

Groton Daily Independent

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Saturday, April 22

10 a.m.: Track at Ipswich

Sunday, April 23

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at 9 a.m., Sunday School at 10 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with Milestones at 9 a.m., Sunday School at 10 a.m.

United Methodist: Conde Worship at 9 a.m., Coffee and fellowship at 10 a.m., Groton Worship at 11 a.m., Sunday School begins after children's sermon.

Catholic Parish: Mass at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church at 9 a.m., then at St. Joseph in Turton at 11 a.m.

Heaven Bound Ministries in Pierpont: Worship at 10 a.m.

Monday, April 24

Senior Menu: Sloppy joe on wheat bun, oven roasted potatoes, mixed vegetables, crunchy cranberry salad.

School Lunch: Submarines, sweet potato tots, fruit.

School Breakfast: Cheese omelette, muffin, fruit, juice, milk.

10 a.m.: Girls Golf at Milbank

4 p.m.: 7th/8th grade track at Aberdeen Central.

7 p.m.: School Board Meeting

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study at 6:30 a.m.

United Methodist: Cub Scouts at 7 p.m., Evening Bible Study at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, April 25

Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

The cardboard/paper
recycling trailer at the school is **Closed**

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Removal, Grinding, Chipping, Trimming
605-725-WOOD
Mason Dinger: 605-216-6098
Trevor Zeck: 605-216-8910



**DAKOTA TREE
COMPANY**

The Life of Larry Allen Ragels

April 29, 1947- March 11, 2017



Larry Ragels passed away at St. Joseph's Hospital, Denver, Colorado with his family by his side on March 11, 2017 after a several week struggle with pneumonia and complications.

Larry was born in Webster SD on April 29, 1947 to Chester and Grace (Molloy) Ragels, the sixth of six children. His first few years were on the family farm, and then in Groton SD where he completed all of his school years, graduating from Groton High School in 1965. After graduation he attended the University of South Dakota, but soon he joined the Army and served for a time in Vietnam. There he was wounded and spent several months in recuperation. He received the Purple Heart and was honorably discharged on March 1, 1974.

Larry and Sandra M. Soyer were married in Sioux Falls SD in April 1971. Regina Lea was born to them. They continued to reside in the Aberdeen area where in 1976 he received his Bachelor of Science Degree.

Following graduation he began his career of government service with a position with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In ensuing years he served in several government agencies in a variety of locations around the country. He retired in 2007 after holding the position of Regional Director with the United States Bureau of Reclamation in Lakewood, Colorado which has been his home since 2002.

Larry was united in marriage to Tetiana V. Kondratova in Golden Colorado on July 17, 2008.

Larry is survived by his wife, Tetiana V. Ragels, stepson Mykola Kondratov, daughter and son-in-law, Gina and Jim Penisten of Sioux Falls SD, Papa to Mary Grace, Bessie, Rosie, and Sojer Penisten, sister and brother-in-law Joyce and Michael Darling of Deadwood SD, sister-in-law Waneta Ragels of Rapid City SD, mother-in-law Nadezhda Moskelchenko, brother-in-law, Stanislav, and sister-in-law Margarita of Ukraine, and several cousins and nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Chester and Grace Ragels, his brothers, Vance, Leonard, and Richard Ragels, and his sister Ramona Schinkel.

Larry greatly enjoyed his family. He and Tetiana always were welcoming hosts for visiting family and friends. He was devoted to Tetiana and of great assistance in making her and Kola feel at home in America. His dogs Vesta and Friia gave him much companionship and happiness. All of his life Larry remained a student with a variety of interests. He could not be found without several books and highlighters nearby. Following a bout with cancer in 2009, Larry's life changed to being more home bound than he might have liked. But he put that time to good use in his passion for research and writing which included his nearly complete book on methods of counteracting addiction.

He also spent time in meditation and contemplation on the meaning of existence, and living life to the best of one's potential. He carried on in that spirit despite the pain and limitations caused by the effects of his cancer treatments. His determination and courage was an inspiration.

A memorial service was held at Aspen Mortuary, 1350 Simms Street, Lakewood Colorado on March 15. Service at 10 followed by a time of sharing at 11.

Inurnment will be at Groton Union Cemetery, Groton SD at 1:00 on May 6, 2017 including the American Legion Post 39 Honor Guard. Friends and family are encouraged to attend.

Undoing the Obama Legacy of 'Government Knows Best'

By Senator Mike Rounds (R-S.D.)

It has been three months since President Trump took office with a Republican-led Congress in place ready to help him advance policies that grow our economy and allow hardworking Americans to keep more of their paycheck each month. Almost immediately, we have been delivering on that promise by undoing a number of Obama-era regulations, regulations that take much-needed capital away from families and small businesses. Under the Congressional Review Act, the Senate has passed 13 resolutions undoing Obama-era regulations. The savings that come from undoing these regulations, combined with the president's executive actions and formal rule delays, will save Americans more than \$65 billion total in regulatory compliance costs and roughly 52 million hours of paperwork annually, according to the American Action Forum.

For example, we have been able to reverse the Obama administration's education mandate, which would have imposed federal education standards on how to assess schools at the state and local level. We also stopped an Obama regulation that would have imposed burdensome new restrictions on internet service providers that did nothing to increase privacy protections for consumers.

In all, the Senate has passed 13 bills undoing Obama-era regulations under the Congressional Review Act (CRA), an important oversight tool that allows Congress to undo federal regulations issued by unelected bureaucrats at federal agencies. We expect to use the Congressional Review Act to undo even more regulations in the near future, further delivering on our promise to provide regulatory relief to the American people, who are currently saddled with \$1.9 trillion in regulatory compliance costs each year.

The Trump administration has also been busy using the tools available to it to undo burdensome regulations. It put a halt to the overreaching Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule, requiring the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Army Corps to review the WOTUS rule to make certain it promotes economic growth and minimizes regulatory uncertainty. This is a victory for South Dakota farmers, ranchers and landowners who would otherwise be forced to spend countless hours filling out paperwork to get permits from the EPA and Army Corps just to conduct normal agricultural activities or spray for weeds along our county roads.

The administration was also able to stop the Obama administration's costly Clean Power Plan, which would have required states to completely rework their electric grids and led to dramatically higher electricity bills for every single American in the country. It also reversed a harmful regulation known as the "fiduciary rule" that would have negatively impacted South Dakotans saving for retirement by limiting the availability of retirement investment advice.

I'm the first to admit that not all rules are bad – some rules are necessary for government to operate in an orderly fashion and to keep Americans safe. But too much regulation is costly and stifles innovation. Under the eight years of the Obama administration, Americans saw an unprecedented amount of new rules and regulations issued by unelected, unaccountable Washington bureaucrats. In 2016 alone, the last year he was in office, the federal register which prints all the new rules being promulgated surpassed 97,000 pages, by far an all-time record. This is unacceptable and unsustainable.

At the end of the day, overregulation hurts families the most because they are the ones forced to pay more for goods and services. As the 115th Congress moves forward, I will continue working with my colleagues on ways to provide regulatory relief for South Dakota families and businesses.



50th Anniversary

Dave and Mary Blackmun are celebrating 50 years of marriage. Please join family and friends for an open house Saturday, April 29th, at Olive Grove golf course in Groton, SD from 2-4 pm. No gifts please.

EarthTalk®

From the Editors of E - The Environmental Magazine

Dear EarthTalk: Even though pesticides may take an environmental toll, isn't it worth it given how many more mouths we can feed thanks to their use? -- Mickey Jurowski, Palatine, IL

The advent of new technologies coming out of World War II led agricultural researchers to start experimenting with new classes of chemicals they could use to boost agricultural production. As human populations swelled, these "advances" were applied around the world so farmers could grow more food to feed the hungry masses and stave off widespread famine. This transition from essentially organic farming practices to what we now consider "conventional" (that is, aided by chemicals) has been dubbed "The Green Revolution." But "green" in the name doesn't mean it's been good for the environment.

Chemical fertilizers are synthetic or inorganic materials added to soil to aid in plant life. Pesticides kill insects or other organisms that are harmful to crops, while herbicides kill any unwelcomed vegetation that may affect their growth. According to data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), American farmers use upwards of a billion pounds of pesticides every year. Meanwhile, the United Nations reports that globally we use about five times that.

Indeed, the widespread adoption of these synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides has done a great job at boosting crop efficiency to feed more and more of us. For example, India was on the brink of a mass famine in the 1960s due to rapid population growth. Using the techniques of the green revolution, Indian farmers were able to grow enough produce and rice to stave off widespread starvation. Another advantage of pesticide use in India and elsewhere has been the prevention of disease, because pesticides kill insects carrying viruses that could be passed onto the crops.

However, pesticides not only kill the pests but also the natural enemies of those pests. In nature, everything is balanced out. Indeed, there is no free lunch, as pests respond to treatment by breeding stronger offspring that are resistant to these chemicals, and with natural predators gone, these pests will quickly multiply, which is why the need for pesticides to kill these pests keeps increasing.

Furthermore, persistent organic pollutants, also known as "POPs," are highly toxic pesticides and chemicals that do not decompose. They poison non-target organisms in the environment because they are passed through the food chain (bioaccumulate). Consumption of POPs disrupts the endocrine system and is linked to cancer and infertility in humans. Pesticides also take a toll on our environment, contaminating water and soil. Along with insects, pesticides are also toxic to fish, birds, frogs and more.

Pesticide use is very controversial and should be taken seriously. While here at home, the EPA has banned many pesticides that are harmful to our environment and our health (though the battle for safer food rages on), in many other countries agricultural oversight and environmental regulations are non-existent or unenforced. Fortunately, we can all be part of the solution by eschewing conventionally grown foods and opting for organic varieties whenever we can. While growing your own food is one sure way to know that what you're eating is safe, you can also find an increasingly large amount of organic food in your local supermarket, let alone at a Whole Foods near you. Another great way to eat healthier and organic is to shop at local farmers' market. Find one near you by searching the free online database maintained by the non-profit Local Harvest.

