategy that has stirred a California rivalry.

The prize is big, and both cities want it badly.

"This is the largest civic gift in American history," LA Mayor Eric Garcetti told The Associated Press. "I think Los Angeles is the natural home for it" — a notion that San Francisco officials enthusiastically contest.

The Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, as it will be called, promises hundreds of jobs and a high-profile attraction — and it's essentially free.

The "Star Wars" creator is financing the project himself. He plans to spend more than \$1 billion to build the museum, endow it and provide a trove of initial artworks valued at over \$400 million. Together with Chinese architect Ma Yansong, Lucas has proposed a sleek, futuristic design looks like a cross between the Guggenheim and a galactic starfighter.

The museum's bold design and concept make clear that the 72-year-old filmmaker sees it as part of his legacy, and he is increasingly impatient to break ground.

"It's not just an enormous philanthropic gift to a city and to the world, but it is a unique museum in

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the way it is envisioned," said Don Bacigalupi, an art historian and respected museum director Lucas hired as its founding president. "Certainly, we'll be looking forward to the day we can move the art into a museum."

The museum will not, as many assume, be a repository for "Star Wars" memorabilia.

It will, however, show how Lucas spent some of his filmmaking fortune and that his interest in art extends beyond movies.

An avid collector for more than 40 years, Lucas is giving the museum some 10,000 paintings and illustrations that include dozens of Norman Rockwells and works from French impressionist Edgar Degas to American contemporary artist Keith Haring. There are illustrations for classic children's books by Beatrix Potter of "Peter Rabbit" fame and Jean de Brunhoff, who created "Babar."

The museum gets its pick from some 30,000 film-related pieces including storyboards and costumes from "The Wizard of Oz," "Casablanca," and, naturally, "Star Wars."

There's art from comic books, graphic novels and other popular works that Lucas hopes will attract people who don't typically visit museums.

In 2010, Lucas first pitched his project to San Francisco and considered a site in the Presidio, but the trust that oversaw the park ultimately rebuffed him. He then took his project to Chicago, his wife's hometown, but preservationists sued to keep it off the lakefront.

Lengthy delays prompted Lucas to abandon that bid in June and change strategy.

In October, Lucas unveiled similar but competing designs for Los Angeles and San Francisco sites, turning the project into a public competition. It seems to have worked.

Government leaders in both cities have unanimously approved it. And officials are quick to stress that this time there is no apparent opposition, and construction could begin quickly ahead of a projected 2020 finish date.

Later this month, Lucas is convening the museum's board to decide between two distinct locations.

In San Francisco, his project would virtually have an island unto itself.

The city offered Lucas a 4-acre waterfront plot on Treasure Island, a man-made creation in the middle of the bay with cinematic views of the city skyline.

The island was built for the 1939 World's Fair, then used as a World War II naval base. These days it's populated mainly by seagulls, boarded-up barracks, some art studios and old warehouses, but officials hope the museum triggers its transformation. A massive \$6 billion redevelopment project includes apartments, hotels and a ferry terminal.

"It's a risk they would be taking, but it's a bet on the future," said Adam Van De Water, project manager for the museum at San Francisco City Hall. "We think his heart is here in the Bay Area."

Lucas has spent most of his life in the San Francisco area, and Lucasfilm was based in the city before he sold it in 2012 to Disney Co.

"Put yourself in his shoes. You could be on Treasure Island, where you're visible throughout downtown San Francisco," said Van De Water, pausing to take a swipe at Los Angeles. "Or you could be a museum in a park with other museums."

Los Angeles has offered Lucas a 7-acre spot in Exposition Park, a sprawling cultural compound that holds three other museums and the Coliseum, home to the LA Rams. It has its own light rail station and is near the main campus of the University of Southern California, where Lucas went to film school.

"A museum should not be cloistered away from the people," LA Mayor Garcetti said. "We don't live life on islands."

Exposition Park also is near eight public high schools and could help expose young people to Lucas'

collection, Garcetti says.

If Lucas has a favorite, Bacigalupi won't say.

But Bacigalupi calls Treasure Island "sort of magical." Not only does it offer stunning views, but the island would give the museum an iconic location on the water's edge, which he compares to the Sydney Opera House. And, he says, Lucas is deeply devoted to the Bay Area.

Los Angeles is exciting for different reasons, he said. Its proximity to schools and being part of a community of museums "is certainly attractive," he said. And, like San Francisco, Los Angeles is part of Lucas' history.

"These are two spectacular places. Two great cities," Bacigalupi says. "It's a tough decision. But for all the right reasons."

Storms kill 4, damage buildings across Southern states

By JEFF AMY, Associated Press

A powerful storm system that moved across the South on Monday killed four people in Alabama and left a trail of damage over several states, officials said.

The line of severe thunderstorms spawned several possible tornadoes, and the threat continued into early Tuesday for southern Alabama, southwest Georgia and the Florida Panhandle.

Four people were killed Monday evening when a tree fell on their mobile home in Rehobeth, Alabama, said Kris Ware, a spokeswoman for the Dothan Houston County Emergency Management Agency.

The National Weather Service had issued a tornado warning for Houston County in the southern part of the state Monday evening. Local media outlets reported that emergency officials advised residents to stay in their homes and assess damage in the morning.

Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley said in a statement on social media that the Houston County sheriff had told him about the deaths and he offered "prayers for those impacted."

In Georgia, some of the heaviest rains were expected late Monday night and into the overnight hours of early Tuesday morning, forecasters said.

"There is a slight chance of damaging winds and tornadoes, however the highest probabilities are generally west of Interstate 75," said Sid King, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Peachtree City, Georgia, near Atlanta.

Parts of south Georgia could see as much as 3 inches of total rainfall from all the storms produced by the system now moving across southern states, King said.

