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Thursday, May 4

School Lunch: Cheese sticks, broccoli and dip, fruit.

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

Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked potato with sour cream, creamed peas, Fruited Jell-O, whole wheat bread.

St. John's Lutheran: Nursery circle and good cheer circle at 1:30 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle at 2 p.m.

Groton School: MS/HS Spring Concert at 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Prayer Group at 7 p.m.

Friday, May 5

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

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

Senior Menu: Taco salad, Mexican rice, seasonal fresh fruit, breadstick.

Groton School: Track at Sisseton at 4 p.m.

United Methodist: MOMS Group at 9:30 a.m.

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

The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **Open**

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MCKIVER COLLISION
Lifetime Warranty on all Collision Work!
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Allen McKiver, Owner ~ 605/397-4404



The sidewalk on the south side of the football field is completed and is now curing. This is the next step that needed to be done before the closing of SD37 through Groton. For an update on construction plans, tune in to GDILIVE.COM at 1 p.m. or come to the Community Center.

Lot for Sale

Great building lot in Groton located on the North side of HWY 12. Mature trees surround the south and east of the lot for extra privacy. New move on stick built homes allowed! Seller will look at all reasonable offers. \$35,000 Contact Eric Vetter Century 21 Investment Realtors 605-380-0031

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**Mowers
for any
size
yard!**



Casey Hein is pictured below guiding the back-hole operator clean out the trench. A new manhole (pictured above) will be installed. This is part of the work being done for the elementary school. Dahme Construction is doing the work.



Harry Implement
"Family Owned & Operated Since 1935!"
(605) 395-6421
Ferney



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Destination Imagination



Please
Pre- Order
Pork Loins by
the whole or
half. Also
sliced or
unsliced.

**Destination
Imagination**
Thanks you for
your support!

PORK FEED

Also offering Hot Dog meals and Rib meals (until ribs are sold out)

Tuesday May 2nd and Thursday May 4th

Before the Elementary & Junior/Senior High School Spring Concerts

SERVING 5 to 7 p.m.

GROTON AREA HIGH SCHOOL GYM

Meal includes sandwich, chips, drink and dessert

To PRE ORDER half or whole cooked loins

Please contact Julie Milbrandt at julie.milbrandt@k12.sd.us

or

Joann Donley at joann.donley@k12.sd.us

or

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Today in Weather History

May 4, 1964: A tornado touched down southwest of Kadoka causing \$25,000 in damage.

1926 - A hurricane came inland near Daytona Beach, FL. The hurricane caused 2.5 million dollars damage in eastern Florida, including the Jacksonville area. (David Ludlum)

1939 - The temperature at Lewiston, ID, hit 117 degrees to establish an all-time record high for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1943 - On a whim, and flying a single engine AT-6, Lieutenant Ralph O'Hair and Colonel Duckworth were the first to fly into a hurricane. It started regular Air Force flights into hurricanes. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in Minnesota spawned a tornado which moved in a southwesterly direction for a distance of thirty miles across Rice County and Goodhue County. Trees were uprooted and tossed about like toys, and a horse lifted by the tornado was observed sailing horizontally through the air. Thunderstorms drenched La Crosse, WI, with 5.26 inches of rain, their second highest 24 hour total of record. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1988 - Hot weather prevailed in the north central U.S. Williston, ND, reported a record high of 108 degrees. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the eastern U.S., and in southeastern Texas. Richland County, SC, was soaked with up to 5.5 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in the southwestern U.S. Yuma, AZ, experienced their most severe thunderstorm of record. Strong thunderstorm winds, with unofficial gusts as high as 95 mph, reduced visibilities to near zero in blowing dust and sand. Yuma got nearly as much rain in one hour as is normally received in an entire year. The storm total of 2.55 inches of rain was a record 24 hour total for July. Property damage due to flash flooding and high winds was in the millions. (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Wisconsin and northern Illinois to New England, with 103 reports of large hail and damaging winds through the day. Thunderstorms in Wisconsin produced hail three inches in diameter near Oshkosh, and wind gusts to 65 mph at Germantown. (The National Weather Summary)

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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 73 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 79 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 75 °F	Low: 47 °F	High: 76 °F



Today
70s


Friday
75 to 83°


weather.gov/Aberdeen National Weather Service Aberdeen   Updated: 5/4/2017 5:12AM Central

Published on: 05/04/2017 at 5:18AM

Comfortable weather ahead! Dry and warm weather will remain through early next week. Expect a mostly sunny sky today, with highs in the 70s. Temperatures will fall into the low 40s tonight, before rebounding into the 70s to low 80s Friday afternoon.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 66.8 F at 4:30 PM