CONTACTS: EPA, www.epa.gov/agriculture/agriculture-organic-farming;
Local Harvest, www.localharvest.org/farmers-markets/; Whole Foods, wholefoods.com.

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss and is a registered trademark of the nonprofit Earth Action Network. To donate, visit www.earthtalk.org. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.

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Today in Weather History

April 22, 1968: A late season snow storm affected most of South Dakota, with the heaviest snowfall measuring 18 inches at Eagle Butte. Also, localized icing damaged utility lines, and 40 mph winds caused localized blizzard conditions. Some calf losses were reported.

April 22, 1992: With a fresh blanket of snow from a recent snowstorm helping to keep the air cool the high temperature at Sioux Falls only reached 31 degrees. This cold temperature is the latest below freezing high temperature on record in Sioux Falls.

April 22, 2001: Heavy snow of 7 to 15 inches fell across much of central and northeast South Dakota from early on the 22nd to early on the 23rd. Some freezing rain also brought heavy icing in Buffalo, Eastern Lyman, and far southern Roberts counties resulting in some downed trees and branches along with some downed power lines. This late season snowstorm caused many travel problems along with some accidents. There were many vehicles in the ditch along Interstate-29 in Roberts County. Many schools and events were either canceled or delayed on the 22nd and 23rd. The heavy snow also caused problems with ranchers and their livestock with some calves lost in the storm. Around 9:30 am on the 23rd in Kennebec, the heavy snow resulted in the roof of the 40 by 64-foot feed and seed warehouse to collapse. Late season record snowfalls were set at Aberdeen and Pierre. Some snowfall amounts included 7 inches at Timber Lake and Leola, 8 inches at Eagle Butte, Mobridge and Aberdeen, 9 inches at Kennebec and Pollock, 10 inches at Gettysburg, Selby, Redfield, and Webster, and 11 inches at Onida, Mission Ridge, Hosmer, and Columbia. Locations with snowfall amounts of a foot or more included, 12 inches at Britton, Ree Heights, Highmore, Blunt, Seneca, and Pierre, 13 inches at Murdo, Presho, Miller, and Wilmot, 14 inches at Roy Lake and southwest of Harrold, and 15 inches at Saint Lawrence.

1883: A tornado outbreak from Louisiana to Kansas claimed the lives of at least 127 people and injured over 800 others. One of the tornadoes destroyed the town of Beauregard, Mississippi.




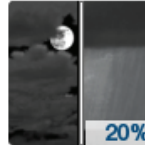



1978: Lightning sometimes strikes tents. In this case, a tent containing some sleeping Girl Scouts was hit by lightning as they were camping at DeGray Lake in Arkansas. Two of the Girl Scouts suffered minor burns.

1999: A one million dollar air charter Boeing 727 flew into large hail. Although the plane and its 66 occupants landed safely, the aircraft was declared a total loss.

2003: Tropical Storm Ana became the first Atlantic tropical storm since records began in 1871 to form during the month April. Maximum sustained winds reached 55 mph. Starting as a non-tropical area of low pressure on the 18th about 210 miles south-southwest of Bermuda, it was classified as a sub-tropical storm early on the 20th, it gained full tropical characteristics near 0000 UTC on the 21st, developing an "eye" feature.

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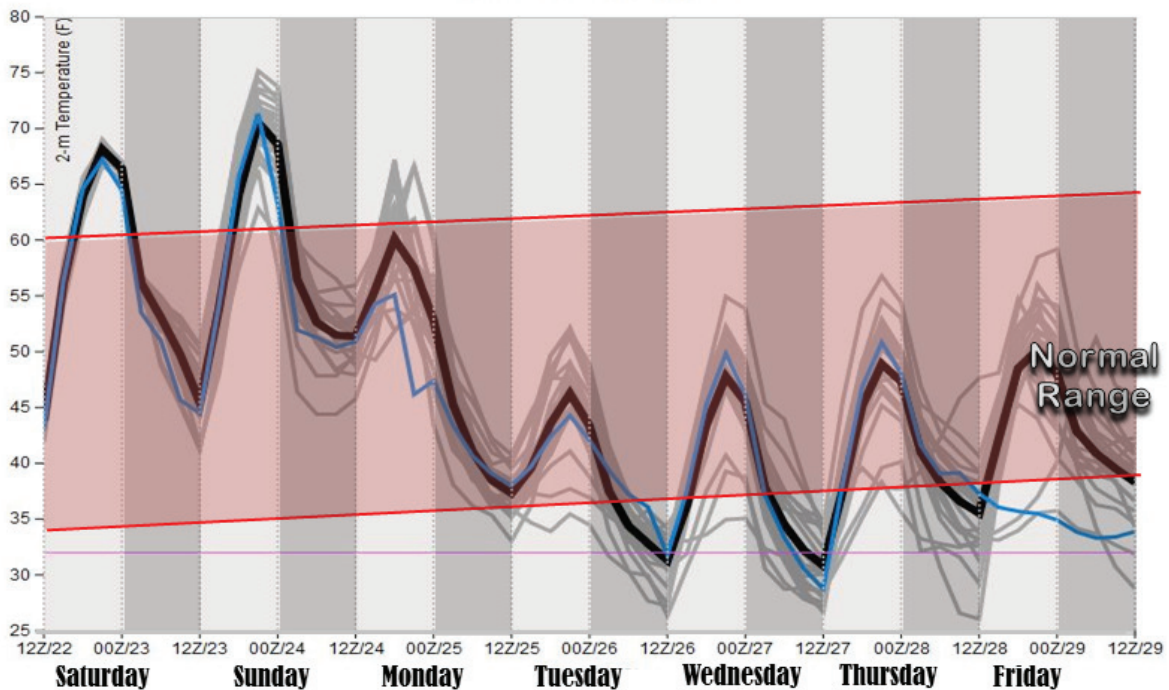
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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Showers
High: 67 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 66 °F	Low: 44 °F	High: 60 °F	Low: 30 °F	High: 46 °F

Mild This Weekend

Weather System Dislodges Colder Temperatures For Next Week

High/Low Temperature Trace For The Weekend/Workweek



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD



Updated: 4/22/2017 5:21 AM Central

Published on: 04/22/2017 at 5:26AM

Take advantage of the sunny skies and mild temperatures today and Sunday. A weather system will draw colder air into the region for next week.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 63.4 F at 5:23 PM

Low Outside Temp: 30.7 F at 5:39 AM

High Gust: 12.0 Mph at 11:50 AM

Snow: Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 90° in 1990

Record Low: 15° in 2015

Average High: 61°F

Average Low: 34°F

Average Precip in April.: 1.18

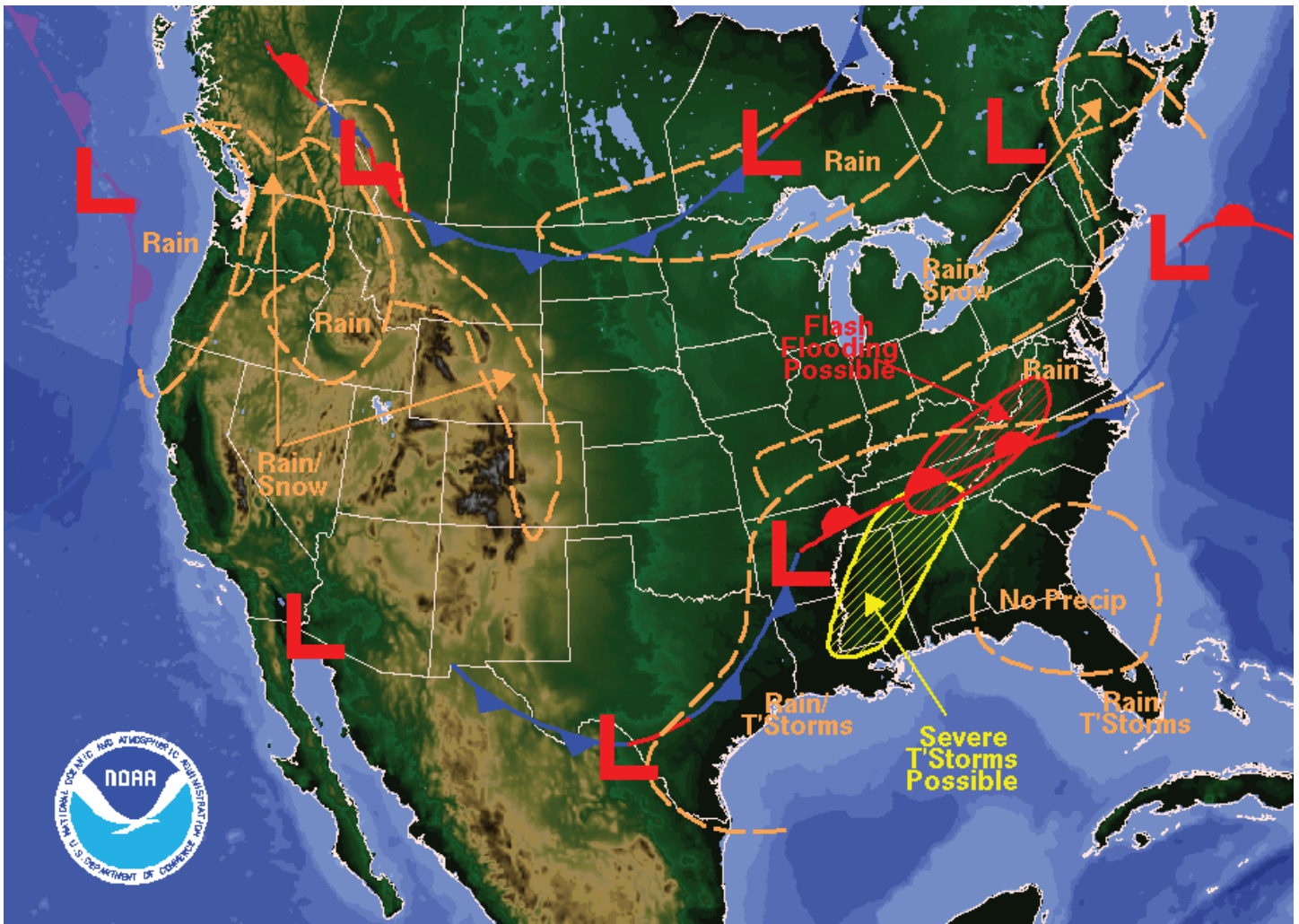
Precip to date in April.: 1.09

Average Precip to date: 3.36

Precip Year to Date: 1.68

Sunset Tonight: 8:29 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:34 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Sat, Apr 22, 2017, issued 5:51 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Krekeler based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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YOU CAN'T STAY WHERE YOU ARE

Someone once described life as an "incline." If we are not continually going up, we will certainly slip downward. We can never stay where we are. And when we falter and fall, it is what we do that makes a difference.

