

Groton Daily Independent

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Senior Menu: BBQ chicken, rosemary red potatoes, old fashioned slaw, strawberry Jell-O dessert, whole wheat bread.

United Methodist: Bible Study at 10 a.m.

16

Senior Menu: Breaded fish, parsley buttered potatoes, beets, sherbet, whole wheat bread.

8 a.m.: Faculty In-Service at NSU

United Methodist: Wednesday coffee, 9 a.m.; Conde UMW, 10 a.m.; Ad Council, 7:15 p.m.

Official Notices

Groton City (updated 8-8)

Other Notices (updated 8-8)

Groton Area School (updated 8-7)

Brown County (updated 8-7)

Frederick Area School Book (updated 7-26)

Westport Town Book (updated 7-26)

Frederick Town (updated 7-18)

Claremont Town Official Notices 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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Removal, Grinding, Chipping, Trimming

605-725-WOOD

Mason Dinger: 605-216-6098

Trevor Zeck: 605-216-8910



**DAKOTA TREE
COMPANY**

**"BEGIN DOING
WHAT YOU
WANT TO
DO NOW."**

-Marie Beynon Ray

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Groton Area Elementary Renovations and Addition

Progress Update 08-14-2017

By Superintendent Joe Schwan

Each week at our weekly construction progress meetings attended by Ken Anderson (FJJ), Joel Bornhoft (FJJ), and each contractor, we discuss jobsite safety, clean-up, critical items (security), change events, Field Work Orders*, Requests for Information (RFIs)***, Supplemental Instructions (ASis)***, schedule reviews, equipment deliveries, manpower updates, and anything else of importance.

*Field Work Orders: As of last week, there have been 17 approved field work orders, all of which have been completed.

These are minor work orders outside of the scope of a contract that need to be completed on the spot and will likely result in a change order being processed at some point.

**Requests for Information: As of last week, there had been 87 RFIs submitted to be responded to by the responsible party, typically the architect or an appropriate engineer.

***Supplemental instructions: As of last week, five ASis have been issued.

Work Remaining:

1992 Addition/Library/Center: Work remaining in this area of the building is very minor. There are a few doors in this area to install (expected to arrive to jobsite on Tuesday, 8/15/17) -JDH. Vinyl base needs to be installed in the computer Lab - Grazzini Brothers. Muth Electric is finishing the data wiring termination in the hub room.

Our custodial crew has been in this area cleaning carpets and will strip/wax the tile floor in the junior kindergarten room. We are expecting to begin moving items back into this space beginning Tuesday, 8/15/17.

Lower Pod: Interior doors need to be installed. Carpeting needs to be finished extending from the PLC into to hallway and ceiling tiles need to be dropped in the hallway. Anything else in this area is basically a punch-list type item.

Upper Pod: Interior doors need to be installed. Carpeting needs to be installed in two more classrooms as well as in the PLC and into the hallway. Carpeting will be followed by rubber base. Ceiling tiles need to be dropped in the upper pod. Trim and sealing of the windows is in progress as well.

Main Restrooms/Kitchen/Gym: Most of the remaining work on the renovation is in the restrooms and kitchen. The dish counter is expected back on site Tuesday. The kitchen is ready for ceiling grid, followed by light fixtures, HVAC and sprinkler connections and ceiling tile. The girls bathroom has been tiled/grouted and the plumbers are beginning to hang fixtures. Ceiling grid is scheduled for Wednesday after which time partitions, light fixtures, and HVAC connections can be completed. The boys bathroom has been tiled and the grout is curing. Ceiling grid is scheduled for this space late on Wednesday followed by the same protocol as in the girls restroom (with fewer partitions).

New Addition: I expect that conversation at our weekly meeting on 8/16/17 will begin to center around work taking place in the new addition as contractors begin to shift focus back to that area.

Miscellaneous: We've begun discussion with FJJ and the contractors about taking back our playground space prior to the beginning of the school year- similar to how it was set up last spring.

I've had discussions with Mr. Clocksene about the alternative options for serving lunch during the completion of the construction of the new addition. During that time, lunch will be served in the gymnasium as it has in the past.

Next week Tuesday (August 22), there is a walk through with the Architects and Engineers to develop the punch list of items that need to be completed and/or corrected. It is anticipated that many of these items will be completed prior to school beginning on September 5. Those items not yet completed will need to be taken care of around our school day schedule

Elementary School nearing completion

Work on the Groton Area Elementary School is nearing completion. The janitorial staff has begun work in the building and some stuff has been moved in. Superintendent Joe Schwan said that he knows the elementary staff is itching to move into the building. He did say that maybe, and only maybe, that could happen as early as next Monday. Schwan said that he would send out an e-mail letting the staff know when they can move into the building. To date, only 69.3 percent of the contingency fund has been used.

Another school has joined the North Central Special Education Co-Op. Edmunds Central becomes the ninth school to join Doland, Frederick Area, Groton Area, Hitchcock-Tulare, Langford Area, Leola, North-western Area and Warner.

A number of positions were filled at the school board meeting last night. Melissa Ulmer will be the new elementary librarian;

Lisa Sippel was hired to replace Joni Groeblichhoff as a special education teacher. Groeblichhoff moved to the kindergarten aid replacing Alexia Schuring. Schuring moved to the junior kindergarten teacher, replacing Kayla Krause who left.

In other staff changes, Jodi Schwan is the new Opportunities Room Counselor replacing Kiersten Sombke who is the new middle/high school principal; Deb Tietz, Rita Kampa and Karen Johnson are all part-time cooks; Chris Kucker and Doug Heinrich are volunteer assistant girls soccer coaches; Sara Schuster is the volunteer assistant volleyball coach; and Seth Erickson is the volunteer assistant football coach.

The board approved the extension of the Safe Routes to School Grant. It was earlier approved by the city council and also has to be approved by the school. The plan is to get a speed sign for around the school.

The board acknowledged the receipt of an application for public school exemption for a sixth grader, and approved the open enrollment for an eighth grader from the Aberdeen Public School District.

Instructions for 2017 Information Center Publications



At the end of the 2017 season, the Wilmot, Valley Springs and Vermillion Interstate Welcome Centers will begin undergoing renovations that will keep them closed during the 2018 season. Industry partners will be able to collect any remaining publication inventory they may have at these sites once the centers have closed. If you'd like to collect your leftover publications, you must contact Nate Johnson, Welcome Center Manager, no later than Thursday, August 31, to schedule a date and time.

Collection will take place at the Wilmot center Monday, September 11, through Wednesday, September 13. Publications can be picked up from the Valley Springs and Vermillion centers Monday, October

16, through Wednesday, October 18. Publications can only be collected during the specified time frames. Any leftover material that cannot be reused will be recycled.

Additionally, in an effort to keep industry partners well-informed, the Department of Tourism has created a Fact Sheet regarding the Rest Area Revitalization Plan. It includes a timeline, frequently asked questions, and a link to the full Rest Area Revitalization Plan report. We have also created webpages on SDVisit.com that include the same information and links, and will provide updates on where we are at in the process. There will be more to come on this in the coming weeks.

Boards of North Central Farmers Elevator and Wheat Growers Approve Member Vote on Unification

(AUGUST 14, 2017; Ipswich & Aberdeen, SD) – The Boards of Directors for North Central Farmers Elevator (NCFE) and Wheat Growers have decided to proceed to a vote of the membership to unify the two cooperatives. Both boards voted affirmatively to sign a Unification Agreement that would unify the two cooperatives, subject to a vote of the memberships of both cooperatives.

“The value to our members is what’s driving the decision by the Boards to move forward with the effort to unify the two cooperatives,” said Rick Osterday, NCFE Board President. “Members have told us that unification will help us be better able to compete at a time when we see lots of competitor growth in the region. This will help keep our businesses strong, members' equity secure, and local control intact.”

Osterday said the decisions to take the unification opportunity to a vote of the memberships was made after considering member feedback and re-examining findings from a thorough analysis of both cooperatives that was conducted two years ago. The unification proposal now will be considered by the memberships of both cooperatives.

“Many benefits we’ve identified are extremely timely given the aggressive positioning of competitors and continued market uncertainty,” said Hal Clemensen, Wheat Growers Board President. “By combining both cooperatives, we can realize significant savings, economies of size and scale, efficiencies in operations, adoption of new technologies, and an ability to continue to attract talent – all to better serve our members.”

A series of member information meetings will be held throughout the region beginning Aug. 21. Ballots will be mailed to members of NCFE and Wheat Growers on Aug. 29. Details regarding member information meetings, ballots, and how and when members can vote will be provided to members over the next few weeks.

Vogel is elementary special education teacher



Pictured are Dustin Vogel with his wife, Kristen, and their five-week old daughter, Harper.

Dustin Vogel is a new elementary special education teacher. Vogel is a 2005 Edmunds Central High School graduate and he graduated from Northern State University in 2010 with a double major - bachelors of science degree in education- special education/ elementary education.

Previously, Vogel was a Redfield Elementary Special Education Teacher from 2010-2014, a Harrisburg Liberty Elementary Special Education Teacher from 2014-2015, a Harrisburg District Wide Elementary Behavior Program Teacher from 2015-16, and a Sioux Falls School District Middle School OSS Program at Axtell Park from 2016 to this year.

Vogel said, "We decided to relocate to Aberdeen to be closer to family.

"Groton had an open special education position that I had prior experience in. I have heard good things about the Groton Area school system and I have a lot of respect for Elementary Principal Brett Schwan and his background/support for special education programs."

Vogel is married to Kristen Vogel who just graduated from nursing school and they have a five-week old daughter, Harper. His hobbies include Outdoor activities; fishing, hiking, walking, exercise; Anything with family; Watching football and basketball, playing basketball.



Customer Appreciation Days

Aug. 22 through Aug. 24

Specials All Week! Daily Drawings!

Tuesday is Coffee, cookies and cheese samples

Wednesday is bring your pet in for a treat

**Thursday is beef sandwiches, beans and drink
served from noon to 7 pm.**

**Ritchie Waterer rep Curt Weyh available
to speak with on Thursday**

Come let us show you **OUR
appreciation for your business**

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The oil was put down on the graveled streets on the east side of town on Monday with chips being put down in other areas in that part of town. The work should be done before the rain moves in on Tuesday night.



Terry Herron was fixing a water leak caused by Webster Scale, Inc. on Monday. The water service line feeding Mary Larson's home was accidentally pulled up.

Gas Prices Have Stalled in South Dakota

August 14, 2017 - Today's South Dakota and national's average price for regular unleaded gasoline is \$2.35 per gallon, which is flat on the week, and nine cents more than one month ago.

"Prices at the pump continue a slow, upward climb as the summer season draws to a close," said Marilyn Buskohl, AAA South Dakota spokesperson. "As we get closer to Labor Day and demand and production rates grow, drivers will likely see some of the highest prices at the pump this year."

Current Price Averages per Gallon of Regular Gasoline

Sioux Falls – \$2.27, up 12 cents from one month ago ... up 17 cents from 8/14/16

Rapid City – \$2.37, up 12 cents from one month ago ... up 1 cents from 8/14/16

South Dakota – \$2.35, up 9 cents from one month ago ... up 10 cents from 8/14/16

U.S. – \$2.35, up 10 cents from one month ago ... up 23 cents from 8/14/16

Great Lakes and Central States

Despite a nearly 800,000 bbl build in gasoline, low inventory levels are driving gas prices up in the Great Lakes and Central States. Three states in the region land on this week's top states with the biggest increases: Indiana (+7 cents), Michigan (+6 cents) and Ohio (+6 cents). As we've seen for most of the year, the region remains volatile. Just last week these same three states saw comparable declines at the pump: Indiana (-8 cents), Michigan (-7 cents) and Ohio (-7 cents).

In the region on the week, gas prices increased in a total of seven states, decreased in three states and remained flat in three states. All states in the region with increases include: Indiana (+7 cents), Michigan (+6 cents), Ohio (+6 cents), Illinois (+2 cents), Kansas (+1 cent), North Dakota (+1 cent) and Wisconsin (+1 cent). States with decreases: Kentucky (-4 cents), Missouri (-3 cents) and Minnesota (-1 cent).

Quick Stats

Largest weekly increases: Idaho (+9 cents), Indiana (+7 cents), Utah (+7 cents), Michigan (+6 cents), Ohio (+6 cents), Wyoming (+3 cents), Hawaii (+3 cents), Illinois (+3 cents), West Virginia (+3 cents) and Oregon (+2 cents).

The nation's top ten least expensive markets are: South Carolina (\$2.08), Alabama (\$2.10), Mississippi (\$2.10), Arkansas (\$2.11), Oklahoma (\$2.12), Missouri (\$2.14), Tennessee (\$2.15), Virginia (\$2.16), Texas (\$2.16) and Louisiana (\$2.16).

Oil market dynamics

After closing on the NYMEX at \$48.82 per barrel on Friday, WTI started moving downward Monday morning amid concerns from investors that U.S. production will continue to add to the global crude glut. The reduction in inventories has given the market greater confidence, but the growing rig count remains a concern as it indicates that oil companies are still investing heavily in U.S. production.

With strong gasoline production levels and seasonal demand staying on track, drivers will likely see prices continue to climb across the country.

Motorists can find current gas prices along their route with the free AAA Mobile app for iPhone, iPad, and Android. The app can also be used to map a route, find discounts, book a hotel, and access AAA roadside assistance. Learn more at AAA.com/mobile.

Surviving the Total Eclipse of the Sun if You're in Your Car

Aug. 15, 2017 – The first cross-country solar eclipse since the advent of the automobile is heading our way Monday, Aug. 21. And, while it won't shroud South Dakota in complete darkness, drivers will see and feel the difference while on the road, which could lead to some distracted driving behavior.

Most of South Dakota will experience 90 percent obstruction of sunlight over the lunch hour on Aug. 21 when the moon passes between the Earth and the sun.

"As spectacular as this once-in-a-lifetime event will be, if you happen to catch a glimpse of it while behind the wheel, by all means, don't turn your eyes away from the road," said Marilyn Buskohl, spokesperson for AAA South Dakota. "Aside from damaging your eyes, looking at the eclipse while driving is distracted driving at its worst. In fact, AAA recommends staying off the road during the eclipse. But if you have to drive keep sun visors and cell phones down to protect your eyes, don't give in to the temptation to look at the sun, and avoid all distractions."

AAA Warns: Expect Traffic Jams

Sky gazers could take to the roads at the last minute, looking for a good view of the eclipse.

August 21 is still summer vacation time for many – there may be increased travel (and subsequently traffic) up to and including Aug. 21.

Pack your patience, whether traveling great distance or locally, people will be out and about to catch a glimpse of the eclipse.

AAA Driver Safety Tips during the Solar Eclipse

Keep headlights on.

Put the sun visor down to block your view of the sun.

Don't wear eclipse glasses while driving.

Don't try to photograph or video the eclipse while driving.

Don't pull over to the side of the road, highway or interstate to view the eclipse.

Exit the roadway and park in a safe area away from traffic to view the eclipse.

Be alert to the possibility of distracted drivers swerving into your lane.

Other drivers may be attempting to watch the eclipse and drive at the same time.

To help prevent trouble, keep additional space between you and other vehicles.

Reduce your speed so you will have more time to make an emergency maneuver if needed.

Be mindful of pedestrians that many be walking around with their eyes on the sky.

NASA reports that the eclipse will first be visible in Lincoln Beach, Ore. at 11:05 a.m. South Dakota time, with a total eclipse occurring at 12:16 p.m., South Dakota time. Over the next hour and a half, the total eclipse will pass over 14 states, ending near Charleston, S.C. at 1:48 p.m., CST.

NASA has created an interactive map that allows you to view when the eclipse will be visible in your area.