State emergency officials reported no injuries or deaths in Louisiana and Mississippi, but a trip to Wal-Mart was memorable for some shoppers in Marksville, Louisiana, as severe weather blew out skylights in the store, sending water and glass cascading onto shoppers.

Marksville Fire Chief Jerry Bordelon said a fireworks stand in the Wal-Mart parking lot was tossed 30 or 40 yards and mangled. The storm also knocked over 18-wheel truck trailers and punched holes in the Wal-Mart's roof. The fire department ordered shoppers to leave the store, but some didn't want to leave even as managers closed it.

"Believe it or not, we had some people in there who were still trying to shop," Bordelon said.

Wal-Mart spokeswoman Erica Jones said the Arkansas-based company hopes to reopen the store Tuesday, but isn't sure that will happen, citing needed repairs to a natural gas line.

Storms in central Mississippi near Mendenhall and Mount Olive were preliminarily identified as tornadoes by the National Weather Service, based in part on radar signatures. Both storms damaged farm buildings and homes. Other possible tornadoes will be surveyed later.

In Louisiana, there was also relatively serious damage in the southwestern parishes of Beauregard and Allen, including the town of Reeves. Some wind damage was also reported in Houston and throughout East Texas. Though Arkansas had also been included in warnings, there was only a stray report of hail in Jackson County in the northeast part of the state.

Tens of thousands lost power in Louisiana and Mississippi at the height of the storm, according to utilities.

Freddie Zeigler, a meteorologist in the Weather Service's New Orleans office, said heavy winds were preceding the squall line, possibly contributing to power outages.

It was the second episode of heavy rain within days for some areas. An area stretching from Biloxi, Mississippi, through Alabama and across Macon and Augusta, Georgia, received more than 4 inches of rain Monday, according to radar estimates. Parts of southern Mississippi and southwest Alabama have received more than 8 inches of rain since Saturday. Though rivers along the Gulf Coast were rising rapidly Monday, only minor flooding was predicted.

Associated Press writers Kim Chandler and Jeff Martin contributed to this report.

Follow Jeff Amy at: <http://twitter.com/jeffamy>. Read his work at <https://www.apnews.com/search/JeffAmy>.

House GOP votes to gut independent ethics office

By DONNA CASSATA, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans on Monday voted to eviscerate the Office of Congressional Ethics, the independent body created in 2008 to investigate allegations of misconduct by lawmakers after several bribery and corruption scandals sent members to prison.

The ethics change, which prompted an outcry from Democrats and government watchdog groups, is part of a rules package that the full House will vote on Tuesday. The package also includes a means for Republican leaders to punish lawmakers if there is a repeat of the Democratic sit-in last summer over gun control.

Under the ethics change pushed by Rep. Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., the non-partisan Office of Congressional Ethics would fall under the control of the House Ethics Committee, which is run by lawmakers. It would be known as the Office of Congressional Complaint Review, and the rule change would require that "any matter that may involve a violation of criminal law must be referred to the Committee on Ethics for potential referral to law enforcement agencies after an affirmative vote by the members," according to Goodlatte's office.

Lawmakers would have the final say under the change. House Republicans voted 119-74 for the Goodlatte measure despite arguments from Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., against the change. They failed to sway rank-and-file Republicans, some of whom have felt unfairly targeted by the OCE.

"The amendment builds upon and strengthens the existing Office of Congressional Ethics by maintaining its primary area of focus of accepting and reviewing complaints from the public and referring them, if appropriate, to the Committee on Ethics," Goodlatte said in a statement.

Democrats, led by Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, reacted angrily.

"Republicans claim they want to 'drain the swamp,' but the night before the new Congress gets sworn in, the House GOP has eliminated the only independent ethics oversight of their actions," the California

lawmaker said in a statement. "Evidently, ethics are the first casualty of the new Republican Congress." Chris Carson, president of the League of Women Voters, said Ryan should be ashamed of himself and his leadership team.

"We all know the so-called House Ethics Committee is worthless for anything other than a whitewash — sweeping corruption under the rug. That's why the independent Office of Congressional Ethics has been so important. The OCE works to stop corruption and that's why Speaker Ryan is cutting its authority. Speaker Ryan is giving a green light to congressional corruption."

The OCE was created in March 2008 after the cases of former Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham, R-Calif., who served more than seven years in prison on bribery and other charges; as well as cases of former Rep. Bob Ney, R-Ohio, who was charged in the Jack Abramoff lobbying scandal and pleaded guilty to corruption charges and former Rep. William Jefferson, D-La., convicted on corruption in a separate case.

AP Congressional Correspondent Erica Werner contributed to this report.

The name of the office in this story has been corrected to the Office of Congressional Ethics, rather than the Office of Government Ethics.

IS makes unusual claim of responsibility for Turkey attack

By LORI HINNANT and DUSAN STOJANOVIC, Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — The Islamic State group on Monday made an unusual claim of responsibility for a major terrorist attack in Turkey, saying a "soldier of the caliphate" carried out the mass shooting at an Istanbul nightclub that killed 39 people as they welcomed the new year.

The group said Christian revelers were targeted in response to Turkish military operations against IS in northern Syria, but most of the dead were foreign tourists from Muslim countries.

The claim came after a recent IS propaganda video urged attacks on Turkey, which is home to an air base used in the U.S.-led effort against the group in Syria and Iraq.

Turkish authorities never confirmed the authenticity of the Dec. 22 video that purported to show Turkish soldiers who were burned alive, but access to social media was temporarily restricted in what appeared to be an effort to curb circulation of the footage.

The nightclub assailant, armed with a long-barreled weapon, killed a policeman and a civilian early Sunday outside the Reina club before entering and firing at some of the estimated 600 people inside. The establishment is frequented by famous locals, including singers, actors and athletes.

Authorities obtained the fingerprints and a basic description of the gunman and are close to identifying him, Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus said Monday after a weekly cabinet meeting. He confirmed that eight people have been detained in connection with the attack.