Low Outside Temp: 41.8 F at 6:40 AM

High Gust: 31.0 Mph at 4:02 PM

Snow: Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 98° in 1926

Record Low: 20° in 2005

Average High: 66°F

Average Low: 40°F

Average Precip in May: 0.41

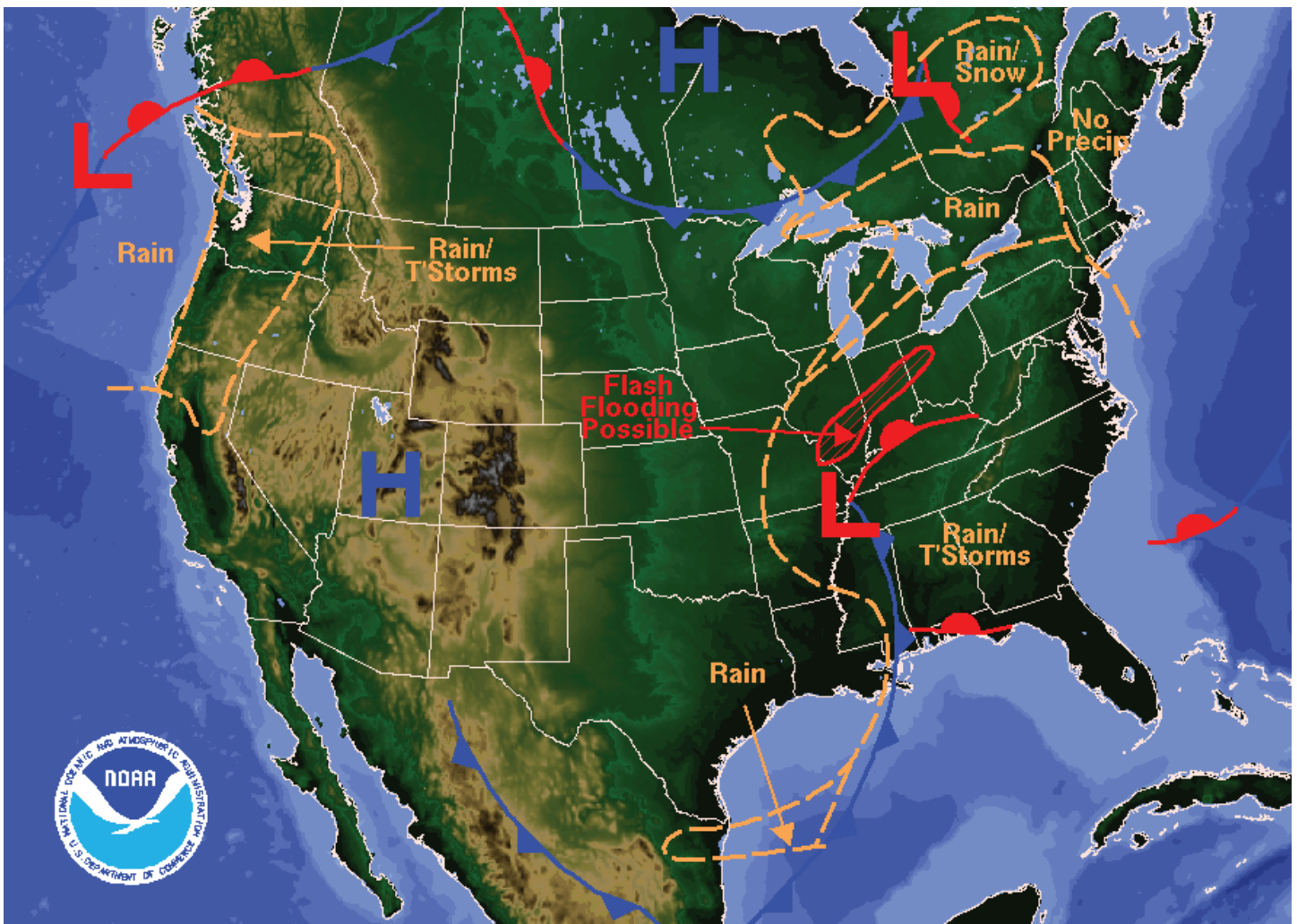
Precip to date in May: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 4.44

Precip Year to Date: 1.98

Sunset Tonight: 8:44 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:15 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Thu, May 04, 2017, issued 4:32 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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ALWAYS ON HIS MIND!

He was looking forward to his marriage. But at the last moment his fiancée decided that she did not want a life that included sharing his blindness. In his disappointment and distress he turned to the Lord for His comfort and compassion. In Christ he found someOne who would love him "no matter what." He became one of the greatest preachers of his day and people would travel great distances to hear his sermons. Over the years he became known as "The Blind Preacher Who Could See Quite Well."

Because of his limited sight, he became dependent on his sister, who assisted him in the chores of living and his pastoral responsibilities. On the day of her marriage he became very distraught mentally. Whether it was because it brought back memories of his once anticipated marriage or whether he realized that he would be abandoned once again, in pain, anguish, and sadness, he wrote:

"O Love that wilt not let me go
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."

He penned this hymn in five minutes, never having to make one correction or change. And its spirit seems to capture the words of David when he wrote, "How precious it is Lord, to realize that You think about me constantly. I can't even count how many times a day Your thoughts turn to me. And when I awaken You are still thinking of me."

What great love God offers us. It will never let us go.

Prayer: It's simply impossible, Father, for us to fathom the depths of Your love. In deep humility we thank You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 139:7-8 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

02-09-12-30-32

(two, nine, twelve, thirty, thirty-two)

Estimated jackpot: \$124,000

Hot Lotto

12-28-35-39-45, Hot Ball: 2

(twelve, twenty-eight, thirty-five, thirty-nine, forty-five; Hot Ball: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$6.09 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$20 million

Powerball

17-18-49-59-66, Powerball: 9, Power Play: 2

(seventeen, eighteen, forty-nine, fifty-nine, sixty-six; Powerball: nine; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$130 million

Man suspected of shooting South Dakota deputy in custody

MADISON, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a man suspected of shooting and wounding a South Dakota sheriff's deputy is in custody after a lengthy standoff.

The McCook County deputy was shot around 2 a.m. Wednesday in an exchange of gunfire with the suspect south of Madison. Authorities were in a standoff with the suspect for more than 12 hours.

Officials say the deputy has been released from a hospital.

Lake County Sheriff Tim Walburg says the 37-year-old suspect from Montrose was cornered in a ditch. SWAT teams were brought in to negotiate, and the man was taken into custody around 3:30 p.m. without incident.