The 14 states along the path of totality include: Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

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Today in Weather History

August 15, 1886: A tornado moved northeast from 5 miles southwest of Newark in Marshall County, through town and into North Dakota. Only three buildings were reportedly undamaged at Newark, and a bartender at a saloon was killed. Three people died in two homes on adjoining farms 2 miles southwest of town. A saddle from a Newark stable was carried for a half mile. In North Dakota, homes and barns were damaged along the Wild River. This tornado was estimated as an F3.

August 15, 1987: On this day the largest hail stone was reported in Brown County. The size of the hail stone as 4.5 inches in diameter, and fell on the southwest corner of Warner. This storm also produced F1 tornado that touchdown about 2 miles southwest of Warner. An estimated wind gust of 60 mph was also reported about 2 miles NNW of Stratford.

August 15, 2011: Slow moving thunderstorms across parts of northern Roberts County produced anywhere from 4 to 8 inches of rainfall resulting in flash flooding. The town of New Effington was affected with many roads along with several homes flooded. Sandbagging took place to keep the water from the school. Highway 127 from New Effington to Hammer was flooded in several spots. The floodwaters remained for several days afterward with several roads flooded.

1787: Tornadoes were reported in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. Wethersfield, Connecticut was hard hit by the tornado outbreak. There, a woman and her family were caught in the open. She and her son were killed. Clothes from the family farm were carried three miles away. This event is regarded to be the most significant tornado outbreak in early New England history.

1946 - Saint Louis, MO, was deluged with a record 8.78 inches of rain in 24 hours. (The Weather Channel)

1967 - The sundance fire in northern Idaho was started by lightning. Winds of 50 mph carried firebrands as much as ten miles in advance to ignite new fires, and as a result, the forest fire spread twenty miles across the Selkirk Mountains in just twelve hours, burning 56,000 acres. The heat of the fire produced whirlwinds of flame with winds up to 300 mph which flung giant trees about like matchsticks. (David Ludlum)

1983: Hurricane Alicia formed on this day and was the costliest tropical cyclone in the Atlantic since Hurricane Agnes in 1972. It struck Galveston and Houston, Texas directly, causing \$2.6 billion (1983 USD) in damage and killing 21 people. This storm was the worst Texas hurricane since Hurricane Carla in 1961. Also, Alicia was the first billion-dollar tropical cyclone in Texas history.

1987 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a sharp cold front produced severe weather in the Upper Midwest during the afternoon and evening hours, with Minnesota and eastern South Dakota hardest hit. A thunderstorm in west central Minnesota spawned a tornado at Eagle Lake which killed one person and injured eight others. A thunder- storm in eastern South Dakota produced softball size hail at Warner. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thirty five cities in twenty states in the north central and northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Lamoni IA and Baltimore MD, where the mercury hit 105 degrees. Temperatures 100 degrees or above were reported in twenty-two states. Pierre SD was the hot spot in the nation with a high of 114 degrees. Bluefield WV reported eight straight days of record heat. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Evening thunderstorms in eastern New Mexico produced wind gusts to 66 mph at Clovis. Evening thunderstorms in West Texas produced baseball size hail around Hereford, Dimmitt, Ware and Dalhart. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

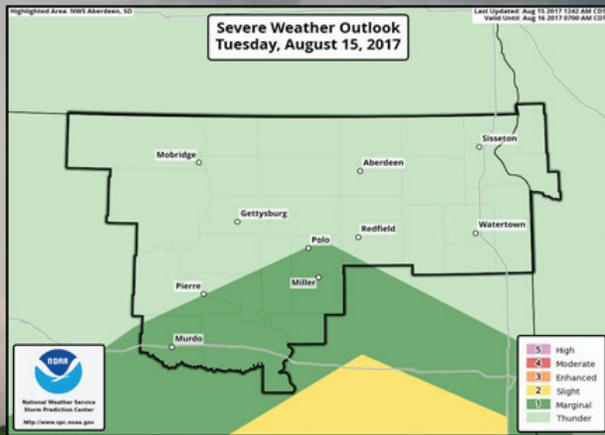
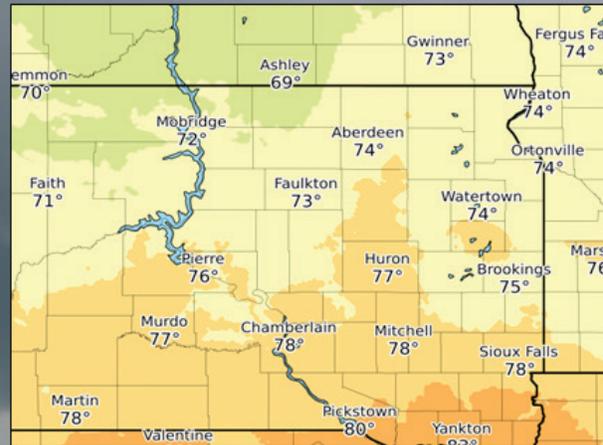
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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						
30% / 50%	70%	20%			20%	20%
Scattered Showers then Scattered T-storms	Showers Likely and Patchy Fog	Isolated Showers and Patchy Fog	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear then Slight Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers
High: 74 °F	Low: 61 °F	High: 76 °F	Low: 53 °F	High: 81 °F	Low: 58 °F	High: 80 °F

Showers and Thunderstorms Today

Severe Threat Over Southern SD Today Into Tonight



Below Normal High Temps Again Today



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD



Updated: 8/15/2017 5:37 AM Central

Published on: 08/15/2017 at 5:46AM

Scattered showers and thunderstorms can be expected today into the overnight hours. Moderate to heavy rainfall is possible through tonight, with some areas picking up over an inch to perhaps two inches of rain. As far as the severe storm threat, it appears southern South Dakota has the best potential today into tonight. High temperatures today will be below normal once again, with readings in the 70s.

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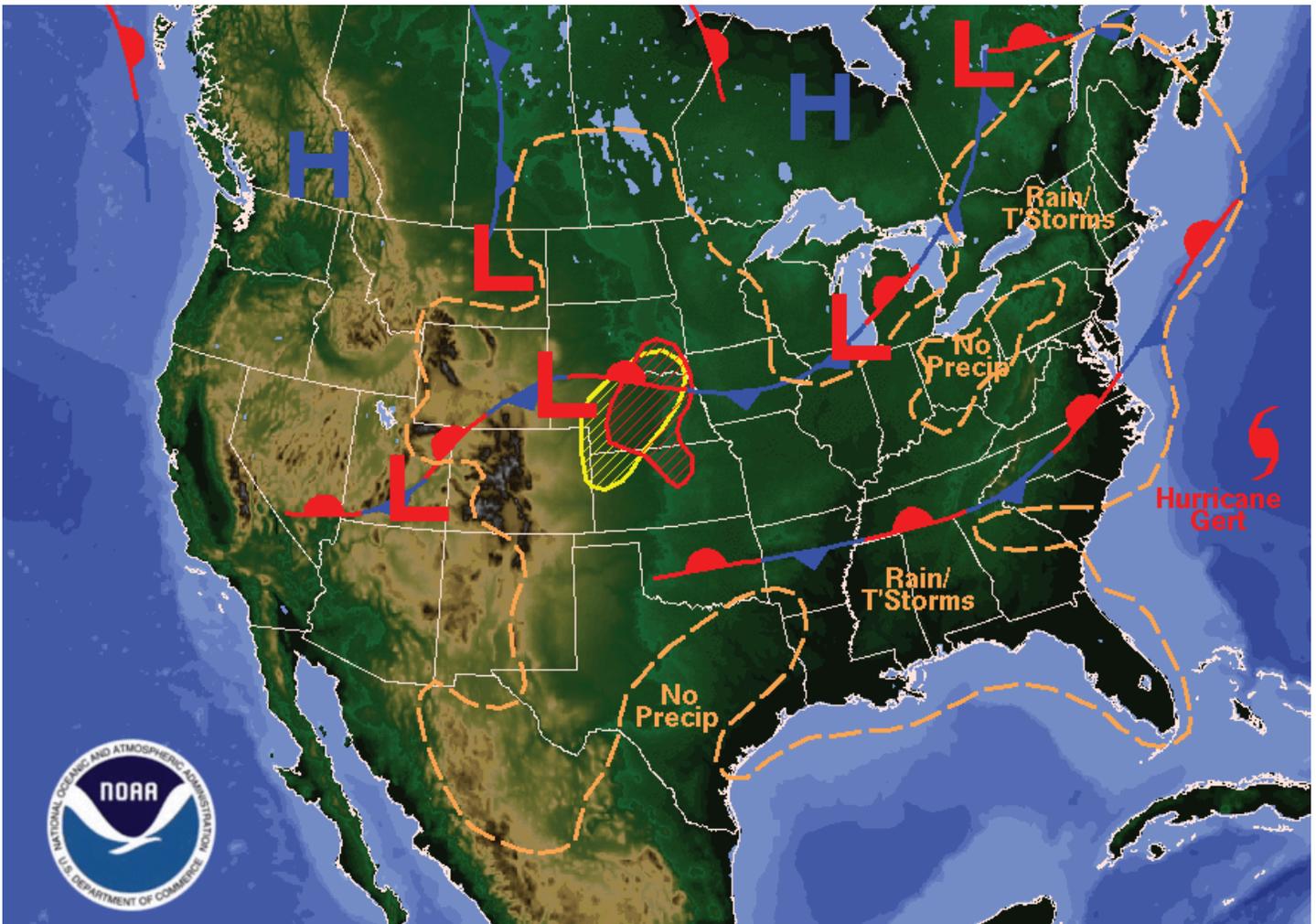
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 73.2
Low Outside Temp: 55.2
High Gust: 12
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 111° in 1937
Record Low: 42° in 1895
Average High: 82°F
Average Low: 57°F
Average Precip in Aug: 1.17
Precip to date in Aug: 1.11
Average Precip to date: 15.03
Precip Year to Date: 8.46
Sunset Tonight: 8:40 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:36 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Tue, Aug 15, 2017, issued 4:53 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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COME! PRAISE THE LORD!

There seems to be an attitude of arrogance in the world today. It is summed up in the epigram that was written above the door of the saloon on the Titanic: "Not even God can sink this ship!" Imagine the irony of those words. They are carved in a piece of wood that is still rotting after all of these years.

Unfortunately, there seems to be no fear of God in the world any longer. Today, the list of the world's fears includes a nuclear disaster, global warming, the national deficit, health care, a flu epidemic, identity theft or a stock market crash. It seems as though God has been assigned the role of being an ex-officio member of the "Board of Governors." It is a "position" with no power or influence. He is no longer recognized as one who makes any difference in the day to day operation of the universe. He's simply around to humor some people. Man is in charge now, thank you, and will bring good things to pass now that God is out of the way!

Psalm 34 takes the opposite view of God. The author blesses the Lord for what He has done. In deep humility he recognizes the power and presence of God. His view of the world is God-centered not man-exalting. Therefore, "His praise should always be on our lips."

How different it is today. People seem to do what they do for the recognition they may receive. Glory and honor belong to the one who can score the most points, accumulate vast wealth or demonstrate great power over people. God, to them is a "thing" in the past.

Prayer: Father, may we praise You at all times and in all things for Your unending, unfailing, steadfast love. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 34:1 I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.

News from the Associated Press

South Dakota farmers, ranchers get some drought relief

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Rain has brought South Dakota farmers and ranchers some relief from the drought.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture says rain and cooler temperatures last week brought drought relief to parts of South Dakota. But rainfall totals varied widely and left some areas with little to no precipitation. Moisture conditions remain short to very short for a majority of the state.

South Dakota's winter wheat harvest remains on pace with last year, at 95 percent complete, and ahead of the five-year average of 89 percent.

The spring wheat crop is 96 percent mature. The spring wheat harvest is slightly behind last year at 79 percent complete but well ahead of the 59 percent average.

More than half of South Dakota's pasture and rangeland is rated in poor or very poor condition.

North Dakota offers to settle with Dakota Access developer

By BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — North Dakota regulators offered Monday to settle state allegations that the Texas-based developer of the Dakota Access oil pipeline improperly reported the discovery of American Indian artifacts during construction.

The state Public Service Commission last November proposed a fine of at least \$15,000 against Energy Transfer Partners, though the commission has the authority under state law to levy fines of up to \$200,000.

The three-member commission unanimously agreed to offer a settlement under which ETP would make a \$15,000 "contribution" to the State Historic Preservation Office or another mutually agreed-upon entity. The company would not have to admit fault, and the matter would be dismissed upon payment of the money.

ETP didn't immediately comment on the proposal. The company has 10 days to accept the offer. If it rejects it, the PSC will move forward with the complaint. The next step would be a public hearing.

The complaint arose when the PSC was notified by a third-party inspector that pipeline crews last October had diverted construction of the pipeline around Native American artifacts. The company had obtained the approval of the State Historic Preservation Office but not of the commission, which oversees pipelines. The artifacts weren't disturbed.

ETP has maintained it did nothing intentionally wrong and has been fighting the proposed fine, which pales in comparison to the \$3.8 billion cost of the pipeline that last month began moving oil from North Dakota to a distribution point in Illinois.

Commissioners said they decided to make the offer to try to put an end to the dispute. The group in recent weeks has been meeting with its attorneys in meetings closed to the public, but Commissioner Julie Fedorchak said the attorneys did not indicate to regulators that the state would have a tough time proving its case.

"It wasn't a matter of whether the case is strong or weak," she said. "It was really an effort to recognize that it's taking a long time to get to, actually, the heart of the matter, and we're not interested in being tangled up in procedural delays indefinitely, and that seemed to be what was happening from the company's standpoint."

The commission also is looking into whether ETP removed too many trees and improperly handled some removed soil while laying pipe in the state. A public hearing is scheduled Thursday, after which the PSC is to determine whether to proceed with a formal complaint and a possible fine, as it did in the artifacts case.

ETP on Monday asked the PSC to delay the hearing to give company and state attorneys more time to discuss a resolution. The PSC did not immediately decide.

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

Regents to seek millions of dollars for need-based aid

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The state Board of Regents will ask policymakers to put millions of dollars into a new need-based scholarship program meant to keep higher education affordable for South Dakota students, a top official said Monday.

South Dakota has “very little” need-based financial aid available to students, particularly compared to surrounding states, said Mike Rush, the board’s executive director and CEO. He said the regents are seeking \$3.5 million for the next state budget year for the new program, Dakota’s Promise, which is a top priority for the board.

“The primary aim is to ensure that every student has the opportunity and the means to get a post-secondary education in the state of South Dakota,” Rush told The Associated Press. “Education contributes mightily to the economic vitality of our state, as well as to each individual student’s economic future.”

The program would be aimed at bridging the divide between existing financial aid and resident South Dakota college students’ cost of attendance. The state would fill the financial gap for a student after all other available sources have been used, including from the student, family, the school and the federal government.

All postsecondary institutions in the state would be eligible to participate in the program, Paul Turman, vice president for academic affairs with the Board of Regents, said in an email.

A board report projects that in state budget year 2019, roughly 2,000 new students would be eligible for funding under the program at a cost of about \$3.5 million to the state. The average award would be roughly \$1,750.

The board says the funding would scale up in future years until an estimated roughly 6,000 students receive financial support each year at a \$10.3 million cost.

That would amount to a major increase in need-based aid available to students in South Dakota. In the 2014-2015 school year, South Dakota awarded \$227,000 in need-based grant aid, far less than seven nearby states, according to a board report. The document says that the next lowest state, Montana, awarded \$3.7 million, while Minnesota topped the list at more than \$186 million.

“Our state remains at the very bottom when it comes to state-funded scholarship programs,” South Dakota Board of Regents President Bob Sutton said in a statement. “After exhausting all existing aid options, many of our students still have unmet need. That gap may prevent a student from attending college or completing their degree.”

Gov. Dennis Daugaard said that he hasn’t had an opportunity to review the proposal, but said he’s open to looking at it. The Republican governor will propose his spending plan for the 2019 budget year in December.

South Dakota completes 77th Sturgis motorcycle rally

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — Western South Dakota’s famed motorcycle rally in Sturgis saw a small uptick in attendance this year.

