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- Frederick Area School Book**

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

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

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20

Senior Menu: Lemon chicken breast, creamy noodles, spinach salad, baked apple slices, whole wheat bread.

Jr. Legion: host Northville, 6 p.m., DH (postponed to July 27th in Northville, 6 p.m.)

21

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

Legion: State at Winner

Amateurs: hosts Northville, 7 p.m.

22

Legion: State at Winner

23

Legion: State at Winner

Summer Fest, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., City Park

23

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at 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.

Midwest Masonry & concrete Pumping

Greg Heilman, owner

405 E 1st Ave., Groton

Greg: 253/929-9137

Mike: 605/492-7041

midwestmasonry1@yahoo.com



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“Running is alone
time that
lets my
brain unspool
the tangles
that build up
over days.”

—Rob Haneisen

Chicken Soup
for the Soul

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The fog this morning created streaks of light from this street light.

Groton Garden Club

The Groton Garden Club met at the home of Linda Gengerke on July 17, at 5:30 p.m. Arlis Kluess assisted. Following supper the pledges were recited in unison and twelve members answered roll call with whether they read the "the Green Sheet". President Bev Sombke read the biography of the new state Garden Club president, Virginia Sandier of Mobridge. Yard of the week schedule is as follows July 23- Marg Overreacher , July 30, Elda Stange, August 6-Linda Anderson, August 13-Pat Larson, August 20, Eunice McColister. Unfinished business included a motion by Pam Rix to use our "Jimmies for Pines" money to plant a plot of Pinis in the SD National Forest in the Black Hills. The motion passed. The Andover Garden Club will be hosting the Northern District meeting at Pizza Ranch in Aberdeen, July 22, at 11:30am. Next meeting will be at the home of Pam Rix with Laurie Mitchell assisting. Linda Gengerke giving the program. Following the meeting Arlys Kluess gave the program on dealing with drought stress tips for lawn and gardens.

GFP Commission Proposes Petition Process to Restrict Recreational Use of Section 8 Nonmeandered Lakes

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission during the July Commission meeting adopted a proposal to establish a process where landowners can request the restriction of recreational use of nonmeandered waters for public use.

“The Legislature gave the GFP Commission the authority to decide on requests to restrict nonmeandered lakes. The process being considered by the Commission will give landowners who reside on one of the 27 Section 8 lakes the ability to formally make those requests,” stated Kelly Hepler, GFP department secretary.

Petitioning landowners must first complete and submit the petition form which can be found online at <http://gfp.sd.gov/fishing-boating/petition-form.aspx>. Landowners can complete and submit the form online or print and mail the form to GFP.

Upon submission of the form, the Commission will schedule and post a hearing date based on the availability of the landowner and the Commission. The hearing agenda will be publicly posted and the hearing will be open to the public. Prior to the Commission’s decision, the department will work with the landowner to determine temporary solutions to accommodate the landowner and the public.

Following the hearing, the Commission will adopt a resolution that grants the petition in part or full, or denies the petition stating its reasons for partial or complete denial. State law requires the Commission to consider privacy, safety and substantially affected financial interests of the landowner as well as history of use, water quality and quantity and the public’s interest in recreational use of the water.

Final adoption of the petition process rule will be considered at the Commission meeting in September, after which they will then accept and consider petitions for closing waters to public access.

The proposed rule will pertain to the following 27 Section 8 nonmeandered lakes:

- (1) Casey’s Slough, Cottonwood GPA, Dry #1, Dry #2, Round, and Swan in Clark County;
- (2) Deep and Goose in Codington County;
- (3) East Krause, Lynn, and Middle Lynn, in Day County;
- (4) North Scatterwood in Edmunds County;
- (5) Three Buck in Hamlin County;
- (6) Bullhead, Cattail-Kettle, and Opitz in Marshall County;
- (7) Island South in McCook County;
- (8) Keisz in McPherson County;
- (9) Grass, Loss, Scott, and Twin in Minnehaha County;
- (10) Twin in Sanborn County;
- (11) Cottonwood and Mud in Spink County;
- (12) Cottonwood in Sully County; and
- (13) Dog Ear in Tripp County, South Dakota.

“We continue to encourage conversations from landowners and those who hunt, fish and recreate in our state about the changes and the impacts of the Open Waters Compromise. Together, let’s all contribute to the conversations to ensure our state’s outdoor heritage is conserved and that the quality of life we all enjoy here is taken care of now and into the future,” concluded Hepler.

Salvaging Drought Stressed Corn in Mid-Summer

BROOKINGS, S.D. - Before harvesting drought stricken corn early to use for forage, SDSU Extension Beef Feedlot Management Associate, Warren Rusche urges producers to test for nitrates.

"As drought conditions deepen in South Dakota and the surrounding region, the likelihood of corn making a harvestable grain crop in some areas is so low that the best option is to take an early forage harvest," he said. "However, we need to make certain that we aren't just trading one problem for another by salvaging drought damaged corn."

Rusche explains that nitrate accumulation can be a very real issue during drought conditions which can lead to potential issues with abortions and/or death loss.

Testing prior to harvest is the safest approach.

Increasing the cutting height also helps as the greatest nitrate concentration tends to be in the lowest portion of the stalk.

Cutting for silage

Cutting drought-damaged corn for silage is hands down the best harvest option.

"There is little need to worry about moisture content of the crop plus there is the added advantage of potential reductions in nitrate concentrations during the ensiling process," Rusche says.

The feeding value, even of short, barren stalks is relatively high, as silage - as much as 70 to 80 percent of normal corn silage.

In extreme cases, Rusche says it may be necessary to first windrow the corn and use a pickup head for chopping if the crop isn't tall enough for conventional equipment.

Management principles still apply

All the management principles for harvesting quality silage still apply with a drought-stressed crop.

"In fact, a good fermentation is critical to reduce nitrate concentrations," Rusche said.

Harvesting at the right moisture content, using proven inoculants, achieving the correct density and excluding oxygen from the pile or bunker are important steps for maximizing silage value, regardless of the quality of the crop.

Dry baling?

How about harvesting the corn as dry hay in large round bales? Harvesting corn as dry hay in large bales is not recommended.

An SDSU trial conducted during the 2012 drought illustrates some of the reasons this is discouraged.

"Getting corn dry enough to bale poses a key obstacle. Even damaged corn can be much wetter than they look and thick stems take a long time to dry down," Rusche explains.

In the 2012 trial, the moisture content of the corn plants at the time of cutting was 68.2 percent. After field curing for 30 days, the crop dried down to 16.2 percent.

Extended curing times can result in increased losses of leaves and husks; which in fact happened in the 2012 trial. If the stalks do not completely dry down, the likelihood of spoilage is high.

Other options

Another option SDSU evaluated in 2012 was baling the corn at a higher moisture content with bale wrap (baleage).

"Using that technique was successful, to a point," Rusche says. "The resulting feed had 6.4 percent crude protein compared to 8.6 percent at the time of cutting, plus the resulting bales were extremely heavy and difficult to move.

Those factors plus the expense of the wrap and the hassle of disposing of the plastic lead one to conclude that harvesting corn as baleage is less than ideal.

Test forage for nitrates here

SDSU Extension Regional Centers have nitrate quick test kits available. Please call first.

Aberdeen Regional Extension Center (605-626-2870), Lemmon Regional Extension Center (605-374-4177)

Mitchell Regional Extension Center (605-995-7378), Pierre Regional Extension Center (605-773-8120)

Rapid City Regional Extension Center (605-394-1722), Sioux Falls Regional Extension Center (605-782-3290)

Watertown Regional Extension Center (605-882-5140), Winner Regional Extension Center (605-842-1267)

Today in Weather History

July 20, 1951: From the southeast residential section of Watertown, an estimated F2 tornado moved east, passing near Kranzburg and Goodwin. The storms destroyed one home and several barns.

July 20, 2002: An extremely strong severe thunderstorm moved over Rapid City and across the adjacent plains east of town. Downburst winds and the associated gust front caused damage along a nearly 30-mile long path. Extensive tree damage occurred throughout the eastern half of the city with countless trees and branches more than 24-inch diameter fell. Two roofs were torn off by the winds. Flying debris damaged numerous cars and buildings. The NWS office in downtown Rapid City measured an 80 mph wind gust, with meteorologists noting winds were sustained at 60 to 70 mph for 5 minutes. Ellsworth AFB wind equipment measured a 106 mph wind gust from the thunderstorm as it passed.

1915: A record high temperature of 115 degrees occurred in Yosemite Valley at the National Park Headquarters, California (around 4,000 feet elevation). This reading was the warmest day in a streak of 7 consecutive days of 110 degrees or higher at Yosemite Valley from the 19th through the 25th.

977: A flash flood hits Johnstown, Pennsylvania, on this day in 1977, killing 84 people and causing millions of dollars in damages. This flood came 88 years after the infamous Great Flood of 1889 that killed more than 2,000 people in Johnstown. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the History Channel. Click [HERE](#) for a YouTube video from WTAJ-TV.

2005: Hurricane Emily made landfall in northern Mexico. When the central pressure fell to 29.43 inches of mercury, and its sustained winds reached 160 mph on the 16th, Emily became the strongest hurricane ever to form before August, breaking a record set by Hurricane Dennis just six days before. It was also the earliest Category 5 hurricane ever recorded in the Atlantic basin, beating Hurricane Allen's old record by nearly three weeks.

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

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

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

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








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

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

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

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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
Patched Fog then Mostly Sunny	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 89 °F	Low: 64 °F	High: 91 °F	Low: 64 °F	High: 88 °F	Low: 59 °F	High: 80 °F



Mostly Sunny/Hot West Today



**Today - Highs Mid 80s east to Mid 90s west
Less Humidity**

Isolated Thunderstorms Southwest

**Tonight - Chance of Thunderstorms
Lows mid 60s to around 70**

**Friday – Upper 80s east to Upper 90s west
More Humidity
Chance of Thunderstorms**

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD



weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 7/20/2017 5:30 AM Central

Published on: 07/20/2017 at 5:52AM

Fog dissipating in the east early this morning. Otherwise, surface high pressure will bring less humid conditions today along with mostly sunny skies. There will be some isolated thunderstorms southwest in the region. Highs will be in the mid 80s east to mid 90s far west today. More heat and humidity for Friday along with chances of thunderstorms with highs mostly in the 90s.

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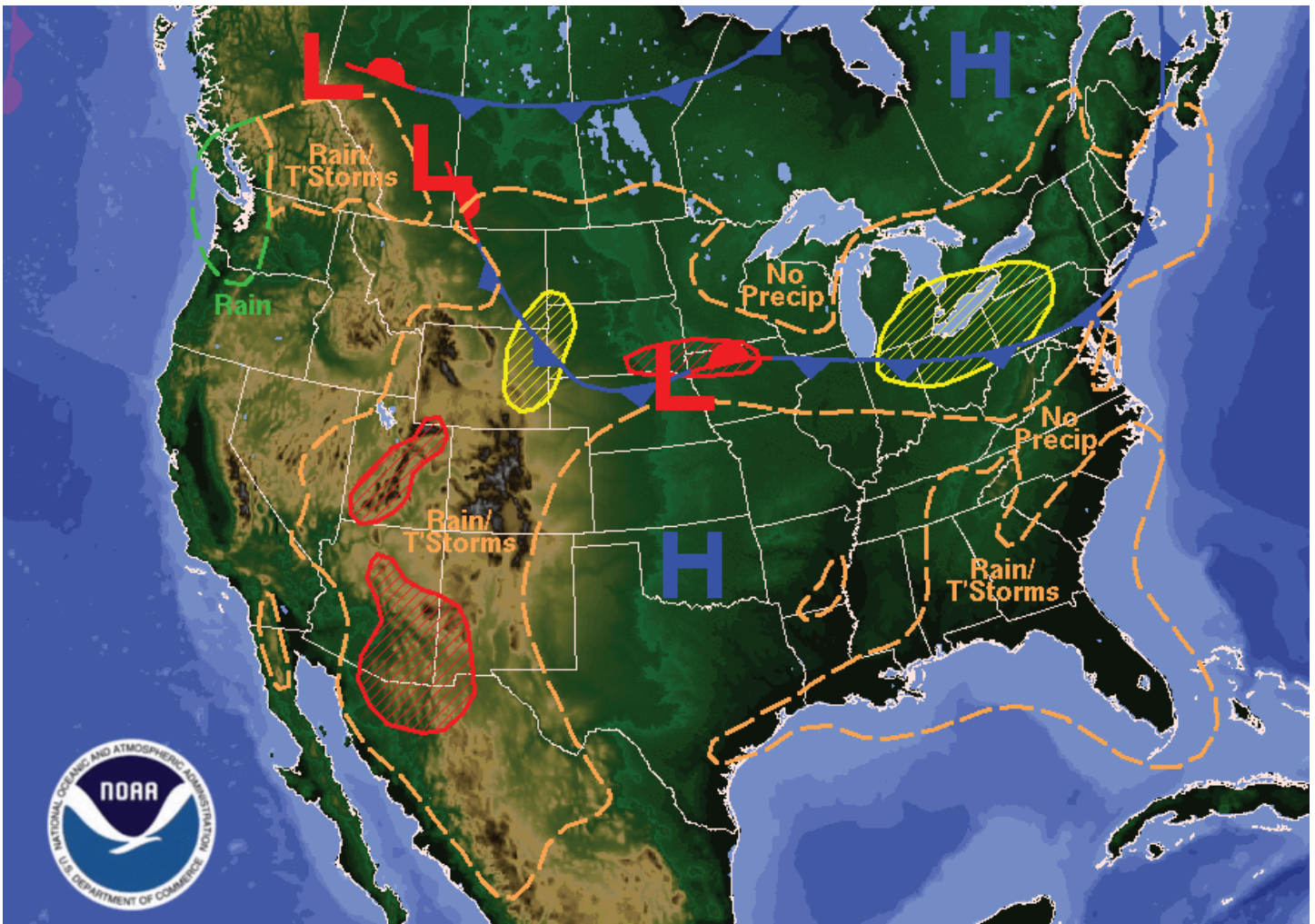
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 83.1 F at 6:57 PM
Heat Index:
Low Outside Temp: 61.9 F at 6:18 AM
High Gust: 22.0 Mph at 11:30 AM
Precip: 0.30

Today's Info

Record High: 111° in 1934
Record Low: 43° in 1970
Average High: 84°F
Average Low: 60°F
Average Precip in July: 2.06
Precip to date in July: 1.10
Average Precip to date: 12.90
Precip Year to Date: 6.87
Sunset Tonight: 9:14 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:05 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Thu, Jul 20, 2017, issued 4:56 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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RIGHT LIVING

When we are born, we know nothing, have no plan to follow and must be taught how to live. Before us are opportunities and options, choices and consequences that await us. Unfortunately, we do not have any "second chances" in life to live our lives over again. No matter how deep our desire may be or how desperate we are, we cannot relive one second nor retrace one step. Each step is final and every second gone forever.

David, however, says that the Good Shepherd will "lead us in paths of righteousness for His name's sake." Note carefully that He does simply want us to understand what righteousness is, but that He leads His own "in paths of righteousness for His name's sake" – so we can avoid many tragedies in life.

This is very important. The "righteousness" that David is speaking of here is not an end in itself. If it were, it would lead us to a state of "self-righteousness" – not godly righteousness. God does not want us to stray or walk in paths that are unrighteous because they will lead us to defeat and destruction, sin and shame. He wants to lead us in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Nothing is more important for us. Why?

Because of the Shepherd's name – His reputation – is at stake. Like it or not, His name will be respected or rejected by the way we live. Our lives say it all.

Alexander the Great once said to one of his soldiers, "Your name is Alexander and my name is Alexander. But you are bringing disgrace to my name. Change your name or change the way you live."

Prayer: Enable, us Father, to walk righteously in Your power for Your Name's sake, to honor You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 23:3 He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash
03-11-14-19-22
(three, eleven, fourteen, nineteen, twenty-two)
Estimated jackpot: \$352,000

Hot Lotto
08-23-26-36-47, Hot Ball: 8
(eight, twenty-three, twenty-six, thirty-six, forty-seven; Hot Ball: eight)
Estimated jackpot: \$8.44 million

Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: \$248 million

Powerball
50-51-59-61-63, Powerball: 4, Power Play: 5
(fifty, fifty-one, fifty-nine, sixty-one, sixty-three; Powerball: four; Power Play: five)
Estimated jackpot: \$187 million

Deadwood creates drone "no-fly zone" over historic downtown

DEADWOOD, S.D. (AP) — City leaders in Deadwood have approved a drone "no-fly zone" over the Old West gambling town's National Historic Landmark District.

The ordinance unanimously approved on Monday by the Deadwood City Commission effectively outlaws unmanned aerial devices over the entire downtown area in the western South Dakota city, the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2uIzkf8>) reported.

Rushmore Drones business owner Trevor Plett doubts the new rule will fly with the Federal Aviation Administration because the agency has sole responsibility for regulating U.S. airspace. Plett also said such ordinances add another layer of burdensome regulations to an emerging industry and create "an unwelcoming environment."

"A lot of the provisions in their ordinance try to outlaw what is effectively already outlawed by the FAA: flying over crowds, putting weapons on drones, not being allowed to fly above 400 feet. You already can't do that," Plett said. "Their main target is the hobbyist, and I am looking at this as a commercial operator who owns a business."

The ordinance bars flying a drone over any person not involved with the drone's operation, over vehicular traffic and over property not owned by the drone user unless the property owner consents. It also prohibits the use of a drone over any school, school yard, hospital, water treatment facility, law enforcement building or place of worship without consent.

Deadwood Mayor Chuck Turbiville said city officials are confident they made the right decision. Violation of the ordinance is a misdemeanor punishable by up to 30 days in jail and hundreds of dollars in fines.

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Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

The Daily Republic, Mitchell, July 18

To the farmers, thank you

The roads are dusty, cattle are overheating and the corn stalks are starving for a drink.

Welcome to South Dakota summer 2017.