The Islamic State group boasts of having cells in Turkey, regularly issues propaganda in Turkish and is believed to have hundreds of Turks in its ranks. But until now, the main act of aggression it had claimed in Turkey was the March 2016 killing of a Syrian journalist and an attack on riot police in the province of Diyarbakir, which Kurdish militants also claimed.

Other attacks in Turkey have been linked to IS, but without specific claims of responsibility.

For some analysts, the claim signaled a shift in IS strategy in Turkey, a predominantly Muslim nation and NATO member.

"It's a new phase," security analyst Michael Horowitz said. "What we saw before was an undeclared war, and now we're entering an open war."

The IS claim said only that the attacker struck to "let infidel Turkey know that the blood of Muslims

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that is being shed by its airstrikes and artillery shelling will turn into fire on its territories.”

Early Turkish media reports suggested the nightclub gunman was probably from either Uzbekistan or Kyrgyzstan and may have been part of the same cell that staged a June attack on Istanbul Ataturk Airport that killed 45 people.

By attacking as the nation was celebrating the new year, the group indicated that it intends to continue being a “scourge” against Turkey in 2017, Kurtulmus said.

Initially, IS activity in Turkey appeared designed to stoke tensions with the country’s ethnic Kurds and reflected events in Syria. The first dramatic attack came July 2015, when a suicide bomber hit a rally of activists in the border town of Suruc, at a time when Kurdish fighters in Syria were under siege just across the border in Kobane.

The worst IS-linked attack to rock Turkey came just months after, in October 2015, when twin suicide bombings killed 102 people at a peace rally in the capital, Ankara.

In 2016, IS was blamed by analysts and Turkish authorities for a wider range of attacks, including the airport assault and two other deadly bombings against tourists in Istanbul. The group was also suspected of directing an attack by a suicide bomber — possibly as young as 12 — that killed more than 50 people at an outdoor wedding in the city of Gaziantep.

Turkey launched an offensive to northern Syria in August in a bid to clear a strategic border area of IS militants and contain the gains of Kurdish fighters. In October, Turkish-backed Syrian forces took the symbolically important town of Dabiq, which is central to IS propaganda. Turkish jets regularly bomb IS in the then town of Al-Bab, and Ankara wants to play a role in dislodging IS from its bastion in Raqqa.

“Islamic State is sending a strong message to the Turkish government that it will pay in blood for the offensive in northern Syria,” Anthony Skinner, an analyst with the Verisk Maplecroft security firm, wrote in an email to The Associated Press.

Many analysts also see the latest attack on Turkey as a sign of growing desperation within IS.

The group has been threatened in al-Bab, Raqqa and Mosul in Iraq and “needs to reassert itself,” said Horowitz, director at the intelligence analysis firm Prime Source.

The aggression on Turkey, he added, is in line with the group’s practice of equating mass-casualty terrorism attacks with heavy bombings and airstrikes on IS-held territories.

In its claim, IS said the nightclub attack was aimed at Christians celebrating a pagan holiday, suggesting a symbolic choice of target that can be justified to radical Sunni Muslim supporters as punishment of sinners. But in reality, many of the victims hailed from majority-Muslim nations in the Middle East.

Max Abrahms, a Northeastern University political scientist, said IS understands that civilian attacks can be counterproductive in countries where it has abundant support. To him, the change of tact in Turkey reflects the mindset of IS in the wake of losses in Syria and Iraq.

“There’s no question that Islamic State is suffering in an irreversible way,” Abrahms said. So the group wants to commit as many attacks as possible and “is much more likely to claim credit for them in order to signal that it has continued capability to mount operations around the world.”

Also Monday, Anadolu said more than 100 Islamic State targets in Syria have been hit by Turkey and Russia in separate operations. Last week, Turkey and Russia brokered a cease-fire for Syria that excludes the IS and other groups considered to be terrorist organizations.

Hinnant reported from Paris. Associated Press writers Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Bassem Mroue in Beirut and Dominique Soguel in Vannes, France, also contributed to this report.

Under 3 weeks left: Obama in closing stretch of presidency

By JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — His last vacation behind him, President Barack Obama is entering the closing stretch of his presidency, an eleventh-hour push to tie up loose ends and put finishing touches on his legacy before handing the reins to President-elect Donald Trump.

Obama returned to Washington midday Monday from Hawaii with less than three weeks left. His final days will largely be consumed by a bid to protect his endangered health care law, a major farewell speech and the ongoing handover of power to Trump.

In an email to supporters on Monday, Obama said his valedictory speech on Jan. 10 follows a tradition set in 1796 when the first president, George Washington, spoke to the American people for the last time in office. The speech will take place at McCormick Place, a giant convention center in Obama's hometown of Chicago.

"I'm thinking about them as a chance to say thank you for this amazing journey, to celebrate the ways you've changed this country for the better these past eight years, and to offer some thoughts on where we all go from here," Obama said.

Obama's chief speechwriter, Cody Keenan, traveled with Obama to Hawaii and spent much of the trip working on the speech. The Chicago trip will likely be Obama's last outside Washington as president and will include a "family reunion" for Obama's former campaign staffers.

Obama is also planning last-minute commutations and pardons, White House officials said, in line with his second-term effort to cut sentences for inmates given unduly harsh sentences for drug crimes. Though prominent offenders like Edward Snowden and Rod Blagojevich are also asking for leniency, Obama's final acts of clemency are expected to remain focused on drug offenders whose plight Obama tried but failed to address through criminal justice reform.

After taking office eight years ago, Obama and his aides were effusive in their praise for how Obama's predecessor, George W. Bush, helped his team take over the massive federal bureaucracy. Obama has vowed to pass on the favor to Trump. But the transition hasn't been without incident.

