

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 1 of 40

- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Groton Ford Ad
- 1 - DQ Help Wanted
- 2- Adopted 2017-18 School Calendar
- 2- Aberdeen Area Job Fair
- 3- Elementary School project under budget
- 4- Classifieds
- 4- Sundial Manor hiring
- 4 - GDI Living Heart Fitness Ad
- 5- Updated bleachers on the way to baseball complex
- 6- Laundromat is open
- 7- Deep Thoughts Column
- 8- MS/HS bond set for 20 years
- 8- NEC All-Conference GBB Team
- 9- Today in Weather History
- 10- Local Weather Forecast
- 11- Yesterday's Groton Weather
- 11- Today's Weather Climate
- 11- National Weather map
- 12 - Daily Devotional
- 13- News from the Associated Press



DAIRY QUEEN HELP WANTED

Dairy Queen in Groton is now hiring. If you're looking for a fun job with part-time hours, flexible scheduling, please stop in for an application.

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**

© 2017 Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14

Senior Menu: Chicken Tetrizzine, Green beans, honey fruit salad, vanilla pudding, whole wheat bread.

School Lunch: Tomato soup, grilled cheese, broccoli and drip, fruit.

School Breakfast: Boscos breakfast stick, fruit, juice, milk.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, March 15

Senior Menu: Roast turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, broccoli, pumpkin bar, whole wheat bread.

School Lunch: Hot dog wraps, baked beans, fruit, romaine salad.

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Lenten meal at 6 p.m. (men serve), worship at 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation at 3:45 p.m., Lenten Service at 7 p.m.

Thursday, March 16

Senior Menu: Mulligan stew, cornbread, pistachio pudding, pineapple, cookie.

Spring break - No School

Emmanuel Lutheran: WELCA at 1:30 P.M.

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting at 9 a.m.

Friday, March 17

Senior Menu: Hot pork sandwich, coleslaw, baked beans, sherbet.

Spring Break - No School

Put our experienced team to work for you!

GROTON
Ford

GROTONFORD.COM 605-397-2311

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 2 of 40

2017 - 2018 Groton Area School District

Draft Updated 03/13/17

August 2017						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August	
16 - Faculty Inservice - NSU	
31 - Faculty Inservice	
Student Contact: 0; Inservice: 2	

January 2018						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

January	
3 - NCSEC Faculty Inservice	
4 - School Resumes	
17 - End of 1st Semester (42/85)	
Student Contact: 20; Inservice: 1	

September 2017						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

September	
4 - Labor Day - NO SCHOOL	
5 - 1st Day of School	
7 - Open House/Picnic (5:00-7:30)	
18 - Homecoming Coronation (7:30)	
22 - Homecoming FB vs. Moberidge-Pollock	
Student Contact: 19; Inservice: 0	

February 2018						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

February	
16 - Faculty Inservice - NO SCHOOL	
19 - President's Day - NO SCHOOL	
Student Contact: 18; Inservice: 1	

October 2017						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

October	
13 - Lake Region Marching Festival	
24 - Parent/Teacher Conferences (1:30 - 8:30)	
27 - Faculty Inservice - NO SCHOOL	
Student Contact: 21; Inservice: 2	

March 2018						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

March	
9 - Spring Break - NO SCHOOL	
23 - End of 3rd Quarter (44)	
30 - Good Friday - NO SCHOOL	
Student Contact: 20; Inservice: 0	

November 2017						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

November	
3 - End of 1st Quarter (43)	
10 - Veterans Day Program	
22 - 24 - Thanksgiving - NO SCHOOL	
Student Contact: 19; Inservice: 0	

April 2018						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

April	
2 - Easter Monday - NO SCHOOL	
8 - Pops Concert	
14 - Junior/Senior Prom	
17 - Elementary Concert (7:00)	
26 - FCCLA Style Show	
27 - FFA Banquet	
30 - Kiwanis Athletic Banquet	
Student Contact: 20; Inservice: 0	

December 2017						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

December	
7 - MS/HS Concert (7:00)	
22 - Elementary Christmas Concert (1:00)	
22 - School Dismisses for Break (2:00 Dismissal)	
Student Contact: 16; Inservice 0	

May 2018						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

May	
1 - Middle School Concert (7:00)	
3 - HS Concert/Awards Night (7:00)	
20 - Graduation (2:00)	
23 - End of 2nd Semester (41/85)	
24 - Faculty Inservice	
28 - Memorial Day - NO SCHOOL	
Student Contact: 17; Inservice: 1	

Makeup Day #1: Monday, February 19 (First Day Missed Prior to Friday, January 12)
 Makeup Day #2: Monday, April 2 (Another known make-up day prior to March 2)

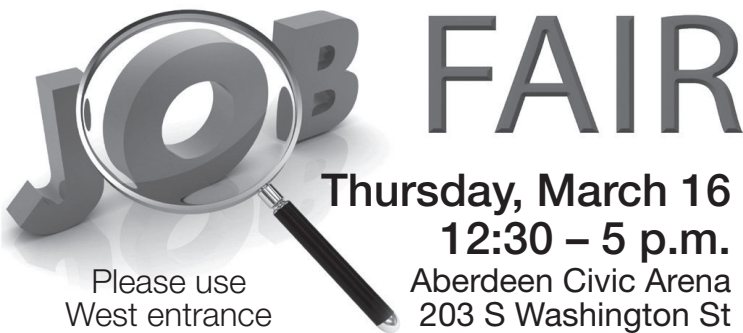
- Faculty Inservice
- No School
- Important Dates
- End of Quarter/Semester
- Early Dismissal

DRAFT 2

Come meet with local hiring businesses!

Discover career opportunities • Meet recruiters
 Distribute your resume • Learn about many companies

2017 ABERDEEN AREA



Thursday, March 16
 12:30 – 5 p.m.
 Aberdeen Civic Arena
 203 S Washington St

Please use West entrance

Let the Department of Labor and Regulation help you prepare

Write your resume • Fill out applications • Practice interviewing skills

Sponsored By:

- South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation
- Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce
- Aberdeen Area Human Resource Association
- Aberdeen Development Corporation
- Aberdeen News Company
- Northern State University, Career Development and Placement Center
- Dakota Broadcasting, LLC
- Hub City Radio
- The Training Place

There is no cost to attend!

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program
 USDOL Funded



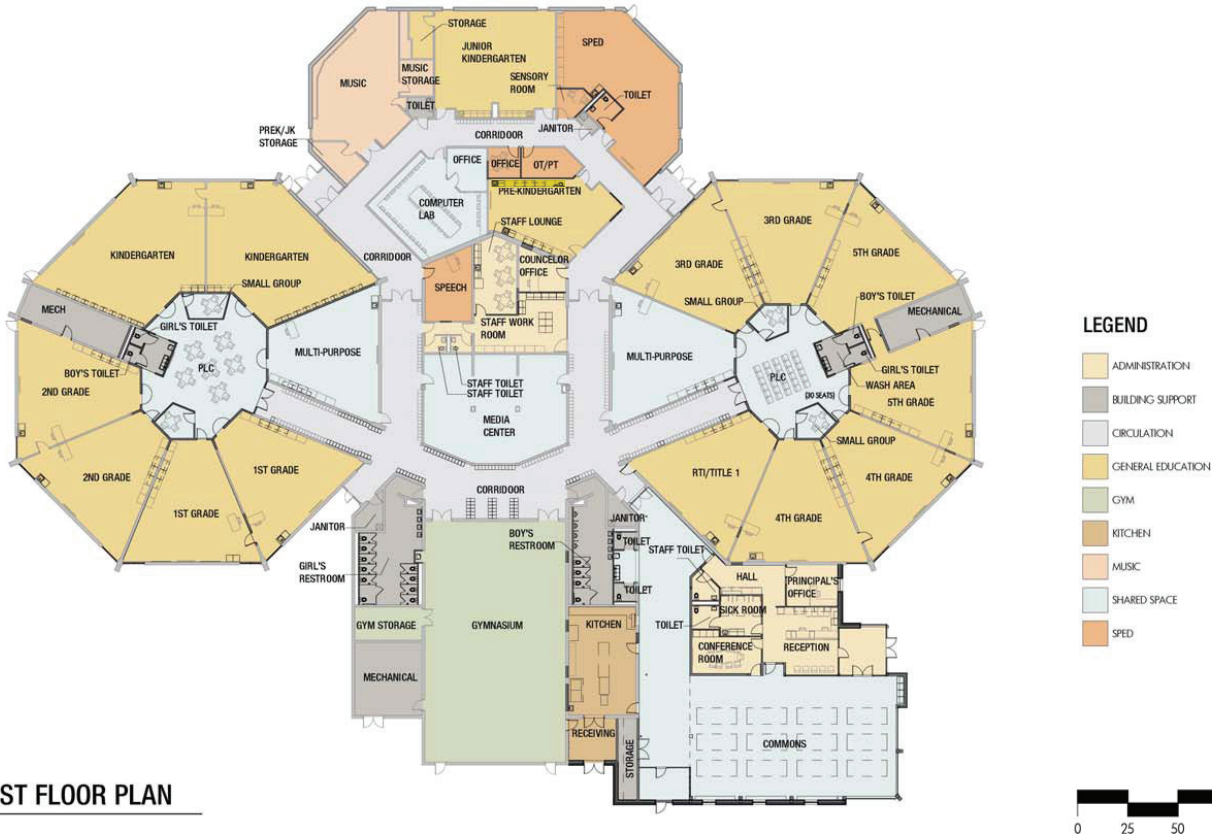
www.sdjobs.org

For more information:

DLR Aberdeen Local Office
 420 S Roosevelt St
 605.626.2340



Printed on Recycled Paper



GROTON AREA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FINISHES PRESENTATION

FLOOR PLAN

DECEMBER 2016 © 2016 JLG ARCHITECTS



Elementary School project is \$600,000 under budget

The contracts for the elementary school project will be issued this week with construction to begin on May 22. The bids for the project were reviewed and accepted at the school board meeting Monday night. They are \$463,691.15 to Lien Transportation of Aberdeen for site work; \$1,551,700 to JDH Construction of Aberdeen for general construction; \$141,610 to Architectural Roofing & Sheetmetal, Inc., of Sioux Falls for roofing; House of Glass, Inc., of Aberdeen for aluminum storefronts, curtain walls and glazing for \$130,324.00; Gemini Acoustical, LLC of Sioux Falls for acoustical ceilings, \$189,620.00; Grazzini Brothers & Company, Eagan, Minn., for flooring and wall tile, \$264,350.00; PrairieSons, Inc., Brandon, for fire protection, \$88,275.00; Redlinger Bros. Plumbing & Heating Co., Watertown, for plumbing and heating, \$554,350.00; Custom Sheet Metal, Inc., of Aberdeen for ventilation, \$617,400.00; Balancing Professionals, Inc., of Sioux Falls, for testing and balancing, \$23,890.00; and electrical to Muth Electric, Inc., Mitchell, for \$818,890.00; for a grand total of \$4,844,100.15.

There have been meetings with the elementary school staff for procedures in packing, storing and moving out of the facility prior to the beginning of construction. There will be big cartons arriving this week for preparation of the big move. Hundreds of boxes will be brought on site. The renovation is scheduled to be done by August 18 with the new addition to be completed in November. The question was asked of Business Manager Mike Weber, that if the project comes in under budget, what will happen to the extra funds. Weber said, that for example, if the project came in at \$300,000 under budget, then in 2018, the Capital Outlay request could be reduced by \$300,000 to give some relief to the tax payers. The \$600,000 under budget includes \$270,000 in contingency funds.

In addition to the major overhaul of the elementary school, there will be a commons area being added to the south of the complex.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 4 of 40



Sun Dial Manor in Bristol has openings for an RN or LPN, full time, part time or PRN. Increased wage based on previous experience. May be eligible for \$10,000 recruitment bonus. We also have openings for CNA's, training for certification provided. For more information, please call Connie Brown RN, DON at 605/492-3615. EOE. DFW.

Full-Time Job Opportunity

This unique full-time position will provide for cross organizational support of accounting, marketing, and loan processing. May be based out of Sisseton, Webster, or Aberdeen. Regular travel to the Sisseton office will be required. Experience beneficial, but will train. Applications taken until Friday, March 17. To request a job application and job description, contact GROW South Dakota, 104 Ash St. E., Sisseton, SD 57262, www.growSD.org, or call (605)-698-7654. EOE



GDI Living Fitness

25 Main St., Downtown Groton



Call or Text
Paul at
397-7460
or Tina at
397-7285
for
membership
Information



Branden Abeln and Dan Sunne have been putting the new boards on the frames of the baseball bleachers.

Updated bleachers on the way to the baseball complex

The baseball complex will be having updated bleachers this year. The baseball park bleachers are three-fourths done - new boards were purchased by the Baseball Foundation and they have been primed and painted and are now being installed on the frames.

Councilman Mary Fliehs brought up at the city council meeting about parking stripes on Main Street. There is a safety concern around the Post Office. Every corner where there are businesses should have a safety area, she said. City Supervisor Terry Herron will get a bid to have these areas done. Main Street gets chip seal every three years and that should be coming up soon, so it would not pay to put down stripes if they are going to be covered up too soon.

On April 22 NSU athletes will come out and help the city for day through United Way.

A new steamer has been ordered. It is currently being backlogged at the factory.

Load limits will be held off for a week or two in the city.

The city has three 100lb propane cylinders that it is declaring as surplus. A price of \$100 per tank was established. The city also has 250 pounds of grass seed from the airport project. The price was established at \$3 a pound for a 50 lb. bag.

The old Tahoe will be put up for sale. Lowary said she found on Kelley Blue Book that a vehicle in fair condition goes for \$8,390. It has 143,000 miles. The council agreed to set a price of \$5,000. There are two old mowers that were declared as surplus with value of \$100 and \$300 established. The Tahoe will have to be bid out.

There is a pole behind MJ's Sinclair that has been hit several times and there was discussion on put-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 6 of 40

ting the electrical lines underground. The pole serves as a service line to MJ's Sinclair as well as providing primary service to S & S Lumber and the Olson Development. It was estimated that it would cost \$36,000 to put the primary wire underground from SD37 to S & S Lumber.

Jerry Bjerke talked about the new cop car. He said he is impressed with the new vehicle. "It's very nice," Bjerke said. The only problem right now is the in-car camera and that the videos will not transfer to the computer in the office. He reported that the audio and video quality of the body cameras is excellent. There are two body cameras right now and they would like to get two more so each officer would have their own.

A planning grant for a new water tower which would include a review of the other infrastructure. It would cost \$10,000 for a water study, \$12,500 for a storm sewer study and \$12,500 for a storm sewer study, but the grant would cover all but \$2,500. The council decided to pursue the grant.

