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Tuesday, Feb. 28

First Round of Boys' Basketball Regions at Webster

4:30 pm: Roncalli vs. Tiospa Zina

6:00 pm: Groton Area vs. Britton-Hecla

7:30 pm: Webster Area vs. Milbank Area

United Methodist: Bible Study at 10 a.m., Evening Bible Study at 7 p.m.

School Lunch: Cheese sticks, mixed vegetables, fruit, carrots and dip.

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

Senior Menu: Salisbury steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, carrots, frosted brownie, whole wheat bread.

Wednesday, March 1

ASH WEDNESDAY

United Methodist: Kid Zone at 3:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 2

Boys Regional Semifinals at Webster

PARTS COUNTER SALES

Self motivated individual needed to fill our Parts Counter Sales position. Duties include parts sales, display stocking, shipping and receiving. Sponsored training, excellent benefits package and the possibility for advancement. Contact Steve at 605-395-6421 or email resume to s.harry@harrysinc.com.

Harry Implement Inc.

PO Box 841

Ferney, SD

57439



Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **OPEN**

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Harry Implement

"Family Owned & Operated Since 1935!"



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Ferney

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The Dumpling Jokers placed first in the elementary Challenge A, "Show & Tech" in the regional competition held Saturday in Groton. They will compete at the state tournament March 25 in Pierre. Pictured in back, left to right, are Axel Warrington, Winston Clark and Corbin Weismantel; in front, left to right, are Lincoln Krause and Nicholas Groeblinghoff. Their team managers are Joni Groeblinghoff and Kandi Weismantel. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Here are the Dumpling Jokers with their back drops. In back are Axel Warrington, Winston Clark and Corbin Weismantel; in front are Nicholas Groeblinghoff and Lincoln Krause.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



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The Aquarium Solvers placed second in the Elementary Challenge C Vanished! division and will take part in the state meet in Pierre on March 25. Pictured left to right are Hannah Monson, Emma Bahr, Nicolette Nickeson, Abby Jensen, Jeslyn Kosel and Karlie McKane. Their team managers are Tina Kosel and Rachael Bahr. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Pictured left to right are Nicolette Nickeson, Emma Bahr, Karlie McKane, Jeslyn Kosel, Abby Jensen and Hannah Monson. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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The Army Ants took second place in the elementary level Challenge D, "3-Peat." They will compete at the state DI tournament set for March 25 in Pierre. In back are Ben Hoeft and Tristan Nickeson; in front, left to right, are Addison Hoffman, Karsten Flihs, Natalia Warrington and Keira Weismantel. Their team managers are JoAnn Flihs and Tiffany Hoeft. (Photo

by Paul Kosel)



Pictured here doing their improv skit are the Army Ants. Pictured are Addison Hoffman, Karsten Flihs, Natalia Warrington, Keira Weismantel, Tristan Nickeson and Ben Hoeft. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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The Bazang Boys placed first in the middle level, Challenge D, "3-Peat" division and will compete at the state competition March 25 in Pierre. Pictured left to right are Jackson Dinger, Ian Kyar, Ryan Groeblinghoff, Layne Hanson and Carter Barse. Not pictured is Bryson Wambach. Their team manager is Joni Groeblinghoff. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Doing their skit are the Bazang Boys. Pictured left to right are Carter Barse, Layne Hanson, Bryson Wambach, Jackson Dinger, Ian Kyar and Ryan Groeblinghoff. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Groton's Rising Stars team, "Super Stars" performed "Save the Day." They had to use two simple devices to make a complex device. Pictured left to right are Makenna Krause, Wyatt Wambach, Arabella Clark, Aurora Washenburger (on the ground), Troy Nickeson, Novalea Warrington and Korbin McKane. Their team managers are Joann Donley and Laura Arth. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Kristi Erickson, chairman of the Northeast Region DI area, is pictured in back as the Rising Stars teams were recognized. They do not compete, but do perform for their first year in DI.

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Larson on SDSU Indoor All-Time Top 10 List



Landon Larson competed this weekend, in the Summit League Indoor Track and Field Championship Meet, in Brookings SD. He ran in the 200 meter dash, finishing in 6th place with a time of 21.83 and the 4x400 relay with a third place finish. Landon finished his Freshman indoor season, ranked in three events, on the SDSU Indoor All-Time Top Ten List. He is ranked 2nd in the 200m dash with a time of 21.83, .01 from the school record, tied for 5th in the 400m dash with a time of 48.78, and a 2nd place ranking in the 4x400m relay with a time of 3:15:03. South Dakota State University placed third behind Oral Roberts in first and NDSU in second. SDSU beat the old Summit League Championship 4x400 indoor record.



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Deep Thoughts

Notes from the underground by Communications Director Constance Walter

Monday, February 27, 2017

Seeing the unseen

Look around you. Everything you see—people, planets, stars, galaxies—makes up approximately 20 percent of all the matter in the universe. That means a lot of matter is missing. So, where is it? And, more importantly, what is it and how do we know it's there?

"We don't know much about dark matter yet, which is a remarkable thing because it makes up 80-85 percent of the matter in the entire universe," said Mark Hanhardt, support scientist at Sanford Lab. "Although we've never directly detected it, we know it must exist from the way it affects the universe around us."

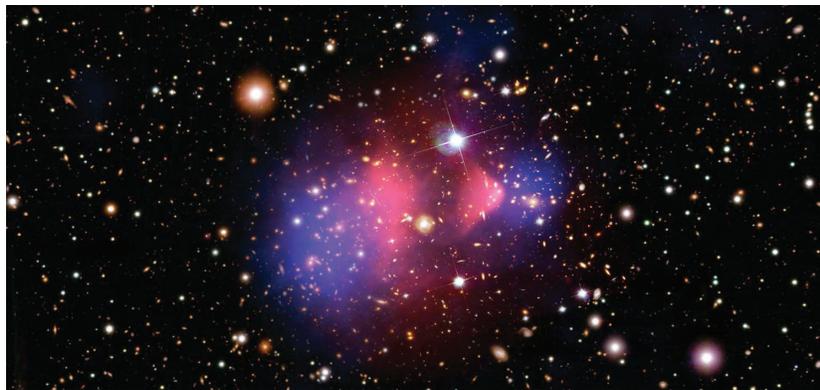
Hanhardt points to several phenomena that provide strong evidence of the existence of dark matter:

The orbital velocities of stars around their galactic centers.

Gravity keeps planets rotating around the sun and the solar system rotating around the galaxy. The speed at which galaxies rotate suggests there is more mass than we observe. Think of dark matter as the glue that allows galaxies to generate the extra mass and gravity required to keep it all together.

Gravitational lensing. This phenomenon occurs as light bends around massive objects such as galaxies, clusters of galaxies and even our own sun. Predicted by Einstein in his Theory of Relativity, it has been observed for more than a hundred years. "It becomes especially interesting when observed where there is nothing visible to bend the light," Hanhardt said. This effect is especially evident in the Bullet Cluster.

The Bullet Cluster. "This is a fantastic example of how the center-of-mass of a cluster of galaxies can decouple from the regular matter, something that can only happen if dark



Credit: X-ray: NASA/CXC/CfA/M.Markevitch et al.; Optical: NASA/STScI; Magellan/U.Arizona/D.Clowe et al.; Lensing Map: NASA/STScI; ESO WFI; Magellan/U.Arizona/D.Clowe et al.

This composite image shows the galaxy cluster 1E 0657-56, also known as the "bullet cluster." This cluster was formed after the collision of two large clusters of galaxies, the most energetic event known in the universe since the Big Bang.

matter exists," Hanhardt said. In the distant past, these subclusters collided and the visible matter (dust and stars) slowed down while the centers of mass passed right through each other and kept going. This decoupling can only happen if there is invisible and intangible matter making up most of the mass. That matter is dark matter.

"It's an observation that very strongly supports the WIMP (weakly interacting massive particle) as a dark matter candidate," said Markus Horn, research scientist at Sanford Lab. Both the Large Underground Xenon (LUX) and LUX-ZEPLIN experiments hope to detect these elusive particles.

Clues from the Cosmic Microwave Background. "The CMB gives us a snapshot of the universe when it was very young, just 380,000 years old," Hanhardt said. It is now 13.8 billion years old. By studying the fluctuations and patterns in the CMB, scientists can better understand matter distribution in the early universe. Some patterns, which scientists

call "ringing," would not appear unless there were a large amount of dark matter pulling the rest of the regular matter together at a very early stage in the life of the universe

Simulations of galaxy formations. Want to know how the universe evolved? Type the laws of gravity into a computer model and tell it to start with the conditions of the early universe. You won't see one that looks like ours unless, of course, you include a "mass field" that simulates dark matter.

"Without dark matter, we could not have gone from a somewhat uniformly distributed universe made of hydrogen and helium to a universe made up of staggeringly massive structures and formations like galaxies, clusters of galaxies, superclusters of clusters and the webs shown in the Sloan Digital Sky Survey," Hanhardt said.

"When taken together, these phenomena lead to the inescapable conclusion that dark matter exists."

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NOTICE OF CANCELLATION GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 06-6 SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION

Notice is hereby given that no School Board Election for Groton Area School District No. 06-6 will be held on April 11, 2017.

The election for which public notice was given has been canceled because the following individuals have filed certificates of nomination in the office of the business official for the positions to be filled:

Groton Area School Board, 3-year term – Grant P. Rix
Groton Area School Board, 3-year term – Steven R. Smith

Because each of the candidates is unopposed, certificates of election will be issued in the same manner as to successful candidates after election at the annual meeting held on July 10, 2017.

Michael J Weber, Business Official
Groton Area School District

Groton Garden Club

The Groton Garden Club met at the home of Marg Overacker with Eunice McColister assisting. Following supper, Bev Sombke opened the meeting with the pledges. Nine members answered roll call with an interesting US President. Bev reported on delivering Valentines to veterans. A thank you was read from the city transit for our Christmas donation. National Garden club week will be June 4-10 Gardeners are encouraged to plant pink flowers for breast cancer, and also plants that are tempting to pollinators such as bees, butterflies, etc. The National Garden club Convention will be held in Richmond, VA, May 18-20. Minnehaha County Master Gardeners Workshop will be held April 1, 2017. SD State Garden Club Convention will be held in Dell Rapids, April 22. Next meeting will be March 20, at 5:30 pm with Bev Sombke with Grace Albrecht assisting.

Groton FCCLA Meeting

In February 2017, Groton FCCLA chapter met for the February meeting in the FACS Room. There was an opening ceremony led by Madison Sippel. Lexi Harder read treasurer's report. New business includes the FCCLA bake sale during the home Roncalli game made a huge profit. Congratulations to every member who got to be at the pizza party. State meeting April 2-4, we need to know who is all going by the of next week. \$30 for lodging for people who have not turned in the polos from Region FCCLA. Unfinished business included FCCLA week is next week and Pennies for Patients will be going on, and the winners will get a pizza party sponsored by Domino's. Meeting was closed by President Madison Sippel.



Groton MathCounts places third

The 2017 Northeastern South Dakota Chapter MathCounts Competition was held at the Student Center on the campus of Northern State University in Aberdeen on Wednesday, February 8. Groton team members, Trey Gengerke, Tanae Lipp, Samantha Pappas, and Isaac Smith, earned the third place trophy and plaque. Mickelson Middle School of Brookings won the team competition and advances to the state competition on March 11 in Pierre, along with the second place team from Holgate Middle School of Aberdeen.

Isaac Smith also received individual recognition by placing among the top ten individuals in the countdown portion of the competition. Besides the team, Alexis Hanten, Seth Johnson, Stella Meier, Kale Pharis, Travis Townsend, and Erin Unzen also participated in the chapter competition.

The top four highest scoring individuals and the coach of the winning team at the state event will represent South Dakota at the national competition in May, 2017.

Team Awards

Front row from left: Mickelson Middle School, 1st Place, Serena An, Samyok Nepal, Ryan Nielson, Carl Steinlicht, Coach Shannon Renkly

Second row from left: Holgate Middle School, 2nd Place, Drew Comstock, Melanie Jacobs, Mason Myers, Haley Weber, Coach Dena Sievers

Third Row from left: Groton School, 3rd Place, Trey Gengerke, Tanae Lipp, Samantha Pappas, Isaac Smith, Coach Darlyne Johnson

The Life of Floyd Beck



Funeral service for Floyd Beck, 86, of Ipswich and formerly of Herreid will be 10:30 am, Friday, March 3, 2017 at First Reformed Church at Herreid. The Rev. Cody Schwichtenberg will officiate.

Burial will be in Artas Cemetery with military graveside rites by Jacob A. Heinrich American Legion Post #170.

Visitation will be Thursday from 5-7 pm at the funeral home in Eureka.

Floyd died February 24, 2017 at Ipswich Care and Rehabilitation Center.

Floyd Beck, son of Edward and Lydia (Schmidt) Beck, was born December 8, 1930 at Artas, SD. He grew up in the Artas area and was confirmed in Artas Reformed Church on June 30, 1946. Floyd graduated from Herreid High School in 1948. On December 14, 1951. He married Gladys Zimmerman at the Artas Baptist Church. Starting on September 24, 1952 Floyd spent two years in the United States Army. After being honorably discharged on September 24, 1954 he started farming two miles south of Artas. In November 1994, he and Gladys moved to Herreid. Floyd continued working on the farm until they moved to Ipswich in July 2012. He entered the Ipswich Care and Rehabilitation Center in April 2013.

Floyd enjoyed all aspect of farming and never referred to it as work. He was on the Artas School Board, Campbell County Bank Board, an elder at Artas Reformed Church and a member of Jacob A. Heinrich American Legion Post #170.

Grateful for having shared Floyd's life are his wife of 65 years, Gladys; children, Cynthia (John) Neifer of Hosmer, SD, Diann (Brad) Morehouse of Andover, SD and Vaughn (Julie) Beck of Ipswich; 12 grandchildren, Matthew Beck, Marcus Beck, Amy Beck, Jeanne Josten, Carmen Anderson, Travis Neifer, Justin Morehouse, Brent Morehouse, Jesse Morehouse, Desiree Foltz, Emily Beck and Philip Beck; 18 great-grandchildren; and two brothers Ruben Beck and Chester Beck.

He was preceded in death by his parents, son, Kenneth (2002), great-granddaughter, Emerald Beck and two sisters Edna Rohrbach and Esther Rohrbach.

High School Speakers Prepare for 2017 State Debate and Individual Events Tournament in Mitchell

South Dakota's top high school speech and debate competitors are busy preparing for the season-concluding SDHSAA Annual State Debate & Individual Events Tournament. The 2017 State Debate & Individual Events Tournament will be held at Mitchell High School on Friday & Saturday March 3-4. Schools, based on their enrollment, are divided into Class "AA" and Class "A" for state tournament competition.

The State Debate & Individual Events Tournament will find students competing for state championships in some of South Dakota's oldest statewide high school competitions. The 2017 State Tournament will crown the 103rd Annual State Champions in Policy Debate. Extemporaneous Speaking events have been held for over 90 years. Original Oratory is marking its 83rd year of State Championship competition. Although having a long history in the realm of political debate, Lincoln-Douglas Debate is one of the more recent high school state championship speech activity events and will crown its 37th group of state champions. The newest speech activity, Public Forum Debate, will mark its 15th year as a State Tournament event.

The 2016 Class "AA" Sweepstakes Team was Watertown High School and the 2016 Class "A" Sweepstakes champion team was Spearfish High School.

No admission is charged for any of the competition and the public is invited to observe any of the competition during the State Debate & Individual Events Tournament. The Public Forum Debate format, which is intended for the "man-on-the-street" audience, will debate the issue of: "The United States should lift its embargo against Cuba". Each Public Forum debate will provide a short audience oriented competition with each debate lasting approximately 35 minutes. Lincoln-Douglas competitors will be debating the issue: "Public colleges and universities in the United States ought not restrict any constitutionally protected speech."

A copy of the State Debate and Individual Events Tournament schedule is available on the SDHSAA website. A link to the results of the Tournament will be posted on the SDHSAA website, after the conclusion of competition on Saturday, March 4. (Go to Fine Arts, Speech, Debate and click on the SDPB logo.)

Today in Weather History

February 28, 2007: Another late February strong low pressure area moving across the central plains spread heavy snow of 6 to 11 inches across northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota. Many school and college classes were cancelled and many events were postponed. Road conditions became very poor with some accidents occurring along with ditched vehicles. The snow continued into the first day of March and ended between in the morning. Snowfall amounts included, 6 inches at Aberdeen, 7 inches at Wilmot and Artichoke Lake, 8 inches at Conde, Watertown, and Milbank, 9 inches at Browns Valley and Wheaton, and 11 inches at Clark. This heavy snow event was followed by more snowfall along with blizzard conditions which developed across the area during the afternoon and evening of March 1st.

1792: Heavy snow collapsed the Ashley River Bridge in Charleston, South Carolina.

1900: A massive storm spread record snows from Kansas to New York State. Snow fell for over 24-hours in Toledo, Ohio. When it was all over, the 19 inches set a single storm record for the city. Topeka, Kansas reported 18.7 inches of snow in 24 hours to set their record for most snow in a 24-hour period. 36 inches of snow at Astoria, Illinois sets new state 24-hour snowfall record. Northfield, Vermont picked up 31 inches of snow. Snowfall totals ranged up to 17.5 inches at Springfield, Illinois and 43 inches at Rochester, New York. 60 inches fell in parts of the Adirondack Mountains of New York State.

1952 - An intense storm brought coastal sections of southeastern Massachusetts to a halt, stranding 3000 motorists on Lower Cape, and leaving ten thousand homes on the Cape without electricity. Winds gusting to 72 mph created mountainous snowdrifts of the 18 inches of snow which buried Nantucket and Hyannis. A barometric pressure reading of 29.02 inches was reported at the center of the storm. (The Weather Channel)

1962: Wilmington, North Carolina, reached a high temperature of 85 degrees. This is the warmest temperature on record during the month of February.

2007: A severe storm, named Xynthia, blows into France, Portugal, and Spain, smashing sea walls, destroying homes, polluting farmland with saltwater and devastating the Atlantic coast's oyster farms.

