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FOR SALE

MARCY MWM900 Home Gym for sale. Asking \$100. Contact Brian at 397-7180.

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

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



Friday, June 9

Senior Menu: Hot turkey sandwich, macaroni salad, Mandarin orange dessert, peanut butter cookie.

Legion: at Warner for 2 games, 6 p.m.

U12: hosts Clark for 1 game, 7 p.m., Nelson Field

U10: hosts Clark for 1 game, 6 p.m., Nelson Field

10

Groton School: ACT Test in Aberdeen

Jr. Legion: at Northville Tourney

11

St. John's Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at 9 a.m.

United Methodist Church: Conde worship, 9 a.m.; coffee fellowship time, 10 a.m., Groton worship, 11 a.m.

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

First Presbyterian: Bible Study at 9 a.m., Worship at 10 a.m.

Jr. Legion: at Northville Tourney

12

Senior Menu: Swiss steak, mashed potatoes, cauliflower, apricots, whole wheat bread.

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

Groton School: School board meeting, 7 p.m.

T-Ball: Black team practice at 6 p.m., Gold team at Doland, 5 p.m.

Legion: hosts Mellette for 2 games, 6 p.m.

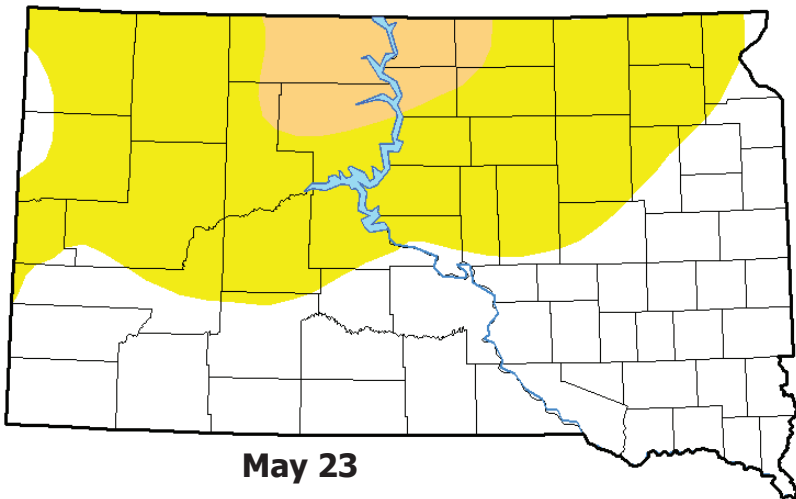
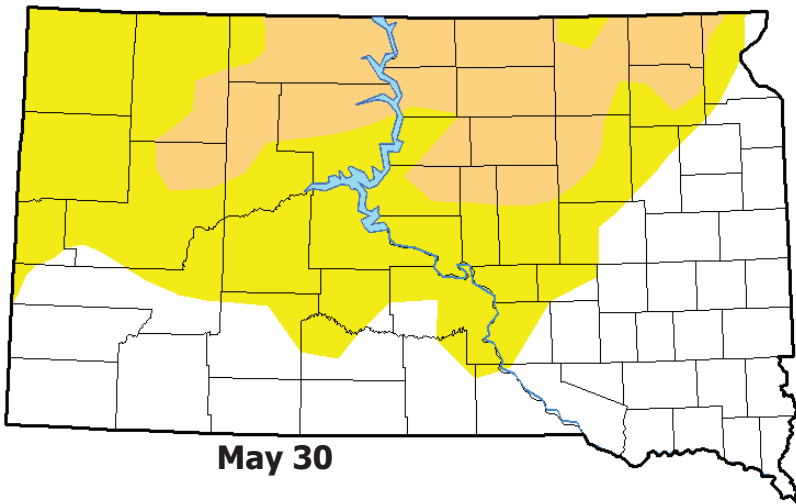
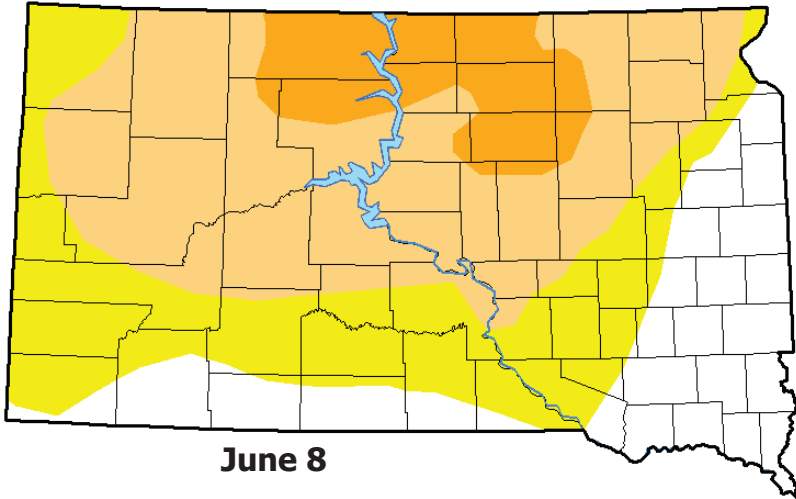
Jr. Teener: at Clark for 2 games, 6 p.m.

U8 Red: at Doland for 2 games, 6 p.m.

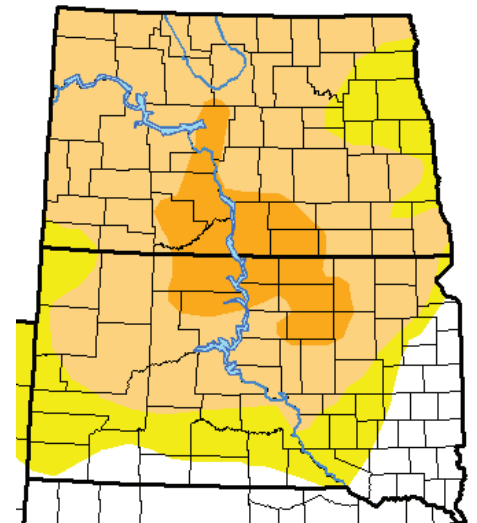
Softball: Mellette in Groton (U10 at 6 p.m., U12/14 DH at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m.)

Olive Grove: Kid's lessons, 9:30 a.m.-10:15 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Drought Monitor



The lack of precipitation combined with near record temperatures and high winds has created very dry growing conditions across the Dakotas, with little to no hay production expected. The U.S. Department of Agriculture rates more than half of the top soil in these two states as short to very short. Moderate drought (D1) was expanded so that it now covers the majority of North Dakota as well as northern South Dakota, and severe drought (D2) was introduced.



Gov. Dugaard Activates State Drought Task Force

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Dennis Dugaard Thursday activated the state Drought Task Force to monitor drought conditions across South Dakota. The task force also held its first meeting today in Pierre.

The latest U.S. Drought Monitor indicates that abnormally dry conditions can be found in western, south central and eastern parts of South Dakota. Moderate and severe drought conditions are found in central, north central and western South Dakota as well as in the extreme northeast part of the state. There are still areas of the state not considered to be in a drought.

“The recent hot, dry weather has increased drought conditions quickly in parts of South Dakota,” says Gov. Dugaard. “The Drought Task Force gives us a way to share information so we can all appropriately respond. We want to be ready in case drought conditions persist.”

Task Force members will coordinate the exchange of drought information among government agencies as well as agriculture, fire and water-supply organizations. Officials say the exchange of information will allow the task force to better monitor the development and seriousness of the drought. The task force also will evaluate the impact of drought on economic sectors of the state.

State government agencies represented on the Drought Task Force include the: Governor’s Office, Department of Agriculture, Department of Public Safety, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Game, Fish and Parks, South Dakota National Guard and Bureau of Information and Telecommunications.

Because of the dry conditions, the public is asked to be careful with open burns and other activities that could start fires.

SDSU
Extension



ANNIE’S PROJECT
EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

**Management Education for
Today’s Farm and Ranch Women**

Aberdeen

June 19, 26

July 3, 10, 17, and 24

5:30 pm - 8:45 pm

SDSU Extension Aberdeen Regional Center
13 2nd Ave SE

**Register by:
June 17, 2017
at**

www.iGrow.org/events

Registration: \$150 per person

If interested contact:

Shannon Sand

SDSU Extension Livestock
Business Management Field
Specialist

605-626-2870

shannon.sand@sdstate.edu

South Dakota State University, South Dakota counties, and USDA cooperating. South Dakota State University adheres to AA/EEO guidelines in offering educational programs and services.

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The children were making good use of the new playground equipment that has been installed at the baseball complex. The only things missing yet are the swings and they should be up soon.



There are fewer potholes around town as the city crew filled many of them in on Wednesday. Pictured are Branden Abeln, Aaron Severson and Paul Kosel. (Photo by Julianna Kosel)



John is "tickled pink" about work on SD37

The curb and gutter was being removed on the SD37 project on Friday. According to John Shoemaker of Webster Scale, Inc., at the weekly construction meeting, he said, "I'm tickled pink about the work on 37." Work on Highway 37 is well ahead of schedule. Meanwhile work on US12 is still a little behind schedule.

The SD D.O.T. as given Webster Scale permission to not have a block-out on SD37 when it closes. It would have meant that portions of the area would have to be blocked out, poured and wait to be cured. With an agreement from the Mayor Scott Hanlon, traffic will be rerouted to First Street and then over on 11th Avenue to allow access to Ken's and the Red Horse. This should only be about a two-week detour.

Next week, traffic on US12 will be altered as the current traffic pattern will shift from the south side of US12 to the north side of US12. In addition, it is expected that the construction of the south side of US12 will go much faster as there are no utility or other issues to contend with. Once that happens, access to SD37 from US12 to 12th Avenue will be closed off. Access to Ken's and the mall will have to be done from First Street.



Whoever was the lucky winner of the old playground equipment should come and get it. It is taking up about five valuable parking spaces in the ball park parking lot. There parking lot was overflowing last night with action on all three fields.

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GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting June 12, 2017 – 7:00 PM – GHS Conference Room

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

1. Executive session pursuant SDCL 1-25-2(1) for personnel and SDCL 1-25-2(4) for negotiations.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of minutes of May 8, 2017 school board meeting May 31, 2017 special school board meeting and June 1, 2017 special school board meeting.

2. Approval of North Central Special Education Co-Op (NCSEC) agenda items...as fiscal agent.

3. Approval of May 2017 Financial Report, Agency Accounts, and Investments.

4. Approval of May 2017 School Transportation Report.

5. Approval of May 2017 School Lunch Report

6. Approval of May District bills for payment.

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.

2. School Board Committee Reports:

a. Building, Grounds, & Transportation: Clint Fjelstad, Merle Harder, Marty Weismantel

b. Personnel, Policy, & Curriculum: Deb Gengerke, Grant Rix

c. Negotiations: Kelly Kjelden, Steve Smith

3. Update on Groton Area Elementary Renovations and Addition.

4. Consider Change Orders on Groton Area Elementary Renovations and Addition:

a. CCO#001: Door Hardware Changes

b. CCO#002: Room 082 SE Door Clarification

c. CCO#001: ProPress Copper Fittings

d. CCO#001: Soil Correction to Asphalt Pavement

5. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Curriculum Review Presentation – Social Science.

2. Approve 2017-2018 GTA Negotiated Agreement and issue amended certified staff contracts and off-staff coaching agreements.

3. Approve 2017-2018 Administrative Negotiated Agreement and issue amended administrative contracts.

4. Approve resignation from Greg Kjellsen, HS Math Teacher/Girls Golf Coach/JH Football Coach.

5. Approve resignation from Darcey Leshner, Paraprofessional.

6. Approve hiring Carrie Weisenberger, Elementary Special Education Teacher for 2017-18 with salary to be published in July.

7. Approve hiring Dustin Vogel, Elementary Special Education Teacher for 2017-18 with salary to be published in July.

8. Approve hiring Kiersten Sombke, MS/HS Principal for 2017-2018 with salary to be published in July.

9. Approve hiring Sandi Sippel and Aubray Harry as co-football cheer advisors for 2017-18.

10. Approve open enrollment #18-07 (Grade 9) from Langford Area School District.

11. Authorize request of 2017-2018 energy quotes (fuel/oil/diesel/gas) with due date of 4:00 PM on June 26.

12. Authorize request of 2017-2018 newspaper specifications and quote form with due date of 4:00 PM on June 26.

13. Authorize Business Manager to publish 2017-2018 Groton Area School District Budget with 8:00 PM public hearing set for July 10th...organizational school board meeting.

ADJOURN

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Alex Morris was the catcher for the Groton Junior Legion team. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Baseball continues to run in the Karst family. Here is Kellie Karst pitching for the Sisseton Junior Legion Team. Kellie is the granddaughter of Paul Karst and the daughter of Dan Karst. Paul was a former coach in Groton. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Darrien Shabazz steals third on this play for the Groton Junior Legion team. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Austin Jones was a pitcher for the Groton Junior Legion's game with Sisseton on Thursday in Groton. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Anthony Schinkel makes a play in left field. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Hunter Schaller makes a play in center field. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Activities association budget has \$300,000 hole

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. Newspaper Association

PIERRE - The South Dakota High School Activities Association Board of Directors tabled three budgetary items Thursday as it struggles to fill a \$300,000 hole in its next budget.

The missing money is likely headed for the SDHSAA Foundation. Corporate partners who donate to the association have said that they want their donations to build the financial strength of the foundation rather than pay day-to-day expenses of the association.

In the past, donations from corporate sponsors have helped the association pay the expenses of its 181 member schools including dues, postage, subscription fees, catastrophic insurance and liability insurance. At its March meeting, the S.D. School Superintendents Association asked the SDHSAA board to use corporate contributions to pay for ongoing expenses rather than allowing the money to go to the foundation.

At its meeting Thursday, the board tabled action on approving the amended corporate contracts. The motion to table the item was made by Brian Maher of Sioux Falls.

"This has been an item that's weighed on the minds of member schools," Maher said, who suggested that new executive director Daniel Swartos attend the July meeting of the state's school superintendents.

Board member Roger Bordeaux of Tiospa Zina Tribal School said it was dangerous to put off making a decision about what to do with the corporate funds.

"Eventually we're going to lose corporate partners if we keep delaying this from happening," said Bordeaux, who added that it was a mistake to use one-time funds for ongoing expenses.

SDHSAA Executive Director Wayne Carney said he would be "terribly disappointed if this passes."

Carney said school districts that have their own foundations know that one-time money is better off in a foundation. "I just don't understand why that doesn't carry over to the association," Carney said.

The vote to table action on the contracts passed 5-3 with dissenting votes from Bordeaux, Dave Planteen of Langford and Sandy Klatt of Brandon Valley.

The next item to be tabled would have provided language that delineates the separation of the association and foundation, giving the ability to distribute foundation funds to the foundation board of directors and allowing donations to be made directly to the foundation rather than funneling them through the association.

Klatt wasn't on board with that change, saying that the SDHSAA board has no idea what sort of decisions future foundation boards would make about how to spend the money. She said it was up to the association board to make sure that the needs of member schools were being met by the foundation's spending.

"We're here to represent the schools," Klatt said.

Board chairman Steve Morford of Spearfish noted that a committee is in the works that will try to distinguish the roles of the association and the foundation.

The item was tabled on a 5-3 vote with dissenting votes by Bordeaux, Klatt and Jason Uttermark of Aberdeen.

A discussion of ways to generate income and balance the budget was also tabled. Ideas for generating income ranged from increased ticket prices at state and sub-state events to raising the association's share of income generated by sub-state events.

Klatt said board members didn't have enough time to study the proposals, having first seen them 48 hours earlier when the agenda was published. Klatt noted that the association has \$1.4 million in a contingency fund that could be used to cover a shortfall.

"Isn't that why we have a contingency fund?" Klatt asked. "We have a budget that needs to be fixed."

The discussion was tabled on a 7-1 vote with Bordeaux dissenting.

While they tabled the three financial matters, the board did pass the first reading of the association's 2017-2018 budget.

The budget that passed its first reading doesn't include any money from corporate sponsorships and has expenses traditionally covered by the association left up to school districts.

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Much like a school district, Maher said, the association has to start its budget process and then "you have to get clear on what your revenues look like."

Klatt said all the contacts she's had with member schools indicate that they want the association to keep helping them with their expenses.

The first reading of the budget passed on a 7-1 vote with Klatt dissenting.

The SDHSAA finance committee will tackle the tabled items and report its findings to the full board.