The two teams have clashed over the Trump team's requests for information Obama aides fear could be used to eliminate government employees who worked on Obama priorities like climate change and minority rights overseas. Trump's team, meanwhile, has been frustrated by Obama's attempts to box Trump in with parting moves to block ocean drilling, declare new monuments and further empty out the Guantanamo Bay prison.

While on his annual vacation in Oahu, Obama asserted himself forcefully on two foreign policy issues that put him in direct conflict with Trump. Obama directed the U.S. to defy tradition by allowing a U.N. Security Council resolution criticizing Israel on settlements to pass, then slapped Russia with sweeping penalties over U.S. allegations of hacking.

The final days are Obama's last chance to define his presidency before he loses the bully pulpit and cedes his legacy to historians. For Obama, helping Americans understand how his two terms have reshaped American life is even more critical amid concerns that Trump may undo much of what he accomplished, including the health law.

As Trump and Republicans vow to gut the Affordable Care Act, Democrats are working to devise a strategy to protect the law by exploiting GOP divisions about how to replace it. To that end, Obama will travel Wednesday to the Capitol to meet with House and Senate Democrats, likely his last meeting with his party's lawmakers as president.

His administration is also working feverishly to finish up regulations in the pipeline that Obama hopes can be completed in the final days, perhaps increasing the likelihood his policies carry over. But the

closer it gets to Trump's inauguration, the harder those tasks become.

Though Obama remains president until Jan. 20, the White House can't process the departure of all its staffers on a single day. So this week Obama aides will start "offloading," turning in their Blackberries and shutting down their computers for the last time, leaving a smaller staff on hand for the final days.

Obama must also prepare to become a private citizen for the first time in two decades. An office of the former president must be stood up, and Obama's family will be making arrangements to move into a rental home in Northwest Washington where they plan to stay until youngest daughter Sasha finishes high school.

The Obamas have long lamented how the presidency denied them freedom and privacy, with first lady Michelle Obama likening the White House to "a really nice prison." But on their last Hawaii vacation, the first family took time out to visit Breakout Waikiki, where visitors are "trapped" in a room together and must try, as a team, to escape.

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

Cruel bully or modern-day Wyatt Earp? Sheriff's mixed legacy

By JACQUES BILLEAUD, Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — The full-throated bravado that made Sheriff Joe Arpaio a household name in debates over illegal immigration and the treatment of jail inmates was missing as he started his last news conference in a law enforcement career that spanned a half-century.

After being charged with a crime and booted from office by voters, the 84-year-old Arpaio looked tired and dispirited as he defended his investigation of President Barack Obama's birth certificate — a debunked controversy that critics say Arpaio exploited to raise funds from his supporters.

The sheriff mispronounced several words as he attacked the birth record of the president he blames for his political demise. The media-savvy lawman ended the news conference by uncharacteristically declining to mix it up with reporters about the credibility of the five-year Obama investigation by his volunteer posse.

He told his 75 supporters in the room that the investigation wasn't about whether Obama was born in the U.S. and instead focused on a claim that the birth certificate was fraudulent.

"This is tough for me to say — believe me, all of you media know me," Arpaio said. "Sometimes I get diarrhea of the mouth. But I am going to tell you, we are not going to answer any questions. There is more sensitive information that we have regarding this matter, and I am not going into it."

The investigation was another questionable tactic in Arpaio's 24-year tenure as the sheriff of metro Phoenix that ended Sunday and was also marked by traffic patrols and business raids that targeted immigrants; decisions to house jail inmates in tents, dress them in pink underwear and make them work on chain gangs; round up dead-beat parents; and arrest animal abusers.

Arpaio's critics say he was a bully who was driven by a hunger for publicity and who treated powerless people harshly because it was popular with voters.

Attorney Mike Manning, who filed several lawsuits against the sheriff over in-custody deaths, said the lawman will be remembered for bringing a "culture of cruelty" to his jails.

Arpaio stepped over the line when he treated inmates awaiting trial as if they were hardened criminals, even though the Constitution prohibits punishing people before they are convicted of crimes, Manning said.

"He wanted those jails to punish and hurt those detainees," Manning said.

Supporters counter that Arpaio is a standup guy who did what the public wanted and was the only

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local police official to do something about illegal immigration.

Tom Morrissey, a retired chief U.S. marshal who has been a friend of Arpaio for more than two decades, believes history will be kind to the sheriff.

"He will be celebrated and remembered 100 years from now, like Wyatt Earp was," Morrissey said, referring to the Old West sheriff credited with taming Tombstone.

Arpaio took big chances in using jail tents and dressing inmates in pink underwear and was correct in taking on illegal immigration a decade ago when voters demanded action and state lawmakers passed laws to confront the problem, Morrissey said. But in doing so, he said, Arpaio was unfairly portrayed as anti-Latino.

"Believe me, there is a lot of support for him in the legal Latino community, but it just didn't get played that way," Morrissey said.

Lydia Guzman, a Latino civil rights advocate who helped organize volunteers to video-record encounters between officers and motorists during the immigration patrols, said Arpaio turned his back on the Hispanic community by caving in to public pressure to crack down on illegal immigration.

"Joe is a politician and has to get re-elected, so he did what he had to do to get himself elected," Guzman said.

Arpaio, through a spokesman, declined a request to speak about his legacy.

"I built a reputation in this world," Arpaio said in an interview days after his defeat in November. "Everyone knows who the sheriff is. That's one advantage. I've worked hard in this life."

State Sen. John Kavanagh, an Arpaio friend and proponent of tough crackdowns on illegal immigration, said the lawman gained popularity because he created a law-and-order persona that connected with voters.

"He wasn't afraid to speak his mind, even if it was politically incorrect," Kavanagh said. "He was an elected sheriff — he didn't have to worry about a town council firing him. He could be straight up with people, and he was."

That base of devoted supporters and impressive fundraising helped Arpaio get elected to six terms.