Winds reach to about 125 mph on the summits of the Pyrenees and up to nearly 100 mph along the Atlantic Coast. Wind speeds of 106 mph are measured atop the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The storm hits hardest in the Vendee and Charente-Maritime regions in southwestern France. The storm is blamed for 52 deaths in France. A Napoleonic sea wall collapsed off the coastal town of La'Aiguillon-sur-Mer. A mobile home park close to the sea wall was particularly hard hit.



livestream

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, BBB Region

6 p.m. at Webster

Groton Area vs. Britton-Hecla

gdilive.com

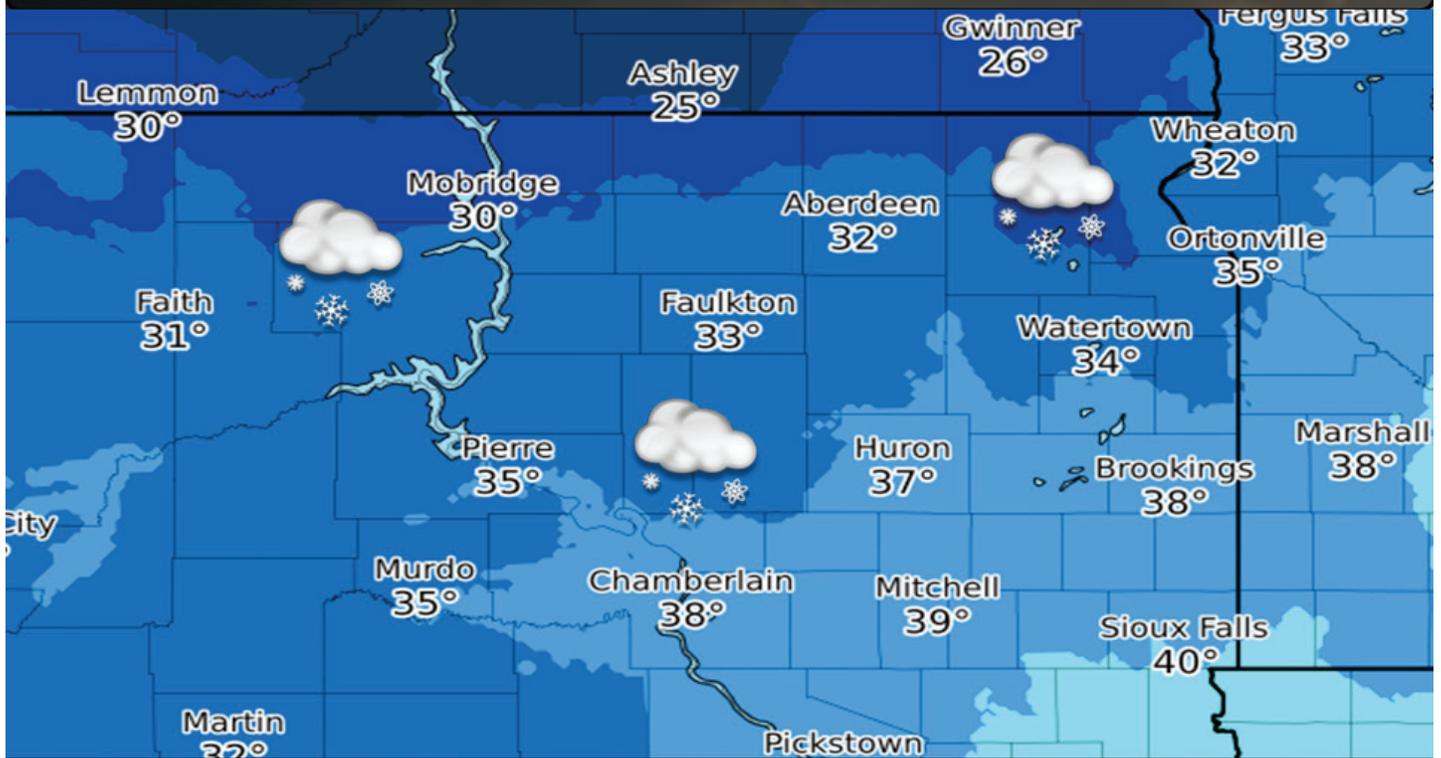
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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						
Chance Snow	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Snow	Slight Chance Snow then Partly Sunny	Chance Snow	Slight Chance Snow then Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 32 °F	Low: 17 °F	High: 32 °F	Low: 18 °F	High: 30 °F	Low: 15 °F	High: 42 °F



Areas of Light Snow Today – Temps in the 30s



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD



weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 2/28/2017 5:39 AM Central

Published on: 02/28/2017 at 5:42AM

An upper level low pressure system moving across the region today will bring areas of light snow, but any accumulations will remain on the light side. Highs will generally range from the low to mid 30s across the area.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 33.8 F at 4:44 PM

Low Outside Temp: 22.5 F at 4:27 AM

High Gust: 25.0 Mph at 1:04 PM

Rain: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 59° in 1934

Record Low: -27 in 1962

Average High: 33°F

Average Low: 13°F

Average Precip in Feb.: 0.55

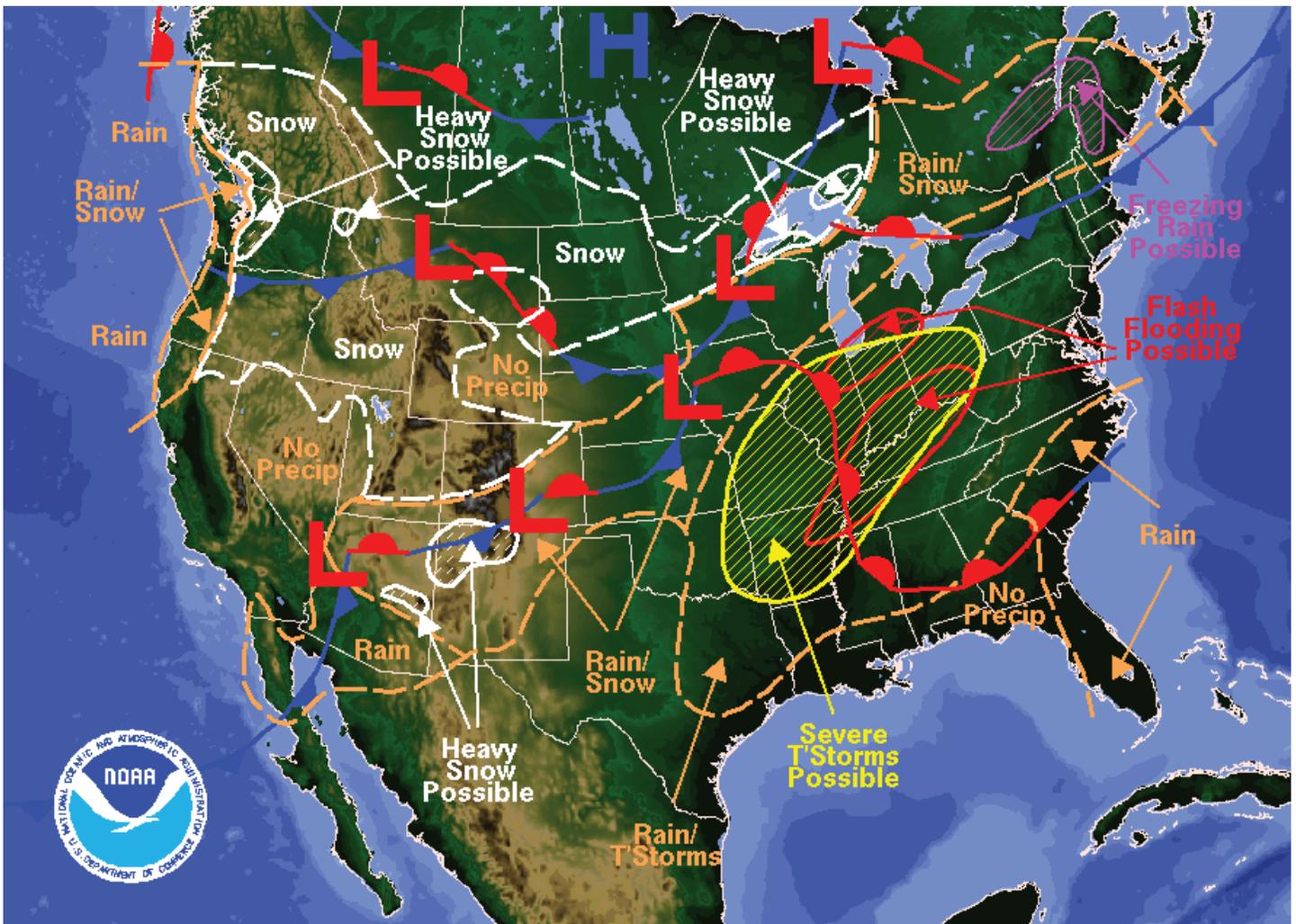
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 1.02

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 6:19 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:11 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Tue, Feb 28, 2017, issued 4:29 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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TO BELIEVE IS TO ACHIEVE

A group of men was preparing to climb Mount Everest. As the final pieces of their plan fell into place, a psychologist asked if he could interview them. They agreed and he met with them at their camp.

He looked at each one very carefully. Then, after a moment of reflection he asked, "Tell me, will you get to the top?"

The first answered, "I certainly hope so." The second responded, "I'll do my best." The third, "I'm going to give it all I've got." And the fourth said, "Yes, I will." And he did – and he was the only one!

Our body can achieve what our hearts believe and our hearts believe what comes from our minds. A lack of faith enlarges our fears and turns them into facts. The shadows that our minds create become so dreadful that we are afraid to face them. Our worries eventually become walls that we cannot climb over or around.

Often when we are asked to do "something" for the Lord our minds create fears that are not based on facts or shadows that have no substance or windows of opportunity that become walls without ends.

Isaiah the Prophet boldly declared, "See, God has come to save me, I will trust in Him and not be afraid! The Lord God is my strength and my song, he has become my salvation!"

If we truly trust God, all things are possible.

Prayer: Lord, in Your grace You bring so many opportunities and challenges into our lives that allow us to honor You. Help us to trust in You and be victorious. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Isaiah 12:2 Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For Yah, the Lord, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation."

News from the Associated Press

Judge to hear arguments on Dakota Access oil pipeline work

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON**, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A federal judge will hear arguments Tuesday about whether to stop the final bit of construction on the disputed Dakota Access pipeline, perhaps just days before it could start moving oil.

U.S. District Judge James Boasberg in Washington, D.C., will consider a request by the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Sioux tribes to order the Army Corps of Engineers to withdraw permission for developer Energy Transfer Partners to lay pipe under Lake Oahe in North Dakota. The stretch under the Missouri River reservoir is the last piece of construction for the \$3.8 billion pipeline that's to move oil through the Dakotas and Iowa to a shipping point in Illinois.

The tribes argue that the mere existence of an oil pipeline under the reservoir that provides water to the neighboring reservations violates their right to practice their religion, which relies on clean water.

"The granting of the easement and resulting construction activity violates the tribe's and its members' constitutional rights, and will result in immediate and irreparable harm to the tribe and its members before this court will be able to rule on the merits of this claim," tribal attorney Nicole Ducheneaux said in court documents.

When they filed the lawsuit last summer, the tribes argued that the pipeline threatens Native American cultural sites and their water supply. Their religion argument is new, however, and both the Corps and Energy Transfer Partners argue that the delay in raising it is a reason for Boasberg to reject the argument.

Company attorney William Scherman also said the tribes' claim is suspect based on other man-made infrastructure under the lake, and that the company respects the tribe's religious beliefs but has no legal duty to make concessions for them.

Corps attorney Erica Zilioli said the government's permission for the company to lay pipe under the lake "does not substantially burden the exercise of the tribe's religious beliefs."

Earlier this month, Boasberg declined the tribes' request to order an immediate halt to the pipeline construction, ruling that as long as oil wasn't flowing through the pipeline, there was no imminent harm to the tribes.

In a court filing Friday, Ducheneaux argued the claim is "about the religious harm arising from the mere siting of this pipeline under the tribe's sacred waters."

Boasberg's decision on the matter won't be the end of the court battle. Both tribes have asked him to overturn the federal permission for the Lake Oahe crossing and to bar the Corps from granting permission in the future. The judge won't rule until at least April.

Hundreds and sometimes thousands of pipeline opponents who sided with tribal opposition to the pipeline camped on federal land near the drill site for months, often clashing with police. There have been about 750 arrests in the region since August. Authorities last week closed the camp in advance of spring flooding season and set up roadblocks to prevent protesters from returning.

Work under Lake Oahe had been held up in the courts until President Donald Trump last month instructed the Corps to advance construction. The Army is involved because its engineering branch manages the river and its system of hydroelectric dams, which is owned by the federal government.

Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners began drilling under the lake Feb. 8. The pipeline could be operating as early as Monday and no later than early April, according to Scherman.

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

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Monday's Scores By The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

District 2B

Northwestern 52, Leola/Frederick 51

District 3B

Faulkton 58, Edmunds Central 25

Ipswich 58, Eureka/Bowdle 51

District 4B

Hitchcock-Tulare 80, Sunshine Bible Academy 53

District 6B

Wessington Springs 60, Iroquois 59, OT

District 7B

Elkton-Lake Benton 46, Dell Rapids St. Mary 36

District 8B

Hanson 46, Ethan 42

Mitchell Christian 70, Howard 56

District 9B

Freeman Academy/Marion 62, Freeman 60

District 10B

Gayville-Volin 72, Centerville 34

District 11B

Andes Central/Dakota Christian 73, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 46

District 12B

Burke/South Central 76, Avon 63

District 13B

Kadoka Area 53, Jones County 52

District 15B

Dupree 72, Wakpala 42

Tiospaye Topa 66, McIntosh 32

District 16B

Newell 70, Takini 64

Region 7A

Pine Ridge 73, Bennett County 46

St. Francis Indian 85, Todd County 56

Winner 52, Red Cloud 48

Region 8A

Custer 51, Hill City 43

Hot Springs 63, Lead-Deadwood 31

Spearfish 63, Belle Fourche 54

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

District 1AA

Semifinal

Sioux Falls O'Gorman 52, Brookings 38

Sioux Falls Roosevelt 66, Watertown 33

District 2AA

Semifinal

Brandon Valley 66, Sioux Falls Lincoln 45

Harrisburg 65, Sioux Falls Washington 56

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District 3AA
Semifinal
Aberdeen Central 48, Mitchell 26
Pierre 69, Huron 51
District 4AA
Semifinal
Rapid City Central 75, Douglas 37
Rapid City Stevens 52, Sturgis Brown 40
Region 4A
Regional Semifinal
Vermillion 57, Dakota Valley 54

Legislature passes bill that would encourage buffer strips

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Legislature has approved a bill that would encourage people to install buffer strips between agricultural land and waterways.

The state House voted Monday to send the measure to Gov. Dennis Daugaard, who proposed the plan. It had passed through the Senate.

Republican Rep. Mary Duvall, a supporter, says buffer strips are important for helping improve water quality throughout South Dakota. Daugaard tweeted after the vote that the bill is a “bipartisan step forward for conservation.”

The bill would offer property tax breaks for land turned into buffer strips of vegetation to help trap fertilizer, pesticide and sediment before they reach water.

The proposal allows for 50- to 120-foot buffers along 575 lakes and roughly 11,000 miles of streams in South Dakota.

Some Black Hills bike races lacking needed permits

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Some popular bike races aren't getting the permits they need this year from the Black Hills National Forest rangers.

Organizers said some of those races may need to be canceled. The Black Hills Back 40 and Victoria Secret race organized by the Black Hills Runners Club are among the competitions in limbo.

When the Forest Service realized some of the events were overlapping with active timber work, the special use permits were denied or organizers were told to change locations, Mystic Ranger District ranger Ruth Esperance told the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2mw1brl>).

Esperance said the denials are mainly due to safety concerns. And since the Forest Service has a contract with timber companies, they couldn't change plans for a race.

“When we have a timber sale in that area, there is no reclamation work that takes place to non-system trails after that operation is done,” Esperance said.

She noted that some permits for races were approved on non-system trails this year.

Last year, tension between mountain bikers and the Forest Service escalated when Esperance sent a letter to leaders of the mountain-biking community, which announced that the Forest Service was stepping up monitoring of unauthorized trail construction and use. The letter also said Forest Service would prosecute anyone caught building, maintaining or improving unauthorized trails in violation of federal regulations.

Mountain bike groups denounced the letter, but tension eased a month later when Black Hills National Forest officials expressed support for the development of an evaluation process for proposals to make new trails through the forest.

However, that relationship has since soured once more with the denial of the racing permits.

“We felt like we were moving in a good direction with them, and then we were blindsided by some of the moves they made,” said Kent Jacobs, Black Hills Mountain Bike Association trails director.

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

Like flying drones? South Dakota lawmakers debate new rules

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Drones couldn't soar over jails without permission and their owners would be on the hook for damage caused by a crash under new rules South Dakota lawmakers are set to consider on Tuesday.

The House Transportation Committee is set to take up the bill, which has been passed through the Senate. It would give South Dakota a better outline of what people can and can't do with drones, said Republican Sen. Arthur Rusch, the bill's main sponsor.

"I think we're going to see a lot more drones — not less," Rusch said.

There were more than 2,000 hobbyist drone owners registered in South Dakota as of this month, according to the Federal Aviation Administration, which has its own rules for drone users.

The South Dakota bill would block drones from alighting on other people's land without their consent, except during forced landings, and would make the drone's owner liable for damages resulting from a crash. It would also make it a misdemeanor to use drones to photograph or observe people in private places.

It would make it a misdemeanor to fly them without permission over correctional facilities such as jails and prisons and military facilities. Under the plan, it would be a felony to use a drone to deliver drugs or contraband to a correctional facility and to have a drone capable of firing a bullet or being used as a weapon.

The bill includes some exceptions including for commercial users, the military and law enforcement.

Department of Corrections Secretary Denny Kaemingk said during a committee hearing that drones flying over correctional facilities are a safety threat. Officials don't know of any successful contraband drops using drones in South Dakota, but they have intelligence that there have been plans to do so, he said.

"This is concerning not only for the introduction of contraband like drugs, but also introduction of weapons that could be used against our staff or other inmates," Kaemingk said.

Tim Kennedy, who works at Who's Hobby House, a Rapid City hobby store, said that most people he talks to think that state regulation would be unnecessary. The benefits would be minimal and people could be discouraged from taking up the hobby, said Kennedy, who typically goes hiking with his drone.

Jerry Schmitz uses a drone for tasks ranging from monitoring soil conditions to checking for crop damage on his Vermillion farm, which has corn and soybeans. The 60-year-old said he supports regulations that protect the privacy of individuals and businesses, but said he wasn't familiar with the details in Rusch's bill.

Schmitz' drone offers a "totally new view" that has made his farm more efficient, he said.

"It's like a whole new world, kind of like the first photos from space that folks saw back in the 1960s," he said. "It opens a new world for us."

South Dakota State student stabbed, suspect injured

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — A fight in a residence hall at South Dakota State University has left one man stabbed and another injured.

University officials say a male student entered an unlocked room in Brown Hall Sunday and was stabbed after getting into a fight with a man in the room who was not a student. KELO-TV (<http://bit.ly/2lrzhvE>) reports university police responded and both men were taken Brookings Hospital.

The student who was stabbed was then airlifted to a Sioux Falls hospital for surgery. The other man was treated and released to the custody of Brookings County sheriff's deputies.

Information from: KELO-TV, <http://www.keloland.com>

Lawmakers reject call for commission to study race relations

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A House panel has rejected a call to create a commission to study race relations among Native Americans and the state of South Dakota.

The House State Affairs Committee on Monday voted down the resolution. Democratic Rep. Shawn Bordeaux, the prime sponsor, says it's necessary to talk about race in South Dakota.