Anyone who has a dispute with their property evaluation has until Thursday to file with the city a review of the evaluation. Some areas of the city have seen a 2.5 percent increase in evaluation.

Nominating petitions have been turned in by Ed Opp, Jay Peterson, Mary Fliehs and Karyn Babcock. There will be an election in Ward 3 between Fliehs and Babcock.

Now Open!
GDI CLEAN!
Downtown
Groton

Paul - 397-7460
Tina - 397-7285

PLEASE Empty your pockets before loading the washer!

Welcome to **GDI Clean!**
For any questions or problems, call or text
Paul 605-397-7460
or
Tina 605-397-7285

Sanford
Underground
Research
Facility



Subscribe at: Sanfordlab.org/newsletters

Deep Thoughts

Notes from the underground by Communications Director Constance Walter

Monday, March 13, 2017

Last, but not least, the poly shield

FOR nearly seven years, the MAJORANA DEMONSTRATOR Project's "shield team" has been building the six-layered shield that surrounds the experiment on the 4850 Level. In early March, they placed the last piece of polyethylene on the outermost layer of the shield.

"I'm proud of what the team has produced," said Vince Guisepppe, assistant professor of physics at the University of South Carolina. "This was a complicated project. Every layer was added at the right time and fit perfectly."

The MAJORANA collaboration uses germanium crystals to look for a rare form of radioactive decay called neutrinoless double-beta decay. The discovery could determine whether the neutrino is its own antiparticle. Its detection could help explain why matter exists. The shield is critical to the success of the experiment.

Each layer of the shield was designed to target certain forms of radiation. "The closer the layer is to the experiment, the greater its impact," Guisepppe said.

The most important layer is the electroformed copper that sits closest to the experiment. Comprised of 40, half-inch thick copper plates, it was grown and machined underground. "This is clearly the hallmark of our shield system in terms of purity and cleanliness protocols," Guisepppe said. Surrounding that portion of the shield, is a 2-inch thick layer of ultrapure commercial copper.

Next is a "castle" built with 3,400 lead bricks. Two portable monoliths, each holding 570 bricks, support the cryostats filled with strings of germanium detectors and cryogenic hardware, what Guisepppe calls "the heart of the experiment."

An aluminum box encapsulating the lead castle protects the experiment



Photos by Constance Walter



Left: Vince Guisepppe stands next to an extra lead brick monolith, which keeps the shield sealed if a working module needs to be removed for service. Right: Jared Thompson stands in front of the completed shield. The shield team is encasing the poly shield in aluminum as a fire suppression element.

from naturally occurring radon. Every minute, the team injects eight liters of nitrogen gas to purge the air within the enclosure. "We don't want any lab air getting in."

Attached to the aluminum box are scintillating plastic "veto panels" designed to detect muons, the most penetrating of all cosmic rays.

Finally, there's the 12 inches of polyethylene enclosing the entire experiment, including the cryogenics (chilled water heat exchangers moderate the temperature). The poly slows down neutrons that could cause very rare backgrounds. Why worry about such rare events? High-energy neutrons can bounce through just about anything, including the 22 inches of lead and copper shielding. If a neutron hits a copper atom, it could create a gamma ray right next to the experiment.

"The poly is the final defense against backgrounds in an experiment that requires extreme quiet," Guisepppe said.

The entire shield, weighing 145,000 pounds, rests on an over floor made of steel with channels for the poly.

Jared Thompson, a research assistant, began his work with MAJORANA in

2010, etching lead bricks for the shield. In fact, in March 2014, he placed the last brick on the castle. And he was part of the group that recently placed the last piece of poly.

"It's really exciting," Thompson said. "A complete shield could mean a whole new data set down the road."

By the numbers

The total passive shield weight (copper, lead, poly) is 144,500 pounds.

Here's the breakdown:

- Poly shield: 31,000 pounds (190 4' x 8' x 1" sheets)
- Lead castle: 108,000 pounds (over 4500 bricks)
- Outer copper shield: 3300 pounds
- Inner electroformed copper shield: 2200 pounds

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 8 of 40

MS/HS Bond rate set for 20 years, election is April 11th

The bond rate for the MS/HS addition has been set for 20 years at 3.475 percent. The mil levy will be 50 cents per \$1,000 valuation. The school board voted Monday night to defer the first three years principle and make interest only payments to keep the mil levy down. The district will be voting April 11th on a \$14 million renovation project for the middle/high school.

There were six patrons who attended the meeting in regards to the district's renovation projects. Bob Swisher said the teachers have a very short time frame to get packed up and out of the elementary school building, which is putting a hardship on them as they have to teach and pack at the same time. There was also discussion on spreading out the MS/HS building project bond over 30 years instead of 20 years. Several board members responded by saying the people they have talked with want it at the 20-23 year range. There were several questions about the elementary school bids, especially with the alternates. Superintendent Joe Schwan said the intent of the alternates was to give the board an area to cut in the event the project went over budget. The project is coming in at \$600,000 under budget.

The board accepted the following resignations: Kayla Krause as JK/kindergarten teacher as she is going to teach second grade at Mike Miller Elementary in Aberdeen; Katie Miller as middle school special education as she is taking on a teaching position in Aberdeen; Gail Kyar as an elementary PARA as their family is moving to Minnesota; and Kelli Hanson as football/basketball cheerleading advisor. Krause has been with the district for three years, Miller for six year and Hanson for five years.

All four administrators have turned in signed contracts - Superintendent Joe Schwan, MS/HS Principal Dr. Anna Schwan, Elementary Principal Brett Schwan and Business Manager Mike Weber.

Both the school board and city council meetings from last night were carried live at GDILIVE.COM.

NEC All-Conference Girls' Basketball Team voted on by the conference coaches

1st Team: Haley Rithmiller, Webster Area
Lexi Wadsworth, Hamlin
Caryssa Mielits, Milbank Area
Janae Golden, Clark/Willow Lake
Grace Imbery, Aberdeen Roncalli

2nd Team: Audrey Wanner, Groton Area
Brynn Alfson, Hamlin
Olivia Breske, Webster Area
McKenzie Volesky, Webster Area
Alyssa Magnuson, Sisseton

3rd Team: Gabbi Cummins, Milbank
Ashley Fosness, Britton/Hecla
Laken Olson, Britton/Hecla
Aubree Bearsheart, Tiospa Zina
Britney Lovre, Deuel

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 9 of 40

Today in Weather History

March 14, 1989: A fast moving winter storm produced freezing rain and heavy snow across most of South Dakota. Visibilities were reduced to 100 ft within areas of blowing snow. Driving conditions became treacherous, resulting in abandoned vehicles, several accidents, and the temporary closing of I-29 from Sioux Falls to the North Dakota border.

March 14, 1990: Heavy Snow fell across parts of southwest, central, and north central South Dakota from the late afternoon on the 13th into the morning hours of the 14th. Highest accumulations were recorded in the north-central part of the state, including 9 inches at Gettysburg, 8 inches at Pollock, and 5 inches at Pine Ridge.

March 14, 2002: Heavy snow of 6 to 16 inches fell across parts of central and northeast South Dakota from the early morning to the evening hours. Some freezing rain fell across parts of the area before changing over to snow. Also, the winds increased from the north resulting in blowing snow and reduced visibilities. The combination of ice, heavy snow, and blowing snow resulted in very difficult travel conditions. There were several accidents across the area along with many vehicles sliding off the road. Schools either started late or were closed. Some snowfall amounts included, 6 inches at Blunt, 7 inches at Murdo, 8 inches at Stephan and Clark, 9 inches at Gann Valley and Miller, and 11 inches at Highmore and Watertown. Locations with a foot or more of snowfall included, 12 inches at Hayti and Milbank, 14 inches at Castlewood and Presho, 15 inches at Clear Lake, and 16 inches at Kennebec.

1870 - The term blizzard was first applied to a storm which produced heavy snow and high winds in Minnesota and Iowa. (David Ludlum)

1944 - A single storm brought a record 21.6 inches of snow to Salt Lake City UT. (The Weather Channel)

1960 - Northern Georgia was between snowstorms. Gainesville GA received 17 inches of snow during the month, and reported at least a trace of snow on the ground 22 days in March. Snow was on roofs in Hartwell GA from the 2nd to the 29th. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A powerful storm in the western U.S. produced 15 inches of snow in the Lake Tahoe Basin of Nevada, and wind gusts to 50 mph at Las Vegas NV. Thunderstorms in the Sacramento Valley of California spawned a tornado which hit a turkey farm near Corning. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Squalls in the Great Lakes Region continued to produce heavy snow in northwest Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, and produced up to 14 inches of snow in northeast Ohio. Poplar WI reported 27 inches of snow in two days. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1989 - High winds in Colorado and Wyoming gusted above 120 mph at Horsetooth Heights CO. High winds in the Central Plains sharply reduced visibilities in blowing dust as far east as Kansas City MO. Winds gusting to 72 mph at Hill City KS reduced the visibility to a city block in blowing dust. Soil erosion in northwest Kansas damaged nearly five million acres of wheat. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Fifty-three cities reported record high temperatures for the date as readings warmed into the 70s and 80s from the Gulf coast to the Great Lakes Region. Charleston WV was the hot spot in the nation with a record high of 89 degrees. It was the fourth of five consecutive days with record warm temperatures for many cities in the eastern U.S. There were 283 daily record highs reported in the central and eastern U.S. during between the 11th and the 15th of March. (The National Weather Summary)

2007 - The temperature in Concord, NH, reaches a record high of 74 degrees less than one week after a record low temperature of 7 degrees below zero on March 8, an 81 degree temperature swing in six days.

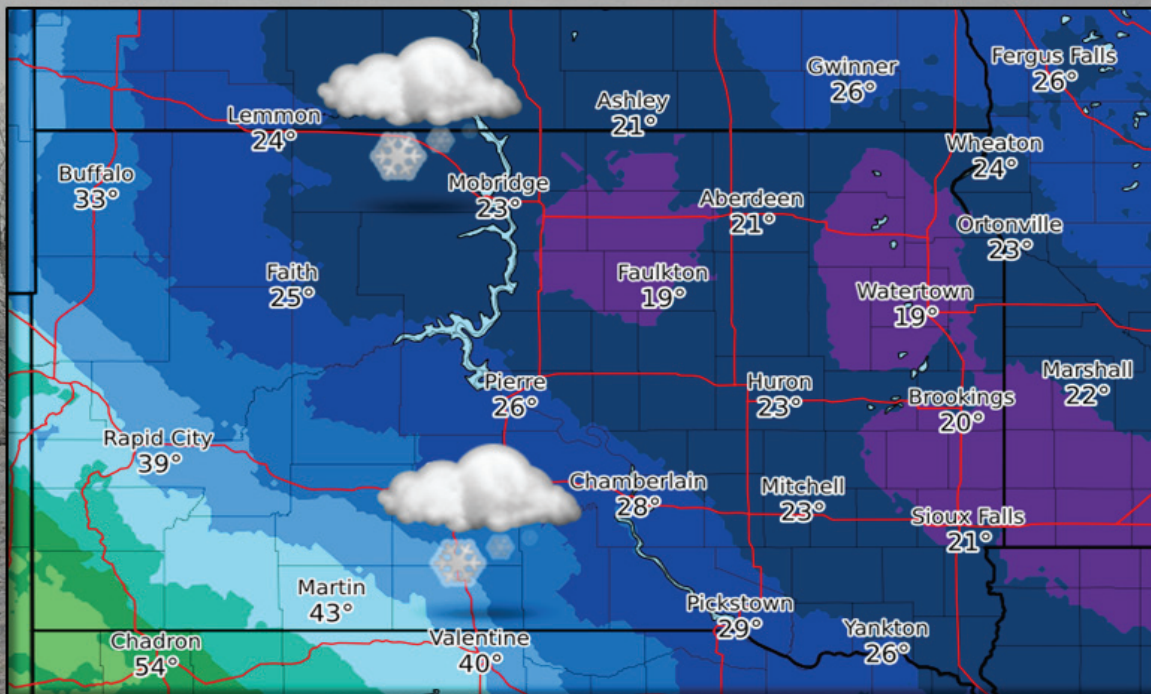
Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 10 of 40

Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						
Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Sunny
High: 21 °F	Low: 10 °F	High: 30 °F	Low: 25 °F	High: 42 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 45 °F

Cold Today

Expect Light Snow this Morning



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD



Updated: 3/14/2017 5:25 AM Central

Published on: 03/14/2017 at 5:30AM

Expect light snow to continue through noon for the Missouri River valley today. Snowfall amounts will range between a dusting to two inches. Temperatures will be on the cold side with highs only in the upper teens to the mid-20s. Warmer temperatures can be expected in western South Dakota.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 11 of 40