Years ago I heard of a tombstone that contained the words, "He died climbing." What a profound statement a loved one had made about him. Imagine what we might all accomplish for God if our lives were invested in moving upward and forward in love and service to Him!

When Jesus was telling His disciples about His return He said, "Stand straight and look up for your salvation is near!" He wanted His followers to focus on what they had to look forward to – not what was going on around them. Focusing on what is going on around us will cause us to lose sight of what is before us – the hope of being with our Savior in heaven!

If we only focus on the tragedies and troubles that surround us, we will find a cause of worry and fear, doubt and despair. But if we embrace the joy of living in and through our Savior and Lord, we will find a peace that passes all understanding and the comfort that come from knowing that God is in control.

As believers we can look forward to the return of our Lord and His reign of justice and peace. Rather than fearing what is going on around us, we must constantly, continually and confidently look forward to Christ's return and the hope we have of being with Him forever!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to keep our eyes and minds on You and not the things in this world. Give us strength and courage to go forward every day of our lives. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Luke 21:28 Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Friday:

Mega Millions

01-12-13-32-34, Mega Ball: 10, Megaplier: 2

(one, twelve, thirteen, thirty-two, thirty-four; Mega Ball: ten; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$45 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$90 million

South Dakota man charged with streaming terrorist threats

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a South Dakota man who was asked to leave an anti-Islam event is facing a felony charge after he livestreamed himself brandishing weapons and making threats to the public.

Attorney General Marty Jackley and Lincoln County State's Attorney Tom Wollman said Friday that 45-year-old Ehab Abdulmutta Jaber of Sioux Falls has been charged with one count of terrorist threats.

Authorities say Jaber was escorted out of the event April 9 after he was observed filming on his cell-phone and carrying a pistol. Officials say he was later found to be streaming threats to the public and brandishing guns and ammunition.

Authorities say law enforcement seized guns and methamphetamine during a search of his home. It wasn't immediately clear if Jaber has an attorney who could comment on his behalf.

Groups work to clean up river in South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Groups in South Dakota are trying to clean up the sediment and bacteria from farms, fields, neighborhoods and businesses that drain into the Big Sioux River and make it unsafe for activities such as swimming, kayaking and canoeing.

The Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2otW8s7>) reported the city of Sioux Falls spends millions on watershed improvement, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service has cash incentives for farmers to be more water-friendly. The East Dakota Water Development District also monitors water quality along the watershed.

Friends of the Big Sioux River plans to host workshops to educate the public on ways to decrease pollution, including reducing lawn size, building rain barrels and picking up after pets.

"We're people who basically got tired of bringing visitors to our city, going down to see our number one attraction, then coming back and saying 'oh, it looks great, but why does it smell so bad?'" Dana Loseke, a chairman of the group, told Minnehaha County Commissioners recently.

The group hopes to see the river swimmable by 2025.

East Dakota Water Development Director Jay Gilbertson doubts the goal is attainable.

"Swimmable is a laudable goal, but I think it is overly optimistic. It's taken a century to get us to where we are today. It's getting better, but . we remain a long way away from being able to improve those

numbers," Gilbertson said.

Larger measures that would help cut down on river pollution include low-impact development, where developers work to fit the natural landscape, and water-friendly agriculture practices such as switching to untilled soil, which reduces sediment runoff.

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

Backers of marijuana measures to launch push for 2018 ballot

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Supporters of a pair of ballot measures that would legalize medical and recreational marijuana in South Dakota plan to launch their push Saturday to get on the ballot in 2018.

Backers of the South Dakota effort would have to submit nearly 14,000 valid signatures for each initiative to the secretary of state by November 2017 to put them before voters in 2018. The kickoff event is in Sioux Falls.

Melissa Mentele, founder and director of a group advancing the measures, said voters "should definitely expect to see us on the ballot."

New Approach South Dakota's medical cannabis proposal would allow patients with serious medical conditions and a health practitioner's recommendation to use marijuana. Qualifying patients — such as people with cancer, AIDS and hepatitis C — would be able to get a registration card to possess up to 3 ounces of the plant.

People 21 and older would be able to possess and use marijuana under the recreational marijuana proposal. Possession for South Dakota residents would be limited to 1 ounce of marijuana, five plants and any excess cannabis produced by the plants if they are stored in the same facility where they were cultivated.

Marijuana retailers could be established under the plan, which would also impose an excise tax on cannabis.

People who are serving time or have been convicted of a non-violent marijuana offense would have their cases reviewed or sentences commuted under the proposal.

Medical marijuana initiatives in South Dakota have failed at the ballot box at least twice since 2006. Last year, the secretary of state's office said backers didn't turn in enough valid signatures to get on the ballot.

Attorney general explains transgender bathroom measure

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Attorney General Marty Jackley has released an explanation for a ballot measure that would restrict the bathrooms transgender students could use at school.

Jackley's office said Friday that the explanation has been filed with the secretary of state's office.

The initiative would require people to use the public school bathrooms, locker rooms, shower rooms and changing facilities matching their gender at birth.

Schools would be allowed to provide alternative accommodations, such as single-occupancy restrooms.

Backers of the plan would have to submit nearly 14,000 valid signatures to the secretary of state by November 2017 to get on the ballot in 2018.

It comes after lawmakers for the past two legislative sessions have considered restricting the school facilities that transgender students can use.

Unemployment rates fall to record lows in 4 US states

By CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Unemployment rates fell to record lows in four U.S. states in March after months of steady job creation nationwide.

Unemployment rates fell in 17 states in March and were mostly unchanged in 33, the Labor Department said Friday. Employers added a significant number of jobs in just three states last month and cut them in four. Employment was mostly unchanged in the other 43 states. Hiring nationwide was weak in March but strong in the previous two months.

Arkansas, Colorado, Maine and Oregon reported the lowest unemployment rates since 1976. Colorado's rate, at 2.6 percent, was the nation's lowest.

The unemployment rate in those states fell because more residents found work. That's a better dynamic than in some cases, when the rate falls when those out of work stop looking and are no longer counted as unemployed.

Several other states are benefiting from low unemployment rates: The rate is 2.7 percent in Hawaii and 2.8 percent in New Hampshire, North Dakota and South Dakota. The highest rate was in New Mexico, at 6.7 percent.

Maine, Tennessee and Washington state reported the largest percentage job gains last month, while Missouri, New Jersey and Pennsylvania experienced the biggest cuts.

Nationwide, employers added just 98,000 jobs in March, far below January and February's totals. But hiring has averaged about 175,000 jobs in the first three months of the year, similar to last year's pace. And the unemployment rate fell to 4.5 percent from 4.7 percent, as more Americans found jobs.

Scientists to march in Sioux Falls to encourage funding

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Many scientists are planning to march in Sioux Falls this weekend to raise awareness about science, and encourage research and data-backed policymaking.

The Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2pLWcYk>) reports the effort is the local arm of a national campaign. Some scientists have been motivated to step into the political sphere following President Donald Trump's proposed budget cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Institutes of Health.

The South Dakota Board of Regents and some research institutions have permitted scientists to participate in the march Saturday, but have advised them not to advocate for their institutions specifically.

Some scientists say they hoped to recharge excitement about the field and encourage non-scientists to seek elected officials' support of additional research funding in South Dakota. Others say they're unsure of the march's impact.

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

Origin of fire that killed 5 in Spearfish determined

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — Investigators say the exact cause of a fire that killed five children in Spearfish cannot be determined, but they have pinpointed the area where it started.

Fire investigators say the origin of the April 1 fire has been traced to a corner on the porch of the multi-family residence. A metal trash can in that area was used to collect ash and hot coals from a fireplace. Investigators also found discarded smoking materials in the area.

The Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2oc9oWa>) reports authorities say it's impossible to determine

which items ignited the fire.

The blaze killed 6-year-old Phibie Moyer, 7-year-old Clinton Johnson, 9-year-old Rhylin Gee, 9-year-old Justice Roden and 11-year-old Tanlynn Roden.

Several adults and a 13-year-old were also in the residence, some of whom were injured and treated at a hospital before being released.

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

Montana tourism campaign targets visitors from nearby states

GREAT FALLS, Mont. (AP) — Montana's summer tourism promotion invites would-be visitors to "Discover Your Montana Moment."

The campaign's goal is to raise nationwide awareness of Montana as a tourism destination, while focusing on potential visitors from nearby states, the Great Falls Tribune (gftrib.com/2pWEUE5) reported.

The campaign, which features images by Montana photographers, emphasizes opportunities for visitors to have an "authentic trip that lets them experience the feelings of being free-spirited and adventurous while returning to a fine meal and comfortable place to rest," said Jenny Pelej with the Montana Office of Tourism.

The campaign also hired "influencers" with active social media followings to visit the state and post pictures with the hashtag #MontanaMoment. Others are encouraged to do the same.

Tourism research helped frame the campaign. Surveys found that Montana ranked in the middle of western states as a place people consider visiting for outdoor fun and scenic beauty, but it has a higher "destination aspiration gap," meaning more people want to visit than have visited.

The research found out-of-staters use words like beautiful, wilderness, uncrowded and welcoming to describe Montana, but they also feel that it's hard to get to and maybe a little bland and boring.

Last year, Montana saw a record 12 million visitors — an increase of 1.6 million compared to 2011.

The Montana Moment campaign is being run by the Milwaukee-based ad firm Hoffman York. The Commerce Department was criticized for awarding the \$7 million contract to an out-of-state firm last year.

