

Groton Daily Independent

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Official Notices

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- Frederick Area School (updated 8-29)**
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- Groton Area School (updated 8-29)**
- Westport Town (updated 8-21-17)**
- Other Notices (updated 8-21)**

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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There will be NO JH volleyball matches at Webster on Tuesday, Sept. 5th. These matches are postponed for now until a date is rescheduled.

Friday, Sept. 1

Senior Menu: Breaded codfish, parsley buttered potatoes, coleslaw, orange sherbet, whole wheat bread.

Football: Sisseton, here, 7 p.m.

Pool Hours: Open Swim 1-4:50; Lap Swim 5-5:45; Aerobics 5:45-6:30; Open Swim 6:40-8:00.

Groton Christian & Missionary Alliance: Men's Bible Study at the Groton Dairy Queen, 6:30 a.m.

Saturday, Sept. 2

Heaven Bound Ministries: Worship in Pierpont at 5:30 p.m.

Soccer: Groton at Tea Area, Girls at 1 p.m., Boys at 3 p.m.

Catholic Parish: Mass at SEAS in Groton, 4:30 p.m.; Mass at St. Anthony, Bristol, 6 p.m.

Pool Hours: Open Swim 1-4:50; Lap Swim 5-5:45; Aerobics 5:45-6:30; Open Swim 6:40-8:00.

Sunday, Sept. 3

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

First Presbyterian: Bible Study at 9:30 a.m., Worship at 11 a.m.

United Methodist: Conde worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Fellowship time, 10 a.m.; Groton worship with communion, 11 a.m.

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

Pool Hours: Open Swim 1-4:50; Lap Swim 5-5:45; Aerobics 5:45-6:30; Open Swim 6:40-8:00.



Oven Fresh Sandwiches Hot Desserts Snack Melts

11 E Hwy 12, Groton ~ 397-8627

"Luck has a
peculiar habit of
favoring those
who don't depend
on it."

-Author Unknown-



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Redfield-Doland Cross Country Meet

Thursday, Aug. 31 in Redfield

Girl's Varsity 5,000m Race: 15, Emily Thompson, 21:59.51; 33, Hannah Lewandowski, 23:49.83.

Boy's Varsity 5,000m Race: 55, Micah Poor, 21:18.93; 66, Isaac Smith, 21:59.33.

Girl's 3,000m JV Race: 43, AnneMarie Smith, 15:55.31; 51, Rylee Rosenau, 16:21.15; 62, Jenifer Fjelstad, 18:03.12.

Boy's 3,000m JV Race: 41, Noah Poor, 13:25.59

Lady Netters beat Ipswich in three games

Groton Area's volleyball team defeated Ipswich on Tuesday, Aug. 29, in Ipswich, 3-0. Game scores were 25-15, 25-16 and 25-20.

In serving, Groton Area was 63 of 74 with five ace serves. Miranda Hanson was 12 of 16 with one ace serve and Gia Gengerke was 12 of 13.

In sets, Groton Area was 92 of 94 with 33 assists. Miranda Hanson was 85 of 86 with 31 assists.

Groton Area was 89 of 102 in attacks with 35 kills. Gia Gengerke was 20 of 24 with seven kills, Jennie Doeden was 21 of 23 with 11 kills and Taylor Holm was 18 of 19 with eight kills.

Groton Area had two solo blocks by Taylor Holm and two assists with one each by Gia Gengerke and Jennie Doeden.

Groton Area had 53 digs with Payton Maine having 17 and Eliza Wanner 14.

Noem Accepting Applications for Spring Interns

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Rep. Kristi Noem is accepting applications for spring internships in her Washington, D.C.; Sioux Falls; Rapid City; and Watertown offices.

Student interns will work with staff on various constituent service and communications projects, as well as assist with legislative research. Both South Dakota and Washington, D.C. internships provide students with first-hand knowledge of the legislative process and the countless other functions of a congressional office.

College students who would like to intern in any of Representative Noem's offices should submit a cover letter and resume to Michael.Maloof@mail.house.gov by Friday, November 17, 2017. For more information, contact Michael Maloof at 202-225-2801.

Death Notice: Margaret Padfield

Margaret Padfield, 91, of Groton passed away Thursday, August 31, 2017 at Groton Care and Rehabilitation Center. Services are pending with Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Help Wanted

Full- or part-time for the following positions:
Healthcare workers for Nurse's-RN or LPN, and
Nursing Assistants, Dietary Cook and assistant,
and Housekeeper. (12 hour shifts/rotating weekends for
nurses and C.N.A.s)

Contact Jessica Lindskov or Nellie Peterson at 605-397-2365
or apply in person.

EOE/AA/M/F/V/D-Drug Free Workplace



GROTON
CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton
605-397-2365

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All auto owners!
Save \$2-\$4 /tank
& grow your local economy
by choosing low carbon
Super Premium E30's
94 octane, more power,
same mileage, fewer
carbon deposits, lower
maintenance costs,
slashed benzene & related
genotoxic, carcinogenic
tailpipe emissions;
*see sdfu.org's E30 tab for
info, E30 prices\locations.

***Farmers Union's
PSA: Courtesy Merle
Anderson (Merle is 94
year old founder of Ace
and legendary ethanol
supporter... "because it is
the right thing to do")**



**Soup, Pie,
& Sandwich
\$2.00 per item**

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Groton, SD
Thursday, September 14th**

**11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.
Craft Items – Baked Goodies –
Garden Produce**

**Soups available:
Chili, Wild Rice,
Potato, Ham & Bean**

**For take-out orders, please call
397-2386 at 10:30 a.m. or after.**

**Coming up on
GDILIVE.COM
Click on image**

**Webster Scale Weekly Meeting
with the S.D. D.O.T.**

**Thurs., Aug. 31, 2017, 1 p.m.
Groton Community Center**

It's Football Action on GDILIVE.COM



Groton Area Tigers

VS



Sisseton Redmen

**Friday, Sept. 1, 2017 at 7 p.m.
Doney Field, Groton**

Click here for the program

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Netters drop first match of the season

Groton Area's volleyball team dropped its first match of the season to Redfield-Doland. The match was played Thursday in Redfield.

The Pheasants won the first game, 26-24. Groton Area won the second game, 25-17, but then dropped the next two games, 25-18 and 25-22.

In serving, Groton Area was 82 of 89 with 10 ace serves. Gia Gengerke was 23 of 25 with four ace serves and Miranda Hanson was 16 of 17 with three ace serves. Redfield-Doland was 62 of 70 with two ace serves. Hannah Kuehn was 13 of 13 with one ace serve and Kennedy Fast was 14 of 15.

In sets, Groton Area was 125 of 126 with 31 assists. Miranda Hanson was 110 of 111 with 30 assists and Taylor Holm was three of three with one assist. Redfield-Doland was 167 of 170 with 37 assists. Kennedy Fast was 61 of 61 with 20 assists and Hannah Kuehn was 58 of 61 with 13 assists.

Groton Area was 102 of 118 in attacks with 32 kills. Nicole Marzahn was 18 of 19 with eight kills and Taylor Holm was 24 of 31 with eight kills. Redfield-Doland was 163 of 182 with 42 kills. Ryne Gall was 31 of 41 with 14 kills and Olivia Swantz was 18 of 24 with 10 kills.

Groton Area had 68 digs with Payton Maine having 22 and Eliza Wanner 15. Redfield-Area had 131 digs with Kulea Clausen having 26 and Autumn Turck having 25. Leading blockers were Taylor Holm for Groton Area with two solo and one assisted block, and Trista Frost of Redfield-Doland with six solo and five assisted blocks.

Groton Area won the junior varsity match, 25-18 and 25-9. Redfield-Doland won the C match by game scores of 21-25, 25-20 and 15-11.

Groton Area's next volleyball action will be after the Labor Day weekend as the Lady Tigers travel to Webster on Tuesday.

Harvey to Hike Gas Prices over Holiday Weekend

Summer will end with prices near high for the year

August 31, 2017 - Even though South Dakota is over a thousand miles from those towns and cities flooded by Hurricane Harvey, the storm is having an impact on gas prices here.

The average price of gas across the state has jumped seven cents in the past week to \$2.43 a gallon and gas prices are expected to continue to rise over the Labor Day weekend... and into September – possibly to the highest they have been this year.

"When you see what's going on in Houston, you can hardly refer to an increase in our gas prices as 'pain' at the pump", says AAA South Dakota spokesperson Marilyn Buskohl. "That said, the timing of the increase is unfortunate for all those planning one final road trip this summer".

Several refineries in Texas shut down in advance of the storm and other refineries are shipping supplies to areas of the country where supplies are low. The result is a ripple effect pushing prices up almost everywhere.

The national average has increased 5 cents in a week to \$2.40 for a gallon of regular unleaded, which is 18 cents higher than it was on this date last year.

Good News

Even though gas prices are rising, AAA analysts say the upswing should be relatively short-lived followed by a sharp drop off, given the mid-September switchover to the less expensive winter blend of gasoline and also a drop in demand.

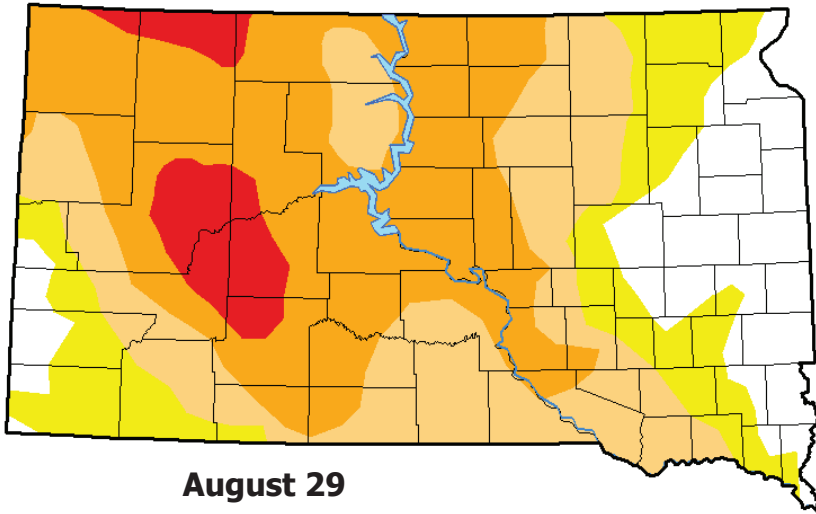
"Even with gas prices on the rise, we expect those increasing prices will reverse course in a month or so and begin a downward trend toward year's end," Buskohl says.

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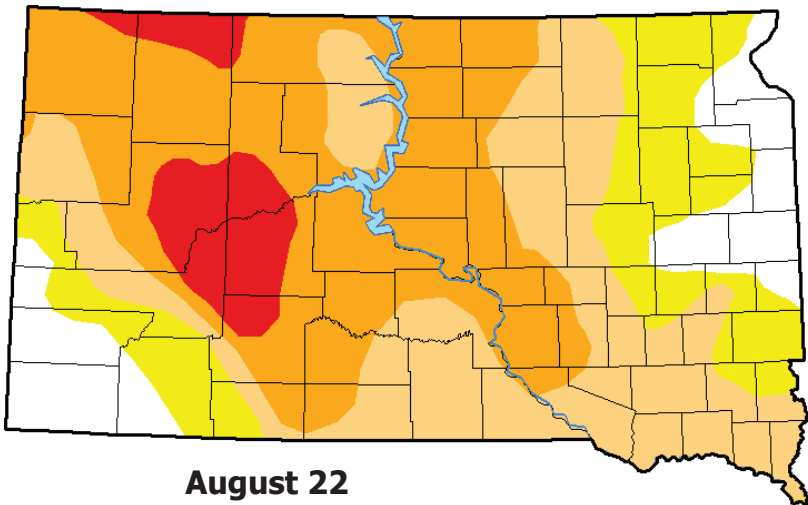
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Drought Monitor

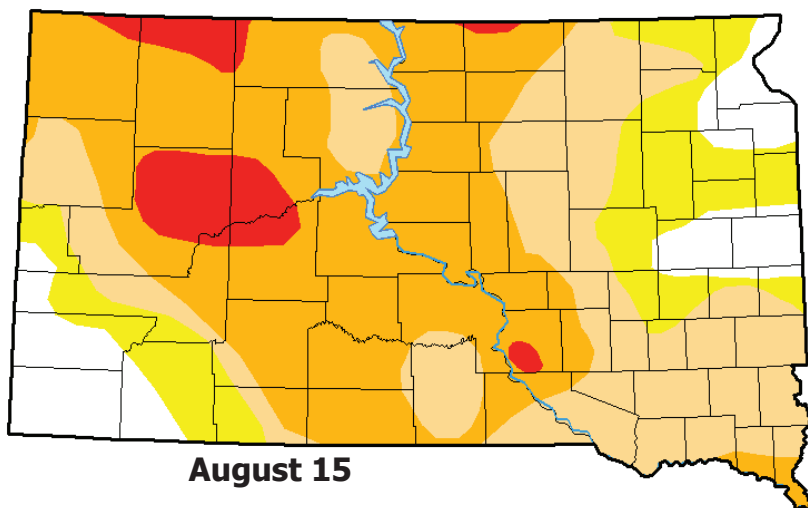
Precipitation was below normal for much of the High Plains this week prompting the expansion of D0 in southwest South Dakota and western Wyoming. Drought was expanded throughout Montana where long-term precipitation deficits remain. According to the USDA crop reports, 41 percent of Montana pasture and range conditions are rated very poor and 73 percent of the topsoil moisture conditions are rated very short. D0 was expanded and a small area of D1 was introduced in northeast Kansas and southeast Nebraska based on the 30-day precipitation deficits. One category improvements were made in eastern South Dakota where 1-2 inches of rain has fallen during the last two weeks. It was reported that crop conditions are very good in this eastern region.



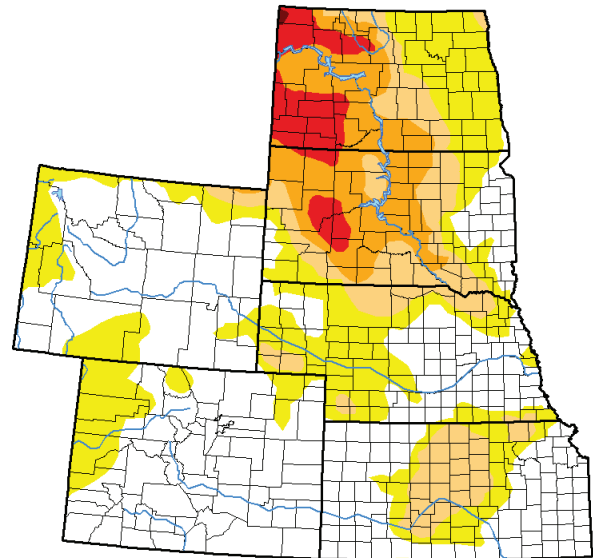
August 29



August 22



August 15



Schwan is Opportunities Room Counselor

Jodi Schwan will be the new Opportunities Room Counselor. Schwan takes over for Kiersten Sombke who is now the middle/high school principal.