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 18.1 F at 5:10 PM

Low Outside Temp: -1.9 F at 8:04 AM

High Gust: 16.0 Mph at 12:04 AM

Snow: Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 71° in 1981

Record Low: -31 in 1897

Average High: 39°F

Average Low: 19°F

Average Precip in March.: 0.44

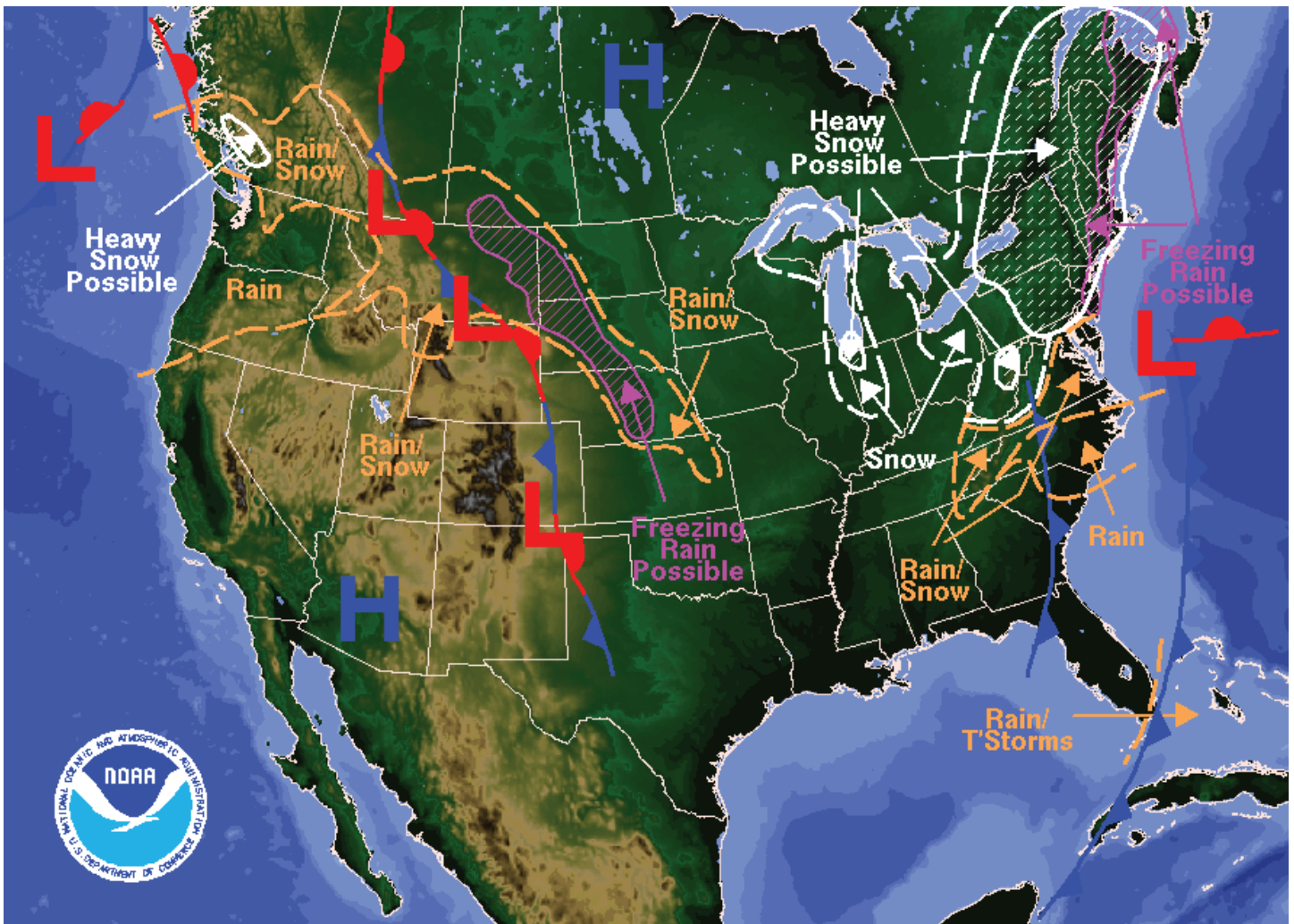
Precip to date in March.: 0.59

Average Precip to date: 1.46

Precip Year to Date: 0.59

Sunset Tonight: 7:38 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:45 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Tue, Mar 14, 2017, issued 4:26 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 12 of 40



RIGHT FOR GOD'S PLAN

Charlie Brown was sitting behind his desk holding his head between his hands, as his elbows kept them in place. With a worried look on his face he moaned, "The moment I set foot on the steps of life, they took one look at me and said, "You're not right for the part!"

Not so for the Christian!

Paul, writing to the Ephesians said, "When you believed in Christ who called you, He identified you as His own by giving you the Holy Spirit." That's God's guarantee that we belong to Him and that He has a unique plan for our lives and we are just "right for the part."

When the Holy Spirit comes into our lives it is the beginning of a new way of living because we have become "new creations" through Christ Jesus. We know that "old things have passed away and all things have become new!" And whatever "part" God has for us is one that meets His needs not ours. If we accept that "part" we will certainly be able to fulfill that "part" for His glory on earth.

We must always remember that the power of the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives now – transforming us into the likeness of Christ right now. Often we look at the "end product" – being with God in the Kingdom of Heaven. We must always remember that His power is at work in us at this very moment. And when we look back and see where we were, and look forward and know where we will be, we know He has a "part" for us.

Prayer: We pray, Lord, that we will be patient with You as You are with us as You shape us and mold us and work with us until we are "right for our part." In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Ephesians 1:13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.

News from the Associated Press

Secretary of State Krebs announces congressional bid

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Secretary of State Shantel Krebs says she's running for Congress. The first-term Republican announced her campaign in an emailed statement Monday. She also posted a video that touted her background as a "fourth-generation farm kid," former legislator and businesswoman, with visuals of her lifting a bale of hay and gazing at the South Dakota prairie. Krebs follows Dusty Johnson, a former public utilities commissioner and former chief of staff to Gov. Dennis Daugaard, into the race. Johnson announced in November. The incumbent, Republican Kristi Noem, is running for governor.

Opponents: North Dakota-owned casinos would hurt tribes

By JAMES MacPHERSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A change to the North Dakota Constitution allowing state-owned casinos will hurt American Indian gambling facilities and further erode relationships with tribes, opponents of the proposal told lawmakers Monday.

The proposal comes after months of protests of the \$3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline's disputed crossing under a Missouri River reservoir near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in North Dakota.

"Tribal and state relations are at an all-time low, so low that we are in a deficit, in the red," Ruth Bufalo, of Mandaree, told the House Judiciary Committee. "The state of North Dakota needs to be worrying about how they can fix relationships with tribes."

Rep. Al Carlson, R-Fargo, said the idea behind the proposed constitutional amendment is to establish casinos as "destination-oriented attractions" and use profits from them to lessen — or eliminate altogether — state sales tax and corporate income tax.

It also would be a preemptive strike against a voter initiative that could establish casinos with rules less desirable to lawmakers, backers said.

"I want citizens to be able to vote on this but we want to control the details," said Sen. Lonnie Laffen, R-Grand Forks.

North Dakota has charitable gambling sites in bars and clubs throughout the state. North Dakota voters in 2002 also endorsed putting the state into national lottery games, after defeating the idea three times prior. The Legislature in 2003 killed proposal to allow gambling casinos anywhere in the state.

North Dakota already has six casinos on American Indian reservations. The proposal would forbid state casinos from being built within 20 miles of a reservation, or 5 miles of a city of more than 5,000 people.

The proposal would allow up to six state-owned casinos. If approved by the Legislature, voters could decide the issue in the June 2018 primary.

Three Affiliated Tribes Chairman Mark Fox said casinos provide more than 2,000 jobs and millions of dollars in annual revenue for the state's five Indian reservations and nearby communities.

Fox said the state already has an adequate number of casinos. If more were added, "one is going to have to suffer for the other."

Jonathan Jorgensen, president of the board of directors for the Charitable Gaming Association of North Dakota, said the additional casinos also would hurt his organization, that has about 300 sites in the state.

"This is not an expansion of gaming, this is an explosion of gaming," he said.

Larry Treleven, of Rugby, told lawmakers he supports more casinos in the state for gamblers like himself and to help tourism and the state's bottom line.

"Rather than being known as a drive-through state, it would be a great asset to have destination casinos for both vacationers and travelers," Treleven said.

Minnehaha County files suit against South Dakota hospital

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's largest county has sued a state-run mental health hospital after it denied a criminal defendant despite a judge's order to admit him.

The Minnehaha County Public Defender's Office filed a lawsuit last week on behalf of 18-year-old Sampson Balu, who was denied admittance into Yankton's Human Services Center last month. County officials were told while transporting Balu to the hospital that there was no "bed space" available, the Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2n0XXiY>) reported.

The lawsuit said the hospital refuses to say when bed space will be available and argues that the center doesn't have authority to refuse a commitment ordered by a judge.

Balu is charged with disorderly conduct and resisting arrest after a fight at Roosevelt High School in May. A judge concluded in February that he wasn't fit for trial based on a psychiatric evaluation.

The psychiatrist who evaluated Balu recommended he be tested at the hospital for a major neuro-cognitive disorder. Court records show Balu has a developmental disability and an IQ lower than 70, which the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities says suggests limited intellectual functioning.

"If they aren't able to deal with someone, they need to get the training to work with people," said Phyllis Arends, Sioux Falls executive director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. "Closing the door is not the answer to the problem. It is their duty to treat people."

The goal of sending criminal defendants for psychiatric rehabilitation is to reorient patients to where they understand the charges against them and can partake in their defense.

The South Dakota Department of Social Services, which oversees the hospital, declined to comment. The Public Defender's Office also declined to comment citing pending litigation.

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

Bond of \$500,000 set in Rapid City motel stabbing

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A bond of \$500,000 cash has been set for a Rapids City man accused in a fatal stabbing at a local motel.

Twenty-three-year-old Vincent Mousseaux is charged with first-degree murder and an alternative of second-degree murder in the death of Deziree Martinez at the Price Motel last Wednesday. Mousseaux was arrested Thursday. He appeared in 7th Judicial Court Monday.

The Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2mk0HUW>) says Mousseaux is also facing alternate charges of aggravated assault. Police say he stabbed another person in the hotel room.

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

Tribes ask judge to stop Dakota Access oil from flowing

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Two Native American tribes who are suing to stop the Dakota Access pipeline have asked a judge to head off the imminent flow of oil while they appeal his decision allowing the pipeline's construction to be completed.

U.S. District Judge James Boasberg last week rejected the request of the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Sioux tribes to stop construction of the final segment of the pipeline under Lake Oahe, a Missouri River reservoir in North Dakota from which the tribes get their water. The pipeline's developer, Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners, expects to have the work done and the pipeline filled with oil as early as this week.

The tribes maintain that an oil pipeline under the lake they consider sacred violates their right to practice their religion, which relies on clean water. In his decision last week, Boasberg said the tribes

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 15 of 40

didn't raise the religion argument in a timely fashion and he questioned its merits.

Cheyenne River attorney Nicole Ducheneaux on Friday appealed the ruling to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. She also asked Boasberg to "prevent the flow of oil through the Dakota Access pipeline" until the appeal is resolved.

"Should construction continue during the appeals process, the last opportunity for Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe to defend its tribal members' free exercise of religion will be lost," Ducheneaux wrote.

Boasberg on Monday gave ETP and the Army Corps of Engineers until Tuesday to file their responses to the request. The Corps is a defendant in the lawsuit because it manages the Missouri River system and authorized the Lake Oahe work last month at the urging of President Donald Trump.

Government attorneys didn't immediately respond to a request for comment Monday. ETP spokeswoman Vicki Granado declined to comment, citing the ongoing legal case.

The 1,200-mile pipeline would transport oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa to a shipping point in Illinois.

The tribes filed their lawsuit last summer, after which hundreds and sometimes thousands of pipeline opponents began camping on federal land near the Lake Oahe drill site. Many clashed with police, resulting in about 750 arrests from August to late February, when the main camp and two others were shut down in advance of spring flooding season.

A Corps contractor late last week finished cleaning up the camps, Corps Capt. Ryan Hignight said Monday. A total of 835 industrial-size trash bins were filled and removed. An unknown amount of material such as lumber and propane tanks was set aside for reuse or recycling.

"After the spring thaw, fencing will be put back up out there, like was there originally, and the land will have to be regraded and reseeded so we can get grass cover," he said.

The total cost of the operation isn't tallied yet, but the Corps has said it could cost taxpayers more than \$1.1 million.

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

Prison sentence for man who set fire to apartments

ARMOUR, S.D. (AP) — A Texas man has been sentenced to six years in prison for setting a fire that destroyed an apartment building in South Dakota.

Fifty-six-year-old Brian Good was convicted of first-degree arson in the February 2016 fire that burned the four-unit apartment building in Delmont. The Aubrey, Texas man was also ordered to pay about \$319,000 in restitution to two insurance companies and two individuals.

The Daily Republic (<http://bit.ly/2mSdAst>) says Good was arrested last October in Denton, Texas.

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

The Latest: Attorney generals warn against price gouging

NEW YORK (AP) — The Latest on a strong winter storm expected in the Northeast (all times local): 7:15 a.m.

Attorney generals in New York and Pennsylvania have issued a warning about price-gouging during the snowstorm.

Eric Schneiderman in New York says consumers should contact his office about "excessive increases" in the price of goods and services. Examples include food, water, gas, generators, hotels and transportation.

The price-gouging law also could apply to snow removal and equipment, salt and contractor services for storm-related damage.

Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro also alerted consumers and businesses about potential scams, urging people to report any "suspicious activity" about home repairs, snow plowing, government assistance programs and fraudulent disaster-related fundraising to his office's Bureau of Consumer

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 16 of 40

Protection.

7 a.m.

Hundreds of school districts from Buffalo to New York City have cancelled classes and authorities are advising people to stay off the roads as a nor'easter starts to pummel the Northeast.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has declared a state of emergency Tuesday for all of New York's 62 counties, including New York City's five boroughs. The Democrat also directed non-essential state employees to stay home from work.

The National Weather Service says the storm will drop more than a foot of snow across much of the upstate region, with some areas getting up to 18 inches and higher elevations in the lower Hudson Valley expected to get 2 feet or more.

Blizzard warnings have been issued for much of the region south of Albany, where high winds could produce whiteout conditions

6:30 a.m.

The National Weather Service says the dividing line between snow and a wintry mix from a nor'easter pushing through the southern New Jersey-Pennsylvania region has moved farther inland, cutting down the anticipated snow accumulation, but increasing the chance of icing.

NWS Meteorologist Sarah Johnson, in Mount Holly, New Jersey, says the dividing line between snow and a mix of snow, sleet and rain has pushed west, from the Jersey coast into Philadelphia. She says that lowers anticipated snow totals, but increases the threat of icing from sleet and freezing rain along the Interstate 95 corridor.

While the snow totals might be lower, Johnson warns that New Jersey shore areas can still expect strong winds, with gusts between 50 and 55 mph. The I-95 corridor could get wind gusts of up to 40 mph.

6 a.m.

Rain, sleet and snow are sweeping across New Jersey as a late-winter storm slows the morning commute.

State government offices are closed Tuesday and non-essential employees were told to stay home after Republican Gov. Chris Christie declared a state of emergency. Many schools are closed.

Plows are on the highways and the speed limit is restricted to 45 mph on the Garden State Parkway between Cape May and Brick Township.

NJ Transit has suspended bus service and all trains, except for the Atlantic City Rail Line, are operating on a weekend schedule.

A blizzard warning is in effect, basically north of Interstate 195. Forecasters say 18 to 24 inches of snow are possible. A winter storm warning covers other portions of the state, save for coastal south Jersey.

4 a.m.

A late-season snowstorm has prompted the U.S. Office of Personnel Management to allow a 3-hour delayed arrival for non-emergency employees at federal offices in and around the nation's capital.

OPM also announced early Tuesday that non-emergency federal employees also have the option to take unscheduled leave or to conduct unscheduled telework.

For those non-emergency workers headed to offices, the agency told them on its website that they "should plan to arrive for work no more than three hours later than they would be expected to arrive."

The agency added that emergency federal employees in the Washington, D.C., area are expected to report on time unless otherwise directed by their agencies. Emergency and telework-ready employees should follow their agency's policies, the office added.

2:35 a.m.

A winter storm expected to dump several inches of snow on Delaware made an impact even before it arrived: Delaware lawmakers decided to scrap plans to reconvene a key budget committee hearing Tuesday after a weeklong break.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 17 of 40

In Newark, Delaware, authorities declared a snow emergency effective early Tuesday, ordering residents and businesses on snow emergency routes to remove all vehicles from the street to avoid being towed. The city also announced a two-hour delayed opening for city offices.