Sweet 16 leaves a sour taste for some

By Dana Hess

For the South Dakota Newspaper Association

PIERRE - Despite some board member opposition, the state's high school activities association has approved a Sweet 16 format for Class AA and Class B basketball and volleyball.

A second reading on Thursday of proposed changes to the South Dakota High School Activities Association Athletics Handbook passed on a 6-2 vote. Board members Jason Uttermark of Aberdeen and Steve Morford of Spearfish said they voted no on the entire package of changes because they were opposed to changing to the Sweet 16 format.

An attempt to consider the Sweet 16 format separate from the entire package of changes failed on a 3-5 vote of the board.

The Sweet 16 format eliminates regional play and seeds teams for a 16-team tournament.

In AA, regular season seed points will determine the top 16 teams to qualify for postseason play. Two teams would be left out of the tournament. The No. 1 seed would host the No. 16. The eight winners would be the teams going to the state tournament.

In Class A, which already has the Sweet 16 format, and Class B, tournaments would decide the top two teams in each region. The remaining 16 teams would be seeded for games with the eight winners going to the state tournament.

At the first reading of the proposal at the SDHSAA board meeting in April, a divide was apparent between East River and West River schools with representatives of West River schools speaking against the proposal.

"I have not heard one positive comment," Morford said, about the switch to the Sweet 16 format.

Uttermark said he was voting against the proposal because of financial concerns and because "I just love those rivalries on a regional basis."

Terry Rotert, activities director of the Huron School District, an AA school, said the new format meant that at tournament time teams and their parents would have to travel once rather than three times.

As for the lost revenue, Rotert said schools are already charging higher admission prices for football playoff games. "The precedence is there," Rotert said, to charge more to make up for lost revenue.

The change will go into effect in the 2017-2018 school year.

Schools get scheduling option so football games won't interfere with rodeo

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. Newspaper Association

PIERRE - The South Dakota High School Activities Association may have found a way to keep the first football games of the year from interfering with the 4-H Rodeo finals.

Thursday, the SDHSAA Board approved a plan for school districts in Class 9 and 11B football to reschedule their first game of the season to Thursday, Aug. 17. The 4-H Finals rodeo is scheduled to be held in Fort Pierre Friday, Aug. 18, through Sunday, Aug. 20.

To accommodate the earlier date, schools would need to start their 10-day football practice schedule a day early. Board chairman Steve Morford of Spearfish stressed that the decisions about scheduling, practice days and contacting officials about the new date is a strictly local decision left up to the schools and does not involve the SDHSAA office.

The allowance to change the schedule passed on a 6-2 vote with the dissenting votes from Jim Aisenbrey of Baltic and Moe Ruesink of Sioux Valley.

"I just fear we're opening the door to something bigger," Aisenbrey said. "If we say yes to the rodeo, we have to say yes to other endeavors."

Board members expressed their belief that the accommodation would be needed for only one year and that rodeo organizers would change their schedule for next summer. The SDHSAA staff did not share that belief.

"If we make the accommodation, it will be perpetual," forecast SDHSAA Assistant Executive Director John Krogstrand.

Board member Sandy Klatt said there was time to deal with the next scheduling accommodation if and when it came before the board. In the meantime, she said, she did not want to see athletes penalized by a crowded schedule.

Postma to lead activities association board

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. Newspaper Association

PIERRE - Bud Postma of the Madison School District will take over the leadership of the South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors at its next meeting in August. Postma was elected chairman Thursday along with Jim Aisenbrey of Baltic who was elected vice chairman.

Joining them on the board will be new member Steve Moore, the athletic director at Watertown. Moore was elected to the board by a vote of member schools, 113-44 over Brookings Activities Administrator Randy Soma.

Moore takes the place of Jason Uttermark of Aberdeen who has served a five-year term on the board, one year as its chairman.

Also new at the next meeting will be Daniel Swartos who starts July 1 as the SDHSAA executive director. He replaces Wayne Carney who is retiring after 16 years at the association.

The board also approved Distinguished Service Awards for 2017-2018. The purpose of the awards is to recognize outstanding service to young people through high school activities programs. Candidates for the award are nominated by the schools with the final selection made by the SDHSAA board of directors.

In the administrator category, the awards went to Uttermark, Dani Walking Eagle of St. Francis and Galen Drapeau of Marty.

In the fine arts coaches and directors category, the awards went to Helen Mogen of Chester, Sharon Prendergast of Sisseton and Roger McCafferty of Aberdeen Central.

In the athletic coaches and directors category, those honored include cheer coach Bruce Kleinsasser of Aberdeen Central and wrestling coach Marc Murren of Sioux Falls Washington.

In the contest official category, the awards went to Kevin Brick of Brandon Valley, Kim Bartling of Sioux Falls, Jim Aberle of Lead, Terry Duffy of Brookings, Gene Struck of Montrose and Dave Dolan of Rapid City.

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Today in Weather History

June 9, 1957: Southwest of Faulkton, one of four funnel clouds finally touched down and cut an unusual path to the northeast. One home was reduced to "matchsticks and tidbits." The tornado strength was an F3.

June 9, 1968: A brief F2 tornado moved northeast from 6 miles northeast of Britton. Barns were destroyed, and trees were uprooted on three farms. Two cars were picked up and thrown into a ditch. One person in a car was hospitalized. Damage was estimated at \$150,000 to property and another \$80,000 to crops.

June 9, 1972: A steady flow of warm moist air near the surface fed storms and anchored them against the Black Hills for six to eight hours. A flash flood killed 238 people in the Rapid City area after as much as fifteen inches of rain fell over the eastern Black Hills.

1953 - A tornado hit the town of Worcester MA killing ninety persons. The northeastern states usually remain free of destructive tornadoes, however in this case a low pressure system, responsible for producing severe thunderstorms in Michigan and Ohio the previous day, brought severe weather to New Hampshire and central Massachusetts. The tornado, up to a mile in width at times, tracked 46 miles through Worcester County. It mangled steel towers built to withstand winds of 375 mph. Debris from the tornado fell in the Boston area, and adjacent Atlantic Ocea. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1966: Hurricane Alma made landfall over the eastern Florida panhandle becoming the earliest hurricane to make landfall on the United States mainland.

1972 - A cloudburst along the eastern slopes of the Black Hills of South Dakota produced as much as 14 inches of rain resulting in the Rapid City flash flood disaster. The rains, which fell in about four hours time, caused the Canyon Lake Dam to collapse. A wall of water swept through the city drowning 237 persons, and causing more than 100 million dollars property damage. (David Ludlum)




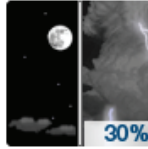



1987 - Lightning struck Tire Mountain near Denver CO, destroying two million tires out of a huge pile of six million tires. Thunderstorms spawned three tornadoes around Denver, and a man was killed at Conifer CO when strong thunderstorm winds lifted up a porch and dropped it on him. A thunderstorm near Compton MD produced two inch hail, and high winds which destroyed twenty barns and ten houses injuring five persons. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from North Carolina to the Central Gulf Coast Region. Hail in North Carolina caused more than five million dollars damage to property, and more than sixty million dollars damage to crops. Hail three and a half inches in diameter was reported at New Bern NC. Thunderstorms in the Central High Plains produced eighteen inches of hail at Fountain CO. The temperature at Del Rio TX soared to an all-time record high of 112 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Severe weather abated for a date, however, showers and thunderstorms continued to drench the eastern U.S. with torrential rains. Milton, FL, was deluged with 15.47 inches in 24 hours. Record heat and prolonged drought in south central Texas left salt deposits on power lines and insulators near the coast, and when nighttime dew caused arcing, the city of Brownsville was plunged into darkness. (The National Weather Summary)

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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
						
Sunny then Sunny and Breezy	Partly Cloudy and Breezy then Mostly Clear	Hot	Mostly Clear then Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Partly Cloudy	Hot
High: 96 °F	Low: 69 °F	High: 90 °F	Low: 59 °F	High: 84 °F	Low: 61 °F	High: 90 °F

HOT, Dry and Breezy Today

Highs 90 to 100 Degrees



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD



Updated: 6/9/2017 5:04 AM Central

Published on: 06/09/2017 at 5:08AM

Increasing southerly winds will bring much above normal temperatures into the region today. High temperatures will climb into the lower 90s to 100 degrees.

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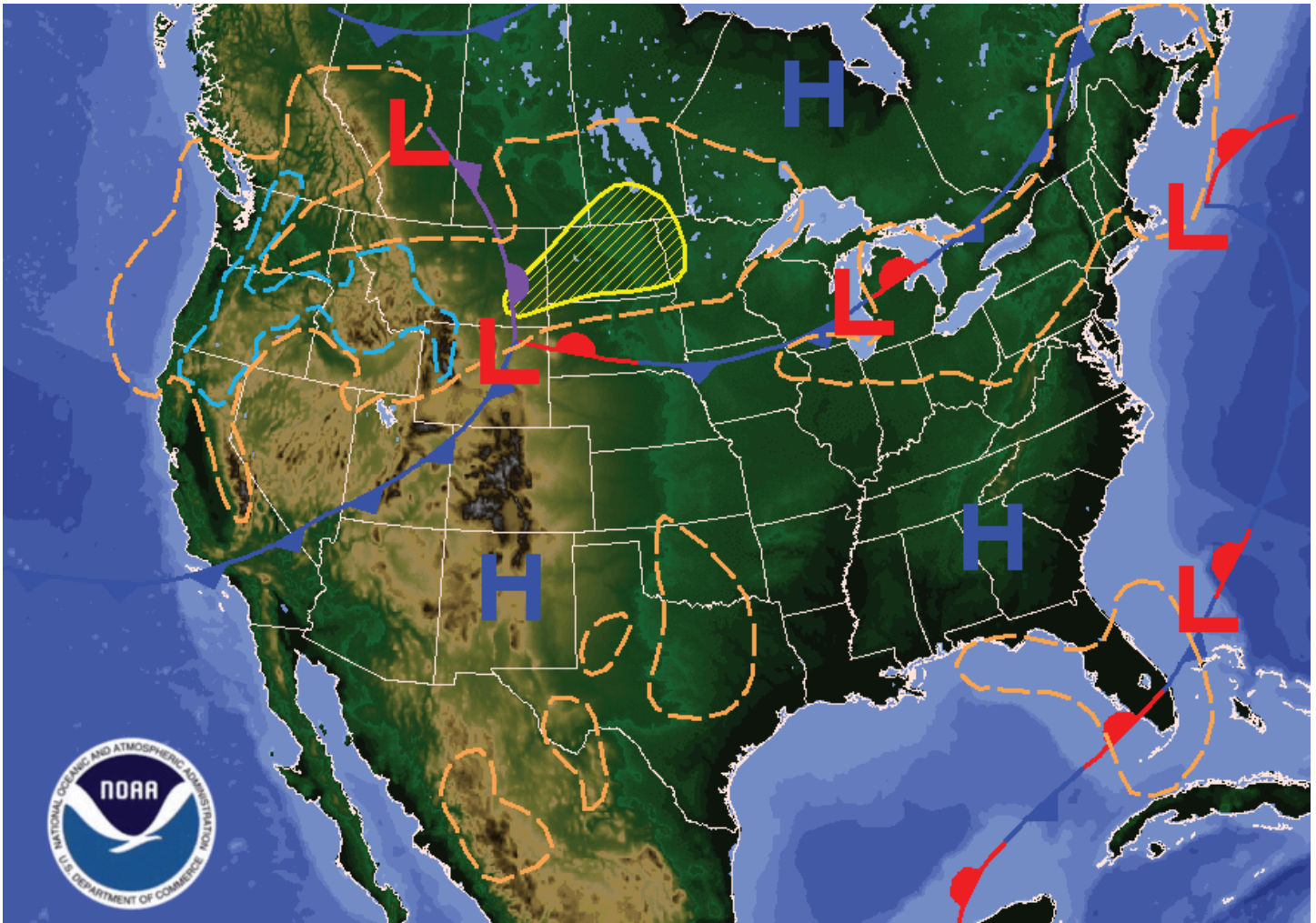
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 85.1 F at 5:25 PM
Heat Index: 84.0 at 3:34 PM
Low Outside Temp: 53.9 F at 4:39 AM
High Gust: 14.0 Mph at 1:13 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 100° in 1933
Record Low: 33° in 1915
Average High: 75°F
Average Low: 52°F
Average Precip in June: 1.05
Precip to date in June: 0.08
Average Precip to date: 8.19
Precip Year to Date: 3.27
Sunset Tonight: 9:21 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:45 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, Jun 09, 2017, issued 4:26 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain
Rain and T'Storms
Rain and Snow
Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)
Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)
Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)
Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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FROM TRIAL TO TRIUMPH

Lord Kelvin is recognized as one of the greatest Scottish engineers, mathematicians and physicists of his day. He had a profound influence on the scientific thought of his generation.

On one occasion, while he was conducting an experiment with his students, it turned into a disaster. Looking at each of them he said, "Gentlemen, when you are face to face with a difficulty, you are up against a discovery."

This is not only true in learning, it is true in living. When David was face to face with a major difficulty, he made a discovery that lasted throughout his entire life. Faced with a dilemma he cried to God, "Give me relief from my distress, be merciful to me and hear my prayer, O God."

If it had not been for the pain he experienced, we would not have his psalms of praise. If he had not been tested and tried through his trials, we would not understand the triumphs he enjoyed. If he had not struggled to survive, we would not understand the strength he received from God.

Joseph began his path to a palace from a prison. He became the prime minister of Egypt after he served a sentence as a prisoner. Can anyone forget the boils of Job? Ultimately, they became a blessing to him.

Whatever God brings into our lives is not to destroy or defeat us, but to develop us and our faith and to enable us to discover His goodness and grace.

Prayer: Father, we thank You for working in us and through us to develop us into Your likeness. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 4:1 Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

News from the Associated Press

Drought Monitor: Parched conditions expand across Dakotas

By **JAMES NORD, Associated Press**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The U.S. Drought Monitor shows that most of the Dakotas are experiencing drought conditions that experts say are harming farmers and cattle producers.

About 87 percent of North Dakota is in drought, while just more than half of South Dakota is experiencing drought conditions, according to updated monitoring information released Thursday. The parched conditions have expanded and deteriorated compared to last week, and roughly 700,000 people across both states are living in drought areas.

Feed shortages in the South Dakota caused by poor grass growth are prompting some livestock producers to sell their cattle, according to Laura Edwards, the state climatologist at the South Dakota State University Extension, which does outreach to farmers and ranchers.

There have also been significant winter wheat losses in central South Dakota, she said, adding that she doesn't anticipate conditions will improve in the near term.

"The drought's pretty bad, I'd say, especially in the agricultural sector, which is often where we see the first impacts," Edwards said.

Selling calves now that would get a good price this fall means producers will likely take a hit on the animals' value, said Silvia Christen, executive director of the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association. She said selling cows now means they won't be there to produce calves in the spring, affecting income for next year.

"Our producers, our families out there on these ranches are at the mercy of the weather," Christen said. "We've seen that over the last few years. But I think we can't discount the toll that this kind of a drought takes on our agriculture community and what it's going to do to a lot of our neighbors and friends here across the state this year, if this drought doesn't break."

Terry Beastrom, who farms mostly in Stanley county in South Dakota, said he's leaning toward destroying nearly all of his wheat and hopes to turn most of it into cattle feed. He said he's just hoping to break even this year.

In North Dakota, drought conditions have the potential to cause future feed shortages, said Scott Ressler, environmental services director for the North Dakota Stockmen's Association, which represents the cattle industry.

Producers are selling older cattle because, without precipitation, some pastures aren't going to be able to support as many animals as they normally do, he said.

"Pray for rain," Ressler said.

PGA Tour Champions adds tournament in South Dakota

The PGA Tour Champions is bringing a tournament to South Dakota next year. The Sanford International will be the first PGA Tour-sanctioned tournament in South Dakota in 17 years.

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The PGA Tour Champions is bringing a tournament to South Dakota next year. The Sanford International will be the first PGA Tour-sanctioned tournament in South Dakota in 17 years. Sanford Health, which has headquarters in the Dakotas, signed a five-year agreement as the title sponsor through 2022.

The tournament will be played Sept. 21-23 in 2018 at Minnehaha Country Club, offering \$1.8 million in prize money. Two-time U.S. Open champion Andy North is serving as tournament host, while Jack Nicklaus will be the tournament ambassador.