According to the job description of the position, the job of the opportunity room teacher was established for the purpose of providing support to students in need of social, emotional and academic assistance to meet the requirements of the general curriculum.

The 2001 Aberdeen Central High School graduate, Jodi received her Bachelors in Sociology degree with specialization in Human Services and Criminal Justice from Northern State University in 2005. She also got a psychology minor.



Pictured are Jodi and Joe Schwan in back with their children Jordan and Jayden in front.

Jodi was a drug and alcohol prevention counselor for community counseling services in Madison before she was the elementary school counselor at the Hamlin School District. "A counselor is seeing the skills that each person has and helping develop, support & strengthen those skills. I went into the counseling profession out of interest of helping people see those skills. I am drawn to counseling in the school because of the different topics you get to cover and the relationships that are built."

Jodi has been the director of welcoming and serving at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Aberdeen. When the Groton position came up, Jodi was excited to apply. "Besides the position, Groton has been a great community for me and my family the last six years. The sense of community is strong, and I am excited to be working in the same town in which I live." The Schwans moved to Groton when her husband, Joe Schwan, was the high school principal. He is now the superintendent and they have two children, Jordan and Jayden.

Jodi's grandmother was an inspiration for her. "My grandma, a retired teacher, would tell each one of us grandchildren "study what you enjoy." With that encouragement I knew that as long as I enjoyed what I was doing I would always have my families support."

Jodi's hobbies are "time in front of my sewing machine quilting, outside playing, running, or swimming. However, I would say my biggest hobby at this stage of life is chasing my kids around from one practice to the next, getting ready for the games and making sure uniforms are washed."

Golfers compete at Milbank

Three Groton Area golfers competed at the Milbank Tournament held Thursday.

Cade Guthmiller shot a 49 in the front nine and a 46 in the back nine for a total score of 95. Lucas Simon shot a 49 in the front and a 57 in the back for a total score of 106. Tristan Traphagen shot at 54 and a 53 for a total of 107.

The meet was held at the Pine Hills Golf Course in Milbank.

Groton's next golf competition will be September 5 in Madison.

Elk Contingency Licenses to be Determined for 2017

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) is working on a recommendation regarding this year's use of elk contingency licenses for the GFP Commission to take action on in Sioux Falls next week.

"Due to this year's dry conditions, the Department will use a variety of sources to help generate a recommendation for the GFP Commission to consider; including a decision-making tool assessed by an outside stakeholder group," stated Tom Kirschenmann deputy director of the GFP Wildlife Division. "Elk contingency licenses are a product of the elk management plan as a means of responding quicker to environmental conditions such as drought, like we have experienced this year."

The Department is working on its recommendation on whether or not to issue additional antlerless elk licenses. GFP recently met with the US Forest Service and the National Resource Conservation Service to discuss Black Hills range conditions and evaluated forage production data to better understand forage conditions on federal lands and any changes to livestock grazing plans or allowances. In addition, the US Drought Monitor will also be considered and used as an information source to help guide the recommendation to the GFP Commission.

"The percent of normal forage production obtained from the U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service and current elk population objectives will serve as significant pieces of information in the development of the Department recommendation," stated Kirschenmann.

The GFP Commission will take final action of either authorizing contingency licenses or not at the GFP Commission meeting on Sept. 7 which begins at 1 p.m. CDT at the Sioux Falls Ramada. Public comments can be provided in person during the open forum session of the meeting or in advance by emailing wildinfo@state.sd.us.

"There's a small window to obtain and analyze the most up-to-date information possible used in building the Department recommendation," Kirschenmann noted. "If determined necessary to implement contingency licenses, the application process for any additional antlerless elk tags will begin after the September GFP Commission meeting."

To learn more about South Dakota's elk management plan and the use of elk contingency licenses, visit <http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/management/plans/docs/ElkPlanApril2015Final.pdf>.

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Coming up next week in state government

Thursday, Sept. 7, 11 a.m. CDT, Yankton – Gov. Dennis Daugaard will speak at the groundbreaking for the Dakota Plains Ag Center, LLC at the Napa Facility in Yankton.

Wednesday, Sept. 6, to Thursday, Sept. 7, Rapid City – The Council of Juvenile Services will meet at the Western South Dakota Juvenile Services Center Sept. 6 and the Pennington County Courthouse 3rd Floor conference room on Sept. 7. The meeting will begin at 2 p.m. MDT on Sept. 6, and at 8:30 a.m. MDT on Sept. 7. For a proposed agenda and more information, go to <http://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/Meetings.aspx?BoardID=59>.

Wednesday, Sept. 6, 2 p.m. CDT, Sioux Falls – The South Dakota Board of Nursing will meet at Sioux Falls University Center, 4801 N. Career Ave., Sioux Falls. See <http://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/> or call 605-362-2760 for more information.

Wednesday, Sept. 6, 9 a.m. MDT, Deadwood – The South Dakota Commission on Gaming will hold its quarterly meeting. The meeting will be held in the city commission chambers of Deadwood City Hall, located at 102 Sherman St.

Thursday, Sept. 7, 8:30 a.m. CDT, Pierre, View 34 - The South Dakota Retirement System Board of Trustees will meet in Pierre on Thursday. For more information, go to <http://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/Meetings.aspx?BoardID=86>.

Thursday, Sept. 7, 8:30 a.m. CDT, Pierre – The South Dakota Real Estate Commission Public Hearing at 123 W. Missouri Ave., in the Sharpe Conference Room to consider the adoption and amendment of proposed rules numbered §§ 20:69:05:01 to 20:69:05:03, inclusive, and 20:69:05:05, 20:69:05:08, inclusive. Anyone interested in sitting in on any part or all of this meeting is welcomed to do so. For more information, please contact Melissa Miller at 605.773.3600 or melissa.miller@state.sd.us or visit <http://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/Meetings.aspx?BoardID=84>.

Thursday, Sept. 7, to Friday, Sept. 8, Sioux Falls – Beginning Sept. 7 at 1 p.m. CDT, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks' (GFP) Commission will meet at the Ramada Hotel and Suites in Sioux Falls. A public hearing will begin at 2 p.m. CDT discussing the finalizations of July's meeting. The GFP Commission serves as the advocate and liaison between the department and its stakeholders – the people of South Dakota. The Commission meets monthly (except for February and August) and consists of eight members; which are appointed by the Governor for four year terms. The full agenda for the September meeting can be found here: <http://gfp.sd.gov/agency/commission/default.aspx>. For more information, please contact wild-info@state.sd.us or call 605.773.3718.

Thursday, Sept. 7, 10:30 a.m. CDT, Sioux Falls – The Department of Social Services' Board of Addiction and Prevention Professionals will hold a board of directors meeting at Park Place Center, 3101 W. 41st St in the conference room. Public input will begin at 11 a.m. For more information please contact Tina Nelson at 605-332-6778. To view the agenda, please visit <http://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/Meetings.aspx?BoardID=29>.

Friday, Sept. 8, 12 p.m. MDT, Spearfish – The Department of Social Services' Psychologists Board of Examiners will hold a board meeting at 629 Main St. The meeting will also be held via teleconference. For more information on joining the meeting by teleconference, please view the agenda at <http://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/Meetings.aspx?BoardID=81>.

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You Might Also Be Interested To Know:

Tuesday, Sept. 5, to Thursday, Sept. 7 – The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation will host Job Search Assistance Programs (JSAP). JSAP is a workshop for people recovering from job loss or enhancing their job search skills. Trained instructors speak on modern-day techniques used to successfully find employment. Topics covered include resume and cover letter writing, interviewing etiquette, networking effectively, using social media and much more. JSAP will be offered at the following locations:

- Tuesday, Sept. 5, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. MDT, Rapid City – at 2330 N. Maple Ave. For more information, call 605-394-2296 or visit www.sdjobs.org.
- Wednesday, Sept. 6, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. CDT, Pierre – at 116 W. Missouri Ave. For more information, call 605-773-3372 or visit www.sdjobs.org.
- Thursday, Sept. 7, 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. CDT, Aberdeen – at 420 S. Roosevelt St. Parties interested in attending should register by calling 605-626-2340 prior to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 6 for more information, visit www.sdjobs.org.

Tuesday, Sept. 5, to Thursday, Sept. 7 – The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation will hold itinerant office hours. Both job seekers and employers interested in receiving employment and career services at no cost may visit or call during these office hours. More information on programs and services is available at www.sdjobs.org. Itinerant office hours will be held at the following locations:

Tuesday, Sept. 5, 8a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CDT, Wagner - at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 29775 Main Ave. For more information, call 605-487-7607 Ext. 207 or 212 or visit www.sdjobs.org.

· Tuesday, Sept. 5, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. MDT, Rapid City – at the Western Dakota Technical Institute, Lewis & Clark Hall, Room L212. For more information on programs and services, call Kevin Dary, Lynette Engle, Melanie Garstenschlager, Samantha McGrath or Jennifer Gross at 605-718-2956 during these office hours. Additional information is available at www.sdjobs.org.

· Tuesday, Sept. 5, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. CDT, DeSmet – at Kingsbury County Courthouse, 101 2nd St. SE. For more information on programs and services, call Scott Kwasniewski or Kris Warnke at 605-688-4350.

· Tuesday, Sept. 5, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. MDT, Sturgis – at 1401 Lazelle St., Meade Room or call 605-641-0965 during these office hours and 605-642-6900 at any other time. Additional information at www.sdjobs.org.

· Wednesday, Sept. 6, 12 – 3 p.m. CDT, Mobridge – at the Mobridge Economic Development office 205 2nd St. E., Suite 1 or call 605-380-8930 during these hours and 605-626-2340 at any other time. Additional information at www.sdjobs.org.

· Thursday, Sept. 7, 1 – 3 p.m. CDT, Britton – at Marshall County Community Hall or call 605-380-8930 during these hours and 605-626-2340 at any other time. Additional information at www.sdjobs.org.

· Thursday, Sept. 7, 1 – 4 p.m. MDT, Rapid City – at the Western Dakota Technical Institute, Lewis & Clark Hall, Room L212. For more information on programs and services, call Kevin Dary, Lynette Engle, Melanie Garstenschlager, Samantha McGrath or Jennifer Gross at 605-718-2956 during these office hours. Additional information available at www.sdjobs.org.

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Tuesday, Sept. 5 – Benefits specialists from the Department of Social Services' Division of Economic Assistance will be available at the following itinerant office locations. For more information, contact Tia Kafka, 605-773-3165.

- Kyle, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. MDT
- Dupree, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. MDT
- Canton, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CDT
- Flandreau, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. CDT
- Wagner, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CDT
- Fort Thompson, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CDT
- Desmet, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CDT
- Miller, 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CDT
- Howard, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CDT
- Webster, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CDT

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- Wanblee, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. MDT
- Timber Lake, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. MDT
- Flandreau, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. CDT
- Salem, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CDT
- Britton, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. CDT
- Faulkton, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CDT

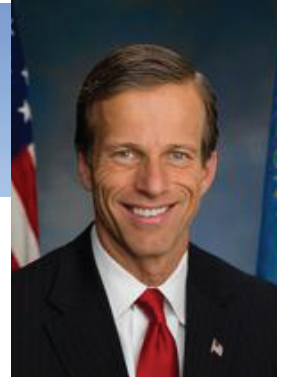
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- Kyle, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. MDT
- Canton, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. CDT
- Flandreau, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. CDT
- Webster, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CDT
- Lemmon, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. MDT
- Armour, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CDT
- Plankinton, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CDT
- Lower Brule, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CDT

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John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Here to Serve You

An issue I frequently discuss with folks while I'm traveling the state is the wide range of services I can offer to South Dakotans through any of my Senate offices. It doesn't matter if you contact my office in Sioux Falls or Rapid City, Aberdeen or Washington, D.C., my staff is the best of the best. They're always ready, willing, and able to help you any way they can. Although my offices mainly assist South Dakotans with federal issues, if your concern relates to something that falls to the state or your local government, my staff will help point you in the right direction. Either way, we're all here to serve you.

Spring break is always a popular time to visit Washington, D.C., and I see a lot of South Dakota families and students who travel there each year. As most folks may know, I can help you arrange tours of certain federal buildings while you're in town, including the Capitol and White House. My office can help with other elements of your trip, too, like offering advice on where to stay or other places to visit around the city.

Wherever you might be, when it comes to problems you're having with federal government agencies, I want to help you cut through the federal bureaucracy. My office can act as a liaison between you and the government to get questions answered and hopefully get your problem resolved. For example, if you're a South Dakota veteran with medical needs and you're having difficulties with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, or if you're a South Dakota senior and you're having trouble receiving your Social Security benefits, we can certainly try to help.

Are you traveling abroad on short notice? I can help expedite the passport approval process if you need to renew one for you or a family member, apply for a new one, or have an existing passport corrected. Anyone who has gone through the standard passport process will tell you that it isn't quick, but if your request is urgent, my office can try to work to reduce the wait time.

If a friend or family member is having a milestone event in his or her life, such as a birthday, anniversary, graduation, or retirement, I can help you recognize it. With several weeks' notice, you can purchase a U.S. flag through my Senate website (at cost), and I can have it flown atop the Capitol on a particular date in honor of your event. After it's flown, the flag and a certificate will be mailed to you or a recipient of your choice. With similar notice, I'm happy to mail a congratulatory letter directly to your loved one ahead of his or her big day.

We can also try to help veterans receive medals or awards that are long overdue, students who are interested in attending a service academy, or families who are pursuing international adoptions, among many other services.

For questions on these or other services, please feel free to call or visit any of my offices throughout South Dakota or in Washington, D.C. You'll always be greeted by a friendly face or voice, and they will be glad to assist you. If it's outside of regular business hours, don't worry, my website is always open! Visit www.thune.senate.gov on your computer or mobile device for contact information and additional resources about my work in South Dakota and Washington.

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Today in Weather History

September 1, 1990: Several severe thunderstorms in northwest South Dakota dropped from penny to softball size hail during the afternoon and early evening hours which caused a good deal of structural damage to houses and farm buildings. The largest hailstone of 4 inches in diameter was reported at Sorum in Perkins County. There was also a wind gust to 86 mph measured at Buffalo during a severe thunderstorm.

September 1, 2010: A couple of weak tornadoes touched down briefly in the late evening west of Tulare with no damage occurring.

1862: The Battle of Ox Hill (or Chantilly) is also known as the only major Civil War battle to have been fought during a storm. "A severe thunderstorm erupted, resulting in limited visibility and an increased dependence on the bayonet, as the rain soaked the ammunition of the infantry and made it useless." From Taylor, Paul. He Hath Loosed the Fateful Lightning: The Battle of Ox Hill (Chantilly), September 1, 1862.

1915 - The temperature at Bartlesville, OK, dipped to 38 degrees to establish a state record for the month of August. (The Weather Channel)

1954 - Hurricane Carol swept across eastern New England killing sixty persons and causing 450 million dollars damage. It was the first of three hurricanes to affect New England that year. (David Ludlum)

1971 - The low of 84 degrees and high of 108 degrees at Death Valley, CA, were the coolest of the month. The average daily high was 115.7 degrees that August, and the average daily low was 93.4 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1894: The Great Hinckley Fire, which burned an area of at least 200,000 acres or perhaps more than 250,000 acres including the town of Hinckley, Minnesota occurred on this day. The official death count was 418 though the actual number of fatalities was likely higher. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the History Channel. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the town of Hinckley.