Forecasters expect between 8 and 12 inches of snow in some areas of Delaware, while areas near the Atlantic seaboard faced a threat of coastal flooding.

2 a.m.

The snow threat in the Northeast is causing college basketball teams to alter their travel plans.

Teams chasing a college basketball title are contending with an unexpected wrinkle that's making last-minute travel plans difficult — a fierce storm bearing down on the Northeast that could dump up to two feet of snow in some places.

"We are closely tracking the weather and working with our travel partners and teams in the tournament to ensure the safety of our student-athletes, coaches, administrators, officials and fans," the NCAA said in a statement.

Villanova, top overall seed in the men's NCAA Tournament, left Philadelphia on Monday afternoon for Buffalo, New York, to get ahead of the storm.

There is less of a chance that the women's tournament would be affected. UConn is the only Northeast team hosting and they play Saturday, giving teams more time to arrive in Connecticut.

U.S. airlines canceled thousands of flights ahead of the storm. Teams in the men's and women's NCAA Tournaments have chartered flights so any backlog on commercial planes shouldn't be a problem.

Nor'easter pounds region canceling flights, schools

By DEEPTI HAJELA, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A powerful nor'easter pounded the mid-Atlantic and the Northeast early Tuesday, prompting flight cancellations, school closures and warnings from city and state officials to stay off the roads.

The National Weather Service issued blizzard warnings for parts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont.

The storm was expected to dump 12 to 18 inches of snow on the New York City metro area with wind gusts of up to 55 mph.

The weather service's office near Philadelphia called the storm "life-threatening" and warned people to "shelter in place." Coastal flood warnings were in effect from Massachusetts to Delaware.

According to the airline-tracking website FlightAware, more than 5,000 flights Tuesday were canceled, including more than 2,800 in the New York City area, where about 200 passengers were stranded at John F. Kennedy airport. Amtrak also canceled and modified service up and down the Northeast Corridor. In New York City, the above-ground portions of the subway system were being shut down Tuesday morning.

In the nation's capital, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management announced a three-hour delayed arrival for non-emergency employees at area federal offices — with an option of unscheduled leave or telework. Emergency employees of the federal government in the Washington, D.C., area were to report on time unless otherwise directed.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo a state of emergency Tuesday for all of New York's 62 counties, including New York City's five boroughs. The Democrat also directed non-essential state employees to stay home from work as authorities advised people to stay off the roads.

In Massachusetts, where forecasts called for 12 to 18 inches of snow, Gov. Charlie Baker encouraged motorists to stay off the roads and to take public transit only if absolutely necessary. The fast snowfall rates will "create hazardous driving conditions across the Commonwealth," he said.

Schools in New York City, Philadelphia, Boston and elsewhere were all closed Tuesday.

Juan Castro, of Pittsburg, California, waited at a hotel by the World Trade Center for his pre-dawn ride to a hospital where his sister was having surgery. The hospital had assured his family that the procedure would go on despite the weather. He was layered up and wore boots he'd bought just for the storm. Castro, a pastor, reasoned that the weather was OK with him. "It's beautiful," he said as the

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 18 of 40

snow swirled on a Lower Manhattan street. "You've got to be positive."

Bank teller Jana White said her plans for riding out the storm included "lots of hot chocolate and a couple of sappy movies."

"It's a reminder that winter is always ready to take shot at you, so you have to stay prepared," the 23-year-old Trenton, New Jersey, resident said. "We've got food and snacks and drinks, so as long as the power stays on we should be in good shape."

In Maryland, Gov. Larry Hogan declared a state of emergency and urged residents not to be lulled into a false sense of security due to the mild winter.

"This is a serious winter storm," Hogan said, adding that some parts of the state could see over a foot of snow. "It's obviously going to be the biggest event we've had this season and people need to be prepared. They need to be safe."

The heaviest snowfall was expected Tuesday morning through the afternoon, with snowfall rates as high as 2 to 4 inches per hour.

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf said that approximately 700 National Guard members would be deployed, along with more than 2,000 snow plows to keep up with the storm that was expected to bring a foot or more of snow to some parts of the state.

Early Tuesday, the NWS said the dividing line between snow and a wintry mix had moved farther inland, through southern New Jersey into Philadelphia, cutting anticipated snow totals, but increasing the chance of icing. But parts of the Lehigh Valley and Poconos, north and west of Philadelphia, had whiteout conditions Tuesday due to blowing snow.

In Illinois, state police say snowy weather caused two crashes on a Chicago expressway that involved a total of 34 cars. A State Police spokesman says seven people sustained minor injuries in Monday night's pileup on the Kennedy Expressway. Both wrecks occurred in the express lanes of the highway on the city's North Side.

The nor'easter comes a week after the region saw temperatures climb into the 60s. Spring officially starts on March 20.

The snow threat in the Northeast also was causing college basketball teams to alter their travel plans as the fierce storm bore down on the region.

"We are closely tracking the weather and working with our travel partners and teams in the tournament to ensure the safety of our student-athletes, coaches, administrators, officials and fans," the NCAA said in a statement.

Villanova, top overall seed in the men's NCAA Tournament, left Philadelphia on Monday afternoon for Buffalo, New York, to get ahead of the storm.

There is less of a chance that the women's tournament would be affected: UConn is the only Northeast team hosting a game and they play Saturday, giving teams more time to arrive in Connecticut.

Teams in the men's and women's NCAA Tournaments have chartered flights so any backlog on commercial planes shouldn't be a problem.

Associated Press writers Bruce Shipkowski in Trenton, New Jersey, and John Kekis in Albany, New York, contributed to this report.

Get by without Planned Parenthood? One Texas effort stumbles

By PAUL J. WEBER, Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — In pushing a replacement for the Affordable Care Act that cuts off funds for Planned Parenthood, Republicans are out to reassure women who rely on the major health care organization that other clinics will step up to provide their low-cost breast exams, contraception and cancer screenings.

Texas is already trying to prove it. But one big bet is quietly sputtering, and in danger of teaching the opposite lesson conservatives are after.

Last summer, Texas gave \$1.6 million to an anti-abortion organization called the Heidi Group to help

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 19 of 40

strengthen small clinics that specialize in women's health like Planned Parenthood but don't offer abortions. The goal was to help the clinics boost their patient rolls and show there would be no gap in services if the nation's largest abortion provider had to scale back.

The effort offered a model other conservative states could follow if Republicans make their long-sought dream of defunding Planned Parenthood a reality under President Donald Trump. Several states are already moving to curtail the organization's funds.

But eight months later, the Heidi Group has little to show for its work. An Associated Press review found the nonprofit has done little of the outreach it promised, such as helping clinics promote their services on Facebook, or airing public service announcements. It hasn't made good on plans to establish a 1-800 number to help women find providers or ensure that all clinics have updated websites.

Neither the group nor state officials would say how many patients have been served so far by the private clinics.

The Heidi Group is led by Carol Everett, a prominent anti-abortion activist and influential conservative force in the Texas Legislature.

In a brief interview, Everett said some of the community clinics aren't cooperating despite her best efforts to attract more clients.

"We worked on one Facebook site for three months and they didn't want to do it. And we worked on websites and they didn't want to do it," Everett said of the clinics. "We can't force them. We're not forcing them."

Everett said that advertising she planned was stalled by delays in a separate \$5.1 million family planning contract.

Everett proposed helping two dozen selected clinics serve 50,000 women overall in a year, more than such small facilities would normally handle. Clinic officials contacted by the AP either did not return phone calls or would not speak on the record.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission, which awarded the funding to the Heidi Group, acknowledged the problems. Spokeswoman Carrie Williams said in an email that the agency had to provide "quite a bit" of technical support for the effort and make many site visits. She disputed that the contract funding has been as slow as Everett alleged.

"The bottom line is that we are holding our contractors accountable, and will do everything we can to help them make themselves successful," she said.

In August, the state had lauded Everett's pitch for taxpayer funds as "one of the most robust" received.

Planned Parenthood and its supporters say the failures show the risks of relying on unproven providers to serve low-income women, and that Republicans' assurances about adequate care are only political rhetoric.

"Every time they try to relaunch one of these women's health programs, without some of the most trusted providers in women's health, every single time they come up short," said Sarah Wheat, a Planned Parenthood spokeswoman in Texas. "And they show their lack of understanding and respect for what women need."

On Tuesday, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that 15 percent of low-income people in rural or underserved areas would lose access to care if Planned Parenthood loses funding. The analysis also projected several thousand more births in the Medicaid program in the next year.

The Heidi Group is an evangelical nonprofit that started in the 1990s and is best known for promoting alternatives to abortion. It operates with a relatively small budget, taking in about \$186,000 in grants and donations in 2015, according to tax records, and had not been doing patient care.

State officials say the year-old women's health program includes about 5,000 providers. Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers are banned from participation.

Federal dollars comprise nearly half of the Planned Parenthood's annual billion-dollar budget, and although government funds don't pay for abortions, the organization is reimbursed by Medicaid for non-abortion services that it says the vast majority of clients receive. Missouri is planning to reject federal funding just to keep some of it away from Planned Parenthood, and Iowa is also considering giving up millions in federal Medicaid dollars to create a state-run family planning program that excludes abortion providers.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 20 of 40

U.S. House Republicans' health care bill would freeze funding to Planned Parenthood for one year. House Speaker Paul Ryan has suggested other clinics will pick up the slack.

"It ends funding to Planned Parenthood and sends money to community centers," Ryan said last week.

Democrats argue that other clinics are already overloaded and wouldn't be able to meet increased demand.

After Texas state funding was cut off to abortion providers in 2011, 82 family planning clinics closed in the state, a third of which were Planned Parenthood affiliates. A state report later found that 30,000 fewer women were served through a Texas women's health program after the changes. Planned Parenthood now has 35 clinics in Texas and served more than 126,000 individual patients last year, including those seeking abortions. The state has provided no estimates of low-income women served by other clinics.

Asked whether the Heidi Group would meet the patient targets in her contract, Everett said her own goal was to serve 70,000 women.

However, "it's not as easy as it looks because we are not Planned Parenthood. We are working with private physicians and providers," Everett said after leaving a committee hearing this week at the Texas Capitol. She said the clinics she is working with are busy seeing 40 to 50 women a day. "They don't have time to go out and do some of the things that we would really like to help them do. But we're there if they want to. And we're there when the need it. And we're in their offices and we're helping them."

She had been at the Capitol to support a bill that would require abortion clinics to bury or cremate fetal remains.

Follow Paul J. Weber on Twitter: www.twitter.com/pauljweber

Critics of GOP health bill get ammunition from budget score

By ERICA WERNER, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Critics of GOP health care legislation got fresh ammunition from a report that estimates the bill would increase the ranks of the uninsured by 14 million people next year alone, and 24 million over a decade.

The findings from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office could make prospects for the legislation backed by President Donald Trump even tougher, with a few House and Senate conservatives already in open revolt and moderate Republicans queasy about big cuts to the Medicaid safety net for the poor.

But with the legislation headed for votes in the House Budget Committee within days and floor action next week, its supporters at the White House and on Capitol Hill showed no sign of retreat. Instead, they attacked the parts of the CBO report they didn't like, while touting the more favorable findings, including smaller deficits from their bill and lower premiums over time.

"I'm pretty encouraged by it, it actually exceeded my expectations," House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin said on Fox News Channel shortly after the report was released Monday evening.

Ryan said the CBO findings about millions losing coverage were to be expected, because the GOP legislation removes the penalty in former President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act aimed at coercing people into buying coverage.

"If we're not going to force someone to buy something they don't want to buy they're not going to buy it, and that's kind of obvious," Ryan said.

The GOP legislation would use tax credits to help consumers buy health coverage, expand health savings accounts, phase out an expansion of Medicaid and cap that program for the future, end some requirements for health plans under Obama's law, and scrap a number of taxes.

Ryan pointed to other CBO figures, including that the GOP bill reduces federal deficits by \$337 billion over a decade, and begins to bring down insurance premiums by around 10 percent starting in 2020, though that comes only after premiums sharply rise in 2018 and 2019.

Democrats scoffed at Ryan's positive take, calling the CBO analysis damning evidence that Republicans are interested only in giving hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks to the rich, which their bill would accomplish, while yanking health coverage from the poor.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 21 of 40

"I hope they would pull the bill. It's really the only decent thing to do," House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi said. "How can they look their constituents in the eye when they say to them '24 million of you will no longer have coverage.'"

At the White House, Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price rejected portions of the CBO's findings, in comments that seemed to contradict Speaker Ryan.

"We believe that the plan that we're putting in place is going to insure more individuals than currently are insured. So we think the CBO simply has it wrong," Price said

It was unclear exactly what impact the CBO news would have on the debate. Republicans were already planning to move forward with no Democratic votes, aiming for action by the full House next week and the Senate the week after that. Senate prospects look particularly dicey, given the GOP's slim 52-48 majority and vociferous objections from several Republicans including Rand Paul of Kentucky and Tom Cotton of Arkansas.

Senators were just beginning to absorb the CBO findings Monday night. The approaching winter storm had delayed the arrival of House members to the Capitol.

"It's awful. It has to be a concern," Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., said of the budget office findings. "President Trump said he wanted as many people covered as under Obamacare."

"At the end of the day, we should pause and try to improve the product in light of the CBO analysis rather than just rejecting it," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C.

Price planned to meet with GOP senators Tuesday to discuss the issue.

All along Republican leaders have assumed that once it comes time to vote, few if any Republicans will dare vote "no" on the repeal and replacement of "Obamacare" that their party has been promising for seven years. They are relying on Trump's popularity with conservative voters to close the deal, and Trump on Monday announced he would be traveling to Kentucky for a rally early next week.

But the Congressional Budget report seemed likely to increase some Republicans' discomfort with their approach, especially those representing states that expanded Medicaid coverage under Obama's law. Roughly 14 million fewer people would have Medicaid coverage over a decade as the GOP bill cuts \$880 billion from the federal-state health program for the poor and disabled, the CBO said.

Trump pledged during the presidential campaign that he would not cut Medicaid, but the bill would violate that pledge, as well as fail to meet Trump's stated goal of "insurance for everybody."

The CBO report also undercuts a central argument that Trump and other Republicans have cited for swiftly rolling back Obama's health care overhaul: that the health insurance markets created under the 2010 law are unstable and about to implode. The congressional experts said that largely would not be the case and the market for individual health insurance policies "would probably be stable in most areas either under current law or the (GOP) legislation."