The Sanford International is the fifth new tournament added to the PGA Tour Champions in the last two years.

The previous PGA Tour-sanctioned event in the area was the Dakota Dunes Open on what is now the

Web.com Tour. It was played from 1990 through 2001.

Police: 10-year-old girl found in 'deplorable' conditions

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls police have removed a 10-year-old girl from a house with no electricity or running water and arrested her parents.

Authorities searched the home Wednesday after receiving a tip about a dead animal. Police spokesman Sam Clemens says garbage was piled outside of the house, and maggots lined the driveway.

Inside the house police found drugs and animal feces.

The Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2raIfzv>) reports three men in the house came outside. Police found a woman hiding under a bed. Clemens says she told officers she was the only one in the house, but officers found the 10-year-old girl hiding behind a dresser.

The girls' parents were arrested on suspicion of multiple charges, including abuse and neglect.

The girl did not need medical attention and was taken into protective custody.

Inmates help Yankton's Heartland Humane Society train dogs

By REILLY BIEL, Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — A truly beneficial partnership is one in which both parties receive something from the other.

That kind of partnership exists between Yankton's Heartland Humane Society (HHS) and the Federal Prison Camp (FPC), the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan (<http://bit.ly/2rCVfRS>) reported.

In January, HHS created the Federal Inmate Dog Obedience (FIDO) program, which allows inmates at the FPC to train dogs that are available for adoption.

The FPC has been working with HHS for several years through its community service program, in which inmates work at various businesses in the Yankton community. At HHS, they help feed the animals and clean the facility and crates in which the animals are kept.

According to HHS Director Kerry Hacecky, the kind of partnership that exists through FIDO has been something HHS has wanted to do for a long time.

"Every year when a new warden came to town, I would pose the question, 'What would it be like to put the dogs on the campus?'" she said. "This year, we finally have a warden who was willing to listen. There were also some (FPC) employees who really wanted to see this happen."

Through FIDO, high-energy dogs that come to HHS are housed at the FPC with 2-3 inmates for an eight-week period. During this time, the inmates teach the dogs basic obedience commands like "sit," "stay" and "down." They also teach the dogs house and door manners, as well as how to behave on a leash.

The program was specifically made for dogs that wouldn't find homes as easily as others.

"This is a really good fit for high-energy dogs that can't find foster homes and are hard to kennel," Hacecky said. "They don't sell themselves when they're jumping up and down in a kennel barking. They are the 1- to 3-year-old dogs that got dumped because they didn't get trained. It's no fault of theirs. They're not dogs that have aggressive tendencies; they just need to learn basic manners."

HHS FIDO coordinator Janette Kaddatz views the progress the dogs have made while in the inmates' care.

"We give them guidelines to follow and show them how we want them to do it," she said.

If the dog learns its commands before the end of the program, the inmates teach them additional tricks, she added.

So far, the program has served nine dogs, five of which have been adopted and one that is currently available for adoption.

It's been fun to track which homes the dogs have gone to, Hacecky said. One dog lives with a retired couple and spends most of its days riding alongside the husband as he checks his crops. Another lives with a woman who takes the dog with her when she reads books to children at the library. Two live with families and another one regularly goes on runs with its owner.

The inmates also help with the adoptions, Kaddatz said.

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"Every time a dog is adopted, they do a write-up of the dog explaining what they've done with them, how they've taught them and their observations," she said. "They're really dedicated to it."

The inmates who take part in the program are part of the FPC's educational program. Materials for the program, such as a dog training learning manual and supplies to care for the dogs, are provided by HHS.

Though no inmates were available to speak to the Press & Dakotan about their experience with the program, Hacecky said she has received positive feedback.

"We're hearing good things from the people that work there, that they enjoy having the dogs there and they like to see the inmates working with them," she said.

Kaddatz recalled how one inmate — whom she described as a "perfectionist" — was disappointed that his dog preferred interacting with her and the other people present rather than performing. Through her eyes, however, the dog did "amazing."

"(The inmates) really take pride in what they're doing, and it's working towards educational credits for them," she said.

Both the trainers and the trainees learn a lot during this time, she added.

"(The inmates) are watching videos, reading literature and coming to us asking if they can implement this, how can they do this and things like that," she said.

The program is slowly growing, with two dogs taking part in the first eight-week program. The third round of the program that recently started has four dogs.

Dogs can graduate from the program if they show about 80 percent consistency doing their commands.

Hacecky hopes to see the program grow not only in the number of dogs, but also in the kind of training provided.

One such way is to have dogs trained as therapy dogs for people with both physical and mental illnesses.

"There's a need in this area for legitimate therapy dogs that have gone through training to be a service animal for someone with special needs or a health concern," she said. "We get requests from people all the time about where they can get their dog therapy-trained, and there's no outlet close to Yankton. If we could bring 3-4 dogs into the community every year that are therapy trained, that'd be an asset."

Dogs that enter the program are treated like any other animals under HHS's care. They are spayed/neutered, microchipped and fully vetted with a health exam and vaccinations.

"Heartland is always looking for ways we can better serve the community," Hacecky said. "The shelter isn't just a place to bring your unwanted pet. We're trying to do things outside of the normal shelter atmosphere."

Information from: Yankton Press and Dakotan, <http://www.yankton.net/>

Aberdeen taxidermist wins 'Best in World' award

By OLIVIA JOHNSON, Aberdeen News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Though the animals they work on are still and lifeless, members of the taxidermy community are very much the opposite.

Aberdeen-native Sam Cahoy won "Best in World" in the game bird category with a mount of a sandhill crane at the annual Taxidermy World Championships in Peoria, Ill. in May, the Aberdeen News (<http://bit.ly/2rCIeYC>) reported.

Cahoy owns Showpiece Taxidermy in Aberdeen and said his love for hunting and fishing growing up pushed him to start his business in 2007.

In 2009, two years after opening, Cahoy began competing in state taxidermy competitions.

"I've been competing every year ever since," he said. "It's one of the best ways to improve your skills."

At competitions, Cahoy said taxidermists enter their mounts to be judged, given a score and critiqued by experienced peers who tell competitors how to improve their submissions.

"I've competed with pretty much everything," he said of his submissions, which he feels have greatly improved since he began.

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Cahoy said he's done a life-size African lion, a buffalo, countless white-tailed deer and various types of game birds for clients.

"I've always been interested in the taxidermy aspect," he said. "I just kept doing it."

Cahoy taught himself the process of taxidermy — a complex procedure involving painting, gluing, cleaning fur or feathers and an artistic eye.

He said an average duck mount — his most popular request — takes eight to 10 hours to complete. White-tailed deer and pheasants are also popular mounts, he said. His busiest time of the year is in late October.

When creating a bird mount, Cahoy said he starts by carefully skinning the frozen animal and cleans the feathers of fat deposits and blood. He then takes a mold of the head, shapes it and drills holes to insert lifelike eyes. After painting the head, he attaches the feathers to a styrofoam body and fills the bird's legs with a liquid plastic material that hardens when dry. Cahoy said the last steps are to fluff the feathers and wire on the legs and wings.

Larry Blomquist, the owner and publisher of Breakthrough Magazine, a taxidermy publication, has run the Taxidermy World Championships for more than 20 years with his wife, Kathy.

This year's world championship featured 156 competitors from 13 countries, including Finland, China, Austria and New Zealand, he said.

In past years, Larry Blomquist said not all 16 first-place world titles were given out to submissions because they sometimes weren't good enough.

"Your piece has to be exceptional to win a first-place ribbon," he said, adding that this year was the first year that all 16 world titles were awarded.

Many of the submissions included exotic reptiles and birds from different parts of the world, as well as recreations of animals that cannot legally be hunted, Blomquist said.

Roger Heintzman, also a full-time local taxidermist in Aberdeen, has been in the business since 1987 after attending a taxidermy school in Minneapolis.

"I've competed in a lot of state competitions," he said. "It's a very good learning tool."

Heintzman, who owns Roger's Taxidermy, said he mostly does mounts of international animals, like lions, leopards or bears.

"It's nice to win the awards," Cahoy said. "But the main objective is to improve."

Information from: Aberdeen American News, <http://www.aberdeennews.com>

Lake Lorraine development springs to life

By JEREMY J FUGLEBERG, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Steve Van Buskirk is watching workers prep a flat dirt pad for paving. Here is the future parking lot for Hobby Lobby, an anchor store in the Lake Lorraine development.

"This is exciting stuff," he told the Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2rDcbrF>).

That isn't an understatement. For Van Buskirk, director of land development for Van Buskirk companies, Friessen Development and all the others involved in the birth of the large Sioux Falls mixed-use development, this isn't just a parking lot. It's a sign that a lot of hard work is paying off.

And it's years in the making. It might seem like a long time since the Van Buskirks and Cindy Monnin and Patty Vognild of Friessen Development overlooked the tree-ringed, gravel pit turned lake and saw the future: a 130-acre mixed use development that would transform Sioux Falls west of Interstate 29 between 26th and 41st streets, with businesses, hotels, offices, homes and recreation opportunities.

But after three years, the Lake Lorraine development is starting to take shape. Some of its tenants, including the Cars For Sale headquarters, are built and busy.

On the development's east side, a string of large stores is a beehive of activity, with workers installing heating and cooling systems and shaping their exteriors. Hobby Lobby, Marshalls, Ross Dress for Less, HomeGoods, Carters/OshKosh and DSW.

The stores should open in late summer, Van Buskirk says.

Just south of the large stores, just-released architectural renderings reveal a future of walkable stores, lake-side restaurants and a central plaza. Van Buskirk points to the future path of the road through the south end of the Shoppes at Lake Lorraine, and the site of an Aloft Hotel.

"We're just on the edge," Van Buskirk said. "It's going to be an exciting three months ahead of us."

On the development's south side, the open Grand Living at Lake Lorraine retirement community dominates the shoreline. But the first set of 54 townhomes are rising on the slope of the lake's southwest corner.

The first set, 17 townhomes, are nearing completion and should be done in August. The townhome pricing will vary depending on what amenities buyers want and their placement (read, views of the lake), but their estimated prices run from \$443,000 to \$751,000.

The walking and biking path will ring the lake, connecting to a sandy beach and a gazebo, making Lake Lorraine an anchor of the west side of the Sioux Falls bike trail system, a key component for the Friessens, said Van Buskirk.

"One of their objectives right from the get-go was to make this a community asset," he said. "For the west-side people, this is going to be awesome."

On the development's west side, The WestLake office building is getting its roof now, with large windows overlooking the lake, and should be finished next month. Meanwhile, leasing is nearly complete on several strips of retail space on Marion Road. A number of businesses, including the SandBar and Grill, are hopping with customers.

"The ball is rolling," said Van Buskirk, with a smile. "It's fun to see it moving."

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

Podcast finds 'lost' voice for Native Americans

By **PATRICK ANDERSON**, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Gabriel Night Shield sees the same repeating stereotypes of Native Americans. "It's one of the two: the drunk living in the streets," Night Shield told the Argus Leader (<http://argusnews/2qP0iLv>). "Or the guy that's living in the teepees."

What he doesn't see is his story. The Sioux Falls resident, who grew up in Rosebud, is a musician, a businessman and father. Millions of other Native Americans lead similar lives, but don't see it reflected in the media, Night Shield said.

He's taking matters into his own hands, releasing a new podcast next month to focus on the lives of Native Americans in urban settings.

The "Urban Indianz" podcast will premiere June 12 with three episodes on iTunes, SoundCloud and other outlets.

Night Shield, who lived in Boston and Seattle before settling in Sioux Falls 17 years ago, envisions the podcast as one with a national audience. He and his two co-hosts, Levi Hansen and Char Green-Maximo, will tackle one topic in each episode, drawing from their own lives for inspiration.

Moving between reservations and large cities can be overwhelming for Native Americans, Night Shield said. Life away from home can be isolating, and that's often what causes people to move back and live closer to their family.

He hopes to provide them and other listeners with a new perspective on current events, and talk about what it's like to work and raise a family in a city away from the reservation.

"I feel like that voice is lost," Night Shield said.

Each episode will also have a segment on art and end with Native American hip hop. Night Shield is a music producer and locally-based rapper who has won multiple national awards.

The show will be produced by the Sioux Empire Podcast Network, with a new episode every two weeks.

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

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Tribe that led pipeline fight to embrace renewable energy
BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The American Indian tribe that led opposition to the Dakota Access oil pipeline says it hopes to move away from reliance on fossil fuels.

Standing Rock Sioux Chairman Dave Archambault says the tribe wants to transition to renewable energy, such as wind and solar energy. He made the statement Thursday while accepting an award, but didn't announce any specific projects.

The Wallace Global Fund, which supports social movements through investments and grants, awarded the tribes its inaugural Henry A. Wallace Award. It's named for President Franklin D. Roosevelt's vice president.

The award comes with a \$250,000 prize, and the Wallace Global Fund also pledged to invest up to \$1 million in renewable energy projects led by the tribe.

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

American News, Aberdeen, June 6

With end of school year, we salute the best of our teachers

For some teachers, school is out forever.

Each year, lots of teachers retire in South Dakota and nationwide. Some of our best and brightest.

Not every teacher was the greatest. A few outstanding ones sprinkled with some really good ones. Then there are the good-average-OK ones with a few bad ones souring the profession.

Your career choice does not give you any free passes. You have to earn your stripes, and then work hard to stay ahead of the pack to be in those top tiers.

Teachers are no different. There are bad, good and great ones. The title of teacher does not magically make you a great person for children, or adults, to be around.

To the best of you teachers who are putting away your school supplies for the last time, thank you for your service, dedication and what you did your students, colleagues and schools. And thank you to the many great teachers who have gone before you and to those who remain in the classrooms.

You will never know how many lives you changed for the better.

But what superior riches await those extraordinary teachers when one of their extraordinary students returns with the humble words "you were the one person who made a big difference in my life."

Among the lowest paid in the nation or not, that is quite the bonus.

So many successful people in this world can trace a life-changing year to one of their special teachers. Most teachers spend hours a day with our children; most parents only a few.

The best of our teachers embraces us with their patience, energy, communication skills and the examples they set. At times, they make us feel like the only one in the room in a classroom of 25.

These are the teachers who make our children happy to go to school and sad to leave it.

The ones who arrive early and leave late. The ones who kids, parents and principals can't brag enough about. The ones who turn around when meeting a student in need after a long day and a longing to get home to spend time with their own families.

These are the teachers who administrators hold up as examples to first-year teachers of what it means to be a teacher.

So to the ones who went the extra mile and then some, thank you.

Teachers such as Peggy Abeln, who has just retired after a 44-year career. She was one of the founding teachers at First Baptist Christian School in 1982, which, through the course of years and mergers, became Aberdeen Christian School.

For the past 35 years, Abeln has worked at Aberdeen Christian. She is reluctantly retiring.

"The heart is willing, the body is shot," Abeln said of health concerns which forced her hand.

And thank you to the teachers who are still going the extra mile.

Teachers such as Patty Stoner of Gettysburg, who started teaching 60 years ago. At 82, she's not ready

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to quit anytime soon.

May 26 was declared Patricia M. Stoner Day in South Dakota by Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

Once teaching colleagues in Gettysburg, Stoner and Abeln have taught generations of families, influenced hundreds of students in this area, and put a daily dose of passion in their backpacks.

Two teachers, 104 years of experience and another proud moment for Northern State, where both learned how to become teachers.

All give this region a lot to smile about.

The Daily Republic, Mitchell, June 6

A blue-green wake-up call from our lake

If you didn't think Lake Mitchell needed some serious attention, we invite you to drive out to the lake and lay your eyes on what might be the worst the lake's looked in years.

Over the weekend, Mitchell residents kindly submitted photos of Lake Mitchell, and what we saw was a disaster.

Water quality has slowly declined over the years, with the whispers from Mitchell residents claiming Lake Mitchell needs to be restored turning into a dull roar. And we're right on board with them.

The vibrant blue foam and green sludge accumulating on Lake Mitchell's shores is enough to scare off the bravest swimmer. The putrid algae can even be seen from high above the lake. If this isn't a wake-up call to those who have questioned investing funds into the eventual restoration of Lake Mitchell, we're not sure what will.

Recently, the Mitchell City Council denied a plan to create a lake manager job who would have been tasked, in part, with working with the Lake Mitchell Advisory Committee. We then called upon the council to give the post a second look. Maybe the current state of the lake will be the tipping point for the five council members who voted against the plan to support the new post.