Now, he is leaving office after being charged with a crime himself — misdemeanor contempt-of-court for prolonging his immigration patrols against the orders of a federal judge. Arpaio has acknowledged the contempt violation but says it wasn't intentional. He could face up to six months in jail if convicted.

In recent years, Arpaio's reputation for being tough on criminals was undermined by his failure to adequately investigate more than 400 cases alleging sex crimes, including dozens of child molestation reports.

Arpaio did investigate a number of county officials and judges who were at odds with him in political and legal disputes. But the investigations eventually collapsed, and county taxpayers had to pay \$8.7 million in lawsuits filed by people who said they were investigated on trumped-up allegations.

In all, the sheriff's office racked up \$130 million in taxpayer-funded legal costs during the tenure of Arpaio, who was trounced in the November election by Paul Penzone, a little-known retired Phoenix police sergeant.

Follow Jacques Billeaud at twitter.com/jacquesbilleaud. His work can be found at <http://bigstory.ap.org/content/jacques-billeaud>.

Diet Res-Illusions: Tips from the pros on how to lose weight

By **MARILYNN MARCHIONE, AP Chief Medical Writer**

We make `em, we break `em. New Year's diet resolutions fall like needles on Christmas trees as January goes on. Genes can work against us. Metabolism, too. But a food behavior researcher has tested a bunch of little ways to tip the scale toward success.

His advice: Put it on autopilot. Make small changes in the kitchen, at the grocery store and in restaurants to help you make good choices without thinking.

"As much as we all want to believe that we're master and commander of all our food decisions, that's just not true for most of us," said the researcher, Brian Wansink. "We're influenced by the things around us — the size of the plate, the things people are doing ... the lighting."

He heads the Cornell University Food and Brand Lab, has written books on taking control of food choices, and has had government and industry funding.

Some tips are gimmicks, and some may not work as well for you as they did in tests. But they "make a lot of sense" and many are backed by other studies, said one independent expert, Dr. William Yancy, a weight specialist at Duke University's diet and fitness center.

To start: Make goals that are SMART — Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound, Yancy said. Instead of resolving to eat better, plan how to do it, such as having chips once or twice a week instead of every day. Rather than vague vows to get in shape, resolve to walk half an hour every day after dinner.

Other tips from Wansink and research to support them:

IN THE KITCHEN

Redo the pantry to put healthy stuff in front. You're three time more likely to eat the first food you see than the fifth one.

Tidy your kitchen before eating. Women asked to wait in a messy kitchen ate twice as many cookies as women in the same kitchen did when it was organized and quiet.

Redo the fridge. Even though it shortens shelf life, move fruits and vegetables out of crisper drawers and put them at eye level. Keep good foods in clear bags or containers and less healthy things like leftover pizza in aluminum foil. In one study, people who put fruits and vegetables on the top shelf ate nearly three times more of them than they did the week before.

Keep no food out except a fruit bowl. Researchers photographed 210 kitchens to see whether countertop food reflects the weight of women in each home. Those who left breakfast cereal out weighed 20 pounds more than neighbors who didn't; those with soft drinks out weighed 24 to 26 pounds more. Those with a fruit bowl weighed 13 pounds less.

AT THE TABLE

Beware the glassware. Use narrower glasses, pour wine when the glass is on the table rather than in your hand, and use a glass that doesn't match the color of the wine. A study found that people poured 12 percent more wine when using a wide glass, 12 percent more when holding the glass, and 9 percent more when pouring white wine into a clear glass versus a colored or opaque one. Pour any glass only half full — this cuts the average pour by 18 percent.

Use smaller plates and pay attention to color. Big plates make portions look small. In one study, people given larger bowls took 16 percent more cereal than those given smaller bowls, yet thought they ate less. People also take more food if it matches the color of their plate. But they eat less when the tablecloth or placemat matches the plate; it makes the food stand out more.

Keep the TV off and eat at a table. A study of dinner habits of 190 parents and 148 children found

that the higher the parents' body mass index (a ratio of height and weight), the more likely they were to eat with the TV on. Eating at a table was linked to lower BMI.

Try small portions of "bad" foods. Eat a bite or two, then distract yourself for 15 minutes to see if you feel satisfied. A study gave people different portions of chocolate, apple pie and potato chips and had them rate hunger and craving before and 15 minutes after eating. Bigger portion folks ate 103 calories more, but didn't feel more satisfied than those given less.

AT THE GROCERY STORE

Divide your shopping cart in half. Use a partition, purse or coat for a visual cue to fill at least half of your cart with fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods. In two studies, half of shoppers were given divided carts and told to put healthier items in front. They spent more on produce than those given regular shopping carts.

Be careful when buying in bulk . A study found that people who bought big containers of chips, juice boxes, cookies, crackers and granola bars ate half of it within the first week — twice as fast as they normally would. Tip: Repackage into single-serve bags or containers, or store it out of reach, such as the basement.

Eat an apple first. People given a sample of an apple at the store increased spending on fruits and vegetables versus those given no sample or a cookie. A healthy snack may prime people to buy better foods, not the fast, processed foods they gravitate to when shopping hungry.

Circle every island in the produce section. In a study of 1,200 shoppers, every minute spent in the produce section meant \$1.80 more in fruit and vegetable sales.

AT A RESTAURANT

Let the light shine. Researchers checked sales receipts of patrons at four casual chain restaurants. Those in brighter rooms were more likely to order healthier fish, vegetables or white meat rather than fried food or dessert. Diners in dim rooms ordered 39 percent more calories.

Sit near a window. Researchers analyzed 330 diners' receipts after they left. The closer they were to a window, the fewer foods and alcoholic drinks they ordered.

Ask for a to-go box in advance. Half of diners in a study were told before they ordered that the portions were big and that they could have a doggie bag. Those told in advance wound up taking more food home. To-go boxes encourage people to eat about a third less.