The resolution would have encouraged the formation of a truth and healing conciliation commission to oversee an analysis of past and present policies affecting tribes and chart a path for the healing and empowerment of tribal members.

Republican Rep. Tona Rozum, an opponent, says that she doesn't think another government commission would help.

Trump looks to refocus his presidency in address to Congress

By JULIE PACE, AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — With his first address to Congress, President Donald Trump has an opportunity to refocus his young administration on the economic issues that helped him get elected. His allies hope it will help him move beyond the distractions and self-inflicted wounds that he has dealt with so far.

Trump's advisers say he will use his prime-time speech Tuesday to declare early progress on his campaign promises, including withdrawing the U.S. from a sweeping Pacific Rim trade pact, and to map a path ahead on thorny legislative priorities, including health care, infrastructure, and military spending.

"We're going to spend a lot more money on military," Trump told "Fox & Friends" in an interview aired Tuesday, saying he could stand to see even \$30 billion more than what's being recommended.

"We're going to get involved in negotiating. We're going to be able to get, I think, a lot more product for a buck and I'm going to be very, very serious about it," he said.

The White House said Trump has been gathering ideas for the address from the series of listening sessions he's been holding with law enforcement officials, union representatives, coal miners and others. Aides said he was still tinkering with the speech Monday night.

Republicans, impatient to begin making headway on an ambitious legislative agenda, hope Trump arrives on Capitol Hill armed with specifics on replacing the "Obamacare" health care law and overhauling the nation's tax system, two issues he's so far talked about in mostly general terms. More broadly, some Republicans are anxious for the president to set aside his feuds with the media, the intelligence community and the courts, which have overshadowed the party's policy priorities.

"Results aren't going to come from that," said Judd Gregg, the former Republican senator from New Hampshire. "Results are going to come from driving the policies he said he would do."

The pressure from Republican lawmakers makes this a critical moment for a new president who ran for office on a pledge to swiftly shake up Washington and follow through on the failed promises of career politicians.

While most new presidents enjoy a honeymoon period, Trump is saddled with record low approval ratings — just 44 percent of Americans approve of his job performance, according to a new NBC News/Wall Street Journal survey. His most sweeping executive order was blocked by federal courts, sending advisers scrambling to write a new travel and immigration directive, which the president is expected to sign on Wednesday.

Morale is also plummeting among some White House staffers following a string of leaks that have left aides questioning each other. On Sunday, Politico reported that White House press secretary Sean Spicer had sprung surprise "phone checks" for members of his communications team after details from a staff meeting were made public.

Trump said in the interview Tuesday that he "would have handled it differently than Sean. But Sean handles it his way, and I'm OK with it."

In public, Trump has continued to speak about his presidency with his usual confident bluster, declaring that there's "never been a presidency that's done so much in such a short period of time." But he's privately vented frustrations to friends and associates, particularly about what he sees as the ineffectiveness of the

White House's communications efforts and the scattershot nature of his first weeks in office.

In the Fox interview Tuesday, Trump gave himself an overall "A plus" for effort, but conceded, "In terms of messaging, I would give myself a C or a C plus."

Trump recently complained to one associate that the White House was trying to do too many things at once and none of it was breaking through. He told another associate that the White House had lost control of the story surrounding Michael Flynn, who was fired as national security adviser after misleading Vice President Mike Pence and others about his contacts with Russia.

The White House looked to be finding its footing for a stretch last week, beginning with Trump's widely praised rollout of Flynn's replacement, Lt. General H.R. McMaster. On domestic issues, the White House largely stuck to its script, focusing on manufacturing and the budget. Fewer aides appeared on television, part of an effort to apply some message discipline to a White House that has frequently contradicted itself.

One of the most notable changes was made by the president himself, who scaled back his use of Twitter for a few days, particularly in the pre-dawn hours.

One aide said the reduction in Trump's early morning tweets was a result of his ending his habit of watching "Morning Joe," the MSNBC show hosted by Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski, longtime friends of the president who have been critical of some of his early moves.

Brzezinski said Trump made similar claims of avoiding the TV during the campaign. "Then I would see him and Joe talking and he would say 'Joe, you know I really watch every day,'" she said.

The aide who told the story about Trump and early-morning TV insisted on anonymity in order to discuss internal White House dealings. So did other advisers and associates cited in this story.

By the end of last week, the White House was back in the throes of some of the same sideshows that had overshadowed the policy issues Trump advisers have insisted they want to focus on. The president doubled down on his media bashing during a free-wheeling speech to conservative activists. Questions about his advisers' contacts with Russian intelligence agents were revived by revelations that chief of staff Reince Priebus discussed the matter with high-level FBI officials, in the midst of an investigation into those contacts.

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

Associated Press writer Vivian Salama contributed to this report.

South Korean prosecutors indict Samsung's de facto chief

By YOUKYUNG LEE and KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean special prosecutors indicted Samsung's de facto chief Tuesday on bribery, embezzlement and other charges linked to a political scandal that has toppled President Park Geun-hye.

The indictment of Samsung Electronics vice chairman Lee Jae-yong is a huge hit for the largest and most successful of the big businesses that dominate the South Korean economy. It also signals the still roiling state of South Korea's political and economic circles after weeks of massive demonstrations that led to Park's impeachment.

The announcement of the indictment came after a three-month investigation by a special prosecution team that ended Tuesday after the country's acting leader refused a request for an extension.

Shortly after the announcement, Samsung said several top executives also facing criminal charges will resign from their positions and leave Samsung.

It did not say anything about Lee's status, implying that the Samsung heir will likely keep his position and board membership at Samsung Electronics while he is under arrest and stands trial.

Prosecutors say Lee gave bribes worth \$36 million to Park and her confidante to help win government support for a smooth leadership transfer from Lee's ailing father to Lee.

Lee also allegedly hid assets overseas, concealed proceeds from criminal activities and committed perjury.

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The 48-year-old billionaire was arrested Feb. 17. Samsung has denied wrongdoing.

Prosecutors also said they planned to indict four other Samsung executives on charges of offering bribes, embezzlement, hiding assets overseas and concealing proceeds from criminal activities.

The indictments mean that key figures at a powerful yet secretive Samsung office that wielded influence over dozens of Samsung affiliates face trial. Lee promised in December to disband the secretive office, called the Corporate Strategy Office, which allegedly orchestrated bribery schemes centered on Choi Soon-sil, Park's confidante.

The office consists of close Lee family aides who worked to help ensure the father to son leadership transition. Some say the contentious merger of Samsung C&T and Cheil Industries in 2015 was also overseen by the office, not by the board of directors at the two Samsung companies. The merger, a crucial step for Lee to strengthen his grip on Samsung Electronics, was a key benefit that Samsung sought from the government by offering millions of dollars to Choi's various entities, according to the prosecutors.

The merger, despite opposition from some shareholders who argued that it unfairly benefited the Lee family, was approved by shareholders thanks to the support of a state-controlled national pension fund, a key Samsung investor.

The special prosecution team said it also plans to pursue additional charges of bribery and concealing proceedings from criminal activities against Choi, who allegedly exploited her presidential ties to extort money and favors from companies and manipulate state affairs from the shadows.

The team finished its inquiry without questioning Park, after she backed off from a Feb. 9 interview. The country's acting leader, Hwang Kyo-ahn, refused to extend the investigation past Tuesday's deadline.

Lee was once the face of the new Samsung, but now follows in the footsteps of his father, Samsung Electronics chairman Lee Kun-hee. The senior Lee was indicted in 2008 on charges of tax evasion and breach of trust. He was later convicted and then pardoned by a former president.

Corruption has dogged many other business leaders in South Korea's family-controlled conglomerates, which are known as chaebol.

When the elder Lee was indicted, Samsung vowed a series of measures to improve transparency.

After the prosecutors' announcement Tuesday, Samsung said it would disband the secretive office.

Since Lee's father fell ill in May 2014, the younger Lee has stepped up his leadership role. Samsung appeared to be trying to change its top-down, hierarchical, authoritarian corporate culture under Lee.

Fluent in foreign languages, educated overseas and linked to Silicon Valley luminaries, Lee was seen as the new face of Samsung. Samsung promised to remove obstacles to creativity and innovation in recent years by introducing a nimble, startup-like attitude. It has increased returns to shareholders and acquired several companies outside South Korea.

Follow Lee on Twitter at twitter.com/YKLee

Follow Kim on Twitter at twitter.com/KimTongHyung

Trump takes on entrenched practice of Washington leaks

By **DAVID BAUDER** and **JONATHAN LEMIRE**, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — When White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer wanted to crack down on leaks last week, he collected his aides' cell phones to check for communication with reporters. The crackdown quickly leaked.

President Donald Trump now says he probably would have handled the situation differently, meeting with staff one-on-one instead — but perhaps still demanding to look at their phones.

"I mean, you know, there are things you can do that are a hell of a lot worse than that, I'll be honest with you," Trump told "Fox & Friends" in an interview aired Tuesday.

Trump denied that there was a "major leak process" at the White House. So who did it?

"We have sort of ideas," Trump said. "But don't forget, we have people from other campaigns, we have people from other governments. We've got a lot of people here."

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Spicer's losing round in Washington's perpetual game of information Whack-a-mole was hardly a surprise. In trying to plug leaks from anonymous sources, President Donald Trump and his aides are going after one of the most entrenched practices in Washington politics and journalism, an exercise that has exposed corruption, fueled scandals and spread gossip for decades.

But the practice has created several headaches for the new president, leading Trump, just weeks into his presidency, to publicly vow to try to punish "low-life leakers" in his own administration.

"Let their name be put out there," Trump said before the Conservative Political Action Conference on Friday, accusing reporters of making up anonymous sources and stories. He declared reporters shouldn't be allowed to use sources "unless they use somebody's name."

"A source says that Donald Trump is a horrible, horrible human being." Let 'em say it to my face."

But Trump's administration has not been practicing what the boss preached. Despite the president's anger about unnamed sources, White House budget officials insisted on anonymity Monday as they outlined details of Trump's spending plans to reporters on a conference call. The budget officials ignored requests to put the briefing on the record.

Several anonymously sourced stories have driven Trump coverage: revelations that former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn had lied about conversations with Russians about sanctions; details of private phone calls Trump had with leaders of Australia and Mexico; draft memos of policy plans for actions like rounding up undocumented aliens.

Trump isn't the first president to be frustrated by leaks.

From the release of the Pentagon Papers on Vietnam policy, the Watergate scandal that brought down President Richard Nixon to Edward Snowden's data dump of national security files, American history is filled with stories of government misconduct that came to light through information passed privately into the hands of journalists.

"Leaking is gigantically important in modern presidential coverage and Washington history," said Frank Sesno, a former CNN Washington bureau chief and now a journalism professor at George Washington University.

Sources have countless reasons for leaking, Sesno said. Maybe they're raising a trial balloon, or shooting one down. Maybe they don't like a policy being considered or want to report wrongdoing. Maybe they just want to talk back to the boss.

Journalists prefer sources go on the record; it lends more credibility to the stories. But on important areas of national security, it's understandable when people insist upon anonymity, said Dean Baquet, executive editor of The New York Times, on CNN's "Reliable Sources" Sunday.

"These are not people who pull us aside because they want to screw Donald Trump," Baquet said. "These are people who are worried about the direction of the government. These are people who are taking risks to talk to the media because they think these things need to be exposed. And I have to say, in an administration that has expressed so much distaste for the press and so much distaste for our role, are you surprised that some of the people who want to criticize the administration want to do it without their names attached? I'm not."

Leaks have progressed beyond the days of clandestine meetings in darkened parking garages — although that still happens. Since leakers can be tracked if they use government-issued phones, journalists and sources have increasingly turned to encrypted messaging services, such as Signal, that aren't logged by phone companies, with messages that can be programmed to self-destruct after they are viewed.

Spicer called the White House communications staff into his office to express his frustration with unauthorized leaks to reporters, according to two people with knowledge of the meeting but not authorized to discuss it publicly. He asked the aides to provide him with both their government-issued and personal cell phones so he could check communications with journalists.

He also told them that use of encrypted texting apps was a violation of the Federal Records Act and had representatives from the White House counsel's office in the meeting, according to one person with knowledge of the meeting. That person said Monday that Trump was not aware of the inquiry.

Spicer also requested that the details of the meeting not be shared with the press. Politico first reported

the meeting Sunday.

Sesno said the Trump White House's battle against leakers is likely fueled by a combination of being new to Washington and a genuine desire to control the message. But to some who knew Trump from a different era, it's a little jarring.

In the 1990s, Trump was a frequent anonymous source of information about his social life and television series, "The Apprentice," said newspaper columnist Linda Stasi, who covered Trump at the New York Daily News and New York Post. Once Trump called and pretended to be someone else delivering information about him; Stasi said she could easily recognize his voice.

"I think he was surprised to find out that it's not the same when you're talking about the most important things in the world, as opposed to when your mistress is saying she was having good sex with him," Stasi said.

Stasi said she got along well with Trump, even though she felt the relationship was more beneficial for her than it was for him.

"When it comes to politics, it's a different game," she said. "He's turned into someone I don't know."

Associated Press writers Ted Bridis and Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

N. Korean diplomats in Malaysia to seek Kim's brother's body

By EILEEN NG, Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — A high-level North Korean delegation arrived in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday seeking the body of leader Kim Jong Un's half brother, the victim of a nerve-agent attack that many suspect the North itself of orchestrating.

The body of Kim Jong Nam, killed Feb. 13 at Kuala Lumpur's airport, is at the center of a heated diplomatic battle between North Korea and Malaysia. North Korea opposed Malaysian officials even conducting an autopsy, while Malaysia has resisted giving up the body without getting DNA samples and confirmation from next of kin.

The delegation includes Ri Tong Il, a former North Korean deputy ambassador to the United Nations, who told reporters Tuesday outside the North Korean Embassy that the diplomats were in Malaysia to retrieve the body and seek the release of a North Korean arrested in the case. He said the delegation also wants "development of the friendly relationship" between North Korea and Malaysia.

Malaysian officials have confirmed that the victim of the attack was Kim Jong Nam. North Korea, however, has identified him only as a North Korean national with a diplomatic passport bearing the name Kim Chol.

Health Minister Subramaniam Sathasivam said Malaysia will continue to insist that the body be positively identified by medical examiners through DNA or other means before it can be released. He said the protocol is to release it to the next-of-kin once identification is completed.

Asked how long Malaysia can keep Kim's body at the morgue, he said "we can keep as long as we want." Police have said that the body will eventually have to be released to the North Korean embassy if there is no claim by Kim's family members.

The killing of Kim Jong Nam took place amid crowds of travelers at Kuala Lumpur's airport and appeared to be a well-planned hit. Malaysian authorities say North Koreans put the deadly nerve agent VX on the hands of two women who then placed the toxin on Kim's face. Kim died on the way to a hospital, within about 20 minutes of the attack, they say.

Malaysian Attorney General Mohamed Apandi Ali said Tuesday in a text message to The Associated Press that the two women accused of killing Kim Jong Nam — Indonesian Siti Aisyah and Vietnamese Doan Thi Huong — will be charged with murder Wednesday and would face a mandatory death sentence if convicted. Both women have been arrested, and authorities must file charges by Wednesday or release them.

Both women have reportedly said they thought they were part of a prank TV show when they put their hands on Kim. Indonesian officials have said Aisyah told them she was paid the equivalent of \$90.

"For Aisyah, we will always provide legal assistance and advocacy to ensure her rights in accordance with

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applicable law," said Lalu Muhammad Iqbal, director of citizen protection at Indonesia's Foreign Ministry. "We have assigned lawyers who would accompany her during the process."

Malaysia has also detained a 45-year-old North Korean, Ri Jong Chol, whose role in the killing is unclear. Asked if the North Korean will be charged, Apandi said it depends on the outcome of the investigation.

Authorities are seeking seven other North Korean suspects, four of whom fled the country the day of Kim's death and are believed to be back in North Korea. Others sought include the second secretary of North Korea's embassy and an employee of North Korea's state-owned airline, Air Koryo.

Malaysia hasn't directly accused North Korea of having masterminded the killing, but South Korea has. It has not provided evidence, but suspicions were heightened over the weekend when Malaysia announced that VX killed Kim. Producing the deadly toxin requires a highly sophisticated lab, and VX is one of many chemical weapons North Korea is believed to possess.

South Korean lawmakers said Monday that the country's National Intelligence Service told them in a private briefing that four of the North Koreans identified as suspects are from the Ministry of State Security, the North's spy organ.

Kim Jong Nam was estranged from Kim Jong Un. He reportedly fell out of favor with their father, the late Kim Jong Il, in 2001, when he was caught trying to enter Japan on a false passport to visit Tokyo Disneyland.

He had been heading to Macau, where he has a home, when he was killed.

Isolated North Korea has a long history of ordering killings of people it views as threats to its regime. Kim Jong Nam was not known to be seeking political power; he was best known for his penchants for drinking, gambling and expensive restaurants. But his position as eldest son of the family that has ruled North Korea since it was founded could have made him appear to be a danger.

Malaysia continues to seek DNA samples from Kim Jong Nam's immediate family. He is believed to have two sons and a daughter with two women living in Beijing and Macau.

AP video journalist Yves Dam Van in Kuala Lumpur and writer Ali Kotarumalos in Jakarta, Indonesia, contributed to this report.

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. TRUMP READIES FOR PRIME-TIME SPEECH

With his first address to Congress, the president gets an opportunity to refocus his young administration on the economic issues that helped him get elected.

2. HOW PYONGYANG IS TURNING UP DIPLOMATIC HEAT

A high-level North Korean delegation arrives in Kuala Lumpur, seeking the body of Kim Jong Un's half brother, the victim of a nerve-agent attack that many suspect the North itself of orchestrating.

3. SCANDAL'S STAIN SPREADS TO SAMSUNG

South Korean prosecutors said they will indict Samsung's de facto chief on bribery, embezzlement and other charges linked to a political scandal that has toppled President Park Geun-hye.

4. WHICH WHITE HOUSE QUEST COULD COME UP SHORT

In trying to plug leaks from anonymous sources, Trump and his aides are going after one of the most entrenched practices in Washington politics and journalism.

5. VETTING CENTER FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES ALREADY STRINGENT

As Trump mulls a revised travel ban, the UN says its refugee resettlement program in Jordan is among the "most scrutinized" ways of entering the U.S.

6. CHINA WORKING TO COMBAT WARMING

Consumption of coal by the world's top carbon polluter fell in 2016 for a third year in a row, official data show.

7. PLANE HITS TWO HOMES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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The crash of a small aircraft carrying a family back from a cheerleading competition sparks a major fire and kills three people.

8. WHAT BIG TRIP SPACEX IS PLANNING

Tech billionaire Elon Musk says his company is on track to send two paying passengers in orbit around the moon by the end of 2018.

9. 'WEIRDEST TV FINALE SINCE "LOST"!'

Oscars host Jimmy Kimmel shares his perspective on the show's best-picture gaffe during his monologue on "Jimmy Kimmel Live!"