This year’s 10-day motorcycle rally wrapped up Sunday. The rally has been held annually for the past 77 years, the Rapid City Journal reported .

The state Department of Transportation data show that an estimated 376,000 vehicles entered Sturgis during the event, compared to less than 360,000 in 2016.

Officials said attendance may have been higher this year because of pleasant weather.

Mike Mead of Las Vegas made his annual appearance at the rally this year after receiving a 2007 Harley-Davidson Electraglide Classic motorcycle as a gift from his son.

“For a lot of the riders in this country, they tell us this is one of their favorite rallies,” said Sturgis City Manager Daniel Ainslie. “Thankfully we’ve had some great chamber-of-commerce weather this week.”

The number of wrecks involving injuries also increased from last year. The South Dakota Highway Patrol

reported eight fatal accidents during the rally's official time frame, compared with three last year. Four the fatal accidents didn't involve motorcycles but were reported by the patrol because they happened in the area during the time frame.

"It's always difficult when you mix a bunch of motorcycles and cars," said Meade County Sheriff Ron Merwin. "The motorcycles tend to turn around in the middle of the street and tend to speed a little more than they should and so as a driver of a car you really need to be paying attention. The same holds true for the motorcycle riders. It's a balancing act."

Despite the accidents, this year's rally ran smoothly for the Highway Patrol, said Capt. Jason Ketterling. "It's been great," said Sturgis Police Chief Geody VanDewater. "My guys are getting along with the citizens and the citizens are enjoying them. All in all, it's been a good rally."

VanDewater also thanked local businesses and residents for their patience and support during the rally. "We appreciate them being open and friendly to our visitors," he said.

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

Custer City man to face trial for drunken boating, assault

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Custer City man is headed to trial in October on charges he ran over a man while boating drunk on Angostura Reservoir two summers ago.

Authorities allege that 41-year-old Cory Schmitz struck and seriously injured 31-year-old wakeboarder Michael Lemley in 2015.

The Rapid City Journal reports that Schmitz has pleaded not guilty to aggravated assault, vehicular battery and boating under the influence.

The most serious charge against Schmitz, aggravated assault, is punishable by up to 15 years in prison. Vehicular battery carries a maximum of 10 years and boating under the influence one year. Schmitz is to go on trial Oct. 2-6 in Fall River County.

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

Deadly rally accelerates removal of Confederate statues

By JESSE J. HOLLAND, Associated Press

In Gainesville, Florida, workers hired by the Daughters of the Confederacy chipped away at a Confederate soldier's statue, loaded it quietly on a truck and drove away with little fanfare.

In Baltimore, Mayor Catherine Pugh said she's ready to tear down all of her city's Confederate statues, and the city council voted to have them destroyed. San Antonio lawmakers are looking ahead to removing a statue that many people wrongly assumed represented a famed Texas leader who died at the Alamo.

Some people refused to wait. Protesters in Durham, North Carolina, toppled a nearly century-old statue of a Confederate soldier Monday at a rally against racism. Activists took a ladder up to the statue and used a rope to pull down the Confederate Soldiers Monument that was dedicated in 1924. A diverse crowd of dozens cheered as the statue of a soldier holding a rifle fell to the ground in front of an old courthouse building that now houses local government offices.

The deadly white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, is fueling another re-evaluation of Confederate statues in cities across the nation, accelerating their removal in much the same way that a 2015 mass shooting by a white supremacist renewed pressure to take down the Confederate flag from public property.

"We should not glorify a part of our history in front of our buildings that really is a testament to America's original sin," Gainesville Mayor Lauren Poe said Monday after the statue known as "Old Joe" was returned to the United Daughters of the Confederacy, which erected it in 1904.

A county spokesman said he did not know if the statue was removed because of the events that killed one person and injured dozens more Saturday in Charlottesville. But many officials who were horrified by

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the confrontation soon began publicizing plans to take down statues.

The Southern Poverty Law Center last year counted more than 1,500 things around the country named after Confederate figures or dedicated to the Confederacy, including holidays, statues, flags and the names of cities, counties, schools and parks. Nearly half are monuments, which are in 24 states. Most of the dedications are in the South, but 24 are in the North and 21 in states that did not exist at the time of the Civil War.

In Jacksonville, Florida, City Council President Anna Brosche ordered an immediate inventory of all of the Confederate statues in her city in preparation for their removal.

"These monuments, memorials and markers represent a time in our history that caused pain to so many," she said Monday.

Lexington, Kentucky, Mayor Jim Gray moved up his announcement by a day in reaction to the weekend bloodshed. Memorials to John C. Breckinridge and John Hunt Morgan are perched outside a former courthouse that was the site of slave auctions before the Civil War.

San Antonio Councilman Robert Trevino is promoting a measure that would remove the Confederate statue at the center of Travis Park, where for years people have mistakenly identified the figure as being that of Col. William Travis, a Texas hero who died at the Alamo.

"This is not an important art piece, but a monument to power. It was put in to remind people of that power. It is an unfortunate message of hate, and we think it's important to relocate it." Trevino said Monday. "We do think that history is important so we're looking for an appropriate location for it."

St. Louis dismantled its Confederate Monument in Forest Park in June, giving it to the Missouri Civil War Museum after years of debate.

In Baltimore, Pugh announced Monday that she would move forward with the removal of Baltimore's statues of Roger B. Taney, a Marylander who wrote the 1856 Dred Scott supreme court ruling that denied citizenship to African-Americans, and a statue of two Virginians, Confederate generals Robert E. Lee and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson.

Pugh said she was making plans to send the statues to cemeteries with Confederate dead outside the city. But hours later, the city council voted unanimously to have the statues destroyed instead of moved. It was unclear whether anything would happen to the statues immediately.

Seconds after the monument fell in Durham on Monday, protesters began kicking the crumpled bronze monument.

In response, Democratic North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper tweeted: "The racism and deadly violence in Charlottesville is unacceptable but there is a better way to remove these monuments."

Back in May, New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu moved his city's four main Confederate statues, including a statue of Lee, at night after threats of violence from Confederate sympathizers and white supremacists. Pugh said she is consulting with Landrieu, now head of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, about the removal of Baltimore's statues and the cost.

The violence in Charlottesville will probably speed up efforts to do away with the monuments, experts said.

The convergence of white nationalists and neo-Nazis with Confederate imagery in Charlottesville will make it difficult for government agencies to defend having Confederate statues on their property, Boston University history professor Heather Cox Richardson said.

"The idea that this somehow is about Southern heritage, I think that ship sailed," said Richardson, who teaches and writes about the Civil War, Reconstruction and Southern politics.

Violence and death changes things, agreed University of Georgia political science professor M.V. "Trey" Hood III.

Photos of gunman Dylan Roof, who fatally shot nine black churchgoers in South Carolina, showed him with a Confederate flag and triggered a swift "sea change" in perception of the banner, Hood said.

Then-South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley successfully led calls to bring down a Confederate flag that had flown on Statehouse grounds for 54 years. Other cities and organizations began accelerating their removal of Confederate imagery following Roof's arrest.

Now local officials will find it harder to ignore or shelve questions about Confederate statues, Richardson

said.

"It was always possible for people to look the other way," she said. "After Charlottesville, I do not see how Americans can look the other way. You have to make a choice at this moment."

This story corrects spelling of last name of San Antonio Councilman Robert Trevino, not Travino.

Jesse J. Holland covers race and ethnicity for The Associated Press in Washington. Contact him at jholland@ap.org, on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/jessejholland> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/jessejholland>.

Furor over Charlottesville follows Trump home to Manhattan

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump is back in the New York skyscraper that bears his name as the furor over his reaction to race-fueled clashes in Charlottesville, Virginia, over the weekend shows few signs of dying down.

Protesters on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue tried to spoil Trump's homecoming Monday night with signs bearing messages like "stop the hate, stop the lies" and chanting "shame, shame, shame" and "not my president!"

After two days of public equivocation and internal White House debate, the president condemned white supremacist groups by name on Monday, declaring "racism is evil".

In a hastily arranged statement at the White House, Trump branded members of the KKK, neo-Nazis and white supremacists who take part in violence as "criminals and thugs."

The groups are "repugnant to everything that we hold dear as Americans," he said.

The move didn't quiet the uproar, however. The leaders of four minority House caucus groups wrote a letter to Trump calling for the removal of White House staff aides Steve Bannon, Stephen Miller and Sebastian Gorka.

The heads of the black, Hispanic, Asian and progressive caucuses are calling in the letter for the firings of the Trump administration officials in the wake of a violent, racist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. The letter asserts their continuing presence in the White House is emboldening a resurgent white supremacist movement in America.

This came a day after Anthony Scaramucci, who was fired as White House communications director after a less than two-week stay, called for Bannon's ouster.

In his initial remarks on the violence Saturday, Trump did not single out the groups and instead bemoaned violence on "many sides." Those remarks prompted stern criticism from fellow Republicans as well as Democrats, who urged him to seize the moral authority of his office to condemn hate groups.

Trump's softer statement Saturday had come as graphic images of a car plowing into a crowd in Charlottesville were playing continually on television. White nationalists had assembled in the city to protest plans to take down a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee, and counter-protesters gathered in opposition. Fights broke out, and then a man drove into the opponents of the white supremacists. One woman was killed and many more badly hurt. Twenty-year-old James Alex Fields Jr. of Ohio is charged with second-degree murder and other counts.

Loath to appear to be admitting a mistake, Trump was reluctant to adjust his remarks.

The president had indicated to advisers before his initial statement Saturday that he wanted to stress a need for law and order, which he did. He later expressed anger to those close to him about what he perceived as the media's unfair assessment of his remarks, believing he had effectively denounced all forms of bigotry, according to outside advisers and White House officials.

Several of Trump's senior advisers, including new chief of staff John Kelly, had urged him to make a more specific condemnation, warning that the negative story would not go away and that the rising tide of criticism from fellow Republicans on Capitol Hill could endanger his legislative agenda, according to two White House officials.

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The outside advisers and officials demanded anonymity to discuss private conversations.

Aides were dispatched to Sunday talk shows but struggled to explain the president's position. A stronger statement was released — but attributed only to an unnamed spokesperson.

Tougher condemnations began Sunday night with Vice President Mike Pence, traveling in South America, declaring that "these dangerous fringe groups have no place in American public life."

On Monday, Trump had planned to interrupt his 17-day working vacation at his New Jersey golf club to travel to Washington for an announcement he hoped would showcase some tough talk on China's trade practices.

But by the time he arrived at midmorning, it was clear all other messages would be drowned out until he said more about Charlottesville.

Trump returned to a White House undergoing a major renovation. With the Oval Office unavailable, he worked from the Treaty Room as aides drafted his remarks.

Reading from a teleprompter, he made a point of beginning with an unrelated plug for the strength of the economy under his leadership. Then, taking pains to insist "as I said on Saturday," Trump denounced the hate groups and called for unity.

"We must love each other, show affection for each other and unite together in condemnation of hatred, bigotry and violence," he said.

Trump for the first time mentioned Heather Heyer by name as he paid tribute to the woman killed by the car.

At the trade event later in the day, he was asked why it took two days for him to offer an explicit denunciation of the hate groups.

"They have been condemned," Trump responded before offering a fresh criticism of some media as "fake news."

He followed with a tweet declaring "the #Fake News Media will never be satisfied."

Associated Press writers Julie Bykowicz and Jay Reeves contributed reporting.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire>

Both Korean leaders, US signal turn to diplomacy amid crisis

By FOSTER KLUG and KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea's military on Tuesday presented leader Kim Jong Un with plans to launch missiles into waters near Guam and "wring the windpipes of the Yankees," even as both Koreas and the United States signaled their willingness to avert a deepening crisis, with each suggesting a path toward negotiations.

The tentative interest in diplomacy follows unusually combative threats between President Donald Trump and North Korea amid worries that Pyongyang is nearing its long-sought goal of accurately being able to send a nuclear missile to the U.S. mainland. Next week's start of U.S.-South Korean military exercises that enrage the North each year makes it unclear, however, if diplomacy will prevail.

During an inspection of the North Korean army's Strategic Forces, which handles the missile program, Kim praised the military for drawing up a "close and careful plan" and said he would watch the "foolish and stupid conduct of the Yankees" a little more before deciding whether to order the missile test, the North's state-run Korean Central News Agency said. Kim appeared in photos sitting at a table with a large map marked by a straight line between what appeared to be northeastern North Korea and Guam, and passing over Japan — apparently showing the missiles' flight route.

The missile plans were previously announced. Kim said North Korea would conduct the launches if the "Yankees persist in their extremely dangerous reckless actions on the Korean Peninsula and its vicinity," and that the United States should "think reasonably and judge properly" to avoid shaming itself, the news agency said.

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Lobbing missiles toward Guam, a major U.S. military hub in the Pacific, would be a deeply provocative act from the U.S. perspective, and a miscalculation on either side could lead to a military clash. U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis said the United States would take out any such missile seen to be heading for American soil and declared any such North Korean attack could mean war.

Kim's comments, however, with their conditional tone, seemed to hold out the possibility that friction could ease if the United States made some sort of gesture that Pyongyang considered a move to back away from previous "extremely dangerous reckless actions."

That could refer to the U.S.-South Korean military drills set to begin Monday, which the North claims are rehearsals for invasion. It also could refer to the B-1B bombers that the U.S. has occasionally flown over the Korean Peninsula as a show of force.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in, meanwhile, a liberal who favors engagement with the North, urged North Korea to stop provocations and to commit to talks over its nuclear weapons program.

Moon, in a televised speech Tuesday on the anniversary of the end of World War II and the Korean Peninsula's liberation from Japanese colonial rule, said that Seoul and Washington agree that the crisis over the North's nuclear program should "absolutely be solved peacefully," and that no U.S. military action on the Korean Peninsula could be taken without Seoul's consent.

Moon said the North could create conditions for talks by stopping nuclear and missile tests.

"Our government will put everything on the line to prevent another war on the Korean Peninsula," Moon said. "Regardless of whatever twist and turns we could experience, the North Korean nuclear program should absolutely be solved peacefully, and the (South Korean) government and the U.S. government don't have a different position on this."

The chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Corps Gen. Joseph Dunford, on Monday met with senior South Korean military and political officials and the local media, and made comments that appeared to be an attempt to ease anxiety while also showing a willingness to back Trump's warnings if need be.

Dunford said the United States wants to peacefully resolve tensions with North Korea, but Washington is also ready to use the "full range" of its military capabilities in case of provocation.

Dunford is visiting South Korea, Japan and China after a week in which Trump declared the U.S. military "locked and loaded" and said he was ready to unleash "fire and fury" if North Korea continued to threaten the United States.

North Korea's military had said last week it would finalize and send to Kim for approval the plan to fire four ballistic missiles near Guam, which is about 3,200 kilometers (2,000 miles) from Pyongyang.

The plans are based on the Hwasong-12, a new missile the country successfully flight-tested for the first time in May. The liquid-fuel missile is designed to be fired from road mobile launchers and has been previously described by North Korea as built for attacking Alaska and Hawaii.

The North followed the May launch with two flight tests of its Hwasong-14 intercontinental ballistic missile last month. Analysts said that a wide swath of the continental United States, including Los Angeles and Chicago, could be within reach of those missiles, once they're perfected.

The North's latest report said Kim ordered his military to be prepared to launch the missiles toward Guam at any time. Kim said that if the "planned fire of power demonstration" is carried out because of U.S. recklessness, it will be "the most delightful historic moment when the Hwasong artillerymen will wring the windpipes of the Yankees and point daggers at their necks," the North reported.

Even with North Korea and the Trump administration exchanging tough talk, back-channel diplomatic contacts between the countries have continued, The Associated Press reported Saturday. People familiar with the contacts who spoke on condition of anonymity say those discussions have addressed deteriorating relations and issues including three Americans still detained in the North.