Associated Press writers Matthew Daly, Alan Fram, Stephen Ohlemacher, Mary Clare Jalonick, Richard Lardner and Andrew Taylor 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. CRITICS OF GOP HEALTH BILL GET AMMO FROM BUDGET SCORE

A few House and Senate conservatives are in open revolt and moderate Republicans are queasy about big cuts to the Medicaid safety net for the poor.

2. NORTHEAST LASHES REGION

A powerful late winter storm is beginning to whip the mid-Atlantic and the Northeast, prompting flight cancellations, school closures and warnings to stay off the roads.

3. TEXAS EFFORT FOR PLANNED PARENTHOOD ALTERNATIVE STUMBLES

An AP review found the nonprofit Heidi Group has done little of the outreach it promised, such as helping clinics promote their services on Facebook, or airing public service announcements.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 22 of 40

4. ISLAMIC STATE GROUP ALREADY LOOKING PAST MOSUL

Militants are positioning themselves to defend the remains of its so-called "caliphate" in Syria and wage an insurgent campaign in Iraq.

5. WHERE AMERICANS FOLLOW THROUGH ON TRUMP VOW

In New Zealand, the number of those from the United States who applied for a grant of citizenship rose by 70 percent in the 12 weeks following his election, AP finds.

6. PIRATES HIJACK FREIGHTER OFF SOMALIA'S COAST

The hijacking of the oil tanker with eight Sri Lankan crew members is the first of a large commercial vessel on the crucial global trade route since 2012.

7. HIGH COST OF BLOCKING INFORMATION

An AP analysis of new U.S. data finds the Obama administration in 2016 spent a record \$36.2 million on legal costs defending its refusal to turn over federal records under the Freedom of Information Act.

8. WHAT RARE STEP CITY HAS TAKEN

Everett, Washington, is suing Purdue Pharma, maker of OxyContin, alleging the drugmaker knowingly allowed pills to be funneled into the black market in the community.

9. WHY DISNEY WON'T SCREEN MOVIE IN MALAYSIA

"Beauty and the Beast" is shelved in the mainly Muslim country, even though film censors say it had been approved with a minor cut involving a "gay moment."

10. MARCH MADNESS CONTENDING WITH FIERCE STORM

Villanova and UConn, the top teams in the NCAA Tournament for the men and women, have games scheduled in Buffalo, New York, and Connecticut.

Tight budgets could complicate Sessions' vow to fight crime

By **SADIE GURMAN, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General Jeff Sessions is promising his Justice Department will lead the charge in helping cities fight violent crime, and police chiefs are ready with their wish-lists.

More technology to trace guns after shootings. More grant money. More intelligence analysts to help dismantle gangs. More protective gear and equipment. As the head of one police officers' union put it, "We need more of everything."

But Sessions, who cut his teeth as a federal prosecutor in Mobile, Alabama, at the height of the drug war in the 1980s, has inherited a federal government that built itself to fight terrorism since 9/11 and, more recently, to combat cybercrime.

Since taking office, Sessions has spoken repeatedly about a spike in murders. He and President Donald Trump ordered the creation of a crime-fighting task force, bringing together the heads of the major law enforcement agencies. And they seem to be counting on tighter border security to stop a flow of drugs and reduce crime.

But they have yet to detail how federal law enforcement should juggle priorities or offer new money for crime-fighting, especially in the face of Trump's plan to slash nonmilitary budgets. Some clarity could come Thursday when the administration unveils its budget proposal.

"He'll find out very quickly that you can't pull people off all these other things just to go do that," said Robert Anderson, who was the FBI's most senior criminal investigator until his retirement in 2015. Anderson joined the bureau in the 1990s, when combating violence and drugs was its top challenge. "Now he's walking into a much different Justice Department and FBI."

Kerry Sleeper, assistant director of the FBI office that works with local law enforcement, said that after decades of declines in violence, police chiefs are coming to grips with a new uptick and asking for federal help.

What they'd like to see:

— In Milwaukee, Police Chief Edward Flynn said he would like an expansion of the work done in that city by the Justice Department's Violence Reduction Network. It teams officers with deputy U.S. marshals and agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Drug Enforcement Administration to target high-crime areas. "It's encouraging to have an incoming administration take an

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 23 of 40

interest in the spikes in violence in central cities," he told The Associated Press.

— In Baltimore, which recorded 318 homicides last year, Police Commissioner Kevin Davis has said he would like federal agencies to double the number of agents assigned to cities experiencing spikes in violence.

— In Chicago, singled out by the White House for its surge in shootings, Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson has said he would welcome more agents and money for mentorship and after-school programs to help kids in violent neighborhoods and, in turn, reduce crime.

Other cities want help processing evidence, tracing guns and prosecuting drug traffickers and dealers as they combat heroin and opioid addiction.

More chiefs are asking the FBI for its help with intelligence-gathering to thwart crime, said Stephen Richardson, assistant director for the FBI's criminal division.

Making violent crime a priority is a departure for a Justice Department that has viewed as more urgent the prevention of cyberattacks from foreign criminals, counterterrorism and the threat of homegrown violent extremism. And while local police say they want more help fighting violence, such a plan could put new pressure on Justice Department agencies already strapped for resources.

"Our budget's been eroding," Thomas Brandon, acting ATF director, told a congressional committee last week. The ranks of the agency's special agents hit an eight-year low in fiscal year 2013 and have not grown dramatically since then.

Sessions' focus fits his background. His career as a prosecutor began when there was bipartisan agreement in Washington that the best way to fight crime was with long, mandatory prison sentences. And he views today's relatively low crime rates as a sign that those policies worked. Just last week, he underscored his priority in a memo to the nation's federal prosecutors that they should use all available resources to take down the worst offenders.

In contrast, the Obama administration's Justice Department focused its aid to local police on improving community relations.

The federal government has long played a role in fighting crime through grants and partnerships. Agents assigned to field offices work with local police to share intelligence on gangs and shootings, hunt fugitives and probe bank robberies, among other things. Constance Hester-Davis, special agent in charge of the ATF's field division in New Orleans, said her agents routinely work alongside local counterparts, even attending community meetings.

"At the end of the day, crime is a state and local concern," said Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, a law enforcement think tank. "However, what police chiefs say is the federal government does have a responsibility, particularly when they prosecute."

Such cooperation can work. Oakland, California, police saw killings fall from 126 in 2012 to 85 in 2016, two years after FBI agents were embedded in the homicide unit. Ten agents now share an office with Oakland detectives, offering help gathering evidence, collecting DNA, chasing leads and bringing federal prosecutions that carry longer sentences in far-away prisons. Detectives solved at least 60 percent of their cases last year, compared to about 30 percent in 2010, said Russell Nimmo, FBI supervisory special agent on the Oakland Safe Streets Task Force.

"It's very complementary to what our mission is," Nimmo said. "We're a big organization. The challenge for our leadership is determining how many resources to allocate to each of those competing priorities."

Richardson, who formed the first FBI task force in Louisiana to combat violent criminals, said the new focus will mean shifting resources in ways that are yet to be seen. The FBI is finalizing a strategy to "surge" resources, including agents, in certain cities this summer.

"We won't be able to do all the cities we'd like to at once," Richardson said. "I firmly believe it will make a difference."

Obama's final year: US spent \$36 million in records lawsuits

By TED BRIDIS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration in its final year in office spent a record \$36.2 million on legal costs defending its refusal to turn over federal records under the Freedom of Information Act, according to an Associated Press analysis of new U.S. data that also showed poor performance in other categories measuring transparency in government.

For a second consecutive year, the Obama administration set a record for times federal employees told citizens, journalists and others that despite searching they couldn't find a single page of files that were requested.

And it set records for outright denial of access to files, refusing to quickly consider requests described as especially newsworthy, and forcing people to pay for records who had asked the government to waive search and copy fees.

The government acknowledged when challenged that it had been wrong to initially refuse to turn over all or parts of records in more than one-third of such cases, the highest rate in at least six years.

In courtrooms, the number of lawsuits filed by news organizations under the Freedom of Information Act surged during the past four years, led by the New York Times, Center for Public Integrity and The Associated Press, according to a litigation study by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University. The AP on Monday settled its 2015 lawsuit against the State Department for files about Hillary Clinton's time as secretary of state, at AP's request, and received \$150,546 from the department to cover part of its legal fees.

The AP has pending lawsuits against the FBI for records about its decision to impersonate an AP journalist during a criminal investigation and about who helped the FBI hack into a mass shooting suspect's iPhone and how much the government paid to do it.

Of the \$36.2 million in legal costs fighting such lawsuits last year, the Justice Department accounted for \$12 million, the Homeland Security Department for \$6.3 million and the Pentagon for \$4.8 million. The three departments accounted for more than half the government's total records requests last year.

The figures reflect the final struggles of the Obama administration during the 2016 election to meet President Barack Obama's pledge that it was "the most transparent administration in history," despite wide recognition of serious problems coping with requests under the information law. It received a record 788,769 requests for files last year and spent a record \$478 million answering them and employed 4,263 full-time FOIA employees across more than 100 federal departments and agencies. That was higher by 142 such employees the previous year.

A spokesman for former President Obama did not immediately respond to an email request for comment late Monday. The White House under Obama routinely defended its efforts under the information law in recent years and said federal employees worked diligently on such requests for records.

It remains unclear how President Donald Trump's administration will perform under the Freedom of Information Act or other measures of government transparency. Trump has not spoken extensively about transparency. In his private business and his presidential campaign, Trump required employees and advisers to sign non-disclosure agreements that barred them from discussing their work. His administration has barred some mainstream news organizations from campaign rallies and one White House press briefing. And Trump broke with tradition by refusing to disclose his tax returns.

Trump's secretary of state, Rex Tillerson, is traveling to Asia this week on a small plane without a contingent of journalists or a designated pool reporter who would send reports to the broader diplomatic press corps, departing from 50 years of practice.

Overall, in the final year of Obama's administration, people who asked for records last year under the law received censored files or nothing in 77 percent of requests, about the same as the previous year. In the first full year after Obama's election, that figure was only 65 percent of cases. The government released the new figures in the days ahead of Sunshine Week, which ends Sunday, when news organizations promote open government and freedom of information.

Under the records law, citizens and foreigners can compel the U.S. government to turn over copies of federal records for zero or little cost. Anyone who seeks information through the law is generally

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 25 of 40

supposed to get it unless disclosure would hurt national security, violate personal privacy or expose business secrets or confidential decision-making in certain areas.

Submit tips to the AP's investigative team at <https://www.ap.org/tips>

Online: <https://www.foia.gov/data.html>

Winter storm forces basketball teams to alter travel plans

By JOHN KEKIS, AP Sports Writer

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Mother Nature is causing college basketball teams to alter their travel plans.

Teams chasing a college basketball title are contending with an unexpected wrinkle that's making last-minute travel plans difficult — a fierce storm bearing down on the Northeast that's expected to dump up to two feet of snow in some places and create blizzard-like conditions.

"We are closely tracking the weather and working with our travel partners and teams in the tournament to ensure the safety of our student-athletes, coaches, administrators, officials and fans," the NCAA said in a statement. "This includes looking at departure times for teams that will play in affected cities."

Villanova, the top overall seed in the men's NCAA Tournament, left Philadelphia on Monday afternoon for Buffalo, New York, to get ahead of a storm that's projected to last three days. The defending champion Wildcats, who play on Thursday, had an abbreviated press availability with coach Jay Wright, but no player interviews were granted as the team rushed to its flight.

"I'm not really looking forward to leaving right away. But it hits you with reality, you're in it," Wright said. "We're going to be in Buffalo tonight and we're playing and it's on."

There is less of a chance that the women's tournament would be affected. UConn is the only team in the Northeast hosting and they play Saturday morning giving teams more time to arrive in Connecticut.

U.S. airlines canceled thousands of flights for Monday and Tuesday in anticipation of the storm. Teams in the men's and women's NCAA Tournaments have chartered flights so any travel backlog on commercial planes caused by the storm shouldn't be a problem.

Nobody was facing a more difficult week than Princeton, a school new to the scramble.

The Tigers beat Yale on Sunday for the title in the first Ivy League Tournament, where in previous years they would have clinched earlier by being unbeaten in the regular season.

The victory allowed for a brief celebration and not much more for Chris Mongilia, director of basketball operations for the Tigers.

"I kind of enjoyed it for a minute, and then my phone started ringing and emails started firing out, trying to figure out when we were going," Mongilia said Monday. "We found out our flight time this morning. We've been booking buses and hotels. It's been putting a lot of pressure on us to get everything done and organized. But yeah, it's been crazy."

Crazier still, the school is factoring in midterms for several players this week, squeezing them in before the team plays Notre Dame on Thursday in Buffalo. The team took a chartered flight Monday evening.

"A lot of our guys are going to have to take exams proctored by a professor who is going to have to travel with us," Mongilia said. "They are going to have to take them in a conference room up at the hotel in Buffalo. The storm has definitely put a few bumps in our travel plans."

The Princeton women's team is playing in the WNIT and the tournament decided to have the 10 teams in the Northeast play their games on Friday to avoid the storm and lessen the risk of travel issues.

Providence was leaving Monday evening for Dayton, Ohio, for its Wednesday night matchup against Southern California in the First Four, and the Friars had no worries about cancellations because it takes charter flights for away games and can avoid the local airport, athletic director Bob Driscoll said.

"It's good we're getting out tonight because the snowstorm is coming tomorrow. It'll be a different story," Driscoll said. "People are excited to be in, so we're locked and loaded and ready to leave. We've been working on it all night and all morning."

The winter storm had already begun strafing the Midwest and was projected to begin sweeping through

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 26 of 40

the New York region Monday night. Forecasters said it could dump up to two feet of snow across parts of New York and New Jersey. The National Weather Service issued blizzard watches for New York City and nearby areas, including Connecticut. The storm is expected to last into Wednesday in western New York with as much as 18 inches of snow.

For the NIT, Ole Miss was taking a charter flight on Monday for its Tuesday game at Monmouth in New Jersey. School officials said the storm pushed the travel timeline up a few hours.

West Virginia coach Bob Huggins was delayed getting on the Big 12 coaches weekly media call Monday because he was in a meeting with school officials to discuss the Mountaineers' travel plans to Buffalo.

"Yeah, we are concerned," Huggins said.

The school later announced it would take a bus more than 280 miles north to Buffalo on Monday night rather than leaving on Tuesday. West Virginia plays Thursday afternoon against Bucknell.

Virginia Tech also opted to leave after classes Monday, a day earlier than normal. The Hokies were to take a bus to Roanoke and fly to Buffalo before their game Thursday night against Wisconsin.

Airport officials in Buffalo said they would be able to handle the conditions.

"We're always ready to do our best," said Douglas Hartmayer, spokesman for the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, which oversees the Buffalo-Niagara Airport. "We have a history of being prepared and keeping those runways open and safe."