10. TIM TEBOW GETTING INTO SWING OF THINGS

The former football player, now pursuing a baseball career, belts nine home runs in batting practice during his first workout with the Mets.

Historically black colleges push for financial support

By ERRIN HAINES WHACK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Presidents from a majority of the country's historically black colleges and universities are in Washington this week, calling for \$25 billion in the upcoming budget to help address priorities including infrastructure, college readiness and financial aid as President Trump prepares to sign an executive order aimed at signaling his commitment to the schools.

Trump met briefly with the college leaders on Monday, posing for a photograph in the Oval Office before the group met with Vice President Mike Pence and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos. Tuesday's order is expected to move the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities from the Department of Education into the White House. A senior White House official said the order was intended to prioritize the initiative and make it easier to partner with various federal departments and agencies.

The moves are among the actions some college presidents said they would like to see coming from the new administration. For some, their decision to come to Washington was over the objections of students and alumni, but they say they can ill afford to play politics as Trump moves quickly to set priorities.

Florida A&M Interim President Larry Robinson said it is important for schools like his to have a seat at the table early.

"We are the subject matter experts in terms of what needs to be done," Robinson said. "We wanted to communicate that to those who were receptive of doing something on our behalf ... regardless of who's sitting in the White House, or what their political affiliations are."

Though Trump did not have a plan to address HBCUs during his campaign — unlike Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton — the Republican was swift to signal his support for the schools soon after his inauguration. Administration officials vowed that he would take action on HBCUs during Black History Month, which ends Tuesday. One of the president's most visible black aides, Omarosa Manigault, holds degrees from two HBCUs: Central State University in Ohio and Howard University in Washington.

More than 231,000 students enrolled at black colleges and universities in 2014, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Almost 80 percent were black. But HBCU enrollment declined from 326,614 to 294,316 between 2010 and 2014, according to NCES data. And in the past generation, the percentage of black college students attending HBCUs dropped from 18 percent of the overall total of black college students in 1976 to 8 percent in 2014.

On Tuesday, the college presidents will spend the day on Capitol Hill, lobbying Congress for more funding. Grambling State University President Rick Gallot said he was encouraged by Monday's meeting and saw a government interested in a meaningful partnership. Gallot is hoping the initial meetings will lead to more access to research opportunities for his school.

"As HBCUs, we've always done what politicians stress to agencies: To do more with less," the head of the Louisiana college said. "Think of the opportunities that would be there to do more with more."

Gallot pointed out that more than 90 percent of his students are eligible for the federal Pell grant, and added he would like to see the program strengthened and made into a year-round opportunity.

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Trump's executive order is also aimed at helping the HBCU initiative work as a partner in the president's agenda, including job creation, community revitalization and making inner cities safer, according to the official who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity, despite the president's recent complaints about un-named sources.

Florida Memorial University's Roslyn Artis said she is looking to play to Trump's CEO background, looking for tax incentives that would attract government contractors and private companies to invest in HBCUs.

"We're appealing to his good business sense and hoping he finds an investment worth paying for," she said, adding that Florida Memorial leadership had several listening sessions with its campus community ahead of the Washington trip to allay concerns. "The reality is, we as HBCUs don't have the luxury of playing politics. It's really about policy for us."

The presidents were invited to Washington by the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, the nonprofit umbrella organization of public HBCUs headed by Johnny Taylor, who said he reached out to both presidential campaigns about support for the schools last summer. Taylor pointed out that two-thirds of HBCUs are in red, or Republican-oriented states, and that the colleges are heavily reliant on federal and state funding to survive — meaning HBCUs must meet with the administration, despite the fact that only 8 percent of African-Americans voted for Trump.

"Taking that position was met with great skepticism, and in some cases, outright refusal to cooperate, but the idea that you would not talk to this group is silly," Taylor said at a reception his organization sponsored Monday.

The Marshall fund and the United Negro College Fund, which supports private HBCUs, have been lobbying Trump to support the colleges. Taylor said Trump's swift action on many of his campaign promises sends a message that he will take action without worrying about the political winds.

"You can like or dislike his position, but one thing about him: If he says it, you can count on it," Taylor said.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, who also attended the reception, was more skeptical Monday night, calling the Oval Office stop nothing more than 'a photo op.'

"There is no substance at this point," she said, cautioning to wait for the contents of the executive order and the budget process. "The proof is in the pudding."

Jesse J. Holland and Jill Colvin contributed to this report. Errin Haines Whack covers urban affairs for The Associated Press. Follow her work on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/emarvelous>.

Divided Republicans await guidance from Trump

By ERICA WERNER, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Flailing and divided, congressional Republicans are hoping for clarity from President Donald Trump on key issues like health care when he delivers his first speech to a joint meeting of Congress. It comes as Republicans are discovering, a month into Trump's administration, how difficult it will be to make good on their many promises now that they control Washington in full.

The GOP's long-stated plans to repeal former President Barack Obama's health care law and replace it with something better are running into major difficulties even before legislation is officially released. After a week of raucous town hall meetings, Republicans are back in Washington and key conservatives have begun to denounce House leadership plans based on a leaked draft and reports that the bill would cost more than expected while covering fewer people than the Affordable Care Act.

"That dog doesn't hunt," GOP Rep. Mark Meadows of North Carolina, head of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, declared flatly of a central element of the plan, tax credits extended regardless of income.

Asked whether Republicans were nearing consensus on the overall legislation, Meadows said: "I think we're a long way from that."

Another influential conservative, GOP Rep. Mark Walker of North Carolina, who chairs the Republican Study Committee, released a statement warning that "There are serious problems with what appears to

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be our current path to repeal and replace Obamacare.”

GOP leaders and aides insisted that no final decisions have been made and plans remain on track.

“We must repeal and replace Obamacare and that is top of our list this spring,” House Speaker Paul Ryan said after meeting at the White House with Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell on Monday. “We will replace it with a law that’s better, that’s more durable, that lowers costs, improves access to more affordable plans.”

But in the face of the divisions, several House Republicans said they would like to hear Trump sketch a clear vision, or better yet an endorsement of their plan, when he addresses Congress Tuesday night. Ahead of the speech, Republicans had little clarity about what Trump was going to say on the topic. Trump himself remarked Monday that “Nobody knew that health care could be so complicated.”

“What the president can say is that the plan that gets presented to the conference is the one you need to vote ‘yes’ on,” said GOP Rep. Bill Flores of Texas. “That’s how he can be helpful.”

Yet health care is far from the only issue dividing Republicans. Plans to overhaul the tax code have Republicans tied in knots, while Trump’s promised increases in infrastructure spending promise to provoke major clashes with deficit hawks. A government funding deadline looms two months away and must be met to keep the government from shutting down. And, senior lawmakers were busy throwing cold water on Trump’s budget proposal, which was made public in broad outlines on Monday. The budget envisions a huge \$54 billion surge in U.S. military spending while slashing domestic programs and foreign aid.

GOP Rep. Mike Simpson of Idaho, a senior member of the Appropriations Committee, said that the budget as presented could not possibly pass the House.

“No, no. There’s a lot of members that have a lot of interest in a lot of these programs,” Simpson said. “There’s more to our government than just defense.”

Yet for defense hawks, Trump’s Pentagon spending didn’t go far enough. Sen. John McCain of Arizona complained that Trump’s plans represented just a small increase over Obama’s recent Pentagon wish list.

And, Trump’s budget would leave large deficits intact while sparing Social Security and Medicare, the entitlements that make up an enormous and growing share of the federal budget. That puts Trump in direct conflict with Ryan and other leading Republicans who’ve long advocated reforming entitlement programs to put them on a more sustainable footing and get deficits under control.

It’s unclear how that conflict will get resolved, but several Republicans said Trump would have to address Medicare and even Social Security despite campaign promises to spare them.

“If you want to balance the budget, if you want to increase defense spending, at some point in time you’ve got to touch entitlements,” Simpson said. “All you’ve got to do is look at the numbers. This is not rocket science.”

Partisan discord tainting probes of Russia, Trump, election

By DEB RIECHMANN and EILEEN SULLIVAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Partisan discord is seeping into House and Senate intelligence committee investigations of the Kremlin’s interference in the 2016 presidential election and whether President Donald Trump has ties to Russia.

Both Republicans and Democrats say they can still conduct bipartisan probes, but there are renewed calls for a special prosecutor and revelations that the White House enlisted GOP chairmen of the intelligence committees to push back against news reports suggesting Trump advisers were in contact with Russians.

The issue will likely surface at Tuesday’s Senate confirmation hearing for Dan Coats, a former senator from Indiana who is Trump’s pick to be the next national intelligence director.

Federal investigators have been looking into possible contacts between Trump advisers and Russia for months, along with Russia’s role in political hacking during the campaign. Trump has denied knowing that any of his campaign advisers were in contact with Russians during the campaign. He has also said he has no financial ties or other connections to Russia.

Sen. Richard Burr of North Carolina said he wasn’t taking questions about whether the White House

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enlisted him to talk to reporters, as reported by The Washington Post.

"I'm in a comfortable place. I didn't do anything to jeopardize my investigation," Burr told The Associated Press on his way out of the Capitol after Senate votes Monday night.

Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, a Democrat on the intelligence committee, said if Burr did call reporters at the behest of the White House, it would be troubling. "If these reports are true, I think it's going to be very hard to convince the public that there could be an impartial inquiry," Wyden said.

On the House side, there was a simmering dispute Monday between the intelligence committee's top Republican and Democrat.

The GOP chairman, Rep. Devin Nunes of California, said that so far, he has not received any evidence from the intelligence community that anyone in Trump's orbit was in contact with Russians during the presidential campaign.

Nunes — a member of Trump's presidential transition team — has said the White House asked him to talk with one reporter about the matter, but didn't give him any guidance on what to say. He said he told that reporter the same thing he's said to many other reporters in the course of discussions.

The top Democrat on the committee, Rep. Adam Schiff, also of California, said the committee has not reached any conclusion on whether the Trump campaign colluded with Russia, Russian officials or any Russian contacts.

"Nor could we," he said. "We have called no witnesses thus far. We have obtained no documents on any counterintelligence investigation and we have yet to receive any testimony from the FBI of potential links between the Trump campaign and Russia."

Mostly Democrats have requested a special prosecutor, saying they worry that Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who worked on Trump's presidential campaign, is not in a position to oversee such an investigation. "I would recuse myself from anything that I should recuse myself on," Sessions said Monday.

Associated Press writer Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

Starbucks CEO says chain ready to enter Italy after 35 years

By COLLEEN BARRY, AP Business Writer

MILAN (AP) — Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz's vision for the chain was largely inspired by the coffee bars he saw on his first trip to Milan more than three decades ago. But it took the company growing to about 26,000 stores in 75 countries to win the credibility he felt necessary to make the leap into the country that gave espresso to the world.

"I didn't think we were ready to come to Italy," Schultz told The Associated Press in an interview Monday. "I think Italy is such a special place. I am so respectful of the Italian coffee heritage and the Italian culture, and I think we had to earn that respect, opportunity, and I think over the years we got to the point that we are now ready to come."

As he prepares to step down as CEO in April, Schultz will focus on innovation. That includes a Milan location that will open in 2018 of what he called "the quintessential Roastery" — one of the high-end shops featuring in-house roasting and complex coffee drinks. The journey of 35 years, he said, completes "my own dream and the circle of Starbucks."

Unsurprisingly, skeptics like 70-year-old Christine Kung see Starbucks as a coals-to-Newcastle enterprise. "We are happy the way we are," Kung said on her way to a bar for coffee in central Milan. "We don't need to be invaded by American scenery. We already have McDonald's and that's enough."

Indeed, the entry of McDonald's into Italy three decades ago sparked the Slow Food movement that encourages local food traditions, although it ultimately did not prevent the Golden Arches and other fast-food chains that followed from becoming part of the Italian landscape.

Still, espresso drinks are part of Italian tradition and the fabric of everyday life in a way a quick bite still is not. Italians are accustomed to "taking" an espresso standing at the bar for an average price of 1 euro, or just about a dollar, even in major cities; 1.20-1.50 euros is on par for a cappuccino.

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In Italy, baristas generally make the coffee in full sight of the consumer, and hand brioche and other pastries across a glass case, often with a quip. Taking a seat in an Italian bar may incur an extra charge, especially in prime locations. There are few sugary embellishments and Wi-Fi access is spotty, at best.

It is not uncommon to see waiters with silver trays delivering coffee in porcelain cups covered with foil to neighboring business, a practice that underlies the rarity of the takeout coffee cup.

This sort of humanity attracted Schultz's admiration on his first Milan visit. His response is to position the first Starbucks in Italy as a premium operation.

The Milan store at Piazza Cordusio will be among the early wave of up to 30 Roastery locations Starbucks says it expects to open around the world. The Milan store will launch a new partnership with an Italian partner, the Princi baker, offering deli food and baked goods. The first Roastery is in Seattle, with others announced for Shanghai, New York and Tokyo.

Besides mainstay espresso drinks, Schultz hopes customers will be attracted by specialized brewing techniques developed by Starbucks that are not typical in Italy. As in other markets, customers can take coffee out, or drink out of porcelain cups if they're staying in. Starbucks says it hasn't yet determined its prices.

Located in an old post office building just steps from Milan's cathedral, the store will be the largest to date at 25,500 square feet, or about 2,400 square meters — compared with 200 square feet for the average Starbucks location.

It is hard to gauge how many in Italy might share Kung's wariness. Schultz says market research indicates strong brand awareness among Italians, mostly from travels abroad. And younger Italians may be more disposed toward embracing Starbucks as a place to hang out. Twenty-year-old Giulia Rizzi said she is excited for the opening and has no doubt her peers will frequent Starbucks in Italy.

"When I go abroad it's a place I go to very often because I like it both for the place and for what they do, which can't often be found in Italy," she said. "Of course in Italy coffee is sacred so perhaps not everyone will like it."

But the brand took a brief battering on social media, along with city planners in Italy's finance and fashion capital, after an oasis of palm trees appeared opposite the cathedral and it emerged that Starbucks was paying for the landscaping project, chosen by the city. Vandals burned a couple of the trees.

The fate of the Italian enterprise, Schultz said, will depend on winning over Italian customers, not just tourists. Schultz has been getting guidance on how to approach the Italian market from fashion designer and CEO Brunello Cucinelli. His advice: "For Starbucks to be authentic. For us to be ourselves," Schultz said.

After the Roastery, Starbucks plans to open other locations in Milan, a combination of traditional stores and Reserve stores, which are essentially smaller Roasteries, before it looks at other Italian cities. Schultz didn't say how many stores are planned for Milan, but noted in the past 10 to 12 have opened within the first year of entering a market.

So far, Starbucks' plans aren't worrying the folks at one typical Milanese coffee bar, the Giacomo Caffè with its wooden bar, round tables and straight-back chairs located in the Palazzo Reale beside Piazza Duomo, not far from the new Starbucks location.

"It is something completely different," said manager Antimo Santoro. "Their strongest point is to take away, to buy and take away. Our strong point is service, we serve a coffee of very high quality, with a very refined blend, a great service."

Charlene Pele in Milan contributed to this report.

Jimmy Kimmel shares insights on best picture Oscar gaffe

By SANDY COHEN, AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Oscars host Jimmy Kimmel shared his perspective on the show's best-picture gaffe during his Monday monologue on "Jimmy Kimmel Live !"

"As I'm sure you've at least heard, 'La La Land' was simultaneously somehow the biggest winner and loser last night," Kimmel said.

Presenters announced "La La Land" as the best picture winner at Sunday's Academy Awards, though "Moonlight" was the actual winner. Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway had been given the best actress envelope to open instead of best picture. The accounting firm responsible for the integrity of the awards has taken responsibility for the error and apologized to all involved.

"It was the weirdest TV finale since 'Lost,'" Kimmel cracked.

He said the plan had been for him to end the Oscar show in the audience, seated next to Matt Damon, when rumblings began that there'd been a mistake.

"We're sitting there and we notice some commotion going on," Kimmel said. "And Matt says, 'I think I heard the stage manager say they got the winner wrong.' ...So you just kind of figure, well, the host will go onstage and clear this up. And then I remember, oh I'm the host."

Three "La La Land" producers gave acceptance speeches before the error was corrected and "Moonlight" received the award.

Kimmel said it was "mass confusion" when he got onstage and no one seemed sure what to do. Then Denzel Washington, sitting in the front row, got Kimmel's attention and shouted, "Barry!"

"Eventually I figured out that Barry Jenkins, the director of 'Moonlight,' is standing behind me and Denzel wanted me to get him to the microphone to make a speech, which makes sense," Kimmel said. "Thank God Denzel was there to make sense."

After ending the show, Kimmel spoke to Beatty backstage, who showed him the envelopes. Dunaway, "made quite a getaway," Kimmel said, leaving immediately after the show.

"Have any of you here ever hosted the Oscars before?" Kimmel joked with his Monday night audience. "Well, except for the end - it was a lot of fun."

Follow AP Entertainment Writer Sandy Cohen at www.twitter.com/APSandy .

Jewish centers cope with bomb threats; graves vandalized

MICHAEL RUBINKAM, Associated Press

Jewish centers and schools across the nation coped with another wave of bomb threats Monday as officials in Philadelphia made plans to repair and restore hundreds of vandalized headstones at a Jewish cemetery.

Jewish Community Centers and day schools in at least a dozen states received threats, according to the JCC Association of North America. No bombs were found. All 21 buildings — 13 community centers and eight schools — were cleared by Monday afternoon and had resumed normal operations, the association said.

It was the fifth round of bomb threats against Jewish institutions since January, prompting outrage and exasperation among Jewish leaders as well as calls for an aggressive federal response to put a stop to it.

"The Justice Department, Homeland Security, the FBI, and the White House, alongside Congress and local officials, must speak out — and speak out forcefully — against this scourge of anti-Semitism impacting communities across the country," said David Posner, an official with JCC Association of North America. "Members of our community must see swift and concerted action from federal officials to identify and capture the perpetrator or perpetrators who are trying to instill anxiety and fear in our communities."

The FBI and the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division are probing the threats.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions called the vandalism and bomb threats serious, unacceptable behavior and said the department will "do what it can to assist in pushing back ... and prosecuting anybody that we can prove to be a part of it."

"We are a nation that is a diverse constituency, and we don't need these kind of activities," Sessions said.

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In Philadelphia, police investigated what they called an "abominable crime" after several hundred headstones were damaged during the weekend at Mount Carmel Cemetery, a Jewish cemetery dating to the late 1800s, said Steven Rosenberg, chief marketing officer of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia.

Police said the vandalism appeared to be targeted at the Jewish community, though they cautioned they had not confirmed the motive. Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney said authorities were doing everything possible to find those "who desecrated this final resting place."

"I'm hoping it was maybe just some drunk kids," said Aaron Mallin, who discovered the damage during a visit to his father's grave. "But the fact that there's so many, it leads one to think it could have been targeted," he told WPVI-TV.

The vandalism comes less than a week after a Jewish cemetery in suburban St. Louis was targeted. More than 150 headstones there were damaged, many of them tipped over.