Breaking news: It's hot and dry, folks. And it's really a drag.

While it's not considered to be the worst drought South Dakota has seen on record thus far, this summer is really taking a toll on our most important industry: Agriculture.

Farmers and ranchers wake up each morning and check the forecast to the same song.

Monday, hot and dry. Tuesday, hot and dry. Wednesday, you guessed it.

Most people realize the importance the agriculture industry is to the economic well-being of South Dakota, but this year's drought is magnifying exactly how critical that engine really is.

But more importantly, this dry period is weighing hard on the spirits of farmers and ranchers.

No rain means little to no hay crop.

No rain means extra work to keep cows and calves cool and healthy.

And no rain means no grain produced from the ground.

The harvest season is an immense amount of work, but it's the season that farmers work for. It's their paycheck. It's collecting the grain that feeds the world. This year, sadly, farmers are not looking forward to harvest compared to recent years when yields have been rather bountiful.

As we continue to pray for rain each Sunday in church, we continue thinking about the farmers who are battling through this drought each day.

It's difficult years like now that we appreciate South Dakota's agriculture industry more than ever. It's a full-time, all-the-time job. And even if this year finishes tough, farmers will drive back into the fields next year, plant their seeds and start over.

To the farmers and ranchers working through this heat with little signs of hope, thank you.

Thank you for everything.

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, Yankton, July 18

Township task force needs your input

Once again, Yankton County officials are asking for public input on the roads. Perhaps this time, they'll get some.

"This time" refers to a task force that's been established to look at the pros, cons and possibilities of townships within the county as a means of addressing at least a portion of the overall road/bridge issue. Studying this concept is a good idea, and it could provide a little help for Yankton County as it struggles just to keep up on its road work.

Organizing a township can be a practical and/or contentious move, which is why the task force is seeking the public's thoughts on the matter.

The County Commission sought public feedback last year when it made a second try at imposing a levy to help pay for road and bridge maintenance. The item was placed on the agenda of most every commission meeting held last summer. But overall, there was little in the way of feedback from the public — at least until the public voted to reject the levy, sending the process back to square one again.

The time to step up and get involved is now, not later. And, while getting involved just enough to say "no" on the ballot is your right, it isn't particularly practical or constructive in regards to finding a long-term solution.

After last year's levy defeat, this task force was formed to examine townships within the county. Very broadly speaking, a township is a local governing apparatus in which, in this case, residents pay for the maintenance of their own roads; thus, their money goes directly to the roads they use, and those roads also come off the county's to-do list. While there are already some townships in Yankton County, others

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remain unorganized and, therefore, are under the county's care, which stretches a slim road budget even further.

Residents in an area have every right to remain unorganized and stay on the county's road budget. However, when they do this, their roads are classified as "county secondary," meaning they are not the top priority for the county when it comes to road maintenance. That's a big drawback of staying unorganized.

Meanwhile, organizing a township comes with its own burdens and responsibilities, although it does offer local control.

Doing one or the other is not a simple decision, which is why the task force wants the public to weigh in on the subject.

Time to do this is running out, but it hasn't vanished. The task force has two more meetings scheduled — on July 31 and Aug. 14 — at the County Government Center before it organizes its information and formulates recommendations for the County Commission. County residents are stakeholders in this, and they need to be involved. This is the next chapter in Yankton County's roadway saga, and it is important to weigh in. It's all about your money and your roads, not to mention your future.

Rapid City Journal, Rapid City, July 18

Sanford Lab gets the right type of attention

GOOD: It was quite a week for the Sanford Underground Research Facility in Lead. On Wednesday, the lab that is working to unravel some of the mysteries of the universe received a social media boost when Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg decided to visit western South Dakota. After getting a tour of the former Homestake Gold Mine, Zuckerberg — who has 93 million Facebook followers — did a 13-minute video post from a mile below the ground that attracted 2.5 million views within 24 hours. The Journal then reported on Sunday that a multimillion-dollar conveyor belt will be built at the lab to remove 875,000 tons of rock in three years as part of the lab's Deep Underground Neutrino Experiment, which has garnered the attention of scientists from around the world. Last week's news and the visit from Zuckerberg demonstrate the underground lab clearly has a rock-solid future as a research institution.

BAD: The actions of our public servants are confounding at times. One of those times is now if you live in southwestern Fall River County, where some residents are understandably concerned about seismic testing for oil and natural gas deposits scheduled to be conducted in an area where explosive consequences are not all that far-fetched. The 46,000 acres — which includes 23,000 acres of the Buffalo Gap National Grassland — that will be subjected to the testing includes the former Black Hills Army Depot, a storage site for weapons during World War II. Local residents have expressed concerns that the testing might cause problems in an area where ammunition, bombs, rockets and even chemical weapons are stored. Those worries have largely gone unheeded by U.S. Forest Service officials, who did, however, decide to prohibit testing until Aug. 1 to protect raptors and sharp-tailed grouse now nesting there. I guess one can say the local residents there are third in the pecking order in their home county.

UGLY: The Federal Aviation Administration is concerned that Deadwood's proposed "drone no-fly zone" ordinance will chip away at its sweeping authority to regulate all air space. The Deadwood City Commission recently approved the first reading of the ordinance that prohibits drones from flying over the downtown, schools, churches, and the water treatment and storage facilities with some exceptions. The penalties include fines and as long as 30 days in the county jail. The idea is to protect the privacy of residents and deter those operators whose reckless acts can endanger public safety. Even as the FAA seeks to discourage or stop Deadwood from the prying eyes of drone operators, the agency itself reports a surge in drone sightings, including cases this summer when they interrupted the efforts of firefighters battling wildfires. Drones are becoming a problem and the FAA is not keeping up, which is why towns are forced to consider taking matters into their own hands.

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Panel: Dakota Access-style protests could become commonplace

By JAMES MacPHERSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Well-funded and organized protests like the one involving the disputed Dakota Access oil pipeline may become commonplace, officials said Wednesday as they urged the industry to prepare for such activity.

The struggle over the recently completed \$3.8 billion pipeline was discussed at an annual oil industry conference in Bismarck, with a panel dissecting what the industry learned. Native Americans and other opponents worried about the pipeline's effect on the environment established a massive encampment in North Dakota to protest it.

"The opponents will not rest," said Craig Stevens, a spokesman for Grow America's Infrastructure Now, a pro-pipeline coalition of businesses, trade associations and labor groups.

Stevens called such protests the "new normal" and the "new cost of doing business." He said pipelines will be targeted by those wanting to stop the use of fossil fuels, by attempting to "kill the heart by cutting the veins." Stevens said the oil industry must battle what he called misinformation about pipeline projects while touting benefits, such as jobs.

"It is important for us to engage the opposition ... and provide context to the overall debate," Stevens said.

The Dakota Access pipeline began moving North Dakota oil to Illinois on June 1. But a judge has ordered the Army Corps of Engineers to do more study on its impact on the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, which believes the pipeline threatens sacred sites and the Missouri River that provides drinking water for millions of people. Texas-based developer Energy Transfer Partners maintains it's safe.

Troy Eid, a former U.S. attorney in Colorado who specializes in Native American law, said tribal consultation is key in building such projects and something the industry must take "much more seriously."

Based on information supplied by ETP in court documents, delays have cost it more than a half-billion dollars.

Companies can save money in the long run by doing more work with tribes "on the front end," he said. One-fifth of all oil production comes from in and around American Indian reservations, Eid said.

"Tribes are going to be in this game," he said.

Keystone XL opponent plans appeal to South Dakota high court

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — An attorney for a group fighting the Keystone XL pipeline says the organization plans to appeal a South Dakota judge's decision upholding state regulators' approval for the pipeline to cross the state.

Dakota Rural Action attorney Robin Martinez said Wednesday that the conservation and family agriculture group plans to raise the issue to the South Dakota Supreme Court. Others could also appeal.

Judge John Brown last month affirmed a Public Utilities Commission decision that was challenged by Native American tribes, landowners and others. Martinez says the high court will have an opportunity to look at issues that affect the pipeline and how the commission operates.

The project would move crude oil from Canada across Montana and South Dakota to Nebraska, where it would connect with existing pipelines feeding refineries along the Gulf Coast.

Complaint: Woman plays dead to avoid continued assault

GREGORY, S.D. (AP) — A Gregory man is accused of severely beating a woman who said she played dead in order to end the assault.

Court documents say 35-year-old Whitney Tyler Covey told investigators the woman "got what she deserved" in a July 13 assault that went on for 45 minutes. The charges against Covey accuse him of slamming the woman's head against a cast iron stove and door frame and biting and strangling her.

The woman told investigators Covey threatened to kill her throughout the assault. She said she had to play dead and was later knocked out. A complaint says the woman awoke and was able to flee and call police.

The Daily Republic (<http://bit.ly/2uaZjdB>) says Covey is charged with six felonies, including attempted second-degree murder. Covey's attorney did not immediately return a call seeking comment.

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

South Dakota and Nebraska fighting common foe: Zebra mussels

By DILLON DWYER, Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — Stop aquatic hitchhikers! Zap the zebra! Clean, drain and dry!

You might be familiar with some of these rallying cries if you've recently spent time near Lewis and Clark Lake or the Missouri River along the South Dakota and Nebraska borders. They are references to multiple efforts being deployed to combat the spread of zebra mussels, aquatic invasive mollusks that have made their way into regional waters, the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan (<http://bit.ly/2vuawUj>) reported.

"When I started working awareness events nine years ago, the vast majority of people were confused as to why we were doing them," said Paul Lepisto of the Izaak Walton League of America, a wildlife conservation group. "They thought that we didn't have to worry about invasive species in this part of the United States. They had heard about zebra mussels in the Great Lakes, but they were shocked to hear that they were in the Missouri River.

"The fact is that the threat of these things isn't coming anymore. They are here and people have to make changes to the way they do recreation. It doesn't matter if you are fishermen or recreational boater; we all have to work together to keep the water healthy and productive for the next generations."

With zebra mussels making their permanent home in the Missouri River and Lewis and Clark Lake, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks and Nebraska Game and Parks Commissions have stepped up their efforts to educate the public and prevent the further spread of aquatic invaders to other bodies of waters in the regions through the promotion of awareness programs and the enforcement of stricter laws and guidelines regarding boating in both states.

Zebra mussels originated in the Black and Caspian seas near southern Russia and Ukraine, but have since invaded North America, Great Britain, Italy, Spain and Sweden by attaching themselves to ships and passing into international waters undetected. One adult female alone can produce 1 million eggs in a lifetime and zebra mussel veliger, or larvae, are microscopic and can attach to almost anything in the water.

"The impact that invasive species have on a body of water once they get in it is nearly irreversible," said Lepisto. "They are virtually impossible to eradicate. The old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure is so true with zebra mussels. If we can keep zebra mussels out of our lakes and rivers, those waters will never have to deal with the same problems that hinder recreation in already-contaminated waters."

The main problems caused by zebra mussels are usually related to structural damage. The mussels can range in size from microscopic to nearly two inches long with a tendency to cluster up on structures as they multiply. With the way that they group up together, zebra mussels can easily clog intake pipes and boat motors. They have also been known to grow on the bodies of other aquatic species like crayfish and native mussels causing them harm.

"The biggest problem with zebra mussels at this point is that they damage infrastructure because they attach and layer up on anything that is in the water for an extended period of time," said Jeff Schuckman of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

It isn't just structural damage that zebra mussels are causing on parts of the Missouri River, though. It is also relatively unknown yet what impact the mussels will have on native animal and plant species and the overall ecosystem and food chain in the region.

"A zebra mussel can filter up to a liter of water per day," Schuckman said. "If you start to multiply that by the number of zebra mussels out there, that is a pretty big number. We don't know what effect they are having on the phytoplankton and zooplankton levels in the area. They are working at the bottom level of the food chain and could cause disruptions in the future."

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One of the ways that Nebraska is working to help educate the public and prevent the spread of zebra mussels is through the implementation of a \$15 aquatic invasive species stamp that must be purchased by out-of-state boaters before launching their boats into Nebraska waters. While the stamp is required for out-of-state boaters, residents are also required to pay an extra fee that goes toward the aquatic invasive species program when they register their boats every three years.

"The money from the stamp and fees goes toward paying the wages of invasive species technicians working across the state," Schuckman said. "Right now, in the northeast district of Nebraska, we have three technicians who are responsible for doing boat inspections, handing out literature and collecting veliger samplings."

As a separate measure of defense against the spread of zebra mussels, Nebraska and South Dakota both promote the concepts of cleaning, draining and drying boats before leaving a body of water. The states ask that individuals clean their boats by removing plants, animals and mud from the craft and thoroughly washing all equipment that came into contact with water. Boaters are also asked to drain all water from their wells, bilge, ballast and other equipment before leaving.

If a boat isn't able to completely drain its live well, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission recommends a 20-minute soak in vinegar to kill zebra mussel veligers. The final step is to let all equipment dry completely before launching into another body of water. Along with cleaning, draining and drying boats, the states also ask that fishermen dispose of their live bait in the trash and not the water supply.

"I think that people are taking this very seriously now," Lepisto said. "They are realizing the way we used to do things isn't the way we can do them anymore. The reality of zebra mussels is that now we must involve those extra steps every time we are done enjoying the river to make sure that the future of our recreation stays available. If we clean, drain and dry our equipment every time we come off the water, our chances of spreading zebra mussels is almost none."

Decontamination stations are another way that both Nebraska and South Dakota are working to help prevent the spread of zebra mussels from one body of water to another. The stations are operated by trained technicians and designed to remove both adult zebra mussels and veligers.

"Our technicians conduct a hot flush with 140-degree water for a three-to-four-minute period to kill any veligers and then they power wash any attached mussels," said Schuckman. "We are trying to get boat shops trained to do decontaminations in Nebraska in case we aren't around at the time."

Nebraska laws make it illegal to leave an area with an aquatic invasive species attached to your boat. If a boat is contaminated by an aquatic invasive species, it has to be decontaminated by the Nebraska Game and Parks or a trained boat shop. The only other option is for that boat to be impounded for up to 30 days.

It is illegal in both South Dakota and Nebraska to transport water from one body to another. Both states are working to further develop their aquatic invasive species laws and practices to help ensure that lakes, rivers and streams are protected for future use.

"We are all in this together and we all have to pull in the same direction to keep these invasive species out of our other waters," said Schuckman.

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

Vacant storefronts uncommon at Sioux Falls' Empire Mall

By PATRICK ANDERSON, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The empty storefront where Best Buy Mobile used to be is already reserved for a newcomer.

The spot, in a corner of the Empire Mall's open and sky-lit central court, will eventually host jewelry store Ashcroft & Oak. A candy store is opening down the hall in the spot of an old Footlocker and an escape room is opening in another unused space on the other side of the building.

Like its counterparts across the country, the Empire Mall is subject to shifts and changes in the retail industry. Movement is a part of life. Closure happens.

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But unlike malls in other cities, vacant storefronts are uncommon.

"We continue to see increases," mall spokeswoman Kirsten Schaffer told the Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2uaLYTI>).

The Empire Mall seems almost immune to the national trend of struggling malls.

As experts predict dark times ahead for shopping centers across United States, mall leadership in Sioux Falls has worked to make the Empire Mall a destination for surrounding communities, adding to the support it receives from the city's steadily growing population.

Competition with online retail giants such as Amazon changed the game for brick-and-mortar retailers across South Dakota and the rest of the U.S. Online vendors are often a culprit of City Hall and state lawmakers looking to justify the underperforming sales tax hurting government coffers.

In South Dakota, the weaker-than-expected shopping habits could also be due to the state's heavy dependence on agriculture. Farmers are still struggling from a drastic decrease in the price of corn and other grains, leaving them and others in the state with less disposable income.

Chains have been some of the most affected, though that's left an opening for locally owned independent retailers, said Shawn Lyons, executive director of the South Dakota Retailers Association.

"No question, that's been tough to see some of those national retailers move out," Lyons said.

Sioux Falls has also suffered from sales tax woes, with two straight years of lackluster performance on the money it collects from local shoppers.

Meanwhile, national retail chains are entering bankruptcy court at an unprecedented rate, and major department stores such as JC Penney are closing locations across the U.S., many of which once served as anchor tenants for malls.

But at the Empire, staffers are more concerned about the bottleneck effect of construction on Louise Avenue. However, it's still not enough to keep many shoppers away, and it's temporary, Schaffer said.

"I would still say we are really strong," Schaffer said.

Mall staff don't track traffic, but Schaffer believes the number of shoppers has increased in the last few years since a change in ownership and renovation.

That strength is no doubt a draw for national retailers, Lyons said.

"Even if there are struggles of changing of their business model elsewhere, for the time being, Sioux Falls is important to their continued success and growth," Lyons said.

The Empire Mall is not safe from closures. When a national chain evaporates into nothing, there's no sparing the local branch.

Gordman's announced a liquidation of all of its locations, though its Sioux Falls store remains open. Vanity closed in March after the national chain announced bankruptcy, after departures of Limited, Deb Shops and Wet Seal.

But the mall has managed to remain a haven for other embattled retailers, even as their ranks grow. Aeropostale, Eddie Bauer, American Eagle, GameStop and Rue21 have all experienced financial distress and national closures in recent years. So has Caribou, for that matter, which closed dozens of stores a few years ago after a merger with a California-based chain.

Then there are the anchor stores. JC Penney is shuttering more than 100 stores nationally, but its Empire Mall location remains open in spite of liquidations in Mitchell, Pierre, Watertown and Yankton. Macy's and Sears have gone through similar painful reductions on a national scale, though their respective locations at the local mall have so far been spared.

Some stores at the Empire Mall are among the top performers in their chain, Schaffer said.

"When you're walking into the mall, you're walking into some of the best of the company," she said.

The Empire Mall gets regular shoppers from a 75-mile radius.

But the mall and other businesses on the Empire-owned campus draw shoppers from as far away as Iowa, Nebraska and Minnesota. The mall's ability to draw customers is partly due to Sioux Falls' status as a "regional hub," Lyons said.