Hoffman York announced Wednesday that it was opening an office in Helena on May 1.

"Since working with our newest client, Montana Tourism and Business Development last year, we determined that an office in Helena would not only provide greater support for Montana tourism it would also serve as a great base of operation to grow our footprint in the west," Hoffman CEO Troy Peterson said in a statement.

The firm also has offices in Los Angeles, Chicago and Louisville, Kentucky.

Online: www.visitmt.com

Information from: Great Falls Tribune, <http://www.greatfallstribune.com>

Not guilty pleas in Pine Ridge reservation shooting

PORCUPINE, S.D. (AP) — A man accused in a shooting on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation has pleaded not guilty to federal charges.

An FBI statement filed in court says Kison Robertson shot Urva Quick Bear Sr. in a fight over a financial disagreement. Quick Bear survived a gunshot to the abdomen.

The 45-year-old Robertson is charged with attempted murder and three other charges. The Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2pKtmEF>) says the March 30 fight outside the Evergreen Housing complex in

Porcupine. Authorities say Robertson also fired at Quick Bear's son, but missed. Robertson is being held in the Pennington County Jail. A trial is scheduled for June.

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

Scientists leave labs, take to streets to defend research

By SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Scientists worldwide left their labs to take to the streets Saturday along with students and research advocates in pushing back against what they say are mounting attacks on science.

The March for Science, coinciding with Earth Day, was set for more than 500 cities, anchored in Washington and to be joined by dozens of nonpartisan scientific professional societies in a turnout intended to combine political and how-to science demonstrations.

Marchers in Geneva carried signs that said, "Science — A Candle in the Dark" and "Science is the Answer." In Berlin, several thousand people participated in a march from the one of the city's universities to the Brandenburg Gate landmark. "We need to make more of our decision based on facts again and less on emotions," said Meike Weltin, a doctorate student at an environmental institute near the capital.

In London, physicists, astronomers, biologists and celebrities gathered for a march past the city's most celebrated research institutions. Supporters carried signs showing images of a double helix and chemical symbols.

The protest was putting scientists, who generally shy away from advocacy and whose work depends on objective experimentation, into a more public position.

Organizers portrayed the march as political but not partisan, promoting the understanding of science as well as defending it from various attacks, including proposed U.S. government budget cuts under President Donald Trump, such as a 20 percent slice of the National Institute of Health.

Signs and banners readied for the Washington rally reflected anger, humor and obscure scientific references, such as a 7-year-old's "No Taxation Without Taxonomy." Taxonomy is the science of classifying animals, plants and other organisms.

The sign that 9-year-old Sam Klimas held was red, handmade and personal: "Science saved my life." He had a form of brain cancer and has been healthy for eight years now. His mother, grandmother and brother traveled with him from Parkersburg, West Virginia. "I have to do everything I can to oppose the policies of this administration," said his grandmother, Susan Sharp.

Scientists involved in the march said they were anxious about political and public rejection of established science such as climate change and the safety of vaccine immunizations.

"Scientists find it appalling that evidence has been crowded out by ideological assertions," said Rush Holt, a former physicist and Democratic congressman who runs the American Association for the Advancement of Science. "It is not just about Donald Trump, but there is also no question that marchers are saying 'when the shoe fits.'"

Judy Twigg, a public health professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, was aiming one of her signs at the president. The sign showed the periodic table of chemical elements and said: "You're out of your element Donny (Trump)." For Twigg, who was wearing a T-shirt that said "Science is not a liberal conspiracy," research is a matter of life and death on issues such as polio and child mortality.

Despite saying the march was not partisan, Holt acknowledged it was only dreamed up at the Women's March on Washington, a day after Trump's inauguration on Jan. 20.

"It's not about the current administration. The truth is we should have been marching for science 30

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years ago, 20 years, 10 years ago," said co-organizer and public health researcher Caroline Weinberg. "The current (political) situation took us from kind of ignoring science to blatantly attacking it. And that seems to be galvanizing people in a way it never has before. ... It's just sort of relentless attacks on science."

"The scientific method was developed to be nonpartisan and objective," Weinberg said. "It should be embraced by both parties."

Christine McEntee, executive director of the American Geophysical Union, a global professional organization of earth and space scientists, cited concerns by scientists and threats to research as a result of elections in the U.S. and other countries.

Threats to science are heightened in Turkey and elsewhere in Europe, said McEntee, who planned to march with geophysical scientists in Vienna, Austria.

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, who exposed the dangerous lead levels in the drinking water and children's blood in Flint, Michigan, planned to march in Washington and speak to the crowd.

"It's risky, but that's when we make advancements when we take risks ... for our heart rates to go up, to be a little anxious and scared and uncomfortable," she said before the event.

Associated Press writer Markus Schreiber in Berlin contributed to this report.

France's overseas territories kick off key presidential vote

By THOMAS ADAMSON, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Polling stations opened Saturday in France's far-flung overseas territories — one day earlier than on the mainland — for the country's unpredictable presidential election as the 11 candidates in the race observed a ban on campaigning.

France's 10 percent unemployment and the country's lackluster economy top voters' concerns as first-round ballots are cast this weekend in the most nail-biting French election in generations.

Opinion polls showed a tight race among the four top contenders vying to get the May presidential 7 runoff that will decide who becomes the next head of state. But the polls also showed that the future of France was largely in the hands of the one-in-three voters who were still undecided.

A deadly attack on police on Paris' famed Champs-Elysees Avenue clouded the last days of campaigning. Security is a prominent issue after a wave of extremist attacks on French soil, including Thursday night's attack by a gunman who killed a Paris police officer before being shot dead by security forces. The gunman had a note in his pocket praising the Islamic State group.

Political campaigning is banned beginning Saturday across France and online and several candidates canceled appearances Friday hours after the attack.

Polling centers opened in the Atlantic Ocean territories of Saint Pierre and Miquelon as well as French Guiana in South America, the Caribbean's Guadeloupe and elsewhere. Voters abroad could also cast ballots in French embassies.

Polls suggested that far-right nationalist Marine Le Pen and Emmanuel Macron, an independent centrist and former economy minister, were in the lead.

However, conservative Francois Fillon, a former prime minister whose campaign was initially derailed by corruption allegations that his wife was paid as his non-working parliamentary aide, appeared to be closing the gap, as was far-leftist candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon.

The mad-dash campaigning of the last few weeks came to an abrupt halt hours after the Champs-Elysees gun attack by 39-year-old Karim Cheurfi. Three suspects close to the attacker remain in custody, Agnes Thibault-Lecuire of the Paris prosecutor's office said Saturday.

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Le Pen and Fillon canceled their last campaign events Friday over security concerns. Macron did too, but also accused his rivals of trying to capitalize on the attack with their anti-immigration, tough-on-security messages.

On Saturday, flowers, candles and messages of solidarity with police adorned a makeshift memorial for the slain police officer, Xavier Jugele. Small groups of well-wishers paid their respects at the site of the shooting.

Some believed French stoicism would prevent a lurch to the right in the vote, despite the fact the attack dominated French newspaper and TV headlines.

"These 48 hours are not going to change everything ... terrorism is now an everyday occurrence. It's permanent, 24 hours a day. So we're not afraid. If we're believers, believers in freedom, we must live with it," said Marise Moron, a retired doctor.

Others, fearful that the far-right Le Pen has been strengthened by the instability, said they would shift their votes from fringe candidates to make sure to keep the far-right out of power.

"With an attack such as this one, I think the National Front will get a good score. Therefore, I'm going to change my intention and I'm going to cast a useful vote. Either Melenchon or Macron," said physics teacher Omar Ilys, 44.

When French voters cast their ballots for president Sunday, their choice will resonate far beyond France's borders, from Syrian battlefields to Hong Kong trading floors and the halls of the U.N. Security Council.

The election is also widely being viewed as a ballot on the future of the European Union. The far-right Le Pen and the far-left Melenchon could pull France out of the 28-nation bloc and its shared euro currency — a so-called Frexit.

A French exit could ignited a death spiral for the EU, the euro and the whole idea of European unity that was borne out of the bloodshed of World War II. France is a founding member of the EU and its main driver, along with former rival Germany.

Financial markets are already jittery over a possible Frexit, capital flight, defaults or lawsuits on bonds and contracts. Le Pen's team is downplaying apocalyptic scenarios and arguing that the euro — now used by 19 nations — is headed for a breakup eventually anyway.

If Le Pen or Melenchon win a spot in the runoff, it will be seen as a victory for the populist wave reflected by the votes for Donald Trump and Brexit — the British departure from the EU. Many French workers who have lost out by globalization are similarly fed up with establishment parties and attracted by promises of ditching the status quo.

Alternatively, if neither candidate makes it past Sunday's first round into the May 7 runoff, that's a clear message that populist nationalism is receding.

Macron and Fillon, meanwhile, are committed to European unity and would reform labor rules. Macron has framed himself as a bulwark against Trump's protectionism.

Le Pen and Melenchon blame free trade pacts for killing French jobs and want to renegotiate them.

David Keyton and Angela Charlton in Paris contributed to this report

Afghan officials: 100 casualties in Afghanistan attack

By RAHIM FAIEZ, Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Authorities on Saturday raised the casualty toll to 100 in an attack on a military compound in northern Afghanistan a day earlier by gunmen and suicide bombers wearing army uniforms.

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Gen. Daulat Waziri, spokesman for the Afghanistan Ministry of Defense, said the attack Friday on a compound of the 209th Corps of the Afghan National Army left dozens of soldiers and other personnel dead or wounded.

Reports conflicted on the death toll, but at least two sources within the army corps and a provincial security official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak with the media, confirmed that more than 130 people were killed and at least 80 others were wounded.

The defense ministry had said Friday night that eight soldiers were killed and 11 others were wounded in its initial reports.

Gen. Mohammad Radmanish, deputy spokesman for the Defense Ministry, said the militants entered the base in Balkh province using two military vehicles and attacked army personnel inside the compound's mosque.