Syracuse also is in the storm's path, predicted to receive more than one foot of snow, but the Orange aren't going anywhere. Syracuse hosts UNC-Greensboro in a first-round game in the NIT on Tuesday night. The visit from the Spartans comes after Orange coach Jim Boeheim said there was "no value" in the Atlantic Coast Conference holding its postseason tournament in Greensboro.

AP Sports Writers Tom Canavan in New Jersey, John Raby in West Virginia, Hank Kurz in Virginia, David Brandt in Mississippi, Doug Feinberg and Brian Mahoney in New York, Dan Gelston in Philadelphia, and John Wawrow in Buffalo contributed to this report.

For more AP college basketball coverage: <http://collegebasketball.ap.org> and http://twitter.com/AP_Top25

US applications for New Zealand citizenship jump 70 percent

By NICK PERRY, Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — It's one thing to talk about changing allegiance to another country when a new president is elected. It's another thing to go ahead and do it.

But that's exactly what seems to be happening, at least in one distant corner of the world.

In New Zealand, the number of Americans who applied for a grant of citizenship rose by 70 percent in the 12 weeks following the election of President Donald Trump when compared to the same period a year earlier, immigration records obtained by The Associated Press show.

Figures also show the number of Americans who obtained a New Zealand work visa in January was up 18 percent from a year earlier, as was the number of Americans who visited the country.

In New Zealand, a grant of citizenship is the pathway for people without a family connection. Among those Americans with a New Zealand parent, citizenship applications after the election were up 11 percent from a year earlier.

In response to an AP freedom of information request, New Zealand's Department of Internal Affairs said that in the two days after the U.S. election in November, the number of Americans who visited its website to find out about citizenship was up more than tenfold from the same two weekdays a month earlier.

To be sure, the total number of Americans applying for New Zealand citizenship remains relatively low. The country is more than 10,000 kilometers (6,000 miles) from the mainland U.S. and is perhaps best known for its majestic landscapes. Farming remains central to the economy, with sheep outnumbering the 4.8 million people by about six to one.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 27 of 40

Trump made a brief reference to the country during the election campaign when a New Zealand television reporter asked him what the election would mean for the South Pacific country.

"Say hello to Bob Charles. I love Bob Charles," Trump replied. "Do you know who Bob Charles is? Your greatest golfer." Charles won the British Open in 1963.

Some Americans living in New Zealand say their friends and family have been asking them about moving there since the election.

Alanna Irving, 33, a technology startup entrepreneur from San Francisco, moved to New Zealand six years ago and has since married a kiwi, as the locals are known.

"It's an extremely livable place and you can see and palpably feel the difference in how society is organized, and what people prioritize," she said. "New Zealand is a place that cares about equality, I think more. It's less individualistic, more community-minded."

She said that a friend of a friend was so disturbed by the outcome of the election that he immediately jumped on a plane and flew to New Zealand to check it out as a possible place to live. Irving said his visit exceeded his expectations.

"So that was really symbolic to me that there were people in the United States who feel like things are going in a very different direction than they want for their future, or for their children, and they're looking to New Zealand as perhaps an alternative," she said.

Most Americans who apply for New Zealand citizenship must first live in the country for five years.

Cameron Pritchard, an immigration consultant at Malcolm Pacific Immigration in Wellington, said the increase in citizenship applications could be a result of people wanting to feel more settled in their adopted country, given the uncertain nature of the world.

It's about "getting a bit more security or really making a longer-term decision that New Zealand is the place they want to call home," he said.

He said his company noticed a big spike in inquiries from the U.S. during the election.

"It's been more of a flurry of excitement initially than anything that's translated into a huge avalanche of numbers," he said.

Irving said she plans to apply for New Zealand citizenship this year and doesn't foresee ever returning to live in the U.S. She said she misses the excitement that some U.S. innovators and companies can offer, although technology allows her to stay connected with that world.

But, she added, there's one thing she misses that can't be replicated online: The great Mexican food that's available in the U.S.

By the numbers:

Americans applying for New Zealand citizenship by grant:

Nov. 8, 2016, to Jan. 31, 2017: 170

Nov. 8, 2015, to Jan. 31, 2016: 100

Americans applying for New Zealand citizenship by descent:

Nov. 8, 2016, to Jan. 31, 2017: 203

Nov. 8, 2015, to Jan. 31, 2016: 183

Citizenship-related visits to Department of Internal Affairs website from the U.S.:

Nov. 8 to Nov. 10, 2016: 4,146

Oct. 4 to Oct. 6, 2016: 305

Work-visa arrivals from the U.S.:

Jan. 2017: 254

Jan. 2016: 216

Visitor arrivals from the U.S.:

Jan. 2017: 34,240

Jan. 2016: 28,992

Source: Department of Internal Affairs, Statistics New Zealand

Congress' analyst: Millions to lose coverage under GOP bill

By ALAN FRAM and RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fourteen million Americans would lose coverage next year under House Republican legislation remaking the nation's health care system, and that number would balloon to 24 million by 2026, Congress' budget analysts projected Monday. Their report deals a stiff blow to a GOP drive already under fire from both parties and large segments of the medical industry.

The Congressional Budget Office report undercuts a central argument President Donald Trump and Republicans have cited for swiftly rolling back the 2010 health care overhaul: that the insurance markets created under that statute are "a disaster" and about to implode. The congressional experts said the market for individual policies "would probably be stable in most areas under either current law or the (GOP) legislation."

The report also flies in the face of Trump's talk of "insurance for everybody," which he stated in January. He has since embraced a less expansive goal — to "increase access" — advanced by House Speaker Paul Ryan and other Republicans.

Health secretary Tom Price told reporters at the White House the report was "simply wrong" and he disagreed "strenuously," saying it omitted the impact of additional GOP legislation and regulatory changes the Trump administration plans.

In a signal of trouble, Rep. Mark Walker, R-N.C., leader of a large group of House conservatives, said the report "does little to alleviate" concerns about the bill including tax credits considered too costly.

The budget office's estimates provide a detailed, credible appraisal of the Republican effort to unravel former President Barack Obama's 2010 overhaul. The office has a four-decade history of even-handedness and is currently headed by an appointee recommended by Price when he was a congressman. Trump has repeatedly attacked the agency's credibility, citing its significant underestimate of the number of people who would buy insurance on state and federal exchanges under "Obamacare."

On the plus side for Republicans, the budget office said the GOP measure would reduce federal deficits by \$337 billion over the coming decade. That's largely because it would cut the federal-state Medicaid program for low-income Americans and eliminate subsidies that Obama's law provides to millions of people who buy coverage.

The report also said that while the legislation would push premiums upward before 2020 compared to current law, premiums would fall after that by an average 10 percent by 2026.

The GOP bill would obliterate the tax penalties Obama's law imposes on people who don't buy coverage, and eliminate the federal subsidies millions receive based on income and premium costs. It would instead provide tax credits largely reflecting recipients' ages, let insurers charge more for older people and boost premiums for those who let coverage lapse.

It would phase out Obama's expansion of Medicaid to 11 million additional low earners, cap federal spending for the entire program, repeal taxes the statute imposes and halt federal payments to Planned Parenthood for a year.

Administration officials took strong issue with the budget office's projections.

"We believe that our plan will cover more individuals and at a lower cost and give them the choices that they want," Price said.

Ryan, R-Wis., said the GOP legislation "is not about forcing people to buy expensive, one-size-fits-all coverage. It is about giving people more choices and better access to a plan they want and can afford." In fact, he said on Fox News Channel that the CBO report "exceeded my expectations."

Not in a good way, Democrats said. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York said the projections show "just how empty the president's promises, that everyone will be covered and costs will go down, have been."

"I hope they would pull the bill. It's really the only decent thing to do," said House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California.

The American Medical Association, which has opposed the Republican bill because it would reduce coverage, said the report shows the legislation would cause "unacceptable consequences."

Two House committees have approved the legislation and Ryan wants to bring it to the full House next

week. Though many Republicans back the bill, conservatives say it doesn't go far enough in repealing Obama's law, while moderates whose states expanded Medicaid don't want people losing coverage.

GOP leaders hope the Senate will consider the measure before breaking for an early April recess. Opposition from both ends of the Republican spectrum suggests senators might demand significant changes.

The budget office attributed projected increases in uninsured Americans to the GOP bill's elimination of tax penalties for people who don't buy insurance, reduced federal subsidies for many people who buy policies and the Medicaid reductions.

By 2026, the office estimated, a total of 52 million people would lack insurance, including 28 million who would have been expected to lack coverage under Obama's statute. People with lower incomes age 50 to 64, generally too young for Medicare, would represent a disproportionately large share of the uninsured, and growing numbers of people would lose coverage from jobs.

Though Republican tax credits would be less generous than Obama's, the combination of those credits and other changes to lower premiums would attract enough healthy people to stabilize markets under the new plan, the report said.

The budget office sees federal spending on Medicaid declining by \$880 billion over the coming decade, about 25 percent lower than current projections. That would push about 14 million low-income people off the program.

Average premiums are ultimately expected to fall, but that would vary for people of different ages because contrary to Obama's law, Republicans would let older people be charged more.

The report estimates that individuals' out-of-pocket costs under the GOP bill "would tend to be higher than those anticipated under current law." That runs counter to another Trump claim — that his plan would offer "much lower deductibles."

CBO had predicted 23 million people would enroll in online marketplaces when Obama's law was enacted but the actual number was 12 million, largely because it overestimated how the individual mandate would prompt people to buy coverage.

AP reporters Julie Pace, Ken Thomas, Erica Werner and Matthew Daly contributed to this report.

Justice Dept. asks for more time on wiretapping evidence

By JULIE PACE and DEB RIECHMANN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Facing a Monday deadline, the Justice Department asked lawmakers for more time to provide evidence backing up President Donald Trump's unproven assertion that his predecessor wiretapped his New York skyscraper during the election. The request came as the White House appeared to soften Trump's explosive allegation.

The House intelligence committee said it would give the Justice Department until March 20 to comply with the evidence request. That's the date of the committee's first open hearing on the investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 election and possible contacts between Trump associates and Russia.

A spokesman for the committee's Republican chairman said that if the Justice Department doesn't meet the new deadline, the panel might use its subpoena power to gather information.

"If the committee does not receive a response by then, the committee will ask for this information during the March 20 hearing and may resort to a compulsory process if our questions continue to go unanswered," said Jack Langer, a spokesman for Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif.

Trump's assertions have put his administration in a bind. Current and former administration officials have been unable to provide any evidence of the Obama administration wiretapping Trump Tower, yet the president's aides have been reluctant to publicly contradict their boss.

White House spokesman Sean Spicer tried to clarify Trump's comments Monday, saying the president wasn't using the word wiretapping literally, noting that Trump had put the term in quotation marks.

"The president used the word wiretap in quotes to mean broadly surveillance and other activities," Spicer said. He also suggested Trump wasn't accusing former President Barack Obama specifically, but instead referring to the actions of the Obama administration.

Trump himself has not commented on the matter since his March 4 tweets, in which he said he had

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 30 of 40

"just found out that Obama had my 'wires tapped' in Trump Tower just before the victory." He also wrote: "Is it legal for a sitting President to be 'wire tapping' a race for president?"

In two other tweets, Trump described Obama tapping his phones, but did not put the phrases in quotation marks.

The president's accusations against Obama came amid numerous political questions surrounding his associates' possible ties to Russia. The FBI is investigating Trump associates' contacts with Russia during the election, as are House and Senate intelligence committees.

The White House has asked those committees to also investigate Trump's unverified wiretapping allegations against Obama. The House committee has turned the matter back on the Trump administration, setting the Monday deadline for the Justice Department to provide evidence.

In a response Monday evening, the Justice Department said it needed extra time to "review the request in compliance with the governing legal authorities and to determine what if any responsive documents may exist."

Other congressional committees are also pushing the administration to clarify Trump's claims.

Sens. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., asked Acting Deputy Attorney General Dana Boente and FBI Director James Comey to produce the paper trail created when the Justice Department's criminal division secures warrants for wiretaps. The senators, who head the Senate Judiciary Committee's crime and terrorism subcommittee, are seeking warrant applications and court orders, which they said can be scrubbed to protect secret intelligence sources and methods.

Trump's critics have slammed the president for making the wiretapping claim on his Twitter account without evidence. Wiretapping a U.S. citizen would require special permission from a court, and Trump as president would have the ability to declassify that information.

Sen. John McCain, an influential Republican, said Sunday: "I think the president has one of two choices: either retract or to provide the information that the American people deserve."

"If his predecessor violated the law, President Obama violated the law, we have got a serious issue here, to say the least," McCain said.

Comey has privately urged the Justice Department to dispute Trump's claim but has not come forward to do so himself. James Clapper, who was Obama's director of national intelligence, has said that nothing matching Trump's claims had taken place.

White House counselor Kellyanne Conway sidestepped questions about the lack of proof Monday, saying she was "not in the job of having evidence."

"That's what investigations are for," Conway told CNN's "New Day." "The president is pleased that the House and Senate intelligence committees have agreed that this should be part of the investigation that already exists about Russia and the campaign, an investigation that apparently has gone nowhere so far."

In a weekend interview with the Bergen Record, a newspaper in her home state of New Jersey, Conway appeared to point toward the recent WikiLeaks release of nearly 8,000 documents that purportedly reveal secrets about the CIA's tools for breaking into targeted computers, cellphones and even smart TVs.

"What I can say is there are many ways to surveil each other now, unfortunately," including "microwaves that turn into cameras, et cetera," Conway said. "So we know that that is just a fact of modern life."

Associated Press writer Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

Follow Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC> and Deb Riechmann at <http://twitter.com/debriechmann>

UK Parliament gives government power to begin EU exit

By JILL LAWLESS, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain lurched closer to leaving the European Union Monday when Parliament stopped resisting and gave Prime Minister Theresa May the power to file for divorce from the bloc.

But in a blow to May's government, the prospect of Scotland's exit from the United Kingdom suddenly appeared nearer, too. Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon called for a referendum on independence

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 31 of 40

within two years to stop Scotland being dragged out of the EU against its will.

In an announcement that took many London politicians by surprise, Sturgeon vowed that Scotland would not be "taken down a path that we do not want to go down without a choice."

Sturgeon spoke in Edinburgh hours before the European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill passed its final hurdle in Parliament's upper chamber, the House of Lords.

The House of Commons approved the bill weeks ago, but the 800-strong Lords fought to amend it, inserting a promise that EU citizens living in the U.K. will be allowed to remain after Britain pulls out of the bloc.

They also added a demand that Parliament get a "meaningful" vote on the final deal between Britain and the remaining 27 EU nations.