A foreign ministry spokesman for the North on Tuesday denied that the country is currently discussing the detainees with Washington. "The issue on detained Americans is not an object to discuss in view of the present atmosphere of DPRK-U.S. relations," the state-run Korean Central News Agency quoted the spokesman as saying.

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North Korea is angry about new United Nations sanctions over its expanding nuclear weapons and missile program and the upcoming military drills between Washington and Seoul.

Kim said the United States must "make a proper option first and show it through action, as it committed provocations after introducing huge nuclear strategic equipment into the vicinity of the peninsula" and that it "should stop at once arrogant provocations" against North Korea, state media said.

AP writers Hyung-jin Kim in Seoul and Robert Burns in Washington 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. HOW CHARLOTTESVILLE COMPARES WITH CHARLESTON

The deadly white nationalist rally in Virginia and the mass shooting inside a South Carolina church renew pressure to take down Confederate symbols from public property.

2. DIPLOMACY SIGNALS EMANATE FROM KOREAN PENINSULA

Both Korean leaders and a U.S. military official appear willing to avert a crisis even as Pyongyang details plans to launch missiles into waters near Guam.

3. 'NO NEW DEALS' PLEDGE TESTED

A new push to sell Trump-branded villas in Dubai and state visits by the sitting president's main business partner in the Middle East raise new questions.

4. HELP WANTED: SKILLS REQUIRED

Statistics show 359,000 jobs remain open at American companies. The problem is many demand education and technical know-how, disqualifying workers set adrift from low-tech factories, AP learns.

5. WHY LIGHTNING IS KILLING FEWER AMERICANS

Once one of nature's biggest killers, bolts are claiming far fewer lives, mostly because we've learned to get out of the way.

6. 3 GOP HOPEFULS EYE CHAFFETZ SEAT

They will face off in a primary for his U.S. House post in Utah in a special election after weeks of trying to burnish their conservative credentials and fend off attack ads.

7. POLL: SUPPORT FOR CHARTERS DROPS MARKEDLY

Trump campaigned on a promise to improve school choice, but the message is not resonating with the public, an Education Next survey finds.

8. CHINA: US TRADE PROBE WOULD VIOLATE INTERNATIONAL RULES

Beijing says it will "resolutely safeguard" its interests in response to a possible trade probe ordered by Trump into Chinese technology policies.

9. 'IT'S NOT UP TO ME'

Short-lived White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci says if it were up to him, top adviser Steve Bannon would be gone from Trump's administration.

10. COLLEGE TRANSFERS HOPING FOR GRIDIRON IMPACT

Chris James, who transferred from Pitt to Wisconsin, is part of this year's crop of Division I transfers who could make an immediate difference with their new teams.

Protesters topple Confederate statue in North Carolina

By JONATHAN DREW, Associated Press

DURHAM, N.C. (AP) — Protesters in North Carolina toppled a nearly century-old statue of a Confederate soldier Monday at a rally against racism.

Activists in Durham brought a ladder up to the statue and used a rope to pull down the Confederate Soldiers Monument that was dedicated in 1924. A diverse crowd of dozens cheered as the statue of a soldier holding a rifle fell to the ground in front of an old courthouse building that now houses local gov-

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ernment offices.

Seconds after the monument fell, protesters began kicking the crumpled bronze monument.

"I was a little bit shocked people could come here and come together like that," said Isaiah Wallace, who is black.

Wallace said he watched as others toppled the statue. He hopes other Confederate symbols elsewhere will follow.

"I feel like this is going to send shockwaves through the country and hopefully they can bring down other racist symbols," he said.

The Durham protest was in response to a white nationalist rally held in Charlottesville, Virginia, over the weekend. Authorities say one woman was killed Saturday after one of the white nationalists drove his car into a group of peaceful counter-protesters.

Although the violence in Virginia has prompted fresh talk by government officials about bringing down symbols of the Confederacy around the South, North Carolina has a law protecting them. The 2015 law prevents removing such monuments on public property without permission from state officials.

In response to the statue in Durham being torn down, Democratic North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper tweeted: "The racism and deadly violence in Charlottesville is unacceptable but there is a better way to remove these monuments."

After the statue fell, several dozen protesters congregated on the street in front of the old courthouse. Some took pictures standing or sitting on the toppled soldier, in front of a pedestal inscribed with the words "In Memory of the Boys Who Wore The Gray." Police cruisers blocked off the street, and officers looked on — some filming. As it got dark, rally participants began to peacefully disperse.

Robin Williamson, who works downtown, arrived in the area about an hour after the statue came down. Williamson, who is black, said he can sympathize with people who are upset with the state of racial discourse in the country.

"People feel that with Donald Trump as leader, racists can be vocal," he said.

He said that while Confederate monuments have been defaced in other cities, it was surprising to see an entire statue brought down by protesters.

"This is a little bit more intense because they took the whole statue down," he said.

Follow Drew at www.twitter.com/jonldrew

Science Says: Lightning is zapping fewer Americans, not more

By **SETH BORENSTEIN**, AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lightning — once one of nature's biggest killers — is claiming far fewer lives in the United States, mostly because we've learned to get out of the way.

In the 1940s, when there were fewer people, lightning killed more than 300 people annually. So far this year, 13 people have died after being struck, on pace for a record low of 17 deaths. Taking the growing population into account, the lightning death rate has shrunk more than forty-fold since record-keeping began in 1940.

People seem to be capturing the phenomenon more on camera than before, making it seem like something new and sizzling is going on in the air. Separate videos last month of a Florida lifeguard and an airport worker being hit by lightning went viral. Both survived.

Lightning strikes have not changed — they hit about the same amount as they used to, said Pennsylvania State University meteorology professor Paul Markowski.

A big difference: Fewer of us are outside during bad weather. If we're not huddled indoors, we're often in cars. Vehicles with metal roofs — not convertibles — are safe from lightning, experts say.

"As a society we spend less time outside," said Harold Brooks, a scientist at the National Weather Service's National Severe Storms Laboratory. "Especially farmers. There aren't just many farmers around."

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Decades ago, farmers would be in fields and were the tallest object, making them most likely to get hit, said National Weather Service lightning safety specialist John Jensenius Jr.

That helps explain the drop in yearly lightning deaths from about 329 in the 1940s to about 98 in the 1970s. The numbers have kept plunging since. From 2007-2016, average yearly deaths dropped to 31.

Improved medical care also has played a key role, including wider use of defibrillators and more CPR-trained bystanders.

When Dr. Mary Ann Cooper started out in the emergency room in the 1970s, there was nothing in textbooks about how to treat lightning victims.

Now instead of treating lightning patients the same way as people who touch high-voltage wires and are burned, doctors focus more on the neurological damage, said Cooper, professor emerita of emergency medicine at the University of Illinois in Chicago.

Perhaps the biggest reason deaths are down is because of efforts to teach people not to get hit in the first place.

"We've equipped the public by saying, 'When thunder roars, go indoors.' Three-year-olds can remember that," Cooper said.

Men are four times more likely to be killed by lightning in the U.S. than women, statistics show. Men do riskier things that get them in trouble in storms, Cooper and Jensenius said.

"Our victims are at the wrong place at the wrong time. The wrong place is anywhere outside. The wrong time is anywhere that you can hear thunder," said Jensenius.

In July — the deadliest month for lightning in the U.S. — vacationers Andre Bauldock and Lamar Rayfield were on a beach in Florida when a thunderstorm rolled in.

"We ignored it. We were just thinking it was going to pass over soon," recalled Bauldock. "We could see the sun in the distance. I was admiring the lightning out in the ocean and I thought it was far away."

The next thing Bauldock remembers is waking up in a parking lot surrounded by people. He was told the lightning struck his friend's stomach and then hit him. They both fell over. Rayfield eventually died.

An analysis of 352 U.S. lightning deaths from 2006 to 2016 found people were most often doing something near water — fishing, camping and beach activities— when they were hit. Golf doesn't even crack the top dozen activities, but soccer does, said Jensenius.

James Church was hit earlier this year in Florida as his first cast of the day flew through the air.

"I woke up. I couldn't move. It was like an elephant sitting on me, not a single muscle would work," Church recalled. "My eyes were working, my brain was working ... I couldn't feel anything."

Video journalist Joshua Replogle contributed to this report. Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears. His work can be found here.

This Associated Press series was produced in partnership with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Charlottesville driver previously accused of beating mother

By **DAKE KANG** and **SARAH RANKIN**, Associated Press

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP) — The driver charged with killing a woman at a white nationalist rally in Charlottesville was previously accused of beating his mother and threatening her with a knife, according to police records released Monday.

Samantha Bloom, who is disabled and uses a wheelchair, repeatedly called police about her son, James Alex Fields Jr., in 2010 and 2011, telling officers he was on medication to control his temper, transcripts from 911 calls show.

Fields, 20, is accused of ramming his car into a crowd of counter-protesters on Saturday in Charlottesville, killing 32-year-old Heather Heyer.

Fields, described by a former high school teacher as an admirer of Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany, was

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charged with second-degree murder.

A judge denied him bail Monday after the public defender's office said it couldn't represent him because a relative of someone in the office was injured in Saturday's protest.

Fields was assigned a local attorney, and another hearing was set for Aug. 25.

Records show that Fields was arrested and put in juvenile detention after his mother reported in 2011 that he stood behind her wielding a 12-inch knife.

In another incident in 2010, she said her son smacked her in the head and locked her in the bathroom after she told him to stop playing video games. There was no indication in the records that he was arrested.

Also Monday, a former classmate told The Associated Press that on a school trip to Europe in 2015, a teenage Fields couldn't stand the French and said he only went on the trip so that he could visit "the Fatherland" — Germany.

"He just really laid on about the French being lower than us and inferior to us," said Keegan McGrath.

McGrath, now 18, said he challenged Fields on his beliefs, and the animosity between them grew so heated that it came to a boil at dinner on their second day. He said he went home after three or four days because he couldn't handle being in a room with Fields.

The incident shocked McGrath because he had been in German class with Fields for two unremarkable years.

"He was just a normal dude" most of the time, though he occasionally made "dark" jokes that put his class on edge, including one "offhand joke" about the Holocaust, McGrath said.

McGrath said Fields was no outcast: "He had friends. He had people who would chat with him."

Meanwhile, under pressure to speak out more forcefully, President Donald Trump condemned Ku Klux Klan members, neo-Nazis and white supremacists who take part in violence as "criminals and thugs" and declared that "racism is evil."

Trump's initial failure on Saturday to denounce the groups by name, and his blaming of the violence on "many sides," prompted criticism from fellow Republicans as well as Democrats.

A teacher who taught Fields in high school said Sunday that Fields was fascinated with Nazism, idolized Hitler, and had been singled out in the ninth grade by officials at Randall K. Cooper High School in Union, Kentucky, for his "deeply held, radical" convictions on race.

Fields also confided that he had been diagnosed with schizophrenia when he was younger and had been prescribed an anti-psychotic medication, according to the teacher, Derek Weimer.

Fields later enlisted in the Army and reported for basic training in 2015 but was released from active duty four months later because of what military described only as "a failure to meet training standards."

The violence in Charlottesville also was blamed for the deaths of two Virginia State Police officers in a helicopter crash.

Fields had been photographed hours before the attack with a shield bearing the emblem of Vanguard America, one of the hate groups that took part in the protest against the removal of a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. The group on Sunday denied any association with Fields.

Associated Press writer Brian Witte in Annapolis, Maryland, contributed to this report.

Bowing to pressure, Trump denounces hate groups by name

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bowing to pressure from right and left, President Donald Trump condemned white supremacist groups by name on Monday, declaring "racism is evil" after two days of public equivocation and internal White House debate over the deadly race-fueled clashes in Charlottesville, Virginia.

In a hastily arranged statement at the White House, Trump branded members of the KKK, neo-Nazis and white supremacists who take part in violence as "criminals and thugs."

The groups are "repugnant to everything that we hold dear as Americans," he said.

In his initial remarks on the violence Saturday, Trump did not single out the groups and instead bemoaned

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violence on "many sides." Those remarks prompted stern criticism from fellow Republicans as well as Democrats, who urged him to seize the moral authority of his office to condemn hate groups.

Trump's softer statement on Saturday had come as graphic images of a car plowing into a crowd in Charlottesville were playing continually on television. White nationalists had assembled in the city to protest plans to take down a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee, and counter-protesters gathered in opposition. Fights broke out, and then a man drove into the opponents of the white supremacists. One woman was killed and many more badly hurt. Twenty-year-old James Alex Fields Jr. of Ohio is charged with second-degree murder and other counts.

Loath to appear to be admitting a mistake, Trump was reluctant to adjust his remarks.

The president had indicated to advisers before his initial statement Saturday that he wanted to stress a need for law and order, which he did. He later expressed anger to those close to him about what he perceived as the media's unfair assessment of his remarks, believing he had effectively denounced all forms of bigotry, according to outside advisers and White House officials.

Several of Trump's senior advisers, including new chief of staff John Kelly, had urged him to make a more specific condemnation, warning that the negative story would not go away and that the rising tide of criticism from fellow Republicans on Capitol Hill could endanger his legislative agenda, according to two White House officials.

The outside advisers and officials demanded anonymity to discuss private conversations.

Aides were dispatched to Sunday talk shows but struggled to explain the president's position. A stronger statement was released — but attributed only to an unnamed spokesperson.

Tougher condemnations began Sunday night with Vice President Mike Pence, traveling in South America, declaring that "these dangerous fringe groups have no place in American public life."

On Monday, Trump had planned to interrupt his 17-day working vacation at his New Jersey golf club to travel to Washington for an announcement he hoped would showcase some tough talk on China's trade practices.

But by the time he arrived at midmorning, it was clear all other messages would be drowned out until he said more about Charlottesville.

Trump returned to a White House undergoing a major renovation. With the Oval Office unavailable, he worked from the Treaty Room as aides drafted his remarks.

Reading from a teleprompter, he made a point of beginning with an unrelated plug for the strength of the economy under his leadership. Then, taking pains to insist "as I said on Saturday," Trump denounced the hate groups and called for unity.

"We must love each other, show affection for each other and unite together in condemnation of hatred, bigotry and violence," he said.

Trump for the first time mentioned Heather Heyer by name as he paid tribute to the woman killed by the car.

At the trade event later in the day, he was asked why it took two days for him to offer an explicit denunciation of the hate groups.

"They have been condemned," Trump responded before offering a fresh criticism of some media as "fake news."

He followed with a tweet declaring "the #fakenews will never be satisfied."

Trump noted the Justice Department has opened a civil rights investigation.

His attorney general, Jeff Sessions, said earlier Monday on ABC's "Good Morning America," "You can be sure we will charge and advance the investigation toward the most serious charges that can be brought, because this is an unequivocally unacceptable and evil attack that cannot be accepted in America."

In the hours after the incident on Saturday, Trump addressed the violence in broad strokes, saying he condemned "in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides, on many sides."

That was met with swift bipartisan criticism. There were far fewer responses to Trump's statement

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Monday, though Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, a frequent Trump critic, tweeted "Well done Mr. President."

Trump's initial comments had drawn praise from the neo-Nazi website Daily Stormer, which wrote: "Trump comments were good. He didn't attack us. He just said the nation should come together. Nothing specific against us. ... No condemnation at all."

Though the Daily Stormer did not criticize Trump's new statement, the Occidental Dissent, a white nationalist website, published a message saying whites had been "deserted by their president."

Trump, as a presidential candidate, frequently came under scrutiny for being slow to offer condemnation of white supremacists. His strongest denunciations of the movement have not come only when asked, and he occasionally trafficked in retweets of racist social media posts during his campaign. His chief strategist, Steve Bannon, once declared that his former news site, Breitbart, was "the platform for the alt-right."

Only late in last year's campaign did Trump move away from his long-held questioning that Barack Obama was born in the United States, and even then he falsely blamed the origins of "birtherism" on Hillary Clinton.