Marilynn Marchione can be followed at <http://twitter.com/MMarchioneAP>

Turkmenistan halts gas exports to Iran

ASHGABAT, Turkmenistan (AP) — The energy-rich Central Asian nation of Turkmenistan has suspended shipments of natural gas to Iran, which it says has not paid for deliveries since 2013.

Turkmenistan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement Tuesday that Iran's failure to make payments in a timely fashion hindered Turkmenistan's ability to operate its gas transportation infrastructure. Gas deliveries were halted on Jan. 1.

Turkmenistan has been exporting gas to Iran under an agreement signed two decades ago, but occasionally raises its prices during the winter. In 2006, it suspended shipments and demanded a nine-fold price increase. Iran eventually accepted the higher prices for a short period.

In 2016, Russia stopped buying gas from Turkmenistan, which is now left with China as its sole customer.

'Rogue One' tops box office for third straight weekend

By JAKE COYLE, AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The new year at the box office is starting where 2016 left off: with Disney on top. The "Star Wars" spinoff "Rogue One" led the box office for the third straight week, taking in an estimated \$64.3 million over the four-day New Year's weekend, according to studio estimates Monday.

The success of Gareth Edwards' "Rogue One" has only further cemented a record year for the Walt Disney Co., which ran up \$2.7 billion in domestic ticket sales in 2016 and accounted for more than 25 percent of the market.

"Rogue One," which has now grossed about \$440 million in North America and nearly \$800 million globally, currently slots in as the year's No. 2 movie, following "Finding Dory" (also from Disney). The studio notched four of the five top films and has, in a year marked by franchise struggles, made a routine of churning out well-reviewed, hugely profitable blockbusters.

The weekend pushed the industry to \$11.4 billion in ticket sales in 2016, topping the \$11.1 billion record set in 2015. The record revenue, propelled primarily by the Disney juggernaut, masks undeniable challenges in the business. Attendance was largely flat. Streaming and television continue to grow as competitors. Some glaring failures ("Suicide Squad") and flops ("Independence Day: Resurgence") showed considerable franchise fatigue with audiences. And several studios (Paramount, Sony) endured much leaner years.

But Hollywood's 2017 is starting out with brisk business. In its second week of release, the animated "Sing," from Universal Pictures and Illumination Entertainment, again came in second with \$56.4 million.

The poorly reviewed science-fiction romance "Passengers," starring Jennifer Lawrence and Chris Pratt, came in third with \$20.7 million over the four-day weekend. It's made \$61.4 million thus far, a somewhat disappointing total for a film that cost north of \$100 million to make. Another Disney title, "Moana," came in fourth with \$14.3 million in its sixth weekend.

A pair of Oscar contenders is also packing theaters. Despite playing in more limited release, Damien Chazelle's Los Angeles musical "La La Land" grossed \$12.3 million over the four-day weekend. The lead Golden Globe nominee has grossed \$37 million and yet is playing in only 750 theaters. (Wider releases play in 3,000-plus theaters.) It's the year's top limited release title.

Denzel Washington's acclaimed August Wilson adaptation, "Fences," also took in \$12.7 million over the holiday weekend. Since opening wide on Christmas, the Paramount release has made \$32.4 million, making it one of the more lucrative stage-to-screen adaptations in recent years.

Debating in a handful of theaters was Mike Mills' family drama "20th Century Women," starring Annette Bening, and Jim Jarmusch's poetic "Paterson," with Adam Driver. Each drew strong per-theater averages playing on four screens. They joined a large contingent of films in limited release making awards-qualifying bows before expanding in January. Among them: Martin Scorsese's Christian epic "Silence," the grief-filled fantasy "A Monster Calls," Peter Berg's Boston Marathon drama "Patriot's Day," Ben Affleck's crime thriller "Live By Night," and the 1960s NASA tale "Hidden Figures" (which earned \$1.1 million over the weekend in 25 theaters).

In the coming weeks, those films will try to kick start the box office of 2017. On tap in the new year are new installments from "Guardians of the Galaxy," "The Fast and the Furious," "Alien" and, of course, "Star Wars" -- a new (and yet very familiar) fleet of blockbusters that will hope to drive the industry to even higher revenue records.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Monday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to comScore. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included.

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Final domestic figures will be released Tuesday.

1. "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story," \$64.3 million (\$45.8 million international).
2. "Sing," \$56.4 million (\$24.5 million international).
3. "Passengers," \$20.7 million (\$21.7 million international).
4. "Moana," \$14.3 million (\$21.3 million international).
5. "Why Him?" \$13 million (\$10.1 million international).
6. "Fences," \$12.7 million.
7. "La La Land," \$12.3 million (\$6 million international).
8. "Assassin's Creed," \$10.9 million (\$22 million international).
9. "Manchester by the Sea," \$5.5 million.
10. "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them," \$5.4 million (\$8.8 million international).

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Monday at international theaters (excluding the U.S. and Canada), according to comScore:

1. "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story," \$45.8 million.
2. "Sing," \$24.5 million.
3. "The Great Wall," \$24.4 million.
4. "Assassin's Creed," \$22 million.
5. "Passengers," \$21.7 million.
6. "Moana," \$21.3 million.
7. "Some Like it Hot," \$20.7 million.
8. "Master," \$11.2 million.
9. "See You Tomorrow," \$10.3 million.
10. "Why Him?" \$10.1 million.

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

AP Exclusive: Golf club shows pitfalls of Trump presidency

By JON GAMBRELL, Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The decorative clock bearing the name of America's incoming 45th president has yet to start at the Trump International Golf Club in Dubai, but the developers behind the project already are counting the money they've made.

The 18-hole course is likely to be the first Trump-connected property to open after his Jan. 20 inauguration as president, joining his organization's projects stretching from Bali to Panama.