The council will soon be asked to determine whether to move forward with phase two of Omaha-based water quality experts Fyra Engineering's plan to find ways to restore the lake.

We hope — even if it costs hundreds of thousands of dollars — the new City Council thinks long and hard about moving forward with Fyra's plan. It very well could be critical in allowing residents to swim in the city's beloved lake again.

Now is the time to act, and we urge everyone to check out Lake Mitchell to witness what our lake has become. This lake belongs to all of us, and we'll all have to pitch in to save it. We'll do our part by urging the council to move forward with the second phase of Fyra's plan if costs are reasonable, and we hope you do the same.

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, Yankton, June 5

Ribfest Builds For The Future

Change is hard. That's something the organizers of Yankton's Rockin' Ribfest likely understood prior to this past weekend, and they certainly understand it now.

But hard change can pay off down the line, if the Ribfest crew sticks with it.

Yankton's annual early-summer ribs festival — which is a success story of continual evolution — made a bold move this year, shifting the event from Fandle Memorial Park to the NFAA Easton Yankton Archery Center. It was also decided to charge an admission for entry into the event in order to help Ribfest grow.

As of this writing, the attendance figures for this past weekend have not been announced, but they were certainly down from last year. Crowds were very light Friday and much of Saturday; only on Saturday evening, when headlining band Hairball took the stage, did the numbers return and Ribfest seemed like Ribfest again.

The changes did not come without complaints, particularly concerning the admission price, which was a \$10 fee that covered the entire event. There were also grumblings about moving Ribfest away from centrally located Memorial Park, where the event performed wonderfully, to the archery center.

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However, we do understand the reasons why this was done.

Memorial Park was practically perfect for this event — except there was no way organizers could even begin to charge the admission. And without generating that revenue, it would be very difficult for the event to continue growing.

Charging an admission price after being free for years (although, as memory serves, there was a modest admission charged in the first days of Ribfest) is a consequence of the demands for growth. Without it, Ribfest could not change or expand, and it would eventually lose its allure. That's part of the evolution process. We suspect the hubbub over this will die down in the future as the fee (which was not exorbitant for 1 ½ days of entertainment) becomes a fixed feature.

The move to the archery center was a calculated risk for a few reasons, including this one: The complex is still a mystery to a lot of people. A comment heard from a few people Saturday night was that they had no idea those fields — which are spacious places built to hold world-class archery events — were even out there. Well, they are, and as this weekend showed, they offer more than enough room for a lot of growth and flexibility, which certainly has to be attractive to Ribfest organizers. Now, after this weekend's exposure, a lot more people know about the facility (it's safe to assume that, for many people, it was the first time they had even been there). This will serve Ribfest, the archery center and Yankton well in the future.

There was a lot to learn from this past weekend's Ribfest, and hopefully, organizers can use those lessons going forward. Perhaps there is a need for more promotion. Perhaps it needs to move to the following weekend in order to not conflict with a ribs event in Sioux Falls (if that is even a problem). There are no doubt other possibilities out there.

The worst possibility would be to pull the plug on the event altogether, which, fortunately, no one is talking about today. Ribfest has been successful from its inception, and each change has brought new opportunities. And so it remains.

Change really is hard. But the rewards can make all the headaches worth it.

Life sentence upheld for man who killed former girlfriend

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court has upheld a Minnesota man's life sentence for an attack in a Sioux Falls apartment that left his former girlfriend dead and a man wounded.

The high court in a Wednesday opinion rejected Janno Talla's argument that the sentencing court had abused its discretion in giving him life imprisonment for first-degree manslaughter.

Talla was arrested in October 2015 near Worthington, Minnesota, after the stabbing death of Ammuna Gayya, the mother of one of his children. Talla also wounded Danga Kotudi, who was romantically involved with Gayya, in the apartment attack.

Talla stabbed Kotudi in the arm after Kotudi refused to fight him to the death. During an attempt to restrain Talla, he stabbed Gayya in the heart.

Talla fled, and Gayya later died.

Prosecutors press for release of violent offender

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Prosecutors in Minnehaha County are working to win the release of a man accused in a kidnapping and armed robbery case.

Landon Hale agreed to plead guilty to charges in exchange for his testimony against two other men charged in the 2016 case. A judge this spring rejected the agreement, calling Hale a dangerous criminal that belongs behind bars. The Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2r5zSdk>) reports the judge's decision was appealed to the South Dakota Supreme Court, putting prosecutors in the position of advocating for the release of a violent offender.

The other two defendants ended up pleading guilty and Hale's testimony wasn't needed. But, from the prosecution's perspective, a deal is a deal.

The state's attorney office has filed a legal challenge with the Supreme Court last month seeking to reinstate the plea deal.

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

Suspect in killing wants jail cell search evidence rejected

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Sturgis man accused of plotting his ex-girlfriend's killing in 2015 is asking the court to throw out any evidence gathered during a search of his jail cell last year.

Twenty-seven-year-old Jonathon Klinetobe has pleaded not guilty to multiple felonies including first-degree murder in the May 2015 stabbing death of 22-year-old Jessica Rehfeld. Her body was found in a remote grave near Rockerville last summer.

Pennington County prosecutors plan to seek the death penalty against Klinetobe and the man he allegedly hired to stab Rehfeld, should they be convicted.

The Rapid City Journal reports (<http://bit.ly/2sGW4rl>) that Klinetobe appeared in court Wednesday. No decision was made on evidence. He's due back in court June 14.

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

Trump tweets on Comey, declares 'total vindication'

By ERIC TUCKER and ERICA WERNER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Friday broke his silence on Twitter following explosive testimony by fired FBI Director James Comey, declaring "total and complete vindication."

Trump, who had not posted on his Twitter account since Comey accused the administration of spreading "lies," struck back with an early morning tweet in which he said, "Wow, Comey is a leaker."

Trump's tweet comes ahead of a news conference planned Friday. Trump scheduled a joint news conference with visiting Romanian President Klaus Iohannis.

In his first congressional appearance since being abruptly fired last month, Comey on Thursday described months of distrust of the president, bluntly asserting that Trump had fired him to interfere with the probe of Russia's ties to the Trump campaign.

Comey also revealed that he'd orchestrated the public release of information about his private conversations with the president in an effort to further the investigation.

Trump's tweet said: "Despite so many false statements and lies, total and complete vindication ... and WOW, Comey is a leaker."

Comey's testimony, at a hugely anticipated hearing that captured the country's attention, provided a gripping account of his interactions with Trump and underscored the discord that had soured their relationship.

He portrayed Trump as a chief executive dismissive of the FBI's independence and made clear that he interpreted Trump's request to end an investigation into his former national security adviser as an order coming from the president.

Though Republicans worked to discredit Comey and to blunt the impact of his testimony, the ex-director's statement deepened questions about the basis for his May 9 dismissal and about whether Trump's actions constituted obstruction of justice. The veteran lawman expressed confidence that could be a matter ripe for investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller, though he declined to offer an opinion on whether it met such a threshold.

Trump's private attorney, Marc Kasowitz, seized on Comey's admission that he had told Trump on multiple occasions that he was not personally under investigation and maintained the testimony made clear that Trump "never, in form or substance, directed or suggested that Mr. Comey stop investigating anyone."

Kasowitz also jumped on Comey's revelation that he had released details of his private conversations with the president, casting the former FBI director as one of the "leakers" set on undermining the Trump administration.

Still, there was no doubt the veteran lawman made for a challenging adversary.

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"It's my judgment that I was fired because of the Russia investigation," Comey said toward the end of more than two hours of testimony before the Senate intelligence committee. "I was fired in some way to change, or the endeavor was to change, the way the Russia investigation was being conducted.

"That is a very big deal, and not just because it involves me."

At one point he practically dared Trump to release any recordings of their conversations, a prospect the president once alluded to in a tweet.

"Lordy, I hope there are tapes," Comey said, suggesting such evidence would back up his account over the president's.

Thursday's hearing brought Washington and other parts of the country to a standstill as Americans sat glued to their screens, harkening to the Watergate congressional hearings that held the nation rapt some four decades earlier.

Republicans mindful of the gravity of the moment worked feverishly to lessen any damage from the hearing. They tried to undermine Comey's credibility by issuing press releases and even ads pointing to a past instance where the FBI had to clean up the director's testimony to Congress.

In his opening statement, Comey somberly accused the Trump administration of spreading "lies, plain and simple" in the aftermath of his abrupt ouster, declaring that the administration "chose to defame me and, more importantly, the FBI" by claiming the bureau was in disorder.

He then dove into the heart of the fraught political controversy around his firing and whether Trump interfered in the bureau's Russia investigation, as he elaborated on written testimony released a day earlier.

In that testimony, Comey said that Trump demanded his "loyalty" and directly pushed him to "lift the cloud" of investigation by declaring publicly the president was not a target of the FBI probe into his campaign's Russia ties.

He said that when Trump told him he hoped he would terminate an investigation into Michael Flynn, the ousted national security adviser, he interpreted that as a directive.

"I mean, this is the president of the United States, with me alone, saying, 'I hope' this," he said. "I took it as, this is what he wants me to do."

He said that while he found the February exchange in the Oval Office disturbing, "that's a conclusion I'm sure the special counsel will work towards, to try and understand what the intention was there, and whether that's an offense."

Comey said that after his firing he actually tried to spur the special counsel's appointment by giving a damning memo he had written about a meeting with Trump to a friend to release to the media.

"My judgment was I need to get that out into the public square," he said.

The February meeting was one of several one-on-one encounters that Comey said made him feel such intense discomfort that he felt compelled to document them in memos.

"I was honestly concerned that he might lie about the nature of our meeting, so I thought it really important to document," he said. "I knew there might come a day when I might need a record of what happened not only to defend myself but to protect the FBI."

Trump himself was expected to dispute Comey's claims that he demanded loyalty and asked the FBI director to drop the investigation into Flynn, according to a person close to the president's legal team who was not authorized to discuss legal strategy by name and demanded anonymity. Instead, Kasowitz pushed back and the president remained conspicuously silent on Twitter during the hearing despite expectations he might respond.

The disclosures that followed Comey's firing have raised questions about why Comey, known in government for an independent streak and a willingness to buck protocol, did not speak out publicly while on the job, or at least make his objections directly known to the president.

Discussing the meeting in which Comey says Trump asked him to back off Flynn, Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California asked, "Why didn't you stop and say, 'Mr. President, this is wrong,?'"

"It's a great question," Comey replied. "Maybe if I were stronger I would have. I was so stunned by the conversation I just took it in."

Comey also made clear that political entanglement in law enforcement has cut across party lines.

During a discussion of the Hillary Clinton email investigation, Comey disclosed that then-Attorney General

Loretta Lynch, an Obama administration appointee, instructed him to refer to the issue as a "matter," not an "investigation."

"That concerned me because that language tracked how the campaign was talking about the FBI's work and that's concerning," he said. "We had an investigation open at the time so that gave me a queasy feeling."

Many Democrats still blame Comey for Clinton's loss, leading Trump to apparently believe they would applaud him for firing Comey. The opposite occurred, as the firing created a political firestorm that has stalled Trump's legislative agenda and taken over Washington.

Under questioning Thursday, Comey reaffirmed the intelligence community's conclusion that Russia meddled in the election.

"There should be no fuzz on this. The Russians interfered," Comey stated firmly. "That happened. It's about as unfake as you can possibly get."

Trump has begrudgingly accepted that assessment. But he has also suggested he doesn't believe it, saying Russia is a "ruse" and calling the investigation into the matter a "witch hunt."

Associated Press writers Julie Bykowicz and Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

North Korea says it has tested new anti-ship missile

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea said Friday it has test-launched a new type of cruise missile capable of striking U.S. and South Korean warships "at will," as South Korea found a suspected North Korean drone near the tense border between the rivals.

The missiles are the fourth new missile system North Korea has disclosed and tested this year, sending a defiant message that it will continue to pursue a weapons program that has rattled its neighbors and Washington.

"This new-type cruise rocket is a powerful attack means capable of striking any enemy group of battle-ships" attempting to attack North Korea and can be used "at will," the North's official Korean Central News Agency said.

It said leader Kim Jong Un observed the launches and that the missiles "accurately detected and hit" floating targets at sea after making "circular flights." The North's claims could not be independently confirmed.

North Korea didn't say how many anti-ship missiles it launched, but South Korean national security director Chung Eui-yong said later Friday the North had fired four short-range missiles on Thursday. South Korea's military said they were fired from the town of Wonsan and flew about 200 kilometers (125 miles) before splashing down between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

The launch came days after U.S. aircraft carriers USS Carl Vinson and USS Ronald Reagan left those waters after joint exercises with the South Korean navy.

The North Korean missile tests present a difficult challenge to new South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who has expressed a desire to reach out to the North. North Korea, which could have a working nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missile in the next several years, may also be the most urgent foreign policy concern for the Trump administration in Washington, which has been distracted by domestic political turmoil and has insisted that China do more to rein in North Korea's weapons activities.

Moon has sought to expand cross-border civilian exchanges as a way to improve ties, but North Korea on Monday rejected a Seoul civic group's offer to provide anti-malaria supplies to protest South Korea's support of fresh U.N. sanctions adopted last week.

Moon said after the new launches that his government "won't back off even a single step and make any compromise" on the issue of national security. He also warned that North Korea could only face further international isolation and more economic difficulties.

On Friday, South Korea's military found a small flying object that it said was similar in shape and size to one of several North Korean drones discovered in 2014. The Joint Chiefs of Staff said a thorough investigation will be made of the object found south of the Demilitarized Zone that bisects the Koreas.

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North Korea has in recent years touted its drone program, a relatively new addition to its arsenal. In 2013, state media said leader Kim had watched a drone attack drill on a simulated South Korean target. The drones found in 2014 were low-tech, but were still considered a potential new security threat, according to South Korean experts.

In what will likely become another source of animosity, Moon's government plans to let two out of four North Korean fishermen recently rescued at sea resettle in South Korea in accordance with their wishes. The two other fishermen, who wanted to return home, were repatriated on Friday.

North Korea often accuses South Korea of kidnapping its citizens or enticing them to defect to the South.

Last month, North Korea premiered a powerful new midrange missile that outside experts said flew higher than any other missile it has tested.

In the following weeks, North Korea launched a solid-fuel midrange missile that can be fired on shorter notice than liquid fuel missiles, and also what it described a new "precision-guided" missile which experts say is designed with a maneuverable terminal stage meant to frustrate missile defense systems like the U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense that is being deployed in South Korea.

A look at what a hung Parliament means for Britain

LONDON (AP) — Britain's general election has ended with no party winning an outright majority, bringing the second so-called hung Parliament in the last three elections.

Here are a few questions over what it means and its implications for the country.

QUESTION: WHAT IS A HUNG PARLIAMENT?

Answer: It's an unusual situation in which no political party wins more than half of the 650 seats in the House of Commons. Without such a majority, the government cannot be assured of passing legislation and often has to rely on the support of other parties.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? WHO FORMS THE GOVERNMENT?

A: Prime Minister Theresa May, as the leader of the largest single party in the House of Commons, will have the first chance to put together a government and present a formal program, known as the Queen's Speech. She could do this either by forming a formal coalition with one or more other parties, which would give those parties seats in her Cabinet. Or she could seek to govern through a so-called "confidence and supply" arrangement with other parties, in which they agree to support the minority government on vital matters, such as the Queen's Speech or the budget, in return for concessions.

Q: WHICH PARTIES ARE LIKELY TO SUPPORT THE CONSERVATIVES?

A: The most likely partner for the Conservatives is the Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland. Current projections give the DUP 10 seats in the House of Commons and the Conservatives 319, enough to form a working majority. While the parties are closely aligned they differ on issues such as pensions and the details of Britain's exit from the European Union. The Conservatives could be forced to compromise to win DUP backing.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF THE PRIME MINISTER CAN'T FORM A GOVERNMENT?

A: If she fails to cobble together a majority, the queen, following advice, could then ask the main opposition Labour Party to try to form a government. Given the election arithmetic, Labour would struggle to get the numbers to form a government. Based on current seat projections, Labour and its potential likely allies will fall short in getting a majority. However, Labour could govern as a minority government, too, even though it came second in the election in terms of seats.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF NO PARTY IS ABLE TO FORM A GOVERNMENT?

A: New elections will be called.

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Q: HOW COMMON ARE HUNG PARLIAMENTS?

A: There have been six hung Parliaments since 1900. No party won a majority in elections in 1909, 1929, 1974 and 2010.