Both acts of vandalism spurred offers of help.

The Philadelphia Building & Construction Trades Council, an umbrella group for more than 50 union locals that work in the construction industry, offered to repair the damage at Mount Carmel free of charge, calling it a "cowardly act of anti-Semitism that cannot be tolerated." A community cleanup organized by the Jewish Federation was to begin Tuesday with as many as 50 volunteers per hour.

And in Missouri, a Muslim crowdfunding effort to support the vandalized Jewish cemetery near St. Louis had raised more than \$136,000 by Monday, with organizers announcing they would use some of the money for the Philadelphia cemetery.

Monday's bomb threats caused no physical damage but were no less worrisome.

"There's plenty of people who are scared," said Rosenberg, who denounced the hoaxsters as "an embarrassment to civilized society."

Some 200 people were evacuated from a Jewish Community Center in York, Pennsylvania, after a caller told the front desk there was a bomb in the building, said Melissa Plotkin, the York JCC's director of community engagement and diversity. Police entered the building and cleared it, she said.

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf, who has long ties to the York center, having served on its board, called the bomb threats and cemetery vandalism reprehensible.

"These acts are cowardly and disturbing," Wolf told reporters in a conference call Monday. "We must find those responsible and hold them accountable for these hate crimes."

Jewish centers and schools in Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island and Virginia also were threatened, according to the JCC Association of North America.

Since January, the group has tracked a total of 90 incidents in 30 states and Canada.

Paul Goldenberg, director of the Secure Community Network, a nonprofit founded by several national Jewish groups to bolster security in the Jewish community, said Jewish Community Centers and other Jewish institutions have extensive security protocols in place.

After dealing with Monday's threats, he said, the "Jewish community is back in business."

Rubinkam reported from northeastern Pennsylvania. Associated Press writers Larry Rosenthal in Philadelphia; Eric Tucker in Washington, D.C.; Jim Salter in St. Louis; Marc Levy and Mark Scolforo in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Michelle R. Smith in Providence, Rhode Island; and Emery P. Dalesio in Raleigh, North Carolina, contributed to this report.

House probe into Russia ties to Trump off to rocky start

By DEB RIECHMANN and EILEEN SULLIVAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A simmering dispute between leaders of the House intelligence committee spilled into the public Monday over an investigation into whether President Donald Trump has ties to Russia, even as they pledged to conduct a bipartisan probe.

The Republican committee chairman, Rep. Devin Nunes of California, said he has heard no evidence so far that anyone in Trump's orbit was in contact with Russians during the presidential campaign. The top Democrat on the committee, Adam Schiff, also of California, said the committee's investigation was hardly off the ground and it was premature to make any conclusions.

The nature of ties between Trump's associates and Russia has dogged him throughout his nascent presidency, and Monday brought renewed calls for a special prosecutor to investigate the unusual situation. Federal investigators have been looking into contacts between Trump advisers and Russia for months, along with Russia's role in political hacking during the campaign aimed at Democrats. Trump, on Monday, said he hasn't called Russia in 10 years.

The House and Senate intelligence committees are conducting separate investigations. But revelations last week that the White House enlisted the Republican chairmen of those committees to push back against news reports have intensified concerns over whether the congressional investigations will be tainted by political influence.

Nunes has said the White House asked him to talk with one reporter, but didn't give him any guidance on what to say. He said he told that reporter the same thing he's said to many other reporters in the course of discussions.

Sen. Richard Burr of North Carolina said he wasn't taking questions about whether the White House enlisted him to talk to reporters, as reported by The Washington Post. He said he doesn't need to talk about it.

"I'm in a comfortable place. I didn't do anything to jeopardize my investigation," Burr told The Associated Press on his way out of the Capitol after Senate votes Monday night.

The issue was likely to come up at Tuesday's Senate confirmation hearing for Dan Coats, a former senator who is Trump's pick to be the next director of intelligence.

Speaking to reporters earlier Monday, Nunes — a member of Trump's presidential transition team — said Congress should not begin a McCarthy-style investigation based on news reports that a few Americans with ties to Trump had contacted Russians during the 2016 presidential campaign.

"We can't have McCarthyism back in this place," Nunes said. "We can't have the government, the U.S. government or the Congress, legislative branch of government, chasing down American citizens, hauling them before the Congress as if they're some secret Russian agent."

Former Sen. Joe McCarthy led a hunt for communists in the 1950s that was fueled by anonymous informants. Nunes said if evidence surfaces, the committee will investigate.

Schiff, who worked as an assistant U.S. attorney for six years, said it's not proper to start an investigation by stating your views of the outcome.

"The committee has reached no conclusion on whether the Trump campaign colluded with Russia, Russian officials or any Russian contacts — nor could we," Schiff said. "We have called no witnesses thus far. We have obtained no documents on any counterintelligence investigation and we have yet to receive any testimony from the FBI of potential links between the Trump campaign and Russia."

White House spokesman Sean Spicer said Russia's activity with regard to the 2016 election has been "investigated up and down."

"If there's nothing to further investigate, what are you asking people to investigate," Spicer said.

Trump was asked Monday whether he would support a special prosecutor to investigate Russia's influence on the 2016 election. Instead of answering that question, he said, "I haven't called Russia in 10 years." Trump did not say why he called Russia a decade ago.

According to a White House description, the last time Trump spoke by phone with Russian President

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Vladimir Putin was Jan. 28 and the White House said Putin had initiated the call. Trump also traveled to Russia in 2013 for the Miss Universe beauty pageant in Moscow.

Trump has denied knowing that any of his campaign advisers were in contact with Russians during the campaign. He has also said he has no financial ties or other connections to Russia.

Previously, mostly Democrats have requested a special prosecutor, but Republican Rep. Darrell Issa late Friday said Attorney General Jeff Sessions — who worked on Trump's presidential campaign — is not in a position to oversee such an investigation and urged the administration to appoint an independent prosecutor.

"Any review conducted must have the full confidence of the American people, which is why I recommended an independent review," Issa said Monday in a statement.

Issa was the first Republican to break ranks on the subject, although House Speaker Paul Ryan said again Monday there should be no special prosecutor.

"The proper place, in my opinion, is the intelligence committees. They're the ones that have access to methods of intelligence gathering."

Sessions on Monday told reporters the FBI and Justice Department will remain independent.

"I would recuse myself from anything that I should recuse myself on," Sessions said. "That's all I can tell you."

Democratic Sen. Richard Durbin, of Illinois, also said a special prosecutor was needed. Durbin noted on MSNBC that any report the intelligence committees produce as a result of their investigations would likely be initially classified, and the Trump administration would be responsible for declassifying portions and releasing them to the public.

Conducting the investigation in the Republican-controlled Senate intelligence committee "guarantees the American people will not know what is said," Durbin said.

Associated Press writers Vivian Salama, Eric Tucker, Julie Pace and Chad Day contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to say that Dan Coats is a former senator, not a former representative.

Big surge for military in Trump budget, big cuts elsewhere

By ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is proposing a huge \$54 billion surge in U.S. military spending for new aircraft, ships and fighters in his first federal budget while slashing big chunks from domestic programs and foreign aid to make the government "do more with less."

The Trump blueprint, due in more detail next month, would fulfill the Republican president's campaign pledge to boost Pentagon spending while targeting the budgets of other federal agencies. The "topline" figures emerged Monday, one day before Trump's first address to a joint session of Congress, an opportunity to re-emphasize the economic issues that were a centerpiece of his White House run.

Domestic programs and foreign aid would as a whole absorb a 10 percent, \$54 billion cut from currently projected levels — cuts that would match the military increase. The cuts would be felt far more deeply by programs and agencies targeted by Trump and his fellow Republicans, like the Environmental Protection Agency as well as foreign aid. Veterans' programs would be exempted, as would border security, additional law enforcement functions and some other areas.

"We're going to start spending on infrastructure big. It's not like we have a choice — our highways, our bridges are unsafe, our tunnels," the president told a group of governors at the White House on Monday. He added, "We're going to do more with less and make the government lean and accountable to the people."

However, Trump's final version of the budget is sure to leave large deficits intact — or even add to them if he follows through on his campaign promise for a huge tax cut.

His plan faces strong opposition from Democrats, who possess the power to block it. The immediate reaction from Republicans was mixed, with prominent defense hawks like Sen. John McCain of Arizona

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saying it would do too little to help the Pentagon and fiscal conservatives and supporters of domestic agencies expressing caution.

The White House indicated that the foreign aid cuts would be particularly large.

Asked about those plans, top Senate Republican Mitch McConnell of Kentucky would say only, "We'll see how it works out."

A congressional showdown is inevitable later this year, and a government shutdown a real possibility.

White House Budget Director Mick Mulvaney said the spike in Pentagon spending would bring the total defense budget to a record \$603 billion — and that's before including tens of billions of dollars for overseas military operations.

The United States already spends more on defense than the next seven countries combined, but military leaders have complained repeatedly that aircraft are aging. Congress was told recently that the average age of Air Force aircraft is 27 years, and more than half of the service's inventory would qualify for antique vehicle license plates in Virginia.

"It is a true America first budget. It will show the president is keeping his promises and will do exactly what he said he was going to do," Mulvaney said. "It prioritizes rebuilding our military, including restoring our nuclear capabilities, protecting the nation and securing the border, enforcing the laws currently on the books, taking care of vets and increasing school choice."

The border wall would cost \$2.9 billion in 2018, according to draft documents for the Department of Homeland Security, which assume the agency would hire 500 new members of the Border Patrol and 1,000 new Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents next year. Detention beds for apprehended immigrants would receive \$2 billion over current-year spending. The Transportation Security Administration ticket fee would increase by \$1 to \$6.60 for each one-way flight.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York said, "It is clear from this budget blueprint that President Trump fully intends to break his promises to working families by taking a meat ax to programs that benefit the middle class."

Mulvaney said the plan wouldn't add to the budget deficit — currently projected to hit about \$500 billion next year — but it wouldn't reduce it, either. The administration again made clear that the government's largest benefit programs, Social Security and Medicare, would be exempt from cuts when Trump's full budget submission is released in May.

GOP Rep. Mike Simpson of Idaho, a member of the Appropriations Committee, said the large cuts Trump envisions making to domestic programs won't fly.

"There's a lot of members that have a lot of interest in a lot of these programs," Simpson said. "There's more to our government than just defense."

But McCain said Trump's Pentagon plans would fall short by almost \$40 billion and represent just a small increase over former President Barack Obama's recent Pentagon wish list.

"With a world on fire, America cannot secure peace through strength with just 3 percent more than President Obama's budget," said McCain, chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

On Monday, tentative proposals for the 2018 budget year that begins Oct. 1 were being sent to federal agencies, which will have a chance to propose changes.

Before the new budget year, there's an April 28 deadline to finish up spending bills for the current 2017 budget year, which is almost half over, and any stumble or protracted battle could risk a government shutdown then as well.

There's expected to be an immediate infusion of 2017 cash for the Pentagon of \$20 billion or more, and also the first wave of funding for Trump's promised border wall and other initiatives like hiring immigration agents.

Sequestered jury from outside area to decide Bill Cosby case

By MARYCLAIRE DALE, Associated Press

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (AP) — A sequestered jury from an outside county will decide the sexual assault case against Bill Cosby, a suburban Philadelphia judge ruled Monday, rejecting a defense request to move the trial because of worldwide media reports that the actor's lawyers say brand him a "serial rapist."

Montgomery County Judge Steven O'Neill will oversee a June 5 trial over charges Cosby drugged and molested a former Temple University employee in 2004.

The judge's ruling came after lawyers for the 79-year-old TV star argued his trial should be moved to Philadelphia or the Pittsburgh area. The larger, more diverse population would make it easier to find unbiased jurors, lawyer Brian McMonagle argued, but even then, he said, there was no guarantee Cosby could get a fair hearing.

"Unless you've been living under a rock, the message that has been promoted, in insidious fashion, is that Bill Cosby is guilty and that Bill Cosby is a serial rapist," McMonagle said. "I do not believe that there's a place anywhere in this country now where he can receive a fair trial. Not here, not anywhere. I hope I'm wrong."

Prosecutors accused the defense of trying to shop for a jury.

In a court filing, District Attorney Kevin Steele called the pretrial publicity argument "a red herring." He said Cosby couldn't expect to find a jury anywhere that is "oblivious" to the dozens of sex assault accusations lodged against him by Andrea Constand and other accusers.

"He's not entitled to a jury that is ignorant of the facts surrounding his case," Steele wrote. "The publicity that necessarily follows the rich and famous cannot insulate them from prosecution."

Prosecutors didn't object to bringing an outside jury to the courthouse in Norristown but fought the bid to move the trial.

They told the judge they could surely find a dozen unbiased jurors in counties with fewer than 1 million people, the size sought by the defense.

"It's not just short on the law but short on logic," Assistant District Attorney M. Stewart Ryan argued.

Cosby has pleaded not guilty to charges he sexually assaulted Constand at his suburban Philadelphia home. The Associated Press doesn't typically identify people who say they are victims of sexual assault unless they have come forward publicly, as Constand has done.

With the judge's decision to import an out-of-county jury, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court must now decide where in Pennsylvania the jurors will be selected.

Monday's hearing came after the judge dealt a blow to the prosecution by limiting the number of accusers who can testify at the trial. Prosecutors wanted to put 13 more women on the stand to bolster charges Cosby had drugged and molested women before the 2004 encounter with Constand.

The judge ruled Friday only one of those accusers may testify. She worked for Cosby's agent at the William Morris agency and said Cosby drugged and molested her during a lunch meeting in Los Angeles in 1996.

In a setback for the defense, the judge previously ruled Cosby's damaging deposition from Constand's 2005 lawsuit can be aired in court. Cosby, over four days, described a string of extramarital affairs and liaisons with young women, often after he gave them drugs or alcohol. He called them consensual.

Cosby, once known as America's Dad for his top-rated family sitcom, "The Cosby Show," which ran from 1984 to 1992, appeared relaxed in his latest court appearance Monday, laughing with aides during breaks.

He has been married to Camille Cosby for more than 50 years and has four surviving children. Their only son, Ennis Cosby, was killed in an attempted robbery in 1997.

Senate confirms billionaire investor as commerce secretary

By **STEPHEN OHLEMACHER, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate on Monday confirmed billionaire investor Wilbur Ross as commerce secretary as President Donald Trump adds to his economic team.

The vote was 72-27.

Breaking with Republican orthodoxy, Ross said the Trump administration will work quickly to re-do the North American Free Trade Agreement. That's the massive trade pact with Canada and Mexico that has boosted trade but still stings laid-off workers across the Midwest.

Senators from both political parties were deferential to Ross at his nearly four-hour confirmation hearing, which was much more subdued than the confirmation hearings of other Trump nominees. Former commerce secretaries have praised him, including one who served under former President Barack Obama.

"Mr. Ross will bring decades of business, entrepreneurial and civic experience to this important position," said Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., chairman of the Commerce Committee. "I believe his extensive management experience in the private sector, and his understanding of the challenges faced by workers and businesses alike, will equip him well for the job of leading the Department of Commerce."

Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts criticized Ross' business ties to Russia and the way he ran a mortgage lender during the housing crisis.

"Mr. Ross has extensive ties to Russia. He plans to keep making money from his major oil shipping companies while working as Commerce Secretary. He's made billions off the backs of struggling home owners," Warren said Monday. "He is practically a cartoon stereotype of a Wall Street fat cat."

As part of his ethics agreement, Ross is giving up his position at Diamond S. Shipping, but he will retain a stake in the company, which ships petroleum and other products. As part of the agreement, Ross has promised not to take any action as commerce secretary that would benefit any company in which he has a financial interest.

At his confirmation hearing, Ross was not asked about business ties to Russia or his work as a mortgage lender, and he did not address the issues.

Senators did note that Ross is divesting from much of his business empire.

Worth an estimated \$2.9 billion, Ross has extensive business ties around the globe. In 2000, he founded WL Ross & Co., a private equity firm. As part of his ethics agreement, Ross will divest from the firm.

So far, the Senate has confirmed 15 out of 22 Trump Cabinet or Cabinet-level picks requiring confirmation. Senators also moved forward Monday on Trump's nomination of Montana Rep. Ryan Zinke to lead the Interior Department, voting 67-31 to limit debate. A final vote on confirmation could occur on Tuesday or Wednesday.

During the presidential campaign, Trump criticized U.S. trade deals, including NAFTA. Trump's stance on trade is at odds with many Republicans in Congress, but it endeared him to some voters in the Midwest who believe trade deals cost American jobs.

NAFTA was negotiated and signed by President Bill Clinton, with broad support among Republicans in Congress.

Ross said all free trade agreements should be systematically re-opened every few years to make sure they are working in the best interests of the U.S.

Ross said he is pro-free trade but noted his close relationship with the United Steelworkers union as proof that he will fight to protect American jobs. The union has endorsed him.

The commerce secretary has several roles in promoting American business interests in the U.S. and abroad. The department handles trade issues, working to attract foreign investment to the U.S. The department also oversees agencies that manage fisheries, weather forecasting and the Census Bureau, which will conduct a count in 2020.

Ross said he has experience at that agency; he was a census-taker while he attended business school.

Trump looks to refocus his presidency in address to Congress

By JULIE PACE, AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's first address to Congress gives him a welcome opportunity to refocus his young administration on the core economic issues that helped him get elected — and, his allies hope, to move beyond the distractions and self-inflicted wounds that have roiled his White House.

Trump's advisers say he will use his prime-time speech Tuesday to declare early progress on his campaign promises, including withdrawing the U.S. from a sweeping Pacific Rim trade pact, and to map a path ahead on thorny legislative priorities, including health care and infrastructure spending.

"We spend billions in the Middle East, but we have potholes all over the country," Trump said Monday as he previewed the address during a meeting with the nation's governors. "We're going to start spending on infrastructure big."

The White House said Trump has been gathering ideas for the address from the series of listening sessions he's been holding with law enforcement officials, union representatives, coal miners and others. Aides said he was still tinkering with the speech Monday night.

Republicans, impatient to begin making headway on an ambitious legislative agenda, hope Trump arrives on Capitol Hill armed with specifics on replacing the "Obamacare" health law and overhauling the nation's tax system, two issues he's so far talked about in mostly general terms. More broadly, some Republicans are anxious for the president to set aside his feuds with the media, the intelligence community and the courts, which have overshadowed the party's policy priorities.

"Results aren't going to come from that," said Judd Gregg, the former Republican senator from New Hampshire. "Results are going to come from driving the policies he said he would do."

The pressure from Republican lawmakers makes this a critical moment for a new president who ran for office on a pledge to swiftly shake up Washington and follow through on the failed promises of career politicians.

While most new presidents enjoy a honeymoon period, Trump is saddled with record low approval ratings — just 44 percent of Americans approve of his job performance, according to a new NBC News/Wall Street Journal survey. His most sweeping executive order was blocked by federal courts, sending advisers scrambling to write a new travel and immigration directive, which the president is expected to sign on Wednesday.