It also encapsulates the host of worries of possible conflicts of interest circulating around a president who is very different from America's past leaders. While the Oval Office has always been home to the wealthy, Donald Trump represents the first franchise president.

Could foreign governments pressure or please Trump through his international businesses? Should projects bearing his name receive additional security? And how close should his ties remain to business executives operating in areas with far different opinions about human rights and justice?

"There has never been anything remotely like this — not even close," said Robert W. Gordon, a legal historian and ethics expert who teaches at Stanford University. "Trump himself tends to treat his businesses and his public policy as sort of extensions of himself. He seems to be completely unembarrassed about scrambling up and conflating his business enterprise and the actions and policies of the U.S. government."

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The Trump International Golf Club in Dubai — the sheikhdom in the United Arab Emirates home to a futuristic skyline crowned by the world's tallest building — is due to open in February and be managed by Trump Organization employees.

The course sits along a road that begins near the sail-shaped Burj al-Arab luxury hotel and passes by a mall with its own artificial ski slope. The luxury continues onto the par-71 Trump course, designed by American golf architect Gil Hanse, where wrinkled fairways lead to putting greens made smooth with silica sand brushed in between micro-blades of grass.

It is set inside Akoya, a massive housing development of 2,600 villas and 7,000 apartments developed by Dubai-based luxury real estate DAMAC Properties. Another Trump-managed golf course is planned for another even larger DAMAC project under development further down the road.

Billionaire Hussain Sajwani, who founded DAMAC Properties in 2002, met Trump some 10 years ago and the two men hit it off over their real estate experiences, said Niall McLoughlin, a senior vice president for communications and marketing at the firm.

"When we approached them in 2013 about the golf course, he of course knew who DAMAC was," McLoughlin told The Associated Press on a recent trip to the golf course. "They subsequently cemented the family relationship as well. ... A lot of our dealings have been with Eric, a lot of our dealings have been with Ivanka. They have traveled here — and Donald Jr."

Sajwani and his family also attended a New Year's Eve party at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club in Florida, with the incoming president describing them from on stage as "the most beautiful people from Dubai."

Trump received between \$1 million to \$5 million from DAMAC, according to a Federal Election Committee report submitted in May. It's unclear how much the contract will be worth once the golf course opens and starts operating. McLoughlin declined to offer specific figures.

It is the first Trump venture in the Arab world. His first proposed project in Dubai, a 62-story tower with state-backed developer Nakheel, became a victim of the sheikhdom's 2009 financial crisis.

By 2014, Trump knocked a golf ball down the fairway of what would become the golf course at Akoya. Sajwani called Trump a "great man" during the tour, and DAMAC later designed some 100 Trump-branded villas at the property, selling from 5 million dirhams (\$1.3 million) to over 15 million dirhams (\$4 million).

With Trump set to be sworn in as president, security analysts have suggested properties bearing his name could be targets. His campaign pledge calling for a "total and complete shutdown" of Muslims entering the U.S., followed by his proposal to conduct "extreme vetting" of immigrants, also sparked regional anger. The Trump logos on the golf course even came down for a short time.

Still, the United Arab Emirates, a staunch U.S. ally in the war against the Islamic State group and host to some 5,000 American military personnel, remains a peaceful corner of the Middle East.

"Dubai is one of the safest cities in the world," McLoughlin said. "Dubai has proved itself to be safe. We have no extra concerns about this golf course."

Dubai police did not respond to a request for comment about security at the property.

Financial matters raise other questions.

DAMAC, a private company, purchased the property for Akoya from Dubai's government in 2012 for around \$350 million. Dubai's government ultimately answers to the emirate's hereditary ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who also is the UAE's vice president and prime minister.

All services to the property — electricity, water, roads — come at the discretion of the government. The club's bar will need government approvals to serve alcohol, not to mention other regulatory issues.

That could raise concerns about the so-called "emoluments clause" of the U.S. constitution, which bars public officials from accepting gifts or payments from foreign governments and companies con-

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trolled by them without the consent of Congress.

Any negotiations involving the Trump brand at the least could create the appearance of impropriety, legal experts warn.

"He has so many properties that his business interests become an obvious target for both bribes and threats," said Gordon, the Stanford law professor. "The dangers really come in two directions: One is that foreign powers will try to use Trump's interests as a way of bribing him into public policies in a way that are friendly to them or use them put pressure on him."

Trump has said he will step away from managing his business empire while in office, but has offered few details other than to say his executives "will run it with my children."

Erik Jensen, a law professor emeritus at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, said that alone could pose problems.

"Turning over control to the kids just doesn't do it. They clearly are going to be having holiday meals together, talking on the telephone," Jensen said. "There's going to be a lot of contact there."

Even putting assets in a blind trust, like other presidents have, likely wouldn't work since, for example, he would know the trust holds a golf course in Dubai. "You can put it in the trust, but the adjective 'blind' wouldn't apply in that situation," Jensen said.

Also, DAMAC's Sajwani has had dealings with the U.S. government. He credits some of his fortune to contracting work his companies did in supplying U.S. forces during the 1991 Gulf War that expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Over the past decade, his companies have been awarded at least \$1 million in contracting work, according to U.S. government records reviewed by the AP.

McLoughlin did not respond to a query regarding whether DAMAC would continue to seek U.S. government contracts.

DAMAC stock traded after the election at near a yearlong low of 2.02 dirhams (55 cents) a share, in part due to the company announcing an 11.7 percent fall in third-quarter profits as Dubai's housing market has slowed in 2016.

Stock then rebounded, reaching 2.53 dirhams (69 cents) just before New Year's Eve, as the company began handing over properties at Akoya.

Sajwani's business dealings have drawn international scrutiny in the past. After Egypt's 2011 Arab Spring protests, a local court sentenced him to five years in prison and a \$40.5 million fine over a 2006 land deal. Egypt and DAMAC later reached an undisclosed settlement in international arbitration and Sajwani never served prison time.