In 2010, the Conservatives formed a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats, the first formal coalition since Winston Churchill's government during World War II. In 1974, a minority Labour government was in charge for eight months because the Conservatives were willing to abstain on key votes. In the other four instances minority governments were able to survive as a result of agreements with other parties.

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. WHY BRITISH PM'S EARLY ELECTION GAMBLE SPECTACULARLY BACKFIRES

Theresa May's Conservative Party loses its majority in Parliament, throwing British politics into chaos, but she still seeks to form the next government.

2. COMEY'S PRIMARY TARGET: TRUMP'S CREDIBILITY

Donald Trump's own track record — as president, a candidate and private citizen — make new questions about the veracity of his own words impossible for the White House to avoid.

3. SECRET RELEASE OF TRUMP MEMO KICKS UP HORNET'S NEST

Experts debate the legality of the ex-FBI director's leak of damaging information about his conversations with President Trump.

4. WHO'S SET TO LEAD POWERFUL HOUSE PANEL

Rep. Trey Gowdy, a South Carolina Republican, is on track to become chairman of the powerful House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

5. ARAB NATIONS PUT 12 GROUPS ON TERROR SANCTIONS LIST

The organizations are described as being associated with Qatar, in a growing diplomatic dispute that's seen the energy rich nation isolated by Saudi Arabia and others.

6. WHAT EXPLOSIVE DETAILS COULD COME NEXT IN COSBY TRIAL

Prosecutors are expected to present excerpts of a previous deposition given by the actor, in which he acknowledges giving drugs to women before sex.

7. US PULLS BACK FROM TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

The Trump administration's withdrawal from environmental treaties opens the way for China and other nations to seize the mantle of leadership.

8. BUFFET LUNCH AUCTION COULD RAISE MILLIONS

A California homeless charity will benefit from the online auction for a private meal with the Oracle of Omaha.

9. JAPAN GIVES OK FOR EMPEROR'S ABDICATION

In veiled language, the 83-year-old Emperor Akihito has expressed his wish to step down from the throne.

10. PENGUINS ARE 1 GAME AWAY FROM STANLEY CUP REPEAT

Pittsburgh crushes Nashville 6-0 to take 3-2 lead in Stanley Cup finals.

May's UK election gamble backfires as Tories lose majority

By JILL LAWLESS and DANICA KIRKA, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Spectacularly punished by voters who took away her majority in parliament, a politically wounded Theresa May sought to soldier on Friday as Britain's prime minister, resisting pressure to resign after the failure of her high-stakes election gamble made the massive challenge of untangling Britain from the European Union only more complex and uncertain.

Having called an early election in hopes of getting an increased majority that could have strengthened her hand in Britain's exit talks with the EU, May instead saw her majority evaporate completely — leaving

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her fortunes hanging by a thread.

Still, rather than resign, May clung to the hope that her Conservatives might still be able to govern by making deals with another party or group of parties. She was planning to seek Queen Elizabeth II's approval — a largely symbolic step — to form a government later Friday.

The shock result and the prospect that the EU will now be negotiating with a shaky British government cast dark clouds over the Brexit negotiations just 10 days before they are due to start. The pound lost more than 3 cents against the dollar.

With 649 of 650 seats in the House of Commons declared, May's bruised Conservatives had 318 seats — short of the 326 they needed for an outright majority and well down from the 330 seats they had before May's roll of the electoral dice. Labour has 261.

The recriminations were immediate and stinging.

"This is a very bad moment for the Conservative Party, and we need to take stock," Conservative lawmaker Anna Soubry said. "And our leader needs to take stock as well."

Left-wing Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, who was among those calling on May to resign, said Friday morning that people have had enough of austerity politics and cuts in public spending. He ruled out the potential for deals or pacts with other progressive parties in Parliament.

"The arguments the Conservative Party put forward in this election have lost, and we need to change."

The results confounded those who said Corbyn was electorally toxic. Written off by many pollsters, Labour surged in the final weeks of the campaign. It drew strong support from young people, who appeared to have turned out to vote in bigger-than-expected numbers.

As she was resoundingly re-elected to her Maidenhead seat in southern England, May looked tense and did not spell out what she planned to do.

"The country needs a period of stability, and whatever the results are the Conservative Party will ensure we fulfill our duty in ensuring that stability," she said.

Many predicted she would soon be gone.

"Clearly if she's got a worse result than two years ago and is almost unable to form a government, then she, I doubt, will survive in the long term as Conservative Party leader," former Conservative Treasury chief George Osborne said on ITV.

British media reported later Friday that May had no intention of resigning.

The result was bad news for the Scottish National Party, which lost about 20 of its 54 seats. Among the casualties was Alex Salmond, a former first minister of Scotland and one of the party's highest-profile lawmakers.

The losses complicate the SNP's plans to push for a new referendum on Scottish independence as Britain prepares to leave the EU. Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said the idea of a new independence referendum "is dead. That's what we have seen tonight."

May had hoped the election would focus on Brexit, but that never happened, as both the Conservatives and Labour said they would respect voters' wishes and go through with the divorce.

Despite the surprise election result, French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said he doesn't believe voters have changed their minds about leaving.

But speaking Friday on Europe 1 radio, he said "the tone" of negotiations may be affected.

"These are discussions that will be long and that will be complex. So let's not kid ourselves," he said. "I'm not sure that we should read, from the results of this vote, that Britons' sovereign decision on Brexit has been cast into doubt in any way."

EU budget commissioner Guenther Oettinger said the EU is prepared to stick to the timetable that calls for negotiations to start in mid-June, but said it would take a few hours at least to see how the results of the election play out in forming a government.

"Without a government, there's no negotiation," he said Friday morning by phone on Germany's Deutschlandfunk radio.

May, who went into the election with a reputation for quiet competence, was criticized for a lackluster campaigning style and for a plan to force elderly people to pay more for their care, a proposal her op-

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ponents dubbed the "dementia tax." As the polls suggested a tightening race, pollsters spoke less often of a landslide and raised the possibility that May's majority would be eroded.

Then, attacks in Manchester and London that killed a total of 30 people brought the campaign to a halt — twice, sent a wave of anxiety through Britain and forced May to defend the government's record on fighting terrorism. Corbyn accused the Conservatives of undermining Britain's security by cutting the number of police on the streets.

Eight people were killed near London Bridge on Saturday when three men drove a van into pedestrians and then stabbed revelers in an area filled with bars and restaurants. Two weeks earlier, a suicide bomber killed 22 people as they were leaving an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester.

Voters were left flustered Friday by the fast-moving events.

"It's a bit of a mess," Peter Morgan, 35, said in London. "I was kind of hoping it would just go the way that the polls suggested it would and we could have a quiet life in Westminster but now it's going to be a bit of a mess."

Steven Fielding, a professor of politics at the University of Nottingham, said Britain had seen an election "in which the personal authority of a party leader has disappeared in an unprecedented way."

"If she had got the majority she wanted, she would have been a supreme political colossus," he said. "She did not get that and she's a hugely diminished figure. She's a zombie prime minister."

Gregory Katz, Sophie Berman and Niko Price contributed to this story.

Arab nations add names to terror list amid Qatar dispute

By MALAK HARB and JON GAMBRELL, Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Arab countries put 12 organizations and 59 people on a terror sanctions list early Friday they described as being associated with Qatar, the latest in a growing diplomatic dispute that's seen the energy rich nation isolated by Saudi Arabia and others.

Qatar dismissed the terror listing as part of "baseless allegations that hold no foundation in fact," standing by earlier defiant statements by its top diplomat to The Associated Press that Arab nations had no "right to blockade my country."

The sanctions list further tightens the screws on Qatar, home to a major U.S. military base and the host of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, and shows the crisis only escalating despite Kuwaiti efforts to mediate an end to the rift.

Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates said they sanctioned the groups and individuals because of "the continuous and ongoing violations of the authorities in Doha of Qatar's commitments and obligations."

Six of the organizations are already considered militant groups in Bahrain, a Sunni-ruled, predominantly Shiite island home to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet and an under-construction British naval base. Bahrain has been gripped by a government crackdown on dissent for over a year now.

Among the individuals named is Youssef al-Qaradawi, an Egyptian-born cleric considered a spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, a Sunni Islamist group. Al-Qaradawi has been tried and sentenced to death in absentia in Egypt since the 2013 military overthrow of elected President Mohammed Morsi, a Brotherhood member.

Other names involving Egypt include more Brotherhood members and those once belonging to Gamaa Islamiya, an Islamist group that carried out a series of bloody attacks in Egypt in the 1990s before renouncing violence in 2000s. One is the brother of the Gamaa Islamiya assassin who killed Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat in 1981.

Egypt separately has asked the United Nations Security Council to investigate reports that Qatar "paid up to \$1 billion to a terrorist group active in Iraq" to recently free 26 hostages, including members of its ruling family, saying it would violate U.N. sanctions.

Names involving Libya include militia commanders and the Benghazi Defense Brigade, which is battling

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forces commanded by Gen. Khalifa Hifter, who has the backing of Egypt and the UAE amid that country's chaos. The sole Yemeni, Abdel-Wahab al-Humayqani, is the leader of a Salafi party whose has been accused by the U.S. of financing al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, the terror group's branch in Yemen.

Qatar long has denied supporting or funding terror groups. However, Western diplomats accuse Qatar's government of allowing or even encouraging the funding of some Sunni extremists, like al-Qaida's branch in Syria.

Responding to the list overnight, Qatar issued a statement saying: "We do not, have not and will not support terrorist groups."

"We lead the region in attacking the roots of terrorism — by giving young people hope through jobs, replacing weapons with pens by educating hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees and funding local community programs globally to challenge extremist agendas," it said.

In a wide-ranging interview Thursday with the AP, Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani repeatedly denied that his country funded extremists and he rejected the idea of shutting down its Al-Jazeera satellite news network, something suggested as a demand of the Arab nations.

He said Qatar, as an independent nation, also had the right to support groups like the Muslim Brotherhood, despite the fact that its neighbors view it as a threat to their hereditary rule.

Sheikh Mohammed's hard line mirrored that of a top Emirati diplomat who told the AP on Wednesday that the United Arab Emirates believes "there's nothing to negotiate" with Qatar.

"If anyone thinks they are going to impose anything on my internal affairs or my internal issues, this is not going to happen," Sheikh Mohammed said.

Worried residents have responded to the crisis by emptying grocery stores in the capital of Doha, and Saudi Arabia has blocked trucks carrying food from entering the country across its only land border.

Doha is a major international travel hub, but flagship carrier Qatar Airways now flies increasingly over Iran and Turkey after being blocked elsewhere in the Middle East. On Wednesday, Emirati officials shut down the airline's offices in the UAE.

Al-Jazeera's offices have been shut down by authorities in Saudi Arabia and Jordan. The network also said Thursday night that its websites had come under a sustained cyberattack.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on the other hand, has approved sending troops to an existing Turkish base in Qatar as a sign of support.

U.S. President Donald Trump, who tweeted Tuesday about Qatar funding extremists, called Qatari ruler Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on Wednesday and offered to host leaders at the White House to resolve the crisis.

But Sheikh Mohammed told the AP on Thursday that Sheikh Tamim "is not going to leave the country while the country is in blockade," in effect turning down the mediation offer. Analysts have raised the prospect of a palace coup in Qatar, a hereditary monarchy ruled by the Al Thani family that has a history of such changes in leadership.

Trump's administration later suggested U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who as Exxon Mobil's CEO had business with Qatar, as a possible mediator.

Qatar said Friday that U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson spoke to its foreign minister and discussed the crisis, without offering specifics.

Gambrell reported from Sir Bani Yas Island, United Arab Emirates. Associated Press writer Maggie Michael in Cairo contributed to this report.

Japan enacts law allowing Emperor Akihito, 83, to abdicate

By MARI YAMAGUCHI, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's parliament on Friday passed a law allowing Emperor Akihito to become the country's first monarch to abdicate in 200 years, but put off a debate over how to tackle the shrinking royal population and whether to allow women to ascend the throne.

In veiled language, the 83-year-old emperor expressed his wish to abdicate last August, citing his old

age and health.

Under the law enacted Friday, his abdication must take place within three years.

Current succession rules allow only men from the paternal bloodline to ascend the 2,000-year-old Chrysanthemum Throne. Women, but not men, are forced to renounce their royal status if they marry a commoner.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's conservative government supports male-only succession. Akihito's son, 57-year-old Crown Prince Naruhito, is next in line.

Naruhito's only child is a girl, and his younger brother, Prince Akishino, has two adult daughters and a 10-year-old son, Hisahito. This means only one of the emperor's four grandchildren is an eligible heir.

After Naruhito's daughter was born, a government panel discussed the possibility of allowing female ascension, but the talk quickly faded after Hisahito's birth.

Akihito's coming abdication has rekindled concerns about a shortage of heirs.

The Abe government avoided taking up divisive issues involving the status of female royals, which would have required a time-consuming and broader overhaul of the 1947 Imperial House Law.

To secure opposition support, the ruling party did agree to a non-binding attachment to the bill calling on the government to study ways to improve the status of princesses.

That could include allowing them to keep their titles so that they can make up for the declining royal membership and continue to perform some royal family public duties.

The abdication law applies only to Akihito and expires in three years, to avoid putting future monarchs at risk of forcible abdication due to political manipulation. The law was needed because the 1947 Imperial House Law does not provide for abdication.

Japanese media reports have said officials are considering having Akihito abdicate at the end of 2018, when he would turn 85 and mark nearly 30 years on the throne. No date has been announced yet.

The last emperor to abdicate was Kokaku in 1817.

Follow Mari Yamaguchi on Twitter at <https://www.twitter.com/mariyamaguchi>

Find her work also on APNews at <https://www.apnews.com/search/mari%20yamaguchi>

British shock: PM May's election gamble appears to backfire

By JILL LAWLESS and GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Theresa May's gamble in calling an early election appeared Friday to have backfired spectacularly, with her Conservative Party on the verge of losing its majority in Parliament. Opposition politicians called for May to resign, and pressure to quit also mounted within her own party.

The result looks set to trigger a period of political uncertainty and could throw Britain's negotiations to leave the European Union — due to start June 19 — into disarray. The pound lost more than 2 cents against the dollar within seconds of an exit poll projecting an uncertain result.

With only 25 of the 650 seats still to declare, the results largely bore out the exit poll, which predicted the Conservatives would get 314 of the 650 House of Commons seats, down from 330. The Labour Party was projected to win 266, up from 229.

John Curtice, who oversees the exit poll for a consortium of broadcasters, said Friday that the Conservatives' final tally might be a bit higher than 314, but it was extremely unlikely they would get a majority.

As the results piled up, some form of minority or coalition government appeared increasingly likely. That raised the odds that an election called by May to provide "strong and stable government" would bring instability and the chance of yet another early election.

The results confounded those who said the opposition Labour Party's left-wing leader, Jeremy Corbyn, was electorally toxic. Written off by many pollsters, Labour surged in the final weeks of the campaign. It drew strong support from young people, who appeared to have turned out to vote in bigger-than-expected numbers.

By Friday morning, pressure was mounting on May, who called the snap election in the hope of increasing her majority and strengthening Britain's hand in exit talks with the European Union.

"This is a very bad moment for the Conservative Party, and we need to take stock," Conservative law-

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maker Anna Soubry said. "And our leader needs to take stock as well."

As she was resoundingly re-elected to her Maidenhead seat in southern England, May looked tense and did not spell out what she planned to do.

"The country needs a period of stability and whatever the results are the Conservative Party will ensure we fulfil our duty in ensuring that stability so that we can all, as one country, go forward together," she said.

Others predicted she would soon be gone.

Former Conservative Treasury chief George Osborne said the result was "catastrophic."

"Clearly if she's got a worse result than two years ago and is almost unable to form a government, then she, I doubt, will survive in the long term as Conservative Party leader," he said on ITV.

Corbyn said the result means "politics has changed" and voters have rejected Conservative austerity. Speaking after being re-elected to his London seat, Corbyn said May should "go ... and make way for a government that is truly representative of all the people of this country."

The result was bad news for the Scottish National Party, which by early Friday had lost about 20 of its 54 seats. Among the casualties was Alex Salmond, a former first minister of Scotland and one of the party's highest-profile lawmakers.

The losses complicate the SNP's plans to push for a new referendum on Scottish independence as Britain prepares to leave the EU.