The suspect ran away after crashing his car following a pursuit by the deputy who was shot. The deputy initially tried to pull over the suspect for a traffic violation.

Men found dead in apparent murder-suicide were acquaintances

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Police say the two men found dead in an apparent murder-suicide in Sioux Falls were acquaintances who were involved in a physical fight before their deaths.

Authorities on Wednesday said 45-year-old Ronald Cook fatally shot 36-year-old Brett Thooft Sunday evening at Cook's apartment in an industrial area. Thooft was shot in the head and chest with a handgun. Officials say Cook took his own life at the apartment on Monday.

Officers were called to the apartment on Tuesday morning when a friend arrived to give Cook a ride

to work and found a note which said something bad had happened in the apartment and that police should be called.

Investigators say alcohol was likely a factor in the deaths and that a small amount of marijuana was found in the apartment.

—
This story has been corrected to show that Cook fatally shot Thoof and later killed himself, not the other way around.

Amendment backers hope to tap anger over ethics law repeal

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Supporters of a proposed constitutional amendment that would make it harder for the Legislature to tamper with voter initiatives hope to harness anger over lawmakers' repeal this year of a voter-approved ethics measure to advance their cause, an amendment campaign leader said Wednesday.

The proposal would make the Legislature more accountable to South Dakota voters, said Roxanne Weber, a co-sponsor of the new amendment who fought Republicans' repeal of the ethics initiative in the just-completed session. If passed, the plan would require a two-thirds vote in each legislative chamber to repeal or amend ballot initiatives for seven years after they become law, among other provisions.

"This amendment provides a lot stronger protections to the initiated measure process so that voters still have that voice in our government," Weber said. "Protecting our rights is by far one of the most important values that I think South Dakotans hold."

At least 10 states, but not South Dakota, have provisions to protect citizens' initiatives from state lawmakers, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. For example, Alaska and Wyoming lawmakers can't repeal an initiative within two years, while it takes a two-thirds majority in Arkansas and Nebraska to amend or repeal.

South Dakota amendment supporters would have to submit nearly 28,000 valid signatures to the secretary of state by November 2017 for the amendment to appear on the 2018 ballot. Weber, a software engineer in Pierre, said she hopes volunteers can start collecting signatures in June.

When lawmakers passed a bill scrubbing the ethics measure from law during the 2017 session, it contained an emergency provision that made the repeal take effect immediately and blocked voters from referring it to the ballot. Under the proposed amendment, a law passed with an emergency clause could be taken to a public vote.

It would also cap the number of signatures required to get a constitutional amendment on the ballot at no more than 10 percent of the total votes cast for governor in the last gubernatorial election.

Republican Sen. Jim Bolin last session pushed an amendment for the 2018 ballot that would have made it more difficult to change the state constitution. Bolin said he likely wouldn't support the proposed voter-initiative amendment. State legislators who run for political office should be given deference to deal with such laws, he said.

"I don't think that's a good way to go for the state of South Dakota," he said.

South Dakota city adopts partial ban on outdoor smoking

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Sioux Falls City Council has unanimously approved an outdoor tobacco policy that bars people from smoking cigarettes where nonsmokers are likely to congregate.

The measure approved Tuesday bans smoking outside of city-owned facilities operated by third par-

ties, though designated smoking areas can still be provided if they're at least 25 feet from public entrances.

The ban also requires those hosting an event at a park to apply for a permit to designate a smoking area. The clubhouses, outdoor patios and first and last holes of the city's two public golf courses also are included in the ban. While on the course, if no one else is around besides playing companions, smoking is still permitted.

Resident David Zokaites criticized the ordinance because of its restrictions regarding golf courses.

"I think it's excessively complicated and a little hard to interpret," he said. "You have to read it a couple of times to figure out what it really says."

Christine Erickson, a member of the council, says the intent of the ordinance is to protect the health of nonsmokers and the rights of smokers.

The ordinance doesn't outline a fine for people who violate the ban. Instead violators will be ejected from city-owned property if they don't comply. If they refuse to leave the property, law enforcement has "other tools" to compel them to leave, Erickson said.

The ban doesn't apply to chewing tobacco, which is still permitted outdoors except during youth activities and near playgrounds.

Tripp-Delmont school district voters approve tax increase

DELMONT, S.D. (AP) — Voters in the Tripp-Delmont school district have decided to opt out of the state property tax freeze.

About 63 percent of the 608 voters in Tuesday's election favored exceeding the state property tax limit by as much as \$400,000 annually for five years. The opt-out passed in both towns.

School Board President Jeff Kramer says the opt out passage not only funds the district but also provides needed time to make better long-range decisions. The school's enrollment has dropped 52 percent in the past 16 years.

The opt out will cost the owner of a \$100,000 house an additional \$47 per year in taxes.

Sioux Falls fire chief abruptly terminated, no explanation

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — City officials have abruptly terminated the employment of Sioux Falls' fire chief and have offered no explanation.

The termination Tuesday of Chief Jim Sideras' employment comes as Minnehaha County sheriff's deputies and state agents served a search warrant at a home which public records show belongs to Sideras and his wife, Kathleen.

Sheriff Mike Milstead declined to provide further information.

Sideras' was to leave his post at the end of June after serving almost 34 years with Sioux Falls Fire Rescue. Mayor Mike Huether appointed Sideras as chief in June 2011. Huether said Tuesday that Division Chief Brad Goodroad will serve as interim fire chief. The search for the next fire chief is already underway.

Sideras didn't answer a phone call to the home for comment from The Associated Press.