1974: Lt. Judy Neuffer became the first female to fly a Hurricane Hunter aircraft through the eye of a hurricane.

1984 - Lightning ignited several forest fires in Montana, one of which burned through 100,000 acres of timber and grassland. (The Weather Channel)








1987 - Eight cities in Washington and Oregon reported record high temperatures for the date, including Eugene OR and Portland OR with afternoon highs of 102 degrees. The high of 102 degrees at Portland smashed their previous record for the date by twelve degrees. Frost was reported in South Dakota. Aberdeen SD established a record for the month of August with a morning low of 32 degrees, and Britton SD dipped to 31 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - August ended on a relatively mild and tranquil note for most of the nation. Forest fires in the northwestern U.S. scorched 180,000 acres of land during the last week of August. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing along a stationary front spread severe weather from Minnesota to Indiana through the course of the day and night. Thunderstorms in Minnesota produced baseball size hail near Saint Michael and Hutchinson, and drenched Moose Lake with nine inches of rain in six hours. Tucson AZ hit 100 degrees for a record 79th time in the year, surpassing a record established the previous year. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Labor Day
						
60% → 30%						
Showers Likely and Breezy then Chance Showers	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Hot	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 74 °F	Low: 58 °F	High: 85 °F	Low: 57 °F	High: 93 °F	Low: 58 °F	High: 74 °F

Scattered Showers Moving from West to East Today

Highs:
Low 70s Eastern SD and Western MN
Mid to upper 80s Missouri Valley



National Weather Service - Aberdeen, SD

@NWSAberdeen



www.weather.gov/Aberdeen

Updated: 9/1/2017 5:09 AM Central

Published on: 09/01/2017 at 5:14AM

A storm system will move through the region from west to east today. This system will bring showers and a few rumbles of thunder. Clearing sky are expected for the Missouri River Valley by this afternoon.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 80.8 at 4:50 PM

Low Outside Temp: 61.4 at 6:56 AM

High Gust: 21 at 5:53 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 102° in 1970

Record Low: 30° in 1893

Average High: 78°F

Average Low: 52°F

Average Precip in Sept: 0.08

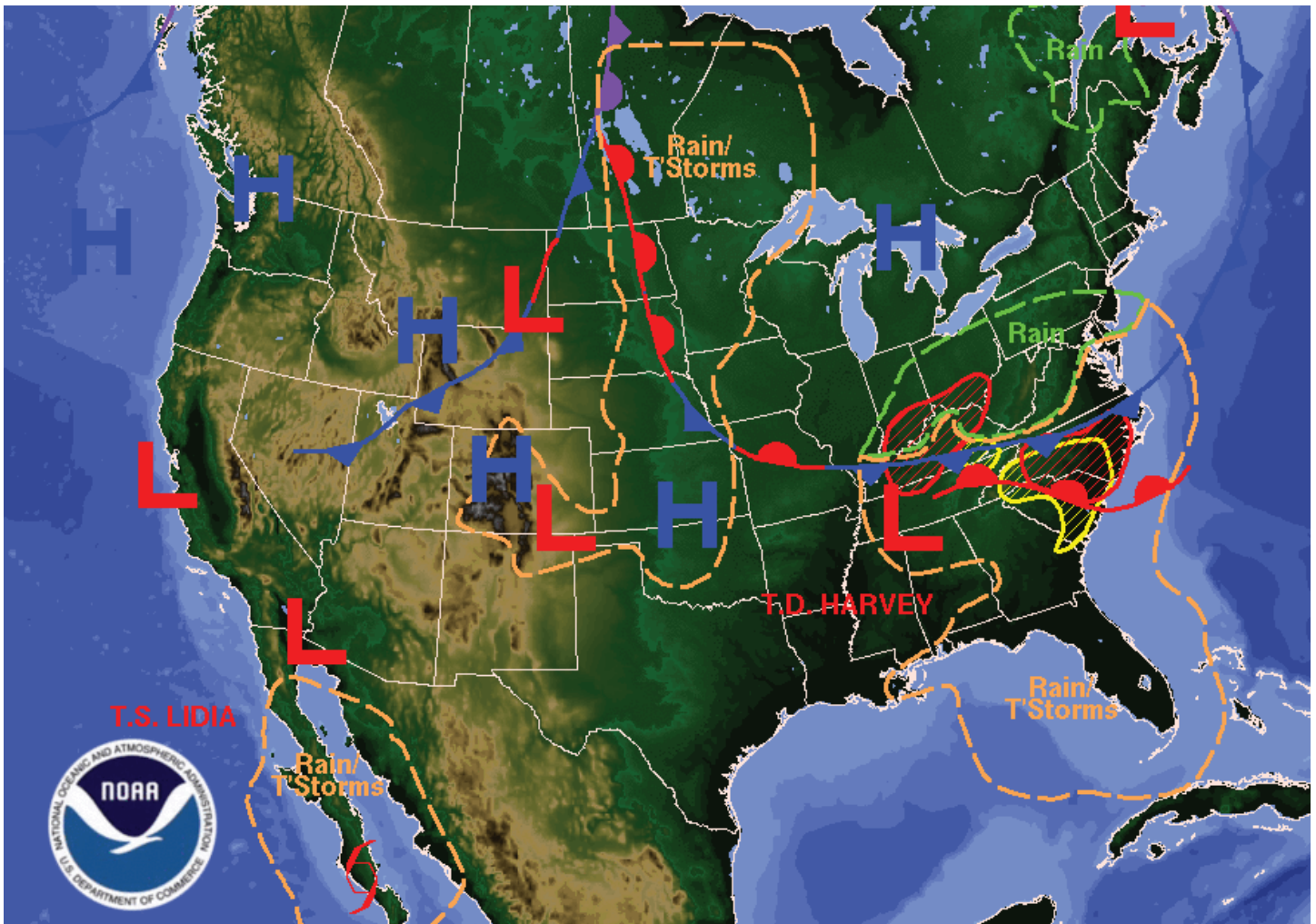
Precip to date in Sept: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 16.29

Precip Year to Date: 9.52

Sunset Tonight: 8:10 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:56 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, Sep 01, 2017, issued 6:07 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Campbell 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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THERE IS AN END TO LIFE

All of us are confronted by the passing of time – not only the elderly. It is an issue that all of us face whether we like it or not. Yet, our culture is in massive denial that everyone ages and every life will end.

Our elderly now live in “retirement villages.” More cosmetics than ever are sold to “erase” the lines of aging. There are more products now available to “cover” gray hair that once stood for wisdom. We have surgery to remove the signs of aging that are becoming less expensive and more available. But it is all in vain. Time is the enemy of everyone and judgment awaits us all.

David was aware of the fact his life was passing away. Overwhelmed by its shortness he cried out, “Show me, O Lord, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life.” He had questions and wanted God’s answers. His sickness was a result of his sin and knowing that God was displeased with him caused him to be alarmed.

So, he wanted a “date” and the “number” of days he had left to live. He was asking God to give him some assurance of the time he had been allotted. Having that information would enable him to “figure” out what to do “next.” But he didn’t get it.

In this simple verse he admitted that he was frail, that his “days” were numbered and his “life” short. He knew that one day he would certainly face God!

Armand Nicholi said, “Only when we are ready to die can we truly live a fulfilling and satisfying life.”

Prayer: As we face the shortness of life and the reality of death, Lord, may we live lives that honor You. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 39:4 “Show me, LORD, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is.”

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News from the Associated Press

Escaped inmate arrested following lengthy standoff

LAKE ANDES, S.D. (AP) — An inmate who assaulted a correctional officer and escaped from the Charles Mix County Jail is back in custody after a long standoff with law enforcement in Vermillion.

Sheriff's officials say a car stolen by 19-year-old Jubal Grant was found at a residence in Vermillion about 2 p.m. Thursday. Authorities determined Grant was in the house, but he refused to surrender.

Vermillion police, Clay County sheriff's deputies, officers from the Division of Criminal Investigation and the South Dakota Highway Patrol worked to resolve the standoff. Grant was taken into custody about 8:30 p.m.

Survey suggests more economic growth ahead for Midwest

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A monthly survey of business leaders suggests more economic growth lies ahead for nine Midwest and Plains states.

A report released Friday says the Mid-America Business Conditions Index rose to 57.5 in August from 56.1 in July. Creighton University economist Ernie Goss oversees the survey, and he says it "points to solid growth for both manufacturing and nonmanufacturing for the rest of 2017."

The survey results are compiled into a collection of indexes ranging from zero to 100. Survey organizers say any score above 50 suggests growth in that factor. A score below that suggests decline.

The survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Thursday's Scores By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Milbank, 25-22, 23-25, 25-20, 25-22
Alcester-Hudson def. Gayville-Volin, 25-14, 25-11, 22-25, 25-9
Andes Central/Dakota Christian def. Avon, 19-25, 25-15, 21-25, 25-18, 15-9
Baltic def. Garretson, 25-18, 25-20, 25-18
Bridgewater-Emery def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 19-25, 25-9, 25-21, 25-19
Canistota def. Oldham-Ramona/Rutland, 25-13, 25-19, 25-15
Colman-Egan def. Estelline, 25-13, 25-7, 25-11
Dakota Valley def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 25-19, 25-23, 25-21
Deubrook def. DeSmet, 25-12, 26-24, 25-17
Edgemont def. Newell, 25-9, 25-23, 25-5
Faith def. McIntosh, 25-17, 25-10, 25-13
Faulkton def. North Border, 25-20, 25-20, 25-14
Florence/Henry def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-19, 26-24, 27-29, 12-25, 16-14
Great Plains Lutheran def. Tri-State, 25-14, 18-25, 22-25, 25-22, 16-14
Gregory def. Lyman, 25-18, 25-20, 25-16
Hanson def. Parkston, 25-19, 22-25, 25-19, 21-25, 15-7
Harding County def. Lemmon, 25-15, 25-16, 25-19
Harrisburg def. Pierre, 25-20, 25-16, 25-19
Hendricks, Minn. def. Aberdeen Christian, 25-18, 25-5, 25-8
Herreid/Selby Area def. McLaughlin, 25-10, 25-5, 25-13
Highmore-Harold def. Lower Brule, 25-8, 25-14, 25-9
Hitchcock-Tulare def. James Valley Christian, 22-25, 25-17, 25-15, 25-21
Huron def. Brandon Valley, 25-16, 25-9, 25-14

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Ipswich def. Waubay/Summit, 25-8, 25-8, 20-25, 25-14
Kimball/White Lake def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-8, 25-10, 25-19
Lake Preston def. Castlewood, 25-16, 25-9, 25-17
Lead-Deadwood def. St. Thomas More, 23-25, 26-24, 25-15, 25-15
Lennox def. Tri-Valley, 25-20, 25-18, 25-13
McCook Central/Montrose def. Parker, 25-23, 25-21, 24-26, 20-25, 15-12
Menno def. Freeman Academy/Marion, 25-21, 25-13, 18-25, 20-25, 15-13
Mitchell def. Yankton, 25-17, 25-17, 25-10
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-17, 20-25, 25-16, 25-17
Northwestern def. Langford, 25-8, 25-15, 25-18
Philip def. Kadoka Area, 25-21, 25-23, 16-25, 25-23
Pine Ridge def. St. Francis Indian, 25-21, 25-16, 25-21
Redfield/Doland def. Groton Area, 26-24, 17-25, 25-18, 25-22
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket def. Ethan, 25-21, 25-20, 13-25, 10-25, 15-9
Scotland def. Viborg-Hurley, 18-25, 25-19, 26-24, 25-23
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 25-17, 25-20, 25-19
Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Sioux Falls Washington, 26-24, 26-24, 25-21
Sioux Valley def. Clark/Willow Lake, 25-11, 25-18, 25-16
Sisseton def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 25-16, 25-20, 25-18
Spearfish def. Hill City, 25-12, 25-9, 25-18
Sturgis Brown def. Douglas, 25-7, 25-16, 25-11
Timber Lake def. Bison, 25-18, 25-6, 25-7
Wagner def. Chamberlain, 25-22, 25-15, 25-9
West Central def. Bon Homme, 25-13, 25-21, 25-22
Valentine Triangular
Winner def. Valentine, Neb., 25-17, 25-17, 25-14

Christian throws for 5 TDs, S Dakota St tops Duquesne 51-13

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Taryn Christian threw four of his five touchdown passes to Jake Wieneke, who set a school record for career receptions and tied a record for TD catches, and South Dakota State beat Duquesne 51-13 in a season opener on Thursday night.

Wieneke caught his 226th pass, passing Josh Davis, and his four TD catches tied Don Bartlett (1949) and Dallas Goedert (2016).

Christian completed 17 of 26 passes for 254 yards and an interception, hitting Wieneke on scoring strikes of 10, 22, 2 and 15 yards. Christian's 9-yard TD strike to Kane Louscher put the Jackrabbits up 20-0 at the end of the first quarter.

Christian gained 96 of SDSU's 301 total rushing yards, and Brady Mengarelli and Isaac Wallace each scored on 3-yard runs.

Duquesne's Tommy Stuart completed 14 of 22 passes for 175 yards and one interception. He hit Kareem Coles on a 31-yard TD pass and Nehari Crawford on a 2-yarder.

Ex-South Dakota state's attorney to serve weekends in prison

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A former South Dakota state's attorney convicted of tax evasion has been sentenced to a year of prison time that will only be served on weekends due to the fact that he owes the government a lot of money and has a child who has special needs.

Ken Orrock, 48, was sentenced Wednesday in Rapid City for evading business taxes. He pleaded guilty in February to willful failure to collect and pay over tax from 2011 to 2015 as owner of Black Hills Patrol security agency, the Rapid City Journal reported .

Earlier this summer, after Orrock had already pleaded guilty, the IRS discovered he hadn't paid most of

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his business taxes for 2016 and 2017. He was detained at the Pennington County Jail for nearly a dozen days because the evasion was a violation of the conditions of his pre-sentence release.

"He was effectively engaged in a criminal livelihood since 2011, stealing from the government and, by extension, law-abiding citizens, to support his lifestyle," said Assistant U.S. Attorney Kirk Albertson.

Defense attorney Stanton Anker said that in order to pay restitution of \$280,000, Orrock needs to keep his business going and that nobody knows Black Hills Patrol better than he does. Orrock surrendered his license to practice law in South Dakota after being convicted.

Orrock's wife, Julia Orrock, testified that their son with special needs responds best to his father, who helps take care of him during her hours as a hospital nurse.

"(Ken) is able to get him to fight and try a little harder," she said. "I truly do not know if I can keep this job if he is incarcerated."

Ken Orrock was sentenced to 12 months in prison to be served from Friday evenings to Sunday evenings beginning Sept. 8. The sentence would take more than three years to complete. He's been excused for the weekends of Easter and Christmas each year.

The federal judge said the uncommon sentence was influenced by Orrock's responsibility to pay the government a large sum and the unique parenting needs of his son.