"Indy Ref 2 is dead in Scotland," said Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson, using a short form for a second independence referendum.

May had hoped the election would focus on Brexit, but that never happened, as both the Conservatives and Labour said they would respect voters' wishes and go through with the divorce.

May, who went into the election with a reputation for quiet competence, was criticized for a lackluster campaigning style and for a plan to force elderly people to pay more for their care, a proposal her opponents dubbed the "dementia tax." As the polls suggested a tightening race, pollsters spoke less often of a landslide and raised the possibility that May's majority would be eroded.

Then, attacks that killed 30 people in Manchester and London twice brought the campaign to a halt, sent a wave of anxiety through Britain and forced May to defend the government's record on fighting terrorism. Corbyn accused the Conservatives of undermining Britain's security by cutting the number of police on the streets.

Eight people were killed near London Bridge on Saturday when three men drove a van into pedestrians and then stabbed revelers in an area filled with bars and restaurants. Two weeks earlier, a suicide bomber killed 22 people as they were leaving an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester.

Rachel Sheard, who cast her vote near the site of the London Bridge attack, said the election certainly wasn't about Brexit.

"I don't think that's in the hearts and minds of Londoners at the minute, (not) nearly as much as security is," said Sheard, 22. "It was very scary on Saturday."

Penguins crush Predators 6-0 to take 3-2 lead in Stanley Cup

By WILL GRAVES, AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The night started with a catfish throw.

It ended with haymaker after haymaker — both literal and proverbial — from Sidney Crosby and the rest of the resilient Pittsburgh Penguins.

The defending champions provided an emphatic reminder of why they're on the cusp of history with a 6-0 demolition of the Nashville Predators in Game 5 of the Stanley Cup Final to take a 3-2 lead. Pittsburgh will have a chance to become the first franchise to win back-to-back championships since Detroit in 1998 when the series shifts back to Nashville for Game 6 on Sunday night.

"Still a lot of work to be done but the way we played tonight, if we can build off that momentum, that's important," Crosby said after collecting three assists. "We know we're going to be facing a desperate team."

One that can't get back to the creature comforts of Smashville fast enough. The Penguins chased Pekka

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Rinne with a three-goal barrage in the first period and kept it going against backup Juuse Saros to push the Predators to the brink of elimination for the first time during their run to the final.

"I don't know if anybody shakes off a game like that that quickly," Nashville coach Peter Laviolette said. "Nobody feels good leaving the building playing the way we did."

All the good mojo Rinne generated while helping Nashville rally to tie the series at 2 vanished in a span of 20 minutes. Justin Schultz beat Rinne just 91 seconds in, Bryan Rust and Evgeni Malkin followed before the first period horn sounded, continuing Rinne's baffling inability to play effectively in Pittsburgh during the series. Rinne has stopped just 34 of the 45 pucks that have come his way during seven forgettable periods at PPG Paints Arena.

"It was just one of those games where they were going and we were trying to find it and didn't really get it going at any point," Rinne said.

Not that the Penguins gave them much of a chance.

Conor Sheary, Phil Kessel — just as linemate Malkin predicted — and 35-year-old playoff newbie Ron Hainsey also scored for Pittsburgh. It was Crosby who sent the message — with his vision, his creativity and, oddly, his fists.

The two-time MVP's eventful night included becoming the franchise's all-time leading scorer in the Stanley Cup Final, a two-minute roughing penalty for trying to dribble Nashville defenseman P.K. Subban's head on the ice near the end of the first period and what he said was an inadvertent flip of a water bottle onto the ice during play.

"I think Sid really understands the opportunity that this team has and he's not taking anything for granted," Penguins coach Mike Sullivan said.

And apparently not taking any more stuff from Subban either. The two stars became tangled up behind the Nashville goal late in the first with Crosby on top. He attempted to extract himself but couldn't, then unleashed a torrent of punches at Subban's head.

"He was doing some sort of UFC move on my foot," Crosby said. "I don't know what he was trying to do. ... I don't know what he was trying to do to my ankle. I was in some kind of lock there."

Subban, who claimed Crosby was complaining about Subban's breath during a Game 3 run-in, just kind of sat there and took it. The exchange ended with both players heading to the dressing room with minor penalties. They watched on TV as Malkin's wrist shot with 10 seconds left in the first gave Pittsburgh a 3-0 edge it never came close to giving up.

"That is, hands down, the best game that we've played in this series to this point," Sullivan said.

Saros hardly fared any better. Sheary took a pretty feed from Crosby and sent it by Saros 1:19 into the second to push Pittsburgh's lead to four. Kessel ended a six-game goal drought 8:02 into the second. The score had been predicted by Malkin and it came just seconds after Crosby threw a water bottle onto the ice as the play went by Pittsburgh's bench, a move he told referees was unintentional.

When Hainsey, who waited 907 regular-season games before reaching the playoffs for the first time this season, tapped in a pass from Malkin to make it 6-0, the stage was set for the Penguins to return to familiar territory.

The franchise has won all four of its Cups on the road. A shot at a fifth awaits Sunday, though it'll hardly be easy.

"It's a good game but it's still not done," Malkin said. "We still need one more game, one more win."

The Predators are 9-1 at home in the playoffs, a place they will need to be a haven once again if they want to extend their improbable Cup run back to Pittsburgh.

"The real hockey starts now," Subban said. "You're in the Cup final, this is what it's all about. It's about going back and forth."

NOTES: Matt Murray finished with 24 saves. ... Crosby now has 20 career points in the Stanley Cup Final, a new franchise record and one more than team owner Mario Lemieux. ... Crosby also moved into a tie with Denis Potvin for 19th on the all-time career playoff scoring list. ... The team that has won Game 5 in a 2-2 series has gone on to win the Cup 71 percent (17 of 24) of the time since 1939. ... The teams

combined for 100 penalty minutes (58 for Nashville, 42 for Pittsburgh). ... Guentzel's assist moved him into a tie with Dino Ciccarelli and Ville Leino for the most playoff points by a rookie in NHL history (21). ... Penguins F Nick Bonino missed his third straight game with a lower-body injury. ... Nashville F Colin Wilson made his series debut after missing the first four games with an undisclosed injury. Wilson skated on the fourth line with Frederick Gaudreau and Harry Zolnierczyk.

More AP NHL: <http://apnews.com/tag/NHLhockey>

Cosby's lurid decade-old testimony is read to the jury

By MARYCLAIRE DALE and MICHAEL R. SISAk, Associated Press

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (AP) — The jury at Bill Cosby's sexual assault trial heard from the comedian without him actually taking the stand Thursday as prosecutors read into the record his lurid, decade-old testimony about what he said were several sexual encounters with Andrea Constand that culminated in him giving her pills and then reaching into her pants.

Jurors sat riveted and took notes as they heard the TV star say that as he touched Constand's body during one encounter at his suburban Philadelphia home more than a decade ago, "I don't hear her say anything. And I don't feel her say anything. And so I continue and I go into the area that is somewhere between permission and rejection."

"I am not stopped," he said.

Cosby testified in 2005 as part of a lawsuit brought against him by Constand, who said in court this week that she rejected Cosby's advances and would have fought him off again during the January 2004 encounter had the pills not left her paralyzed and semi-conscious.

Cosby eventually settled the case for an undisclosed sum, and his deposition was sealed for years, until a judge released parts of it in 2015 at the request of The Associated Press.

A portion of it was read aloud by a detective Thursday afternoon, with more expected on Friday, including Cosby talking about giving quaaludes and alcohol to women he wanted to have sex with.

Cosby, 79, could spend the rest of his life in prison if convicted of drugging and molesting Constand, a former employee of Temple University's women's basketball program. He has said the sexual encounter was consensual.

Constand, 44, testified this week that Cosby penetrated her with his fingers against her will after giving her pills that left her so limp that she was unable to push him away or tell him to stop.

Cosby, who said recently that he did not intend to testify at his trial, showed little reaction as the deposition was read.

In his testimony, he said he gave Constand three half-tablets of the cold and allergy medicine Benadryl before the "petting" began. Prosecutors have suggested he drugged her with something stronger, perhaps the quaaludes he admitted obtaining decades ago.

It was the unsealing of the deposition that spurred Pennsylvania prosecutors to reopen their investigation and let loose a flood of similar allegations from dozens of women that all but destroyed his nice-guy image from "The Cosby Show" as America's Dad.

Prosecutors on Thursday also read into the record Cosby's 2005 statement to police, in which he gave a similar account of the night in question, saying he gave Constand the Benadryl to help her relax.

Also Thursday, a detective testified that Bruce Castor, the district attorney who decided more than a decade ago not to bring charges against Cosby, shut the investigation down in 2005 while police were still working the case.

"We had been discussing investigative leads and where they were going," Cheltenham police Sgt. Richard Schaffer, a witness for the prosecution, said on Day 4 of Cosby's trial.

Schaffer's testimony could blunt efforts by Cosby's lawyers to exploit the fact that Castor saw no case. Castor, who has long been out of office, is on the list of potential witnesses at the trial.

Castor ended the investigation after four weeks, announcing that Cosby would not be charged because the evidence had shown both parties "could be held in less than a flattering light." He said he was concerned that Constand had stayed in touch with Cosby and waited a year to call police. It was a new set of prosecutors that brought charges against Cosby in 2015.

Castor testified last year that he had talked with Cosby's lawyer before making his decision and that it was intended to let Cosby speak freely at a potential civil deposition — the same deposition that prosecutors started reading parts of in court Thursday.

Some 60 women have come forward to say Cosby sexually violated them, but the statute of limitations for prosecution had run out in nearly every case. Constand's case is the only one in which Cosby has been charged.

The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sexual assault unless they grant permission, which Constand has done.

For more on Cosby, including trial updates, historical photos, videos and an audio series exploring the case, visit: <http://www.apnews.com/tag/CosbyonTrial>

Comey says he was fired over Russia probe, blasts 'lies'

By ERIC TUCKER and ERICA WERNER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former FBI Director James Comey asserted Thursday that President Donald Trump fired him to interfere with his investigation of Russia's ties to the Trump campaign, bluntly accusing the White House of spreading "lies, plain and simple."

Comey also revealed that he'd orchestrated the public release of information about his private conversations with the president in an effort to further the investigation.

Comey's testimony, at a hugely anticipated congressional hearing that captured the country's attention, provided a gripping account of his interactions with Trump and underscored the deep distrust that had soured their relationship before his stunning firing last month.

In occasionally explosive statements, Comey portrayed Trump as a chief executive dismissive of the FBI's independence and made clear that he interpreted Trump's request to end an investigation into his former national security adviser as an order coming from the president.

He expressed confidence that the circumstances of his firing, and Trump's overall behavior toward him, could be investigated by special counsel Robert Mueller for possible obstruction of justice. But he declined to offer an opinion on whether it met such a threshold.

Trump's private attorney, Marc Kasowitz, seized on Comey's admission that he had told Trump on multiple occasions that he was not personally under investigation and maintained the testimony made clear that Trump "never, in form or substance, directed or suggested that Mr. Comey stop investigating anyone."

Kasowitz also jumped on Comey's revelation that he had released details of his private conversations with the president, casting the former FBI director as one of the "leakers" set on undermining the Trump administration.

Still, there's no doubt the veteran lawman made for a challenging adversary.

"It's my judgment that I was fired because of the Russia investigation," Comey said toward the end of more than two hours of testimony before the Senate intelligence committee. "I was fired in some way to change, or the endeavor was to change, the way the Russia investigation was being conducted.

"That is a very big deal, and not just because it involves me."

At one point he practically dared Trump to release any recordings of their conversations, a prospect the president once alluded to in a tweet.

"Lordy, I hope there are tapes," Comey said, suggesting such evidence would back up his account over the president's.

Thursday's hearing was Comey's first public appearance since his sudden May 9 firing and it brought Washington and other parts of the country to a standstill as Americans sat glued to their screens, harken-

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ing back to the Watergate congressional hearings that held the nation rapt some four decades earlier.

Republicans mindful of the gravity of the moment worked feverishly to lessen any damage from the hearing. They tried to undermine Comey's credibility by issuing press releases and even ads pointing to a past instance where the FBI had to clean up the director's testimony to Congress.

In his opening statement, Comey somberly accused the Trump administration of spreading "lies, plain and simple" in the aftermath of his abrupt ouster, declaring that the administration "chose to defame me and, more importantly, the FBI" by claiming the bureau was in disorder.

He then dove into the heart of the fraught political controversy around his firing and whether Trump interfered in the bureau's Russia investigation, as he elaborated on written testimony released a day earlier.

In that testimony, Comey said that Trump demanded his "loyalty" and directly pushed him to "lift the cloud" of investigation by declaring publicly the president was not a target of the FBI probe into his campaign's Russia ties.

He said that when Trump told him he hoped he would terminate an investigation into Michael Flynn, the ousted national security adviser, he interpreted that as a directive.

"I mean, this is the president of the United States, with me alone, saying, 'I hope' this," he said. "I took it as, this is what he wants me to do."

Asked whether that February Oval Office discussion amounted to obstruction of justice, Comey said he expected that to be a matter for Mueller, the former FBI director who has taken over the Justice Department's investigation.

He said that while he found the exchange disturbing, "that's a conclusion I'm sure the special counsel will work towards, to try and understand what the intention was there, and whether that's an offense."

In a startling disclosure, Comey revealed that after his firing he actually tried to spur the special counsel's appointment by giving a damning memo he had written about a meeting with Trump to a friend to release to the media.

"My judgment was I need to get that out into the public square," Comey said.

The February meeting was one of several one-on-one encounters that Comey said made him feel such intense discomfort that he felt compelled to document them in memos.

"I was honestly concerned that he might lie about the nature of our meeting, so I thought it really important to document," Comey said. "I knew there might come a day when I might need a record of what happened not only to defend myself but to protect the FBI."

Trump himself was expected to dispute Comey's claims that the president demanded loyalty and asked the FBI director to drop the investigation into Flynn, according to a person close to the president's legal team who demanded anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss legal strategy. Instead, Kasowitz pushed back and the president remained conspicuously silent on Twitter during the hearing despite expectations he might respond.

The disclosures that followed Comey's firing have raised questions about why Comey, known in government for an independent streak and a willingness to buck protocol, did not speak out publicly while on the job, or at least make his objections directly known to the president.

Discussing the meeting where Comey says Trump asked him to back off Flynn, Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California asked: "Why didn't you stop and say, 'Mr. President, this is wrong,?'"

"It's a great question," Comey replied. "Maybe if I were stronger I would have. I was so stunned by the conversation I just took it in."

Comey also made clear that political entanglement in law enforcement has cut across party lines.

During a discussion of the Hillary Clinton email investigation, Comey disclosed that then-Attorney General Loretta Lynch, an Obama administration appointee, instructed him to refer to the issue as a "matter," not an "investigation."

"That concerned me because that language tracked how the campaign was talking about the FBI's work and that's concerning," Comey said. "We had an investigation open at the time so that gave me a queasy feeling."

Many Democrats still blame Comey for Clinton's loss, leading Trump to apparently believe they would

applaud him for firing Comey. The opposite occurred, as the firing created a political firestorm that has stalled Trump's legislative agenda and taken over Washington.

Under questioning Thursday, Comey reaffirmed the intelligence community's conclusion that Russia meddled in the election.

"There should be no fuzz on this. The Russians interfered," Comey stated firmly. "That happened. It's about as unfake as you can possibly get."

Trump has begrudgingly accepted that assessment. But he has also suggested he doesn't believe it, saying Russia is a "ruse" and calling the investigation into the matter a "witch hunt."

Associated Press writers Julie Bykowicz and Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

Top Takeaways: Comey's high-drama testimony distilled

By NANCY BENAC, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nuanced conversations. Conflicting versions of events. Lingering intrigue.

For all of the things that came into clearer focus with Thursday's testimony from fired FBI Director James Comey, plenty of other questions remain.

A few takeaways from Comey's appearance before the Senate intelligence committee:

THE OBSTRUCTION QUESTION

A central — and unresolved — question from the hearing revolves around whether President Donald Trump was trying to derail the Russia investigation by pressuring, and ultimately firing, the man in charge. Comey delivered his answer clearly.

"It's my judgment that I was fired because of the Russia investigation," he said. "I was fired in some way to change, or the endeavor was to change, the way the Russia investigation was being conducted."

The firing came, Comey said, after he was pushed to drop the probe into former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn. The president told him, "I hope you can let this go," and he took it as more than a mere suggestion.