"Two suicide bombers detonated their vests full of explosive inside the mosque of the army corps while everyone was busy with Friday prayers," he said.

Waziri said there were 10 attackers, including the two who carried out the suicide attacks. Eight others were killed in a gun battle with soldiers.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed responsibility for the assault in an email sent to media.

President Ashraf Ghani on Saturday traveled to the base and strongly condemned the attack, according to a tweet from the official Twitter account of the presidential palace.

"The attackers are infidels," Ghani was quoted as saying in the tweet.

Ghani announced that Sunday would be a day of national mourning, with memorial services across the country's mosques and the Afghan flag flying at half-mast, in a statement issued by the Presidential Palace.

Afzel Hadid, head of provincial council in Balkh told The Associated Press that more than 100 people, both army personnel and others present at the time inside the army crops, were killed in the attack.

"The exact number is still not verified, but for sure we know more than 100 were killed in the attack," said Hadid.

One of the attack survivors, an Afghan army soldier, Mohammad Hussain who was wounded and transported to a hospital in Mazar-e-Sharif said "Three people in an Afghan National Army vehicle started shooting at us when we finished Friday prayers, they are the enemies of the country."

"I don't know maybe they had someone inside to help them to bring the vehicle inside. There are seven to eight checkpoints from the main gate and without inside help this vehicle cannot enter the compound and get to the mosque."

In the Taliban's detailed statement on the attack posted on its official website, spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said that four of the 10 attackers were disguised as soldiers at the time of the attack.

The Taliban statement said the attack was retaliation for the killing of the Taliban governor of Kunduz province, Mullah Abdul Salam Akhund, and threatened more violence against the army and police, saying "this year's operations will be painful."

Local TV footage showed hundreds of people gathered outside the army crops waiting to find out if their relatives had been killed or wounded.

In March, an attack on a military hospital in the capital Kabul killed 50 people. Responsibility for that attack was claimed by the Islamic State group. According to officials, five attackers were involved, including one suicide bomber who detonated an explosives belt and four gunmen who stormed the building.

The 209th corps is located in the Dihdadi district of Balkh. It is one of seven corps of the country's Ministry of Defense, which is responsible for providing security for Afghanistan's northern and north-

eastern provinces.

Possible shutdown, health care quagmire awaiting Congress

By ANDREW TAYLOR and ALAN FRAM, Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawmakers returning to Washington this coming week will find a familiar quagmire on health care legislation and a budget deadline dramatized by the prospect of a protracted battle between President Donald Trump and Democrats over his border wall.

Trump's GOP allies control Congress, but they've been unable to send him a single major bill as his presidency faces the symbolic 100-day mark on April 29 — the very day when the government, in a worst-case scenario, could shut down.

Feeling pressure to deliver results, Trump wants to revive a troubled health care measure from House Republicans to repeal and replace President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act. Trump also hopes to use a \$1 trillion catchall spending bill to salvage victories on his promised U.S.-Mexico border wall, a multibillion-dollar down payment on a Pentagon buildup, and perhaps a crackdown on cities that refuse to cooperate with immigration enforcement by federal authorities.

Congress faces a midnight Friday deadline to avert a government shutdown. But negotiations on the spending measure, a huge pile of leftover business from last year that includes the budgets of almost every federal agency, have hit a rough patch.

It's looking like a one- or two-week temporary measure will be needed to prevent a shutdown and buy time for more talks. Negotiations have faltered because of disputes over the border wall and health law subsidies to help low-income people afford health insurance.

Trump's Capitol Hill allies had been tempering expectations that the president will win much in the budget talks. Democratic support will be needed to pass the spending measure and Republicans fear taking the blame if the government shuts down on their watch.

"We have the leverage and they have the exposure," House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi of California told fellow Democrats on a conference call Thursday, according to a senior Democratic aide. Pelosi wants the spending bill to give the cash-strapped government of Puerto Rico help with its Medicaid obligations, and Democrats are pressing for money for overseas famine relief, treatment for opioid abuse, and the extension of health benefits for 22,000 retired Appalachian coal miners and their families.

An additional Democratic demand is for cost-sharing payments to insurance companies that help low-income people afford health policies under Obama's health law. The payments are a critical subsidy and the subject of a lawsuit by House Republicans. Trump has threatened to withhold the money to force Democrats to negotiate on health legislation.

Trump's presidential victory makes it "completely reasonable to ask and to insist that some of his priorities are funded," White House budget director Mick Mulvaney said in an interview. "We are more than happy to talk to the Democrats about some of their priorities but we encourage them to recognize that they are a minority party."

Both the White House and Democrats have adopted hard-line positions on Trump's \$1 billion request for a down payment on construction of the border wall, a central plank of last year's campaign. Talk of forcing Mexico to pay for it has largely been abandoned. But in an interview with The Associated Press on Friday, Trump stopped short of demanding that money for the project be included in the must-pass spending bill.

Health care is on a separate track and facing trouble, too. The White House is pressing House Republicans to rally behind a revised bill so GOP leaders can schedule a vote this coming week that could let

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Trump fulfill a 100-days promise.

A quick vote, let alone approval, seems unlikely.

GOP leaders have shown no desire to revisit the issue until they're assured there'll be no replay of the legislative train wreck from March. The failure of that earlier attempt stung Trump and House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis. The measure would have repealed much of Obama's 2010 overhaul and replaced it with fewer coverage requirements and less generous federal subsidies for many people.

As part of the White House drive to resuscitate the bill, members of Trump's team including Vice President Mike Pence and chief of staff Reince Priebus have made multiple calls to Republicans.

Two leaders of the House GOP's warring moderate and conservative factions devised a compromise during Congress' recess to let states get federal waivers to ignore some requirements of the health law. Those include one that now obligates insurers to cover specified services such as for mental health, and one that bars them from raising premiums on seriously ill patients.

But there are widespread doubts that the new attempt has achieved the support it needs.

Rep. Dan Donovan, R-N.Y., an opponent of the bill, said last week that "it doesn't cure the issues that I had concerns" about the bill. The moderate said his objections included changes to Obama's law that would still leave people with excessive out-of-pocket costs.

The potential amendment was brokered by Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., who heads the conservative House Freedom Caucus and Rep. Tom MacArthur, R-N.J., a leader of the moderate House Tuesday Group.

Ryan called off a March 24 House vote on the measure after realizing that objections by conservative and moderate Republicans would have assured its defeat. Democrats were uniformly against the legislation.

Chinese jihadis' rise in Syria raises concerns at home

By BASSEM MROUE and GERRY SHIH, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Many don't speak Arabic and their role in Syria is little known to the outside world, but the Chinese fighters of the Turkistan Islamic Party in Syria are organized, battled-hardened and have been instrumental in ground offensives against President Bashar Assad's forces in the country's northern regions.

Thousands of Chinese jihadis have come to Syria since the country's civil war began in March 2011 to fight against government forces and their allies. Some have joined the al-Qaida's branch in the country previously known as Nusra Front. Others paid allegiance to the Islamic State group and a smaller number joined factions such as the ultraconservative Ahrar al-Sham.

But the majority of Chinese jihadis are with the Turkistan Islamic Party in Syria, whose vast majority are Chinese Muslims, particularly those from the Turkic-speaking Uighur majority native to Xinjiang in China. Their growing role in Syria has resulted in increased cooperation between Syrian and Chinese intelligence agencies who fear those same jihadis could one day return home and cause trouble there.

The Turkistan Islamic Party is the other name for the East Turkistan Islamic Movement that considers China's Xinjiang to be East Turkistan.

Like most jihadi groups in Syria, their aim is to remove Assad's secular government from power and replace it with strict Islamic rule. Their participation in the war, which has left nearly 400,000 people dead, comes at a time when the Chinese government is one of Assad's strongest international backers. Along with Russia, China has used its veto power at the U.N. Security Council on several occasions to prevent the imposition of international sanctions against its Arab ally.

Beijing has blamed violence back at home and against Chinese targets around the world on Islamic

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militants with foreign connections seeking an independent state in Xinjiang. The government says some of them are fleeing the country to join the Jihad, although critics say the Uighurs are discriminated against and economically marginalized in their homeland and are merely seeking to escape repressive rule by the majority Han Chinese.

Abu Dardaa al-Shami, a member of the now-defunct extremist Jund al-Aqsa group, said the TIP has the best "Inghemasiyoun," Arabic for "those who immerse themselves." The Inghemasiyoun have been used by extremist groups such as IS and al-Qaida's affiliate now known as Fatah al-Sham Front. Their role is to infiltrate their targets, unleash mayhem and fight to the death before a major ground offensive begins.

"They are the lions of ground offensives," said al-Shami, who fought on several occasions alongside TIP fighters in northern Syria.

Xie Xiaoyuan, China's envoy to Syria, told reporters in November that the two countries have had normal military exchanges focused on humanitarian issues, although Chinese officials have repeatedly rejected the possibility of sending troops or weapons.

In the last year, however, Chinese and Syrian officials have begun holding regular, once-a-month high-level meetings to share intelligence on militant movements in Syria, according to a person familiar with the matter. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not allowed to reveal military secrets.

"These people not only fight alongside international terrorist forces in Syria, but also they will possibly return to China posing threat to China's national security," said Li Wei, terrorism expert at China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations and Director of the CICIR Institute of Security and Arms Control Studies.

Rami Abdurrahman who heads the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said there are about 5,000 Chinese fighters in Syria, most of them with the TIP fighters in northern Syria who along with their families make about 20,000. Li, the terrorism expert, said Abdurrahman's numbers are way too high, adding that he believes the number are about 300 Chinese fighters in Syria who brought with them about 700 family members.

"As the control of the passage along the borders between Turkey and Syria is being tightened, it is becoming more difficult for them to smuggle into Syria," Li said.

Syrian opposition activists and pro-government media outlets say dozens of TIP fighters have carried out suicide attacks against government forces and their allies and for the past two years have led battles mostly in the north of the country.

The suicide attackers include one known as Shahid Allah al-Turkistani. He was shown in a video released by TIP taken from a drone of an attack in which he blew himself up in the vehicle he was driving near Aleppo late last year, allegedly killing dozens of pro-government gunmen.