DAMAC, which competes against largely state-backed developers in Dubai, focuses on flashy projects, like offering homes built around luxury Bugatti sports cars. But when it comes to building the projects, it like other companies relies heavily on subcontractors who largely employ low-paid laborers from Asian countries like India and Pakistan.

There have been no formal complaints by workers alleging the Trump golf course or the larger DAMAC project mistreats laborers.

However, that alone shouldn't be taken as a sign that everything is fine, said James Lynch, who focuses on Gulf labor issues for Amnesty International.

The Emirati government and local businesses remain sensitive about their image in regards to the millions of workers employed in the country, something Lynch knows all too well as he was barred from entering the UAE in 2015 to discuss laborers' rights.

"Under international standards, construction companies in the Gulf are not only responsible for how they treat their direct employees," Lynch said. "They have a responsibility to put in place measures to ensure that their subcontractors do not abuse the rights of people working for them."

The Trump Organization and his transition team did not respond to AP requests for comment. McLough-

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lin of DAMAC did not respond to a request for comment regarding labor issues.

For now, workers manicure the golf course's empty greens. Others put the finishing touches on a clubhouse that will feature a bar, a water-pipe tobacco lounge and restaurants for those paying the course's dues, which start at around \$10,000 a year.

While DAMAC's contract with Trump allows them to use his image in advertising the course, McLoughlin said the company would be "tasteful" in its promotions. However, he said at least some of Trump's children likely would be on hand for the opening of the course.

"It's their baby," McLoughlin said.

Associated Press writer Vivian Salama in West Palm Beach, Florida, contributed to this report.

Follow Jon Gambrell on Twitter at www.twitter.com/jongambrellap . His work can be found at <http://apne.ws/2galNpz> .

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Jan. 3, the third day of 2017. There are 362 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 3, 1967, Jack Ruby, the man who shot and killed Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy, died in a Dallas hospital.

On this date:

In 1521, Martin Luther was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church by Pope Leo X.

In 1777, Gen. George Washington's army routed the British in the Battle of Princeton, New Jersey.

In 1870, groundbreaking took place for the Brooklyn Bridge.

In 1892, J.R.R. Tolkien, author of the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, was born in Bloemfontein (BLOOM'-fahn-tayn), South Africa.

In 1911, the first postal savings banks were opened by the U.S. Post Office. (The banks were abolished in 1966.)

In 1938, the March of Dimes campaign to fight polio was established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who himself had been afflicted with the crippling disease.

In 1946, William Joyce, the pro-Nazi radio propagandist known as "Lord Haw-Haw," was hanged at Wandsworth Prison in London for high treason.

In 1947, congressional proceedings were televised for the first time as viewers in Washington, Philadelphia and New York got to see some of the opening ceremonies of the 80th Congress.

In 1959, Alaska became the 49th state as President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed a proclamation.

In 1977, Apple Computer was incorporated in Cupertino, California, by Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak and Mike Makkula Jr.

In 1980, conservationist Joy Adamson, author of "Born Free," was killed in northern Kenya by a former employee.

In 1997, Bryant Gumbel signed off for the last time as host of NBC's "Today" show.

Ten years ago: Gerald R. Ford was laid to rest on the grounds of his presidential museum in Grand Rapids, Michigan, during a ceremony watched by thousands of onlookers. Four Americans and an Austrian abducted in southern Iraq spoke briefly and appeared uninjured in a video delivered to The Associated Press. (The men, security contractors for the Crescent Security Group based in Kuwait, were

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later killed by their captors.) Former Commerce Secretary C. William Verity Jr., 89, died in Beaufort, South Carolina.

Five years ago: The Iowa Republican Party held its caucuses; although Mitt Romney was originally considered the winner by an extremely narrow eight-vote margin, officials later said that Rick Santorum had in fact beaten Romney by 34 votes; in the Democratic caucuses, President Barack Obama ran unopposed. A gas pipeline in central Syria exploded; the government blamed "terrorists" while the opposition accused officials of playing on fears of religious extremism and terrorism to rally support behind President Bashar Assad.

One year ago: Republican presidential contender Donald Trump brushed off an African militant group's video that showed him calling for Muslims to be banned from coming to the U.S., telling the Sunday news shows he wouldn't be dissuaded from saying what he thought. Saudi Arabia announced it was severing diplomatic relations with Shiite (SHEE'-eyet) powerhouse Iran amid escalating tensions over the Sunni kingdom's execution of a prominent Shiite cleric.

(Stations: Lloyd, single name, is correct)

Today's Birthdays: Actor Dabney Coleman is 85. Journalist-author Betty Rollin is 81. Hockey Hall-of-Famer Bobby Hull is 78. Singer-songwriter-producer Van Dyke Parks is 74. Musician Stephen Stills is 72. Rock musician John Paul Jones (Led Zeppelin) is 71. Actress Victoria Principal is 67. Actor-director Mel Gibson is 61. Actress Shannon Sturges is 49. Actor John Ales is 48. Jazz musician James Carter is 48. Contemporary Christian singer Nichole Nordeman is 45. Musician Thomas Bangalter (Daft Punk) is 42. Actor Jason Marsden is 42. Actress Danica McKellar is 42. Actor Nicholas Gonzalez is 41. Singer Kimberley Locke ("American Idol") is 39. Actress Kate Levering is 38. NFL quarterback Eli Manning is 36. Actress Nicole Beharie is 32. Pop musician Mark Pontius (Foster the People) is 32. Rhythm-and-blues singer Lloyd (single name correct) is 31. Pop-rock musician Nash Overstreet (Hot Chelle (shel) Rae) is 31. Actor Alex D. Linz is 28.

Thought for Today: "If people never did silly things, nothing intelligent would ever get done." — Ludwig Wittgenstein, Austrian philosopher (1889-1951).