Abbas says talks with Trump positive, if short on specifics

By KARIN LAUB, Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said his first meeting with Presi-

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dent Donald Trump left him hopeful, even though they did not discuss specifics about how to restart long-stalled Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

Abbas said he believes the Trump administration can play an important role as a mediator.

"What is needed is to bring the two parties together, to bring them closer and then to facilitate things between them," he told reporters late Wednesday, after his White House meeting.

Trump also struck an optimistic note Wednesday, saying he believes an Israeli-Palestinian deal can be reached. He did not explain what type of solution he envisions.

The Palestinians want to set up a state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem, lands Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war. Abbas reiterated the demand as he stood next to Trump at the White House.

However, there have been no serious negotiations since gaps widened with the 2009 election of Benjamin Netanyahu as Israel's prime minister. Netanyahu rejects the 1967 frontier as a baseline for border talks and rules out a partition of Jerusalem where Palestinians hope to establish a capital. The Netanyahu government, like those before it, have expanded settlements on war-won lands, despite U.S. appeals to curb construction.

Despite the lack of specifics, Abbas described his meeting with Trump as positive and said that "we build hopes on it."

"So far, we didn't talk about a mechanism, but the contacts between us and the Americans began and will continue," he said.

Abbas said he is ready to meet with Netanyahu, and suggested the Israeli leader is avoiding such talks.

"We had planned to meet in Moscow, but he didn't show up," Abbas said, referring to Russian efforts several months ago to set up such a meeting.

Netanyahu has said he is willing to meet with Abbas. In the past, Abbas balked at the idea of such a summit, saying it would be pointless without general agreement on the framework of negotiations and a significant curb in settlement construction. Abbas did not explain his apparent shift in position.

On Thursday, Netanyahu said he looks forward to discussing with Trump the "best ways to advance peace." Trump is reportedly visiting Israel at the end of the month, although no official announcement has been made.

He said Abbas's comments Wednesday that Palestinians are cultivating a culture of peace "are unfortunately not true," pointing to Palestinian schools named after militants who killed Israelis. "But I hope that it's possible to achieve a change and to pursue a genuine peace. This is something Israel is always ready for, Netanyahu said.

U.S. officials had said ahead of the meeting that Trump would press Abbas to end payments to families of Palestinians imprisoned in Israeli jails. Three Republican senators urged a halt to such payments in a letter to Trump that reflected widespread opinion in Congress.

A senior U.S. official said Tuesday that the issue of payments had been raised in preliminary talks with the Palestinians in Washington. Abbas has said the issue was not raised in his talks with Trump. However, officials close to the talks said it would be addressed in future meeting.

Abbas' positive portrayal of the meeting with Trump may not be enough for a skeptical public at home. Many Palestinians have become disillusioned with Abbas' strategy, after two decades of intermittent U.S.-led negotiations ended in failure while Israeli settlements keep expanding.

In the West Bank, the main focus appears to be a hunger strike by hundreds of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, now in its 18th day.

At the time of the Abbas-Trump meeting, several thousand Palestinians attended a solidarity rally for

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the prisoners, with speakers calling for a new campaign of civil disobedience against Israeli rule.

The hunger strike is led by imprisoned uprising leader Marwan Barghouti, widely seen as the most popular choice to succeed the 82-year-old Abbas one day. Barghouti, in prison since 2002, is serving five life terms after an Israeli court convicted him of directing attacks that killed five people during a Palestinian uprising against Israel.

The turnout at the rally "reflects the people's support for the prisoners at a time when the Palestinian leadership failed in everything," said Sharif Suleiman, a 32-year-old project manager who attended the gathering. "They failed in negotiations, in building institutions and in reforms."

Abbas also faces fierce opposition from his main political rival, the Islamic militant group Hamas, which seized Gaza from him in a 2007 takeover. Hamas has dismissed Abbas' strategy of negotiations as a waste of time and said he does not represent the Palestinians.

After a decade of failed reconciliation attempts, Abbas recently adopted a tougher stance toward Hamas, saying he would use financial pressure to force the militants to cede ground.

His West Bank-based autonomy government announced this week that it will stop paying for electricity Israel sends to power-starved Gaza — about \$11 million a month.

Such a step could potentially plunge Gaza into darkness since the electricity from Israel is currently the main source of power for the territory of 2 million people. Gaza has been enduring rolling blackouts for years, largely as a result of border blockades by Israel and Egypt that were triggered by the Hamas takeover.

Hamas has said it would not bow to pressure from Abbas.

Britain's Prince Philip, 95, to retire from royal duties

By GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prince Philip, the consort known for his constant support of his wife Queen Elizabeth II as well as for his occasional gaffes, will retire from royal duties this fall, Buckingham Palace said Thursday.

Philip, 95, made the decision himself with the full support of the queen, the palace said in a statement. The royal, known as the Duke of Edinburgh, has suffered from heart disease and other ailments in recent years but has nonetheless maintained a vigorous public schedule.

He seemed to be in good health and a fine mood Wednesday during an appearance at a London cricket club. He joked about being the world's most experienced person when it comes to unveiling plaques.

Philip, a member of the Greek royal family in exile, has been at Elizabeth's side in countless public appearances since their marriage in 1947. He gave up a successful naval career to support her when she became queen in 1952.

He became the longest-serving consort in British history in 2009 — much as Elizabeth has become the longest reigning monarch in British history.

Prime Minister Theresa May expressed gratitude "on behalf of the whole country" to Philip for his decades of service.