Anker said he thought the sentence was "just." Albertson said he respected the judge's ruling.

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

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

Rapid City Journal, Rapid City, Aug. 31

Texas deserves all the help it can get

Hurricane Harvey is the storm of the century, devastating the lives and destroying the property of hundreds of thousands of Texans who suddenly face uncertain futures.

And it is not over — not even close. It will be months if not years before many residents of south Texas will be able to resume normal lives.

In the meantime, many lives hang in the balance. Thousands still await rescue, trapped by floodwaters that are swallowing two-story homes and turning highways into canals and residential and business areas into large, dangerous and filthy lakes.

So far, the burden of saving so many lives has fallen primarily upon local public safety agencies, their courageous employees and the thousands of volunteers who have risked their lives to rescue people they don't even know. They are the heroes of Houston.

The federal response, however, has not matched the magnitude of Hurricane Harvey, which dumped more rain on Houston — 50 inches — than any other place has received from a single storm in the history of the continental United States. Surrounding areas have been deluged as well.

While it was good and appropriate that President Trump flew to Texas on Tuesday and voiced his support for federal aid to the dazed victims of Harvey, he could have done more. While we have and will continue to send our military to help victims seemingly anywhere on the planet, it has yet to be enlisted to assist with rescue efforts while families wait on the roofs of homes and pray for a rescue. It is difficult to understand why the federal government is not using more of its considerable resources to help Americans in such desperate and obvious need.

But fortunately others, including South Dakotans, are stepping up to help those who have lost virtually everything to Hurricane Harvey and the flooding that continues to render the residents of Houston, a city of 2 million, and thousands of others nearly helpless.

On Friday, Red Cross volunteers Dave and Joyce Jefferies of Box Elder were among the first South Dakotans sent to Texas for what will certainly be an intense, demanding and likely rewarding experience. On

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Saturday, Ken Michaelson of Rapid City joined the first wave of 22 volunteers from this Red Cross region, which includes North Dakota and western Minnesota.

But volunteers will be needed for many months to assist the victims of Harvey. In order to address that and give local residents the opportunity to help, the Red Cross will hold a volunteer training session from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at its office at 1221 N. Maple St. Lunch will be provided.

Richard Smith, executive director of the local office, said volunteers will be trained to help provide shelter and food to storm victims. Volunteers can expect to spend two to three weeks helping hurricane victims before returning home. All their travel and other expenses will be covered and insurance is provided by the Red Cross.

Smith said Wednesday that the Red Cross could be helping hurricane victims for as long as two years, yet another indicator of the epic nature of the storm that continues to batter southeast Texas in what was once considered unimaginable ways.

For those who can't volunteer, the Red Cross is accepting donations for Harvey relief efforts. To donate, visit redcross.org, call 1-800-733-2767 or text 90999 and type in Harvey for a \$10 donation.

At this time, companies, celebrities and the wealthy either are making donations or leading fundraising efforts of their own, which are welcome as the need for funds is critical. But that should not discourage others from doing what they can — even if they can only afford a small donation of just \$5.

Americans and America have a history of rising to the occasion, whether it is fighting for freedom or responding with generosity to natural disasters or other calamities.

Now comes another challenge and like all those heroes helping the Texas flood victims, the rest of the nation needs to do whatever it can to help those who have literally lost everything in a nightmare no one should have to endure alone.

Capital Journal, Pierre, Aug. 25

Don't get behind the wheel if you're intoxicated

There are few more glaring examples of why driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is a bad idea than that which occurred Wednesday night on Euclid Avenue.

Nobody got hurt, which can appropriately be termed a miracle given that a minivan slammed head-long into the front porch of a small, though fully booked, inn. According to the Pierre Police Department, 52-year-old Henry Chapman was driving his minivan on Euclid Avenue while under the influence of both alcohol and marijuana, when he apparently sped up, crossed two lanes and a grassy yard before crashing his minivan into the Hitching Horse Inn.

It must be noted that Chapman is innocent of any crime until he is proven guilty.

Still, Chapman's story, or at least the police narrative of what Chapman did on Wednesday night, is instructive for those among us who may consider driving while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. While it is true that no one was hurt when the van barreled into the Hitching Horse Inn, someone very easily could have been. The Centers for Disease and Prevention reported that 10,265 people died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes in 2015.

And that's the important thing to remember when it comes to drinking and driving. It's not just about you. It's about everyone else. A few feet in the wrong direction and Chapman could very easily have hurt or killed someone.

What's really sad about any incident involving intoxicated driving, is that they are all, every single one of them, 100 percent avoidable. It's as easy as choosing not to drive when you've had a few drinks or have taken drugs.

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, Yankton, Aug. 28

Bad news for South Dakota pheasant numbers

A recent survey of South Dakota's pheasant numbers didn't offer good news for the state's bird population. The Game, Fish and Parks' (GFP) annual brood survey report showed that bird densities across the state

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have dropped 45 percent from last year. The average bird count per mile this year is 1.68 pheasants; in 2016, the survey counted 3.05 pheasants per mile (PPM).

This is an important development for South Dakota, which prides itself as the pheasant capital of the world. With that title and reputation come hunters — either in-state or from out of state — and their money, which creates a large boost of tourism revenue for the state.

Still, the news is not surprising. The GFP cited a tough combination of the hard winter last year and the drought conditions that have enveloped much of the state this summer. These conditions have reduced the food supply and exposed nesting grounds.

"You are always looking for the positives," Casey Weismantel, executive director of the Aberdeen Convention and Visitors Bureau, told the Star Tribune of Minneapolis. "(But) it's hard to see the positive in these numbers."

Another factor that may also be contributing to the toll — either on its own or in tandem with the weather elements — is the dramatic loss of grassland, more of which has been converted to cropland in recent years. A study reported that about 1.84 million acres of grassland pheasant habitat had been lost primarily to cropland conversion between 2006-2012. While that may not by itself be a primary contributor to the current pheasant decline, it could be aiding and abetting the fall-off when combined with weather factors.

Indeed, weather extremes have taken a toll in past years, but the birds have always managed to rebound. However, some of the reasons for that was the availability of habitat that provided nourishment and cover, allowing the numbers to recharge. With the shrinkage of that habitat, a rebound may be more difficult to achieve.

The short-term good news for hunters is that the number of roosters counted in the survey remained mostly unchanged, so that might spur hopes of a good hunting season this fall.

However, a decline of hens and chicks spells trouble down the line, unless conditions change.

Since humans can't really change the weather, the only thing they can do is change habitat management that gives the birds a better chance to thrive. That's where grasslands, shelter belts and CRP programs come in.

For now, outdoorsmen can hope that weather conditions improve this winter and next spring. And perhaps they can encourage more efforts to provide habitat to help boost the pheasant population back to more encouraging numbers.

Man accused in fatal Rapid City motel beating pleads guilty

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A man accused in a fatal beating at a Rapid City motel in December has pleaded guilty.

Thirty-four-year-old Clifford Gilbert is accused of using a walking stick to violently beat Robert Smith at the Stardust Motel. Prosecutors say Gilbert then used his fists and feet to deliver the fatal blows while the 61-year-old victim was on the floor.

Court documents say Gilbert told investigators he "snapped" in anger while he was in a motel room with Smith and a woman.

Gilbert pleaded guilty to first-degree manslaughter. A charge of second-degree murder will be dismissed as part of the plea agreement.

South Dakota golf course closes after vandalism

CORSICA, S.D. (AP) — A rural South Dakota golf course is closing for the season after vandalism damage resulted in green grass turning brown.

The Dakota Trails Golf Course in Corsica will close Sept. 5, the Daily Republic reported. Dakota Trail's Board of Directors President Brian Vilhauer said the course will stay open Monday to accommodate Labor Day golfers.

"It's just hard to believe that anyone could have done this," Vilhauer said.

Vilhauer said a weed killer known as Roundup was poured on the natural grass greens, leaving behind

a "real streaky" pattern of brown grass. He said the brown grass appeared a few days after flags and flagpoles were allegedly stolen from the first eight greens on the nine-hole course.

Lab tests of the soil confirmed the greens were sprayed with glyphosate, an herbicide used to kill weeds.

"It's pretty evident that eight of our greens were sprayed with Roundup as an act of vandalism," he said.

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office and South Dakota Department of Criminal Investigation are looking into the vandalism. No suspects have been named.

Vilhauer said he doesn't have an estimated cost for the damage, but that the greens will need to be cut, re-seeded, sanded and watered in order to be regrown properly.

The course raised \$250,000 in 2016 to install natural grass greens, which replaced the artificial turf that had covered the course for the past 20 years. Vilhauer estimated there were 150 single and family memberships for Dakota Trails since opening for the year in June.

"We made a good thing. We made a good business," he said. "So everybody is disappointed but optimistic that we'll figure this out."

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

Investor in aquaponics venture stymied in examining finances

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — An investor in a troubled project to grow produce and seafood near Brookings says he hasn't been able to get basic information about the venture's finances.

Investor Dan Kondziolka of Brookings told the Argus Leader that he received two "grandiose" letters with little specifics and no timeline from Sioux Falls-based Global Aquaponics since investing \$50,000 for two ownership units last fall. Kondziolka, a professional accountant, said he asked for balance sheets and other documentation about the project's finances but got none.

"I'm getting rumors that things are looking corrupt and there might not be any money available," Kondziolka said.

A series of news reports from KELO-TV and the Argus leader have raised questions about the company's legitimacy. Global Aquaponics has said that the system would produce 2.5 million pounds of food a year and that construction would start in spring 2017, but the newspaper reported that work on the facility hasn't started.

Timothy Burns, former chief operating officer for Global Aquaponics, told the Argus Leader that construction projects are often delayed. But Burns, of Brookings, said that he was recently interviewed by the FBI about the company's project. The agency has declined to comment to The Associated Press.

A private equity offering that the company used to attract investors called for raising roughly \$5.3 million through the sale of 215 ownership units.

A former Global Aquaponics employee filed a lawsuit Tuesday against the company, calling it a "sham corporation." Gregg Selberg is seeking hundreds of thousands of dollars in damages.

The lawsuit claims Selberg was misled about Global Aquaponics' fraudulent activities, which he says tarnished his reputation and "devastated" his economic position. The lawsuit filed in Brookings County also names Burns and company majority owner Tobias Ritesman, who dubbed himself "the tiger" on a company website and promotes himself as a maverick entrepreneur.

But an entrepreneurial accolade that Ritesman has claimed he won in 2016 doesn't exist, the newspaper reported. Two men purported to be members of a panel of judges for the Global University Alliance's "Entrepreneur of the Year Award" said they've never heard of Ritesman or the award. The alliance's website says the award has been given to entrepreneurs including Ritesman and the founders of Apple, Facebook, Google and Ikea.

Global Aquaponics announced this month that it's working on a new development timeline for the proposed multimillion-dollar venture after funding and contracting issues. That came after a curious transaction in which lobbyist and former legislator Dean Krogman traded a Brookings home valued at about \$175,000 for a 10-acre parcel that he then gave for \$1 to the company behind the project in May.

That company, SD Food Security LLC, which was organized by Ritesman, is listed as "delinquent" in secretary of state's office records. The Argus Leader hasn't been able to establish how Krogman is tied to the company or why he helped.

Krogman and Global Aquaponics haven't returned telephone messages this week requesting comment from The AP.

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

7 companies interested in testing medical marijuana

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Seven companies with experience in other states have expressed interest in testing medical marijuana in North Dakota, which is setting up a system for the drug approved by voters last year.

The response pleases state officials who were concerned about how much interest there would be among in-state labs that focus mainly on agricultural and environmental testing.

Out-of-state companies "have got some experience, the knowledge, I assume the methodology down" on testing medical marijuana for contaminants including pesticides and molds and to ensure that levels of the intoxicant THC are accurately labeled, said Kenan Bullinger, director of the Health Department's medical marijuana division.

The agency earlier this month sought non-binding letters of intent from laboratories so officials could gauge interest and ensure a lab would be available for testing once a system is established for making the drug legally available to qualified patients.

Labs will be asked to submit formal applications later. An out-of-state company would have to set up an operation within North Dakota, since medical marijuana can't legally be moved across state lines, Bullinger said. The lab that ultimately is chosen must be authorized by an accreditation agency.

The North Dakota Compassionate Care Act allows the use of medical marijuana for 17 medical conditions, along with terminal illnesses. Voters approved it last November and state lawmakers earlier this year crafted regulations that Gov. Doug Burgum approved in April.

The Health Department is finishing administrative rules that will cover such things as lab testing, security requirements and transportation regulations. The work is taking longer than expected, though the agency still expects medical marijuana to be available sometime next summer.

The Health Department will register two centers to make medical marijuana and eight more to dispense it. The agency earlier this summer received nearly 100 responses when it sought letters of intent from groups and businesses interested in producing or dispensing the drug.

The formal application process will begin after the rule-making process wraps up following a public comment period, possibly sometime next month.

"We're moving forward, probably methodically and slowly, but trying to do this as good as we can," Bullinger said. "We want a good process in place to select the best growers, dispensers and laboratory. I think we're on the right course."

Activists in South Dakota are collecting signatures to put a proposed medical marijuana ballot measure to a vote next year. Supporters have said they were buoyed by the North Dakota measure's overwhelming passage.

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

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Motorcycle-deer crash in Sully County kills 65-year-old man

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A 65-year-old man is dead after the motorcycle he was driving collided with a deer in Sully County.

The Highway Patrol says the crash happened about 3:40 a.m. Thursday on state Highway 1804, about 24 miles northeast of Pierre.

The man was declared dead at the scene. He wasn't immediately identified. He was alone on the motorcycle.

Drought conditions in Dakotas change little over the week

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — There has been little change in drought conditions in the Dakotas over the past week.

The latest U.S. Drought Monitor map shows 66 percent of North Dakota in some stage of drought, up slightly from 63 percent last week. Twenty-two percent of the state is in extreme or exceptional drought, unchanged.

In South Dakota, 69 percent of the state is in some stage of drought, down from 72 percent. Forty-three percent of the state is in severe or extreme drought, unchanged.

The Drought Monitor says precipitation was below normal for much of the High Plains over the week. However, eastern South Dakota is an exception and crop conditions there are good.

Inmate assaults jailer, escapes

LAKE ANDES, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say an inmate at the Charles Mix County Jail has escaped after assaulting a correctional officer.

The Argus Leader reports officials say 19-year-old Jubal Grant was last seen about 9:20 p.m. Wednesday. He had been jailed on charges of aggravated assault of a law enforcement officer and bond violations.

The sheriff's office says a 2007 silver Pontiac G6 stolen in Lake Andes early Thursday was likely taken by Grant. The license plate is 17F923.

Officials say Grant lived in Wagner and has contacts in Vermillion.

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

Sioux Falls Storm moving to Champions Indoor Football league

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Sioux Falls Storm will compete in a new league starting next season.

The Storm are leaving the Indoor Football League and joining the Champions Indoor Football league. The Sioux Falls franchise will rekindle several former rivalries from when it competed in the United Indoor Football league.