"The Empire Mall has always been one of the biggest tourist attractions in our state," Lyons said.

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The mall's sprawling campus west of Louise Avenue spans from 41st to 49th streets and includes Hy-Vee, Wendy's and Burger King. The shopping center and its partner sites are a destination in their own right, but they also benefit from Sioux Falls' growing health care industry, Schaffer said.

"This is the place where you can bring your whole family," Schaffer said.

Not only are the city's hospitals driving the growing workforce by bringing in new nurses and doctors - and their families - they also bring in out-of-town patients for care. Families in town with a loved one will head to the mall to pass time, Schaffer said.

Perhaps a bigger influence on the mall's success is the population of the metro area that surrounds it. The four-county area adds thousands of people every year, crossing the quarter-million mark last year.

Even given the competition from online retailers, brick-and-mortar stores do well when a community's population is increasing, said Jason Ball, president and CEO of the Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce.

He's hearing good things from the Chamber's real estate partners.

"They continue to see a very strong retail play here because retail follows rooftops," Ball said.

Mall staffers, including ownership group Simon Property Group, have worked to make the shopping center a destination. They're actively looking for newer business models to offer shoppers an improved experience.

There was also a reinvestment in the space a year after Simon took over in 2012, with the new owners putting money into updating the mall's interior, including new ceiling materials, new furniture and removing the giant doughnut-shaped structure that once took up space in the center court.

Built in 1975, the mall has gone through a series of physical transformations. The most recent remodel by Simon helped "modernize" the space and attracted top retailers such as LOFT, Sephora and White House Black Market.

Amy Stockberger picked the mall when it came to finding a new location for her growing escape room business.

Just months after opening Escape 605 behind Target at 3718 S. Westport Ave., Stockberger and the company's other co-owners were in the process of expanding. They got a call from mall staff as they were looking at adding space.

Stockberger realized an opportunity to take advantage of the mall's strong customer base. But she also saw a chance for her business to offer something new to the shopping center.

"We knew that trend of malls dying across the United States," Stockberger said. "Sioux Falls is just the complete opposite."

The Empire Mall has been working to give shoppers more than a venue to purchase items over the counter. Escape 605 and other businesses coming into the mall offer experiences.

Beginning with the \$12 million remodel in 2013 and the addition of a more modern design and features such as the children's play area, the mall has continued to add features that provide visitors with something to do in addition to something to buy.

It's a philosophy that better fits the spending habits of the current generation. Market research conducted by Harris Poll in 2014 shows three in four Millennials pick experiences over possessions when it comes to spending money.

This year, the mall brought in two high-tech videogame-like rides that allow visitors a chance to interact with virtual reality movies. The Xtreme 7D Adventure station is in the far western wing of the mall.

Escape 605 is scheduled to open in July, but it's not the only newcomer. The Candy Clubhouse is opening near the food court, and owner Rob Jatton wants his business to be a place for the whole family to spend time.

Jatton plans to blend in plenty of nostalgia for adults by selling older toys from the 1980s, in addition to hundreds of varieties of soda and masses of sugary treats. A big Jelly Belly display will give visitors a chance to choose between nearly 80 flavors, Jatton said.

He envisions his store as an oasis for mall patrons who might be waiting on other shoppers.

"They want a place to go do something else," Jatton said. "An easy place to disappear when somebody else is shopping."

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

Sioux Falls' 'Big Bang' a decade later

By STU WHITNEY, Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — It was 10 years ago that a crowd gathered at the Washington Pavilion on a Saturday afternoon to officially say goodbye to the past.

As the lights dimmed and a deep voice intoned, "A gift has been given to you," the notion of Sioux Falls as a forgettable part of flyover country was replaced by a city poised to move from pause to fast forward.

Sioux Valley Hospitals and Health System CEO Kelby Krabbenhoft announced the seismic shift, taking the stage on Feb. 3, 2007, to announce one of the largest donations ever given to a medical institution and easily the most significant in South Dakota history, the Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2u1JBzC>) reports.

"Pay careful attention," he told a gathering that included civic luminaries and hospital employees. "History is being made, and you are witnessing it."

The \$400 million gift from billionaire philanthropist and credit card magnate T. Denny Sanford was a "big bang" that changed the name of Sioux Valley to Sanford Health, established a network of worldwide clinics and initiated a research center with the stated goal of curing a major disease, which turned out to be Type 1 diabetes.

Just as importantly, it helped signify Sioux Falls' rise in regional stature while sparking a competitive relationship with Avera Health, setting the stage for a burgeoning health care market with national and global reach.

Not everything was a smashing success. Some parts of the plan, such as a climate-controlled dome over parts of the Sanford campus, were dismissed as impractical, and researchers are still seeking that major diabetes breakthrough. Critics decried the avalanche of Sanford-named buildings and ventures, festooned with self-congratulatory statues, as contrary to the city's more modest heritage.

But no one denies that the donation sparked growth. And lots of it.

In the decade since "The Gift," Sanford Health has seen its annual revenue rise from \$1.3 billion to \$4.4 billion while its reach increased from 60,000 square miles to 250,000. The health system, which completed a merger with Fargo-based MeritCare in 2012, has 45 hospitals and 28,000 employees, up from 24 and 12,000 in 2007.

None of it would have been possible without the timely convergence of two outsized personalities, one with a big-ticket vision of how to revolutionize health care and the other with the means to make it happen.

Forging a lasting relationship with Denny Sanford, the First Premier Bankcard founder whose current wealth is listed as \$2.1 billion, allowed Krabbenhoft to turn words into reality, from a castle-like children's hospital and sports training empire to cutting-edge genetics research.

The bond between the 6-foot-6 Krabbenhoft and the diminutive Sanford is such as that nearly \$1 billion has already been donated, with a 2014 gift of \$125 million setting the stage for a Sanford Imagenetics Research Center to open this fall.

After an exclusive interview with Argus Leader Media alongside Krabbenhoft, the 81-year-old Sanford also floated the likely possibility that he will leave another \$1 billion to the health system as part of his will when he passes away.

"Trust and respect are at the basis of every good relationship," Sanford said of his connection to the hospital executive. "If either one of them is missing, it becomes, 'Take a hike, Jack.' I absolutely trust this guy and respect him so much, and my goal is to make a difference. Not just put my name on something, but make a difference."

He then shot a mischievous look at Krabbenhoft and added: "And he's a very good pickpocket. Probably the best in town."

VISION TAKES SHAPE

Krabbenhoft arrived in Sioux Falls in December 1996 after a successful stint as president of Freeman

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Hospital in Missouri. At the time, Sioux Valley Hospital was a formidable regional health care entity with \$260 million in annual revenue, but the new boss wanted more.

A former college basketball player and son of a microbiology professor from Mankato, Minnesota, Krabbenhoft saw his return to the Upper Midwest as the beginning of a new era, one that would move at a brisk and ambitious pace.

With an inner circle that included administrators Becky Nelson and Dave Link, Krabbenhoft built an integrated system with a clinic of hospital-employed doctors, a health care plan, foundation and regional medical outlets.

The long-range outlook featured a "centers of excellence" strategy that focused on established revenue drivers such as orthopedics, oncology and cardiology. But a key component was missing.

"We wanted a free-standing children's hospital, which didn't exist in South Dakota," says Krabbenhoft.

One of the reasons that none existed was that children's hospitals are seen as a daunting industry challenge - expensive to build and not bursting with profit potential.

When asked by Sioux Valley staffers how he planned to make it happen, Krabbenhoft's response was hopeful and somewhat cryptic.

"It's going to take a white knight," he told them.

FINDING A FORTUNE

Thomas Denny Sanford grew up in St. Paul and was heavily influenced by his father, William, who ran a wholesale garment business while serving the role of both parents.

"He never made a huge amount of money," says Denny Sanford, whose mother, Edith, died of breast cancer when he was 4. "But he still gave back half of what he made to help his brothers and sisters."

Sanford attended the University of Minnesota and later started a construction technology company that he sold in 1982 at age 46, walking away with \$20 million. Rather than rest on his laurels, he purchased United National Bank four years later and formed First Premier Bank and Premier Bankcard in Sioux Falls, taking full advantage of South Dakota's lax usury laws to master the subprime credit card industry.

By the late 1990s, Sanford's soaring net worth allowed him to start donating toward children's health causes, including \$2 million to the Children's Home Society in 1998.

"I could never have accomplished what I've accomplished in any other state other than South Dakota," says Sanford, who recalled his father's example and pledged to give away most, if not all, of his fortune.

In 2003, he had an agreement with the University of Minnesota to donate \$35 million toward a new football stadium for his alma mater -- a deal that included naming rights. When project changes arose and the price tag changed, Sanford walked away in frustration, seeking his next venture.

"He indicated to me that he was looking for a different place to put the funds that he had mentally earmarked for the University of Minnesota," says Sioux Falls lawyer Dave Knudson, part of the billionaire's representation. "And he wanted to do it in Sioux Falls."

Knudson, who had also worked with Krabbenhoft and Sioux Valley, suggested Sanford meet with the hospital CEO to hear about future projects, including the proposed children's hospital.

Before Sanford even said yes, Krabbenhoft was shaping his pitch.

That first meeting occurred in 2003 at Sanford's winter home in Scottsdale, Arizona, where Krabbenhoft shared his vision of a state-of-the-art children's hospital shaped like a castle that would put Sioux Valley at the forefront of pediatrics in the region.

Along with marketing director Cindy Morrison, Krabbenhoft packaged the pitch around an ornate wooden box containing project highlights and a video message asking Sanford to "imagine the possibilities" of their partnership.

"We wanted to show heritage and legacy," says Krabbenhoft of that meeting. "It was the first time I ever shook his hand. I told him, 'You know, we'd really like to make this happen. If you'll give us \$16 million, I promise I'll raise the other \$16 million in 18 months, and we'll get it done.'"

Satisfied with how the conversation went, Krabbenhoft started walking back to his group's private plane when he saw Sanford's car driving out to the tarmac.

"My first feeling was, 'Uh-oh,' because this was all new at the time," says Krabbenhoft. "But Denny rolls

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down the passenger window and says, 'You're serious? You'll get that match done and build this castle?' And I gave him my word. So he says, 'OK, let's do it.' And we loved the sound of that phrase."

SEARCHING FOR MILESTONES

As Denny Sanford's gifts became more significant, they included matching components or milestone reports to ensure promises were kept. The man doesn't donate without expecting results.

In 2005, he gave \$15 million to Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, for an outpatient pediatric specialties center. Soon after, he teamed with Sioux Valley to place \$20 million with the University of South Dakota Medical School, which became the Sanford School of Medicine.

"It was a maturing of his vision for himself as a philanthropist," says Knudson. "He saw it not just as giving money but as becoming a major part of his life's work."

Meanwhile, Krabbenhoft's mind was working overtime. A hard-driving executive who saw the importance of expanding Sioux Valley's reach beyond the Upper Midwest, he saw Sanford's increasing involvement as a possible game-changer.

By October 2005, Sioux Valley had raised matching funds for the children's hospital and was preparing to break ground, which raised a nagging question: Where does the vision go from here?

"I was getting ready to go to Colorado to tell Denny that we'd made the money match on the \$16 million and construction was going to start, so I had a great story to tell him," says Krabbenhoft. "And I felt there was an opportunity to say to him that maybe we should think bigger. I just got the sense that he didn't want to just do what everybody else was doing. It was this feeling of, 'Let's do it unique. Let's do it big.'"

Cindy Morrison recalls working late one night when Krabbenhoft passed by her office and mentioned almost casually that he was planning to ask Denny Sanford for \$400 million.

"My reaction was like, 'What? Are you kidding me?'" says Morrison, now vice president of public policy at Sanford. "But that's what you see with two big personalities. You had Kelby, who had the guts to ask for \$400 million, and you had Denny, who had the ability to provide it. And what came next was the big bang."

GIFT FOR THE AGES

The \$400 million figure didn't come out of nowhere. Krabbenhoft calls it "math of the objectives" as he plotted out a Mayo Clinic-like center for pediatrics. He envisioned a groundbreaking research project, a network of children's clinics and a "futuristic campus" including a climate-controlled dome to help recruit talent to a harsh South Dakota climate.

"I didn't want to ask for a chunk of money and then have to ask for another chunk the next year," Krabbenhoft says. "We were looking at a kind of endowment situation, where you put 5 percent return on a certain amount to fund your objectives, and it came out to be \$400 million. It wasn't magic. It was math."

The meeting started as an update on the children's hospital during a visit to Sanford's home in the mountains of Vail, a friendly give-and-take around the kitchen table that also included Nelson and Sioux Valley Foundation president Brian Mortenson.

After offering his update, Krabbenhoft pivoted to a pitch on the network of pediatric clinics and a cutting-edge research center with the goal of curing a major disease during Sanford's lifetime, catering to the billionaire's milestone-based mentality.

When the figure of \$400 million came up, Sanford "sort of gasped or choked a little," recalls Krabbenhoft. Then he looked at Krabbenhoft and said, 'Do you know the magnitude of what you're asking?'"

The answer came quickly: "Yes, sir. I do."

Sanford jokes that the plan was to get him in his Colorado home at 9,000-foot elevation so he couldn't think clearly, but he was undoubtedly impressed by what came next.

Krabbenhoft started talking about how the name "Sioux" was outdated and "Valley" had no geographic authenticity, leading to a desire to change the health system's brand to something that would signify a fresh era and vision.

"I'd really like your name," said Krabbenhoft, which had an effect on Sanford. He agreed to the historic donation in principle, laying the foundation for a 2007 gift that would help accelerate a city's future and make his name synonymous with that surge.

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As the contingent was leaving, Sanford put his arm around Nelson with a grin and said with his sly sense of humor, "I guess we should all be happy my name's not Krabbenhoft."

FUTURE IN FOCUS

Pay a visit to the Sanford Health corporate campus in northeast Sioux Falls and you'll see a two-story "collegiate gothic" building under construction, within full view of Interstate 229.

The \$6 million project, to be fully completed by next year, is officially labeled the Sanford Foundation House but is more casually known as "Denny's House," a presidential library of sorts to honor his philanthropy and court other potential donors.

Sanford nixed the initial plan and persuaded Krabbenhoft to build the house near a lake on the property. No one argued with the man who could end up donating more than \$2 billion to the health system when all is said and done.

"I sometimes have to remind people that when they meet (Sanford), they're talking to the single largest health care philanthropist in the world," says Krabbenhoft. "It would be like talking to the Mayo brothers or Johns Hopkins himself."

The effect of "The Gift" still resonates 10 years later, with ripples extending from health clinics in Asia, Africa and Europe to quality-of-life enhancements in Sioux Falls. Both Sanford and Krabbenhoft agree that their historic partnership calls for more, such as a cure for Type 1 diabetes during Sanford's lifetime.

As researchers toil away in Sanford labs and clinical trials are offered, the clock is ticking.

"We talked about the time frame at the beginning, and for me that's getting the job done so he can see it," says Krabbenhoft. "I want his eyes to be there. He's going to be around a while, but the truth of the matter is that there is pressure when you talk about one man's promise to another, and that's a heavy lift."

Increasing attention is being paid to stem cell research, with Sanford Health opening a clinic in Germany where regenerative procedures are performed under the direction of Munich-based physician and researcher Eckhard Alt, chair of the Sanford Project.

Denny Sanford toured the Munich facility and underwent a knee procedure a few years ago, ever mindful that his money is used wisely and meaningful advancements are made. When he and Krabbenhoft took the stage a decade ago to stagger the local landscape, the quest for the big bang was really just beginning.

"There's no doubt that at the end of the tunnel he wants an explosive transformation," said Krabbenhoft. "Our job is to make that happen."

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

South Dakota ranch kid turns NASA rocket scientist

By **ABBY PETERSEN**, Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Travis Davis isn't one to pass on opportunities. The 27-year-old has already worked as a wildland firefighter in Montana, interned at construction equipment giant Caterpillar in Illinois, and was offered a job by NASA after graduating from the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology in 2013.

Nine months into the job at NASA, Davis was offered a full-ride scholarship for a bioengineering master's program in Dublin, Ireland, and took it. After graduating from the program and getting married, Davis returned to NASA, focusing on testing proportion valves on rocket engines.

The job in Huntsville, Alabama, has taken Davis a long way from his native Harding County, where he grew up on a ranch herding cattle, the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2urzGGc>) reported.

His family's history there begins in the late 19th century when his ancestors built a cabin in Belle Fourche. About a century later they started the black angus cattle ranch in Camp Crook.

Davis, a fifth-generation rancher, tinkered with cars and motorcycles with his father and brother. He fished with friends and picked up basketball and football. After graduating as one of three valedictorians in a class of 21, Davis moved to Rapid City to attend the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology.

That's where he met his future wife, Amanda, who was studying civil engineering. She now works at the International Space Station.

Davis said he doesn't have any regrets looking back, but he's not sure what the future will hold. He likes his job, but he's also interested in careers in biomedical engineering and additive manufacturing.

And NASA has another draw: his best friend since grade school and fellow Harding County native, Tal Wammen, also works there.

Wammen is a propulsion test engineer who tests the parts that Davis' group designs. "Growing up in a small community, I feel like it gave me skills that aren't found in the common workforce," Wammen said. "It's hard to find people that really want to work these days. We don't take anything for granted."

Davis agrees. His future might be at NASA, or it might be somewhere else.

"If something comes up that I think I can really help people or do something really good," Davis said, "I think I need to take that opportunity."

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

Authorities identify man killed in weekend crash near Bison

BISON, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified a Bison man killed in a weekend vehicle crash in Perkins County.

The Highway Patrol says 36-year-old Saul Montes lost control of the sport utility vehicle he was driving on a rural road south of Bison Saturday morning.

The SUV went off the road and rolled, and Montes died at the scene.

Lincoln County upholds rules for wind turbine setbacks

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Lincoln County voters have upheld regulations for wind turbine setbacks that renewable energy supporters say will end wind development in the area.

The Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2u8m8No>) reports that the vote Tuesday was 57 percent in favor of rules requiring that turbines be at least a half mile from habitable structures in the southeastern South Dakota county.

An investor group called Dakota Power Community Wind wants to build at least 150 turbines to produce 300 megawatts of electricity in Lincoln County. Foes cited concerns for property values and potential health effects in opposing the project.

Brian Minish of Dakota Power Community Wind says its board hasn't made any decisions on the project's next step.

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

Presentation football coach resigns, takes USD positions

Presentation College head football coach Andy Carr has resigned to take positions with the University of South Dakota. The Aberdeen school says Carr will serve as the USD Foundation's director of development and also as USD's associate athletic director for development. Carr has been with the Saints since their inaugural season in 2011, helping build the football program and see its transition from NCAA Division III to the NAIA.

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Presentation College head football coach Andy Carr has resigned to take positions with the University of South Dakota.

The Aberdeen school says Carr will serve as the USD Foundation's director of development and also as USD's associate athletic director for development.

Carr has been with the Saints since their inaugural season in 2011, helping build the football program and see its transition from NCAA Division III to the NAIA. The team finished last season 7-3.

Presentation defensive coordinator Chuck Miesbauer has been named interim head coach while the search is conducted for Carr's successor.

Man accused in contract killing wants statements suppressed

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A man accused of fatally stabbing a Rapid City woman in 2015 wants a judge to throw out statements he made to investigators.

Richard Hirth is charged in Seventh Circuit Court with first-degree murder and other counts in the slaying of 22-year-old Jessica Rehfeld.

Pennington County prosecutors are seeking the death penalty against Hirth and Rehfeld's ex-boyfriend, Jonathon Klinetobe. Police say Klinetobe hired Hirth and another man to kill and bury Rehfeld. She had been missing for a year before a witness came forward and led authorities to her grave near Rockerville.

The Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2viohGn>) says Hirth wants to exclude statements he made to investigators in May 2016. A judge Tuesday scheduled a Nov. 16 hearing on the matter.

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

Venezuela's Maduro, foes head into crucial showdown

By MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN and JORGE RUEDA, Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his opponents face a crucial showdown Thursday as the country's opposition calls the first national strike since a 2002 stoppage that failed to topple Maduro's predecessor Hugo Chavez.

Fifteen years later, Chavez's socialist party controls vast swathes of the Venezuelan economy, making it harder for opponents to bring the country to a halt. Easing their task is the fact that much of the economy is already faltering, hamstrung by a plunge in oil prices and years of corruption and mismanagement.

The 24-hour strike was meant as an expression of national disapproval of Maduro's plan to convene a constitutional assembly that would reshape the Venezuelan system to consolidate the ruling party's power over the few institutions that remain outside its control. The opposition is boycotting a July 30 election to select members of the assembly.

The country's largest business group, Fedecamaras, has cautiously avoided full endorsement of the strike, but its members have told employees that they won't be punished for coming to work. Fedecamaras played a central role in the months-long 2002-2003 strike that Chavez's political rivals and opponents in Venezuela's private business sector orchestrated in an attempt to topple him.

Chavez emerged from the strike and exerted control over the private sector with years of expropriations, strict regulations and imports bought with oil money and meant to replace local production. Business groups estimate that 150,000 Venezuelan businesses have closed over the last 15 years.

"This is a work stoppage by civil society. He who wants to work, work. Who wants to stop, stop," said Francisco Martinez, the president of Fedecamaras.

Government-run industries will remain open and Labor Minister Nestor Ovalles said the Maduro administration would punish private companies that close in sympathy with the strike.

"We won't allow, and we'll be closely watching, any disruption that violates the working class' right to work," Ovalles said. "Businesses that join the strike will be punished."

The business group's incoming president, economist Carlos Larrazabal, said the strike would be of limited duration to avoid worsening Venezuela's already dire shortages of food and other basic products.

"Inventory levels right are very precarious," Larrazabal said. "If the supply chains are affected more than they are right now, we could have a bigger problem."

However, the Venezuelan Workers' Confederation, a labor coalition with ties to the opposition, said at least 12 of its 20 member organizations across the country had decided to join the strike. Transportation workers in the capital, Caracas, also said they would participate.

"There's an appeal to the conscience of the Venezuelan people," said Pedro Jimenez, head of a major transport workers' union. "There won't be transportation services."

More than 24 hours before the start of the strike, neighborhood groups across Caracas were setting up roadblocks of tree branches and tires in to protest Maduro's plans to change the constitution, irritating some residents.

"The government jails the people who protest and those who are protesting are caging the rest of us. It's unfair," said Maria Sandoval, a 27-year-old medical secretary.

But those manning the roadblocks said they had no plans to stop until Maduro fell, complicating the scenario for Wednesday.

"We have been blocking the streets since yesterday and we will do it all week," said protester Ester de Moreno. "We will continue doing this until this man leaves."

Follow Michael Weissenstein on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/mweissenstein>

Trump's critique of Sessions reflects long-held frustrations

By **JULIE PACE** and **JONATHAN LEMIRE**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's extraordinary public denouncement of Attorney General Jeff Sessions reflected a long-simmering frustration with one of his staunchest allies, but was not a calculated attempt to force Sessions from the Cabinet, according to two Trump advisers.

For weeks, the president has seethed about Sessions' decision to recuse himself from the federal investigation into whether Trump's campaign coordinated with Russia during last year's election. On Wednesday, Trump told The New York Times that he would never have appointed Sessions to the post if he had known the former Alabama senator would make that decision.

"Sessions should have never recused himself," Trump told the paper, "And if he was going to recuse himself he should have told me before he took the job and I would have picked somebody else."

The White House notably made no effort to walk back Trump's comments or display confidence in the attorney general. Instead, the two Trump advisers acknowledged that the president's public comments largely reflected what they have heard him say about Sessions privately.

The advisers insisted on anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the president's thinking. The Justice Department declined to comment on the president's remarks.

Sessions, one of Trump's earliest supporters, stepped away from the Russia probe following revelations that he had failed to disclose meetings with the Kremlin's ambassador to the U.S. His decision was made without consulting with the president and essentially paved the way for the appointment of Robert Mueller as special counsel. Mueller's investigation, along with separate congressional probes, has overshadowed much of Trump's agenda and ensnared several of his associates, including son Donald Trump Jr. and his son-in-law and senior adviser Jared Kushner.

Despite his protest to the contrary, Trump continues to heavily watch cable news coverage of the Russia investigations. At times he has told allies he's convinced that the White House has turned the corner and the controversy will soon be behind him. But at other points, he has expressed fears that it will dog him for his entire term.

Few developments in the snowballing controversy have irked Trump more than Sessions' decision to recuse himself from the investigations. The advisers said the president viewed the move as an act of disloyalty — arguably the most grievous offense in the president's mind — and was angry that Sessions did not consult with him ahead of time.

At one point, Sessions privately told Trump he was willing to resign his post, but the president did not accept the offer. One adviser said the president's comments to the Times did not reflect any new desire by Trump to fire Sessions, though they acknowledged that the attorney general's response to the public denigration was less certain.

Sessions was the first U.S. senator to endorse Trump during the presidential campaign, and the two

bonded over their hardline immigration views. Some of Sessions' long-serving advisers are now working alongside the president in the West Wing, including senior policy adviser Stephen Miller, who was one of the architects of Trump's controversial travel ban.

A potential Sessions resignation could throw Mueller's investigation into a state of uncertainty. Trump would nominate a replacement and could seek assurances that his pick would not recuse himself from the investigations.

Trump raised the prospect of firing Mueller in his interview with the Times, suggesting he had damaging information on the former FBI director. The president said Mueller's selection for the job was a conflict of interest because Trump had spoken with him about returning to the FBI after the firing of James Comey in May.

"There were many other conflicts that I haven't said, but I will at some point," Trump said.

He lobbed similar conflict of interest charges at acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein. He also accused Comey of briefing him on a dossier of unverified, incriminating information in an effort to gain leverage over the soon-to-be president.

The president has repeatedly told those close to him that he fears there is a movement underway, fueled in part by Comey, Rosenstein and potentially Mueller, to discredit his presidency. He has denied that his campaign had any contacts with Russia during the election, though that assertion has been challenged by his son's acknowledgment that he accepted a meeting that was billed as part of the Russian government's efforts to help the Republican win the election.

Follow Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC> and Jonathan Lemire at <http://twitter.com/JonLemire>

OJ Simpson making case for his freedom on live TV

By KEN RITTER, Associated Press

LOVELOCK, Nev. (AP) — Former football star and convicted felon O.J. Simpson will command the world's attention once again Thursday when he pleads for his freedom on live TV.

Simpson was convicted in 2008 of an armed robbery involving two sports memorabilia dealers in a Las Vegas hotel room. The 70-year-old will ask four parole board members to release him in October after serving the minimum nine years of a 33-year sentence.

An aging Simpson will appear as inmate No. 1027820, dressed in blue jeans and a blue button-down shirt, in a stark hearing room in a remote Nevada prison.

Lovelock Correctional Center Warden Renee Baker said Wednesday she couldn't say how Simpson's parole hearing might turn out.

"We'll see tomorrow," she said.

Simpson was convicted of enlisting some men he barely knew, including two who had guns, to retrieve from two sports collectibles sellers some items that Simpson said were stolen from him a decade earlier.

"My crime was trying to retrieve for my family my own property," Simpson told the parole officials in 2013 before apologizing.

"Make no mistake, I would give it all back," he said, "to get these last five years back."

The robbery was a new low for Simpson, whose celebrity spanned sports, movies, television and advertising before his fall from grace during his highly-publicized murder trial in 1995.

Simpson was found not guilty in the killings of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman. In 1997, he was found liable in civil court for the deaths and ordered to pay \$33.5 million to survivors including his children and the Goldman family.

The Goldmans believe Simpson got away with murder in Los Angeles, and many people felt the stiff sentence handed down in Las Vegas wasn't just about the robbery.

A Goldman family spokesman said Ron Goldman's father and sister, Fred and Kim, won't be part of Simpson's parole hearing but feel apprehensive about "how this will change their lives again should Simpson be released."

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The retired district attorney who prosecuted Simpson for the heist denied Simpson's sentence was "pay-back" for his acquittal in the Los Angeles slayings.

David Roger said Simpson took a gamble when he rejected an offer to avoid trial by pleading guilty to a felony that could have gotten him 2½ years in prison.

"He thought he was invincible, and he rolled the dice," Roger said.

However, Roger acknowledges that Simpson has a good chance to go free.

By most accounts, Simpson has a clean prison record and a good chance for release.

Simpson is expected to reiterate that he has kept a promise to stay out of trouble, coaches in the prison gym where he works and counsels other inmates.

"I guess, my age, guys come to me," Simpson told parole officials four years ago.

The same commissioners granted him parole during his last public appearance in 2013 on some of his 12 charges, leaving him with four years to serve before reaching his minimum term.

At Simpson's side in his bid for freedom will be lawyer Malcolm LaVergne, close friend Tom Scotto, sister Shirley Baker and daughter Arnelle Simpson.

O.J. Simpson is expected to tell the board what he would do and where he would live if he is granted parole.

GOP senators in last-ditch try to rescue health care bill

By ERICA WERNER and ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican senators are hunkering down in a last-ditch attempt to prevent their own divisions from pushing their health care bill to oblivion.

Yet after a face-to-face lecture from President Donald Trump, around two dozen of them staged a nearly three-hour bargaining session Wednesday night to resolve disputes over repealing and replacing President Barack Obama's health care law. And no one offered specific examples of any progress.

"We still do have work to do to get to a vote of 50, but people are committed to continuing that work," said Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., a member of the GOP leadership who hosted the meeting in his office.

Reviving the legislation will require party leaders to win support from at least 50 of the 52 GOP senators, a threshold they've been short of for weeks. Aiming to finally resolve the issue, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell says he'll force a vote on the legislation early next week.

Also attending Wednesday's private meeting were health secretary Tom Price and Seema Verma, the Medicaid and Medicare administrator. It was interrupted by prayer after the lawmakers learned that their 80-year-old colleague, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., had a cancerous brain tumor.

Earlier Wednesday at the White House, Trump told them they must not leave town for their August recess without sending him an "Obamacare" repeal bill to sign.

"I'm ready to act," Trump said, foisting the responsibility on Republican lawmakers, not himself. During last year's presidential campaign he had declared repeatedly it would be "so easy" to get rid of the Obama law.

Earlier in the week, the latest Senate GOP health care plan collapsed, leading Trump to call for simply letting Obama's law fail.

McConnell indicated he was prepared to stick a fork in the Republican bill and move on to other issues including overhauling the tax code. But plunging into the issue after a period of lackadaisical involvement, Trump pressured McConnell to delay the key vote until next week, and he invited Republican senators to the White House for lunch.

There, with the cameras rolling in the State Dining Room, Trump spoke at length as he cajoled, scolded and issued veiled threats to his fellow Republicans, all aimed at wringing a health care bill out of a divided caucus that's been unable to produce one so far.

"For seven years you promised the American people that you would repeal Obamacare. People are hurting. Inaction is not an option and frankly I don't think we should leave town unless we have a health insurance plan," he said.

Seated next to Nevada Sen. Dean Heller, who is vulnerable in next year's midterm elections, Trump remarked: "He wants to remain a senator, doesn't he?" as Heller gave a strained grin.

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McConnell has failed repeatedly to come up with a bill that can satisfy both conservatives and moderates in his Republican conference. Two different versions of repeal-and-replace legislation fell short of votes before coming to the floor, pushing him to announce Monday night that he would retreat to a repeal-only bill that had passed Congress when Obama was in office.

But that bill, too, died a premature death as three GOP senators announced their opposition on Tuesday, one more than McConnell can lose in the closely divided Senate. Further complicating that approach, the Congressional Budget Office released an analysis Wednesday reaffirming its earlier findings that the repeal-only bill would mean 32 million additional uninsured people over a decade and average premiums doubling.

And a new AP-NORC poll found that Americans overwhelmingly want lawmakers of both parties to work out health care changes, with only 13 percent supporting Republican moves to repeal the Obama law absent a replacement.

At the White House lunch, the discussion was not simply about repealing "Obamacare" but also how to replace it as Republicans said that after seven years of promises, they could not let their efforts die without one last fight.

"Failure on this would be catastrophic, and we're not going to fail," said Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas.

McConnell announced that the Senate would vote next week to open debate, and "I have every expectation that we will be able to get on the bill" — although no one seemed quite sure what bill it will be.

Trump's sudden re-resolve to get "Obamacare" repeal-and-replace passed came after he's been on all sides of the issue in a whiplash-inducing series of remarks over recent days and weeks, supporting repeal and replace, straight repeal, and finally doing nothing so "we'll just let Obamacare fail," as he declared on Tuesday.

Yet for all the determined rhetoric Wednesday, the basic divisions haven't changed in the Senate, where conservatives like Rand Paul of Kentucky want legislation that fully repeals the Obama law while moderates like Susan Collins of Maine want something incompatible with that, a more generous bill that provides for Americans including those who gained Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act.

Associated Press writers Ken Thomas, Catherine Lucey, Stephen Ohlemacher, Richard Lardner, Andrew Taylor, Matthew Daly and Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

Sen. McCain diagnosed with brain tumor after clot removed

By DONNA CASSATA, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. John McCain, the 2008 Republican presidential nominee, Vietnam prisoner of war and political maverick in Congress for more than three decades, has been diagnosed with an aggressive type of brain tumor.

The 80-year-old Arizona lawmaker has glioblastoma, according to doctors at the Mayo Clinic in Phoenix, where McCain had a blood clot removed from above his left eye last Friday. He and his family are considering further treatment, including chemotherapy and radiation.

"Subsequent tissue pathology revealed that a primary brain tumor known as a glioblastoma was associated with the blood clot," his office said in a statement late Wednesday.

According to the American Brain Tumor Association, more than 12,000 people a year are diagnosed with glioblastoma, the same type of tumor that struck McCain's close Democratic colleague in legislative battles, the late Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts. The American Cancer Society puts the five-year survival rate for patients over 55 at about 4 percent.

The senator and chairman of the Armed Services Committee had been recovering at his Arizona home. His absence forced Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., to delay action on health care legislation.

South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham said he spoke to McCain Wednesday evening and he said: "Yeah, I'm going to have to stay here a little bit longer, take some treatments. I'll be back."

In a statement on Twitter, his daughter, Meghan McCain, spoke of the shock of the news and the anxiety over what happens next. "My love for my father is boundless and like any daughter I cannot and do not

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wish to be in a world without him. I have faith that those days remain far away," she said.

As word spread of his diagnosis, presidents past and present along with McCain's current and former Senate colleagues offered support in an outpouring rarely seen in Washington.

"Senator John McCain has always been a fighter. Melania and I send our thoughts and prayers to Senator McCain, Cindy, and their entire family. Get well soon," President Donald Trump said.

Barack Obama, who dashed McCain's dreams of the presidency, said in a tweet: "John McCain is an American hero & one of the bravest fighters I've ever known. Cancer doesn't know what it's up against. Give it hell, John."

McCain has a lifetime of near-death experiences — surviving the July 1967 fire and explosion on the USS Forrestal that killed 134 sailors; flying into power lines in Spain; the October 1967 shoot-down of his Navy aircraft and fall into Truc Bach Lake in Hanoi; and 5 1/2 years in a North Vietnamese prison.

"The Hanoi Hilton couldn't break John McCain's spirit many years ago, so Barbara and I know — with confidence — he and his family will meet this latest battle in his singular life of service with courage and determination," said former President George H.W. Bush.

Politics aside, McCain and Bill Clinton developed a strong friendship, and the former president said: "As he's shown his entire life, don't bet against John McCain. Best wishes to him for a swift recovery."

In the past, McCain had been treated for melanoma, but a primary tumor is unrelated. Doctors said McCain is recovering from his surgery "amazingly well" and his underlying health is excellent.