Both amendments were rejected Monday by the Commons, where May's Conservatives have a majority. A handful of pro-EU Conservatives expressed their unhappiness, then abstained from the vote.

The bill returned to the Lords, in a process known as parliamentary ping pong. Faced with the decision of the elected Commons, the Lords backed down and approved it without amendments.

Labour peer Dianne Hayter, who proposed the amendment on EU citizens, said the Lords had done their best, but "our view has been rejected in the elected House of Commons, and it is clear the government is not for turning."

Once the bill receives royal assent — a formality that should be accomplished within hours — May will be free to invoke Article 50 of the EU's key treaty, triggering two years of exit negotiations, by her self-imposed deadline of March 31.

May was forced to seek Parliament's approval for the move after a Supreme Court ruling in January torpedoed her attempt to start the process of leaving the bloc without a parliamentary vote.

The House of Commons and House of Lords battled over the bill's contents, with the status of EU nationals in Britain — and Britons in fellow EU member countries — drawing especially emotional debate.

Both British and EU officials have said such residents should be guaranteed the right to stay where they are, but the two sides have so far failed to provide a concrete guarantee, leaving millions of people in limbo.

Scottish National Party lawmaker Joanna Cherry told the House of Commons that one constituent, a Lithuanian, had told her "the uncertainty caused by this government and this Parliament is making her feel worse about her personal situation in Britain than she did in Lithuania under the Soviets."

Brexit Secretary David Davis told lawmakers the government had a "moral responsibility" to the 3 million EU citizens living in Britain and the 1 million Britons in other member states, and intends to guarantee their rights as soon as possible after exit talks start.

"That is why we must pass this straightforward bill without further delay, so the prime minister can get to work on the negotiations and we can secure a quick deal that secures the status of both European Union citizens in the U.K. and also U.K. nationals living in the EU," he said.

Pro-EU lawmakers accused the government and Brexit-backing lawmakers of running roughshod over the concerns of the 48 percent of Britons who voted to stay in the EU.

Conservative legislator Dominic Grieve called the government's opposition of handing Parliament a final vote on Brexit "deranged," and the Green Party's Caroline Lucas said lawmakers should not just hand ministers a blank check.

"We were not elected to be lemmings," Lucas said.

Euroskeptics accused pro-EU legislators of trying to frustrate the will of voters who passed a June referendum to leave the EU.

"The simple truth is this — deal or no deal, vote or no vote, positive vote or negative vote, this process is irreversible," Conservative legislator Edward Leigh said. "We're leaving the EU, and that's what the people want."

May is now free to trigger Article 50 as early as Tuesday, but the government signaled the move would come much closer to the March 31 deadline.

May spokesman James Slack repeated the government's position that it would happen by the end of March.

"I've said 'end' many times, but it would seem I didn't put it in capital letters strongly enough," he said. The government's satisfaction at victory in Parliament was tempered by the prospect of an independence vote that threatens the 300-year old political union between England and Scotland.

Sturgeon said she would seek to hold a referendum between the fall of 2018 and the spring of 2019 so Scottish voters could make an "informed choice" about their future.

While Britons overall voted to leave the EU, Scottish voters backed remaining by 62 to 38 percent, and Sturgeon said they should not be forced to follow the rest of the U.K. into a "hard Brexit" outside the EU single market.

In a 2014 referendum, Scottish voters rejected independence by a margin of 55 percent to 45 percent. But Sturgeon said the U.K.'s decision to leave the EU had brought about a "material change of circumstances."

May — whose government would have to approve a legally binding referendum — accused Sturgeon's Scottish National Party of political "tunnel vision" and called her announcement "deeply regrettable."

Follow Jill Lawless on Twitter at <http://Twitter.com/JillLawless>

Turkey sanctions the Netherlands over ministers' treatment

By SUZAN FRASER, Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey announced a series of political sanctions against the Netherlands on Monday over its refusal to allow two Turkish ministers to campaign there, including halting high-level political discussions between the two countries and closing Turkish air space to Dutch diplomats.

Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus, briefing journalists after the weekly council of ministers meeting, said the sanctions would apply until the Netherlands takes steps "to redress" the actions that Ankara sees as a grave insult.

"There is a crisis and a very deep one. We didn't create this crisis or bring it to this stage," Kurtulmus said. "Those who did have to take steps to redress the situation."

Other sanctions bar the Dutch ambassador entry back into Turkey and advise parliament to withdraw from a Dutch-Turkish friendship group

The announcement came hours after Turkey's foreign ministry formally protested the treatment of a Turkish minister who was prevented from entering a consulate in the Netherlands and escorted out of the country after trying to attend a political rally.

The ministry also objected to what it called a "disproportionate" use of force against demonstrators at a protest afterward. Separately, Turkey's foreign minister was denied permission to land to address the same rally in Rotterdam.

The argument is over the Netherlands' refusal to allow Turkish officials to campaign there to drum up support among Turks who are eligible to vote in an April 16 referendum that would greatly expand the powers of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

About 400,000 people with ties to Turkey live in the Netherlands, though it's not clear how many are eligible to vote.

Erdogan said the two cabinet ministers — Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and Family Affairs Minister Fatma Betul Sayan Kaya, would ask the European human rights court to weigh in on their treatment. He added that he didn't think the court would rule in Turkey's favor.

Earlier, German Chancellor Angela Merkel backed the Netherlands in its diplomatic fight with Turkey, as NATO's chief called for alliance members to respect each other and the European Union urged Turkey to calm down.

Turkey had a similar dispute with Germany last week, but the fight with the Netherlands comes as that country prepares for its own election Wednesday pitting Prime Minister Mark Rutte's right-wing PVV Party against far-right, anti-Islam populist Geert Wilders' party.

Merkel, speaking at a news conference in Munich on Monday, pledged her "full support and solidarity"

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 33 of 40

to the Dutch, saying the Nazi gibes were "completely unacceptable."

Erdogan responded angrily to Merkel's support for the Netherlands. "Shame on you!" he exclaimed during an interview with A Haber television on Monday.

He renewed accusations that Germany supported "terrorists" battling Turkey and that it backed the 'no' campaign in the Turkish referendum, arguing that Berlin did not want to see a strong Turkey emerge.

"Some of the European Union countries — let's not put all of them in the same sack — unfortunately cannot stomach Turkey's rise," Erdogan said. "Sadly, Germany tops the list. Germany supports terror in a cruel way."

He went on to advise Turks living in Europe not to vote for parties that he described as "enemies of Turkey."

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg urged all members of the alliance "to show mutual respect, to be calm and have a measured approach."

The European Union also called on Turkey to "refrain from excessive statements and actions that risk further exacerbating the situation." EU spokesman Margaritis Schinas added that it was essential to avoid further escalation and find ways to calm the situation.

In the television interview, Erdogan repeated slurs against the Netherlands, saying: "their Vienna Convention is their fascism. Their Nazism. We can say neo-Nazism." He was referring to a 1961 international treaty on diplomatic relations.

Turkey is a candidate to join the European Union, although the membership negotiations have made little progress over the past decade. The country has become a vital partner in a deal with the EU to curb the passage of migrants and refugees from Turkey into Europe.

Omer Celik, Turkey's minister in charge of European Union affairs, said Monday that his country should consider reviewing the migration deal to relax controls on people reaching Europe by walking into Greece or Bulgaria.

"In my opinion the issue of the land passages should be reviewed," the state-run Anadolu Agency quoted him as saying.

The Dutch, meanwhile, issued a travel advisory to their citizens to "be alert and avoid gatherings and busy places throughout Turkey."

Earlier in the day, Turkey summoned the Dutch Embassy's charge d'affaires, Daan Feddo Huisinga, to the Foreign Ministry, where a senior official handed him two formal protest notes. It's the third time the Dutch diplomat has been summoned since tensions broke out between the two countries.

The first note protested how the family minister was treated. The second note protested the treatment of Turkish citizens who gathered outside the Turkish Consulate in Rotterdam from Saturday night into Sunday morning, saying "disproportionate force" was used against "people using their right to peaceful gatherings."

The deputy prime minister said the political sanctions would remain in place until the Dutch government meets conditions that were set out in the diplomatic protest notes, including apologizing and punishing authorities who mistreated Turks

"Until the Netherlands takes steps to compensate for what it did, high-level relations, planned meetings, meetings between ministers or higher level meetings, high-level official talks will be suspended or delayed," Kurtulmus said.

Associated Press Writers Mike Corder in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and Raf Casert in Brussels contributed to this report.

Few clues on how a Justice Gorsuch would vote on immigration

By HOLBROOK MOHR and SUDHIN THANAWALA, Associated Press

If Neil Gorsuch wins confirmation to the Supreme Court, he could cast the deciding vote on President Donald Trump's travel ban against immigrants from certain countries. But it's far from certain how he would vote.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 34 of 40

According to an Associated Press review of Gorsuch's rulings, he has not written extensively about immigration policy during a decade on the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. And the few rulings he has been involved in do not reveal how he might decide if given the opportunity to consider an immigration ban.

Many of the cases involved people challenging their prison sentences for returning to the U.S. illegally after having been deported. He has often been deferential to immigration authorities, but has also sided with immigrants.

"His record on immigration is a mixed bag, so it's hard to predict how he would rule on any challenge to the executive order," says Melissa Crow, legal director for the American Immigration Council, which challenged Trump's original ban.

That order, which would have banned, people from seven majority Muslim countries, was put on hold last month by a federal appeals court, but Trump signed a new version March 6. That one removed Iraq from the list and eliminated a provision to give priority to religious minorities in allowing immigrants in.

The new order is to take effect Thursday, pending the outcome of legal challenges. It would not affect current visa holders but would bar new visas for people from Iran, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen and Libya. And it would temporarily shut down the U.S. refugee program.

There have been eight justices on the court since the death of Justice Antonin Scalia last year. So for now there's the possibility of a tie vote, which means the lower court ruling would stand.

If Gorsuch makes the ninth vote, which way would he go?

While his rulings on major immigration policy are limited, they do offer insight into his thinking.

In a 2013 case, he wrote, "No doubt, we can and will strike down regulations that defy Congress' statutes or the Constitution's guarantees. We do not, however, amend, revise or undo administrative regulations just because they may not be to a litigant's liking or our own."

"Unless some violation of law is involved, the business of deciding the sometimes hard, often fine and nearly always contestable questions of immigration policy belongs to the legislature and executive, not the courts."

Michael Dorf, a constitutional law professor at Cornell University, says Gorsuch's sympathy for people in religious cases, a general skepticism of executive power and a history of ruling for immigrants give some reason to think he could be sympathetic to plaintiffs challenging a ban on people from certain countries.

But, Dorf added, "At this point it's still sort of a guessing game."

Gorsuch has shown sympathy for religious freedom, notably siding with employers who objected to providing employees coverage for contraceptives. He also found it was wrong for a Wyoming prison to deny use of an existing prison sweat lodge to an inmate who wanted to use it to exercise his Native American religious beliefs. But it's not clear how those considerations would factor into a ban on people from majority Muslim countries.

In one immigration case, Gorsuch sided with a Somali convicted of lying under oath during grand jury questioning about his asylum application, saying the immigrant should have been provided an interpreter. In another case, he was part of a decision that found the court lacked jurisdiction to consider an appeal from Mexican immigrants who argued deportation would create an undue hardship because their teenage kids were U.S. citizens.

In one of Gorsuch's most noted immigration cases, he sided with an immigrant over the application of a law requiring some people who enter the country illegally to wait 10 years outside the U.S. before they can obtain legal residency.

In response to a Senate questionnaire that is part of the confirmation process, Gorsuch put that 2016 case at the top of a list of his most important rulings, saying it dealt with conflicting provisions in immigration law. One provision gave the attorney general power to grant residency to people who enter the country illegally, while another required the 10-year waiting period.

An appeals court had said the first provision trumped, allowing immigrants to apply to the attorney general to stay. But an immigration board said the 10-year rule took precedence. Gorsuch objected to the immigration board applying the 10-year rule for a man who applied for residency when the appeals court decision still stood.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 35 of 40

In a concurring opinion, however, Gorsuch took aim at the longstanding Chevron doctrine, which gives deference to federal agencies' interpretations of ambiguous statutes, calling it "an elephant in the room."

He wrote that the doctrine and another ruling, often referred to as Brand X, allow "executive bureaucracies to swallow huge amounts of core judicial and legislative power and concentrate federal power in a way that seems more than a little difficult to square with the Constitution of the framers' design."

Marielena Hincapie, executive director of the National Immigration Law Center, said Gorsuch's words hold troubling portents for immigration policy, though they came in a case in which he ruled in favor of an immigrant.

"He really believes agencies should not be given the deference that decades of courts have agreed they should be given and that it should be judges themselves who are the ones that are making the decisions about how those rules should be applied," she said.

In considering Trump's original order, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said the administration presented no evidence that any foreigner from the seven countries was responsible for a terrorist attack in the U.S. The court also noted allegations that the order targeted Muslims.

Kevin Johnson, dean of the UC Davis School of Law, said it's hard to predict how any judge will rule in future cases, and in addition Trump's plan has national security implications.

"When it comes to national security, courts are often deferential to the president," he said.

Find AP's reporting on Neil Gorsuch here: <http://apne.ws/2mfXk4V>

The AP National Investigative Team can be reached at investigate@ap.org

INSIDE WASHINGTON: Plane fire safety rules stall under Trump

By JOAN LOWY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A year ago, the U.S. government was campaigning for an international ban on shipments of rechargeable batteries on passenger planes because the batteries can self-ignite, creating intense fires capable of destroying an airliner.

"The risk is immediate and urgent," Angela Stubblefield, a U.S. aviation official, declared then.

Today, that urgency has evaporated as safety regulations stall under President Donald Trump's push to ease what he sees as red tape holding back the economy.

The International Civil Aviation Organization, a U.N. agency that sets global aviation safety standards, decided last year to ban bulk shipments of lithium-ion batteries on international passenger flights. On cargo flights, the batteries can be charged to no more than 30 percent, a level that may reduce the likelihood of fires.

As a result, countries around the world have been adopting the new international standard for domestic flights as well. The Obama administration also looked to do so, submitting rules for publication that makes them binding. But after Trump took office on Jan. 20, he signed an executive order freezing the publication of new regulations. That means airlines and cargo operators remain free to ignore the standard for domestic flights.

The Obama administration had considered the change so urgent that it was fast-tracked in the rule-making process. Trump's executive order says urgent safety rules can be exempted from the freeze, but the new administration isn't invoking that exemption for battery shipments.

"This is part of our ongoing regulatory review," the Transportation Department said in a statement. "The safe movement of hazardous materials remains a priority. We will provide updates as soon as decisions are made with regard to these and other issues at hand." No time frame was provided.