Early Monday, the CEO of the nation's third largest pharmaceutical company said he was resigning from the President's American Manufacturing Council, citing "a responsibility to take a stand against intolerance and extremism."

Trump lashed back at Merck CEO Kenneth Frazier on Twitter, saying Frazier "will have more time to LOWER RIPOFF DRUG PRICES!"

Monday night, the CEO of athletic wear manufacturer Under Armour also resigned from the panel, saying his company "engages in innovation and sports, not politics." Kevin Plank did not specifically mention Trump or Charlottesville, but said his company will focus on promoting "unity, diversity and inclusion" through sports.

Intel CEO Brian Krzanich followed, writing that while he had urged leaders to condemn "white supremacists and their ilk," many in Washington "seem more concerned with attacking anyone who disagrees with them."

Associated Press writers Julie Bykowicz and Jay Reeves contributed reporting.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire>

18 dead in suspected jihadist attack on Burkina Faso eatery

By BRAHIMA OUEDRAOGO, Associated Press

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso (AP) — Hours after suspected Islamic extremists opened fire as patrons dined at the popular restaurant where she worked as a waitress, Amy Sawadogo was still wandering around barefoot at a crisis center asking about her colleagues.

"I just want to go to the hospital and see who is still alive," the distraught young woman, who was still dressed in her uniform, said early Monday. "I am calling them in vain, no response."

The death toll rose to 18 and authorities said many of the victims were children dining with their families on a Sunday night at the Aziz Istanbul restaurant when horror struck once again in Burkina Faso's capital of Ouagadougou. At least 22 people were wounded.

Less than two years ago, jihadists killed 30 people in a similar attack at the nearby Cappuccino cafe, which only recently reopened in a city where fear of another attack has been high.

Eight of the dead in Sunday's attack were citizens of Burkina Faso, authorities said. Three Lebanese and two Canadians were also killed, according to the victims' respective foreign ministries. Other victims came from Kuwait, Senegal, Nigeria, Turkey and France, state prosecutor Maizan Sereme said.

The attack began around 9 p.m. Sunday when the Aziz Istanbul, an upscale Turkish restaurant patronized by many foreigners, was packed with diners. Two young men wearing jeans and jackets drove up on motorcycles and began indiscriminately shooting at the people inside with Kalashnikovs, witnesses told The Associated Press.

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"I heard a noise when they smashed a car with their motorbike and before I understood what happened they started shooting at the customers on the terrace," said Assane Guebre, who had been keeping an eye on customers' cars parked outside.

"They were close to me, and I still don't know how they did not hit me first," said Guebre, whose hands were still bleeding from the cuts he suffered when he threw himself to the ground to avoid the bullets.

Gunfire rang out long into the night before the country's special forces ended the attack after nearly seven hours. Initially authorities had said there were three or four assailants. However, government spokesman Remy Danguinou told reporters early Monday that two attackers had been killed by the authorities.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility but the attack bore the hallmarks of the January 2016 assault on the Cappuccino — gunmen opening fire on diners at a restaurant popular with foreigners, prompting a massive search for the culprits as gunfire and explosions continued into the night.

President Roch Marc Christian Kabore declared three days of national mourning. "The fight against terrorism is a long-term battle," he said in a statement Monday. "That's why I'm calling for vigilance, solidarity and unity of the whole nation in order to face the cowardice of our adversaries."

The U.N. Security Council issued a statement Monday night condemning the attack, which it called it "barbaric and cowardly." It added that "terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security."

In Paris, the office of French President Emmanuel Macron said he discussed the attack in a call with his Burkina Faso counterpart. The leaders agreed it was urgent to accelerate the deployment of a new 5,000-strong anti-terror force in the Sahel, a statement said. With contributions from Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad — known as the G5 — the force is to deploy by September.

At least five members of Burkina Faso's security forces were among the wounded, and another member on leave at the time was among the dead, the state prosecutor said.

Burkina Faso, a landlocked nation in West Africa, is one of the poorest countries in the world. It shares a northern border with Mali, which has long battled Islamic extremists.

In the 2016 attack the attackers were of foreign origin, according to al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, which claimed responsibility for those killings along with the jihadist group known as Al Mourabitoun. But the terror threat in Burkina Faso is increasingly homegrown, experts say.

The northern border region near Mali is now the home of a local preacher, Ibrahim Malam Dicko, who radicalized and has claimed responsibility for recent deadly attacks against troops and civilians. His association, Ansarul Islam, is now considered a terrorist group by Burkina Faso's government.

Associated Press writers Krista Larson in Dakar, Senegal, John Leicester in Paris and Rob Gillies in Toronto contributed to this report.

Police: 16 immigrants locked inside rig at Texas truck stop

EDINBURG, Texas (AP) — Police in Texas acting on a tip found 16 immigrants locked inside a tractor-trailer parked at a gas station about 20 miles (30 kilometers) from the border with Mexico, less than a month after the deaths of 10 people who were packed in a hot truck in San Antonio.

Edinburg Assistant Police Chief Oscar Trevino says the immigrants may have been locked inside the 18-wheeler in Edinburg for at least eight hours before being freed by officers late Sunday morning. He had earlier said there were 17 immigrants locked in the tractor-trailer before correcting the number on Monday to 16.

Trevino said none of the people inside the tractor-trailer required medical attention. He said they were hungry and thirsty and were given food and water at the scene.

Those found locked in the tractor-trailer included eight people from El Salvador, six from Mexico and two from Romania, said Manuel Padilla, U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Border Patrol sector chief for the Rio Grande Valley at Texas' southernmost point.

A man and woman who Trevino said are Cuban nationals were in charge of the rig and have been detained.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokeswoman Nina Pruneda said no one has been charged yet in connection with the case but that the agency is working with state and local officials and talking to witnesses.

The discovery comes three weeks after 10 people died who were in a sweltering rig parked at a Walmart in San Antonio. Immigration officials say survivors estimated 100 people had been packed into the back of the 18-wheeler at one point. Officials said 39 people were inside when rescuers arrived, and the rest either escaped or hitched rides to their next destination. Nearly 20 of those rescued from the rig were hospitalized in dire condition, many suffering from extreme dehydration and heatstroke. The driver of that rig remains in federal custody, charged with illegally transporting immigrants for financial gain, resulting in death.

On Sunday, Edinburg police went to the gas station, a popular stopover for commercial truck drivers traveling through the region, after receiving an anonymous call from someone saying a relative was trapped inside the tractor-trailer. Officers began knocking on the sides of trailers parked at the station and eventually received return knocks from the one holding the immigrants, police said.

The San Antonio incident demonstrated how smugglers regularly use big rigs in an elaborate network of foot guides, safe house operators and drivers. The immigrants discovered in San Antonio had been divided into groups and marked with color-coded tape. Six black SUVs were waiting at one transit point to take some to their destinations.

Authorities have not said if similar arrangements had been made for the immigrants found in Edinburg, about 230 miles (370 kilometers) south of San Antonio.

Trevino said that they discovered the immigrants after one of the people locked in the tractor-trailer called a relative in Mexico. The relative then called authorities.

Padilla declined to say if Sunday's incident was related to the San Antonio case, citing the ongoing investigation. But he said authorities had stopped more than 30 tractor-trailers since October in the Rio Grande Valley. That doesn't include Laredo, the Texas border city where authorities say the driver of the trailer in the San Antonio case said he stopped twice on his journey.

"You don't know how many you miss," Padilla told The Associated Press on Monday. "But ... the use of tractor-trailers to smuggle people out of this area is higher in South Texas, to include Laredo, than any other area along the border. And it goes right back to a weak border."

Most people apprehended crossing the United States' southern border are caught in the Rio Grande Valley, which includes more than 300 miles (480 kilometers) of the Rio Grande, the river separating the United States and Mexico.

Border apprehensions have risen each month since falling in April to a 17-year low.

Tractor-trailers emerged as a popular smuggling method in the early 1990s amid a surge in U.S. border enforcement in San Diego and El Paso, Texas, which were then the busiest corridors for illegal crossings. Before that, people paid small fees to mom-and-pop operators to get them across a largely unguarded border. As crossing became exponentially more difficult after the 2001 terror strikes in the U.S., migrants were led through more dangerous terrain and paid thousands of dollars more.

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This version of the story has been corrected to say there were 16 people inside the locked tractor-trailer instead of 17.

'Out for blood': Man arrested in plan to bomb Oklahoma bank

By TIM TALLEY, Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — A 23-year-old man who was "out for blood" when he attempted to detonate what he believed was an explosives-laden van outside an Oklahoma bank in a plot similar to the deadly

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1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building, authorities said Monday.

During a meeting with undercover FBI agents in June, Jerry Drake Varnell of Sayre, Oklahoma, said he held "III% ideology" and wanted "to start the next revolution," a reference to the "Three Percenters" patriot movement — begun in 2008, galvanized by President Barack Obama's election — and that has rallied against gun control efforts and pledges resistance to the federal government over the infringement of constitutional rights.

Federal officials arrested Varnell early Saturday in connection with a plot to detonate a vehicle bomb in an alley adjacent to BancFirst in downtown Oklahoma City. Varnell is charged with attempting to use explosives to destroy a building in interstate commerce.

Varnell made an initial appearance before a federal judge Monday afternoon and remains in the custody of federal marshals. Court records do not indicate whether Varnell is represented by an attorney.

U.S. Sen. James Lankford of Oklahoma, a member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, said the allegations are a somber reminder that Americans must remain vigilant about home-grown extremism and radicalization in local communities.

A III% group said Varnell had joined their group less than a year ago but was never active and has been removed from its membership rolls. In a statement, III% United Patriots spokesman Dylan Hunter says the group condemns Varnell's alleged acts.

"His claim about following the III% ideology are blatantly false as we do not condone acts of terrorism," Hunter said.

On Saturday, a rally by white nationalists and others opposed to a plan to remove a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee from a Charlottesville, Virginia, park turned violent and led to the death of a 32-year-old woman who was struck by a car allegedly driven by a man into a crowd of people protesting the rally. A Virginia State Police helicopter deployed in a large-scale police response to the violence then crashed into the woods outside of town and both troopers on board died.

A federal complaint filed on Sunday says a confidential informant told the FBI in December that Varnell wanted to blow up a building and "that Varnell was upset with the government and was seeking retaliation."

Officials said Varnell initially wanted to blow up the Federal Reserve Building in Washington, D.C., with a device similar to one used in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing that destroyed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, killing 168 people and injuring hundreds more.

In a series of text messages with the FBI's informant, Varnell "claimed to have a bunker for when the world (or United States) collapsed" and indicated he was trying to build a team, the complaint states.

"I'm out for blood," the complaint quotes Varnell's texts. "When militias start getting formed I'm going after government officials when I have a team."

But an undercover FBI agent posed as someone who could help Varnell build a bomb and the device used was actually inert, authorities said. Varnell's actions were monitored closely for months as the plot developed.

"There was never a concern that our community's safety or security was at risk during this investigation," said Kathryn Peterson, special agent in charge of the FBI in Oklahoma.

The undercover agent met face-to-face with him on June 1 to discuss obtaining materials for an ammonium nitrate and fuel oil bomb similar to the one used in the Oklahoma City bombing, the complaint states.

Varnell indicated at the meeting that he had previously made homemade explosives and that he "was of the same mind with people who wanted to use explosives and make a statement," the complaint says.

"Something needs to be done," Varnell said, but killing a lot of people was not a good idea, according to the complaint. During text conversations in July, Varnell stated he wanted to conduct the attack after closing hours to prevent casualties but conceded that some bank workers or custodians who were inside the building could be killed or injured in the blast, it says.

The complaint says Varnell helped assemble the device and load it into what he believed was a stolen van. Shortly after midnight on Saturday, Varnell drove the van by himself from a storage unit in El Reno, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) from the bank in Oklahoma City, and dialed a number on a cell telephone that he believed would trigger the explosion. The FBI and members of a Joint Terrorism Task Force ar-

rested Varnell shortly before 1 a.m.

The complaint also states that Varnell prepared a statement to be posted on Facebook after the explosion which reads in part that the attack was "retaliation against the freedoms that have been taken away from the American people" and "an act done to show the government what the people think of its actions."

Both of Oklahoma's Republican U.S. senators said the alleged plot could have rivaled the devastation caused by the Oklahoma City bombing 22 years ago.

"It is chilling to think that a sympathizer of Timothy McVeigh would want to act on hate, as a tribute to the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, the deadliest terrorist attack on American soil before September 11," Lankford said.

Sen. Jim Inhofe said law enforcement authorities "successfully prevented a hateful act of domestic terrorism."

If convicted, Varnell faces between five and 20 years in prison.

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Swift justice: Jury takes Taylor's side in groping lawsuit

By **JAMES ANDERSON** and **TATIANA FLOWERS**, Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Four years after Taylor Swift tried to handle her groping allegation against a radio station DJ quietly, the pop superstar got a very public victory Monday with a jury's verdict that she hoped would inspire other women.

Jurors in U.S. District Court in Denver deliberated fewer than four hours to find that ex-radio host David Mueller assaulted and battered Swift during a pre-concert meet-and-greet in June 2013. Per Swift's request, jurors awarded her \$1 in damages — a sum her attorney, Douglas Baldrige, called "a single symbolic dollar, the value of which is immeasurable to all women in this situation."

After Monday's verdict, Swift hugged her crying mom and thanked her attorneys "for fighting for me and anyone who feels silenced by a sexual assault, and especially anyone who offered their support throughout this four-year ordeal and two-year-long trial process."

"My hope is to help those whose voices should also be heard," Swift said in a prepared statement, promising to make unspecified donations to groups that help victims of sexual assault.

The six-woman, two-man jury also rejected Mueller's claims that Swift's mother, Andrea Swift, and radio liaison Frank Bell cost him his \$150,000-a-year job at country station KYGO-FM, where he was a morning host.

On Friday, U.S. District Judge William Martinez dismissed similar claims against Taylor Swift, ruling Mueller's team failed to offer evidence that the then-23-year-old superstar did anything more than report the incident to her team, including her mother.

Mueller, who was seeking up to \$3 million, denied Swift's allegation from the start and maintained his innocence after the verdict.

"I've been trying to clear my name for four years," he said in explaining why he took the singer-songwriter to court. "Civil court is the only option I had. This is the only way that I could be heard."

By the time Swift took the stand Thursday, she was more than angry. She was on a mission to eliminate any doubt about what happened, and she refused to sugarcoat her experience.

During an hour of testimony, Swift blasted a low-key characterization by Mueller's attorney, Gabriel McFarland, of what happened. While Mueller testified he never grabbed Swift, she insisted she was groped.

"He stayed attached to my bare ass-cheek as I lurched away from him," Swift testified.

"It was a definite grab. A very long grab," she added.

Mueller emphatically denied reaching under the pop star's skirt or otherwise touching her inappropriately, insisting he touched only her ribs and may have brushed the outside of her skirt as they awkwardly posed for the picture.

That photo was virtually the only evidence besides the testimony.

In the image shown to jurors during opening statements but not publicly released, Mueller's hand is behind Swift, just below her waist. Both are smiling. Mueller's then-girlfriend is standing on the other side of Swift.

Swift testified that after she was groped, she numbly told Mueller and his girlfriend, "Thank you for coming," and moved on to photos with others waiting in line because she did not want to disappoint them.

But she said she immediately went to her photographer after the meet-and-greet ended and found the photo of her with Mueller, telling the photographer what happened.

Andrea Swift testified that she asked Bell to call Mueller's employers. They did not call the police to avoid further traumatizing her daughter, she said.

"We absolutely wanted to keep it private. But we didn't want him to get away with it," Andrea Swift testified.

Bell said he emailed the photo to Robert Call, KYGO's general manager, for use in Call's investigation of Mueller. He said he didn't ask that Mueller be fired but that "appropriate action be taken."