With his irascible grin and fighter-pilot moxie, McCain was elected to the Senate from Arizona six times, most recently last year, but twice thwarted in seeking the presidency.

An upstart presidential bid in 2000 didn't last long. Eight years later, he fought back from the brink of defeat to win the GOP nomination, only to be overpowered by Obama. McCain chose a little-known Alaska governor as his running mate in that race, and helped turn Sarah Palin into a national political figure.

After losing to Obama in an electoral landslide, McCain returned to the Senate, determined not to be defined by a failed presidential campaign. And when Republicans took control of the Senate in 2015, McCain embraced his new job as chairman of the powerful Armed Services Committee, eager to play a big role "in defeating the forces of radical Islam that want to destroy America."

Throughout his long tenure in Congress, McCain has played his role with trademark verve, at one hearing dismissing a protester by calling out, "Get out of here, you low-life scum."

He tangled with McConnell over campaign finance, joined forces with Democrats on immigration and most recently had a very public spat with Sen. Rand Paul. McCain said the Kentucky Republican was working for Russian President Vladimir Putin after he blocked a vote on allowing Montenegro into NATO. Paul said McCain had gotten "unhinged."

Early in the 2016 campaign, McCain largely held his tongue when Trump questioned his status as a war hero by saying: "He was a war hero because he was captured. I like people who weren't captured."

McCain stuck by Trump at times seemingly through gritted teeth — until the release a month before the election of a lewd audio in which Trump said he could kiss and grab women. Declaring that the breaking point, McCain withdrew his support.

In an interview with The Associated Press in 2013, McCain spoke of his decades in Congress, legislative achievements and political defeats.

"The last thing I am is bitter and angry. ... I've had the most full life," he said. "I would compare my life to anybody that I've ever known and it's been one of great good fortune and I'm grateful every day."

AP Medical Writer Luran Neergaard and writers Nancy Benac and Alan Fram contributed to this report.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. JOHN MCCAIN FACING DAUNTING BATTLE

The Arizona senator's tumor is one of the most aggressive forms of brain cancer, and his family and doctors are deliberating treatment options.

2. OJ SIMPSON BACK IN CAMERA'S GLARE

The former football star, actor and pitchman will command the world's attention once more as he beseeches a parole board for his freedom on live TV.

3. ATTITUDES SHIFTING ON HEALTH CARE

Sixty-two percent of Americans now say it's the government's responsibility to make sure that all Americans have health care coverage, according to an AP-NORC survey.

4. KEY PLAYERS SUMMONED TO CAPITOL HILL

Members of the Trump campaign's inner circle, including his eldest son and son-in-law, are being called before Senate committees next week to talk about the 2016 election.

5. WHO'S GETTING BANG FOR ITS BUCK

North Korea is believed to have spent roughly as much on its infamous nuclear program as the U.S. does on a single nuclear-powered submarine.

6. COMBUSTIBLE SIDING UNDER SCRUTINY

The same aluminum panels covering London's Grenfell Tower, where a recent blaze killed 80 people, are listed in a U.S. company's brochure as adding a "stunning visual effect" to an NFL stadium and a 33-story Baltimore hotel.

7. WHITE HOUSE TARGETING RED TAPE

The Trump administration has withdrawn or delayed 860 proposed regulations in its first five months, the beginnings of a regulatory overhaul meant to bolster economic growth.

8. WHICH SPACE RELIC IS UP FOR SALE

A collection bag containing traces of moon dust that was used by astronaut Neil Armstrong during the first manned mission to the moon in 1969 will be featured at a New York City auction.

9. MILESTONE IN FIGHT AGAINST AIDS

For the first time in the AIDS epidemic, more than half the people with HIV are on drugs to treat the virus, the U.N. reports.

10. WHAT'S SEEN AS TOUGHEST HOLE AT BRITISH OPEN

The sixth hole at Royal Birkdale is a left-to-right dog-leg that requires a precise drive and a long second shot.

Fearsome 6th hole the ultimate test at Birkdale

By STEVE DOUGLAS, AP Sports Writer

SOUTHPORT, England (AP) — Martin Kaymer was approaching the sixth tee during a practice round at Royal Birkdale when he told his playing partners that he was calling it a day.

He walked up the fairway and off into the distance, leaving Paul Broadhurst and Richard Bland to debate the tee shot.

Quite a few other golfers might like to avoid the hole at this British Open.

A 499-yard par 4 this year, the left-to-right dog-leg has played the hardest hole on the course in each of the last two Opens at Birkdale — in 1998 and 2008. In '08, the scoring average was 4.77, making it the second most difficult hole at an Open Championship from 1982-2016 after the 17th at St. Andrews in 1984. There were only 10 birdies there all week.

Dustin Johnson was asked what he would call the hole if it was to be given a name, like they do at St. Andrews and some other Open courses.

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"Probably words I couldn't use in a press conference," the top-ranked Johnson said.

Henrik Stenson said he was sure it will be the toughest hole this week. Jason Day said making par there would be like making a birdie. Jordan Spieth sees it as a "big challenge."

The signature hole on the front side, No. 6 requires a precise drive and a long second shot before you get to an elevated and well-contoured green protected by three bunkers at the front — two on the right and one on the left — and surrounded by dunes.

Possibly the most famous incident on the hole came in 1998, when Mark O'Meara spent four minutes looking for his ball after his second shot drifted right into knee-high grass. Suspecting his ball was lost, he started back down the fairway only for a spectator to find it and pick it up.

The ruling was O'Meara's ball had been identified within the allotted five minutes, and he was granted a free drop. He made bogey and went on to win.

Players on the tee are faced with a pot bunker on the right (the inner bend of the dog leg) at about 280 yards. On the left, there's a bunker at 230 yards and another at 310 yards.

Hit the drive down the middle but too far, there's rough and beyond that a ditch at the top of the bend. Most players will have an approach of between 200-220 yards.

Day spoke of hitting a 2-iron off the tee and even laying up short of the greenside bunkers with a long iron.

"That's one of those holes," Day said, "where you can make a big number quick."

McCain's brain tumor is particularly aggressive type

By LAURAN NEERGAARD, AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. John McCain's tumor is one of the most aggressive forms of brain cancer, and his family and doctors are deliberating next treatment options.

The senator had undergone surgery last week to have a blood clot removed from above his left eye, and that clot turned out to be a sign that a tumor called a glioblastoma had begun growing.

Here are some things to know:

AGGRESSIVE CANCER

McCain's doctors at the Mayo Clinic said they managed to remove all of the tumor that was visible on brain scans. But this kind of tumor, formally known as a glioblastoma multiforme, is aggressive and sneaky. It puts out microscopic roots that go deeper into brain tissue, explained Dr. Joshua Bederson, chairman of neurosurgery at Mount Sinai Health System in New York, who has no direct knowledge of McCain's care.

Still, a tumor above the eye is in a location that permits removal with far less risk of damage to language, motor and other brain functions than in many other areas, he noted.

SURGERY IS HARDLY EVER ENOUGH

McCain's Mayo doctors said the senator's next treatment options may include a combination of chemotherapy and radiation.

That's standard, and the care can take weeks to months. Even among those who respond to initial treatment, the cancer can come back, and often within 12 to 24 months. The American Cancer Society puts the five-year survival rate for patients over 55 at about 4 percent.

Mount Sinai's Bederson tells his own glioblastoma patients that he knows they'll look up the grim statistics, but he wants them to remember that some people do beat the odds for long periods.

"It's a small number. But that's the hope my patients have when they leave my office," he said.

UNCOMMON TUMORS

Glioblastomas (GLEE'-oh-blas-TOH'-muhs) typically occur in adults, and are fairly rare. According to the American Brain Tumor Association, an estimated 12,390 new cases are expected to be diagnosed this year.

McCain is a long-term survivor of melanoma, a deadly skin cancer. But doctors classified this new cancer as a "primary tumor," meaning it's not related to his former malignancies.

NEW APPROACHES

Scientists are trying new approaches to treat glioblastomas. Doctors are testing a novel treatment that

uses the patient's immune system to attack the cancer. The treatment, called CAR-T cell therapy, has been used for blood cancers, but its value for solid tumors like brain tumors is unknown. A cap-like device that makes electric fields to fight cancer has been shown to improve survival odds for people with glioblastomas.

AP-NORC Poll: Most say feds should ensure health coverage

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and LAURIE KELLMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans aren't enthralled with "Obamacare" and they definitely don't like the Republican plans offered in Congress, so what does the public want the government to do about health care?

A new poll suggests the country may be shifting toward the political left on the issue, with 62 percent saying it's the federal government's responsibility to make sure that all Americans have health care coverage, while 37 percent say it is not.

The survey findings from the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research indicate a change in public attitudes over the past few months, as concerns mounted about GOP legislation estimated to leave tens of millions without coverage.

"Nobody should be without insurance," said Louise Prieto of Fort Lee, New Jersey, a retiree covered by Medicare. She said she's most concerned about seniors, children and people with pre-existing medical conditions. The latest Republican legislation — repealing "Obamacare" with no replacement— would increase the number of people who are uninsured by 32 million in 2026, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

As recently as March, the AP-NORC poll had found Americans more ambivalent about the federal government's role, with a slim 52 percent majority saying health coverage is a federal responsibility, and 47 percent saying it is not.

The survey didn't specify how the government might make sure that people have coverage, but a true guarantee entails something like the "Medicare for all" plan that was a rallying cry for Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign last year. And that would involve hard-to-swallow tax increases.

"There is a significant increase in people who support universal coverage," said Robert Blendon of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, who tracks opinion trends on health care. "The impact of the debate over dropping coverage looks like it has moved (more) people to feel that the government is responsible for making sure that people have coverage."

Currently the U.S. has a hybrid system of paying for medical care, with employers, federal and state governments, and individuals sharing responsibility. Government at all levels pays close to half the annual \$3 trillion cost, and federal tax breaks support employer-provided coverage.

Employers cover more than 170 million workers, dependents, and retirees. Medicare, the federal government's flagship health care program, covers about 56 million retirees and disabled people. Medicaid, a federal-state Medicaid partnership, covers more than 70 million low-income people, from newborns, to severely disabled people, to many elderly nursing home residents. About 28 million people remain without coverage although former President Barack Obama's health care law has brought the uninsured rate to a historic low of about 9 percent.

The latest AP-NORC found that more than 8 in 10 Democrats and 3 in 10 Republicans say health coverage is a federal responsibility. Political independents were divided, with 54 percent saying coverage is a federal responsibility and 44 percent saying it is not.

In the poll, Americans didn't find much to like about the Republican legislation offered in Congress.

Seventy-three percent opposed giving states the option to let insurers charge some people higher premiums because of their medical history. And 57 percent opposed allowing states to reduce the types of benefits that federal law now requires insurers to cover. Similarly, 64 percent opposed allowing states to permit some health plans to omit coverage for mental health and drug addiction treatment. There was also solid opposition to Medicaid cuts (62 percent) and overwhelming disapproval (78 percent) for allowing insurers to raise premiums for older adults beyond what is currently permitted.

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Republicans have argued that allowing states to loosen such insurance rules, particularly for people who let their coverage lapse, would result in lower premiums all around. The poll also found that Americans disapprove of various strategies that the Obama law and the GOP bills rely on to nudge healthy people to buy coverage, from the current tax penalties for those who don't have insurance, to waiting periods and premium penalties proposed by Republicans.

The poll was conducted as the GOP "repeal and replace" plan floundered in the Senate during the past week. With the seven-year Republican campaign against the Affordable Care Act now verging on collapse, a strong majority said lawmakers should try to negotiate on health care.

In the poll, 8 in 10 said Republicans should approach Democrats with an offer to negotiate if the current GOP overhaul effort fails, rather than sticking with their own "repeal and replace" campaign of the past seven years. And nearly 9 in 10 said Democrats should take Republicans up on such an offer.

A foundation for common ground seems to be this: Nearly everyone wants changes to the Obama law, while hardly anyone wants to see it abolished without a substitute in place.

Among Democrats, only 22 percent actually want the ACA kept just as it is; 64 percent want it kept but with changes. Among Republicans, 27 percent want immediate repeal, while 54 percent favor repealing the law when a replacement is ready.

Relatively few partisans want their side to turn down an offer to negotiate. Sixty-six percent of Republicans said the congressional GOP should negotiate with the other party, and 81 percent of Democrats said their own representatives should accept an offer to negotiate, if it comes.

The AP-NORC poll of 1,019 adults was conducted July 13-17 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.1 percentage points.

Associated Press polling editor Emily Swanson contributed to this report.

APNewsBreak: Human rights petition sent for Hawaii fishermen

By CALEB JONES, Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Groups have filed a human-rights complaint that aims to jump-start an investigation into conditions among foreign workers in Hawaii's commercial fishing industry.

Turtle Island Restoration Network told The Associated Press on Wednesday that they filed the complaint last week with the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. The filing asks the panel to determine the responsibility of the U.S. for human rights violations against foreign workers in Hawaii's longline fishing fleet.

An Associated Press investigation into the seafood industry revealed that hundreds of men are confined to Hawaii boats that operate due to a federal loophole that exempts the foreign fishermen from most basic labor protections. Many come from impoverished Southeast Asian and Pacific nations to take the jobs, which can pay as little as 70 cents an hour.

The fleet catches \$110 million worth of luxury seafood annually.

The petition, which the Pacific Alliance to Stop Slavery and Ocean Defenders Alliance joined, was filed on July 13 with the agency that can make non-binding recommendations to government officials and policymakers.

The Inter-American Human Rights Commission is an autonomous body of the Organization of American States, which works to protect human rights in the hemisphere. The U.S. is a member of that organization.

"Hawaii's longline fishery operates in a void of regulation. Government at the state and federal level is failing to ensure even the most basic human rights for these workers," said Cassie Burdyslaw, advocacy and policy director for the Turtle Island group.

Since initial reports, little has changed in the industry that provides ahi tuna and other fish to American and overseas consumers at a premium price.

A Hawaii lawmaker introduced measures to create more oversight but they failed. Both proposals aimed to find ways to get more information about what's happening on the boats and to catch potential problems.

"The lobby was out full force to kill this bill, just as I expected," said state Rep. Kaniela Ing, who pushed the measures. "It's difficult because there's very few advocacy organizations for these sorts of migrant workers, so their voice is not as loud as the moneyed lobby behind the longline guys."

In written testimony submitted during legislative hearings, Jim Cook and Sean Martin of the Hawaii Longline Association argued that foreign fishermen "possess legal standing and have legal recourse."

However, U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents now stamp "Refused" on every fisherman's landing permit. That means they are technically not allowed to set foot on U.S. soil, customs officials said. The state requires fishermen to be legally admitted to the U.S. to get fishing licenses.

The men are not permitted to fly into the country because they do not have visas and must instead arrive by boat.

Attempts to contact Cook and Martin were unsuccessful Wednesday.

Lifestyle changes to stave off Alzheimer's? Hints, no proof

By LAURAN NEERGAARD, AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — There are no proven ways to stave off Alzheimer's, but a new report raises the prospect that avoiding nine key risks starting in childhood just might delay or even prevent about a third of dementia cases around the world.

How? It has to do with lifestyle factors that may make the brain more vulnerable to problems with memory and thinking as we get older. They're such risks as not getting enough education early in life, high blood pressure and obesity in middle age, and being sedentary and socially isolated in the senior years.

Thursday's report in the British journal *Lancet* is provocative — its authors acknowledge their estimate is theoretical, based on statistical modeling. A recent U.S. report was much more cautious, saying there are encouraging hints that a few lifestyle changes can bolster brain health but little if any proof.

Still, it's never too early to try, said *Lancet* lead author Gill Livingston, a psychiatry professor at University College London.

"Although dementia is diagnosed in later life, the brain changes usually begin to develop years before," she noted.

Early next year, a \$20 million U.S. study will begin rigorously testing if some simple day-to-day activities truly help older adults stay sharp. In the meantime, Alzheimer's specialists say there's little down side to certain common-sense recommendations.

"Increased health of the body supports increased health of the brain," said cognitive neuroscientist Laura Baker of Wake Forest School of Medicine in North Carolina, who will lead the upcoming U.S. study.

Consider physical activity, crucial for heart health. "If in fact it should also improve the prospects for cognitive function and dementia, all the better," said Dr. Richard Hodes, director of the U.S. National Institute on Aging and an avid exerciser.

Here's the latest from this week's Alzheimer's Association International Conference on possible ways to guard your brain:

KEY RISKS

A *Lancet*-appointed panel created a model of dementia risks throughout life that estimates about 35 percent of all cases of dementia are attributable to nine risk factors — risks that people potentially could change.

Their resulting recommendations: Ensure good childhood education; avoid high blood pressure, obesity and smoking; manage diabetes, depression and age-related hearing loss; be physically active; stay socially engaged in old age.

The theory: These factors together play a role in whether your brain is resilient enough to withstand years of silent damage that eventually leads to Alzheimer's.

DOES CHANGING THESE OR OTHER LIFESTYLE FACTORS REALLY HELP?

Last month, the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine reported there's little rigorous proof. That report found some evidence that controlling blood pressure, exercise and some forms

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of brain training — keeping intellectually stimulated — might work and couldn't hurt.

Why? What's good for the heart is generally good for the brain. In fact, high blood pressure that can trigger heart attacks and strokes also increase risk for what's called "vascular dementia."

And exercising your gray matter may bulk up the brain, whether it's from childhood education or learning a new language as an adult. The more you learn, the more connections your brain forms, what scientists call cognitive reserve. Some U.S. studies have suggested that generations better educated than their grandparents have somewhat less risk of dementia.

Other factors have less scientific support. Studies show people with hearing loss are more likely to experience memory problems, and have speculated that it's because hearing loss leads to depression and social isolation — or even makes the brain work harder to deal with garbled sound, at the expense of other thinking skills. But so far there aren't studies proving hearing aids reverse that risk.