"From his steadfast support for Her Majesty the Queen to his inspirational Duke of Edinburgh Awards and his patronage of hundreds of charities and good causes, his contribution to our United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and the wider world will be of huge benefit to us all for years to come," she said.

Officials said the queen, who turned 91 last month, will keep carrying out royal engagements with the support of the royal family. She has indicated that she does not plan to retire.

Elizabeth has, however, reduced her workload considerably in recent years as her children and grandchildren have moved to the fore. She has stopped making long-haul air flights to other Commonwealth

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countries.

Attention has been increasingly focused on her son Prince Charles, the heir to the throne, and on her grandson Prince William and his wife Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge.

The palace said Philip will continue his role with more than 780 charitable organizations but will not attend engagements.

He is not expected to disappear completely from the public stage — the palace said he may still choose to attend some events from time to time.

The palace did not offer any new details about his health and there were no indications of any new problems. The statement indicated Philip will carry out previously scheduled engagements between now and August.

Philip said when he turned 90 in 2011 that he was “winding down” his official duties, adding that he felt he had “done my bit.” He was treated later that year for a blocked heart artery but seemed to recover well.

He has been hospitalized several times since then with other ailments.

The queen is normally quite reserved about her private life but she has described her husband as “my strength and stay all these years.”

She met with May at the palace Wednesday and has made several public appearances recently. The queen and Philip were both ill with the flu over the Christmas holidays but seem to have recovered well.

Earlier in the day, a report by Britain’s Daily Mail of an unusual meeting of royal household staff sparked a worldwide wave of speculation about the health of the queen and Philip, including incorrect reports that the flag atop Buckingham Palace had been lowered to half-staff.

The Sun tabloid briefly reported on its website that Philip had died. The incorrect report was quickly dropped.

GOP revives struggling health care bill and plans House vote

By ALAN FRAM and ERICA WERNER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a startling turnabout, Republicans say they are ready to push their prized health care bill through the House and claim a victory for President Donald Trump, six weeks after nearly leaving it for dead and days after support from GOP moderates seemed to crumble anew.

House leaders planned a vote Thursday on the legislation, revamped since collapsing in March to attract most hard line conservatives and some GOP centrists. In a final tweak, leaders were adding a modest pool of money to help people with pre-existing medical conditions afford coverage, a concern that caused a near-fatal rebellion among Republicans in recent days.

“We will pass this bill,” House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., predicted late Wednesday. His view was echoed Thursday morning by the chairman of the House Freedom Caucus, Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., who said in a television interview that “we’re optimistic that we’ll pass it out of the House today .”

The bitter health care battle dominated the Capitol even as Congress prepared to give final approval to a bipartisan \$1 trillion measure financing federal agencies through September.

The House passed that legislation Wednesday 309-118, and Senate passage seemed certain as early as Thursday. That would head off a weekend federal shutdown that both parties preferred to avoid — especially Republicans controlling the White House and Congress.

The health care vote was scheduled after the White House and congressional leaders bargained rank-and-file holdouts with pressure in recent days. A wafer-thin margin seemed likely, thanks to opposition expected from every Democrat and more than a dozen Republicans plus lobbying against the bill by the

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AARP seniors organization, doctors, hospitals and patients' groups.

Just Tuesday, The Associated Press had counted 21 Republicans saying they would oppose the bill — one short of the 22 defections that would kill it if all Democrats voted no. Many others were undecided.

House approval would edge Republicans closer to repealing much of President Barack Obama's health care law, which would represent at least partial redemption of campaign pledges by GOP candidates — including Trump — since its enactment in 2010.

Passage would also send it to an uncertain fate in the Senate, where some Republicans consider the House measure too harsh. Polls have shown Obama's much-maligned law has actually gained in popularity as the debate over a replacement health care program has accelerated.

"House Republicans are going to tattoo this moral monstrosity to their foreheads, and the American people will hold them accountable," said House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Said Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore.: "I think we're on the right track here. Obviously it's a work in progress, but I think we're on the right track."

Meadows, who appeared along with Walden on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" program, said that "at this particular point, what we've got is a bill that's better than where it started, drives down premiums."

The bill would eliminate tax penalties Obama's law which has clamped down on people who don't buy coverage and it erases tax increases in the Affordable Care Act on higher-earning people and the health industry. It cuts the Medicaid program for low-income people and lets states impose work requirements on Medicaid recipients. It transforms Obama's subsidies for millions buying insurance — largely based on people's incomes and premium costs — into tax credits that rise with consumers' ages.

The measure would retain Obama's requirement that family policies cover grown children until age 26.

But states could get federal waivers freeing insurers from other Obama coverage requirements. With waivers, insurers could charge people with pre-existing illnesses far higher rates than healthy customers, boost prices for older consumers to whatever they wish and ignore the mandate that they cover specified services like pregnancy care.

The bill would block federal payments to Planned Parenthood for a year, considered a triumph by many anti-abortion Republicans.

Obama's overhaul has extended health insurance to around 20 million Americans. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated in March that the GOP bill would end coverage for 24 million people over a decade. That office also said the bill's subsidies would be less generous for many, especially lower-earning and older people not yet 65 and qualifying for Medicare.

A CBO estimate for the cost of latest version of their bill will not be ready before the House conducts its vote.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., pulled the plug on a March 24 vote as conservatives opposed the bill for not fully repealing Obama's law and GOP moderates considered its cuts too severe.

That was a jarring setback for Trump and Ryan. But leaders gradually rebuilt support.

Conservatives were won over by provisions establishing the coverage waivers crafted by Reps. Tom MacArthur, R-N.J., a leader of the moderate House Tuesday Group and Mark Meadows, R-N.C., head of the hard line House Freedom Caucus.