White nationalists: Charlottesville just a beginning

By JAY REEVES, Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Emboldened and proclaiming victory after a bloody weekend in Virginia, white nationalists are planning more demonstrations to promote their agenda following the violence that left a woman dead and dozens injured.

The University of Florida said white provocateur Richard Spencer, whose appearances sometimes stoke unrest, is seeking permission to speak there next month. And white nationalist Preston Wiginton had said he was planning a "White Lives Matter" rally at Texas A&M University in September, but the university later said it had been canceled.

Also, a neo-Confederate group has asked the state of Virginia for permission to rally at a monument to Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee in Richmond on Sept. 16, and other events are likely.

"We're going to be more active than ever before," Matthew Heimbach, a white nationalist leader, said Monday.

James Alex Fields Jr., a young man who was said to idolize Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany in high school, was charged with killing a woman by slamming a car into a group of counter-protesters at a white nationalist rally Sunday in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Fields, 20, who recently moved to Ohio from his home state of Kentucky, was held without bail on murder charges. He was photographed at the rally behind a shield bearing the emblem of the white nationalist Vanguard America, though the group denied he was a member.

Two state troopers also died Sunday when their helicopter crashed during an effort to contain the violence.

The U.S. Justice Department said it will review the violence, and Attorney General Jeff Sessions told ABC that the death of counter-protester Heather Heyer, 32, met the definition of domestic terrorism.

White nationalists said they were undaunted.

Heimbach, who said he was pepper-sprayed during the melee in Charlottesville, called the event Saturday "an absolute stunning victory" for the far right because of the large number of supporters who descended on the city to decry plans to remove a statue of Lee.

Hundreds of white nationalists, white supremacists, neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klan members and others were involved, by some estimates, in what Heimbach, leader of the Traditionalist Workers Party, called the nation's biggest such event in a decade or more. Even more opponents turned out, and the two sides clashed violently.

A neo-Nazi website that helped promote the gathering said there will be more events soon.

"We are going to start doing this nonstop. Across the country," said the site, which internet domain host GoDaddy said it was shutting down after it mocked the woman killed in Charlottesville.

The head of the National Socialist Movement, Jeff Schoep, said Charlottesville was a "really good" white nationalist event that was being overshadowed by the deaths. "Any time someone loses their life it's un-

fortunate," he said.

He blamed the violence on inadequate police protection and counter-demonstrators and said he doubts white nationalists will be deterred from attending more such demonstrations.

Preserving memorials to the Old South has become an animating force for the white nationalist movement, not because all members are Southern, Schoep said, but because adherents see the drive to remove such monuments as part of a larger, anti-white crusade.

"It's an assault on American freedoms. Today it's Confederate monuments. Tomorrow it may be the Constitution or the American flag," Schoep said.

At the University of Florida, where Spencer has asked to speak, President W. Kent Fuchs called the events in Virginia "deplorable" but indicated school officials might be unable to block his appearance.

"While this speaker's views do not align with our values as an institution, we must follow the law, upholding the First Amendment not to discriminate based on content and provide access to a public space," Fuchs said in a message on the university's Facebook page.

Auburn University spent almost \$30,000 in legal fees in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent Spencer from speaking on its campus in Alabama in April.

Trump attacks exec for quitting council over Charlottesville

By LINDA A. JOHNSON, AP Medical Writer

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — President Donald Trump lashed out at the CEO of the nation's third-largest pharmaceutical company after he resigned from a federal advisory council, citing the president's failure to explicitly rebuke the white nationalists who marched in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Merck CEO Kenneth Frazier wrote on Twitter Monday that "America's leaders must honor our fundamental values by clearly rejecting expressions of hatred, bigotry and group supremacy, which runs counter to the American ideal that all people are created equal."

Frazier is one of the few African Americans to head a Fortune 500 company.

Trump is under increasing pressure to call out the white supremacist and hate groups involved. He lashed out almost immediately on Monday following the resignation, saying on Twitter that Frazier will now "have more time to LOWER RIPOFF DRUG PRICES!"

The president followed up later in the day, tweeting that Merck "is a leader in higher & higher drug prices while at the same time taking jobs out of the U.S. Bring jobs back & LOWER PRICES!"

Drugmakers have come under withering criticism for soaring prices in the U.S., including by Trump, though he has yet to act on a promise to contain them.

With the barbs, Trump appeared to attack an industry executive who has tried to make drug pricing somewhat more transparent by revealing his company's overall drug price changes.

In January, Merck reported that its average net prices — the amount the company receives after discounts and other rebates — increased in the years since 2010 in a range between 3.4 percent and 6.2 percent per year. That's about half as large as the increase in its retail prices. Much of the furor over drug prices recently has been over increases that have been far bigger and come one after another for drugs that have been on the market for years.

The exchange lit up social media early on Monday, with many people lauding Frazier and blasting the president. Trump eventually made a statement condemning bigotry Monday afternoon at a press conference.

Meanwhile, other executives stated their support for Frazier.

Unilever CEO Paul Polman wrote on Twitter, "Thanks @Merck Ken Frazier for strong leadership to stand up for the moral values that made this country what it is."

Frazier, who grew up in a poor neighborhood in Philadelphia, resigned from the manufacturing advisory council days after one person was killed and others wounded in violent clashes between white supremacists and protesters.

Frazier and his siblings were raised by their janitor father after their mother died when they were very young. He has earned a reputation as a risk taker in the drug industry, pouring money into daunting re-

search areas, particularly trying to develop a treatment for Alzheimer's disease.

Frazier is not the first executive to resign from advisory councils serving Trump.

Tesla CEO Elon Musk resigned from the manufacturing council in June, and two other advisory groups to the president, after the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement. Walt Disney Co. Chairman and CEO Bob Iger resigned for the same reason from the President's Strategic and Policy Forum, which Trump established to advise him on how government policy impacts economic growth and job creation.

The manufacturing jobs council had 28 members initially, but it has shrunk since it was formed earlier this year as executives retire, are replaced, or, as with Frazier and Musk, resign.

William Galston, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, said he couldn't "think of a parallel example" of any president responding as viciously as Trump to a CEO departing an advisory council.

"Usually, certain niceties are observed to smooth over a rupture," said Galston, who served as a domestic policy aide in the Clinton administration.

"We've learned that as president, Mr. Trump is behaving exactly as he did as a candidate," Galston said. "He knows only one mode: When attacked, hit back harder."

AP Economics Writer Josh Boak in Washington contributed to this story.

Follow Linda A. Johnson at https://twitter.com/LindaJ_onPharma

Social media harnessed to expose white nationalists at rally

By **BARBARA ORTUTAY, AP Technology Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — One of the social media posts resembled a wanted poster or a missing-persons flyer: Photographs of men were arranged in rows, seeking their names and employers.

But the Facebook post wasn't circulated by law enforcement in the search for a suspect or by relatives looking for a missing loved one. It was an example of ordinary people trying to harness the power of social media to identify and shame the white nationalists who attended last weekend's violent rally in Charlottesville, Virginia.

A Twitter account dedicated to calling out racism identified people who attended the rally using photos culled from the news and social media and listed their places of employment and other information.

"I'm a white Jewish man. So I strongly believe that white people in particular have a responsibility to stand up against bigotry because bigotry thrives on silence," the creator of the account, Logan Smith of Raleigh, North Carolina, told The Associated Press. Using the handle YesYoureRacist, his account grew from around 64,000 followers on Saturday to more than 300,000 by Monday afternoon.

A website created Sunday dedicated itself to collecting the names, social media profiles, colleges and employers of people photographed at the rally. At least one person has lost his job as a result.

Together, the efforts showed that angry online groups can be used to renounce racism as well as promote it.

"The goal with online shaming is very short term and driven by people's desire to feel as if they are fighting back and having an impact," said Brian Reich, who's written several books on digital communications, behavior and political influence. "They are afraid, appalled and they want to stop it."

But is it helpful? Reich said the people behind these efforts "are arguably fanning the flames," giving attention to a group — white supremacists — that feeds on attention.

THE END OF ANONYMITY?

Nicholas Brody, professor of communications at the University of Puget Sound, said the events show that in the age of social media, "nothing is really anonymous anymore."

People attending a white supremacist rally decades ago may have had the comfort of knowing that their schools, employers and disapproving family members probably wouldn't find out about their activity.

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These days, not only can information be quickly and widely shared, but a lot of data is available about people on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Image searches and facial-recognition technology, meanwhile, can make it relatively easy to identify people online. Smith said he called out the people pictured in photos from the rally through a combination of tips from former classmates and others and online sleuthing.

But the method isn't foolproof. In 2013, users of Twitter and the website Reddit wrongly accused a man of being a suspect in the Boston Marathon bombing. Reddit later apologized .

COLLEGE STUDENT IS EXPOSED

Peter Cvjetanovic, a 20-year-old college student, was photographed shouting with a group of torch-wielding protesters Friday during a march through the University of Virginia campus. Cvjetanovic said in a television interview that he didn't expect the photo to spread as widely as it did.

But spread it did. And thousands of people signed an online petition to have him kicked out of school. Cvjetanovic told a local TV station that he is "not the angry racist they see in that photo," but a white nationalist who cares for all people.

The University of Nevada in Reno confirmed Monday that Cvjetanovic is a student there. Spokeswoman Kerri Garcia said the university is "still monitoring the situation and reviewing information."

A message left for Cvjetanovic through the school was not returned. There was no telephone listing available for him in Reno.

Meanwhile, Top Dog, a hot dog company in the San Francisco area, said one of its employees resigned after being confronted by management about participating in the rally.

'DOXING' AS INVITATION TO VIOLENCE

The practice of publishing private or identifying information — such as an address or phone number — about people online in an attempt to hurt, shame or abuse them is known as "doxing."

In the 1990s, anti-abortion hackers infamously exposed abortion providers' home addresses, photos and other information on a now-defunct website called the "Nuremberg Files." Names that were greyed out indicated people who had been "wounded." A strikethrough meant they had been killed.

Collecting and posting publicly available information, such as a photo of a person attending a public protest, is not the same thing, even if that can still hurt or shame people.

Paul Levinson, a communications professor and social media expert, called it a "moral obligation" to expose white supremacists for who they are, something for which social media provides a good opportunity.

Gordon Coonfield, communications professor at Villanova University, said there is an important difference in the reasons people get doxed.

"Doxing an advocate of racial equality is an implicit — and often explicit — call for violence against them," he said in an email. "Doxing a white nationalist is a call for accountability. Compelling individuals to be accountable for their words and deeds online or off is not a threat to freedom of expression. It is the foundation of freedom of expression."

Case in point, Smith said, he has received many death threats because of his Twitter posts, so he's going to consider whether to continue.

"They got ahold of all my personal info and have been threatening me and my family and even my wife's family," he said.

Of course, mere presence at a rally does not imply willing participation. Tiki Brand Products, whose torches were used and widely photographed during the rally, took to Facebook to distance itself from the march.

"We do not support their message or the use of our products in this way," the company wrote on its Facebook page. Our products are designed to enhance backyard gatherings and to help family and friends connect with each other at home in their yard."

Associated Press Writer Jonathan Drew contributed to this story from Raleigh, North Carolina.

At least 300 dead in Sierra Leone mudslides and flooding

By CLARENCE ROY-MACAULAY, Associated Press

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone (AP) — Mudslides and torrential flooding killed more than 300 people in and around Sierra Leone's capital early Monday following heavy rains, with many victims trapped in homes buried under tons of mud.

Survivors and volunteers dug through the mud and debris at times with their bare hands in a desperate search for missing relatives, and military personnel were deployed to help with the rescue operation in the West African nation.

Sierra Leone's national broadcaster announced late Monday that the death toll had risen above 300. Initial Red Cross estimates said as many as 3,000 people were left homeless by the disaster and that figure was expected to rise. Communications and electricity also were affected.

The mortuary at Connaught Hospital was overwhelmed by the number of dead, and bodies had to be spread out on the floor, coroner's technician Sinneh Kamara said.

The toll did not include the untold numbers buried alive in their homes as they slept. More bodies also were expected to be found as floodwaters receded.

In an interview with the Sierra Leone National Broadcasting Corp., Kamara urged the health department to deploy more ambulances to bolster the four belonging to the hospital.

The broadcaster interrupted regular programming to show scenes of people trying to retrieve the bodies of relatives, and some were shown carrying the dead to the morgue in rice sacks.

The president's office released a statement encouraging people to relocate to safer parts of Freetown and sign up at registration centers. The office made no mention of the death toll.

"The government is fully seized of the situation and in collaboration with our development partners, is undertaking a coordinated response to provide emergency services to our affected compatriots," it said.

One particularly hard-hit area was the suburb of Regent, located east of Freetown.

"The mudslide swept down from the hills on the outskirts of Freetown early this morning and spared nothing in its path," said Sasha Ekanayake, the Sierra Leone director for the charity Save the Children. "Houses are buried and entire families are missing, including children."

Homes were destroyed by the flooding, while others were inundated by the floods, leaving many without shelter, Ekanayake said, adding that some children have been separated from their families.

"In places, entire communities seem to have been washed away and whatever is left is covered in mud," said Abdul Nasir, program coordinator for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

He said Red Cross volunteers have been digging with their bare hands and whatever tools available to search for survivors.

"They are also caring for and helping family members who are desperately waiting for news of their loved ones," Nasir said.

Many of the impoverished areas of Sierra Leone's capital are close to sea level and have poor drainage systems, exacerbating flooding during the rainy season.

Freetown also is plagued by unregulated building of large residential houses in hilltop areas.

Deforestation for firewood and charcoal is one of the leading factors of worsening flooding and mudslides. Freetown's drainage channels also are often clogged because of garbage dumping due to insufficient sanitation services in many areas.

AP Explains: How Robert E. Lee's image transformed over time

By RUSSELL CONTRERAS, Associated Press

Confederate Army Gen. Robert E. Lee was vilified in the North during the Civil War only to be transformed in the decades afterward into a heroic icon of "The Lost Cause," admired by many on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line.

Today, many view him as a symbol of racism and America's slaveholding history. His transformation — at

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the center of the recent violence in Charlottesville, Virginia — reflects the changing moods in the United States around race, mythology and national reconciliation.

Lee monuments and the many schools named for him now face renewed scrutiny in a demographically changing nation.

But who was Robert E. Lee beyond the myth? Why are there memorials in his honor in the first place?

THE SOLDIER

A son of American Revolutionary War hero Henry "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, Robert E. Lee graduated second in his class at West Point and distinguished himself in various battles during the U.S.-Mexico War. As tensions heated around southern secession, Lee's former mentor, Gen. Winfield Scott, offered him a post to lead the Union's forces against the South. Lee declined, citing his reservations about fighting against his home state of Virginia and resigned from the U.S. Army.

Lee accepted a role commanding the Virginia state forces of the Confederacy and became one of its generals, even though he had little experience leading troops. He would experience what political science Marshall L. DeRosa called a "mixed record" of military endeavors throughout the war.

Lee eventually commanded troops in the field, winning battles largely because of an incompetent Union Gen. George McClellan, according to historians. "Victories were won through Lee's aggressiveness and daring in the face of McClellan's timidity rather than by any comprehensive generalship on Lee's part, for he was unable to exercise control over his subordinate commanders, and in the individual battles were tactical defeats," according to "The Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Land Warfare: An Illustrated World View."

He won other important battles against other Union's generals, but often was stalled. He was famously defeated at Gettysburg by Union Maj. Gen. George Meade. Lee's massed infantry assault across a wide plain was a gross miscalculation in the era of artillery and rifle fire, "The Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Land Warfare" said.

A few weeks after becoming the general in chief of the armies of the Confederate states, Lee surrendered to Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House in Virginia on April 9, 1865.

THE SLAVE OWNER

A career army officer, Lee didn't have much wealth, but he inherited a few slaves from his mother. Still, Lee married into one of the wealthiest slave-holding families in Virginia — the Custis family of Arlington and descendants of Martha Washington. When Lee's father-in-law died, he took leave from the U.S. Army to run the struggling estate and met resistance from slaves expecting to be freed.