In 2015, members of the group spearheaded an attack on the northwestern province of Idlib and captured the strategic town of Jisr al-Shughour on the edge of Assad's stronghold of Latakia region. They reportedly damaged a church in the town and raised their black flag on top of it.

In late 2016, TIP was a main force to briefly break a government siege on the then rebel-held eastern parts of the northern city of Aleppo.

The role of the Chinese jihadis in Syria was a topic that Assad spoke about last month in an interview with Chinese PHOENIX TV, saying "they know your country more than the others, so they can do more harm in your country than others."

Unlike other rebel groups, TIP is a very secretive organization and they live among themselves, according to activists in northern Syria. They are active in parts of Idlib and in the strategic town of Jisr

al-Shughour, as well as the Kurdish Mountains in the western province of Latakia.

Abdul-Hakim Ramadan, a doctor who was active in Idlib province, said one of his teams was trying to enter a northwestern village to vaccinate children when TIP fighters prevented them from entering, saying only Chinese can go into the area.

Ramadan said unlike other fighters who have come to Syria, the Chinese have not merged into local communities and the language has been a major barrier.

Shih reported from Beijing.

Pence embraces US-Australia partnership after Trump spat

By KRISTEN GELINEAU and KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — U.S. Vice President Mike Pence and Australia's prime minister swept aside any lingering tensions Saturday over an Obama era agreement on the resettlement of refugees, joining forces to urge China to take a greater role in pressuring North Korea to scuttle its nuclear weapons and missile program.

Pence and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull repeatedly praised the decades-long American-Australian alliance following a meeting in Sydney, with the vice president passing along President Donald Trump's "very best regards" and thanking Turnbull for calling on Beijing to be more assertive in the international effort to de-escalate Pyongyang's nuclear threat.

Meeting at the governor-general's residence with sweeping views of Sydney Harbour and the city's famed opera house, the two leaders appeared at pains to present a united front following an unusual period of strain between the longtime allies. The anxieties were sparked by a spat between Turnbull and Trump over a refugee resettlement deal struck by former President Barack Obama.

Pence said Saturday that the U.S. would honor the agreement even if the administration didn't agree with it. Under the deal, the U.S. would take up to 1,250 refugees housed by Australia in detention camps on the Pacific island nations of Nauru and Papua New Guinea.

Trump's anger over the agreement led to a tense phone call with Turnbull in January and an angry tweet in which the president called the deal "dumb."

"President Trump has made it clear that we'll honor the agreement — that doesn't mean we admire the agreement," Pence said during a joint news conference with Turnbull.

The prime minister, for his part, said that "whatever the reservations of the president are," the decision "speaks volumes for the commitment, the integrity of President Trump, and your administration, sir, to honor that commitment."

The fallout over the deal has strained the typically cozy alliance between the U.S. and Australia. A majority of Australians view Trump unfavorably, and some critics of him have urged Australia to distance itself from the U.S. in favor of stronger ties with China. Turnbull has resisted pressure to choose between the two countries, both of which are considered vital allies; the U.S. is Australia's most important security partner, while China is its most important trading partner.

Pence's visit Down Under, part of his 10-day, four-country trip to the Pacific Rim, was widely viewed as an effort to smooth over relations with Australia. Indeed, the vice president seemed determined to reassure Australia of its importance to the U.S., noting as he stood next to Turnbull on the shores of Sydney Harbour: "It's always heartening to stand beside a friend, and I do so today."

Both leaders also repeatedly cited the nations' long history of military cooperation. Australia has fought alongside the U.S. in every major conflict since World War I, and is one of the largest contribu-

tors to the U.S.-led military campaign in Iraq and Syria.

Pence said his trip to Australia during the administration's first three months in office and Trump's plans to travel to Asia next fall represented "a strong sign of our enduring commitment to the historic alliance between the people of the United States of America and the people of Australia."

Pence and Turnbull said they were aligned in their opinion that China should use its leverage with North Korea to de-escalate the nuclear threat from Pyongyang. Pence said the U.S. believes that it will be possible to achieve its objective of ending North Korea's nuclear program peacefully, largely with the help of China.

Turnbull echoed the sentiments, saying: "The eyes of the world are on Beijing."

Pence said that while the Trump administration had pulled out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, it still considered its bilateral trade deal with Australia to be a "model" and a "win-win" for both countries.

The alliance was front-and-center for Pence in his meetings with top Australian officials, who repeatedly noted their military partnership for nearly a century. Governor-General Peter Cosgrove, seated with Pence, said the relationship between the countries is as strong as it was since "the first time we saw each other on the battlefield in 1919."

Pence was using the visit to make a number of cultural stops, joining with Foreign Minister Julie Bishop at the Australian Museum, observing exhibits on crocodiles and snakes and listening as one of the museum's managers offered a traditional Highlands welcome of Papua New Guinea.

On Sunday, Pence and his family were to tour Sydney's iconic Opera House, take a boat ride in the harbor and visit the city's Taronga Zoo.

Follow Ken Thomas on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/KThomasDC> and Kristen Gelineau at <https://twitter.com/KristenGelineau>

Senators seek data on Americans caught up in surveillance

By **DEB RIECHMANN, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Democratic privacy advocate and libertarian-minded Republican are asking the nation's top intelligence official to release more information about the communications of American citizens swept up in surveillance operations.

The request by Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon and GOP Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky adds to a chorus of calls for more transparency about how intelligence agencies use and share communications to, from and about Americans.

The two want to know more about how agencies handle these communications as well as data about the number of Americans affected. They also want to make public the procedures on how intelligence about members of Congress is disseminated.

There are still "holes in the public's understanding of how U.S. person information — collected pursuant to different authorities and by different agencies — is handled," they wrote.

The senators' Friday letter to Dan Coats, director of national intelligence, comes as lawmakers gear up for debate over the reauthorization of one of the government's key surveillance programs, which expires at the end of the year. Programs authorized by Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act target foreigners, but domestic communications are sometimes vacuumed up as well. They were first revealed to the public by Edward Snowden, who leaked files from the National Security Agency.

Critics who want the law reformed worry that agencies use the foreign intelligence collection tool too

loosely and sometimes in connection with domestic law enforcement investigations.

Intelligence officials have tried to allay concerns saying that any domestic communications collected are incidental to the targeting of foreigners.

They say Section 702 allows the government to target non-U.S. citizens reasonably believed to be located outside the United States and bars the government from targeting a foreigner to acquire the communications of an American or someone in the U.S. But they say intelligence agencies are authorized under Section 702 to query communications made with Americans in certain, approved cases.

Lawmakers seeking reforms could gain momentum from the investigation into Russian meddling in the presidential election. President Donald Trump recently made an unsubstantiated claim that his conversations were wiretapped. There also is controversy surrounding intercepts that revealed former national security adviser Mike Flynn's communications with the Russian ambassador.

The House intelligence committee probing Russian activities made a request for similar information earlier this year.

The House committee has scheduled a closed-door hearing for Tuesday with FBI Director James Comey and Adm. Mike Rogers, the head of the National Security Agency. That same day, former CIA Director John Brennan, former National Intelligence Director James Clapper and former Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates are to testify at an open hearing.

Parole denied for Brinks heist getaway driver Judith Clark

By MARY ESCH, Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — A former Weather Underground radical who drove a getaway car in a bungled 1981 Brinks armored-car robbery that left three people dead was denied parole on Friday despite the fact Gov. Andrew Cuomo praised her behavior as a prisoner when he commuted her sentence last year.

Judith Clark has served 35 years of a 75-years-to-life sentence for the suburban New York heist, which led to the deaths of two police officers and a security guard. She won't be eligible for parole again until April 2019.

Cuomo, a Democrat, commuted Clark's sentence in December to make her eligible for parole, saying she had become a repentant, "impressive" and community-spirited prisoner. Before the commutation, Clark, who's 67, would not have been eligible for parole consideration until she was 106.

In announcing the commutation last year, Cuomo's office noted that Clark "received one of the longest sentences of her six co-defendants, the majority of whom are either deceased or no longer in custody" and "received the same sentence as one of the known shooters."

The Weather Underground was a 1960s group of increasingly violent anti-war activists. Clark called herself a freedom fighter, insisted on representing herself at trial and then refused to go to court, remaining in a cell.

In a 2002 sworn statement, she expressed regret and said she had rejected her radical beliefs. Behind bars, she has helped found an HIV/AIDS education program and done other charitable work.

But law enforcement groups opposed Clark's release, and Republican state senators said nearly 10,000 people signed a petition urging the state Board of Parole to keep her locked up.

Clark's lawyer Steve Zeidman said the decision to deny her parole ignores her record of achievement and transformation behind bars, which included earning a master's degree, training 11 dogs for service and working with incarcerated mothers and their children. He said more than 1,000 people have written letters calling for her release.

The three-member parole board, in explaining its unanimous decision to deny release, said it weighed

public support and opposition and Clark's good prison record. It said it was persuaded against releasing Clark by statements from officials, survivors and affected parties.

Clark's daughter said the decision sent a discouraging message to inmates who worked hard to transform their lives so they could return to their families.

"My mother did not kill anyone, and it's hard for me to understand who is served by making her die in prison," Harriet Clark said.

Cuomo spokeswoman Dani Lever said Clark deserved the opportunity to make her case for parole and the commutation gave that to her. She said the governor respects the parole board's decision.

The governor's decision to commute Clark's sentence had outraged Michael Paige, whose father, Brinks security guard Peter Paige, was killed in the \$1.6 million holdup. Less than an hour after Paige's killing, two Nyack police officers, Waverly Brown and Sgt. Edward O'Grady, stopped a truck at a roadside checkpoint and were killed in an ambush.

Michael Paige said 35 years wasn't enough time in prison for Clark.

"No," he said in December. "It's never enough time."

Hawaii bill giving equal access to fertility treatment dies

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ, Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Hawaii lawmakers killed a bill that sought equal access to fertility treatments for gay and lesbian couples and single women.