Earlier this week, moderates objected that constituents with pre-existing conditions could effectively be denied coverage by insurers charging them exorbitant premiums. At least a dozen of them said Wednesday they would oppose the legislation, including GOP Reps. Charlie Dent of Pennsylvania, a moderate leader, Leonard Lance of New Jersey and New York's Dan Donovan.

But GOP leaders seemed to win over a raft of wavering lawmakers after another tweak by moderate Reps. Fred Upton, R-Mich., and Billy Long, R-Mo.

That added \$8 billion over five years for state high-risk pools, aimed at helping seriously ill people pay expensive premiums. That was on top of \$130 billion already in the bill for states to help customers, though critics said those amounts were insufficient.

Associated Press writer Andrew Taylor contributed.

Komodo dragon bites Singaporean tourist in Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — A Komodo dragon has bitten an overly inquisitive tourist in Indonesia who ignored warnings about getting too close to the enormous reptile while it was eating, a national park official said.

The tourist from Singapore was bitten on his leg Wednesday morning while taking pictures of the Komodo dragon, the world's largest lizard, said the chief of the Komodo National Park, Sudiyono.

Sudiyono said the man was rescued by locals and rushed to a hospital in Labuan Bajo on Flores Island, near Komodo Island, for treatment.

Endangered Komodo dragons are found in the wild on several eastern Indonesian islands. They can grow to 3 meters (10 feet) or more in length.

Attacks on humans are rare but may increase as Indonesia is promoting the Komodo National Park as a tourist destination. In 2013, a guide and a park ranger were attacked in separate incidents.

Experts say the Komodo dragon population in the wild is less than 4,000 but stable.

Would-be French first lady an unusual presence in campaign

By SYLVIE CORBET, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — As French presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron prepares for a Sunday runoff against far-right rival Marine Le Pen, his wife is pondering the prospect of a prominent job herself. That's unusual for France, as is the fact that throughout the campaign Brigitte Macron has been her husband's closest collaborator.

Le Pen and her companion, Louis Aliot, an official with her far-right National Front party, remain discreet about their relationship, only occasionally appearing publicly as a couple.

Brigitte Macron, meanwhile, has become one of the most talked-about women in France. Much of it is mean-spirited, focusing on her age: She is 64 while her husband is 39. Feminists denounce the comments as sexist and note that the Macrons' age difference is identical to that of Donald and Melania Trump.

Many voters have ignored such talk, focusing on the economic and security issues in the campaigns.

"Of course it's very unusual for a woman to be much older than her husband, but once you've said that there's nothing much to add," said Parisian Marie Coste, 34. "It's more important to focus on the candidates' policies."

Emmanuel Macron responded to the issue Monday by acknowledging that his family is "a little different."

"So yes, there are in France lots of families," he told a crowd chanting his wife's name. "There are same-sex couples and different-sex couples. There are different filiations. And there is plenty of love."

The crowd gave him a standing ovation.

The couple met when she was about the age he is now; he was a teenager.

Then known as Brigitte Auziere, the married mother of three taught French literature in the northern French town of Amiens, where Emmanuel Macron attended a Catholic high school.

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Although she never was assigned as his teacher, she was in charge of the high school drama club when he joined. They got to know each other when the 16-year-old Emmanuel suggested they write a play together.

"We wrote, and little by little, I was totally awed by the intellect of this boy," she recalled in a documentary on French television last year. "His culture, his clever, well-formed head. Amazing."

Macron's parents, worried about the budding love affair, sent him away for his last year of high school. Brigitte eventually divorced, returned to her maiden name, Trogneux, and joined him in Paris.

The couple married in 2007. They have no children together but Macron says his wife's three children and seven grand-children are his family.

The couple appeared hand-in-hand on stage the night he placed first in the presidential election's first round. They waved at the crowd with tears in their eyes and kissed — another rarity in French politics, where politicians usually keep their private lives private.

Brigitte Macron often accompanies her husband on campaign stops, taking selfies and listening to people's concerns. She also helps prepare his speeches.

A fashion lover, her style is often described as "modern" in French magazines. She sat in the front row at recent Dior and Louis Vuitton shows.

She quit her job at a chic Parisian high school in 2015 to help her husband. Former students at the Lycee Saint-Louis de Gonzague describe her as an enthusiastic, dynamic, joyful person keen to share her passion for French authors.

As a first lady, she says, she would continue to focus on young people.

"My combat will be education," she told Paris Match magazine last year.

Genevieve Perrier, 91, who lives in the countryside in the Burgundy region, praised Brigitte Macron's apparent "simplicity" because "she seems to speak to everyone when we see her on television. She seems very kind."

Perrier said Brigitte Macron reminds her of another atypical woman, Germaine Coty, France's first lady in the 1950s. At first mocked for her grandmotherly style, Coty went on to enjoy great popularity because of her devotion to the French people.

More recently, former French President Nicolas Sarkozy's now-former wife, Cecilia, played a major role in his campaign and worked alongside him.

The couple split up a few months after Sarkozy's election in 2007. The president soon remarried and his new wife, model and singer Carla Bruni, assumed a more traditional role as first lady by staying out of politics and taking part in charity events.

Emmanuel Macron says he would formalize the job of first lady if he wins the election, and his wife would help decide how.

"She has her word to say in this," he said this month.

France has not had a first lady since current President Francois Hollande and his girlfriend, Valerie Trierweiler, parted ways. Their breakup came in 2014 after a tabloid magazine exposed his affair with actress Julie Gayet. Gayet and Hollande have never appeared together in public.