"I took it as a direction," Comey told the committee.

Trump's lawyer says the president "never, in form or substance" directed Comey to stop investigating anyone, and Republicans suggested Comey was reading too much into it.

"You may have taken it as a direction, but that's not what he said," said Sen. James Risch, R-Idaho.

Whether Trump's behavior and comment amount to obstruction of justice, however, depends not on how Comey understood the comment, but Trump's intent in delivering it.

Finding that out, as Comey noted, is now up to the special counsel, Robert Mueller.

"MY WORD AGAINST HIS"

In one of the unexpected moments of the day, Comey essentially took credit for Mueller being on the case.

The former FBI director and media-savvy operator acknowledged he shared with a friend the memos detailing his conversations with the president and specifically asked the friend to pass them on to reporters.

"My judgment was I need to get that out into the public square," Comey said.

But the goal wasn't just to tell his story. Comey said he wanted to spur the Justice Department to appoint a special counsel to take over the investigation.

Comey knew the whole thing could come down to his word against the president's, and he wanted the memos to serve as proof of his version of events.

With trademark flair, Comey told the committee, "Lordy, I hope there are tapes" of his conversations with Trump.

"If there are tapes," Comey said, "it's not just my word against his."

SESSIONS INTRIGUE

Comey added an element of intrigue to the hearings when he said he knew of a "variety of reasons" why Attorney General Jeff Sessions' involvement in the Russia investigation would be problematic but that he couldn't discuss those reasons "in an open setting."

Sessions recused himself from anything related to the Russia inquiry in March, after it was revealed that he had spoken with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak twice during the presidential campaign. Sessions failed to disclose those contacts during questioning at his Senate confirmation hearing, when he told senators he hadn't had any contacts with Russia.

Even before Comey's cryptic reference Thursday, Democratic senators had been raising more questions about Sessions' contacts with Kislyak.

Sens. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., and Al Franken, D-Minn., have asked the FBI to check into the possibility of a third encounter at an April 2016 Trump campaign event that Sessions and Kislyak attended. The Justice Department has acknowledged that Sessions was at the Mayflower Hotel event in Washington, but said there were no private or side conversations that day.

The Justice Department put out a statement late Thursday saying that Sessions had recused himself because of his involvement in Trump's 2016 presidential campaign — "for that reason, and that reason alone."

BIPARTISAN DISCOMFORT

It wasn't just the Trump administration that made Comey anxious about the need to protect the integrity and independence of the FBI.

He'd had moments of discomfort during the Obama administration as well.

Comey described an episode during the inquiry into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server when then-Attorney General Loretta Lynch directed him "not to call it an investigation but to call it a matter, which confused me and concerned me."

Comey said that language "tracked" how the Clinton campaign was talking about the FBI's work.

"We had an investigation open at the time so that gave me a queasy feeling," he added.

Follow Nancy Benac on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/nbenac>

Supermarket massacre shooter left chilling online trail

By **MARK SCOLFORO** and **KRISTEN DE GROOT**, Associated Press

A man who police say trapped and killed three co-workers inside a closed northeast Pennsylvania grocery store overnight Thursday left an online trail behind that includes praise for the 1999 Columbine High School shooters and expressions of deep frustration about the world around him.

Wyoming County District Attorney Jeff Mitchell said a Twitter feed that includes a 42-minute film about a violent massacre, posted about the time of the killings, is believed to have belonged to 24-year-old Randy Stair of Dallas, Pennsylvania.

In that film, Stair praised Columbine shooters Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold as heroes and kissed and fondled a loaded shotgun.

Police say Stair brought two pistol-grip shotguns to work at the store in rural Tunkhannock, about 150 miles northwest of New York City (241 kilometers), blocked store exits and began shooting shortly before 1 a.m. A fourth co-worker eventually escaped unharmed and called police. Stair also killed himself.

"This is really a mental health situation that utterly spiraled out of control," Mitchell said. "I think he had longstanding mental health issues that resulted in this horrible tragedy."

State police said he spent the first 90 minutes of his shift blocking exits with pallets and other items. After the store closed Stair retrieved a duffel bag from his car with the two shotguns, and began his attack.

He killed Terry Sterling, 63, of South Montrose; Victoria Brong, 26, of Factoryville; and Brian Hayes, 47, of Springville.

"It's just unspeakable, it really is," Mitchell said. "These people went to work and they lost their lives because they went to work. It's senseless."

He said Stair apparently did not like one of the victims, the night manager. It wasn't immediately clear which of the victims held that job.

"Ironically, the night manager apparently liked him," Mitchell said.

Mitchell said Stair also shot up the store, damaging merchandise, counters and other parts of the interior

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as he fired a total of 59 rounds.

The prosecutor said the three victims had already been murdered when the fourth worker was able to get out. Mitchell said Stair apparently saw her.

"For whatever reason, he did not shoot at her and she was able to escape," Mitchell said.

On his Twitter home page, Stair wrote: "I had to die in order to truly live. Speaking from before and beyond the grave."

Stair posted a slew of material under the name Andrew Blaze on Twitter and YouTube, including his own anime videos.

His 42-minute film, "The Westborough High Massacre/Goodbye," was apparently posted with other material on Twitter about the time of the attack.

It begins with a bitter narrative about his frustration over not getting help or the response he wanted to produce the film.

"I've been stepped on my whole life; not anymore. ...I've had enough of this putrid planet and I'm going to leave my mark," he wrote in the film.

That was followed by footage of him loading shotguns and putting on a T-shirt similar to one he wore last night, Mitchell said. He also depicted himself using a shotgun for target practice.

He tweeted a link to his journal, a purple spiral notebook scribbled with words "Sandy Hook" "Dylan Klebold," "Eric Harris," "9/11" and "OKC," referencing other massacres and terrorist attacks.

Mitchell said Stair texted what was basically a suicide note to his mother at 12:37 a.m. She was asleep.

The message, Mitchell said, was "that he was not going to be alive anymore and that he left some DVDs and journals for the family," Mitchell said. He said Stair lived with his parents and brother, whom he described as distraught and devastated.

He also posted a video, recorded May 11, describing his attack plans in details, including how he would block the doors, who would be working that night and the importance of making sure the killings were caught on surveillance video.

In it he also laments the tight timeframe he would have to block exits, post all his documents and videos on social media and then kill everyone.

In a recent writing, Stair expressed "extreme loneliness," a sense of detachment from the world and frustration at not being able to make or keep friends or relationships, Mitchell said.

In a video message to his parents, he said he thought about death for years and never imagined he would live past his 20s.

Looking into the camera, wearing a black beanie and black T-shirt, he talked about his obsession with a Nickelodeon cartoon character named "Ember" and said that in 2013 he started cross-dressing, "which is something you never knew I did."

He said he would dress as a woman on Wednesday nights, when his parents went bowling, and secretly wanted a sex change operation.

"I was just a female soul trapped in a man's body my whole life," he said.

Behind him hanging on the wall were framed pictures of his anime creations, "Ember's Ghost Squad," a keyboard and headphones.

"I was put here in this body, I'm going to have to live in this body until I die," he said.

His last tweet read: "Goodbye humans ...I'll miss you...."

A spokesman for the coroner said the victims' relatives have been notified and autopsies are planned for Friday in Scranton.

Remains of missing WWII vet returned home after 73 years

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr., Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — More than 70 years ago, a U.S. Army bomber plane dubbed "Hot as Hell" was headed for India on a supply mission. It never arrived, and no one went looking for the doomed aircraft or the eight men on board because military officials had no way of pinpointing where it went down.

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All signs of the mission were lost until 2006, when a hiker in northeast India spotted a wing and panel sign inscribed with the bomber's name. It wasn't until 2015 that the U.S. Defense Department investigated the crash site and found the remains of 1st Lt. Robert Eugene Oxford.

The remains of the WWII veteran arrived at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport about 4 p.m. Thursday, said Terrell Moody of Moody-Daniel Funeral Home, which is handling burial arrangements in Oxford's tiny hometown of Concord, Georgia.

Moody said the State Patrol, Patriot Guard and Pike County Sheriff's Office accompanied a hearse carrying Oxford's casket on the 50-mile (80-kilometer) journey from the airport to Concord, where the remains will be buried with full military honors alongside those of Oxford's parents this weekend. Photos of his seven fellow crewmen, none of whom was ever found, will lie beside the coffin and then be placed inside it for burial.

"We were ecstatic that Eugene was found, but we feel guilty there are seven other men on that mountain top," said Merrill Roan, the wife of Oxford's nephew. "So we are honoring the other seven. ... We have to honor them as well, because they may never get any closure."

Oxford's plane departed Kuming, China, on Jan. 25, 1944, said Staff Sgt. Kristen Duus at the Defense Prisoners of War/Missing in Action Agency. Oxford was declared dead two years later.

Oxford's family didn't know the wreckage had been found until 2007, when Merrill Roan saw a message on a genealogy website from a relative of another service member on the aircraft. That relative wanted help persuading military officials to investigate the crash site.

Duus' agency confirmed the crash site correlated with the missing aircraft in 2008. But harmful weather coupled with access issues and security delayed recovery operation efforts until late 2015, Duus said.

Officials say a DNA analysis of Oxford's remains matched his niece and nephew.

Roan said the family was "shocked and excited" when they heard the news.

Duus said Oxford is one of 74 veterans who have been identified so far this year. She said all service members are returned to the U.S. for identification before their families are notified, and they are all given funerals with military honors.

Eighty service members were identified in 2015, and that number more than doubled with 164 the following year, Duus said.

The Missing in Action Agency website says there are more than 86,000 Americans still missing abroad from World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Advancements in DNA testing technology and partnerships with other nations have helped find and identify more missing service members than ever, Duus said.

Oxford's parents, siblings and any other relatives who saw him leave for World War II have all died since he went missing, said Moody. Still, the long-overdue homecoming of his remains won't go unnoticed.

A funeral will be held Sunday in a school auditorium, the biggest venue in Concord, Moody said.

"It's just a huge historical event for our little town," Moody said. "The phone constantly rings from people wanting information."

Oxford will be buried in the same plot with his parents, Charles and Bessie Oxford, who had placed a memorial marker for their lost son at the gravesite after his plane went missing seven decades ago.

This story corrects the day of Oxford's funeral to Sunday, not Saturday, and that the remains are returning home after 73 years, not 74.

Associated Press writer Russ Bynum in Savannah, Georgia, contributed to this report.

GOP-run House votes to roll back post-2008 financial rules

By KEVIN FREKING and MARCY GORDON, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Republican-led House approved sweeping legislation Thursday to undo much of former President Barack Obama's landmark banking law created after the 2008 economic crisis that

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caused millions of Americans to lose their jobs and homes.

The largely party-line vote was 233-186, as Republicans argued the rules designed to prevent another meltdown were making it harder for community banks to lend and hampered the economy. No Democratic lawmakers supported the measure; only one Republican opposed it.

"Our community banks are in trouble," said Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis. "They are being crushed by the costly rules imposed on them by the Dodd-Frank Act. This law may have had good intentions but its consequences have been dire for Main Street."

House passage was widely expected, but the Republican overhaul of the 2010 Dodd-Frank law is unlikely to clear the Senate in its current form. Senators have said they'll spend the next few months trying to find common ground on legislation designed to boost the economy. Potential areas for compromise include changes to how much capital banks must maintain and decreasing the paperwork burden for small lenders.

President Donald Trump had said he wants to do "a big number" on Dodd-Frank, and the House vote marks progress toward that goal.

The overhaul bill targets the heart of the law's restrictions on banks by offering a trade-off: Banks could qualify for most of the regulatory relief in the bill so long as they meet a strict requirement for building capital to cover unexpected big losses.

Democrats defended the Dodd-Frank law, saying it has meant financial security for millions of people and that undoing it would encourage the kind of risky lending practices that invite future economic shocks.

They also oppose efforts to sharply curtail a consumer protection agency's power to pursue companies that it determines have participated in unfair or deceptive practices in their financial products and services. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has returned \$29 billion to 12 million consumers who were victims of deceptive marketing, discriminatory lending or other financial wrongdoing.

"All we're doing is spending our time taking away protections for the American people and their futures. Have we learned nothing?" asked Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md.

Several Democratic lawmakers insisted they were willing to make some changes to Dodd-Frank, but that the Republican bill went much too far.

"The bottom line is we put an end to the Wild West of Wall Street, and were on a nice, steady playing field," said Rep. Michael Capuano, D-Mass. "We should be able to adjust it, but we should not throw it out."

The bill would repeal a rule that bans banks from engaging in trading for their own profit using federally-insured deposits, or forming certain relationships with private equity funds. It would roll back a proposed rule that investment advisers who collect commissions must put their clients' interests ahead of their own.

Also, financial regulators would lose the power to dismantle a failing financial firm and sell off the pieces if they decided its collapse could endanger the system. Instead, the bill would let banks fall under an expanded part of bankruptcy law.

The overhaul of Dodd-Frank was crafted by Rep. Jeb Hensarling of Texas, chairman of the House Financial Services Committee. Hensarling said that consumers have suffered as a result of Dodd-Frank.

"We see free checking cut in half at banks. Bank fees are up. The ranks of the unbanked have increased," he said. "For many credit-worthy borrowers, they are paying \$500 more for an auto loan. Have you tried getting a mortgage recently? They're harder to come by and they cost hundreds of dollars more to close."

Trump started his attack on Dodd-Frank soon after taking office, ordering a Treasury Department review of the complex rules that have put the legislation into practice.

One part of that review is expected to be released soon. It could provide a blueprint for regulators to rewrite the rules. But it would take legislation to revamp the law — and that's far from a certain prospect.

The American Bankers Association applauded the House vote, saying the bill would "fix financial rules that are holding back the U.S. economy, and doing little to enhance safety and soundness." Consumers Union criticized the vote and called on the Senate to "reject this rollback of critical consumer protections."

AARP also was among groups opposing the bill.

Rep. Walter Jones of North Carolina was the only Republican to vote against the bill.

The Federal Reserve has described the U.S. banking system as much more robust and resilient than it

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was before the financial crisis. Stronger capital requirements have improved banks' capacity to absorb economic shocks. But in the push to overhaul Dodd-Frank, Republicans said the biggest banks have only gotten bigger while local banks and credit unions are dwindling. Most of the reduction in the number of banks is due to mergers. Actual bank failures have fallen sharply since the end of the financial crisis, to about five or six a year. That compares with 157 at the peak in 2010.

Fed data show that the trend toward mergers far preceded the Dodd-Frank law. In the first quarter of 1984, there were 14,400 commercial banks in the U.S. As of May 1, there were 5,031.

Trump to evangelicals: We're 'under siege,' will be stronger

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump sought comfort in the figurative embrace of his evangelical supporters Thursday as the FBI director he recently fired told Congress about their conversations. The president told a religious gathering that "we're under siege" but will emerge "bigger and better and stronger than ever."

Trump made no reference to James Comey in his remarks to the Faith and Freedom Coalition's annual gathering. But hours before the president's first public comments of the day, Comey told the Senate intelligence committee that Trump tried to get him to pledge loyalty and drop an investigation into former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn.

Trump abruptly fired Comey last month. Trump's attorney said the president never asked Comey to stop investigating anyone.

In his remarks to the conference, Trump pledged to always support the right of evangelicals to follow their faith, which some conservatives believe is under attack by government.

"We will always support our evangelical community and defend your right and the right of all Americans to follow and to live by the teachings of their faith," the president told more than 1,000 activists meeting at a hotel across town from Capitol Hill, the scene of Comey's nationally televised testimony.

"And as you know, we're under siege, you understand that. But we will come out bigger and better and stronger than ever. You watch," Trump said. "You fought hard for me and now I'm fighting hard for all of you."

Trump spoke about his actions to safeguard religious freedom and continued, for the second straight day, to label congressional Democrats as "obstructionists" who are blocking his agenda. Yet it is differences of opinion among Republicans, who control both houses of Congress, that are standing in the way of what Trump wants to do on health care and other issues.

Trump mentioned his nomination of federal judge Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, which pleased Christian conservatives. He also has directed the IRS to ease up on using a rarely enforced rule barring partisan political activity by churches and tax-exempt organizations.

"As long as I'm president, no one is going to stop you from practicing your faith or preaching what is in your heart," he said.

Trump won an overwhelming 80 percent of the white evangelical vote in the November election. A recent Pew Research Center survey marking his first 100 days in office found three-fourths of white evangelicals approved of his performance as president. Thirty-nine percent of the general public held the same view.