Morale is also plummeting among some White House staffers following a string of leaks that have left aides questioning each other. On Sunday, Politico reported that White House press secretary Sean Spicer had sprung surprise "phone checks" for members of his communications team after details from a staff meeting were made public.

In public, Trump has continued to speak about his presidency with his usual confident bluster, declaring that there's "never been a presidency that's done so much in such a short period of time." But he's privately vented frustrations to friends and associates, particularly about what he sees as the ineffectiveness of the White House's communications efforts and the scattershot nature of his first weeks in office.

Trump recently complained to one associate that the White House was trying to do too many things at once and none of it was breaking through. He told another associate that the White House had lost control of the story surrounding Michael Flynn, who was fired as national security adviser after misleading Vice President Mike Pence and others about his contacts with Russia.

The White House looked to be finding its footing for a stretch last week, beginning with Trump's widely praised rollout of Flynn's replacement, Lt. General H.R. McMaster. On domestic issues, the White House largely stuck to its script, focusing on manufacturing and the budget. Fewer aides appeared on television, part of an effort to apply some message discipline to a White House that has frequently contradicted itself.

One of the most notable changes was made by the president himself, who scaled back his use of Twitter for a few days, particularly in the pre-dawn hours.

One aide said the reduction in Trump's early morning tweets was a result of his ending his habit of watching "Morning Joe," the MSNBC show hosted by Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski, longtime friends of

the president who have been critical of some of his early moves.

Brzezinski said Trump made similar claims of avoiding the TV during the campaign. "Then I would see him and Joe talking and he would say 'Joe, you know I really watch every day,'" she said.

The aide who told the story about Trump and early-morning TV insisted on anonymity in order to discuss internal White House dealings. So did other advisers and associates cited in this story.

By the end of last week, the White House was back in the throes of some of the same sideshows that had overshadowed the policy issues Trump advisers have insisted they want to focus on. The president doubled down on his media bashing during a free-wheeling speech to conservative activists. Questions about his advisers' contacts with Russian intelligence agents were revived by revelations that chief of staff Reince Priebus discussed the matter with high-level FBI officials, in the midst of an investigation into those contacts.

On Monday, the White House tried to start over again. Trump huddled with governors and health care executives, pledging to work together to "save Americans from Obamacare." The Office of Management and Budget also laid the groundwork for a budget that will propose a massive increase in defense spending and sweeping cuts to domestic programs.

"We're going to do more with less and make the government lean and accountable to the people," Trump said.

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

Pressure on GOP to revamp health law grows, along with rifts

By ALAN FRAM and RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump declared Monday that "Nobody knew that health care could be so complicated." Yet the opposite has long been painfully obvious for top congressional Republicans, who face mounting pressure to scrap the law even as problems grow longer and knottier.

With the GOP-controlled Congress starting its third month of work on one of its marquee priorities, unresolved difficulties include how their substitute would handle Medicaid, whether millions of voters might lose coverage, how their proposed tax credits would work and how to pay for the costly exercise.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office made things complicated recently by giving House Republicans an informal analysis that their emerging plan would be more expensive than they hoped and cover fewer people than former President Barack Obama's statute. The analysis was described by lobbyists speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations with congressional aides.

In a fresh blow, a leading House conservative said late Monday that he was opposing a preliminary version of GOP legislation that emerged last week. Rep. Mark Walker, R-N.C., objected that the draft would not immediately end the expansion of Medicaid under Obama's health care overhaul and would create new tax credits to be paid to people, even if they owed little or no federal taxes.

Walker heads the Republican Study Committee, which traditionally represents most House Republicans. He said in a statement that he could not "in good conscience" recommend support without significant changes.

House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady, R-Texas, said Republicans have made numerous changes to that draft, but Walker's objections underscored internal tensions over the effort.

For many in the party, those problems, while major, are outweighed by pledges they've made for years to repeal Obama's 2010 law and substitute a GOP alternative. Conservatives favoring full repeal are pitted against more cautious moderates, and governors looking to curb Medicaid's costs also worry about constituents losing coverage. But Republicans see inaction as the worst alternative and leaders may plunge ahead as soon as next week with initial House committee votes on legislation.

"I believe they have left themselves no choice. Politically they must do something," Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a Republican economist and health analyst, said Monday.

Trump spoke about health care's complexities on a day he held White House talks with dozens of governors worried Republicans could shift a huge financial burden to the states by curbing Medicaid, the

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federal-state program that helps low-income people and those in nursing homes pay bills. Republican governors told reporters later that Trump would describe some specifics of his own plan in an address Tuesday to a joint session of Congress.

Trump also met with insurance company executives concerned that uncertainty about possible GOP changes could roil the marketplace.

Trump said the current health insurance market is "going to absolutely implode"—a contention he and other Republicans have made repeatedly. With premiums, deductibles and other out-of-pocket costs increasing in many individual markets, Democrats concede that changes are needed. But they contest that dire description and have no interest in helping Republicans kill Obama's statute.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., told reporters that Republicans have yet to win any Democratic support for their effort and said "the odds are very high" Obama's law won't be repealed.

Congress returned Monday from a recess that spotlighted hurdles the GOP faces.

Many Republicans endured rough receptions at town hall meetings from activist backers of Obama's overhaul. Governors meeting in Washington received a consultants' report warning that planned Republican cuts in Medicaid and federal subsidies for consumers buying private insurance would risk coverage for many people and serious funding gaps for states.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said she wouldn't support blocking federal payments to Planned Parenthood or repealing the health law's expansion of Medicaid — two staple GOP proposals. And former House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, predicted at a Florida forum last week that full repeal and replacement of Obama's law is "not going to happen" and suggested they'd end up leaving much of the law intact.

The plan House Republicans are considering includes helping people pay doctors' bills with tax credits based on age, not income, and expanding tax-advantaged health savings accounts. They would also gradually end Obama's expansion of Medicaid to more low earners and the open-ended federal payments states currently receive to help pay for the program.

Although "Obamacare" has never been popular, public opinion polls show most Americans want changes but not a complete takedown of the law.

At the same time, a number of Republican governors have taken a different path from the congressional GOP. Instead of insisting that the law be repealed, they reached accommodations with the previous administration that allowed the statute's Medicaid expansion to proceed in their states. According to the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation, 16 states with GOP governors have expanded Medicaid.

The consequences of GOP actions could make many people unhappy — not just the 20 million covered through the law but insurers, hospitals and drug companies who have benefited from Obamacare.

AP reporters Ken Thomas and Kevin Freking in Washington and Tom Murphy in Indianapolis contributed to this report.

Takata pleads guilty in air bag scandal, agrees to pay \$1B

By TOM KRISHER and ED WHITE, Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Japanese auto parts maker Takata Corp. pleaded guilty to fraud Monday and agreed to pay \$1 billion in penalties for concealing an air bag defect blamed for at least 16 deaths, most of them in the U.S.

The scandal, meanwhile, seemed to grow wider when plaintiffs' attorneys charged that five major auto-makers knew the devices were dangerous but continued to use them for years to save money.

In pleading guilty, Takata admitted hiding evidence that millions of its air bag inflators can explode with too much force, hurling lethal shrapnel into drivers and passengers. Chief financial officer Yoichiro Nomura spoke on behalf of the Tokyo-based company, saying the conduct was "completely unacceptable."

The inflators are blamed for 11 deaths in the U.S. alone and more than 180 injuries worldwide. The problem touched off the biggest recall in U.S. automotive history, involving 42 million vehicles and up to 69 million inflators.

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Penalties in the criminal case include \$850 million in restitution to automakers, \$125 million for victims and \$25 million for the U.S. government. Takata's fine to the government could have been as much as \$1.5 billion, but the judge in the case said such a sum probably would put the company out of business.

While Takata's destruction "would probably be a fair outcome," it wouldn't help victims get paid, U.S. District Judge George Caram Steeh said in accepting the deal negotiated with the U.S. Justice Department.

Takata's penalty is small compared with the one imposed on Volkswagen, which must buy back cars and pay up to \$21 billion over its emissions-cheating scandal. Steeh said he would pick a person to administer the restitution funds this week. Kenneth Feinberg, who handled the General Motors ignition switch and BP Oil spill compensation funds, is being considered.

Takata's inflators use ammonium nitrate to create a small explosion that inflates air bags in a crash. But when exposed to prolonged high temperatures and humidity, the chemical can deteriorate and burn too fast. That can blow apart a metal canister.

In the U.S., 19 automakers are recalling inflators. Worldwide, the total number is over 100 million.

Takata is "fully committed to ensuring that such conditions never happen again," Nomura said.

The costs of the recalls have saddled Takata, which also makes seat belts, with two straight years of losses. Lawyers acknowledged in court that the company will have to be sold to fund the agreement. Separately, three former executives are charged with falsifying test reports. They remain in Japan.

Steeh rejected pleas by lawyers for plaintiffs in lawsuits against Takata and automakers to delay the sentencing. They contended language in the plea agreement would help the automakers' defense because it painted them as victims of Takata's deception.

"Whether the OEMs (automakers) have a role as culprit in addition to victim is something that can be resolved through the litigation process," he said.

Plaintiffs in dozens of lawsuits over the defect charged in court papers filed Monday in Miami that Honda, Toyota, Nissan, Ford and BMW had independent knowledge that Takata's air bags were unsafe before putting them in millions of vehicles.

After an inflator ruptured in 2009, one of the auto companies described the problem as "one in which a passenger protection device was transformed into a killing weapon," the court filing said. The company was not identified.

The filing marks the broadest allegation yet that automakers knowingly put their customers in danger.

"The automotive defendants were aware that rupture after rupture, both during testing and in the field, confirmed how dangerous and defective Takata's air bags were," the plaintiffs' attorneys said.

The auto companies have asserted that they were deceived by Takata and shouldn't be held liable.

In Takata's plea agreement, the Justice Department says Takata got the car companies to keep buying its inflators "through submission of false and fraudulent reports and other information that concealed the true and accurate test results."

The plaintiffs are suing not only over the deaths and injuries but over what they say is the vehicles' loss in value because of the defect.

The plaintiff's filing Monday alleges that Honda, Takata's biggest customer, was involved in designing Takata inflators, and two of them exploded and ruptured at Honda facilities in 1999 and 2000. Toyota had quality concerns about Takata in 2003, while Ford ignored objections of its own inflator expert. Nissan switched to Takata inflators to save about \$4 per inflator, the lawyers alleged, while BMW also sought cost savings.

BMW, Nissan, Ford and Toyota declined comment. Honda said the lawyers' filing was misleading and an effort to maintain claims for economic losses regardless of Takata's guilty plea. The company also labeled as false an allegation that it proceeded with Takata inflators for cost reasons while knowing they were dangerous.

Feds rescind opposition to key part of Texas voter ID law

By DAVID SALEH RAUF, Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The U.S. Justice Department said Monday it is abandoning its longstanding opposition to a key aspect of Texas' toughest-in-the-nation voter ID law, costing voting rights groups their most important ally and possibly encouraging other conservative states to toughen their own election rules with President Donald Trump in charge.

It's a dramatic break from the agency's position under President Barack Obama, which spent years arguing that the voter ID law passed in 2011 by Texas' Republican-controlled Legislature was intended to disenfranchise poor and minority voters.

"It's a complete 180," said Danielle Lang of the Washington-based Campaign Legal Center. "We can't make heads or tails of any factual reason for the change. There has been no new evidence that's come to light."

The law requires voters to show one of seven forms of state-approved photo identification — gun permits are acceptable but college IDs are not. Voting rights activists sued, and the case returns to court Tuesday in Corpus Christi, Texas, before U.S. District Judge Nelva Gonzales Ramos.

Justice Department spokesman Mark Abueg said that although the Justice Department will no longer argue that the law was intended to discriminate against minorities, it doesn't plan to withdraw from a portion of the lawsuit that argues that the law had the effect of discriminating against them.

The "intent" versus "effect" distinction is important since the former is still being argued before Gonzales Ramos.

A federal appeals court last year already ruled on effect, deciding that the Texas law discriminated against minorities and the poor and ordering changes ahead of the November election. The U.S. Supreme Court last month declined a Texas appeal that sought to restore the law, but Chief Justice John Roberts hinted that the high court could eventually hear an appeal at a later time.

That appeal likely can't happen until Gonzales Ramos rules on the Legislature's intent, though, and she's not expected to decide until weeks after Tuesday's hearing. In the meantime, the Justice Department's withdrawal means voting rights organizations suing will lose the assistance of a group of Department of Justice lawyers who had been assisting them on the case. The groups say they plan to press on even without the extra help.

In a filing Monday, the Justice Department said it was dropping its claim that Texas' measure was crafted with the purpose of disenfranchising minority voters because state lawmakers are considering a proposal to revise the law. The Republican-backed bill would make permanent the court-ordered changes imposed for the November election, but its fate won't be known until closer to the end of Texas' legislative session in May.

"Thus, there is no basis for further judicial action at this juncture, when the State is 'acting to ameliorate the issues raised' in this case and has requested reasonable time to do so," the agency argued.

Along with Texas, the Obama-led Justice Department launched a high-profile legal challenge against North Carolina's voter ID law, arguing that its requirements were unnecessary and unconstitutional. North Carolina's top Democrats recently asked the U.S. Supreme Court to dismiss an effort to restore the law, which had been struck down as unconstitutional.

Republican-led legislatures around the country have in recent years rushed to pass restrictions on voting, arguing they were necessary to prevent fraud at the ballot box, despite any evidence that it's a widespread problem.

Under Obama, the Justice Department sought to contest such measures, but the Trump administration's change in strategy could empower other conservative-controlled states to follow Texas' lead and tighten their voter ID rules.

Trump has consistently touted unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud and has praised laws requiring ballot box photo identification.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions repeatedly sounded alarms over voting fraud and intimidation as a U.S. senator and challenged Justice Department attorneys over whether they were pursuing it aggressively

enough. As a U.S. attorney in Alabama in the 1980s, he prosecuted three civil rights activists on charges of tampering with ballots. The three defendants were acquitted in a matter of hours.

And during his confirmation hearing last month, Sessions defended laws requiring voters to show picture identification at the polls: "I think voter ID laws, properly drafted, are OK."

Wendy Weiser, director of the democracy program at the Brennan Center for Justice, said it was disappointing that the Justice Department would change its legal position.

"The more vigorously the Department of Justice pursues illegal discrimination when it happens, the more deterrent an effect it has," she said. "When they pull back from vigorous enforcement, it may have an unfortunate and pernicious effect of sending a green light to states that there's going to be less policing" of discriminatory laws.

This story has been corrected to reflect that Lang said "It's a complete 180," not "It's a complete 360."

Associated Press writer Eric Tucker in Washington contributed to this report

Trump says Oscars focused hard on politics before 'sad' end

By KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is giving Sunday's Academy Awards two thumbs down, calling the botched ending "sad."

The president said in an interview with Breitbart News on Monday that the Academy Awards "focused so hard on politics that they didn't get the act together at the end." Pointing to the flubbed awarding of "Moonlight" as the Oscar-winning best picture after initially giving the prize to "La La Land," Trump said, "to end that way was sad."

The president was attending a Governors' Ball at the White House for most of Sunday's awards ceremony. The annual Oscars ceremony carried a political edge throughout the evening, with many winners, presenters and host Jimmy Kimmel taking digs at Trump.

Trump, who was photographed at the Oscars in 2011, said the ceremony "didn't feel like a very glamorous evening." He said the event "was a little sad. It took away from the glamour of the Oscars."

The president has been critical of the Oscars before. In February 2015, he complained that the Oscars ceremony was "absolutely terrible" and "boring" and suggested the "perfect host for next year: Me."

At the end of Sunday's ceremony, presenters Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway apparently took the wrong envelope onto the stage for best picture and mistakenly read "La La Land" as the winner. Kimmel came forward to inform the cast that "Moonlight" had won the prize.

The 32.9 million viewers tuning into Sunday's Academy Awards represented a drop-off of more than a million from last year and Oscar's smallest audience since 2008.

AP Television Writer Frazier Moore contributed to this report.

911 call: Bar shooting suspect said he'd killed 'Iranians'

OLATHE, Kan. (AP) — A bartender at the restaurant where a man was arrested last week for an apparently racially motivated bar shooting of two Indian men told a 911 dispatcher that the suspect admitted shooting two people, but described them as Iranian.

A recording from Henry County, Missouri, 911 reveals that the bartender warned police not to approach the building with sirens blaring or the man would "freak out" and "something bad's going to happen."

The man, Adam Purinton, 51, of Olathe, made his first appearance in court Monday via video link. He has been charged with first-degree murder and first-degree attempted murder. According to witnesses, Purinton yelled "get out of my country" at two 32-year-old Indian men, Srinivas Kuchibhotla and Alok Madasani, before he opened fire at Austin's Bar and Grill in the Kansas City suburb on Wednesday evening.

Kuchibhotla was killed and Madasani injured. The two had come to the U.S. from India to study, and

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they worked as engineers at GPS-maker Garmin. A third patron, Ian Grillot, 24, was wounded when he tried to intervene.

After the shooting, Purinton, who is white, drove 70 miles east to an Applebee's restaurant in Clinton, Missouri, where he made the shocking admission to the bartender.

In the 911 call, the bartender, Sam Suida, told the dispatcher a man had come into the bar and said he'd done something "really bad" and was on the run from the police.

"He asked if he could stay with me and my husband, and he wouldn't tell me what he did. I kept asking him, and he said that he would tell me if I agreed to let him stay with me," the bartender said. "Well, I finally got him to tell me and he said, like, that he shot and killed two Iranian people in Olathe...."

Authorities have declined to discuss a possible motive for the attack or to say if they are investigating it as a hate crime. But the incident has raised concern about the treatment of immigrants, who feel targeted by President Donald Trump's promises to ban certain travelers, build a wall along the Mexico border and put "America first."

During Monday's court appearance lasting less than two minutes, Purinton was seen wearing what was described by a sheriff's department spokesman as a "safety smock," assigned to suspects who said something during jail processing that suggested they might do harm to themselves.

Johnson County sheriff's Master Deputy Rick Howell would not disclose the comment by Purinton that raised concern, but said the suspect would wear the smock until mental health professionals say otherwise.

Andy Berthelsen, a neighbor of Purinton's for the past 15 years, told the AP that Purinton had become "a drunken mess" after his father's death about 18 months ago. He said he doesn't believe the shooting stemmed from hatred, and that it likely resulted from Purinton's physical and mental deterioration.

The University of Kansas Health System released a video Sunday of an interview with Grillot, of Grandview, Missouri, who is recovering after a bullet went through his right hand and into his chest.

Grillot said he had to do something because there were families and children in the bar when the gunfire erupted. Grillot said he is grateful that the attack is bringing the community together and that it is "awesome honestly to be able to give people a hope that not everybody hates everybody."

Madasani addressed a crowd of hundreds during a vigil Sunday night at the Ball Conference Center in Olathe, Kansas.