(This story has been corrected to show that Brigitte Macron is 64.)

N. Korea issues direct criticism of China amid nuke dispute

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea has issued a rare direct criticism of China through a commentary saying its “reckless remarks” on the North’s nuclear program are testing its patience and could trigger unspecified “grave” consequences.

China, North Korea’s largest trading partner and main benefactor, suspended imports of North Korean coal in line with U.N. sanctions earlier this year and has recently been urging its traditional ally to stop nuclear and missile activities amid U.S. pressure to use its leverage to resolve the nuclear standoff. Chinese state media have also unleashed regular and harsh criticisms on North Korea.

The commentary released Wednesday by the state-run Korean Central News Agency said that “a string of absurd and reckless remarks are now heard from China every day only to render the present bad situation tenser.”

Asked about the KCNA commentary during a regular briefing Thursday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said Beijing’s position on “developing good neighborly and friendly cooperation with North Korea is also consistent and clear.”

The North Korean article cited recent commentaries by Chinese state media that it said shifted the blame for deteriorating bilateral relations onto the North and raised “lame excuses for the base acts of dancing to the tune of the U.S.”

“China should no longer try to test the limits of the DPRK’s patience,” the North Korean commentary said, using the acronym for its official name, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. “China had better ponder over the grave consequences to be entailed by its reckless act of chopping down the pillar of the DPRK-China relations.”

The article was not attributed to any government agency or official; the writer was identified only as Kim Chol. Still, it’s unusual for the North to directly criticize China. Previously it has couched such criticism by referring to China only as “a neighboring country.”

Analyst Cheong Seong-chang at South Korea’s private Sejong Institute said the North’s discontent at China appears to be on the “verge of exploding.” He said North Korea will likely ignore China from now on while trying to strengthen ties with Russia and improve relations with a new South Korean government to be inaugurated next week.

The Global Times, an outspoken nationalist tabloid published by China’s ruling Communist Party’s flagship People’s Daily, warned in a Thursday editorial that the North’s actions threatened a 1961 treaty of non-aggression between the two countries. It called on the North to end its nuclear tests.

“China will not allow its northeastern region to be contaminated by North Korea’s nuclear activities,” the Global Times declared.

In recent days, the paper also warned that China was able to strike back “at any side that crosses the red line” and would impose an oil embargo against the North in response to any more tests. The North Korean commentary said it’s China that crossed “the red line.”

The People’s Daily declared Sunday — and again on Tuesday — that the North’s nuclear ambitions “put itself and the whole region into dire peril.”

Associated Press writer Matthew Brown and news assistant Liu Zheng contributed to this report from Beijing.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. GOP REVIVES HEALTH CARE BILL

Republicans are planning a House vote on their prized health care bill, which would let Trump claim a victory six weeks after GOP leaders nearly left the measure for dead.

2. PRINCE PHILIP WILL STOP CARRYING OUT ENGAGEMENTS

The 95-year-old husband of Queen Elizabeth II will continue heading numerous charitable organizations but will not play an active role in public events, Buckingham Palace says.

3. WHICH IRS RULE TRUMP IS TARGETING

Trump plans to sign an executive order further weakening a rarely enforced agency edict that says churches that endorse political candidates risk losing their tax-exempt status.

4. WHO HAS ANTAGONIZED PYONGYANG

The state-run Korean Central News Agency says that "a string of absurd and reckless remarks are now heard from China every day only to render the present bad situation tenser."

5. HOW PUERTO RICO IS ENTERING UNCHARTED TERRITORY

Uncertainty is spreading across Puerto Rico and the U.S. municipal bond market as the territory takes an unprecedented step into federal court to restructure a portion of its \$73 billion debt.

6. WHY FRANCE WILL SOON HAVE A LEADER LIKE NO OTHER

Either Marine Le Pen, a populist who could dismantle Europe's post-war unity, or Emmanuel Macron, a political novice, will be president.

7. JAILED VENEZUELA ACTIVIST DISPELS RUMORS OF HEALTH EMERGENCY

Reports that jailed opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez was rushed to a military hospital in a medical emergency sets off a frenzied rush information on the activist, but proved to be wrong.

8. WHAT 'GRAY DEATH' IS

It's a new and dangerous opioid combo that underscores the ever-changing nature of the U.S. addictions epidemic.

9. WHERE A LAGOON IS DYING

Florida's Indian River Lagoon, America's most biologically diverse waterway, is choked with algae, dead fish, manatees, and bird, because of farm runoff and a huge influx of people.

10. LATE-NIGHT HOST DEFENDS TRUMP REMARKS

Stephen Colbert says he has no regrets about a crude sexual reference regarding the U.S. and Russian presidents that prompted calls to fire him and boycott "Late Show" advertisers.

Apple steps up its effort to emphasize its economic impact

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE and CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER, AP Business Writers

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Apple is getting more aggressive about emphasizing its role in the U.S. economy, apparently hoping to counter recurring criticism over its reliance on overseas factories.

On Wednesday, Apple for the first time released a state-by-state breakdown of where its 80,000 U.S. employees work, showing that more than half of them are located outside Silicon Valley. It also announced a \$1 billion fund aimed at creating more U.S. manufacturing jobs, although it provided few details.

The strategy appears aimed at complicating efforts by President Donald Trump and other politicians to vilify Apple for using companies in China and elsewhere to assemble most of its products. Apple had

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no comment on political ramifications of its announcements.