Rechargeable batteries are used in consumer products ranging from cellphones and laptops to electric cars. Manufacturers like them because they pack more energy into smaller packages, but the batteries can self-ignite if they have a manufacturing flaw, are damaged, exposed to excessive heat, overcharged or packed too closely together. The fires can burn up to 1,100 degrees Fahrenheit, close to the melting point of the aluminum used in aircraft construction.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 36 of 40

Since 2006, three cargo jets have been destroyed and four pilots killed by in-flight fires that investigators say were either started by batteries or made more severe by their proximity.

Most passenger carriers and some cargo operators are voluntarily abiding by the international standard for their domestic operations for the time being. Trade associations for the U.S. and international airline industries, as well as the Air Line Pilots Association, say they support extending the standard to domestic flights.

But lobbyists for the battery industry, which opposed the international standard when it was adopted last year, are urging administration officials to make changes that would allow certain batteries to continue to be shipped on passenger flights. The U.N. agency standard already allows for limited exemptions, but lobbyists are asking for blanket exemptions for medical-device batteries and shipments to remote locations and other changes.

The position of U.S. negotiators last year was that medical-device batteries were no less dangerous than other kinds.

Extending the international ban to domestic flights is "a matter of life and death," said Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., the House transportation committee's senior Democrat and an advocate of banning air shipments of batteries.

"If we don't start following the ICAO guidelines and stop stuffing giant boxes of lithium batteries that are fully charged into passenger aircraft, sooner or later we're going to kill a lot of people," he said. "When something is this critical that it will take down an airplane, voluntary compliance with a non-existent rule is not adequate."

But Bob Richard, a battery industry lobbyist, said people living in the Alaskan outback, for example, might not be able to receive batteries for their backup heaters or emergency beacons if the international standard is extended to domestic flights.

Under Trump, "regulators are going to be held more accountable for understanding the impacts of their rules," Richard said. "I think that will cause agencies to take a closer look at the implications."

Battery makers and electronics companies say the problem is mostly limited to manufacturers in China that make substandard batteries and don't follow hazardous materials shipping regulations. They say greater enforcement of the previous, less stringent shipping rules is the better solution. But a study by Canadian safety authorities found that the problem of battery shippers not following regulations was widespread and not limited to China.

Congress directed the Transportation Department last year to adopt the international standard for domestic flights. But it's not uncommon for federal agencies to ignore congressional directives or delay compliance, especially if they disagree with them.

Without harmonization, the U.S. also can't enforce the U.N. agency standard for international passenger and cargo flights to and from the United States. The U.S. is the world's largest aviation market.

Safety concerns about rechargeable batteries increased after FAA tests in 2014 showed gases emitted by overheated batteries can build up in cargo containers, leading to explosions capable of disabling aircraft fire suppression systems. An organization representing aircraft manufacturers said in 2015 that airliners aren't designed to withstand lithium battery fires and continuing to accept battery shipments is "an unacceptable risk."

Follow Joan Lowy at http://twitter.com/AP_Joan_Lowy. Her work can be found at <http://bigstory.ap.org/content/joan-lowy>

Madness: No wagering please, but go ahead and fill a bracket

By EDDIE PELLIS, AP National Writer

Here's one thing millions of Americans can agree on: March Madness is fun, especially when there's a little money on the line.

So fun, in fact, that more people will fill out NCAA Tournament brackets this week than voted for either Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton in last year's presidential election.

Combining all those \$10 and \$20 entry fees that go along with most of the 70 million-plus office pools

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 37 of 40

being filled out as we speak, Americans will put in the neighborhood of \$2 billion at stake when the tournament kicks off later this week.

But though the brackets and the money spent on them have driven the tournament's popularity upward — the 2015 tournament was the most-viewed in more than two decades, while last year's took a hit because the Final Four was televised exclusively on cable — the NCAA itself does not condone gambling or filling out brackets for anything more than fun.

Adding to the outlandishness of it all — CBS, which combines with Turner Sports to pay more than \$1 billion a year to televise every game of the tournament through 2032, runs one of the country's biggest bracket contests, offering players a chance to form their own private pools (for fun, of course) or to compete for prizes, including a trip to the 2018 Final Four (no purchase necessary).

The NCAA also runs a bracket contest on its own website. But in a statement on gambling, it reminds players that while entering a bracket contest that doesn't require an entry fee is not banned by the NCAA (but may be barred by individual schools), that "we have learned that these types of pools are often the entry for youth to begin betting."

"While the bracket is an important part of the excitement around the tournament, money does not have to be involved to enjoy March Madness," NCAA director of public and media relations Stacey Osburn says.

It certainly can make things more interesting, though.

The American Gaming Association estimates that, in total, around \$10.4 billion will be wagered on the three-week hoops extravaganza that starts Tuesday with opening-round games and ends April 1 and 3 at the Final Four in Phoenix. That's \$1.2 billion more than last year. Only \$295 million of that will be bet legally — mainly at sports books in Nevada.

Geoff Freeman of the AGA, which seeks to destigmatize gambling while making it legal in more parts of the country, says the NCAA's stance is "strange" and "hypocritical." "The other word is, it's dangerous," Freeman said.

The AGA, the lobbying arm for commercial and tribal casinos, believes the more regulatory eyeballs placed on the games if gambling became legal in more places, the less chance there is of point shaving and other forms of tampering, the likes of which have hit the college game hard in the past.

"I don't know that the office basketball pool should be messed with," says Bo Bernhard of the International Gaming Institute at University of Nevada, Las Vegas. "But the broader, more important issue is that there's widespread wagering on sports that goes unmonitored, unregulated, and that's where you can get in trouble."

NBA commissioner Adam Silver is among the most high-profile U.S. sports leaders acknowledging the reality that gambling is an ever-growing part of the American fabric. He says it adds to engagement and believes gambling "should be brought out of the underground."

The NFL still has a strict no-gambling policy, but gives tacit recognition to its role in the game by providing detailed injury reports. The league is strongly considering moving a team, the Raiders, to Las Vegas — an unthinkable notion for decades.

The NFL also turns a relatively blind eye to fantasy football. Weekly fantasy football is considered gambling in a handful of states, most of which have differing definitions of what's legal, mainly relating to the amount of luck vs. skill is involved in the game being wagered on. That debate is currently brewing across the country as daily-game fantasy sites fight for their survival.

When it comes to office pools, though, Bernhard says you don't have to be a lawyer to understand the basic idea.

"Clearly, it's betting something of value on an event whose outcome is in doubt, and that's the definition of gambling," he said. "But it's not something legal authorities are looking to crack down on."

The NCAA looks at it differently.

Back in 2003, Washington's Rick Neuheisel was famously fired for participating in a high-stakes March Madness pool — even though he's a football coach.

Just last month, five players on the University of Richmond baseball team were suspended for playing fantasy football.

Freeman labeled that story an instance of a school delivering "absurd punishments for students engaging in mainstream activities."

The numbers show there's nothing more mainstream than filling out a bracket. Even if the student-athletes fueling all this madness aren't allowed to.

For more AP college basketball coverage: <http://collegebasketball.ap.org> and http://twitter.com/AP_Top25.

Scotland seeks new independence referendum amid Brexit spat

By JILL LAWLESS and GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Scotland's leader delivered a shock twist to Britain's EU exit drama on Monday, announcing that she will seek authority to hold a new independence referendum in the next two years because Britain is dragging Scotland out of the EU against its will.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said she would move quickly to give voters a new chance to leave the United Kingdom because Scotland was being forced into a "hard Brexit" that it didn't support. Britons decided in a June 23 referendum to leave the EU, but Scots voted by 62 to 38 percent to remain.

Scotland must not be "taken down a path that we do not want to go down without a choice," Sturgeon said.

The move drew a quick rebuke from Prime Minister Theresa May, who said a second referendum would be hugely disruptive and was not justified because evidence shows most Scottish voters oppose a new independence vote.

May accused Sturgeon's Scottish National Party of political "tunnel vision" and called the referendum "deeply regrettable."

"It sets Scotland on a course for more uncertainty and division," she said.

Sturgeon spoke in Edinburgh as Britain's Parliament was on the verge of approving a Brexit bill that will allow the U.K. to start the formal withdrawal from the EU within days. May plans to trigger the two-year exit process by the end of March.

Sturgeon said she would ask the Scottish Parliament next week to start the process of calling a referendum, to be held between the fall of 2018 and the spring of 2019. She said by then, details of Britain's post-Brexit deal with the EU would be clear and Scottish voters would be able to make "an informed choice."

The British government must agree before a legally binding referendum can be held. It didn't say Monday whether it would do so, but said an independence ballot "would be divisive and cause huge economic uncertainty at the worst possible time."

In a 2014 referendum, Scottish voters rejected independence by a margin of 55 percent to 45 percent. But Sturgeon said that the U.K.'s decision to leave the EU had brought about a "material change of circumstances."

Sturgeon said that she had sought compromise with May's government, but had been met with a "brick wall of intransigence."

Sturgeon has been seeking a deal that would allow Scotland to stay in the European single market and customs union. But she said she has become convinced May is pursuing a "hard Brexit" that would leave Britain outside those arrangements, which many U.K. businesses see as crucial.

"I am not turning my back on further discussions should the U.K. government change its mind," she said.

Sturgeon is taking a big gamble. Although the prospect of Brexit has likely boosted support for independence, polls do not indicate it has majority backing. And there is no guarantee the EU would allow an independent Scotland to remain a member.

Former European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso has set out the legal view that if one part of an EU country becomes an independent state, it would have to apply for its own EU membership.

On Monday, commission spokesman Margaritis Schinas said "the Barroso doctrine ... would apply, obviously" to Scotland.

Apart from Sturgeon's SNP, Britain's main political parties oppose independence.

"The 2014 Scottish independence referendum was billed as a once-in-a-generation event," Labour Party

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 39 of 40

leader Jeremy Corbyn said. "The result was decisive and there is no appetite for another referendum."
Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron said Scotland could find itself with "the worst of all worlds" — outside both the U.K. and the EU.

Asked whether she would resign if she lost the referendum, Sturgeon said she wasn't planning to lose. "Sometimes you've got to do what you think is right in politics," she said. "And I think it's right for Scotland to have a choice."

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, March 14, the 73rd day of 2017. There are 292 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 14, 1967, the body of President John F. Kennedy was moved from a temporary grave to a permanent memorial site at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

On this date:

In 1794, Eli Whitney received a patent for his cotton gin, an invention that revolutionized America's cotton industry.

In 1885, the Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera "The Mikado" premiered at the Savoy Theatre in London.

In 1900, Congress ratified the Gold Standard Act.

In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt signed an executive order designed to prevent Japanese laborers from immigrating to the United States as part of a "gentlemen's agreement" with Japan.

In 1923, President Warren G. Harding became the first chief executive to file an income tax return, paying a levy of \$17,990 on his \$75,000 salary.

In 1939, the republic of Czechoslovakia was dissolved, opening the way for Nazi occupation of Czech areas and the separation of Slovakia.

In 1951, during the Korean War, United Nations forces recaptured Seoul (sohl).

In 1964, a jury in Dallas found Jack Ruby guilty of murdering Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy, and sentenced him to death. (Both the conviction and death sentence were overturned, but Ruby died before he could be retried.)

In 1975, "Monty Python and the Holy Grail," a sendup of the legend of King Arthur, had its world premiere in Los Angeles. Academy Award-winning actress Susan Hayward, 57, died in Los Angeles.

In 1980, a LOT Polish Airlines jet crashed while attempting to land in Warsaw, killing all 87 people aboard, including 22 members of a U.S. amateur boxing team.

In 1990, the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies held a secret ballot that elected Mikhail S. Gorbachev to a new, powerful presidency.

In 1991, a British court overturned the convictions of the "Birmingham Six," who had spent 16 years in prison for a 1974 Irish Republican Army bombing, and ordered them released.

Ten years ago: The Pentagon released the transcript of a military hearing in which Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (HAH'-leed shayk moh-HAH'-med) said he "was responsible for the 9/11 operation from A to Z." President George W. Bush, speaking from Mexico, said he was troubled by the Justice Department's misleading explanations to Congress of why it had fired eight U.S. attorneys, but said the firings were "entirely appropriate."

Five years ago: President Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle, hosted a White House state dinner for British Prime Minister David Cameron and his wife, Samantha. Earlier, the two leaders announced that NATO forces would hand over the lead combat role in Afghanistan to Afghan forces in 2013 as the U.S. and its allies aimed to get out by the end of 2014.

One year ago: The Senate voted 49-40 to confirm John B. King Jr. as the nation's education secretary; King had been serving as acting secretary since Arne Duncan stepped down in Dec. 2015. Europe and Russia launched the ExoMars probe on a joint mission to explore the atmosphere of Mars and hunt for signs of life on the red planet. An Amtrak train traveling from Los Angeles to Chicago derailed west of

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 245 ~ 40 of 40

Dodge City, Kansas, injuring 28 of the 144 people on board.

(Stations: "Derrick," one name only, is correct)

Today's Birthdays: Singer Phil Phillips (Song: "Sea of Love") is 91. Former astronaut Frank Borman is 89. Actor Michael Caine is 84. Composer-conductor Quincy Jones is 84. Actor Raymond J. Barry is 78. Movie director Wolfgang Petersen is 76. Country singer Michael Martin Murphey is 72. Rock musician Walt Parazaider (payr-ah-ZAY'-der)(Chicago) is 72. Actor Steve Kanaly is 71. Comedian Billy Crystal is 69. Former Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla., is 69. Actor-writer-comedian-radio personality Rick Dees is 66. Country singer Jann Browne is 63. Actor Adrian Zmed is 63. Prince Albert II, the ruler of Monaco, is 59. Actress Laila Robins is 58. Actress Tamara Tunie (tuh-MAH'-ruh TOO'-nee) is 58. Actress Penny Johnson Jerald is 57. Producer-director-writer Kevin Williamson is 52. Actress Elise Neal is 51. Actor Gary Anthony Williams is 51. Actress Megan Follows is 49. Rock musician Michael Bland is 48. Country singer Kristian Bush is 47. Rock musician Derrick is 45. Actress Betsy Brandt is 44. Actress Grace Park is 43. Actor Daniel Gillies is 41. Actor Corey Stoll is 41. Actor Jake Fogelnest is 38. Actor Chris Klein is 38. Actress Kate Maberly is 35. Singer-musician Taylor Hanson (Hanson) is 34. Actor Jamie Bell is 31. Rock musician Este Haim (HY'-uhm) (Haim) is 31. Actor Ansel Elgort is 23. Olympic gold medal gymnast Simone Biles is 20.

Thought for Today: "The man who does his work, any work, conscientiously, must always be in one sense a great man." — Dinah Maria Mulock Craik, English novelist (1826-1887).