Champions Indoor Football will begin its fourth season of play next spring. It was formed in 2014 by a merger of the Champions Professional Indoor Football League and the Lone Star Football League, plus a few other teams.

The Storm will compete in the Northern Division with Bismarck, Sioux City, Omaha, Bloomington, West Michigan, Kansas City and Quad Cities.

The Storm won six straight IFL championships before being beaten by the Arizona Rattlers in this year's title game.

Eastern South Dakota authorities probe cattle shootings

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities in eastern South Dakota are investigating incidents in which cattle have been shot in pastures.

Moody County Sheriff Troy Wellman Tells the Argus Leader that a calf in the eastern part of that county was shot in the hip this week. Authorities believe a small-caliber gun was used. The calf is being treated.

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Wellman says other cattle in the area have been shot and have died, and a woman in South Shore, about 20 miles southwest of Milbank, says her family lost five calves to bullet wounds last week. Each calf was shot multiple times.

Anyone with information is asked to call the Moody County Sheriff's Office .

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

Aberdeen man sentenced for attempted arson, drug possession

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — An Aberdeen man accused of pouring gas on someone and threatening to burn down a home has been sentenced.

The American News reports 51-year-old Randell English was recently sentenced to a combined 12 years in prison on felony charges of attempted arson and cocaine possession. He pleaded guilty to both counts in July.

The charges stemmed from unrelated events in July 2016. English fled and wasn't arrested until this summer, when he was caught in Nebraska when his vehicle had a flat tire.

The attempted arson charge resulted from an incident in which authorities say English poured gas on and around a person and threatened to burn down a home.

English's attorney maintained he didn't intentionally dump gas on anyone, and only kicked a gas can through an apartment window.

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

Langford area residents to vote on \$3.6M school expansion

LANGFORD, S.D. (AP) — Residents of the Langford Area School District will vote Oct. 3 on a proposed \$3.6 million school expansion.

The American News reports that improvements would include an auxiliary gymnasium that also would serve as a multipurpose room, a larger special education room, a music room and a wellness center that would be open to students and the public.

The project also would include roof and parking lot improvements.

The proposal would raise property taxes on a house valued at \$100,000 by \$61 per year.

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

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. HARVEY RECOVERY ALREADY IN THE PIPELINE

As floodwaters receded and rescuers searched waterlogged neighborhoods for more potential victims, Houston officials began turning their attention to the city's long-term recovery, which will take years and billions of dollars.

2. HARD LESSONS LEARNED IN BIG EASY

As Houston confronts challenges following Harvey, New Orleans' difficulties after the devastation of Katrina could prove instructive.

3. RUSSIA PROMISES PAYBACK FOR US CONSULATE DECISION

Russia on Friday promised a "tough response" to the United States' decision to shut its consulate in San Francisco in the latest round of a diplomatic tit-for-tat.

4. HAJJ ANNUAL MUSLIM PILGRIMAGE NEARS END

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Muslims around the world are celebrating the Eid al-Adha holiday on Friday as some 2 million Muslim pilgrims carry out the final rites of the annual hajj in Saudi Arabia.

5. KENYA NULLIFIES PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The country is bracing for another round of protests and violence as the Supreme Court overturns the re-election of President Kenyatta, citing irregularities.

6. FUGITIVE RED BULL HEIR WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

AP recently confirmed Vorayuth "Boss" Yoovidhya's last known location was Taiwan. But, the trail has since gone cold as the statute of limitations on his hit-and-run charge is set to expire.

7. AUTHORITIES BRACE FOR WAVE OF HURRICANE-RELATED FRAUD

Federal and state officials are warning residents, volunteers and officials in flood zones they could be targeted by storm-related scams, contract corruption, document fraud, identify theft and other crimes.

8. TRUMP TRAVEL RULES CAUSING ANGST

Muslims from the U.S. traveling to Saudi Arabia for the hajj pilgrimage say they have never been more anxious traveling abroad than now.

9. FADING HOPES FOR WARMER TIES BETWEEN VATICAN, BEIJING

The Vatican's efforts to heal a decades-long rift with China appear to have stalled, with an agreement on the status of controversial bishops still elusive.

10. WHICH BIG-NAME COACHES ARE SQUARING OFF

For the first time, Nick Saban and Jimbo Fisher face each other this weekend in a showdown between the No. 1 Crimson Tide and No. 3 Seminoles.

Turkey's Erdogan slams US indictments as 'scandalous'

By ZEYNEP BILGINSOY, Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday denounced the indictments in the United States of 19 people, among them 15 Turkish security officials, calling them "scandalous."

The 19 suspects have been accused of attacking peaceful demonstrators gathered outside the Turkish ambassador's Washington home during a visit by Erdogan in May.

Videos of the infamous brawl show Erdogan supporters and security guards in suits and green uniforms hitting the protestors as police try to quash the violence. Some protestors are heard shouting "Baby killer Erdogan" and "Long live YPG," a Syrian Kurdish militant group that has become a sore spot in U.S.-Turkey relations.

Erdogan said his security detail was protecting him from members of the militant group after U.S. police failed to do so.

Turkey considers the YPG a terror organization and an extension of Kurdish militants waging a three-decade-long insurgency against the Turkish state, but the group is a key U.S. ally in Syria against the Islamic State group.

The bodyguards "performed their duties against this attack," Erdogan said and accused the U.S. of protecting a terror group. Nine people were hurt in the attack.

Sixteen of the defendants were charged in June while a grand jury decision on Tuesday added three more suspects, among them the head of security, Muhsin Kose.

Erdogan called the indictments "a clear and scandalous expression of how justice works in America" and said he would raise the issue with U.S. President Donald Trump during a visit to New York this month.

Two suspects, who are not security officers, were arrested in June and are due in court on Sept. 7. The rest remain at large and are thought to have returned to Turkey.

Plant explosions, spills test industry's response to Harvey

By **MATTHEW BROWN**, Associated Press

Explosions that rocked a Texas chemical plant after it was inundated by Harvey's floodwaters are raising questions about the adequacy of industry preparations for the monster storm and stoking fears of more accidents in the days ahead.

The owners of the plant in Crosby, Texas, warned Thursday that further explosions could come as the unstable chemicals there warm up and degrade following a loss of power at the site northeast of Houston.

Meanwhile, the scope of the damage from Harvey continues to expand as companies report spills and toxic pollution releases linked to toppled fuel storage tanks, shutdown refineries and at least one broken pipeline used to transport hazardous materials.

"The event is still unfolding. But it's clear that what actions and precautions were taken and were in place have proved inadequate," said Bill Hoyle, a former senior investigator for the U.S. Chemical Safety Board. "When Crosby is resolved, there are many more dominoes to fall in the region."

The six counties in the Houston area are home to some 230 chemical plants, 33 oil refineries and hundreds of miles of pipelines transporting hazardous materials, according to information from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and Sierra Club. That infrastructure stretches east into Louisiana, where the storm traveled after leaving Texas and where damage is just beginning to be assessed.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officials said they were working with the state to contact plant operators to determine their status. Andrea Morrow, a spokeswoman for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, said the agency had received "no other reports of concern" from other chemical plants in the state.

Harvey is only the latest severe weather event to pound the U.S. Gulf Coast, and oil and chemical companies operating there had touted changes made to improve safety in the wake of other devastating storms, most notably Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Those included elevating electrical systems to prevent power losses that can cause equipment to fail, spurring uncontrolled releases of pollutants, and making facilities more resistant to damage from high water or wind.

"Our industry has applied lessons from previous hurricanes and developed new technology, best practices and safety standards to help companies secure infrastructure, assess any damage, and work to minimize disruptions to supply," said Michael Tadeo, a spokesman for the American Petroleum Institute.

Tadeo said the group was unable to quantify or put a dollar value on facility upgrades that were intended to better protect against storms.

Reports submitted to Texas regulators and analyzed by The Associated Press reveal more than two dozen air pollution releases from refineries and chemical plants in the 11-day period leading up to Harvey and its immediate aftermath. That includes both intentional releases as plants scrambled to shut down their operations as the storm approached and accidental emissions caused when fuel storage tanks were compromised or other equipment malfunctioned as Harvey rolled ashore.

As the storm approached, the American Chemistry Council issued a statement saying the industry was prepared for Harvey: "Chemical companies know well to avoid the dangers of being unprepared for any threat," the council said.

Experts say such efforts remain largely voluntary because federal regulations governing plant safety have not been updated since 1992. The rules were adopted in response to an infamous chemical accident in Bhopal, India, where a gas leak at a Union Carbide pesticide plant exposed a densely populated area to poisonous gas that killed thousands of people.

Proposed updates to the federal regulations have languished for more than two decades, said Michael Wilson, director of occupational health for the BlueGreen Alliance and a former chief scientist for the California Department of Industrial Relations.

The effort gained renewed momentum after a 2013 explosion at a fertilizer plant in West, Texas, killed 15 people, most of them firefighters and other first responders. However, stricter rules issued by the Obama

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administration in its final days were put on hold for two years once President Donald Trump took office. Wilson said a gap in the existing rules means companies are not required to use the most advanced technologies to prevent accidents.

The old rules also provide limited guidance on how companies should handle so-called reactive chemicals such as those at the Arkema plant in Crosby that apparently caused Thursday's explosions and fire, said Hoyle, the former safety investigator.

"In some cases facilities have volunteered to make chemical safety improvements. But the problem with that approach is not everyone volunteers," he said.

Arkema warned earlier this week that the chemicals would erupt in an intense fire resembling a gasoline blaze. There was "no way to prevent" the explosion, CEO Rich Rowe said on Wednesday.

The Chemical Safety Board has sought to close the loophole for reactive chemicals since 2002, when it issued a study that detailed 167 accidents involving the chemicals that had resulted in 108 deaths over two decades.

The board's chair, Vanessa Allen Sutherland, told reporters Thursday that the board would be investigating the Crosby accident with an eye toward plugging any regulatory loopholes that could impede safety. She also warned that such events could become more commonplace as the frequency of severe weather events increases, which scientists say could occur due to climate change.

"The type of weather events we are seeing in the Gulf could be a harbinger of things to come," Sutherland said.

AP data journalist Michelle Minkoff contributed to this story.

Officials monitoring chemical plant after explosion, fire

By **FRANK BAJAK and REESE DUNKLIN, Associated Press**

HOUSTON (AP) — At least 2 tons of highly unstable chemicals used in such products as plastics and paint exploded and burned at a flood-crippled plant near Houston, sending up a plume of acrid black smoke that stung the eyes and lungs.

The blaze that began early Thursday at the Arkema Inc. chemical plant burned out around midday, but emergency crews continued to hold back because of the danger that eight other trailers containing the same compound could blow, too.

No serious injuries were reported. But the blast added a new hazard to Harvey's aftermath and raised questions about the adequacy of the company's master plan to protect the public in the event of an emergency in the flood-prone Houston metropolitan area of 5.6 million people.

"This should be a wake-up call (for) all kinds of plants that are storing and converting reactive chemicals in areas which have high population densities," said Nicholas Ashford, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology expert.

The Environmental Protection Agency and Texas environmental regulators called the health risks minimal in Crosby, but urged residents downwind to stay indoors with windows closed to avoid inhaling the smoke.

Arkema had warned earlier in the week that an explosion of organic peroxides stored at the plant was imminent because Harvey's floodwaters engulfed the backup generators and knocked out the refrigeration necessary to keep the compounds from degrading and catching fire.

All employees had been pulled from the plant before the blast, and up to 5,000 people living within 1½ miles (2.4 kilometers) had been warned to evacuate on Tuesday.

Two explosions in the middle of the night blew open a trailer containing the chemicals, lighting up the sky with 30- to 40-foot (9- to 12-meter) flames in the small farm and ranching community of Crosby, 25 miles (40 kilometers) from Houston, authorities said. Aerial footage showed a trailer carcass, its sides melted, burning in a flooded lot.

The Texas environmental agency called the smoke "especially acrid and irritating" and said it can impair

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breathing and inflame the eyes, nose and throat.

Fifteen sheriff's deputies complained of respiratory irritation. They were examined at a hospital and released.

The U.S. Chemical Safety Board, an independent federal agency, launched an investigation into the accident.

The plant is along a corridor near Houston that contains one of the biggest concentrations of refineries, pipelines and chemical plants in the country.

Andrea Morrow, a spokeswoman for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, said the agency had not received any reports of trouble at other chemical plants in the hurricane-stricken zone.

Texas A&M chemical safety expert Sam Mannan said the risk management plan that Arkema was required by state and federal law to develop did not address how it would deal with power and refrigeration failures or flooding.

A 2016 analysis he did with university colleagues ranked the Crosby plant among the 70 or so facilities with the biggest potential to cause harm in greater Houston, based on such factors as the type and amount of chemicals and the population density.

Arkema, which is headquartered in France, did not immediately return calls on the plant's contingency planning.

Rachel Moreno, a spokeswoman for the fire marshal of Harris County, which encompasses Houston, would not discuss details of the risk management plan, such as how high the plant's backup generators were placed.

Arkema officials did not directly notify local emergency managers of the generator failure, Moreno said. It came, instead, by way of the plant's workers, who told the Crosby Volunteer Fire Department about it when they were rescued during the storm, she said.

On Thursday, Rich Rennard, an executive at Arkema, said the chemical compounds were transferred to refrigerated containers after power was lost. But he said those containers failed too, causing the chemicals in one unit to burn. Rennard said more explosions were expected from the remaining containers.

State and federal regulators have cited Arkema for safety and environmental violations at the Crosby plant dating back more than a decade, records show.

Texas' environmental commission penalized the company at least three times for a total of about \$27,000, some of which was deferred pending corrective actions. Arkema denied the allegations.

During the last five years of compliance monitoring at the plant, state officials found five Clean Air Act-related deviations and two deviations from federal requirements on waste management, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency records show.

In June 2006, the company had failed to prevent unauthorized emissions during a two-hour warehouse fire. Records show a pallet of organic peroxide was poorly stored, resulting in the blaze, and more than a ton of volatile organic compounds were discharged.

The biggest penalty, about \$20,000, came in December 2011 after the commission found Arkema had failed to keep thermal oxidizers, used to decompose hazardous gases, at high enough temperatures over the course of several months.

More recently, the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration in February fined Arkema nearly \$110,000 — later reduced to just over \$90,000 — because of 10 serious safety violations found during an inspection.

Records obtained by the AP show Arkema had kept using some equipment even when safety systems weren't working properly, and didn't inspect or test it as recommended. In one unit, the company also didn't ensure equipment there was safe or keep employees up to date on their training.

Arkema is also embroiled in a series of lawsuits stemming from a deadly accident involving one of its contracts at a rail yard in New Orleans.

Arkema is defending itself in federal court after one worker died and two others were seriously injured when they were assigned to clean the inside of a rail car tank that had been filled with a harmful chemical.

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The men, who were working for a contractor with a long history of safety problems, were not wearing respirators and collapsed almost immediately, according to lawsuits filed by the survivors and the family of the man who died.

In court documents, Arkema denied responsibility for the accident, saying it had trusted its contractor to run the operation safely.