In fact, the strongest evidence that lifestyle changes help comes from Finland, where a large, randomized study found older adults at high risk of dementia scored better on brain tests after two years of exercise, diet, cognitive stimulation and social activities.

HUNTING PROOF

Would those strategies help Americans, who tend to be sicker, fatter and more sedentary than Scandinavians? The Alzheimer's Association is funding a study to find out, with enrollment of 2,500 cognitively healthy but high-risk older adults to begin next year.

Want to try on your own? They'll test:

—Walking — supervised, so no cheating. Wake Forest's Baker puts seniors on treadmills at the local YMCA to avoid bumpy sidewalks. She starts exercise-newbies at 10 minutes a day for two days a week and works up to longer walks on more days.

—A diet that includes more leafy greens, vegetables, whole grains, fish and poultry than the typical American menu.

—Certain brain games and what Baker called an "intellectual stimulation barrage," outings and other steps that keep people social, not sitting home on a computer, while they exercise their brains.

—Improving control of medical conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes that are toxic to the brain.

Trump rages at Sessions in New York Times interview

By JILL COLVIN and JULIE PACE, Associated press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump told The New York Times in an interview Wednesday that he never would have appointed Jeff Sessions as attorney general had he known Sessions would recuse himself from overseeing the Russia investigation.

In an extraordinary denouncement of one of his earliest backers in Washington, Trump said Sessions' decision to recuse himself from all matters related to Russia was "very unfair to the president."

"Sessions should have never recused himself," Trump told the paper, "and if he was going to recuse himself he should have told me before he took the job and I would have picked somebody else."

Sessions' recusal, announced following revelations that he had failed to disclose meetings with Russia's ambassador to the U.S., effectively paved the way for the appointment of Robert Mueller as special counsel. Mueller's investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election and potential ties between the Russian government and Trump campaign aides has cast a growing cloud on Trump's administration.

A Trump adviser said the president's comments about Sessions reflected his long-running frustration with the attorney general's decision to recuse himself and echoed statements he has made privately.

The adviser said the remarks were not intended to signal that Trump plans to fire Sessions. However, the adviser said the unknown factor was whether the public airing of grievances would prompt Sessions to resign, particularly given that the attorney general has previously offered to step down.

The adviser insisted on anonymity in order to discuss the president's thinking.

In the interview, Trump also appeared to threaten Mueller, suggesting he had damaging information on the former FBI director.

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Trump said Mueller's selection for the job was a conflict of interest because Trump had interviewed him to serve as the replacement FBI director.

"There were many other conflicts that I haven't said, but I will at some point," Trump said.

He lobbed similar conflict of interest charges at acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, and accused former FBI Director James Comey of briefing him on a dossier of unverified, incriminating information in an effort to gain leverage over the soon-to-be president.

The Justice Department declined to comment on the interview.

Trump also addressed the previously undisclosed conversation he had with Russian President Vladimir Putin during a dinner for world leaders at a summit in Germany.

Trump said the pair spoke for about 15 minutes at the dinner and said the conversation consisted of "pleasantries more than anything else" — though he said he and Putin also discussed adoption.

Russia had banned Americans from adopting Russian children in response to the Magnitsky Act, passed by Congress in 2012, which allowed the U.S. to impose sanctions on Russians deemed as human rights violators.

It's the same topic Trump's oldest son, Donald Trump Jr., says he discussed with a Russian lawyer at a meeting that has drawn intense scrutiny — a coincidence Trump described in the interview as "interesting."

Fire racing near Yosemite park destroys dozens of structures

By SCOTT SMITH, Associated Press

MARIPOSA, Calif. (AP) — A surging wildfire raced through California mountains and foothills west of Yosemite National Park on Wednesday, forcing thousands to flee tiny, Gold Rush-era towns, destroying 29 structures and wafting a smoky haze over the park's landmark Half Dome rock face.

The 4-day-old blaze nearly doubled in size overnight to 75 square miles (194 square kilometers), the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said.

At its closest, the blaze was still about 35 miles from the boundary of Yosemite, where campgrounds are open, park spokesman Scott Gediman said. The fire closed one of several roads into the park during its busy summer season, and rangers warned visitors with respiratory problems to be mindful of the haze, Gediman said.

Among park visitors Gediman talked to, "people understand fire is a naturally occurring thing," he said. "Nobody was upset about it."

Yosemite does not appear at risk from the fire, which was moving south Wednesday, away from the park, California fire spokesman Jordan Motta said.

The fire has forced almost 5,000 people from homes in and around a half-dozen small communities, officials said.

Heavy smoke hung in the air over Mariposa, a town of 2,000 with century-old wooden buildings, including what's touted as the oldest active courthouse west of the Rocky Mountains.

The fire was threatening about 1,500 homes and other buildings, after already destroying 29 structures. It's not clear what type of buildings burned. The flames are near Highway 49, a historical route winding its way up California foothills of the western Sierra Nevada dotted with little towns that sprouted along the gold Mother Lode that drew miners to California in the 1800s.

The fire got within a half mile of Mariposa but crews have been able to keep it out of the town, said Cal Fire spokeswoman Katherine Garver.

Tony Munoz, 63, and his wife, Edna Munoz, 59, were ordered out of their home outside Mariposa on Tuesday. They grabbed clothes, medicine and their three dogs and a cat before fleeing.

Driving out on narrow roads clogged by others getting out, "you couldn't even see the sun" in the ash-filled sky, said Tony Munoz, a school custodian.

Downtown Mariposa was empty except for firefighters and other emergency workers. Fierce flames were visible on slopes about a mile away.

Record rain and snowfall in the mountains this winter abruptly ended California's five-year drought. But

that has increased the challenge for crews battling flames feeding on dense vegetation.

"There's ample fuel and steep terrain," Cal Fire spokeswoman DeeDee Garcia said. "It makes firefighting difficult."

Statewide, about 6,000 firefighters were battling 17 large wildfires, including about 2,200 at the fire near Yosemite.

Gov. Jerry Brown has declared an emergency, bolstering the state's resources to battle the fire that he said has forced thousands of residents to flee and is expected to continue burning.

In Nevada, firefighters got a handle on a wind-driven wildfire that destroyed four homes and damaged several more. Bureau of Land Management spokesman Greg Deimel said Wednesday that no one was hurt in the fire that broke out in extremely windy conditions just east of Elko.

Kristin Bender in San Francisco contributed to this report.

Trump exhorts Senate anew to rid US of Obamacare

By ERICA WERNER and ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lecturing fellow Republicans, President Donald Trump summoned GOP senators to the White House Wednesday and told them face-to-face they must not leave town for their August recess without sending him an "Obamacare" repeal bill to sign. Senators responded by vowing to revive legislative efforts left for dead twice already this week.

Success was far from assured, but Trump declared "I'm ready to act," putting the responsibility on Republican lawmakers, not himself. During last year's presidential campaign he had declared repeatedly it would be "so easy" to get rid of the Obama law.

The developments Wednesday came just a day after the latest GOP health care plan collapsed in the Senate, leading Trump himself to say it was time to simply let President Barack Obama's health care law fail. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell had indicated he was prepared to stick a fork in the Republican bill and move on to other issues including overhauling the tax code.

But in an apparent change of heart, in keeping with his erratic engagement on the issue, Trump pressured McConnell to delay the key vote until next week, and he invited Republican senators to the White House for lunch.

There, with the cameras rolling in the State Dining Room, Trump spoke at length as he cajoled, scolded and issued veiled threats to his fellow Republicans, all aimed at wringing a health care bill out of a divided caucus that's been unable to produce one so far.

"For seven years you promised the American people that you would repeal Obamacare. People are hurting. Inaction is not an option and frankly I don't think we should leave town unless we have a health insurance plan," he said.

Seated next to Nevada Sen. Dean Heller, who is vulnerable in next year's midterm elections, Trump remarked: "He wants to remain a senator, doesn't he?" as Heller gave a strained grin.

It was not clear that the White House lunch would change the calculus in the Senate, where McConnell has failed repeatedly to come up with a bill that can satisfy both conservatives and moderates in his Republican conference. Two different versions of repeal-and-replace legislation fell short of votes before coming to the floor, pushing him to announce Monday night that he would retreat to a repeal-only bill that had passed Congress when Obama was in office.

But that bill, too, died a premature death as three GOP senators announced their opposition on Tuesday, one more than McConnell can lose in the closely divided Senate. Further complicating that approach, the Congressional Budget Office released an analysis Wednesday reaffirming its earlier findings that the repeal-only bill would mean 32 million additional uninsured people over a decade and average premiums doubling.

And a new AP-NORC poll found that Americans overwhelmingly want lawmakers of both parties to work out health care changes, with only 13 percent supporting Republican moves to repeal the Obama law absent a replacement.

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At the White House lunch, the discussion was not simply about repealing "Obamacare" but also how to replace it as Republicans said that after seven years of promises, they could not let their efforts die without one last fight.

"This is more than just a health care debate," said Sen. Pat Roberts of Kansas as he left the meeting. "It really means, can we come together as a conference, can we come together as a Republican Party, can we come together on a signature piece of legislation we've talked about for seven years.

"If we don't, I think it's pretty clear the political consequences are staring us right in the face," Roberts added.

Around two dozen GOP senators met Thursday night with health secretary Tom Price and Seema Verma, the Medicaid and Medicare administrator, but reported no specific progress after a nearly three-hour meeting.

"Will we get there? I don't know," said Sen. John Kennedy, R-La.

McConnell announced that the Senate would vote next week to open debate, and "I have every expectation that we will be able to get on the bill" — although no one seemed quite sure what bill it will be.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, who on Tuesday announced she would vote "no" on the "motion to proceed" to the repeal-only bill, demurred when asked after Wednesday's lunch whether she remains "no," telling reporters: "We don't know what the motion to proceed is for all certainty."

Trump's sudden re-resolve to get "Obamacare" repeal-and-replace passed came after he's been on all sides of the issue in a whiplash-inducing series of remarks over recent days and weeks, supporting repeal and replace, straight repeal, and finally doing nothing so "we'll just let Obamacare fail," as he declared on Tuesday.

He's also failed to use his "bully pulpit" to sell the GOP legislation to the public, something he promised senators he would remedy, according to Roberts.

Yet for all the determined rhetoric Wednesday, the basic divisions haven't changed in the Senate, where conservatives like Rand Paul of Kentucky want legislation that fully repeals the Obama law while moderates like Susan Collins of Maine want something incompatible with that, a more generous bill that provides for Americans including those who gained Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act.

Associated Press writers Ken Thomas, Catherine Lucey, Stephen Ohlemacher, Richard Lardner, Andrew Taylor, Matthew Daly and Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

House panel approves budget with hopes for tax reform

By ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A key House panel on Wednesday approved a Republican fiscal plan that probably won't deliver on its promises to balance the budget, but would begin to clear a path for a GOP effort to overhaul the tax code this fall.

The Budget Committee approved the measure by a party-line 22-14 vote. The plan proposes deep cuts to safety net programs like Medicaid and food stamps and reprises a controversial Medicare plan strongly opposed by President Donald Trump — though Republicans only want to deliver on a small fraction of the cuts.

Instead, to most Republicans on Capitol Hill, the most important element of the plan is the procedural pathway it would clear to allow Republicans to pass their top priority — an overhaul of the tax code — later this year without fear of a blockade by Senate Democrats. Passing a budget through Congress is the only way to get a GOP-only tax plan enacted this year.

Republicans argue that growing deficits and debt are part of the reason for slow economic growth and that big benefit plans like Medicare and Medicaid need changes now to keep them from going broke for future generations.

"Both parties in Washington have failed to abide by a simple principle that all American families and small businesses do — that we must live within our means," said Budget Chairman Diane Black, R-Tenn.

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"Balancing the budget requires us to make tough choices, but the consequences of inaction far outweigh any political risks we may face."

But like the GOP's health care repeal-and-replace efforts and its moribund hopes to boost infrastructure, the GOP budget outline faces opposition from both wings of the party. Republican conservatives want more of its proposed cuts to actually take effect in follow-up legislation, while moderates want to focus on tax reform instead of cuts to food stamps or federal employee pensions.

GOP leaders generally fear that adding spending cuts to tax reform would only make the tax code rewrite more difficult to pass.

The nonbinding GOP plan promises to cut more than \$5 trillion from the budget over the coming decade, though Republicans only appear serious about enacting a relatively modest 10-year, \$203 billion deficit cut over the same period through filibuster-proof follow-up legislation. Conservatives are pressing for larger cuts, including strict work requirements for food stamps, for instance.

But Democrats blasted the sweeping cuts in the plan. It revives a provocative proposal to turn Medicare into a voucher-like program for future retirees. Experts say that change would likely increase costs for beneficiaries and deny them the coverage guarantees of Medicare.

"The list of upside-down priorities and irresponsible policies in this document is lengthy," said top panel Democrat John Yarmuth of Kentucky. "Democrats support investments in education, health care, national security, job training, innovation and infrastructure. We support programs that help individuals with nowhere left to turn, and a tax code that helps families get ahead."

Republicans easily rejected Democratic attempts to protect the Obama health law, restore Medicaid, and increase spending for domestic programs renewed by Congress each year.

The panel is stocked with hard-core conservatives, some of whom said the measure is too loose on spending. Rep. Glenn Grothman, R-Wis., faulted it for a \$28 billion increase above Trump's budget for defense and for rejecting most of Trump's proposed \$54 billion cut to domestic programs for next year. Rep. Mark Sanford, R-S.C., was denied a chance to offer a late amendment designed to block a so-called border adjustment tax and voted for the plan anyway — but wouldn't guarantee he'll support it in a floor vote.

While exempting Social Security, veterans and defense, the plan proposes cuts across the rest of the budget to turn this year's projected \$700 billion-or-so deficit into a tiny \$9 billion surplus by 2027. It would do so by slashing \$5.4 trillion over the coming decade, including almost \$500 billion from Medicare and \$1.5 trillion from Medicaid and the Obama-era health law.

The GOP plan also proposes a 10-year, \$150 billion cut to food stamps, though the Agriculture Committee would be directed to come up with no more than \$10 billion.

It also contains its share of gimmicks, including \$1.8 trillion in deficit cuts over the coming decade from rosy projections of economic growth averaging 2.6 percent over 10 years. Another \$700 billion in savings would come from a crackdown on "improper payments" such as tax credits and Social Security and Medicare benefits going to people who don't qualify for them. Many of its cuts are unspecified.

But in the immediate future, the GOP measure is a budget buster. It would add almost \$30 billion to Trump's \$668 billion request for national defense next year and rejects most of Trump's proposed cuts to domestic agencies — only to promise deeper, nonbinding cuts in the future.

Trump's embrace of Russia making top advisers wary

By VIVIAN SALAMA, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's persistent overtures toward Russia are placing him increasingly at odds with his national security and foreign policy advisers, who have long urged a more cautious approach to dealing with the foreign adversary.

The uneasy dynamic between the president and top aides has been exacerbated by the revelation this week of an extended dinner conversation between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin at the recent summit in Germany. The previously undisclosed conversation, which occurred a few hours after their official bilateral meeting, raised red flags with advisers already concerned by the president's tendency

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to shun protocol and press ahead with outreach toward Russia, according to two U.S. officials and three top foreign officials.

The officials spoke only on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

Deep divisions are increasingly apparent within the administration on the best way to approach Moscow in the midst of U.S. investigations into Russian meddling in the American presidential election. Trump has repeatedly cast doubt on the conclusion of U.S. intelligence agencies that the Russian government sought to tip the election in his favor and has dismissed investigations into the possibility of collusion between his campaign and Moscow as a "witch hunt."

Meanwhile, he has pushed for cooperation between Moscow and Washington on various matters including the raging conflict in Syria.

But some top aides, including National Security Adviser Gen. H.R. McMaster, have been warning that Putin is not to be trusted. An intelligence officer-turned-politician, Putin is known for steering discussions in his own favor.

The three foreign officials who have spoken with top Trump advisers described a disconnect, or "mixed signals," between Trump and his team over Russia, highlighting a lack of a clear policy. U.S. officials echoed that sentiment, with one saying diplomats and intelligence officials were "dumbfounded" by the president's approach, particularly given the evidence of Russia's election meddling.

McMaster expressed his disapproval of Trump's course to foreign officials during the lead-up to his trip to Germany. The general specifically said he'd disagreed with Trump's decision to hold an Oval Office meeting in May with top Russian diplomats and with the president's general reluctance to speak out against Russian aggression in Europe, according to the three foreign officials.

McMaster and other national security aides also advised the president against holding an official bilateral meeting with Putin.

In a highly unusual move, McMaster did not attend the bilateral meeting with Putin. Only Trump, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and a translator made up the U.S. side.

Meetings with such critical national security implications typically include a broader team, including the national security adviser and a regional specialist from the National Security Council — in this case, the head of the Russia directorate, a position recently filled by Russia expert Fiona Hill.

Foreign and U.S. officials said the Russians recommended that a note taker be present in the bare-bones official bilateral meeting. But Trump, who has repeatedly expressed concern over leaks, refused, instead relying on Tillerson to document the meeting. The session was scheduled for 30 minutes but stretched to more than two hours.

The White House did not respond to questions about Trump's refusal to have a note taker for his meeting with Putin, or about whether McMaster communicated his concerns to the president.

The formalities and discipline of diplomacy have been a rough fit for Trump, whose reputation as a businessman was that of a freewheeling, impulsive dealmaker.

As for his dinnertime conversation with Putin, unofficial discussions between world leaders over dinner do not violate protocol. But it is unusual and can be risky for a president to speak directly to Putin without a U.S. translator present. He was forced to rely on Russia's interpreter for the discussion, which reportedly went on for nearly an hour.

"The Russian interpreter probably interpreted very clearly, but the problem is there's no record of the discussion on the American side," said Steven Pifer, a former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine. It would have been wise for Trump to have his interpreter take notes so there would be a record, he said.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders was dismissive of the controversy surrounding the Trump-Putin dinner chat, blaming it on a "Russia fever" gripping the media.