Documents show Lee was cruel to his slaves and encouraged his overseers to severely beat slaves captured after trying to escape. Historian Elizabeth Brown Pryor said in a 2008 American Heritage article that Lee was angry about the slaves' demands for freedom and "resorted to increasingly harsh measures to maintain control," breaking up most slave families. One slave at Arlington, Pryor noted, called Lee, "the worst man I ever see."

In an 1856 letter to his wife, Lee wrote that slavery is "a moral & political evil." Lee also wrote in the same letter that God would be the one responsible for emancipation and that blacks were better off in the U.S. than Africa.

THE LOST CAUSE ICON

After the Civil War, Lee resisted efforts to build Confederate monuments in his honor and instead wanted the nation to move on from the Civil War.

After his death, Southerners adopted "The Lost Cause" revisionist narrative about the Civil War and placed Lee as its central figure. The Lost Cause argued the South knew it was fighting a losing war and decided to fight it anyway on principle. It also tried to argue that the war was not about slavery but high constitutional ideals.

As The Lost Cause narrative grew in popularity, proponents pushed to memorialize Lee, ignoring his de-

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iciencies as a general and his role as a slave owner, according to Gary Gallagher, a University of Virginia professor specializing in the history of the Civil War. Lee monuments went up in the 1920s just as the Ku Klux Klan was experiencing a resurgence and new Jim Crow segregation laws were adopted.

The Robert E. Lee statue in Charlottesville was erected in 1924. A year later, the U.S. Congress voted to use federal funds to restore the Lee mansion in the Arlington National Cemetery.

The U.S. Mint issued a coin in his honor, and Lee has been on five postage stamps. Most Union figures, besides President Abraham Lincoln, weren't granted as many honors.

Shawn Alexander, associate professor of African and African-American studies at the University of Kansas, said that despite the attempt to use Lee as a reconciliation figure, many African-Americans spoke out in the black press that Lee had betrayed the U.S. and was responsible for tens of thousands of deaths. "He was no hero in their eyes," Alexander said.

By the early 20th century, Northern state politicians — fearing deadly violence over black civil rights in the South — caved to pressure from Southern leaders to cast Lee in a more conciliatory light, said Gerald Horne, a professor of history and African-American studies at the University of Houston. "The South showed it would shed blood," Horne said.

A NEW MEMORY

A generation after the civil rights movement, black and Latino residents began pressuring elected officials to dismantle Confederate memorials honoring Lee and others in places like New Orleans, Houston and South Carolina. The removals partly were based on violent acts committed by white supremacists using Confederate imagery and historians questioning the legitimacy of The Lost Cause.

A Lee statue was removed in New Orleans in 2015 — the last remaining of the city's four monuments to Confederate-era figures.

The Houston Independent School District voted in 2016 to rename Robert E. Lee High School, a school with a large Latino population, as Margaret Long Wisdom High School.

Earlier this year, the Charlottesville City Council voted to remove its Lee statue from a city park, sparking a lawsuit from opponents of the move. The debate also drew opposition from white supremacists and neo-Nazis who revered Lee and the Confederacy. The opposition resulted in rallies to defend Lee statues this weekend that resulted in at least three deaths.

Associated Press writer Russell Contreras is a member of the AP's race and ethnicity team. Follow Russell Contreras on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/russcontreras>

Top Fed official tells AP: Bond portfolio could shrink soon

By **MARTIN CRUTSINGER, AP Economics Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — A top Federal Reserve official suggested Monday that the Fed will likely announce next month that it will begin paring its bond portfolio — a step that could lead to slightly higher rates on mortgages and other loans.

In an interview with The Associated Press, William Dudley, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, said he thinks the Fed has adequately prepared investors for a reduction in the portfolio, which swelled after the 2008 financial crisis as the Fed bought bonds to reduce long-term rates. With the economy now much healthier, the Fed is ready to begin trimming its bond holdings.

Dudley also said that he would favor a third increase this year in the Fed's benchmark short-term rate if the economy remained strong. Many investors expect a modest rate hike in December, to follow the Fed's previous increases in March and June this year.

Speaking of the Fed's likely September announcement that it will begin shrinking its \$4.5 trillion bond portfolio, Dudley expressed confidence that investors would react calmly to the prospect of modestly higher rates on some consumer and business loans. He noted that the Fed spelled out to investors months ago the system it plans to use to reduce the portfolio gradually.

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"The plan is out there," he said during an interview at the New York Fed. "It's been generally well-received and fully anticipated. People expect it to take place."

As president of the Fed's New York regional bank, Dudley is an influential voice on interest-rate policy. He is vice chairman of the central bank's policy panel that sets interest rates and is a longtime close ally of Fed Chair Janet Yellen.

His interview with the AP comes at a time when the Fed has essentially met one of its two mandates: To maximize employment. The unemployment rate is at a 16-year low of 4.3 percent, and job growth remains consistently solid.

Yet the Fed has so far failed to meet its second objective of keeping prices stable. Inflation has stayed chronically below the Fed's 2 percent target rate — a problem because consumers often delay purchases when they think prices will stay the same or even decline. In its latest reading, the Fed's preferred inflation gauge was just 1.4 percent year over year. Dudley said Monday that he still thinks inflation will rise toward the Fed's target level as the job market strengthens further and sluggish wage growth begins to pick up.

On other topics, Dudley:

— Suggested that Gary Cohn, who leads President Donald Trump's National Economic Council and is close to Trump, would be a "reasonable candidate" to succeed Yellen as Fed chair if Trump chooses not to re-nominate Yellen when her term ends early next year. Dudley, who worked with Cohn as top officials at Goldman Sachs, said Cohn "knows a lot about financial markets," and "I don't think you have to have a Ph.D. in economics" to lead the Fed. In a recent interview, Trump said he was considering both Yellen and Cohn for the top Fed job, along with some other candidates he would not name.

— Expressed confidence that the Fed's political independence, long considered essential for it to carry out its functions, would remain respected during a Trump presidency. Trump may have the opportunity to install up to five members of the Fed's seven-member board over the next year, and the president has shown a tendency to expect loyalty from some people he has named to key positions. Trump had offered a harsh judgment of the Fed and of Yellen during the presidential campaign but has since avoided making critical comments. Dudley noted that the Trump administration has so far been "very hands-off" toward the Fed, "very respectful of the monetary policy."

— Said that even as stock prices set record highs and other assets surge as well, he isn't concerned that any potentially devastating asset bubbles might be forming, akin to the subprime mortgage bubble that triggered the 2008 crisis. Dudley said asset prices "are pretty consistent with what we are seeing in terms of the actual performance of the economy," which he said has been evolving without much volatility.

— Acknowledged that policymakers need to be "somewhat humble" about how the forthcoming reduction in the Fed's bond portfolio might affect financial markets and loan rates. Dudley noted that the Fed has never before had to pare a balance sheet that has grown five-fold to \$4.5 trillion. But he said officials have learned from the 2013 "taper tantrum" that rocked markets after a surprise announcement from the Fed, and has sought to telegraph all its actions well in advance.

The Fed's announcement that it will start paring its bond portfolio is expected to come after its next policy meeting ends Sept. 20. The meeting after that, in December, is when many Fed watchers expect the next increase in its key short-term rate, which remains in a still-low range of 1 percent to 1.25 percent.

Yellen and other Fed officials have attributed the persistently low inflation rate, which slowed further in recent months, to such transitory events as a sharp drop in cellphone fees.

Dudley said that if the economy evolves during the rest of 2017 as he expects, with inflation rebounding, "I would be in favor of doing another rate hike later this year."

Trump seeks probe by his trade office of China's practices

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and JOSH BOAK, Associated Press

BEDMINSTER, N.J. (AP) — Even as he seeks Beijing's help on North Korea, President Donald Trump asked his trade office on Monday to consider investigating China for the alleged theft of American technology and intellectual property.

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Trump, in the midst of a 17-day vacation, left his New Jersey golf club to return to the White House to sign an executive action on the probe. He suggested that more steps would be taken against China on trade issues.

"This is just the beginning — I want to tell you that," Trump said. "This is just the beginning."

There is no deadline for deciding if any investigation is necessary. Such an investigation easily could last a year.

In a phone call Friday, Trump praised Chinese President Xi Jinping for backing the recent U.N. vote to impose tougher sanctions on North Korea, and the leaders reaffirmed their commitment to a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. But Trump also told Xi about the move toward a possible inquiry into China's trade practices, according to two U.S. officials familiar with that conversation. They were not authorized to publicly discuss the private call and spoke on condition of anonymity.

China announced Monday it will cut off imports of North Korean coal, iron and lead ore and other goods in three weeks under U.N. sanctions imposed against Pyongyang.

In an editorial Monday, the China Daily, a mouthpiece of the ruling Communist Party, linked Trump's trade announcement against China to his disappointment over China's purported failure to rein in North Korea. The newspaper said a trade probe, which could lead to punitive tariffs on Chinese exports, would "poison" U.S.-China relations.

Trump wants government officials to look at Chinese practices that force American companies to share their intellectual property in order to gain access to the world's second-largest economy. Many U.S. businesses must create joint ventures with Chinese companies and turn over valuable technology assets, a practice that Washington says stifles U.S. economic growth.

Trump's action amounts to a request that his trade representative determine whether an investigation is needed under the Trade Act of 1974. If an investigation begins, the U.S. government could seek remedies either through or outside of the World Trade Organization.

While Beijing has promised to open more industries to foreign companies, it also has issued new rules on electric car manufacturing, data security, internet censorship and other fields.

An administration official contended that the possible investigation was unrelated to the showdown with North Korea. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the order before Trump's formal announcement.

As the crisis involving North Korea has unfolded, Trump has alternated praising China for its help and chiding it for not ratcheting up pressure on its Asian neighbor.

"I think China can do a lot more," Trump told reporters Thursday. "And I think China will do a lot more."

China, the isolated North's main trading partner, has been reluctant to push leader Kim Jong Un's regime too hard for fear it might collapse. But Beijing is increasingly frustrated with Pyongyang and supported a U.N. Security Council ban on Aug. 5 on coal and other key goods.

The Chinese customs agency said Monday that it will stop processing imports of North Korean coal, iron and lead ores and fish at midnight on Sept. 5.

"After that, entry of these goods will be prohibited," said an agency statement.

Trump has escalated his harsh criticism of North Korea for days, tweeting Friday that the U.S. had military options "locked and loaded." Xi, in his phone conversation with Trump, urged calm, the officials said.

Trump, in the past, has tied trade policy to national security, leading to speculation that raising the possibility of a probe — without committing to one — could be a negotiating tactic to get China to step up its assistance with North Korea.

The forced sharing of intellectual property with Chinese firms has been a long-standing concern of the U.S. business community, with reports suggesting that losses stemming from it could total hundreds of billions of dollars annually that cost the U.S. economy millions of jobs.

Trump has requested similar inquiries on trade, but the reports haven't been delivered on deadline. Trump made addressing the U.S. trade deficit with China a centerpiece of his campaign last year and has suggested raising tariffs on goods from China.

Associated Press writers Gillian Wong in Beijing and Matthew Pennington in Washington contributed to this report.

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More than spectacle: Eclipses create science and so can you

By **SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The sun is about to spill some of its secrets, maybe even reveal a few hidden truths of the cosmos. And you can get in on the act next week if you are in the right place for the best solar eclipse in the U.S. in nearly a century.

Astronomers are going full blast to pry even more science from the mysterious ball of gas that's vital to Earth. They'll look from the ground, using telescopes, cameras, binoculars and whatever else works. They'll look from the International Space Station and a fleet of 11 satellites in space. And in between, they'll fly three planes and launch more than 70 high-altitude balloons .

"We expect a boatload of science from this one," said Jay Pasachoff, a Williams College astronomer who has traveled to 65 eclipses of all kinds.

Scientists will focus on the sun, but they will also examine what happens to Earth's weather, to space weather, and to animals and plants on Earth as the moon totally blocks out the sun. The moon's shadow will sweep along a narrow path, from Oregon to South Carolina.

Between NASA and the National Science Foundation, the federal government is spending about \$7.7 million on next Monday's eclipse. One of the NASA projects has students launching the high-altitude balloons to provide "live footage from the edge of space" during the eclipse.

But it's not just the professionals or students. NASA has a list of various experiments everyday people can do.

"Millions of people can walk out on their porch in their slippers and collect world-class data," said Matt Penn, an astronomer at the National Solar Observatory in Tucson, Arizona.

Penn is chief scientist for a National Science Foundation-funded movie project nicknamed Citizen CATE. More than 200 volunteers have been trained and given special small telescopes and tripods to observe the sun at 68 locations in the exact same way. The thousands of images from the citizen-scientists will be combined for a movie of the usually hard-to-see sun's edge.

Mike Conley, a Salem, Oregon, stock trader whose backyard is studded with telescopes, jumped at the chance to be part of the science team.

"Who knows? Maybe a great secret will come of this, the mysteries of the sun will be revealed, because we're doing something that's never been done before and we're getting data that's never been seen before," he said. "A big discovery will come and everybody will say, 'Hey, we were part of that!'"

You don't need to have telescopes to help out. You can use the iNaturalist app via the California Academy of Sciences and note the reaction of animals and plants around you. You can go to a zoo, like the Nashville Zoo, where they are asking people to keep track of what the animals are doing. The University of California, Berkeley, is seeking photos and video for its Eclipse Megamovie 2017, hoping to get more than 1,000 volunteers.

Even with all the high-tech, high-flying instruments now available, when it comes to understanding much of the sun's mysteries, nothing beats an eclipse, said Williams College's Pasachoff. That's because the sun is so bright that even satellites and special probes can't gaze straight at the sun just to glimpse the outer crown, or corona. Satellites create artificial eclipses to blot out the sun, but they can't do it as well as the moon, he said.

The corona is what astronomers really focus on during an eclipse. It's the sun's outer atmosphere where space weather originates, where jutting loops of red glowing plasma lash out and where the magnetic field shows fluctuations. The temperature in the outer atmosphere is more than 1 million degrees hotter

than it is on the surface of the sun and scientists want to figure out why.

"It's ironic that we've learned most about the sun when its disk is hidden from view," said Fred "Mr. Eclipse" Espenak, a retired NASA astronomer who specialized in eclipses for the space agency.

And they learn other things, too. Helium — the second most abundant element in the universe — wasn't discovered on Earth until its chemical spectrum was spotted during an eclipse in 1868, Espenak said.

But that discovery is eclipsed by what an eclipse did for Albert Einstein and physics.

Einstein was a little known scientist in 1915 when he proposed his general theory of relativity, a milestone in physics that says what we perceive as the force of gravity is actually from the curvature of space and time. It explains the motion of planets, black holes and the bending of light from distant galaxies.

Einstein couldn't prove it but said one way to do so was to show that light from a distant star bends during an eclipse. During a 1919 eclipse, Arthur Eddington observed the right amount of bending, something that couldn't be done without the moon's shadow eclipsing the sun.

"It marked a complete change in the understanding of the universe," said Mark Littmann of the University of Tennessee, a former planetarium director. "Bang. Right there."

Associated Press writer Gillian Flaccus in Oregon contributed to this report.

Follow AP's coverage of the total solar eclipse here

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears and his work can be found here .

After failure of SC nuke plant, backers seek federal aid

By **MATTHEW DALY**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Proponents of nuclear power are pushing to revive a failed project to build two reactors in South Carolina, arguing that the demise of the \$14 billion venture could signal doom for an industry that supplies one-fifth of the nation's electricity.

Even though the nation's 99 commercial nuclear reactors supply about 20 percent of U.S. electricity, no new nuclear plant has been built from scratch in more than 30 years. Supporters were alarmed when two South Carolina utilities halted construction on a pair of reactors that once were projected to usher in a new generation of nuclear power to provide reliable, cost-effective, carbon-free electricity for decades.