Dunklin reported from Dallas. Associated Press writers Emily Schmall in Dallas; Michael Biesecker, Matthew Daly and Seth Borenstein in Washington; Luke Sheridan in New York and Angeliki Kastanis in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

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As floodwaters recede, Houston officials look to recovery

By JEFF AMY and MATT SEDENSKY, Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — As floodwaters receded and rescuers searched waterlogged neighborhoods for more potential victims, Houston officials began turning their attention to finding temporary housing for those in shelters and getting enough gasoline for people to fill up cars — but also to the city's long-term recovery, which will take years and billions of dollars.

Authorities raised the death toll from the storm to 39 late Thursday. And the latest statewide damage surveys revealed the staggering extent of the destruction.

The Texas Department of Public Safety said more than 37,000 homes were heavily damaged and nearly 7,000 were destroyed, figures that did not include the tens of thousands of homes with minor damage. About 325,000 people have already sought federal emergency aid in the wake of Harvey. More than \$57 million in individual assistance has already been paid out, FEMA officials said.

Harris County FEMA director Tom Fargione said the agency was looking for ways to house people who lost their homes to Harvey, with 32,000 people reported in shelters across Texas. Some evacuees had begun returning to their homes — the George R. Brown Convention Center, where 10,000 people took shelter, housed 8,000 evacuees late Thursday.

The priority is to get those who weren't able to return to their homes into some form of temporary housing, Fargione said.

"Right now, nothing is off the table. This is a tremendous disaster in terms of size and scope."

The block-by-block search of tens of thousands of Houston homes that rescuers began Thursday is expected to be completed by Friday. Fire Chief Sam Pena said his department had responded to nearly 16,000 calls since the storm hit Saturday, over 7,600 of them for water rescues.

Elsewhere, the loss of power at a flood-crippled chemical plant set off explosions and a fire, and the city of Beaumont, near the Texas-Louisiana line, lost its public water supply. The remnants of the storm pushed deeper inland, raising the risk of flooding as far north as Kentucky.

More than 200 firefighters, police officers and members of an urban search-and-rescue team fanned out across the Meyerland neighborhood looking for survivors or bodies. They yelled "Fire department!" as they pounded with closed fists on doors, peered through windows and checked with neighbors.

"We don't think we're going to find any humans, but we're prepared if we do," said District Chief James Pennington of the Houston Fire Department.

Unlike during Hurricane Katrina's aftermath in New Orleans, crews used GPS devices to log the homes they checked rather than painting neon X's on the outside. That avoided alerting potential thieves to vacant homes.

The blasts at the Arkema Inc. plant northeast of Houston also ignited a 30- to 40-foot (9- to 12-meter) flame and sent up a plume of acrid black smoke that stung the eyes and lungs. The blaze burned out around midday, but emergency crews held back because of the danger that eight other trailers containing

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the same compound could blow, too. No serious injuries were reported.

Although it has been downgraded to a tropical depression, Harvey is still expected to dump heavy rain on parts of Louisiana, Tennessee and Kentucky through Friday. Forecast totals ranged from 4 to 8 inches (10 to 20 centimeters), with some places possibly getting up to a foot (30 centimeters).

As the water receded in Houston, the nation's fourth-largest city, where officials expected the floodwaters to be almost entirely gone by late Friday or early Saturday, the greatest threat of damage shifted to a region near the Texas-Louisiana state line.

Some residents in Beaumont, Texas, began to get anxious after the city of nearly 120,000 lost water service when its main pump station was overwhelmed by the swollen Neches River. Officials said they were having difficulty bringing in enough bottled water to set up distribution stations because of flooded roads.

A procession of about 10 vehicles tailed a pickup towing a trailer packed with bottled water meant for emergency workers. The truck circled a downtown Beaumont block before Letorisha Hollier hopped out of the closest car.

"Give us a case!" Hollier shouted. Her persistence paid off. A firefighter handed her the water. She was the only tailgater to score a case.

In nearby Port Arthur, the Coast Guard used baskets and harnesses to pull people out of a neighborhood with chest-deep water. Many residents of second-floor apartments decided to stay.

Economists said the storm shut down everything from plastics plants to oil refineries to the Houston port — the second-busiest in the nation — which could affect the nation's economy.

With widespread reports of gas shortages, the head of the Texas agency that regulates the oil and gas industry urged drivers to wait three or four days to fill up their tanks. Panic buying is causing a run on gas and empty fuel pumps, Texas Railroad Commissioner Ryan Sitton said.

Energy Secretary Rick Perry said he would release 500,000 barrels of crude oil from an emergency stockpile in a bid to prevent gasoline prices from spiking.

Also Thursday, Houston public schools pushed back the start of classes by two weeks. The nation's seventh-largest district had been scheduled to reopen Monday but will now begin school on Sept. 11.

Health experts warned that sewage in the floodwater could make people sick and that mosquito populations could explode in the coming weeks because stagnant water offers abundant breeding grounds.

With temperatures likely to climb in to the low 90s over the weekend, residents were warned about the dangers of heat exhaustion, especially for people who lost power or must toil outdoors.

Harvey initially came ashore as a Category 4 hurricane in Texas Aug. 25, then went back out to sea and lingered off the coast as a tropical storm for days, inundating flood-prone Houston.

The storm brought five straight days of rain totaling close to 52 inches (1.3 meters), the heaviest tropical downpour ever recorded in the continental U.S.

Associated Press writers Jacob Jordan, Frank Bajak and Michael Graczyk in Houston; Nomaan Merchant in Houston; Terry Wallace, Diana Heidgerd and David Warren in Dallas; Seth Borenstein in Washington; Paul J. Weber in Austin, Texas; Tammy Webber in Chicago; and Paul Wiseman in New York contributed to this report.

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On Muslim holiday, Houston's mosques open to Harvey evacuees

By **NOMAAN MERCHANT** and **JEFF KAROUB**, Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — The gymnasium at the Champions Islamic Center is covered with mats and blankets, donated clothes and boxes of food lining its walls.

On the eve of the Eid al-Adha festival, one of Islam's holiest days, it's become the temporary home for 15 of the thousands of Harvey evacuees, Muslim and non-Muslim. And though it will host hundreds of

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people during the Friday morning prayer for the so-called festival of sacrifice, the mosque's leaders have been adamant: No matter how many people attend the prayers, the evacuees aren't going anywhere.

"They are the No. 1 priority. They will not be disturbed, they will not be displaced, they will not be moved," said M.J. Khan, the president of the Islamic Society of Greater Houston, which operates the Champions mosque and several others that are providing shelter. "People who come, if they have to pray in the parking lot, they'll pray in the parking lot."

As in other catastrophes, from Superstorm Sandy in October 2012 to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, American Muslims have been counted both as victims and as participants in the recovery. Houston's Muslim community, an estimated 200,000 people, has opened many of its community centers and sent hundreds of volunteers to serve food and deliver donations. Some have rescued neighbors from high water.

Despite Harvey's historic flooding hitting the Houston area just days ago, the rituals of fasting, an iftar dinner and prayers continue at the Champions mosque, also known as Masjid al-Salam, and other community centers in Houston. But some families who participate in those rituals will spend the night at a mosque because they can't return to their homes. Others will head from prayers Friday morning to volunteer at food banks and shelters. Still others find themselves at one of the city's mega-shelters, unable to get to a mosque for the holiday.

Islamic leaders and scholars say the work underscores the spirit of the festival, which coincides with the hajj, or pilgrimage to the Islamic holy city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Muslims slaughter livestock and distribute the meat to the poor, commemorating the willingness of the Prophet Ibrahim — also known as Abraham to Christians and Jews — to sacrifice his son in accordance with God's will, though in the end God provides him a sheep to sacrifice instead.

"The ultimate goal of holding and practicing all of these rituals ... is to help others," said Imam Hassan Qazwini, leader of a Detroit-area mosque and one of the top Shiite Muslim leaders in the United States. His mosque, the Islamic Institute of America, is dedicating this Eid to raising money for storm victims, and state and national Islamic organizations also have been spearheading similar efforts.

"I believe opening your door on the day of Eid for refugees and people in need is a form of worship itself," he said.

Sitting in a chair inside the Champions mosque's gymnasium, Mabel Rozier recounted how she was rescued from her third-floor apartment as the floods outside reached the second floor. A sheriff's deputy dropped her at the mosque, which at its peak took in around 35 people.

Rozier she said she was grateful to have a comfortable place to eat and sleep while she waited to return home.

"Muslims are just like any other type of person. They're caring, loving, giving people," said Katherine McCusker, also staying in the gymnasium. "I feel very fortunate that they were open and willing to come and have this space."

At the George R. Brown Convention Center, which gave shelter to around 10,000 people at its peak, a handful of Muslim evacuees were organizing a small Eid prayer for Friday.

Hasan Logan, 33, has been meeting with other Muslims during the several days they've stayed inside the convention center, sometimes blocking off a small prayer space with chairs and their shoes.

"It's going to be hard (observing Eid), but I'm going to do it," Logan said.

Nearby, Ismail and Rabia Vaid were volunteering with the American Red Cross, which has run the shelter and expanded it as it doubled its original 5,000-person capacity. For several nights after their shifts ended, they slept in cots set aside for volunteers and then returned to do more.

"It's not about religion," Ismail Vaid said. "When a problem or chaos happens — whether it's natural or man-made — as a Muslim and as humanity, we have to participate."

Liyakat Takim, a professor of global Islam at McMaster University in the Canadian city of Hamilton, Ontario, said what's happening in Houston is the best example of Islam in action — and what is most important to the faith.

"Muslims are very much part of American society and they should contribute in any way possible," he

said. "If you cannot be a good human being, you cannot be a good Muslim. ... The primary identity is not as a Muslim — the primary identity is humanity."

Karoub reported from Detroit. Follow Nomaan Merchant on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/nomaan-merchant> and Jeff Karoub at <https://twitter.com/jeffkaroub>.

Muslims around world celebrate Eid as hajj enters final days

By OMAR AKOUR and AHMED HATEM, Associated Press

MINA, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Muslims around the world are celebrating the Eid al-Adha holiday on Friday as some 2 million Muslim pilgrims carry out the final rites of the annual hajj in Saudi Arabia.

Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims made their way toward a massive multi-story complex in Mina after dawn on Friday to cast pebbles at three large columns. It is here where Muslims believe the devil tried to talk the Prophet Ibrahim out of submitting to God's will.

Muslims believe Ibrahim's faith was tested when God commanded him to sacrifice his only son Ismail. Ibrahim was prepared to submit to the command, but then God stayed his hand, sparing his son. In the Christian and Jewish version of the story, Abraham is ordered to kill his other son, Isaac.

The final days of hajj coincide with the Eid al-Adha holiday, or "Feast of Sacrifice," to commemorate Ibrahim's test of faith. For the holiday, Muslims slaughter livestock and distribute the meat to the poor.

For the final three days of hajj, pilgrims sleep in a large tent valley called Mina and for three days take part in a symbolic stoning of the devil. Mina is also where more than 2,400 people were killed two years ago in a stampede and a collision of two crowds that crushed people under the force.

The Saudi government has since widened some roads in Mina to try and improve the safety of the hajj. More than 100,000 security forces are managing the hajj this year, assisting pilgrims and directing the massive crowds that move from one location to another in the areas around Mecca for five days during the hajj. The Saudi government also offers all pilgrims free health care and access to hospitals during the hajj.

Most pilgrims will remain in Mina until Monday before completing the hajj. They will then circle the cube-shaped Kaaba in Mecca, Islam's most sacred site, before departing. The Kaaba represents the metaphorical house of God and the oneness of God in Islam. Observant Muslims around the world face toward the Kaaba during the five daily prayers.

The five-day-long hajj is a series of rituals meant to cleanse the soul of sins and instill a sense of equality and brotherhood among Muslims. The pilgrimage is required of all Muslims with the means to perform once in a lifetime.

During the last three days of hajj, male pilgrims shave their heads and remove the terrycloth white garments worn during the hajj. Women cut off a small lock of hair in a sign of spiritual rebirth and renewal.

Russia says it's studying US decision to shut its consulate

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says Moscow has yet to study the United States' decision to shut its consulate in San Francisco before considering possible retaliation.

The U.S. on Thursday abruptly ordered Russia to shutter its San Francisco consulate and close offices in Washington and New York within the next 48 hours, intensifying tensions between the former Cold War foes. The Trump administration described its action as retaliation for the Kremlin's "unwarranted and detrimental" demand earlier this month that the U.S. cut its diplomatic staff in Russia.

Speaking at Russia's top diplomacy school on Friday, Lavrov said Moscow would react to the decision once it has finished analyzing it. Lavrov defended Russia's decision to cut U.S. diplomatic staff as reciprocal reaction to the U.S. expelling Russian diplomats last December.

'Don't touch me. I'm dying.' Harrowing Harvey stories emerge

By AMANDA LEE MYERS and ANDREW WELSH-HUGGINS, Associated Press

One man used his last words to save a friend's life, warning him away from a live electrical wire. Another died checking on his uncle. Several others were last seen helping people out of floodwaters.

They're among Harvey victims who lost their lives trying to save other people. Others died doing their best to survive the catastrophic disaster.

They range from 6 years old to 89. Their stories are emerging as the death toll from the storm continues to mount.

Twenty-five-year-old Andrew Pasek was on a mission to check on his beloved older sister's cat when he stepped on a live electrical wire in ankle-deep water Tuesday, his parents said through sobs Thursday.

Pasek then fell into the lamppost attached to the live wire. Pasek's friend moved closer to help, but Pasek warned him away.

"He said, 'Don't touch me. I'm dying,'" according to his mother, JoDell Pasek, who lost her other son to a drunken driver in the 1990s.

Al Pasek said his son was "a remarkable young man" who was always rescuing animals that needed a home and even once saved his own father's life when he choked on a piece of food and couldn't breathe for more than a minute.

"This is absolutely devastating," Al Pasek said of his son's death.

Al and JoDell Pasek want to scatter their son's ashes at Mount Rushmore, where they had long planned to take a family trip. "Maybe we'll still take that family trip," a tearful JoDell said.

Houston police Sgt. Albert Steve Perez died heading to work around 4 a.m. Sunday. The 60-year-old father of two left after his wife urged him to stay home, Houston police Chief Art Acevedo said.

"I've got work to do," Perez told his wife, according to the chief. "He has that in his DNA."

Acevedo added: "I've only been here nine months, we've got 6,500 employees and I knew who Steve Perez was, because he was a sweet, gentle public servant."

Two men, 45-year-old Yahir Rubio-Vizuet and 33-year-old Jorge Perez, died in a boat accident while on a mission with family and friends to save people from the floodwaters, according to their family. Two men in their group remain missing, with their family members posting Facebook Live videos as they search on foot for their loved ones.

Other victims of Harvey died in their homes, businesses, or cars, simply trying to stay safe or find refuge.

Fifty-eight-year-old Ruben Jordan disappeared while driving during the storm and was confirmed dead by the Friendswood Police Department, according to his family, who don't know exactly what happened to him.

Jordan, a beloved football and track coach at Clear Creek High School, was "a hell of a man" with a reputation for helping people, said his brother, Oscar Drew Jordan.