She said other presidents, including Barack Obama, had similar informal conversations.

"To act as if this were some secret is absolutely absurd," she said.

Trump addressed his earlier, official meeting with Putin in an interview with reporters last week onboard Air Force One. The president said that he repeatedly confronted Putin on reports of Russia's election med-

dling — interference that Putin staunchly denies. But Trump would not say whether he believed Putin's denials, as the Russian president claimed.

White House officials said the public may never know what was discussed between Putin and Trump over dinner. But advisers past and present said that characterizing any conversation with Putin as casual would be a mistake.

"There are no meaningless conversations between presidents," said Jeffrey Edmonds, the NSC's former Russia director.

"That's what is so divergent here," he said. "Relations have been at an all-time low because of Russian meddling in our elections and so it's hard to see how a meeting with President Putin for an hour during dinner isn't important."

Associated Press writer Jon Lemire contributed to this report.

O.J. Simpson's hearing revisits old obsession for TV

NEW YORK (AP) — Television networks will interrupt this presidency on Thursday to revisit an old obsession.

ABC, NBC, CNN, Fox News Channel, MSNBC, HLN and ESPN will show O.J. Simpson's parole hearing at a Nevada prison, as he seeks freedom after spending more than eight years locked up for armed robbery and assault. CBS said it will air part of the hearing on television and livestream all of it on its CBSN digital news affiliate.

Simpson's trial in California for the 1994 murders of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman, was a television obsession more than two decades ago. The former football star was acquitted, but has been imprisoned for trying to steal sports collectibles.

Interest in Simpson was revived last year with ESPN's documentary "O.J.: Made in America," and the FX miniseries, "The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story"

Former Los Angeles police detective Mark Fuhrman, who testified in Simpson's original trial, will provide analysis for Fox News Channel.

This story has been corrected to show that Nicole Brown Simpson was O.J. Simpson's ex-wife at the time of her death.

5 killed in Salem witch hunt remembered on 325th anniversary

By RODRIQUE NGOWI, Associated Press

SALEM, Mass. (AP) — The Massachusetts community where 20 people suspected of witchcraft were put to death in 1692 unveiled a memorial to 19 of those victims on Wednesday, promising never to forget the tragedy.

The ceremony came 325 years to the day when Sarah Good, Elizabeth Howe, Susannah Martin, Rebecca Nurse and Sarah Wildes were hanged at a site in Salem known as Proctor's Ledge. It was the first of three mass hangings at the spot. The 20th victim was crushed to death.

"We should not be here commemorating the heartbreaking and tragic loss of life, it did not need to happen," said the Rev. Jeff Barz-Snell, minister at the Unitarian Universalist First Church in Salem. "And so we are here to remember, to resolve, to rededicate."

The semi-circular stone wall memorial is inscribed with the names of the people hanged at the site, now a small city-owned lot in a residential neighborhood and behind a pharmacy.

"The sun casts few shadows this time of day, and yet the shadows from this site extend across our city in ways we cannot see with our eyes," Mayor Kim Driscoll said.

Descendants of the victims were in attendance, including Jeffrey Stark, a relative of Susannah Martin.

"(The memorial) brings justice to the fact that they were wrongly accused," Stark said. "It's a welcom-

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ing feeling that they put this memorial up and they have recognized the mistake that was made here in Salem back in 1692.”

Salem State University history professor Emerson Baker was part of the team that confirmed the site of the hangings last year.

“Unlike in the past, we have seized the opportunity to do the right thing,” he said.

The memorial was funded by a \$174,000 Community Preservation Act grant, as well as through many smaller donations from descendants of those accused of being witches, some of whom attended the ceremony.

Nurse also was to be honored at a ceremony later Wednesday at the Rebecca Nurse Homestead in nearby Danvers. Danvers, at the time of the witch trials, was a part of Salem known as Salem Village.

This story has been corrected to say Jeffrey Stark is a relative of Susannah Martin, not an ancestor. Martin is Stark’s ancestor.

16-year-old from Minnesota ID’d as victim of John Wayne Gacy

By DON BABWIN and JEFF BAENEN, Associated Press Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — After running away from his Minnesota home in 1976, 16-year-old Jimmy Haakenson called his mother, told her he was in Chicago, then disappeared forever.

More than 40 years later, a detective from Illinois arrived at the family’s home to tell Haakenson’s relatives that at some point after hanging up the phone, the teenager crossed paths with serial killer John Wayne Gacy. Haakenson’s body, it turns out, was among dozens found in a crawl space of Gacy’s Chicago-area home in 1978. But the remains were only recently identified thanks to DNA technology that wasn’t available then, the Cook County Sheriff’s Department announced Wednesday.

Gacy was convicted of killing 33 young men and was executed in 1994. But the revelation about Haakenson is the latest turn in a yearslong effort to solve the remaining mystery surrounding Gacy’s case: Who were the eight victims authorities hadn’t been able to identify?

James “Jimmy” Byron Haakenson’s body is only the second person that authorities have identified since Sheriff Tom Dart in 2011 ordered the remains of the eight victims exhumed and asked families of young men who went missing in the 1970s to provide DNA samples. The first was William Bundy, a 19-year-old construction worker from Chicago whose remains were identified weeks after the exhumations.

Haakenson’s family in Minnesota plans to come to Chicago to mark his grave.

“One of the worst people in the world that walked the earth murdered my brother,” his sister, Lorie Sisterman, who lives in North St. Paul, said Wednesday. “You hope for something different,” but she went on to add, “I’m so glad to know where my brother is.”

Gacy is remembered as one of history’s most bizarre killers, largely because of his work as an amateur clown. The Chicago-area building contractor lured young men to his home by impersonating a police officer or promising them construction work. There, he stabbed one and strangled the others. Most of the victims were buried under his home, but others were dumped in a river.

Illinois investigators long referred to Haakenson as simply “Victim #24.”

Haakenson came to Chicago hoping to strike out on his own in a city far bigger than the community of St. Paul where he lived, Dart said. According to Sisterman, the teenager had finally made good on his angry vows to his mother that he was going to run away.

He was a boy, said Sisterman, who kept “trying to find himself.”

After bodies were found in Gacy’s home, Haakenson’s mother was suspicious enough that her son was among the victims that she came to Chicago to talk to investigators. But she left without any answers because there was no way to identify the skeletal remains without dental records, Dart said. The mother died a couple of decades later.

Dart said a nephew of Haakenson became curious about the uncle he never knew and earlier this year went online to see if he could learn anything. That’s when he discovered Dart’s efforts to identify the

remains of the eight young men.

Dart said the nephew went to his father, Haakenson's brother, and his aunt, Lorie Sisterman, and persuaded them to submit the samples for testing.

"We got an immediate hit," Dart said.

Authorities believe the teen was killed in August 1976, in part because of where he was found in Gacy's house. Because Gacy was killing so many young men, his crawl space was filling up, forcing him to stack the bodies. Haakenson's body was directly underneath Rick Johnston, who was last seen at a concert in Chicago on Aug. 6, 1976, and was on top of a still unidentified young man known as "Victim #26."

Over the course of the investigation, the Cook County Sheriff's Department has solved a number of cold cases. According to the department, investigators have located five missing persons who were alive and two missing persons who had died elsewhere in the country. For example, in 2013, Dart announced that one person who submitted DNA had allowed investigators to identify remains found in a wooded area in New Jersey as a teenager who ran away from a nearby orphanage in 1972.

Baenen reported from Minneapolis.

Trump campaign inner circle called before Senate committees

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Members of the Trump campaign's inner circle, including his eldest son and son-in-law, are being called before Senate committees next week to talk about the 2016 election.

The week has the potential to deliver the most high-profile congressional testimony involving the Russian meddling probes since former FBI Director James Comey appeared in June.

Donald Trump Jr. is scheduled to appear July 26 before the Senate Judiciary Committee along with former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, according to a witness list released by the panel Wednesday.

Also, a lawyer for Trump's powerful son-in-law and adviser said Jared Kushner will speak to the Senate intelligence committee Monday.

"As Mr. Kushner has been saying since March, he has been and is prepared to voluntarily cooperate and provide whatever information he has on the investigations to Congress," said attorney Abbe Lowell. "He will continue to cooperate and appreciates the opportunity to assist in putting this matter to rest."

That meeting will apparently take place behind closed doors.

Alan Futerfas, a lawyer for Trump Jr., did not immediately respond to a request seeking comment about his scheduled testimony. Manafort spokesman Jason Maloni said Manafort received the request Wednesday afternoon and is reading it over.

The three men will almost certainly be asked about their attendance at a June 2016 meeting with a Russian lawyer. That gathering was arranged via emails that advertised it would reveal damaging information about Hillary Clinton.

The lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, also said Wednesday she was ready to testify before the U.S. Senate and "clarify the situation."

The meeting raised new questions about the Trump campaign's possible ties to Moscow, which are being scrutinized by federal and congressional investigators. These questions have only intensified as the identities of other Russia-connected participants have become known.

"I am ready to clarify the situation behind the mass hysteria, but only through lawyers or testifying in the Senate," Veselnitskaya said in an interview broadcast Wednesday on Kremlin-funded RT television.

"If the Senate wishes to hear the real story, I will be happy to speak up and share everything I wanted to tell Mr. Trump," she added. That appeared to be a reference to Veselnitskaya's previous statement that the meeting with Trump Jr. focused on U.S.-Russian adoption policies and a U.S. sanctions law.

Veselnitskaya has denied working for the Russian government. She has not responded to repeated attempts by The Associated Press to reach her for comment.

Congressional investigators in both parties have said they want to hear from those involved in the meet-

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ing. The top Democrat on the Senate intelligence panel, Virginia's Mark Warner, said Wednesday afternoon that the panel hasn't yet invited Veselnitskaya to testify, but he wants to hear from her and others who attended.

Warner said "it's still being worked out" whether some of his committee's more high-profile witnesses, including Trump Jr. and Manafort, should testify publicly or privately. The Senate and House intelligence panels conduct most of their interviews in private, but occasionally hold open hearings.

Warner said Trump Jr. has "no security clearances that I am aware of, so he should be able to testify in public."

The GOP chairman of Senate Judiciary panel, Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, told Iowa reporters Wednesday that he's been talking to Trump Jr.'s lawyer and "didn't get any pushback" when suggesting he testify this week. But he said "it's kind of rushy" to call him in so quickly, and said Democrats had requested documents and emails that they wanted to see before a hearing.

Grassley had said he would subpoena the witnesses if necessary.

The Senate Judiciary Committee hearing will review a law that oversees the registration of foreign agents. The panel has been investigating one of the participants at the Trump Jr. meeting, Russian-American lobbyist and former Soviet military officer Rinat Akhmetshin, as part of its probe into the law.

The top Democrat on the Judiciary panel, Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, said this week that special counsel Robert Mueller has cleared Trump Jr. and Manafort for public testimony. Mueller is conducting the Justice Department's investigation and Grassley has said he wants to avoid conflicts.

The House Intelligence Committee is also probing the Russian meddling, and the top Democrat on that panel, California Rep. Adam Schiff, says the committee is contacting participants in the Trump Jr. meeting. Referencing Feinstein's comments about Mueller's clearance, he said his committee may consider public hearings "for particular witnesses" but noted it rarely holds open hearings.

The House panel is "reaching out to participants in the meeting with a request for testimony and documents, so that is very much in process at the moment," Schiff said.

Associated Press writers Jonathan Lemire, Eric Tucker and Chad Day in Washington and David Pitt in Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this report.

British foreign secretary in Japan for security, trade talks

By MARI YAMAGUCHI, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson arrived in Japan on Thursday for talks on security and trade, and to share his experience of hosting the Olympics as London mayor five years ago.

Johnson will meet with his Japanese counterpart, Fumio Kishida, on Friday to discuss an increased foreign and security cooperation, according to Japan's Foreign Ministry. North Korea's missile threat and Brexit are likely to top the agenda.

On Thursday, Johnson was introduced to cutting-edge humanoid robots at the Research Institute for Science and Engineering at Tokyo's prestigious Waseda University.

Johnson was beaming as he encountered the "Wabian 2" walking robot, which university scientists said can run, hop and may even get to carry the Olympic torch ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Games.

"He looks as though he is about to do martial arts," Johnson said as the robot walked. "I don't believe it, I just don't believe it."

He also saw a disaster response robot called "Octopus," which he said reminded him of the 1987 movie "Robocop."

Johnson, who was mayor of London during the 2012 Olympics, plans to share his expertise Friday with Japanese Olympic Minister Tamayo Marukawa to help Tokyo prepare for the 2020 Games.

He said he saw closely how the games unified and lifted the country's capital.

"I'm proud that our world-leading expertise in staging major events will help to forge an even stronger UK-Japan partnership ahead of the 2020 Olympic Games," he said in a statement released by his office.

Johnson is also due to meet with Japanese business leaders for talks on enhanced trade and investment during his three-day visit in Japan before traveling to New Zealand and Australia.

Associated Press video journalist Andrew Drake contributed to this report.

California farm region plagued by dirty air looks to Trump

By SCOTT SMITH, Associated Press

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — California's vast San Joaquin Valley, the country's most productive farming region, is engulfed by some of the nation's dirtiest skies, forcing the state's largest air district to spend more than \$40 billion in the past quarter-century to enforce hundreds of stringent pollution rules.

The investment has steadily driven down the number of days with unhealthy air — but on hot, windless days, a brown haze still hangs overhead, sending wheezing people with tight chests to emergency rooms and hundreds each year to an early grave.

The valley's air also still violates federal standards for sooty pollution that comes from industry, businesses and vehicles.

In California, where Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown is an outspoken leader in the global fight against climate change, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District now is waging a very public campaign against enforcement of the landmark U.S. Clean Air Act.

Officials in the relatively conservative region have seized upon the election of Donald Trump, who won the popular vote in half of the district's eight counties in November — a far stronger performance than in most of California.

The district's website prominently displays a report titled "Presidential Transition White Paper" that the director provided to the incoming Trump administration in calling for the elimination of the federal Air Act's "costly bureaucratic red tape."

District Executive Director Seyed Sadredin also reached out to Bakersfield Republican Kevin McCarthy, the GOP's U.S. House majority leader. And he testified in Washington for a bill co-authored by McCarthy that would limit new air standards under the Air Act to once every 10 years, instead of five.

"Regulators in Washington have issued blanket regulations that would unfairly impact the Central Valley's unique air challenges," McCarthy said in a statement.

The San Joaquin Valley, with more than 4 million residents, produces nearly half the nation's fruits, nuts and vegetables, annually generating \$47 billion.

Its bad air is the byproduct of booming farms, oil production, two major highways, a web of rail lines — and the valley's bowl-shaped geography. The Sierra Nevada and two other mountain ranges wall in the 250-mile-long (400-kilometer-long) valley.

The pollution is aggravated in winter when residents burn wood in fireplaces. In the blistering summer, an atmospheric lid traps haze, sometimes darkened by mountain forest fires.

This summer, the San Joaquin Valley must report how it will meet a federal standard for fine particulate matter — harmful air pollution from dust, soot, smoke or chemical reactions.

Sadredin says there's no way the district can meet the deadline. He contends the district could be subject to billions of dollars in annual penalties if it fails to comply within three years. At his request, language was inserted into McCarthy's bill that would protect the district from sanctions for vehicle pollution, which he says is beyond his authority to control.

Sadredin said he hopes that with a Republican-dominated Congress and Trump's election, regulators will be more sensitive to his district's plight than during the Obama administration. Already, he said, officials at the Environment Protection Agency, now headed by business-friendly former Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, have shown a "greater willingness to be cooperative."

EPA officials said they have never exacted strict penalties on a district and that harsh action would kick in only if a district refused to file an air cleanup plan or submitted a grossly insufficient one.

Elizabeth Adams, acting director of the EPA's regional air division, said she'll work with the air district

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to help meet requirements. "That's the ultimate goal for all our agencies," she said. "It's important for people to breathe clean air."

On the worst days, Natalie Sua keeps her six children inside their Fresno home, especially two sons with asthma. They'd rather be roughhousing on their backyard trampoline, but the risks are too high.

When her 11-year-old, Javier, was a preschooler, she found him lying on the sofa one night, struggling for breath.

Sua rushed the boy to the emergency room, where she says a doctor concluded the bad air and a chest cold triggered an asthma attack that nearly shut down his airway.

"Oh, my gosh. If it would have closed up all the way, I don't even know what would have happened," Sua said.

Roughly 1,200 people each year die prematurely from the valley's polluted air, the California Air Resources Control Board says.

The pollution is strongly linked to increased emergency room visits for asthma, especially in children, according to a 2011 California State University, Fresno study funded by the valley air district.

Since 2002, the district has helped drive down the number of unhealthy days by 80 percent, an Associated Press review found. In Fresno County, 25 unhealthy air warnings were issued last year, and 15 were issued in Bakersfield and other parts of Kern County.

Fresno, with about 500,000 residents, and Bakersfield, with 370,000, were among the three worst cities nationwide in the American Lung Association's annual report on unhealthy air.

Environmentalists accuse the San Joaquin Valley district of giving in to business interests and sounding alarms about looming sanctions, rather than making the air healthier.

"If he's unable to clean up the air for the people in the valley with the tools he has, then he ought to be lobbying for more authority to be more strict," said Brent Newell, legal director for the nonprofit Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment. "He's going the other direction."

While the district resists federal rules, officials in famously hazy Los Angeles are working to meet the standards for particulate matter and don't anticipate penalties, said Sam Atwood, a South Coast Air Quality Management District spokesman.

The valley air district's authority mainly is limited to stationary pollution sources such as oil refineries, power plants and food processors, as well as dispersed sources such as fireplaces, commercial barbecues and road paving.

But Sadredin says he has no direct control over mobile sources such as trucks and trains hauling produce. He has asked the EPA to crack down on them with stricter rules.

Freight trains can be heard passing day and night near Sua's Fresno home, where her two asthmatic sons stay cooped up inside with their four siblings on bad air days.