He described the killing of Kuchibhotla, his friend and co-worker, as "a senseless crime," the Kansas City Star reported (<http://bit.ly/2mkJVIS>).

"The main reason why I am here is that's what my best friend, Srinivas, would have done," Madasani said. "He would have been here for me."

"I wish it was a dream," Madasani said.

Still walking on crutches, Madasani drew applause when he called the shooting "an isolated incident that doesn't reflect the true spirit of Kansas, the Midwest and the United States."

At the vigil, Madasani recalled how Kuchibhotla never complained about picking him up and driving him to work for six months.

"He waited till I bought a car. That's the kind of guy he was — is," Madasani said.

VA pledges more inspections, drug tests to stem opioid theft

By HOPE YEN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Department of Veterans Affairs said Monday it would boost employee drug testing and inspections amid rising cases of opioid theft and missing prescriptions, acknowledging gaps that had allowed thousands of doctors, nurses and other staff to go unchecked for signs of illicit drug use.

Testifying at a House hearing, Carolyn Clancy, a deputy VA undersecretary for health, said the department was moving aggressively to stem VA drug crimes. She said the VA was adding some inspectors to help check drug inventories across a network of 160 medical centers and 1,000 clinics. Computer systems also were being fine-tuned to ensure that all employees subject to drug testing were flagged for monitoring.

In the last week, she said, the VA held a conference call with hundreds of health clinics to develop action

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plans of improvement. The department was also considering more internal audits to make sure hospitals are complying with VA policy.

"The use of illegal drugs by VA employees is inconsistent with the special trust placed in such employees who care for veterans," Clancy told the House Veterans Affairs subcommittee on oversight. "We actually need to up our game."

The panel held a hearing Monday aimed at the VA's efforts to deter drug theft.

The Associated Press reported last week on government data showing a sharp increase since 2009 in opioid theft and drugs that had simply disappeared at the VA, amid rising opioid abuse in the U.S.

Reported incidents of drug losses or theft at federal hospitals jumped from 272 in 2009 to 2,926 in 2015, before dipping to 2,457 last year, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration. "Federal hospitals" include the VA's facilities as well as seven correctional hospitals and roughly 20 hospitals serving Indian tribes.

Out of those cases, only a small fraction of VA doctors, nurses or pharmacy employees were disciplined.

About 372 VA employees were dismissed, suspended or reprimanded for a drug or alcohol-related issue since 2010, according to VA data obtained by AP. Roughly translated, VA employees were disciplined in 3 percent of cases.

Adding to the problem is that some VA hospitals have been lax in tracking drug supplies. Congressional auditors said spot checks found four VA hospitals skipped monthly inspections of drug stocks or missed other requirements.

Pressed to estimate what percentage of VA's total facilities likely had notable problems with inspections, Randall Williamson, health care director at the Government Accountability Office, cited between 85 percent and 90 percent. He referred to "not a great track record" of accountability at the VA.

Rep. Jack Bergman, R-Mich., who chairs the House panel, said he was troubled by the reports, coming after repeated audit warnings dating back to at least 2009 of gaps in VA's monitoring programs.

"Unfortunately, the news has recently been filled with story after story of drug diversion within VA," Bergman said. "In case after case, what we see are examples of drugs being diverted for personal use or personal gain, yet there does not seem to be much progress being made by VA."

"We are in the midst of an opioid epidemic, and it is time for VA to start making effective changes to avoid putting veterans and the employees who serve them at risk."

Rep. Ann Kuster of New Hampshire, the panel's top Democrat, said she worried that the VA may not be receiving adequate resources to stem drug theft. She pointed to President Donald Trump's federal hiring freeze.

"Without adequate support staff in place, VA medical facilities will struggle to comply with the procedures and programs they must follow to ensure our veterans receive safe, high quality care," she said.

VA acknowledged it has had spotty compliance with drug inspections and employee drug testing and said most reform efforts were already underway. Among other problems, the VA inspector general's office found the department had failed to test 70 percent — or 15,800 — prospective employees over a 12-month period who would serve in sensitive VA positions such as doctor, nurse or police officer.

At the Atlanta medical center, mandatory drug testing for new hires did not occur at all for a period of at least 6 months between 2014 and 2015.

Clancy said the VA was now committed to "100 percent testing" of new hires in sensitive VA positions and would fix gaps that had allowed nearly 1 in 10 employees subject to random drug testing to avoid being monitored at all. She also cited strong policies, such as 72-hour inventory checks and "double lock and key access" to drugs, to keep VA drug crime in check.

Keith Berge, a Mayo Clinic anesthesiologist who chairs its Medication Diversion Prevention group, said drug theft was serious and patients could be seriously harmed if deprived of medication. Conducting drug tests before hiring at the VA was critical, he said.

"It is not good enough to merely have effective policies and procedures on the books; they must actually be rigorously followed."

Advocacy groups: Forget Oscars snafu, focus on 'Moonlight'

By JOCELYN NOVECK, AP National Writer

Yes, the Great Mistake of Oscars 2017 made history in all the wrong kinds of ways. But a day later, advocacy groups and others overjoyed by the Cinderella win of "Moonlight" were saying, let's forget the snafu and move on — because "Moonlight" made history in all the right kinds of ways.

The coming-of-age story of a gay black youth in a poor Miami neighborhood was made on the tiniest of budgets — \$1.5 million, said director Barry Jenkins backstage. It had a mostly black cast, and was seen as the first LGBT-themed movie to win best picture in the 89-year history of the awards show.

And so, there's no point in wondering whether the spectacular mess-up that led to "La La Land" first being announced best picture winner — incorrectly — would overshadow the "Moonlight" win, said Sarah Kate Ellis, president & CEO of GLAAD, the LGBT advocacy group. "I don't think you CAN overshadow the 'Moonlight' win," she said in an interview, while acknowledging it was "a bit upsetting that it went down that way."

What won out, she said, was not only a strong message of diversity and inclusivity, but "hopefully the bigger dream — that Hollywood recognizes this and continues to produce films like this, so that they are not the exception but the rule."

"So often we've heard from Hollywood that writers aren't writing about these things," Ellis said. "So having a success at this level takes that narrative out." The reason for the film's success, she said, was simple: "It reflects the world we live in today. Countless people can relate to it."

Gil Robertson, president of the African-American Film Critics Association, said he woke up on Monday morning simply "floating" over the "Moonlight" win.

"It's definitely a sign that the tide has turned" in Hollywood, Robertson said. The most significant result, he said, is what it would signal to up-and-coming filmmakers.

"What's cool for black filmmakers and filmmakers in general is that this lets them know that it's possible," he said. "It shows them, 'Wow, I can do this too.' That's probably the biggest thing to come out of this." As for the snafu, he said, "It was a mistake. Let's just move on."

That's essentially what Jenkins said backstage, minutes after accepting the best picture trophy. He noted that he had wanted to thank the studio, A24, for believing in and supporting the project throughout — but didn't have time, given the chaos onstage.

"My whole acceptance speech was going to be in thanks to them, because it's amazing to be Barry Jenkins right now, but it was not a year and a half ago for a guy who made a movie for \$13,000 and hadn't made a movie in seven years at that point," he said. "And it's unfortunate that things happened the way they did. But hot damn, we won best picture."

He added that "the folks of 'La La Land' were so gracious. I can't imagine being in their position and having to do that."

Oscar tabulators PwC, in their 83rd year providing the service to the academy, later apologized in a statement and were investigating why presenters Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway had been given the wrong envelope — a duplicate envelope for the best actress category, which was won by Emma Stone for "La La Land."

Director Damien Chazelle's buoyant musical had been widely considered a shoo-in for best picture after netting a record-tying 14 nominations and a slew of earlier awards this season. The film still won six Oscars, including best director for Chazelle, at 32 became the youngest ever to take the prize, and for score ("City of Stars") and actress to Stone.

"Is that the craziest Oscar moment of all time?" Stone said later of the mix-up. "Cool!"

It wasn't the only gaffe at the ceremony. An Australian film producer's photo was mistakenly included in the "In Memoriam" tribute. Jan Chapman's photo was shown with the name of Janet Patterson, an Australian costume designer who died in 2015. The Academy didn't respond to a request for comment.

"Moonlight" triumphed in a year when the academy was under pressure to honor more diverse films after two consecutive years of OscarsSoWhite, when no black actors were nominated. (Even before "Moonlight"

won best picture, this year's awards were much more diverse, with supporting acting wins for the film's Mahershala Ali, and for Viola Davis in "Fences.")

Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences President Cheryl Boone Isaacs had taken action to diversify the membership of the largely white, older and male film academy. "Tonight is proof that art has no borders, no single language and does not belong to a single faith," Isaacs said on Sunday.

In Liberty City, the Miami community featured in "Moonlight," Larry Anderson, who played the character of Antwon in the film, said Jenkins' success had given him hope for his own future. Larry, 17, is a junior at Miami Northwestern Senior High School.

"Knowing that he came from the same — not just Miami, but Liberty City, same Pork n' Beans (housing project), Miami Northwestern (High School) and the same programs that I've been part of, it tells me I can achieve me in the same way as him," Larry said. "It does give me a special connection that he walked the same halls."

AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr in Los Angeles and David Fischer in Miami contributed to this report.

Pentagon chief presented counter-IS plan to White House

By ROBERT BURNS and LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Jim Mattis on Monday gave the White House a plan to "rapidly defeat" the Islamic State group, a Pentagon spokesman said Monday. The strategy includes significant elements of the approach President Donald Trump inherited, while potentially deepening U.S. military involvement in Syria.

Navy Capt. Jeff Davis said Mattis, who traveled to Iraq last week to help inform his thinking, presented the results of a 30-day strategy review at a Cabinet-level meeting of the National Security Council. It's unclear whether the meeting included Trump, who said last week his goal is to "obliterate" IS.

White House press secretary Sean Spicer said Mattis was ensuring that he had input from other Cabinet agencies.

"That can help guide where we go from here," Spicer said.

Davis said details of the report are classified secret.

"It is a plan to rapidly defeat ISIS," Davis said, using the Pentagon's preferred acronym for the group, which has proven resilient despite losing ground in its strongholds in Syria and Iraq.

Officials familiar with the review have said it will likely lead to decisions that mean more U.S. military involvement in Syria, and possibly more ground troops, even as the current U.S. plan in Iraq appears to be working and will require fewer changes. The officials weren't authorized to speak publicly about the document and demanded anonymity.

Davis described the Mattis report as "a framework for a broader discussion" of a strategy to be developed over time, rather than a ready-to-execute military plan. In a Jan. 28 executive order, Trump said he wanted within 30 days a "preliminary draft" of a plan to "defeat ISIS." Davis said the report defines what it means to "defeat" the group, which he wouldn't reveal to reporters.

It also includes some individual actions that will require decisions by the White House, Davis said, "but it's not a 'check-the-block, pick A or B or C' kind of a plan."

"This is a broad plan," he said. "It is global. It is not just military. It is not just Iraq/Syria."

Beyond military options, the officials familiar with the review said the report increases emphasis on non-military elements of the campaign already underway, such as efforts to squeeze IS finances, limit recruiting and counter propaganda that is credited with inspiring violence in the U.S. and Europe.

Marine Corps Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said last week the emerging strategy will target not just Islamic State militants but also al-Qaida and other extremist organizations in the Middle East and beyond, whose goal is to attack the United States. He emphasized that it would not rest mainly on military might.

Dunford's comment suggests Pentagon leaders may have a more nuanced view of IS than is reflected in Trump's promise to "obliterate" the group, as he put it on Friday. Dunford said the U.S. should be careful

that in solving the IS problem, it does not create others. Among sensitive questions are how to deal with Turkey, a NATO ally with much at stake in neighboring Syria, and Russia, whose year-and-a-half military intervention has propped up Syrian President Bashar Assad's government.

Davis said Mattis' report was built on broad concepts and based on advice from across the government.

The officials familiar with the review say the recommended approaches will echo central elements of the Obama administration's strategy, which centered on the U.S. military supporting local forces rather than doing the fighting for them. Mattis already has signaled publicly he sees no value in having U.S. combat forces take over the ground war.

"I would just tell you that by, with and through our allies is the way this coalition is going against Daesh," he said last week in Baghdad, using an Arabic term for IS.

Asked if adding more U.S. troops or better arming Syria's Kurds were options, Mattis said he will "accommodate any request" from his field commanders. He said a degree of "confidentiality" was required so plans aren't exposed to the enemy.

Army Gen. Joseph Votel, the commander of U.S. Central Command, which oversees military operations in the Mideast, has said more American troops may be needed to speed up the fight in Syria. The U.S. currently has about 500 special operations forces in Syria helping to organize, advise and assist local forces.

One of the thorniest problems the Trump administration faces concerns Russia's military role in Syria. Although Trump has expressed interest in working with Russia against IS, the Pentagon has been reluctant to go beyond military-to-military contacts aimed at avoiding accidents in the airspace over Syria.

Senior military leaders, including Mattis, seem more confident in the Iraqi military campaign, suggesting the new options will put greater emphasis on Syria.

Associated Press writer Bradley Klapper contributed to this report.

Oscars mistake puts consulting firm's reputation in jeopardy

By PAN PYLAS, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — For 82 years, accounting and consulting firm PwC has enjoyed a reputational boon from handling the balloting process at the Academy Awards.

Now its hard-won image as a dependable partner is under threat.

The company has apologized for a colossal mistake at the 89th Academy Awards on Sunday night when actors Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty wrongly announced the top Oscar went to "La La Land," instead of "Moonlight."

The presenters, it turned out, had been given the wrong envelope by tabulators PwC, in this case the one awarding Emma Stone for best actress for her role in "La La Land." The representatives from PwC, formerly known as PricewaterhouseCoopers, eventually corrected the mistake on air but it's not clear yet how the wrong envelope ended up in the hands of the "Bonnie and Clyde" stars.

Whatever the reason, it's been a cue for endless jokes and hilarity around the world.

For London-headquartered PwC, it's anything but funny.

According to Nigel Currie, an independent London-based branding specialist with decades' worth of industry experience, this mistake is "as bad a mess-up as you could imagine."

"They had a pretty simple job to do and messed it up spectacularly," he said. "They will be in deep crisis talks on how to deal with it."

Brands go to extraordinary lengths to protect their image and reputation and to be seen as good corporate citizens. History is littered by examples when a hard-won reputation nosedives — from sporting legends Tiger Woods and Lance Armstrong to business giants like BP following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster and Volkswagen after its emissions cheating scandal.

Crisis managers say PwC has no other option than to front-up immediately and explain exactly what happened to contain the damage to its reputation and brand and plot a way forward where there's no repeat.

"There will certainly have to be accounting for this error," said Jeremy Robinson-Leon, principal and

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chief operating officer at New York-based public relations firm Group Gordon. "The onus will be on PwC, assuming they stay as partners, to institute controls to ensure this doesn't happen again."

PwC, which originated in London over a century ago, was quick to apologize to the movies involved, Beatty, Dunaway and viewers, but has yet to fully explain what happened.

"The presenters had mistakenly been given the wrong category envelope and, when discovered, was immediately corrected," it said in a statement. "We are currently investigating how this could have happened, and deeply regret that this occurred."

In fact, it took over two minutes on air, during which time the "La La Land" team gave three acceptance speeches, before PwC corrected the mistake on stage.

PwC's representatives were Brian Cullinan, a partner at the firm — and, according to his bio on the company's website, a Matt Damon lookalike — and Martha Ruiz, the second woman to serve as a PwC Oscars tabulator.

Cullinan is the lead partner for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, including the annual balloting for the Oscars ceremony. He has been part of the balloting team since 2014.

Ruiz, a 19-year veteran at PwC who specializes in providing tax compliance and advisory services to entertainment clients in southern California, joined Cullinan as the Oscars balloting co-leader in 2015.

In a promotional video on the company's website ahead of Sunday's show, Cullinan said he and Ruiz are the only two who knew who the winners were on the night of the awards.

"There are 24 categories. We have the winners in sealed envelopes that we hold and maintain throughout the evening and hand those to the presenters before they walk out on stage," he said.

According to Mike Davies, PwC's director of global communications, both Cullinan and Ruiz would have had a briefcase on either side of the auditorium to hand out the envelope for the category to be announced. Each briefcase would have had one envelope of each category winner.

In his remarks before the show, Cullinan had said PwC's relationship with the Academy Awards is testament to the firm's reputation in the market for being "a firm of integrity, of accuracy and confidentiality and all of those things that are really key to the role we have with the Academy in counting these ballots."

"But I think it's really symbolic of how we're thought of beyond this role and how our clients think of us and I think it's something we take very seriously and take a lot of pride in."

Robinson-Leon said it was important to remember that counting ballots is not PwC's core business but that it will have to be serious about dealing with the aftermath of Sunday's embarrassment and media fallout.

"This can happen once and there will be relative forgiveness but it can't happen twice," said Group Gordon's Robinson-Leon. "If they were to do this again, that could have an impact on the brand. If this is an isolated incident, the long-term impact on the brand will be minimal."

Germany sees "alarmingly high" number of anti-migrant crimes

By DAVID RISING, Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Migrants and their homes in Germany faced more than 3,500 attacks in 2016, a number that is "alarmingly high and cause for concern," a German official said Monday, while adding that the crimes are being aggressively prosecuted and the numbers of such attacks are now falling.

Most of the attacks were crimes like vandalism to asylum-seeker homes — including far-right graffiti, threats and slander — but the report also included more serious attacks like arson, bodily harm and attempted murder. It was compiled by the Interior Ministry with information from Germany's 16 states in response to a question in Parliament by the Left party.

"There was a very wide spectrum of crimes ... every one is to be condemned," said Interior Ministry spokesman Johannes Dimroth.

The attacks led to 560 people being injured, including 43 children. Overall, 2,343 suspects were identified and investigated, according to the new report.

Comparison figures for previous years haven't been compiled but Dimroth said after 2016 the "trend is downward ... which gives us a little bit of hope."

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Germany took in 890,000 asylum-seekers in 2015, and the influx caused a backlash and a rise in anti-immigrant sentiment, which was most pronounced in eastern parts of the country.

The government has invested more resources into fighting xenophobic crimes, but the new figures show more needs to be done, said Gauri van Gulik, deputy Europe director of Amnesty International.

"We need to see better risk assessments, more protection at certain locations, thorough investigations and prosecutions of these appalling racist attacks to stop them in the future," van Gulik said.

Dimroth said, in addition to government policies and police enforcement, it's up to society in general to fight racism, saying it's impossible to just "ban" extremism.

"All of society has the responsibility to establish a climate where extremism finds no fertile ground," he said.

The number of asylum-seekers in Germany tapered off to 280,000 in 2016. With the decrease, and more intensive government efforts to rapidly send home those whose applications are rejected, anti-immigrant sentiment has tapered off somewhat.

The government has also been working to more rapidly integrate those who are allowed to stay.

With a German national election planned for the end of September, it seems likely the nationalist and anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany, or AfD, party will have more than enough support still to win seats in Parliament for the first time even though recent polls have shown a steady decline in support. A poll last week showed the party's support at 11 percent, down from as high as 16 percent last fall.