He said Ruben Jordan once took a former student who was addicted to drugs into his home so he could get clean, and then helped the young man get his own apartment.

"He had a bigger heart than anyone I know," his brother said.

Samuel Saldivar told police he was trying to bring his elderly parents and his brother's four grandchildren to safety from their flooded home when the van he was driving was tossed by a strong current into the bayou as it crossed a bridge Sunday.

Saldivar escaped through a window but the others were trapped when the van's partially submerged sliding door wouldn't open.

The bodies of Saldivar's parents and the four grandchildren, who were between 6 and 16, were found Wednesday in the submerged van.

On Tuesday, 82-year-old Ronald Zaring died on a rescue bus on the way to a hospital.

His son, Devin Zaring, said that after the storm hit, there was no way he could get to the nursing home in Friendswood where his Navy veteran father was living after an Alzheimer's diagnosis.

But Zaring took comfort in knowing his father was in good hands. Residents and staff were evacuated to a local high school Monday and then were headed to Huntsville.

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Ronald Zaring probably died of heart disease combined with pneumonia.

"He was just a super nice guy. He didn't know a stranger," Devin Zaring said. "Everybody loved him."

On Wednesday amid clear skies, 65-year-old Donald Rogers decided to check on his uncle, who lived 10 miles away in Fulshear, Texas.

Rogers and his wife, 58-year-old Rochelle, were passing over a bridge in their pickup when the swift current flipped it over, said Rogers' stepbrother, Tony Henny.

Rochelle was able to call 911 but rescuers arrived only to find the couple dead in their truck.

"Both of them were very, very good, very caring, extremely benevolent people," Henny said. "Donald especially would give his last."

Associated Press writers Frank Eltman in Garden City, New York, and Anthony Izaguirre in Philadelphia, and AP News Researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York contributed to this report.

AP Exclusive: China accuses outspoken tycoon in US of rape

By GERRY SHIH, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Escalating efforts to repatriate one of the ruling Communist Party's most wanted exiles, Chinese police have opened an investigation on a new allegation, rape, against New York-based billionaire Guo Wengui, who has been releasing what he calls official secrets ahead of a pivotal party leadership conference.

Two Chinese officials with direct knowledge of the investigation told The Associated Press that police are requesting a second Interpol arrest notice for Guo, 50, for the alleged sexual assault of a 28-year-old former personal assistant.

Guo and his representatives did not respond to repeated requests for comment, though Guo told a Chinese news outlet Friday the rape allegations were a Chinese government ploy to silence him.

The rape allegation represents a new element in the sprawling case that Chinese prosecutors are building against the real estate tycoon, who is being investigated for at least 19 major criminal cases. Allegations against him include bribing a top Chinese intelligence official, kidnapping, fraud and money laundering.

The Associated Press reviewed documents related to the rape investigation and confirmed their contents with Chinese official sources in Beijing, who requested anonymity to discuss an ongoing case. The Chinese officials' disclosures to the AP — an unusual move given the political sensitivity of Guo's case in China — underscores Beijing's urgent effort to not only bring a fugitive to heel on criminal charges but also silence a potent irritant in the run-up to a key Communist Party congress during which political stability and the stifling of any challenges to the party head, President Xi Jinping, are paramount.

Although the United States does not have an extradition agreement with China, Beijing hopes that a mounting body of evidence could sway the U.S. government against extending the exiled businessman's visa, which is believed to expire in October, the Chinese officials said.

Senior U.S. and Chinese officials have discussed the allegations against Guo, according to a third person with direct knowledge of the talks. The Chinese officials are asking the U.S. to cancel Guo's visa, according to the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to disclose the discussions.

It's unclear what steps Washington plans to take, if any. The White House would not comment on the matter.

The Guo saga highlights how China's efforts to repatriate elite Chinese seeking refuge on American soil have become increasingly contentious. The U.S. government has often refused Beijing's demands to extradite corruption suspects, citing flimsy evidence and China's opaque justice system. But the U.S. has sent back two Chinese fugitives in the past three months, including one suspected of rape.

In recent months, Guo has become a widely followed — and, in the eyes of China's leadership, highly destabilizing — social media presence by serving up sensational, if mostly unverifiable, tales of corruption and scandal within the Communist Party's innermost sanctum, including among Xi's closest allies.

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In a daily stream of Twitter posts and YouTube videos tracked by Chinese who follow political gossip, Guo has revealed what he claims are everything from top leaders' secret homes in California to their bank account information and hidden stakes in business empires. He has vowed to continue airing the party's secrets until China unfreezes his assets and releases his relatives who have been detained by authorities, he says, as leverage against him.

Pressure on Guo has been building since April when Interpol issued a "red notice" seeking his arrest on corruption-related charges. Chinese authorities later sentenced several of his employees for fraud in June.

Police in central China opened the rape investigation July 5 after a former employee came forward, the officials said.

In interviews with police, the woman described how she was plucked from her human resources position at Guo's real estate company in Hong Kong in 2015 and sent overseas to become his personal assistant. The woman, whose identity is being withheld by the AP, said that over the next two years, she was raped several times in New York, London and the Bahamas by Guo, who she said demanded sex from female employees as a test of their loyalty.

At times, she said, she languished in virtual detention after Guo's staff confiscated her smartphone, computer, passport and keys and forbade her from leaving her room in his luxury apartment in the high-end London neighborhood of Belgravia. To prove her case, the woman surreptitiously met a lawyer friend in London earlier this year to give a written statement about her ordeal and kept her underwear, pregnancy tests and abortion pills as evidence, according to police documents.

In a brief phone interview with the AP arranged by Chinese officials, the woman confirmed the account and described fleeing Guo's apartment to the Chinese Embassy in London in April to apply for a new passport before returning to China. She said she was speaking of her own volition and that police had assured her she could bring charges against Guo without facing repercussions for having worked for a highly sought-after fugitive.

"I just want him to face justice for what he did to me," she said.

Calls to Guo's mobile phone since Tuesday evening in New York rang unanswered. Guo also did not respond to multiple requests for comment sent by an AP reporter to his WhatsApp mobile messaging account since Tuesday. Lawyers representing him at the New York firm Boies Schiller Flexner did not respond to requests for comment.

In a livestreamed interview early Friday with Mingjing News, a Chinese-language overseas news outlet blocked in China, Guo said the rape allegations were "100 percent baseless."

"If I really raped (the accuser) repeatedly, why didn't she accuse me in New York after the first time, where the law is stronger? Why in China?" he said, adding sardonically that it would have been "great" if he had been detained by police and kept in the U.S.

Guo also acknowledged he received an AP request for comment two days ago and did not respond. "I wanted them to publish," Guo told Mingjing.

Interpol declined to comment about the latest warrant China is seeking for Guo's arrest, referring questions to national authorities as is the policy in ongoing investigations.

Born into poverty in central China, Guo transformed himself from a humble gasoline speculator into a real estate mogul who jet-setted with the likes of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Key to his spectacular rise, according to investigative profiles in Chinese media, was an ability to befriend officials in China's powerful security apparatus who helped him intimidate business rivals, secure deals and gain insights into the secret lives of the Chinese elite.

In one instance, according to these reports, Guo won the rights to build the iconic Pangu tower in 2006 as part of Beijing's Olympics development project by working with Ma Jian, who later became China's chief of counterintelligence, to obtain a sex tape of a Beijing vice mayor who had blocked Guo's initial bid.

In 2015, anti-corruption investigators detained Ma and later accused him of accepting \$8.8 million in bribes from Guo, who fled the country. Prior to that, Guo had enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship with China's intelligence service, even helping to repatriate overseas fugitives, he later said in his YouTube

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videos.

Guo in 2015 hired American private investigators to fan out across the U.S. to look for Ling Wancheng, the fugitive brother of a disgraced top aide to a former Chinese president who possibly sought to defect, a person involved in that search effort told the AP. The person was legally barred from discussing the case publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Months later, Chinese agents arrived in the U.S. to search for Ling in a covert operation that angered U.S. officials, underscoring how the issue of politically connected Chinese fleeing to the U.S. has strained relations.

"With political cases such as Ling Wancheng and Guo Wengui, the U.S. seems reluctant to send them back because both have valuable classified information about the top echelons of the party," said Willy Lam, an expert on Chinese politics at Chinese University of Hong Kong. "This phenomenon is a big plus for the CIA and FBI."

Lam said that although it is unlikely that Washington would send Guo back given his intelligence value, President Donald Trump "could potentially play the 'fugitive card' to put pressure on Beijing to make concessions on issues ranging from trade to North Korea."

The prospect of becoming a bargaining chip has worried Guo, according to a leaked audio recording of a meeting he held earlier this year with former U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson, who offered to lobby the Trump administration for a visa extension.

A spokeswoman for Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, the law firm where Johnson is partner, said a meeting between Guo and Johnson "several months ago about a possible representation appears to have been recorded and released," but the firm ultimately did not take on Guo as a client.

"I want to help you," Johnson says in the edited recording that recently surfaced online. "I am the only member of Barack Obama's Cabinet that has met with Donald Trump."

In the recording, Johnson suggests Guo meet with FBI agents and consider donating to human rights organizations to strengthen his case to remain in the U.S. After Guo expresses concern that Trump had already "made a deal" with the Chinese, Johnson and an unidentified woman who appears to be a Guo adviser quickly assure him that Trump would not give him up.

"He would be violating your rights," Johnson says, while the adviser points out that Guo, who goes by the name Miles Kwok, should also consider his membership in a Trump resort in Florida as a factor working in his favor.

"Miles is a member of Mar-a-Lago," she says, before Guo bursts into laughter.

AP writers Lori Hinnant in Paris and Julie Pace in Washington contributed to this report.

Rescuers seek anyone _ alive or dead _ left in floodwaters

By JEFF AMY and MATT SEDENSKY, Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Rescuers began a block-by-block search of tens of thousands of Houston homes Thursday, pounding on doors and shouting as they looked for anyone — alive or dead — who might have been left behind in Harvey's fetid floodwaters, which have now damaged more than 87,000 homes and destroyed nearly 7,000 statewide.

Elsewhere, the loss of power at a flood-crippled chemical plant set off explosions and a fire, and the city of Beaumont, near the Texas-Louisiana line, lost its public water supply. The remnants of the storm pushed deeper inland, raising the risk of flooding as far north as Kentucky.

More than 200 firefighters, police officers and members of an urban search-and-rescue team fanned out across the Meyerland neighborhood for survivors or bodies. They yelled "Fire department!" as they pounded with closed fists on doors, peered through windows and checked with neighbors. The streets were dry but heaped with soggy furniture, carpet and wood.

"We don't think we're going to find any humans, but we're prepared if we do," said District Chief James Pennington of the Houston Fire Department.

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The confirmed death toll stood at 39, though it is expected to rise. But by midday, the temporary command center in a J.C. Penney parking lot had received no reports of more bodies from the searches, which are expected to take up to two weeks.

Unlike during Hurricane Katrina's aftermath in New Orleans, crews used GPS devices to log the homes they checked rather than painting neon X's on the outside. That avoided alerting potential thieves to vacant homes.

The blasts at the Arkema Inc. plant northeast of Houston also ignited a 30- to 40-foot flame and sent up a plume of acrid black smoke that stung the eyes and lungs. The blaze burned out around midday, but emergency crews held back because of the danger that eight other trailers containing the same compound could blow, too. No serious injuries were reported.

The latest statewide damage surveys revealed the staggering extent of the destruction caused by Harvey. The figures from the Texas Department of Public Safety indicated that nearly 50,000 homes sustained minor damage and 37,000 sustained major damage. At least 6,800 homes were destroyed.

In the Houston area, an estimated 136,000 structures, or 10 percent of all structures in the county database, were flooded, said Jeff Lindner, meteorologist for the Harris County Flood Control District.

About 325,000 people have already sought federal emergency aid in the wake of Harvey. More than \$57 million in individual assistance has already been paid out, Federal Emergency Management Agency officials said.

Rescues continued apace, as did the search for shelter among people made homeless by the storm. Emergency officials reported 32,000 people in shelters across Texas.

The Harris County FEMA director said the agency was looking for ways to house people who lost their homes to Harvey. The priority is to get them into some form of temporary housing, with hotels being one option, he said.

"Right now nothing is off the table," Tom Fargione said. "This is a tremendous disaster in terms of size and scope."

Although it has been downgraded to a tropical depression, Harvey was still expected to dump heavy rain on parts of Louisiana, Tennessee and Kentucky through Friday. Forecast totals ranged from 4 to 8 inches (10 to 20 centimeters), with some places possibly getting up to a foot.

As the water receded in the nation's fourth-largest city, the greatest threat of damage shifted to a region near the Texas-Louisiana state line.

Some residents in Beaumont, Texas, began to get anxious after the city of nearly 120,000 lost water service when its main pump station was overwhelmed by the swollen Neches River. Officials said they were having difficulty bringing in enough bottled water to set up distribution stations because of flooded roads.

A procession of about 10 vehicles tailed a pickup towing a trailer packed with bottled water meant for emergency workers. The truck circled a downtown Beaumont block before Letorisha Hollier hopped out of the closest car.

"Give us a case!" Hollier shouted. Her persistence paid off. A firefighter handed her the water. She was the only tailgater to score a case.

Beaumont police spokeswoman Carol Riley said there were "some disturbances" in supermarkets because people were concerned about water.

The lack of water forced Baptist Beaumont Hospital to bring in ambulances and helicopters to move patients to other facilities, including some who had already been removed from flooded nursing homes. Hospital spokeswoman Mary Poole said other patients were able to be discharged.

In nearby Port Arthur, the Coast Guard used baskets and harnesses to pull people out of a neighborhood with chest-deep water.

Economists said the storm shut down everything from plastics plants to oil refineries to the Houston port — the second-busiest in the nation — which could affect the nation's economy.

With widespread reports of gas shortages, the head of the Texas agency that regulates the oil and gas industry urged drivers to wait three or four days to fill up their tanks. Panic buying is causing a run on gas and empty fuel pumps, Texas Railroad Commissioner Ryan Sitton said.

Energy Secretary Rick Perry said he would release 500,000 barrels of crude oil from an emergency stockpile in a bid to prevent gasoline prices from spiking.

Also Thursday, Houston public schools pushed back the start of classes by two weeks. The nation's seventh-largest district had been scheduled to reopen Monday but will now begin school on Sept. 11.

Health experts warned that sewage in the floodwater could make people sick and that mosquito populations could explode in the coming weeks because stagnant water offers abundant breeding grounds.

With temperatures likely to climb to the low 90s over the weekend, residents were warned about the dangers of heat exhaustion, especially for people who lost power or must toil outdoors.

Harvey initially came ashore as a Category 4 hurricane in Texas on Friday, then went back out to sea and lingered off the coast as a tropical storm for days, inundating flood-prone Houston.

The storm brought five straight days of rain totaling close to 52 inches (1.3 meters), the heaviest tropical downpour ever recorded in the continental U.S.

Associated Press writers Frank Bajak and Michael Graczyk in Houston; Nomaan Merchant in Houston; Diana Heidgerd and David Warren in Dallas; Seth Borenstein in Washington; Paul J. Weber in Austin, Texas; Tammy Webber in Chicago; and Paul Wiseman in New York contributed to this report.