"I wish I could just get up and relocate, but it's kind of hard," she said. "You just have to deal with it."

East Timor vote highlights young nation's uneven progress

By RAIMUNDOS OKI and STEPHEN WRIGHT, Associated Press

DILI, East Timor (AP) — Almost two dozen parties are contesting parliamentary elections in East Timor this weekend that are likely to return independence heroes to power despite frustration in the young democracy with lack of economic progress and warnings the country could be bankrupt within a decade.

East Timorese hope the elections will repeat the success of a peaceful vote for the largely ceremonial role of president in March, which was the country's first election without U.N. supervision since peacekeepers left in 2012. Political stability is particularly crucial for the country, which officially gained independence only 15 years ago, because it is facing a financial time bomb.

Oil revenues, which finance more than 90 percent of government spending, are rapidly dwindling and the country's \$16 billion sovereign wealth fund could be empty within 10 years with the government's annual withdrawals exceeding its investment returns, according to La'o Hamutuk, an East Timorese research institute.

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An opinion poll commissioned by the International Republican Institute, which promotes democracy in the developing world, showed almost half of East Timorese surveyed in May were undecided about which party they would vote for on Saturday. But the current cast of leaders, whose popularity owes much to their history as fighters in East Timor's struggle for independence from Indonesia, are unlikely to be unseated.

Parliament is currently dominated by a national unity coalition led by Fretilin, the party of Prime Minister Rui Maria de Araujo, with CNRT, the party of resistance leader and former president Xanana Gusmao, who remains highly influential. Seats are allocated to parties based on the percentage of votes won if they poll higher than 4 percent.

The Popular Liberation Party, a new political force led by former president and resistance fighter Taur Matan Ruak, is campaigning on a platform of better access to education, anti-corruption and compulsory military service to address high youth unemployment and may pick up a few seats.

Campaigning, which was punctuated by parties trading accusations of vote buying, ended on Wednesday without major incident.

East Timor, a former Portuguese colony, voted overwhelmingly in 1999 to end 24 years of brutal Indonesian occupation. Indonesia's military and pro-Indonesian militias responded to the independence referendum with scorched earth attacks that devastated the East Timorese half of the island of Timor.

Today, the country of 1.3 million people, still faces poverty with many people lacking clean water and sanitation. Unemployment is high and young people are increasingly looking abroad for work. The top and perennial concern of voters in the IRI survey was the poor condition of roads. They also believed government corruption was worsening.

"Here in Dili it is very difficult to find jobs," said Agustinho Lopo, who like other young Timorese hopes he can find work in South Korea.

To develop the economy, leaders have focused on big ticket infrastructure projects such as airports, a highway and a special economic zone funded from the dwindling \$16 billion Timor-Leste Petroleum Fund. It was established in 2005 from revenues from the now almost-dry Bayu-Undan oil field. The field is forecast to end production in 2021.

In an acknowledgement that progress is uneven, both Fretilin and CNRT have vowed during the campaign that the benefits of their development plans will be spread more widely.

As the country's funds run down, development of the potentially lucrative "Greater Sunshine" oil and gas field in the Timor Sea is stalled by a boundary dispute between East Timor and Australia and the insistence of top East Timorese leaders that the processing plant be located in East Timor despite industry experts saying that would make development of the field financially unviable.

In March, an Australian parliamentary committee heard testimony from an expert who predicted East Timor could become a failed state without revenue from Sunrise, outraging East Timorese leaders despite similar warnings coming from other quarters in recent years.

East Timorese, however, are still optimistic about the future. The IRI survey showed 68 percent believed that East Timor would be better off in a year's time.

Ano Peji Colo, a student at the National University of Timor, said East Timor needs other industries, not only oil and gas, to compete with other Southeast Asian nations.

"I really hope that the new government will invest more in the economy. The government shouldn't depend on oil and gas because oil and gas is not sustainable," he said.

Wright reported from Jakarta, Indonesia.

AP Exclusive: US hotel, NFL arena may sport flammable panels

By JULIET LINDERMAN, JASON DEAREN and JEFF MARTIN, Associated Press

In promotional brochures, a U.S. company boasted of the "stunning visual effect" its shimmering aluminum panels created in an NFL stadium, an Alaskan high school and a luxury hotel along Baltimore's Inner Harbor that "soars 33 stories into the air."

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Those same panels — Reynobond composite material with a polyethylene core — also were used in the Grenfell Tower apartment building in London. British authorities say they're investigating whether the panels helped spread the blaze that ripped across the building's outer walls, killing at least 80 people.

The panels, also called cladding, accentuate a building's appearance and also improve energy efficiency. But they are not recommended for use in buildings above 40 feet because they are combustible. In the wake of last month's fire at the 24-story, 220-foot-high tower in London, Arconic Inc. announced it would no longer make the product available for high-rise buildings.

Determining which buildings might be wrapped in the material in the United States is difficult. City inspectors and building owners might not even know. In some cases, building records have been long discarded and neither the owners, operators, contractors nor architects involved could or would confirm whether the cladding was used.

That makes it virtually impossible to know whether the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront hotel or Cleveland Browns' football stadium — both identified by Arconic's brochures as wrapped in Reynobond PE — are actually clad in the same material as Grenfell Tower, which was engulfed in flames in less than five minutes.

"If the materials used on a building appear similar to a known hazard, people need to know that," said Douglas Evans, a fire protection engineer from Las Vegas, who has been studying fires on the exterior facades of buildings for nearly 25 years. "Anybody who is inside of these buildings has a right to know."

The International Building Code adopted by the U.S. requires more stringent fire testing of materials used on the sides of buildings taller than 40 feet. However, states and cities can set their own rules, said Keith Nelson, senior project architect with Intertek, a worldwide fire testing organization.

The National Fire Protection Association conducts fire resistance tests on building materials to determine whether they comply with the international code. Robert Solomon, an engineer with the association, told the AP that the group's records show the U.S.-made Arconic panels never underwent the tests. For that reason, he said, the group considered the products unsafe for use in buildings higher than 40 feet.

Tests conducted by the British government after the Grenfell fire found samples of cladding material used on 75 buildings failed combustibility tests.

Solomon said the use of Reynobond PE on the Baltimore Marriott and the city-owned Cleveland Browns stadium in particular should be reviewed because of their height.

On buildings that are "higher than the firefighters' ladders," incombustible material must be used, Arconic advises in a fire-safety pamphlet. It warns that choosing the right product is crucial "in order to avoid the fire to spread to the whole building" and that fire can spread extremely rapidly "especially when it comes to facades and roofs."

No one has declared the U.S. buildings unsafe, nor has the U.S. government initiated any of the widespread testing of aluminum paneling that British authorities ordered after the London disaster.

Arconic declined to give further details about the buildings in the brochure, and hasn't said how many U.S. buildings contain the product.

The company is cooperating with building owners and others involved, such as the Baltimore hotel, spokesman Steven Lipin said. The product is "certified for use in the UK and US" and the company "will continue to be here to answer any questions about its products," Lipin said in a statement to the AP.

He did not indicate whether Arconic is contacting all the contractors, builders and others that used the material.

Baltimore City Housing Authority spokeswoman Tania Baker said the city doesn't keep detailed records of building materials but added that, if used, the material would have been compliant with local fire codes because the Marriott is equipped with sprinklers. Harbor East, a development company that owns the building, referred all inquiries to the Marriott, whose spokesman Jeff Flaherty said results of testing on the hotel's exterior panels could be received as early as this week.

"We can tell you that the hotel passed building inspection at the time it opened in 2001 and that the hotel's fire and life safety systems meet local code requirements," he said.

The Arconic website stated that the Browns stadium used 100,000 square feet of the bright silver alu-

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minum composite material in its exterior.

Daniel Williams, a spokesman for Cleveland's mayor, wouldn't say whether the city-owned stadium was built with the aluminum cladding. All related questions "will need to wait until after the investigators finish their report on the fire in London," he said.

One option for building owners who are unsure of the product's use would be to remove a section of paneling and have it tested at a lab, said Vickie Lovell, president of InterCode Inc., a consulting firm on building codes and standards.

Building records kept by cities can include construction blueprints, inspection logs and fire safety plans. But local agencies don't require that an applicant seeking a building permit submit a list of materials or specific products. In the case of the Marriott, Baltimore's housing department holds the building's original plans, which don't say what cladding was used.

The architect of record would have known what materials were used during construction. But Peter Filat, an architect who worked on the 2001 Marriott construction, said he destroyed his records pertaining to the property six years ago because his contract requires him to keep files for only 10 years.

Construction and contracting firms that worked on the Marriott also said they no longer had those records. For decades, the U.S. has required sprinkler systems to be installed in new high-rise buildings, as well as multiple ways for people to exit in the case of a fire. Grenfell Tower had none of those safeguards.

But fire safety experts caution that indoor sprinklers can't stop a fire that ignites on a building's exterior and spreads across the coating that encases it.

The danger is that "the whole outside of your building could be on fire, yet the internal sprinkler heads may never activate!" Oklahoma fire safety consultant John Valiulis wrote in a 2015 research report on the flammability of exterior walls. He pointed to high-rise fires that began on building exteriors where indoor sprinklers were completely ineffective at stopping flames from racing up the outside walls.

Some of the buildings Arconic lists as using Reynobond PE:

Anchorage, Alaska: South Anchorage High School used 20,000 square feet of Reynobond Aluminum Cladding Material on the exterior of its science classrooms, according to Arconic's website. Anchorage Public Schools Superintendent Deena Bishop confirmed to the AP that the material was used at the high school. "We are looking at options, studying it more, understanding what the risks are," Bishop said, adding that the cladding was installed according to code. "Presently, we're finding that the use of it on single-story buildings is appropriate according to the manufacturer."

Dallas: Arconic's website says Reynobond PE was used in Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport's 2-million-square-foot Terminal D facility, which opened in 2005. Reynobond PE formed the walls of the terminal's shopping and dining areas, the company's project report states. The panels were installed in parts of the interior and exterior of the terminal, airport spokesman Casey Norton said. "We've been aware that we have these panels for a long time and it's part of the equation that we use every time we inspect the airport for fire safety," he said.

Detroit: Arconic's website reported 26,000 feet of the paneling was used in six Early Childhood Development Centers for the Detroit Public School System. Detroit Fire Marshal Gregory Turner said no specific buildings had been identified using the material applied to Grenfell Tower but that the city was continuing to investigate.

Denver: The top two floors of 1899 Wynkoop, a nine-story office and retail building in downtown Denver's historic warehouse district, were clad with the product to lighten its appearance and keep it from dominating the surrounding warehouses, Arconic advertises in promotional materials. About 13,000 square feet of Reynobond PE was used, the company said. Officials in Denver's community planning and development office have been looking into the matter, but haven't been able to locate the original building plans. "Our expectation is that it was purged as part of our normal records retention process," spokeswoman Andrea Burns said in an email.

Associated Press writers Mark Thiessen in Anchorage, Alaska; Jamie Stengle in Dallas; Corey Williams

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and Mike Householder in Detroit; Mitch Stacy in Columbus, Ohio; and Brian Witte in Annapolis, Maryland, contributed to this report.

Asian shares rally, helped by Wall Street, Japan trade data

By **YOUKYUNG LEE, AP Business Writer**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Asian share benchmarks rose Thursday after an overnight advance on Wall Street fueled by strong corporate earnings. Strong trade data and expectations for continued lavish monetary stimulus from Japan's central bank pushed Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index up 0.6 percent.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 advanced 0.6 percent to 20,148.72 and South Korea's Kospi added 0.1 percent to 2,432.73. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index rose 0.3 percent to 26,749.10 and the Shanghai Composite Index added 0.2 percent to 3,236.58. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 gained 0.5 percent to 5,762.80. Stocks in Southeast Asia were mixed.

CENTRAL BANKS: Japan's central bank opted to keep its lavish monetary stimulus intact while downgrading its outlook for inflation. The Bank of Japan's policy meeting ended Thursday with no change to its injections of trillions of yen (hundreds of billions of dollars) into the economy each year through government bond purchases. Analysts also expect the European Central Bank to keep its policy rate unchanged later in the day and give more hints on the euro-zone's inflation outlook.

ANALYST'S VIEW: "While the Bank of Japan turned more upbeat on the economy, renewed reductions in the Board's inflation forecasts underline that policy tightening is a long way off," Marcel Thieliand of Capital Economics said in a commentary.

JAPAN TRADE: Following on upbeat economic growth and forecasts for China and the rest of the region, news that Japan's exports rose nearly 10 percent in June from a year earlier also brightened sentiment. A recovery in demand from China is helping sustain growth across the region.

WALL STREET: U.S. stocks advanced to fresh record highs on Wednesday, led by technology, health care and energy companies. The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 0.5 percent to 2,473.83. The Dow Jones industrial average added 0.3 percent to 21,640.75. The Nasdaq composite gained 0.6 percent to 6,385.04. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks jumped 1 percent to 1,441.77.

OIL: Benchmark U.S. crude lost 6 cents to \$47.26 per barrel in electronic trading on New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract finished at \$47.12 a barrel on Wednesday, up 72 cents, or 1.6 percent. Brent crude, the standard for international oil prices, dipped 5 cents to \$49.65 per barrel in London. It gained 86 cents, or 1.7 percent, to close at \$49.70 per barrel in the previous session.

CURRENCIES: The dollar strengthened to 112.12 yen from 111.89 yen. The euro slipped to \$1.1507 from \$1.1515.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, July 20, the 201st day of 2017. There are 164 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On July 20, 1917, America's World War I draft lottery began as Secretary of War Newton Baker, wearing a blindfold, reached into a glass bowl and pulled out a capsule containing the number 258 during a ceremony inside the Senate office building. (The drawing of numbers by various officials continued until shortly after 2:00 a.m. the next day.) The Corfu Declaration called for creation of a unified Yugoslav state.

On this date:

In 1861, the Congress of the Confederate States convened in Richmond, Virginia.

In 1871, British Columbia entered Confederation as a Canadian province.

In 1923, Mexican revolutionary leader Pancho Villa was assassinated by gunmen in Parral.

In 1942, the first detachment of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps — later known as WACs — began

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basic training at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. The Legion of Merit was established by an Act of Congress.

In 1944, an attempt by a group of German officials to assassinate Adolf Hitler with a bomb failed as the explosion only wounded the Nazi leader. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was nominated for a fourth term of office at the Democratic convention in Chicago.

In 1954, the Geneva Accords divided Vietnam into northern and southern entities.

In 1968, the first International Special Olympics Summer Games, organized by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, were held at Soldier Field in Chicago.

In 1969, astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin became the first men to walk on the moon after reaching the surface in their Apollo 11 lunar module.

In 1976, America's Viking 1 robot spacecraft made a successful, first-ever landing on Mars.

In 1977, a flash flood hit Johnstown, Pennsylvania, killing more than 80 people and causing \$350 million worth of damage. The U.N. Security Council voted to admit Vietnam to the world body.

In 1982, Irish Republican Army bombs exploded in two London parks, killing eight British soldiers, along with seven horses belonging to the Queen's Household Cavalry.

In 1990, Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, one of the court's most liberal voices, announced he was stepping down.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush signed an executive order prohibiting cruel and inhuman treatment, including humiliation or denigration of religious beliefs, in the detention and interrogation of terrorism suspects. Tammy Faye Messner, who as Tammy Faye Bakker helped her husband, Jim, build a multimillion-dollar evangelism empire, then watched it collapse in disgrace, died at age 65 near Kansas City, Missouri.

Five years ago: Gunman James Holmes opened fire inside a crowded movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, during a midnight showing of "The Dark Knight Rises," killing 12 people and wounding 70 others. (Holmes was later convicted of murder and attempted murder, and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.) After years of preparation and months of buildup, London's Olympic moment finally arrived as Royal Marine Martyn Williams carried the Olympic torch from a Royal Navy Sea King helicopter into the Tower of London on the shore of the River Thames (tehmz).

One year ago: Undercutting calls for Republican unity, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz stubbornly refused to endorse Donald Trump as he addressed the GOP convention in Cleveland, igniting thunderous boos from furious delegates as he encouraged Americans to simply "vote your conscience" in November. A federal appeals court ruled that Texas' strict voter ID law discriminated against minorities and the poor and had to be weakened before the November elections. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (REH'-jehp TY'-ihp UR'-doh-wahn) declared a three-month state of emergency following a botched coup attempt.

Today's Birthdays: Actress-singer Sally Ann Howes is 87. Author Cormac McCarthy is 84. Rockabilly singer Sleepy LaBeef is 82. Former Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski, D-Md., is 81. Actress Diana Rigg is 79. Artist Judy Chicago is 78. Rock musician John Lodge (The Moody Blues) is 74. Country singer T.G. Sheppard is 73. Singer Kim Carnes is 72. Rock musician Carlos Santana is 70. Rock musician Jay Jay French (Twisted Sister) is 65. Rock musician Paul Cook (The Sex Pistols, Man Raze) is 61. Actress Donna Dixon is 60. Rock musician Mick McNeil (Simple Minds) is 59. Country singer Radney Foster is 58. Actor Frank Whaley is 54. Actor Dean Cain is 53. Rock musician Stone Gossard (Pearl Jam) is 51. Actor Reed Diamond is 50. Actor Josh Holloway is 48. Singer Vitamin C is 48. Actor Omar Epps is 44. Actor Simon Rex is 43. Actress Judy Greer is 42. Actor Charlie Korsmo is 39. Singer Elliott Yamin (yah-MEEN') (American Idol) is 39. Supermodel Gisele Bündchen is 37. Rock musician Mike Kennerty (The All-American Rejects) is 37. Actor Percy Daggs III is 35. Actor John Francis Daley is 32. Country singer Hannah Blaylock (Edens Edge) is 31. Dancer-singer-actress Julianne Hough is 29. Actress Billi Bruno is 21.

Thought for Today: "Common sense is the collection of prejudices acquired by age eighteen." — Albert Einstein, German-American physicist (1879-1955).

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