7-foot-7 'Game of Thrones' actor Neil Fingleton dies at 36

LONDON (AP) — Neil Fingleton, a 7-foot 7-inch actor who played the giant Mag the Mighty in "Game of Thrones" has died at 36.

The Tall Persons Club says Fingleton, who was Britain's tallest man, died Saturday. British media reported the cause as heart failure.

Fingleton was recognized by Guinness World Records in 2007 as the U.K.'s tallest man.

Born in northeast England in 1980, Fingleton told the Guinness records website in 2006 that "I have always been taller than everyone since I can remember."

His height made him a basketball natural, and Fingleton played college basketball in the United States for the University of North Carolina and the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts.

He went on to a short professional basketball career in the U.S. and Europe before turning to acting.

He appeared in films including "417 Ronin" and "X-Men: First Class" and in TV shows including "Doctor Who" and the hit fantasy series "Game of Thrones."

In the "Games of Thrones" the fearsome Mag was a giant on the northern side of the great ice wall that was guarded by Lord Commander Jon Snow and the black-clad men of the Night's Watch.

Oscars flap eclipses 'Moonlight' win, but civility reigns

By LINDSEY BAHR, AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The 89th Academy Awards got off on the right foot, with a song and dance, but ended with the most stunning mistake ever to befall the esteemed awards show when the best picture Oscar was presented to the wrong movie. Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty, holding an incorrect envelope, wrongly presented the top prize to "La La Land" instead of "Moonlight."

The moment at the conclusion of the Sunday-night show was so jaw-dropping, it eclipsed everything else in a ceremony that was packed to the brim with Donald Trump jabs, fun stunts, heartfelt positivity and a stunning upset by "Moonlight" over what had been a "La La" juggernaut throughout the awards season. Yet somehow, even the embarrassing moment pivoted into grace.

As confusion and bafflement overwhelmed those in the Dolby Theatre and at home on their couches, "Moonlight" director Barry Jenkins and "La La Land" director Damien Chazelle shared a hug on the back of the stage, out of sight from the television cameras.

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"The folks of 'La La Land' were so gracious. I can't imagine being in their position and having to do that," Jenkins told reporters backstage. "It was unfortunate that things happened as they did but, goddamn, we won best picture."

Oscar tabulators PwC, in their 83rd year providing the service to the academy, later apologized in a statement and are investigating why it happened.

There's no denying, though, that "Moonlight's" win over "La La Land" was a massive upset, made only more pointed by the envelope gaffe. Chazelle's candy-colored musical was widely presumed to be a shoo-in for the top prize after its record-tying 14 nominations and a relative sweep of the awards season. The film still won six Oscars, including best director for Chazelle, who at 32 became the youngest ever to take the prize, and for score, song ("City of Stars") and actress to Emma Stone.

The actress, who pledged her deep love of "Moonlight," said later, "Is that the craziest Oscar moment of all time? Cool!"

The best picture mix-up apparently wasn't the only gaffe at the Oscars. An Australian film producer's photo was mistakenly included in the "In Memoriam" tribute. Jan Chapman's photo was shown with the name of Janet Patterson, an Australian costume designer who died in 2015. The Academy didn't respond to a request for comment.

The academy usually throws awards at films that gaze lovingly at Hollywood, but Barry Jenkins' heartfelt coming-of-age drama seduced academy voters in the end — a subtle tide change perhaps informed by both a prickly political climate and an urgent imperative to honor more diverse films after two consecutive years of OscarsSoWhite.

Diversity could be found in every corner of the awards this year, with supporting acting wins for "Moonlight's" Mahershala Ali and "Fences'" Viola Davis, although the best actor category proved to be a bit of an upset when Casey Affleck won for "Manchester by the Sea" over Denzel Washington of "Fences," who had picked up momentum in recent weeks.

The improvement followed efforts by Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences President Cheryl Boone Isaacs to diversify the membership of the largely white, older and male film academy. "Tonight is proof that art has no borders, no single language and does not belong to a single faith," said Isaacs.

Davis gave a particularly powerful speech in which she praised the late "Fences" playwright August Wilson who, she said, "Exhumed and exalted the ordinary people." Kimmel said later that Davis, "Just got nominated for an Emmy for that speech."

Ezra Edelman, whose nearly eight-hour epic "O.J.: Made in America" took best documentary, dedicated the award to the victims of the famous crime, Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman.

Rich Moore, one of the three directors of Disney's best animated film winner "Zootopia," described the movie as about "tolerance being more powerful than fear of the other."

The majority of speeches were moving and personal and generally in praise of art's ability to create empathy in the world, including Jenkins' in his win for adapted screenplay, who said, "All you people out there who feel like there isn't a mirror out there for you, the Academy has your back, the ACLU has your back, and for the next four years we will not leave you alone, we will not forget you." But not one speech came close to Meryl Streep's Golden Globes barnburner.

"Personally, I didn't say anything because my head was completely blank," Affleck said backstage of his not political speech.

Instead, politics stayed largely with host Jimmy Kimmel, who kept his barbs coy and irreverent, stating at the start that he wasn't the man to unite the country.

The host peppered the evening with digs at President Trump, at one point asking the crowd to stand for the "overrated Meryl Streep," and, later, for any news outlet with the word "Times" in its name to leave, saying, "We have no tolerance for fake news."

Kimmel even jokingly thanked the president for shifting the focus of the night.

"Remember last year when it seemed like the Oscars were racist?" he said in the opening.

The evening's most blunt protests against Trump came not from the A-list stars but from foreigners, a few of whom were not even in attendance and could communicate their sentiments only through statements.

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Kimmel, as if predicting that this would be the case, said early that the Oscars are watched by 225 countries "that now hate us."

Iranian director Asghar Farhadi, whose "The Salesman" won best foreign film, his second win in the category, did not attend the ceremony in protest of Trump's travel ban to seven predominantly Muslim nations.

Anousheh Ansari, an Iranian astronaut, read a statement from Farhadi.

"I'm sorry I'm not with you tonight," it read. "My absence is out of respect for the people of my country and those of other six nations who have been disrespected by the inhumane law that bans entry of immigrants to the U.S."

Gael Garcia Bernal, the Mexican actor, while presenting an award, also declared: "As a migrant worker, as a Mexican, and as a human being, I am against any wall."

But, of course, the big best picture mistake will be the thing that history remembers about the 89th Academy Awards.

"Let's remember this is just an awards show," Kimmel said at the close. "I knew I would screw this show up, I really did. I promise I'll never come back."

AP Film Writer Jake Coyle contributed from Los Angeles.

Trump ordering review of Obama rule protecting small streams

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump will sign an executive order Tuesday mandating a review of an Obama-era rule aimed at protecting small streams and wetlands from development and pollution.

The order will instruct the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers to review a rule that redefined "waters of the United States" protected under the Clean Water Act to include smaller creeks and wetlands, according to a senior White House official.

The official briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity, despite the president's recent complaints about unnamed sources.

Trump had railed against the water rule during his campaign, slamming it as an example of federal overreach. Farmers and landowners have criticized the rule, saying there are already too many government regulations that affect their businesses, and Republicans have been working to thwart it since its inception.

But Democrats have argued that it safeguards drinking water for millions of Americans and clarifies confusion about which streams, tributaries and wetlands should be protected in the wake of decades-long uncertainty despite two Supreme Court rulings.

The order Trump is set to sign will also instruct the agencies to ask the attorney general to suspend ongoing court action while the review is underway. Implementation of the rule has been held up in court due to pending legal challenges.

The president has promised to dramatically scale back regulations that he says are holding back businesses, and has signed several orders aimed at that goal.

The League of Conservation Voters issued a pre-emptive statement slamming the expected move.

"This executive order is about one thing: protecting polluters at the expense of our communities and their access to clean drinking water," Madeleine Foote, the group's legislative representative, said in a statement.

Taco truck serves highway lunch for stranded Seattle drivers

SEATTLE (AP) — A taco truck that became stranded in a massive Seattle traffic jam came to the rescue of hungry drivers by opening up and serving lunch on the interstate.

A tanker truck carrying propane rolled over on Seattle's Interstate 5 on Monday morning, shutting area roads for about eight hours amid concerns about a hazardous materials spill.

While waiting in the jam, Rachel McQuade tells The Seattle Times (<http://bit.ly/2ljsqUg>) she spotted someone walking back to her car with a to-go box of food. She says she then headed over to the Tacos El Tajin truck herself and ordered two steak and two chicken tacos for her husband.

El Tajin owner Thomas Lopez tells the newspaper that he and his employees "are ready to serve food, everywhere."

China's coal consumption falls for 3rd year in a row

By LOUISE WATT, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China's consumption of coal fell in 2016 for a third year in a row, official data showed Tuesday, as the world's top carbon polluter has emerged as a global leader in addressing global warming.

The National Bureau of Statistics said the consumption of coal, a major source of heat-trapping carbon dioxide emissions, fell by 4.7 percent last year, according to preliminary calculations.

The bureau said the share of coal in China's total energy consumption mix fell to 62 percent in 2016 from 64 percent the year before. A revised figure in the China Energy Statistical Yearbook put the 2015 figure at 63.7 percent, but Tuesday's report referenced the preliminary figures reported last year.

While China is the world's biggest consumer of coal, its consumption levels have dropped as economic growth slows to its lowest level since 1990. With its major cities gripped by choking air pollution, China has also aimed to reduce coal usage in favor of natural gas and renewable energy including hydro, wind and solar power.

Directives in January from the National Energy Administration ordered the cancellation of about 100 coal-fired power plants planned across the country. Construction had already started on some.

As the world's second-largest economy, China is the top emitter of man-made carbon dioxide emissions, with the globe's leading economy, the United States, in second place.

China's tackling of climate change in collaboration with the United States under President Barack Obama was touted by Beijing and Washington as a bright spot in a relationship beset by trade and security tensions. Crucially, the two countries joined last year to endorse the landmark Paris Agreement on climate change.

That limited partnership has now grown uncertain under new President Donald Trump, who has called climate change a Chinese hoax and pledged to reverse Obama's efforts to curb emissions from coal-fired power plants.

Trump said during his campaign that he would "cancel" the Paris Agreement and withdraw American tax dollars from U.N. global warming programs.

Greenpeace said an analysis of data from the National Energy Administration showed an expected "significant drop" in China's CO2 emissions of 1 percent this year, in what it said would be the fourth consecutive year of zero growth or a decline.

The decline "reinforces China's growing status as a global climate leader, and sends a strong signal to U.S. President Trump that his dirty energy agenda will send the American economy in the wrong direction," Greenpeace said.

Lauri Myllyvirta, senior coal campaigner for Greenpeace, said China's stable and falling carbon emissions have "completely revolutionized the prospects for bringing global emissions and bringing climate change under control."

"The two reasons why global emissions have been stable for the past three years are no growth in China and rapid fall in emissions in the U.S., so that really shows what can be accomplished when these two countries work together," Myllyvirta said.

China's decline in coal use, however, did not signal an overall drop in energy consumption. The country's total use of energy rose by the equivalent of 4.36 billion tons of standard coal, an increase of 1.4 percent over the previous year, the statistics bureau said. Consumption of crude oil increased by 5.5 percent and natural gas by 8 percent, the bureau said. Overall consumption of electricity from all sources rose by 5 percent, it said.

Consumption of renewable sources accounted for 19.7 percent of the total energy mix, up 1.7 percent from the year before. While solar and wind power are growing more prominent, most renewable energy comes from dams whose environmental impact is beginning to draw more attention. China has suspended approvals for new hydroelectric projects in the mountainous southwestern province of Yunnan following

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concerns about the impact on the local ecosystem.

Meanwhile, production of coal fell by 9 percent to 3.41 billion tons last year. China has for years been closing smaller, less efficient and more dangerous coal mines in a bid to boost productivity in the sector.

AP researcher Yu Bing and news assistant Liu Zheng contributed to this report.

Asia stocks advance ahead of Trump speech, China congress

By KELVIN CHAN, AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — Asian stocks were mostly higher Tuesday after another strong finish on Wall Street as investors awaited a speech by President Donald Trump to the U.S. Congress.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 index added 0.7 percent to 19,242.12 and South Korea's Kospi rose 0.3 percent to 2,091.22. Hong Kong's Hang Seng slipped 0.1 percent to 23,899.76 and the Shanghai Composite index in mainland China was flat at 3,228.74. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 climbed 0.3 percent to 5,740.50.

BIG SPEECH: Investors are awaiting Trump's first speech to a joint session of Congress, scheduled for Tuesday evening — or Wednesday morning in Asia. Investors are hoping he'll outline promised tax cuts, infrastructure spending and other business friendly policies. On Monday he told a group of governors, "We're going to start spending on infrastructure big." He also noted that his upcoming budget would include increasing defense spending by \$54 billion while cutting domestic programs and foreign aid by the same amount.

INVESTOR INSIGHT: "There will be a few things that the market will hunt for in his address," said Jingyi Pan of IG in Singapore. "This includes tax, infrastructure and trade policies and the lack of details may not placate the increasingly impatient market. Should the details, or the lack of, disappoint the markets, the hunt for safe havens may pick up instead."

CHINA CONGRESS: China's national legislature and a parallel advisory body will begin meetings this week that will help signal the direction for the region's largest economy. Financial stability and sustainable growth are on the agenda.

WALL STREET: Major U.S. benchmarks notched up another milestone day as the Dow Jones industrial average ended 0.1 percent higher at 20,837.44, marking the 12th consecutive time it set a record high. That makes it the longest winning streak for the 30-company average in 30 years. The S&P 500 also closed at a record high, gaining 0.1 percent to 2,369.73 while the Nasdaq composite index added 0.3 percent to 5,861.90.

CURRENCIES: The dollar slipped to 112.57 yen from Monday's 112.79 yen. The euro edged lower to \$1.0586 from \$1.0587.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude added 8 cents to \$54.13 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract rose 6 cents to close at \$54.05 a barrel on Monday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, rose 9 cents to \$56.51 in London.

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Feb. 28, the 59th day of 2017. There are 306 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 28, 1917, The Associated Press reported that the United States had obtained a diplomatic communication sent by German Foreign Minister Arthur Zimmermann to a German official in Mexico; the "Zimmermann Note," which had been intercepted and decoded by Britain, proposed a German alliance with Mexico and Japan should the U.S. enter World War I. (Outrage over the telegram helped propel America into the conflict.)

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On this date:

In 1844, a 12-inch gun aboard the USS Princeton exploded as the ship was sailing on the Potomac River, killing Secretary of State Abel P. Upshur, Navy Secretary Thomas W. Gilmer and several others.

In 1861, the Territory of Colorado was organized.

In 1942, the heavy cruiser USS Houston and the Australian light cruiser HMAS Perth were attacked by Japanese forces during the World War II Battle of Sunda Strait; both were sunk shortly after midnight on March 1 with a total loss of more than 1,000 men.

In 1953, scientists James D. Watson and Francis H.C. Crick announced they had discovered the double-helix structure of DNA.

In 1960, a day after defeating the Soviets at the Winter Games in Squaw Valley, California, the United States won its first Olympic hockey gold medal by defeating Czechoslovakia, 9-4.

In 1967, American magazine publisher Henry R. Luce died in Phoenix, Arizona, at age 68.

In 1975, 42 people were killed in London's Underground when a train smashed into the end of a tunnel.

In 1986, Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme (PAHL'-meh) was shot to death in central Stockholm. (The killing remains unsolved.)

In 1993, a gun battle erupted at a religious compound near Waco, Texas, when Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents tried to arrest Branch Davidian leader David Koresh on weapons charges; four agents and six Davidians were killed as a 51-day standoff began.

In 1996, Britain's Princess Diana agreed to divorce Prince Charles. (Their 15-year marriage officially ended in August 1996; Diana died in a car crash in Paris a year after that.)

In 1997, in North Hollywood, California, two heavily armed and armored robbers, after bungling a bank heist, came out firing, unleashing their arsenal at police, bystanders, cars and TV choppers before they were killed.

In 2013, Benedict XVI became the first pope in 600 years to resign, ending an eight-year pontificate. (Benedict was succeeded the following month by Pope Francis.)

Ten years ago: A federal judge in Miami ruled that suspected al-Qaida operative Jose Padilla was competent to stand trial on terrorism support charges, rejecting arguments that he was severely damaged by 3 1/2 years of interrogation and isolation in a military brig. (Padilla was convicted later in the year of supporting al-Qaida and terrorism conspiracy and was sentenced to 17 years in prison, a term that was later increased to 21 years.) Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. died in New York at age 89.

Five years ago: Republican Mitt Romney won presidential primary victories in Arizona and Michigan. Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, announced she would not seek re-election, citing what she called the increasingly polarized climate of Washington. Angela Castro, 88, an elder sister of Cuban leaders Fidel and Raul Castro, died in Havana. Matt Kenseth won his second Daytona 500, holding off Dale Earnhardt Jr. in a post-midnight victory after rain had postponed the start of the race for the first time in its 54-year history from Sunday to Monday.

One year ago: One of Pope Francis' top advisers, Australian Cardinal George Pell, testifying before an investigative commission in Sydney via videolink from Rome, acknowledged that the Catholic Church had made "enormous mistakes" in allowing thousands of children to be raped and molested by priests over centuries. "Spotlight" won the Academy Award for best picture of 2015; Brie Larson was recognized as best actress for "Room" while Leonardo DiCaprio was named best actor for "The Revenant." Oscar-winning actor George Kennedy, 91, died in Middleton, Idaho.

Today's Birthdays: Architect Frank Gehry is 88. Actor Gavin MacLeod is 86. Singer Sam the Sham is 80. Actor-director-dancer Tommy Tune is 78. Hall of Fame auto racer Mario Andretti is 77. Actor Frank Bonner is 75. Actress Kelly Bishop is 73. Actress Stephanie Beacham is 70. Writer-director Mike Figgis is 69. Actress Mercedes Ruehl is 69. Actress Bernadette Peters is 69. Former Energy Secretary Steven Chu is 69. Actress Ilene Graff is 68. Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman is 64. Comedian Gilbert Gottfried is 62. Basketball Hall of Famer Adrian Dantley is 62. Actor John Turturro is 60. Rock singer Cindy Wilson is 60. Actress Rae Dawn Chong is 56. Actress Maxine Bahns is 48. Actor Robert Sean Leonard is 48. Rock singer

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Pat Monahan is 48. Author Daniel Handler (aka "Lemony Snicket") is 47. Actress Tasha Smith is 46. Actor Rory Cochrane is 45. Actress Ali Larter is 41. Country singer Jason Aldean is 40. Actor Geoffrey Arend is 39. Actress Michelle Horn is 30. Actress True O'Brien (TV: "Days of Our Lives") is 23. Actress Madisen Beaty is 22. Actress Quinn Shephard is 22. Actor Bobb'e J. Thompson is 21.

Thought for Today: "Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know." — Daniel J. Boorstin, American historian, educator and Librarian of Congress (1914-2004).