The decision came after health care lobbyists argued it was a bad idea to make insurers cover a fertility procedure for surrogate mothers that gay male couples rely on to have a child.

State Sen. Rosalyn Baker, the Senate's lead negotiator for the bill, suggested killing the bill at a committee hearing Friday.

"I'm not certain that it's ready for prime time, considering that we have no surrogacy laws on the books in the state of Hawaii, and I believe we need to address those," Baker said.

The bill had passed the House and Senate in different forms and was in a conference committee where negotiators from the House and Senate hash out their differences.

Hawaii law requires insurance companies to cover one round of in vitro fertilization for some married, heterosexual women. The procedure in which a doctor retrieves eggs from a woman, combines them with sperm from a man and then implants an embryo into a woman's uterus can cost more than \$20,000 and often requires more than one round of treatment.

The bill sought to extend that insurance mandate to same-sex female couples, single women and surrogate mothers that gay male couples rely on to have a child. It also sought to reduce a wait time for the benefit from five years of infertility to one year.

Hawaii's major health insurers told lawmakers they already cover in vitro fertilization for lesbian couples and single women. But they didn't want to cover the procedure for surrogates because they feared legal complications, especially because there are no state laws covering surrogates.

While two major Hawaii insurers have taken steps to include female same-sex couples in their fertility coverage, there are other insurance companies that have not, said Mandy Finlay, advocacy coordinator for the ACLU of Hawaii.

"We have heard that discrimination is happening, and whether that's human error or whether it's a discriminatory policy that's in place, that issue needs to be resolved, and the best way to do that is by eliminating the discriminatory language in our state law," Finlay said.

Baker said she would rather pass a pending resolution that asks the state attorney general to study

surrogacy and she hopes lawmakers can work on the issue in coming months and revisit it next session.

"I would hope that maybe that there would be some elements that we could salvage at this time, but given the fact that the absence of surrogacy laws in our state is difficult, I would concur with you," said Rep. Della Au Bellati, a negotiator for the bill in the House.

Sean Smith, who with his husband paid out-of-pocket for IVF procedures performed on the surrogate who carried their son to term, said he was "just shocked and sad and surprised that they couldn't agree to keep any parts of the bill."

Justice Dept. warns sanctuary cities in immigration fight

By SADIE GURMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration intensified its threats to crack down on so-called sanctuary cities that refuse to comply with federal immigration authorities, warning nine jurisdictions Friday that they may lose coveted law enforcement grant money unless they document cooperation.

It sent letters to officials in California and major cities including New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and New Orleans, all places the Justice Department's inspector general has identified as limiting the information local law enforcement can provide to federal immigration authorities about those in their custody.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions has warned that the administration will punish communities that refuse to cooperate with efforts to find and deport immigrants in the country illegally. But some of the localities remained defiant, despite risking the loss of funds that police agencies use to pay for everything from body cameras to bulletproof vests.

"We're not going to cave to these threats," Milwaukee County Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic said, promising a legal fight if the money is pulled.

Playing off Sessions' recent comments that sanctuary cities undermine the fight against gangs, the Justice Department said the communities under financial threat are "crumbling under the weight of illegal immigration and violent crime."

After a raid led to the arrests of 11 MS-13 gang members in California's Bay Area "city officials seemed more concerned with reassuring illegal immigrants that the raid was unrelated to immigration than with warning other MS-13 members that they were next," the department said in a statement.

The federal law in question says state and local governments may not prohibit police or sheriffs from sharing information about a person's immigration status with federal authorities.

The money could be withheld in the future, or terminated, if local officials fail to prove they are following the law, wrote Alan R. Hanson, acting head of the Office of Justice Programs. The grant program is the leading source of federal justice funding to states and local communities.

Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly threatened additional consequences for local police that don't deliver people in custody, saying the alternative is immigration agents searching neighborhoods.

"Ideally the best place for us to pick up these illegal criminals is in jails and prisons," Kelly said at a news conference with Sessions in San Diego, next to a border fence topped with razor wire. "If they don't do that, then we have to go into neighborhoods. We have to go into courthouses. We have to go wherever we can find them and apprehend them."

Kevin de Leon, leader of California's state Senate, rejected the administration's demand, saying its policies are based on "principles of white supremacy" and not American values.

"Their constant and systematic targeting of diverse cities and states goes beyond constitutional norms and will be challenged at every level," he said.

Leaders in Chicago and Cook County, which shared a grant of more than \$2.3 million in 2016, dis-

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missed the threat. So did the mayor's office in New York City, which received \$4.3 million. The Justice Department singled out Chicago's rise in homicides and said New York's gang killings were the "predictable consequence of the city's soft-on-crime stance."

New York City Police Commissioner James O'Neill said the "soft on crime" statement made his blood boil.

"To say we're soft on crime is absolutely ludicrous," O'Neill said.

He said his police department, by far the nation's largest, locked up more than 1,000 people in 100 gang takedowns last year. "Maybe we should ask them if we're soft on crime," he said.

The jurisdictions also include Clark County, Nevada; Miami-Dade County, Florida; and Milwaukee County, Wisconsin.

They were singled out in a May 2016 report by the Justice Department's inspector general that found local policies or rules could interfere with providing information to immigration agents. Following the report, the Obama administration warned cities that they could miss out on grant money if they did not comply with the law, but it never actually withheld funds.

The report pointed to a Milwaukee County rule that immigration detention requests be honored only if the person has been convicted of one felony or two misdemeanors, has been charged with domestic violence or drunken driving, is a gang member, or is on a terrorist watch list, among other constraints.

It also took issue with a New Orleans Police Department policy that it said might hinder communication with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. That city received nearly \$266,000 in grant money through the program in fiscal year 2016. New Orleans has used Justice Department funding to pay for testing DNA kits, police body cameras, attorneys for domestic violence victims and other expenses.

Zach Butterworth, Mayor Mitch Landrieu's executive counsel and director of federal relations, said the city drafted its policies in consultation with federal immigration and Homeland Security officials. It was reviewing the Justice Department's letter.

"We don't think there's a problem," he said.

Butterworth said the New Orleans Police Department has seen a 28 percent drop in calls for service from people with limited English since November.

"People are scared, and because of that, they're less willing to report crime," Butterworth added.

Other places also insisted they were in compliance. Clark County Sheriff Joe Lombardo, the elected head of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, said the city and county were wrongly labeled sanctuary cities.

Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele said that community is hardly succumbing to violence.

"Milwaukee County has its challenges but they are not caused by illegal immigration," he said in a statement. "My far greater concern is the proactive dissemination of misinformation, fear, and intolerance."

Associated Press writers Michael Kunzelman in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Ivan Moreno in Milwaukee; Sophia Tareen in Chicago; Karen Matthews in New York; Amy Taxin in Santa Ana, California; Elliot Spagat in San Diego; and Ken Ritter in Las Vegas contributed to this report.

Trump sons take helm of company, eye domestic expansion

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Apprentices no more, Eric and Donald Trump Jr. are now at the helm of the Trump Organization and adjusting to the reality presented by their father's presidency. They're eyeing ways to use the new lease on the family fame by expanding the brand into parts of the United States that

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embrace him.

Some business has slowed as a result of the pledge to stall international dealmaking while Trump is president. But a U.S. push is planned, and two new hotel chains are being considered — a four-star brand and a less luxurious line — possibly in states where Trump triumphed over Democrat Hillary Clinton last November.

“I think it makes it naturally easier if you’re going into a place that’s not adversarial to you,” Donald Trump Jr. said in a recent interview.

The Trump Organization is a private, family-run business that owns billions of dollars’ worth of hotels, office buildings, golf courses and management and licensing agreements. Although foreign deals are on hold, the company will complete existing projects, including ones in India, the United Arab Emirates and the Dominican Republic.

Because overseas markets have been hotter for the Trump brand, the company could lose some new revenue, the president’s sons suggested.

Last fall, the company announced the creation of a four-star hotel chain called Scion, which is meant to offer upscale service in U.S. cities that could not support a full-fledged Trump luxury property. More than two dozen letters of intent have been signed, though no ground has been broken yet.

Among the possible locations being considered: Texas, parts of the South, and perhaps the nation’s capital, where the hotel would exist with the Trump luxury property in the former home of the Old Post Office not far from the White House. The company is also in the very early stages of considering a three-star hotel chain.

Experts said the plan would not seem to run afoul of any ethics standards, even if the hotels ended up in some of the economically depressed regions whose voters rallied for Trump and may not be able to afford a luxury brand. It would be no different from cashing in on the name of a nonpolitical celebrity, they said.

Similarly, daughter Ivanka Trump has made a pitch for Trump’s blue-collar supporters by replacing her high-end jewelry line with a mass-market brand.

“It would not seem to blur any lines with the presidency,” said Kathleen Clark, a law professor at Washington University. She said that while “questions can be raised” about some of some of company’s behavior, a pitch into Trump-friendly states seems like “a reasonable business strategy.”

Any new investment, particularly if it involves foreign funds, will face additional scrutiny, including a review by an in-house and outside ethics counsel, Donald Trump Jr. said.

“It’s a complicated procedure that changes the dynamic. There are plenty of deals that two years ago or eight years from now, ‘Oh, yeah, you can do this,’” he said. “Today, we have to take that much more seriously. There is an optical component that has to be taken into account.”

He bristled at the idea that his father ran for president to enrich himself or his family, as some critics contended during the campaign.

“He spent \$75 million of his own money to run against 17 incredibly seasoned Republican candidates to then go against Hillary Clinton,” Donald Trump Jr. said. “No one in their right mind would do that. That’s not a good business model! I get it, it sells papers, it creates headlines. But it’s ridiculous.”

Donald Trump Jr. said he barely spoke to his father during his first weeks in office. That changed after the younger Trump’s 5-year-old son, Tristan, was hurt in a skiing accident.

Eric Trump said he does talk to his father more regularly but insists that any discussions about the family business are limited to broad strokes and adheres to the guidelines the president laid out in January.

“We don’t talk about the business. At most it’s ‘How’s Turnberry? Turnberry’s great,’” Eric Trump said,

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referring to a Trump golf property in Scotland. He would tell his father, if asked, "A profit or loss in a quarter, that's it."