Trump said restoring freedom also meant repealing and replacing the health care law enacted in 2010 by then-President Barack Obama, saying high deductibles and premiums have turned it into a "catastrophe." But a replacement health care bill has yet to clear Congress despite seven years of pledges by Republicans to scrap the law and start over, and despite the fact that the GOP has full control of the White House and Congress.

The Republican-controlled House passed a bill with the bare minimum of GOP votes and none from Democrats. Senate Republicans are working on their version of the bill, but are divided about the approach.

Trump overlooked the intraparty squabbles and blamed Democrats. He said Democrats have gone so far to the left in terms of opposing him that "they're bad right now for the country." Democrats oppose dismantling Obama's health law.

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The president urged the audience to help send more Republicans to Congress in next year's midterm elections, noting the GOP has just a 52-48 edge in the Senate and a slim advantage in the House.

"We have to build those numbers up because we're just not going to get votes" from Democrats, he said. "Sadly, we're going to have to do it as Republicans because we're not going to get any Democrat votes and that's a very, very sad, sad thing."

Trump ignored the fact that three Democratic senators voted to put Gorsuch on the Supreme Court.

Associated Press writers Jonathan Lemire in New York and Vivian Salama in Washington contributed to this report.

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Climate deal pull-out may speed up damage to Trump property

By JASON DEAREN and ALEX SANZ, Associated Press

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris climate agreement could accelerate damage to his family's real estate empire in the coming decades, especially his properties that lie just feet from the encroaching sea in low-lying South Florida.

The president's Mar-a-Lago estate, the soaring apartment towers bearing his name on Miami-area beaches and his Doral golf course are all threatened by rising seas, according to projections from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the South Florida Regional Climate Change Compact.

Severe damage could come sooner rather than later if the U.S. abandons the international agreement aimed at curbing emissions of heat-trapping gases that cause climate change.

"His properties live off of tourism — golfing communities, places where fat cats go and spend money and hobnob. It's all related to the tourism economy in South Florida," said Jim Cason, the Republican mayor of Coral Gables, a small city south of Miami that is aggressively planning for sea-level rise.

South Florida roadways already flood routinely during storms or unusually high "king tides," forcing cities to raise or move them and install expensive pumping systems.

"If the beaches are gone or the streets are flooded, it's going to affect the value of his property," Cason added. "So as a prudent businessman, he ought to conclude that the science is right and we need to prepare and plan."

Trump's 123-room Mar-a-Lago mansion and private club sit on a barrier island with the Atlantic Ocean to the east and Florida's Intracoastal Waterway to the west. If the sea level climbs by 2 or 3 feet in this century — an amount that falls squarely within scientists' predictions — that would push seawater onto the mansion's western lawns. Nearby roads and bridges used to access the property would also be affected.

At some point this century, water is expected to completely cover many of the state's barrier islands, especially during storms.

Trump's beloved National Doral Miami golf course is inland, but it's still at risk. As seas rise and Florida's water table rises, state geologists predict that Florida's porous limestone geology will allow water to easily percolate upward, flooding inland and coastal areas alike. If the course isn't severely damaged by flooding, there will be more days when it's too swamped for golfers.

The commander in chief's sea-level headache doesn't end in Florida. The Trump International Hotel & Tower in Waikiki Beach, Hawaii, is vulnerable too, as is his golf course in Ireland. The president also has business interests in properties near the ocean in Vancouver, Canada; Panama City, Panama; Uruguay and Mumbai, India, according to the Trump Organization website.

But the problem is especially fraught in Florida. Using the worst-case prediction of a 6-foot sea rise, real estate data provider Zillow estimates that 934,000 of the state's homes, or nearly 12.6 percent, will be underwater by 2100. In Palm Beach, which includes Mar-a-Lago, about 51 percent of homes worth a total of \$10.9 billion would be underwater, according to the data.

"We're already in for a sea-level rise that will put all low-lying coastal areas out of business, and that's

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using U.S. government projections," said Harold Wanless, chairman of the University of Miami's Department of Geological Science, who has been studying sea-level rise for decades. "At some point in the not-too-distant future, we'll be leaving Miami ... we're all moving somewhere."

So far, the threat of rising seas has not affected property values on Florida's coast. Flood insurance rates are already high because of hurricane risks, but that hasn't stopped the wealthy from investing in beachfront property.

Big changes will begin when the first bank denies a 30-year mortgage for a coastal property due to surging seas, leading to a "cascade" of other denials, Cason said.

Despite the scientific consensus that the climate is warming and sea levels rising, Trump has publicly called global warming a "hoax" perpetrated by the Chinese to gain an economic edge on the U.S.

Still, Trump has used the threat of climate change when it suited his business interests. He cited sea-level rise in a permit application to build a nearly 2-mile stone wall between the Trump International Golf Links and Hotel in Ireland and the Atlantic Ocean.

Local officials say they don't have the luxury of ignoring the problem.

"Inaction is not an option for us in South Florida," said Susanne Torriente, chief resilience officer for the City of Miami Beach. "The streets are flooding and days are getting warmer. It's not a partisan issue for us. At a local level, we're being much more practical."

Dearen reported from Gainesville, Florida.

Follow Jason Dearen on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/JHDearen> . Follow Alex Sanz at <http://www.twitter.com/AlexSanz> .

Verizon's first move with Yahoo is to ditch 2,100 jobs

By TALI ARBEL, AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — About 2,100 jobs are on the chopping block as Verizon prepares to combine Yahoo and AOL for a digital advertising offensive.

Yahoo's shareholders on Thursday approved the \$4.5 billion sale of its key businesses to Verizon. The deal is expected to close by Tuesday. AOL and Yahoo will cut 15 percent of the 14,000 workers they now employ, or about 2,100 jobs, said a person familiar with the matter who requested not to be identified discussing the cuts.

USING YAHOO

Verizon has a simple goal in buying Yahoo's core business: It wants to challenge Google and Facebook in the huge and lucrative field of digital advertising. But Verizon faces its own challenge in doing so, given that it will be competing against a slew of other companies also looking to break in.

Verizon wants to become a strong third choice for advertisers by adding Yahoo's popular sites and billion users worldwide to its own media business, which includes AOL and Verizon's home-grown go90 video service. It can place ads on those sites, and can also combine data from visitors to those sites with AOL's ad technologies and sales teams, and possibly also personal data from Verizon mobile customers such as location and other information, in order to better target ads at individuals.

Verizon has programs that use mobile-customer data for targeted ads and may combine that with data gathered by AOL and Yahoo. Verizon says customers can choose whether to participate.

Yahoo and AOL are "positioned to do better together than apart," Pivotal Research Group analyst Brian Wieser said.

But he is setting the bar low. While Verizon talks of growth from the deal, Wieser said "not declining would be a success. Five years from now, if the combined entity were the same size as it is today, I would consider that to be successful."

THE VISION

Verizon sees online ads — particularly targeted ads — as a potential new source of growth as the wire-

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less industry fights for U.S. users with lower prices and other discounts. Verizon has “essentially turned into a no-growth business,” said CFRA Research’s Angelo Zino. The ad business would be a “big deal” for Verizon if it goes well, he said.

Tim Armstrong, the former Google executive who joined AOL as CEO in 2009, has for years wanted to combine AOL with the long-declining Yahoo. Although AOL has big-name properties such as HuffPost and Engadget, it hasn’t been as big of an online destination as Yahoo’s mail, finance, sports and other properties.

The combined business, to be called Oath, will expand its news, sports, entertainment, finance and lifestyle coverage. Like everyone else, Oath will focus on video and mobile, where consumers increasingly spend their time online.

Armstrong says he wants Oath properties to be a place consumers “come and visit every day” and predicts users growing to 2 billion from 1.3 billion by 2020, with annual revenue of \$10 billion to \$20 billion from roughly \$7 billion today.

Lowell McAdam, CEO of New York-based Verizon, teased last month that this could set the stage for a new streaming video service, competing with the slew of internet-TV services already out there. Verizon already has a free mobile video service, go90, that isn’t well known.

ALTERNATIVES TO THE DUOPOLY

Facebook and Google together draw about half the world’s spending on digital ads, and in the U.S., they’re even more dominant. They’re also where the majority of mobile-ad dollars go, eMarketer data show.

The sway Facebook and Google hold for advertisers isn’t expected to change in the next few years. They had a head start on mobile. Yahoo has poured billions into acquisitions that have helped Yahoo make some leeway in mobile — but not enough. It’s gotten better at doing mobile ads, but it has had no major hit apps.

Still, AOL and Yahoo together provide a much-smaller No. 3 in the U.S. for advertisers looking to reach lots of people. But even if Verizon’s goal is to just be happy at No. 3, there are several much smaller players that also draw advertisers.

Snapchat is a niche hit with young people. Amazon has an under-the-radar ad business that supports its e-commerce dominance. Microsoft, which owns LinkedIn, is expected to grow its piece of the ad pie; Microsoft will be just behind the combined AOL-Yahoo in the U.S. once the deal closes. Twitter, although it’s sorting out its ad business, is a significant smaller player. Globally, several Chinese companies also rake in ad dollars.

And the combined company will also have to compete for people’s attention, and not just with other services that rely on ad dollars to survive. Popular sites like Amazon or Netflix also suck up time spent online, said eMarketer analyst Martin Utreras.

“They’ve acquired these two dinosaurs and you kind of wonder, can they be successful?” Zino said. That will depend on Verizon being able to convince marketers that they know more about consumers than anyone else, he said.

AP Technology Writer Michael Liedtke contributed to this story.

Pound falls, Asian shares higher as investors watch UK vote

By YURI KAGEYAMA, AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — The pound slumped in Friday’s trading as soon as signs emerged that Britain’s ruling Conservatives will have a weaker-than-expected showing in the country’s election. Global stock markets were mostly higher as investors shrugged off uncertainties.

KEEPING SCORE: France’s CAC 40 added 0.5 percent in early trading to 5,292.66, while Germany’s DAX rose 0.5 percent to 12,770.25. Britain’s FTSE 100 gained 0.8 percent to 7,509.52. U.S. shares were also set to drift higher, with Dow futures up 0.2 percent at 21,172. S&P 500 futures were also up 0.2 percent at 2,433.90.

ASIA’S DAY: Japan’s benchmark Nikkei 225 added 0.5 percent to finish at 20,013.26, while South Korea’s

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Kospi rose 0.8 percent to 2,381.69. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 was little changed, inching up less than 0.1 percent at 5,677.80. Hong Kong's Hang Seng slipped 0.1 percent to 26,030.29. The Shanghai Composite added 0.3 percent to 3,158.40.

BRITISH POLLS: The Conservative Party lost its majority in Parliament and pressure is mounting on British Prime Minister Theresa May to resign. The results could send Britain's negotiations to leave the European Union — due to start June 19 — into disarray.

CURRENCIES: The pound lost more than 2 cents versus the dollar seconds after the exit poll results were released, plunging from \$1.2955 to \$1.2752. It continued to bounce around that level and was recently trading at \$1.2721. The dollar fell to 110.36 yen from 109.90 yen late Thursday in Asia. The euro weakened to \$1.1182 from \$1.255.

THE QUOTE: "The possibility of a reduced Conservative majority or even a minority government is unlikely to have a significant impact on broader global markets," says Ric Spooner, chief market analyst at CMC Markets. "At this stage it is unclear what, if any, impact this will have on Brexit negotiations."

TESTIMONY WATCH: Markets have also been closely watching former FBI Director James Comey testify before U.S. Congress as part of the investigation into Russian meddling into the presidential election. Comey told Congress that President Donald Trump's administration spread "lies" about him and the FBI after his abrupt firing in May.

ROBOT WATCH: SoftBank stock surged 7 percent after it announced it was acquiring Boston Dynamics from Alphabet, Google's parent. Terms of the deal weren't disclosed, but the Japanese internet, technology and solar company, which offers the Pepper companion robot, said that the purchase shows robotics is a key part of its business.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude added 20 cents to \$45.84 a barrel. It wavered for much of the day before sliding 8 cents to settle at \$45.64 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, used to price international oils, rose 15 cents to \$48.01 per barrel in London.

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, June 9, the 160th day of 2017. There are 205 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 9, 1954, during the Senate Army-McCarthy hearings, Army special counsel Joseph N. Welch berated Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, R-Wis., for publicly attacking a member of Welch's law firm, Fred Fisher, asking McCarthy: "Have you no sense of decency, sir? At long last, have you left no sense of decency?"

On this date:

In A.D. 68, Roman Emperor Nero committed suicide, ending a 13-year reign.

In 1870, author Charles Dickens died in Gad's Hill Place, England.

In 1911, Carrie (sometimes spelled "Carry") A. Nation, the hatchet-wielding temperance crusader, died in Leavenworth, Kansas, at age 64.

In 1934, the first Walt Disney animated cartoon featuring Donald Duck, "The Wise Little Hen," was released.

In 1943, the federal government began withholding income tax from paychecks.

In 1946, Bhumibol Adulyadej (poo-mee-POON' ah-dool-yah-DAYD') became king of Thailand at age 18, beginning a 70-year reign that ended with his death in Oct. 2016.

In 1953, 94 people died when a tornado struck Worcester (WU'-stur), Massachusetts.

In 1969, the Senate confirmed Warren Burger to be the new chief justice of the United States, succeeding Earl Warren.

In 1973, Secretariat won the Belmont Stakes, becoming horse racing's first Triple Crown winner in 25 years.

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In 1986, the Rogers Commission released its report on the Challenger disaster, criticizing NASA and rocket-builder Morton Thiokol for management problems leading to the explosion that claimed the lives of seven astronauts.

In 1994, a fire destroyed the Georgia mansion of Atlanta Falcons receiver Andre Rison; his girlfriend, rap singer Lisa "Left Eye" Lopes, admitted causing the blaze after a fight, and was later sentenced to probation.

In 1997, the final episode of "Married... with Children" ("Chicago Shoe Exchange") aired on Fox, ending the series' 11-season run.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush, denounced by anti-American protesters on the streets of Rome, defended his humanitarian record as he met at the Vatican with Pope Benedict XVI, who expressed concern about "the worrisome situation in Iraq." Rags to Riches became the first filly to win the Belmont Stakes since 1905. Justine Henin (EH'-nen) claimed her third consecutive French Open title with a 6-1, 6-2 victory over Ana Ivanovic (ee-VAH'-noh-vich).

Five years ago: Spain became the fourth and largest country to ask Europe to rescue its failing banks (however, the bailout was averted). Commerce Secretary John Bryson got into two car accidents while driving in the Los Angeles area after suffering a seizure (he ended up resigning his post). Three people, including two former Auburn University football players, were shot to death at a pool party near the Alabama campus; suspect Desmonte Leonard was later convicted of capital murder and sentenced to life without parole. Maria Sharapova (shah-rah-POH'-vah) won the French Open, defeating Sara Errani 6-3, 6-2 to complete the career Grand Slam. Union Rags nipped Paynter at the wire in a photo finish to win the Belmont Stakes.

One year ago: President Barack Obama endorsed Hillary Clinton to succeed him and urged Democrats in a web video to line up behind her, declaring: "Look, I know how hard this job can be. That's why I know Hillary will be so good at it."

Today's Birthdays: Comedian Jackie Mason is 89. Media analyst Marvin Kalb is 87. Former baseball manager and player Bill Virdon is 86. Sports commentator Dick Vitale is 78. Author Letty Cottin Pogrebin is 78. Rock musician Mick Box (Uriah Heep) is 70. Retired MLB All-Star Dave Parker is 66. Film composer James Newton Howard is 66. Mystery author Patricia Cornwell is 61. Actor Michael J. Fox is 56. Writer-producer Aaron Sorkin is 56. Actor Johnny Depp is 54. Actress Gloria Reuben is 53. Gospel singer-actress Tamela Mann is 51. Rock musician Dean Felber (Hootie & the Blowfish) is 50. Rock musician Dean Dinning is 50. Musician Ed Simons is 47. Actress Keesha Sharp is 44. Country musician Shade Deggs (Cole Deggs and the Lonesome) is 43. Bluegrass singer-musician Jamie Dailey (Dailey & Vincent) is 42. Actress Michaela Conlin is 39. Actress Natalie Portman is 36. Actress Mae Whitman is 29. Actor Lucien Laviscount is 25.

Thought for Today: "Next to the slanderer, we detest the bearer of the slander to our ears." — Mary Catherwood, American novelist (1847-1901).