CEO Tim Cook first described the manufacturing fund in an interview on CNBC, but didn't say how the money will be disbursed or who will be eligible to receive it. Apple will provide more details when it announces its first investment by the end of the month, he said. Apple's initial billion-dollar investment amounts to a tiny fraction of its \$257 billion in cash.

Cook also promised that Apple will hire "thousands of employees, thousands more in the future" in the U.S., although he didn't specify how quickly that will happen. Apple's U.S. payroll has grown roughly 40-fold since 1998, when it had 5,000 U.S. workers.

Cook also said Apple is examining ways to help more people learn the programming skills to make apps.

THREATS TO APPLE

Trump has threatened to impose tariffs on products from China, a change that would drive up Apple's costs. That could pressure the company to raise its prices at a time when it is already having trouble increasing its sales of iPhones and iPads.

"They are trying to make the case that they really do have a lot of folks working in the U.S.," said technology industry analyst Rob Enderle. "So if you want to pick on somebody, you might want to pick on somebody else because they won't be a good example."

Cook isn't the only CEO who has been trying to highlight his company's hiring and expansion plans in the U.S.

Trump has attacked many companies, frequently on Twitter, for moving jobs out of the U.S. and lavishly praised those who have announced major hiring initiatives. As a result, many companies, including Exxon Mobil, Intel, Charter Communications and Ford Motor, have unveiled big hiring plans, though in many cases they were already in the works before the presidential campaign.

"There is a lot of political pressure to create jobs in the United States," Diane Swonk, CEO of DS Economics, said. Chief executives "do not want to show up in a tweet."

APPLE IN THE STATES

Since 2014, Apple has issued a series of reports intended to underscore its contributions to U.S. jobs and economic growth. Its first report came after years of complaints about labor practices and suicides at Foxconn, one of the company's major contractors in China, drew more attention to Apple's reliance on overseas factories. Apple also issues a separate "supplier responsibility" report reviewing the labor conditions in those facilities.

The Wednesday report on U.S. jobs is its fourth update, but the first to include a state-by-state breakdown of Apple employees.

Unsurprisingly, the numbers show its highest concentration of workers (36,786) is located in California, home to the company's Silicon Valley headquarters and 53 stores. Apple's second biggest employment center is in Texas (8,407 jobs), where it has a corporate campus and 18 stores. Its smallest pockets of employment are in North Dakota (four jobs), Vermont (six) and Wyoming (seven).

Apple's decision to provide detailed information about the locations of its U.S. employees could help the company win support from lawmakers eager to protect jobs in their states, Enderle said. "It gives senators something to push back with, recognizing that Apple is a real risky company to target anyway because its products are so popular with people."

Besides showing how many of its full-time and part-time employees work in each state, Apple also lists where its 9,000 U.S. suppliers are located. The company says it spent more than \$50 billion at its U.S. suppliers last year, helping them employ a total of 450,000 workers.

APP ECONOMY

The company also cited a study by the Progressive Policy Institute that attributes 1.5 million U.S. jobs to Apple's iPhone "ecosystem." That figure not only includes programmers that work on the apps, but also supporting staff and employees working everywhere from banks to restaurants that have jobs because of the spending generated by apps.

Such "spillover" effects are widely recognized, although economists sometimes spar over their magnitude. But for a company to claim credit for all or most of the jobs in a particular industry is a stretch, Swonk said. The vast majority of app developers, for example, also produce apps for Android phones from Samsung and other manufacturers.

The Public Policy Institute only found 1.7 million jobs in the entire "app economy" — and 1.35 million of those were associated with Android apps. Most of those overlap with the jobs linked to Apple.

Rugaber reported from Washington.

Asian lending bank sees no need to compete with China's AIIB

By **ELAINE KURTENBACH, Associated Press**

YOKOHAMA, Japan (AP) — The massive needs for spending on infrastructure and support for poverty alleviation mean the Asian Development Bank can work with, not compete against China's new infrastructure lender, ADB President Takehiko Nakao said Thursday.

Speaking as the ADB began its annual meeting Thursday in Yokohama, Japan, Nakao told reporters he hopes for more cooperation with the Beijing-backed Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank.

"We can complement each other," Nakao said. "The financing needs are so large so we don't need to regard the AIIB as a kind of a rival in that regard. We can cooperate," he said, noting that the two lenders have already agreed on three co-financing projects.

The ADB has been led by Japan and the U.S. since its founding in 1966, and China joined in 1986. Japan and the U.S. have not joined the AIIB, and some critics question China's motives, concerned it may use its financial heft to further its geopolitical influence without enough regard for the benefit or financial health of countries that may borrow from it.

Nakao said it was important for the projects supported by AIIB to be economically sound.

As a developing country, China still borrows from the regional lender, though these days much of that financing goes to mitigating the impacts of climate change, Nakao said.

The ADB has worked for a half-century to fight poverty and support the Asia-Pacific region's ascent as a global center of growth, but poverty remains a daunting problem for such lenders. The more than 5,500 bankers and other leaders gathered in Yokohama are assessing how they can support growth as income inequality grows in both rich and poor countries.

In the early days, the Manila, Philippines-based ADB leadership sought a role as a "family doctor" in supporting its members, who now number 67, mostly in the farm sector.

These days the bank is more focused on lending for a wide range of projects, promoting good policies and supporting social sector projects, including clinics and schools — in addition to infrastructure such as bridges and roads.

The ADB, which commits about 70 percent of its spending to backing infrastructure development, estimates more than \$26 trillion will be needed by 2030 for such projects. In 2016, it issued loans totaling \$31.7 billion, up 18 percent from the year before.

Among many other projects, the ADB over the years has financed maternity clinics in Bangladesh,