"That doesn't talk about any business sectors, that doesn't talk about any assets, that doesn't talk about anything specific in the business. That is a pure number, one number on a piece of paper," Eric Trump said. "That's more than permissible. None of these laws even apply to him — he's the president — but that is more than permissible in a trust structure."

Experts disagree, noting that it is not a true trust structure because Trump retained ownership of the company.

"As long as President Trump insists on owning the Trump Organization, the conflicts of interest that may occur run directly to him and the so-called firewall plays no role in preventing them," said Fred Wertheimer, head of the ethics watchdog group Democracy 21. "It's an illusion and does not protect the American people."

Both Eric and Donald Trump Jr. said they missed their father's presence. Eric Trump said he sometimes looks upon the stack of \$1 bills that he won during a series of friendly business bets with his father.

The winner would give the other a dollar bill with a note scrawled upon it. The elder Trump would use the bills, or a newspaper clipping about a Trump property, as a means of communicating to his sons, and his trademark scrawl would carry his congratulations — or his wishes — to those he was training to someday lead his company.

"It was his way of saying 'Get this done' or 'Great job, ET - this is going to be amazing,'" said Eric Trump. "It's a simple way of communicating but I learned a lot. I miss that."

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Want to own a town? Tiny Oregon community for sale for \$3.5M

By GILLIAN FLACCUS, Associated Press

TILLER, Ore. (AP) — In the tiny, dying timber town of Tiller, the old cliché is true. If you blink, you might actually miss it.

But these days, this dot on a map in southwestern Oregon is generating big-city buzz for an unlikely reason: Almost the entire town is for sale.

The asking price of \$3.5 million brings with it six houses, the shuttered general store and gas station, the land under the post office, undeveloped parcels, water rights and infrastructure that includes sidewalks, fire hydrants and a working power station. Tiller Elementary School, a six-classroom building that closed in 2014, is for sale separately for \$350,000.

Potential buyers have come forward but are remaining anonymous, and backup offers are still being accepted.

The listing represents a melancholy crossroads for Tiller, a once-bustling logging outpost that sprang up after the turn of the last century deep in what is now the Umpqua National Forest, about 230 miles south of Portland. The post office opened in 1902, and miners, loggers, ranchers and farmers flocked to the community along a pristine river.

By the 1940s and 1950s, there were three timber mills running, and the town expanded the elementary school and built a new general store.

Then, nearly three decades ago, logging on the federal forest lands that encircle Tiller came to a near standstill because of environmental regulations. The mills closed, and families moved away. One longtime resident began buying up properties. When he died three years ago, the family owned much

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of the town.

Then the Tiller Elementary School closed and was up for sale, as well as a small market, and the man's estate bought those too — and the potential became clear.

The listing includes more than 256 acres (1 square kilometer) in 29 distinct parcels, water and timber rights, and a variety of zonings, from residential to industrial.

About 235 people still live in the unincorporated area around Tiller, and have long relied on the buildings now for sale along historic Highway 227 as a gathering spot and one of the only places to shop for groceries in miles.

"Between the dying economy and the dying owners, Tiller became a new opportunity that had never been available before," said Richard Caswell, executor of the estate. "I started getting inquiries from all over the world, essentially, 'What was it? And what could you do with it?' It's the buyer and their imagination that's going to determine what Tiller can become."

The potential buyers have said through the seller's broker that they intend to turn the school into some type of campus and create a "permaculture" development that respects the town's remaining residents and its picturesque setting in a bend in the emerald-tinted South Umpqua River. They want to make reopening the market a priority.

"The buyers understand that they only have one shot at a first impression," said Garrett Zoller, principal broker for LandandWildlife.com, the seller's realtor. "They want to address this project with the community in mind."

Beyond that, Tiller's future remains shrouded in mystery.

The downtown is a ghost town, but plenty of people still live tucked into the mountains in a region where bears wander onto porches and where picking up a cellphone signal takes a 30-minute drive.

Residents gather at the church for coffee and cinnamon rolls on Fridays and collect their mail at the one-room post office — when it's open. Some have a sense of humor: A small, weathered sign affixed to the defunct market reads, "Last one out of Tiller turn out the light."

Sarah Crume and a few other mothers cling to a sense of community by meeting with their young children for playtime at the church, one of the few places not for sale. She's raising five daughters here and had to send her younger children to school in the next closest town when Tiller Elementary shut down.

"It is a little scary, especially raising our kids in this place that we love," Crume said. "I'm just wondering what kind of impact it's going to have on the people."

Paula Ellis grew up in Tiller on a ranch and spent her childhood hunting and riding horses here. Her daughters' beds are decorated with the skins of bears they killed when they were teenagers, and the antlers of the first deer Ellis bagged hangs on a wall near the front door.

She met her husband at the elementary school and recalls the annual end-of-the-year contests for the children that were dubbed the Tiller Olympics.

A giant cross rises over her home from an adjacent hilltop, and Ellis lately has found herself praying. "If you do choose to live here and raise kids here, it's a community you fall in love with," Ellis said, wiping away tears. "And we don't want to lose that."

For Rosemary Klep, news of the sale brought on strong emotions. Her parents built the market that's now for sale in 1947, and she grew up camping and roaming the forests near town. Her family had the only telephone in Tiller and, for a while, the only TV.

"This town has been in dire straits for many, many years," said Klep, 72, who now lives near Olympia, Washington. "But we loved growing up there. To us, it was a paradise."

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, April 22, the 112th day of 2017. There are 253 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 22, 1864, Congress authorized the use of the phrase "In God We Trust" on U.S. coins.

On this date:

In 1889, the Oklahoma Land Rush began at noon as thousands of homesteaders staked claims.

In 1930, the United States, Britain and Japan signed the London Naval Treaty, which regulated submarine warfare and limited shipbuilding.

In 1937, thousands of college students in New York City staged a "peace strike" opposing American entry into another possible world conflict.

In 1946, Harlan F. Stone, chief justice of the United States, died in Washington, D.C., at age 73.

In 1952, an atomic test in Nevada became the first nuclear explosion shown on live network television as a 31-kiloton bomb was dropped from a B-50 Superfortress.

In 1954, the publicly televised sessions of the Senate Army-McCarthy hearings began.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson opened the New York World's Fair.

In 1970, millions of Americans concerned about the environment observed the first "Earth Day."

In 1987, Joe Hunt, leader of a social and investment group called the "Billionaire Boys Club," was convicted by a jury in Santa Monica, California, of murdering Ron Levin, a con man whose body was never found. (Hunt was sentenced to life in prison.)

In 1994, Richard M. Nixon, the 37th president of the United States, died at a New York hospital four days after suffering a stroke; he was 81.

In 1997, in Lima, Peru, government commandos stormed the Japanese ambassador's residence where Tupac Amaru (TOO'-pahk ah-MAH'-roo) rebels were holding 72 hostages, ending a 126-day crisis; two commandos, one hostage and all 14 rebels were killed in the dramatic rescue.

In 2000, in a dramatic pre-dawn raid, armed immigration agents seized Elian Gonzalez, the Cuban boy at the center of a custody dispute, from his relatives' home in Miami; Elian was reunited with his father at Andrews Air Force Base near Washington.

Ten years ago: In the first round of the French presidential election, conservative Nicolas Sarkozy (sahr-koh-ZEE') and Socialist rival Segolene Royal (seh-goh-LEHN' roy-AL') received enough votes to advance to a runoff, which Sarkozy won.

Five years ago: George Zimmerman was quietly released from a Florida jail on \$150,000 bail to await his second-degree murder trial in the fatal shooting of unarmed teen Trayvon Martin. (Zimmerman was acquitted.) The U.S. and Afghanistan reached a deal on a strategic partnership agreement ensuring that Americans would provide military and financial support to the Afghan people for at least a decade beyond 2014, the deadline for most foreign forces to withdraw. In the first round of the French presidential election, Socialist Francois Hollande (frahn-SWAH' oh-LAWND') narrowly edged conservative incumbent Nicolas Sarkozy (sahr-koh-ZEE'), sending the candidates to a May 6 runoff, which Hollande won.

One year ago: Leaders from 175 countries signed the Paris Agreement on climate change at the United Nations as the landmark deal took a key step toward entering into force years ahead of schedule. President Barack Obama, visiting London, made a forceful plea for Britons to heed Prime Minister David

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Cameron's call to stay in the European Union and dismissed critics who accused the U.S. president of meddling in British affairs. Eight members of the same family were shot to death at four locations in rural southern Ohio in a still-unsolved case. A man in Appling, Georgia, shot five people to death before killing himself.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Charlotte Rae is 91. Actress Estelle Harris is 89. Singer Glen Campbell is 81. Actor Jack Nicholson is 80. Singer Mel Carter is 78. Author Janet Evanovich is 74. Country singer Cleve Francis is 72. Movie director John Waters is 71. Singer Peter Frampton is 67. Rock singer-musician Paul Carrack (Mike and the Mechanics; Squeeze) is 66. Actor Joseph Bottoms is 63. Actor Ryan Stiles is 58. Baseball manager Terry Francona is 58. Comedian Byron Allen is 56. Actor Chris Makepeace is 53. Rock musician Fletcher Dragge (DRAH'-guh) is 51. Actor Jeffrey Dean Morgan is 51. Actress Sheryl Lee is 50. Actress-talk show host Sherri Shepherd is 50. Country singer-musician Heath Wright (Ricochet) is 50. Country singer Kellie Coffey is 46. Actor Eric Mabius is 46. Actor Ingo Rademacher (RAH'-deh-mah-ker) is 46. Rock musician Shavo Odadjian (System of a Down) is 43. Rock singer-musician Daniel Johns (Silverchair) is 38. Actor Malcolm Barrett is 37. Actress Cassidy Freeman is 35. Actress Michelle Ryan is 33. Actress Amber Heard is 31. Singer-songwriter BC Jean (Alexander Jean) is 30.

Thought for Today: "That men do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important of all the lessons that history has to teach." — Aldous Huxley, English author (1894-1963).