Instead the project was plagued by billions of dollars in cost overruns, stagnant demand for electricity, competition from cheap natural gas and - most importantly - the bankruptcy of Westinghouse Electric, the lead contractor.

The July 31 suspension of the partly completed V.C. Summer project near Columbia, South Carolina, leaves two nuclear reactors under construction in Georgia as the only ones being built in the U.S. The collapse of the nearly decade-old project in South Carolina could cost ratepayers billions of dollars for work that ultimately provides no electricity and could signal that new nuclear plants are impossible to complete in the United States.

"These reactors failing would be the end of a nuclear renaissance before it even started," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C.

Graham and other lawmakers from both parties are urging Congress to extend a production tax credit that would provide billions of dollars to the South Carolina project and the two Georgia reactors. The House approved an extension in June, and Graham is pushing for a Senate vote after Congress returns from its August recess.

"I'm mad as hell that you spend all this money and you can't get it done," Graham said.

The Vogtle plant in Georgia faces similar economic and competitive threats, including the Westinghouse bankruptcy. The plant's operator, Atlanta-based Southern Co., has said it will decide in coming weeks whether to finish the two reactors, which are years behind schedule and billions of dollars above projected costs.

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Southern CEO Tom Fanning called Vogtle "the last (nuclear) project standing in America" and said it "goes beyond economics" to affect national security.

"If you want a world safe from nuclear proliferation," construction of nuclear plants "is how we maintain nuclear technology," said Rich Powell, executive director of ClearPath, a conservative-leaning clean energy group.

Besides the production tax credit, nuclear supporters want the extension of an Energy Department loan guarantee program that has helped Vogtle and other energy projects secure funding. Vogtle received an \$8.3 billion loan guarantee under the Obama administration - the largest ever issued by the loan program and a deal that some critics say could end up biting taxpayers.

"We've said it for eight years: These massive nuclear reactor projects were doomed from the start, and taxpayer money should not be risked on them," said Ryan Alexander, president of Taxpayers for Common Sense, a watchdog group.

The Summer plant did not receive a loan guarantee, but the parent company of South Carolina Electric & Gas, one of the utilities building it, tried to get a federal grant worth up to \$3 billion before abandoning the project. SCANA CEO Kevin Marsh said he and other executives had "very direct discussions" with the White House and Energy Department, including Energy Secretary Rick Perry, and "explained the need for support for these projects because of the national security interest."

A spokeswoman for Perry said the project's failure has not dimmed Perry's belief in nuclear power. "Secretary Perry remains optimistic about the future of nuclear energy in America and continues to watch this issue closely," said spokeswoman Shaylyn Hynes.

The Energy Department invited the S.C. utility to apply for a loan guarantee, but "that invitation was ultimately turned down by the project's representatives," Hynes said.

Marsh, speaking at an Aug. 1 hearing before the South Carolina Public Service Commission, said a loan "doesn't help the situation we're in."

The loan guarantees typically serve as long-term incentives for companies to take on major energy projects.

While President Donald Trump backs nuclear energy, the administration eliminated the loan guarantee program in its proposed budget for the next fiscal year. The program was a frequent target of GOP lawmakers during the Obama administration, especially a \$535 million loan to the failed solar company Solyndra.

The White House supports extension of the production tax credit, saying it would "fulfill the president's commitment to the continuation of nuclear energy as a major contributor to our nation's energy production and security."

The current credit requires plants to be operational by 2020 - a deadline neither the South Carolina nor Georgia project will come close to meeting.

Rep. Jeff Duncan, R-S.C., called suspension of the South Carolina project a shame. "I can tell you, wind and solar are not going to provide the kind of power that nuclear energy provides," he said.

Associated Press writer Seanna Adcox in Columbia, South Carolina, contributed to this report.

Follow Matthew Daly: <http://twitter.com/MatthewDalyWDC>

Dubai magnate tied to Trump brand seeks new ventures abroad

By JON GAMBRELL, Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — During recent trips to Croatia and Malta, a Dubai-based billionaire and business partner of the Trump Organization looked more like a head of state himself — mingling with government dignitaries, receiving a presidential reception and visiting the glittering Mediterranean Sea.

Hussain Sajwani met with leaders in the two European nations and addressed local journalists, many of whom referred to his ties to President Donald Trump or simply called him "the Donald of Dubai."

Sajwani's trips, as well as a recent deal in Oman, show that Trump's business partner in Dubai wants to

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expand his development empire beyond the Mideast and a tower under construction in London.

Enter Sajwani's DAMAC Properties, which launched a new effort this week to sell Trump-branded villas at the golf course bearing the American president's name.

"My dream is as we have put our major, iconic tower in London, that we do repeat that in major gateway cities around the world," Sajwani said in a July online video. "Tokyo, Toronto, New York, Paris, I don't know. But that would be a dream — to grow DAMAC with its iconic brands around the world."

Sajwani's dream for a global expansion — as well his growing online presence among social media videos and posts — received a major boost with Trump taking the White House. It also raised the public profile of a billionaire whose fortune grew in part out of contracting work his companies did in supplying U.S. forces during the 1991 Gulf War that expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

DAMAC Properties declined an Associated Press interview request with Sajwani. In a statement, DAMAC spokesman Niall McLoughlin said the company is "exploring opportunities in major gateway cities across Europe and the U.S., hence the numerous and ongoing meetings over the past many years" by Sajwani.

Sajwani wholeheartedly embraced Trump, even as the U.S. presidential candidate's campaign saw him call for a "complete shutdown" of Muslims coming to the United States. Once reaching office, Trump's travel ban on six predominantly Muslim countries avoided naming the UAE, a major U.S. ally that hosts some 5,000 American troops and is the U.S. Navy's busiest foreign port of call.

In February, Trump's sons Eric and Donald Jr. opened the Trump International Golf Club in Dubai, the first of two to be built in the sheikhdom by Sajwani. DAMAC share prices have nearly doubled from 2.17 dirhams (59 cents) a share on the day of the U.S. election in November, to a high of over 4 dirhams (\$1.09).

That made Sajwani, who owns over 70 percent of DAMAC stock, even richer.

However, economies overall have slowed across the Middle East amid a glut in global oil prices. An ongoing diplomatic dispute between Arab nations and Qatar has likely also affected DAMAC, as 6 percent of all its customers from 2014 to 2016 were Qataris, according to an April filing by the company on the Nasdaq Dubai. DAMAC announced results Monday that put its second-quarter earnings at 704 million dirhams (\$191.6 million), down from 864 million dirhams (\$235.2 million) in the same period last year.

Facing that sluggish market, Sajwani has begun to look abroad.

In Oman, he signed a deal in June with the state-run Oman Tourism Development Co. for DAMAC to help redevelop Port Sultan Qaboos in Muscat, a project valued overall at \$1 billion.

Then in July, Sajwani visited Croatia and met with President Kolinda Grabar Kitarovic. Sajwani also visited tourist towns along the coast of the Adriatic Sea, according a DAMAC statement at the time. The local branch of Colliers International, a commercial real estate firm headquartered in Toronto, said it organized the three-day trip for Sajwani, trying to pitch him on developments on the Istria peninsula and Central and Southern Dalmatia.

DAMAC "continues to look at the investment opportunities" in Croatia, primarily along the Adriatic, said Vedrana Likan, the managing partner of Colliers' Croatian arm.

Sajwani then traveled to Malta, an archipelago nation off Italy in the Mediterranean Sea, and met with Prime Minister Joseph Muscat.

Both Croatia and Malta are members of the European Union, which Emirati citizens have been able to travel to without visas since 2015. That can drive business for any possible DAMAC project in either country, as well as create new European interest in Dubai, where the developer makes its real money, said Issam Kassabieh, an analyst with the UAE-based firm Menacorp Finance.

"It's a very effective method of branding," Kassabieh said. "Once foreign investors see the DAMAC name in Europe, they'll follow it all the way back to the source, which is Dubai, so they can capitalize on it here."

Meanwhile, DAMAC Properties just this week launched a new set of Trump-branded duplex villas, priced from 2.96 million dirhams (\$806,000) that include three-year memberships at the golf course. The company previously offered stand-alone villas at prices starting at 5 million dirhams (\$1.3 million) up to 15 million dirhams (\$4 million).

The Trump Organization, now run by Trump's adult sons though the president hasn't divested from it,

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also tweeted that the new villas were for sale . It told the AP that the villas are "not a new project" and represented "our longstanding relationship with DAMAC Properties."

While DAMAC merely mentions Trump as representing "the most respected developments throughout the world," one Dubai newspaper more bluntly suggested buyers could "own a piece of the Trump name."

And while it remains unclear how Sajwani trades on his Trump ties in private meetings with foreign leaders, advertising and marketing by DAMAC prominently features Trump. That could lead to potential conflicts, said Norman Eisen, who served as President Barack Obama's lead ethics attorney and who now is a part of a watchdog group suing Trump for his alleged violations of a clause of the U.S. Constitution that prohibits foreign gifts and payments.

If Sajwani "is featuring the Trump name in his marketing materials and if, as one can fairly assume, that's being furnished to government officials and others, then that would be a not-very-subtle attempt to trade on his business partner's presence in the White House," Eisen said.

Follow Jon Gambrell on Twitter at www.twitter.com/jongambrellap . His work can be found at <http://apne.ws/2galNpz> .

Asian stocks rise after Koreas, US make diplomatic overtures

By YURI KAGEYAMA, AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares rose Tuesday as both Koreas and the U.S. appeared to indicate a willingness to defuse the crisis over North Korea's nuclear program. A rally on Wall Street, on the back of strong technology shares, also helped.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 gained 1.3 percent to 19,789.13 in morning trading. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added 0.7 percent to 5,770.90. South Korea's Kospi rose 0.6 percent to 2,334.22. Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 1.4 percent to 27,250.23, while the Shanghai Composite was up 0.8 percent at 3,262.54.

NORTH KOREA: North Korea said Tuesday leader Kim Jong Un was briefed on his military's plans to launch missiles into waters near Guam. But the comments also appeared to signal a path to defuse the deepening crisis with Washington, holding out the possibility that friction could ease if the U.S. made some gesture that Pyongyang considered a move to back away from previous "extremely dangerous reckless actions."

WALL STREET: The S&P 500 jumped 24.52 points, or 1 percent, to 2,465.84. The Dow Jones industrial average gained 135.39 points, or 0.6 percent, to 21,993.71. The Nasdaq composite added 83.68 points, or 1.3 percent, to 6,340.23.

THE QUOTE: "The markets continue to recover from last week's disorder as U.S. equities orchestrated a splendid showing recouping some of the sharp losses from last Friday, as investor confidence returns with the de-escalation of North Korea tension," says Stephen Innes, head of trading for Asia at OANDA.

ENERGY: U.S. crude oil added 8 cents to \$47.67 a barrel. It lost \$1.23 to \$47.59 a barrel in New York Monday. Brent crude, the international standard, rose 13 cents to \$50.86 a barrel in London.

CURRENCIES: The dollar rose to 110.19 yen from 109.57 yen late Monday in Asia. The euro fell to \$1.1784 from \$1.1816.

Yuri Kageyama on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/yurikageyama>

Her work can be found at <https://www.apnews.com/search/yuri%20kageyama>

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Aug. 15, the 227th day of 2017. There are 138 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

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On August 15, 1947, India became independent after some 200 years of British rule.

On this date:

In 1057, Macbeth, King of Scots, was killed in battle by Malcolm, the eldest son of King Duncan, whom Macbeth had slain.

In 1483, the Sistine Chapel was consecrated by Pope Sixtus IV.

In 1812, the Battle of Fort Dearborn took place as Potawatomi warriors attacked a U.S. military garrison of about 100 people. (Most of the garrison was killed, while those who remained were taken prisoner.)

In 1914, the Panama Canal officially opened as the SS Ancon crossed the just-completed waterway between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

In 1935, humorist Will Rogers and aviator Wiley Post were killed when their airplane crashed near Point Barrow in the Alaska Territory.

In 1939, the MGM musical "The Wizard of Oz" opened at the Grauman's Chinese Theater in Hollywood.

In 1945, in a pre-recorded radio address, Japan's Emperor Hirohito announced that his country had accepted terms of surrender for ending World War II.

In 1965, the Beatles played to a crowd of more than 55,000 at New York's Shea Stadium.

In 1967, a 50-foot-tall sculpture by Pablo Picasso was dedicated in Daley Plaza in Chicago by Mayor Richard J. Daley.

In 1969, the Woodstock Music and Art Fair opened in upstate New York.

In 1974, a gunman attempted to shoot South Korean President Park Chung-hee during a speech; although Park was unhurt, his wife, Yuk Young-soo, was struck and killed, along with a teenage girl. (The gunman was later executed.)

In 1989, F.W. de Klerk was sworn in as acting president of South Africa, one day after P.W. Botha resigned as the result of a power struggle within the National Party.

Ten years ago: Former NBA referee Tim Donaghy (DAH'-nuh-hee) pleaded guilty to felony charges for taking cash payoffs from gamblers and betting on games he'd officiated in a scandal that rocked the league. (Donaghy, sentenced to 15 months in federal prison, was released in November 2009.) A magnitude-8 earthquake in Peru's southern desert killed 596 people.

Five years ago: Felix Hernandez pitched the Seattle Mariners' first perfect game and the 23rd in baseball history, overpowering the Tampa Bay Rays 1-0; it was the third perfect game and sixth no-hitter of the season. The United States soccer team broke a 75-year winless streak at Mexico's intimidating Azteca Stadium with an 80th minute goal and a series of saves that delivered a 1-0 victory.

One year ago: Republican Donald Trump called for "extreme" ideological vetting of immigrants seeking admission to the United States, vowing during a speech in Youngstown, Ohio, to significantly overhaul the country's screening process and block those who sympathized with extremist groups or didn't embrace American values. President Barack Obama, in Chilmark, Massachusetts, urged Democrats to campaign aggressively for the next 80 days to elect Hillary Clinton, saying "if we do not do our jobs, then it's still possible for her to lose."

Today's Birthdays: Actress Rose Marie is 94. Actress Abby Dalton is 85. Actress Lori Nelson is 84. Civil rights activist Vernon Jordan is 82. Actor Jim Dale is 82. Actress Pat Priest is 81. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer is 79. U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., is 79. Musician Pete York (Spencer Davis Group) is 75. Author-journalist Linda Ellerbee is 73. Songwriter Jimmy Webb is 71. Rock singer-musician Tom Johnston (The Doobie Brothers) is 69. Actress Phyllis Smith is 68. Britain's Princess Anne is 67. Actress Tess Harper is 67. Actor Larry Mathews is 62. Actor Zeljko Ivanek (ZEHL'-koh eh-VON'-ehk) is 60. Actor-comedian Rondell Sheridan is 59. Rock singer-musician Matt Johnson (The The) is 56. Movie director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu (ihn-YAH'-ee-tu) is 54. Philanthropist Melinda Gates is 53. Country singer Angela Rae (Wild Horses) is 51. Actor Peter Hermann is 50. Actress Debra Messing is 49. Actor Anthony Anderson is 47. Actor Ben Affleck is 45. Singer Mikey Graham (Boyzone) is 45. Actress Natasha Henstridge is 43. Actress Nicole Paggi is 40. Christian rock musician Tim Foreman (Switchfoot) is 39. Actress Emily Kinney is 33. Figure skater Jennifer Kirk is 33. Latin pop singer Belinda (cq) is 28. Rock singer Joe Jonas (The Jonas

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Brothers) is 28. Actor-singer Carlos PenaVega is 28. Actress Jennifer Lawrence is 27. Rap DJ Smoove da General (Cali Swag District) is 27.

Thought for Today: "To feel that one has a place in life solves half the problem of contentment." — George Edward Woodberry, American poet, critic and educator (1855-1930).