Sign up for AP's daily newsletter showcasing our best all-formats reporting on Harvey and its aftermath: <http://apne.ws/ahYQGtb> .

Doctors call victims of New Mexico library shooting heroes

By **SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN, Associated Press**

Alexis Molina took a bullet to the chest, just above her heart, and was shot once in each leg as a gunman opened fire inside a public library in New Mexico. But trauma surgeons at the Texas hospital where she is recovering said Thursday that all she could think about was making sure her little brother was safe.

The doctors told reporters that Molina, 20, is expected to make a full recovery, and they described her and fellow library patron Howard Jones as heroes.

Jones, who was at the library with his granddaughter, was shot in the arm. The bullet traveled from his forearm along his radial nerve before lodging in the back of his arm, the doctors said.

Dr. Sharmila Dissanaiké, assistant medical director of the trauma center at Lubbock's University Medical Center, said she was able to talk with both Molina and Jones after they were stabilized. They were not worried about their own futures but more about their loved ones making it to safety, she said.

"They really are heroes. They both saved the lives of other young people who were in that library," Dissanaiké said, without going into detail.

Gunfire erupted inside the Clovis-Carver Public Library on Monday. Two library workers were killed as parents, children and others hid under tables or behind closed doors.

In addition to Molina and Jones, another library worker was shot in the arm and Molina's 10-year-old brother was injured. The doctors said all four were expected to recover.

Alexis Molina still has a bullet lodged in her leg and the trajectory of the bullet that nearly missed her heart caused other injuries, the doctors said.

"It's a miracle that she's alive," Dissanaiké said.

The suspect, 16-year-old Nathaniel Jouett, was ordered to remain in custody during a detention hearing Thursday. Prosecutors argued that he posed a threat to himself and others.

Jouett's lawyer, Jennifer Birmingham, did not oppose the request.

Jouett has been charged with first-degree murder, assault, aggravated battery and child abuse stemming from the shooting at the library in Clovis, a rural community near the Texas state line.

Prosecutors said suicide notes were found at the teen's home, and the youth's pastor also has said Jouett contemplated suicide several months earlier.

Prosecutors say they will seek to have Jouett, a school sophomore, tried as an adult. They planned to

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file paperwork formalizing the request Friday.

Jouett told investigators he had been thinking "bad things" for some time and initially planned to target his school because he was angry, court documents said.

He was on a two-day suspension from Clovis High School and the pastor, David Stevens, has said that Jouett said he had fought back after another boy hit him.

The teen said he didn't know why he went to the library and that he didn't know the victims, records say. Jouett's father called Clovis police when he discovered two handguns missing and reported his son missing, but the shooting had already happened.

Asked by investigators what Nathaniel Jouett was thinking during the shooting, he said, "I was mad."

According to court documents, Jouett saw a woman lying on the ground as he was escorted away and later asked an investigator why no one had helped her. The investigator asked him to think about it for a moment.

Jouett answered, "I feel awful. I don't like hurting people."

The teen also said during the interview that no one liked him and he had thought he would kill himself or "kill a bunch of people," the court records said.

Jouett told investigators he did not want to tell his family, his girlfriend or his friends at the Living Word Church of God about what he had been thinking of doing because he "knew it was wrong," the records stated.

The Associated Press generally does not identify juveniles accused of crimes. It is identifying Jouett because of the seriousness of the crime and because authorities plan to prosecute him as an adult.

Immigrants battle deportation fears in Harvey's aftermath

By ELLIOT SPAGAT, Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Alain Cisneros walked past thousands of cots filled with storm victims at the Houston convention center holding up a poster with the words, "Do you have questions?" written in Spanish in bold black letters.

He pulled up a chair next to a woman from Honduras and tried to deliver a reassuring message as the 23-year-old recounted in an exhausted voice how waters rose to her chest in her Houston apartment, forcing her to wade to safety with her three young children.

Ricxy Sanchez listened to Cisneros' assurances that although she is in the country illegally she shouldn't worry about being deported if she asks for help and that she should consider applying for disaster relief. With almost everything she owns destroyed in the storm, she's thinking about moving back to violence-ravaged Honduras.

"Stay here to suffer with our children?" Sanchez asked, shaking her head.

The encounter illustrates the complexity of responding to a disaster on the magnitude of Harvey in a city where an estimated 600,000 residents are in the country illegally and immigrants have been on edge amid stepped-up immigration enforcement under the new White House. Authorities have gone out of their way to tell jittery immigrants that they will not be arrested for seeking help, and outreach workers like Cisneros have been delivering that message in person at shelters like the George R. Brown Convention Center and on social media and Spanish-language media outlets.

The Harvey victims Cisneros met at the shelter shared the same concerns as almost everyone else: When can they return home? When can they start earning money again? How will they replace their belongings? The ones in the country illegally had deeper fears of deportation amid the chaos of having their homes wiped out.

"We basically lost everything," Sanchez said, drinking from a Styrofoam cup half-filled with black coffee. "Everything."

Sanchez, who arrived a year ago from Honduras, told Cisneros she has been raising her three young children — ages 5, 2 and 1 — alone on wages cleaning houses since being abandoned by their physically abusive father two months ago. She recently skipped a date in immigration court, but Cisneros suggested

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seeking legal status under protections for victims of domestic violence.

Then the 38-year-old Cisneros, himself an immigrant from Mexico who has lived in Houston since coming to the United States 20 years ago, said goodbye to her with a favorite line. "Don't stay here with your arms crossed" he said.

Houston is one of the most diverse metropolitan areas in the country: Only Los Angeles and New York have a larger population of immigrants in the country illegally. The percentage of Latinos and Asians in the Houston area nearly doubled in 20 years, according to a 2015 report by the Migration Policy Institute, which also found the percentage of immigrants who are U.S. citizens to be well below the national average. The city has the third-largest population of Mexicans, Vietnamese and Hondurans, with large pockets of Pakistanis, Nigerians, Filipinos and Indians.

A sharp increase in immigration arrests under President Donald Trump and Texas' tough law against cities that don't cooperate with federal immigration authorities — which was largely put on hold Wednesday by a federal judge — created an uneasy climate before Harvey struck. The Houston office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has made about 10,000 arrests this year, second-highest in the country after Dallas.

Immigration advocates applauded Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner's comments on Monday that he would represent anyone arrested on immigration violations after seeking help.

"It was a big deal," said Cesar Espinosa, executive director of Immigrant Families and Students in the Struggle, an advocacy group known by its Spanish acronym FIEL. "People hear from us and say, 'Well, you guys are going to tell us that to keep us calm.' When they hear it from an official, they say, 'OK, now we believe it.'"

Some were unnerved, at least initially, when the Border Patrol brought boats from stations on the Rio Grande to help in the Houston rescue effort.

An Associated Press photographer who joined three uniformed Border Patrol agents and two Houston police officers on a flat-bottom boat on Wednesday got no takers as they navigated receding waters and passed a commercial area that had store signs in Spanish. People there politely waved off the agents.

John Morris, the Border Patrol's chief of staff in South Texas, said the agency had 35 boats in the city's flooded neighborhoods on Thursday and had rescued about 450 people since Monday.

"The agents and the assets that are here in Houston as part of the recovery effort are absolutely 100 percent only here for rescue and safety," Morris said. "There is no enforcement activity being undertaken while we're doing this safety mission."

Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which has dispatched about 200 employees for search and rescue, also said it was "not conducting immigration enforcement operations in the affected area."

Groups like FIEL have made it their mission to help immigrants who are fearful of immigration authorities. Its staff has been working around the clock since last week in its office on the second floor of a two-story building in immigrant-heavy southwest Houston, and has dispatched outreach workers like Cisneros, who has also counseled immigrants following Hurricanes Katrina in 2005 and Ike in 2008.

After driving on a near-empty freeway to the convention center, Cisneros found 35-year-old Adabella Fonseca resting on a cot with her 10-month old daughter while her husband was out inspecting damage to their trailer home. She fled Saturday when the water reached her chest; her husband stayed until it was neck-deep.

Fonseca, whose parents brought her to the U.S. from Mexico when she was a year old, said she had wanted to avoid the convention center because she feared immigration authorities. Now she was scared to leave.

Cisneros clasped her hand, told her not to be afraid, and promised support. Before leaving, he asked how she felt.

"Better," she said, managing a faint smile.

Associated Press photographer Matthew Otero contributed to this report.

Boats carrying fleeing Rohingya sink in Bangladesh; 26 dead

By TOFAYEL AHMED and JULHAS ALAM, Associated Press

COX'S BAZAR, Bangladesh (AP) — Three boats carrying ethnic Rohingya fleeing violence in Myanmar capsized in Bangladesh and 26 bodies of women and children have been recovered, officials said Thursday.

Bangladesh border guard commander Lt. Col. S.M. Ariful Islam said at least three boats carrying an unknown number of Rohingya Muslims sank in the Naf River at Teknaf in Cox's Bazar on Wednesday. He said the bodies of 15 children and 11 women were recovered, and it was unclear whether anyone was still missing.

The top government official in Cox's Bazar, Mohammad Ali Hossain, said the bodies would be buried because no one had claimed them.

Last week, Rohingya insurgents attacked at least two dozen police posts in Myanmar's Rakhine state, triggering fighting with security forces that left more than 100 people dead and forced at least 18,000 Rohingya to flee into neighboring Bangladesh.

Hundreds of people have been stranded in a no man's land at the countries' border, the International Organization for Migration said. Satellite imagery analyzed by Human Rights Watch indicated that many homes in northern Rakhine state were set ablaze.

Most of Myanmar's estimated 1 million Rohingya Muslims live in northern Rakhine. They face severe persecution in the Buddhist-majority country, which denies them citizenship and basic rights.

Longstanding tension between the Rohingya Muslims and ethnic Rakhine Buddhists erupted in bloody rioting in 2012. That set off a surge of anti-Muslim feeling throughout the country.

Some Buddhists and Hindus have also fled the violence.

More than 400 Hindu residents of Rakhine state crossed into Bangladesh after being attacked by armed men, officials and survivors said.

Main Uddin, a government official in Ukhiya in Cox's Bazar, said the survivors reported that about 86 Hindus had been killed by armed groups in three villages since last Friday.

Survivors said Myanmar soldiers were everywhere and "armed people" were also burning houses and killing people.

Nirajan Rudro, a Hindu who fled to Bangladesh, told The Associated Press that masked men armed with guns, sticks and knives had attacked them and set fire to their houses.

Uddin said 412 Hindus are staying in a Hindu neighborhood near Rohingya camps in Ukhiya.

"They have been sheltered in an abandoned poultry farm there. Bangladeshi Hindus are helping them," he said.

Alam reported from Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Trump administration slashes funds for health care sign-ups

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Affirming its disdain for "Obamacare," the Trump administration on Thursday announced sharp cuts in programs promoting health care enrollment under the Affordable Care Act for next year.

Advertising will be cut from \$100 million spent on 2017 sign-ups to \$10 million, said Health and Human Services officials.

Funding for consumer helpers called "navigators" will also be cut about 40 percent, from \$62.5 million for 2017, to \$36.8 million for next year. That change reflects a new performance-based ethic that penalizes navigator programs failing to meet their sign-up targets, administration officials said.

About 12.2 million people signed up for subsidized private health insurance under Barack Obama's signature law this year, many in states that President Donald Trump carried in November. Current enrollment is estimated to be around 10 million, due to attrition also seen in prior years.

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Top Democrats accused the administration of malice.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California said the administration is waging a "cynical effort to lower enrollment" that would "create chaos" and increase premiums.

Her Senate counterpart, Chuck Schumer of New York, said the administration "is deliberately attempting to sabotage our health care system," adding that "the American people will know who's to blame."

It was unclear how Trump's latest move might affect a planned effort in the Senate to craft bipartisan legislation that would stabilize insurance markets.

Trump and congressional Republicans have been unable to deliver on their vow to "repeal and replace" the 2010 health care law, but the president has repeatedly pronounced the program on the verge of collapse.

On Twitter and in interviews, Trump has threatened to give "Obamacare" a nudge by cutting off payments to insurers that help reduce consumers' copays and deductibles. Still, his administration has continued making payments month to month.

Independent observers say the ACA's insurance markets have problems, but are not about to implode. For next year all U.S. counties will have at least one participating insurer, although consumers in close to half of counties will only have a single carrier serving them. Some major insurers have left the program after taking deep financial losses.

HHS officials announced the promotional cutbacks in a conference call with reporters. The three officials who described the details of the cuts refused to be identified by name.

The administration says the government hasn't gotten much bang for its buck as far as ACA advertising and the navigator program, with some enrollment centers signing up very few customers.

By comparison, HHS said the combined advertising budget for Medicare Advantage and Medicare prescription drug plans is \$9.7 million.

HHS officials said the 98 navigator programs funded by the ACA enrolled fewer than 82,000 people, or less than 1 percent of the total. Navigator staffers are supposed to guide consumers through the sometimes complicated enrollment process, which involves estimating income for the coming year, proving citizenship or legal residence, and sorting through various health plan options.

For next year, officials said navigator funding will reflect each sign-up center's prior performance. For example, if a navigator program met 70 percent of its enrollment target, it will get 70 percent of its previous funding. If it only enrolled 30 percent, its funding will be cut to 30 percent. However, every center will get some money from the government, even if it's only a few thousand dollars.

"Judging effectiveness by the amount of money spent, and not the results achieved, is irresponsible and unhelpful to the American people," HHS spokeswoman Caitlin Oakley said in a statement. "During the upcoming enrollment period, navigators will be funded in proportion to their performance."

HHS said only 1 in 5 navigators met their own performance goals. Officials said 17 programs enrolled fewer than 100 people each, although they did not identify whether those programs were in urban areas or less populated rural zones. One program got \$200,000 and signed up one person, HHS said.

Adding to sign-up challenges, the ACA enrollment season will be considerably shorter for 2018, running from Nov. 1-Dec. 15.

Soon after taking office, the Trump administration pulled back some advertising for the 2017 sign-up season, angering Democrats, who requested an investigation by the HHS inspector general. That probe has not yet been completed.

AP Exclusive: Taxpayer-funded mail aids California lawmakers

By SOPHIA BOLLAG, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California Assemblyman Jimmy Gomez sent more than 200,000 pieces of mail to constituents last winter. One letter invited women to self-defense classes, another highlighted a bird-watching event, and a third promoted a tree adoption day.

The mailings, all sent in a two-week period, cost \$62,000, and taxpayers foot the bill, according to data obtained by The Associated Press through a public records request.

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Last year, California Assembly members spent \$3.2 million sending mail to their constituents, taking advantage of a legislative perk that allows them to use tax dollars to cover the costs. Senators spent \$230,000 on postage costs in the same timeframe.

Lawmakers aren't supposed to spend money on campaign mail. But Assembly spending data shows their spending on mail to constituents is typically higher during election years, and that those with the highest tabs are usually in the most competitive races.

In Gomez's case, the letters went out as he was ramping up his campaign for an open U.S. House seat that attracted 23 candidates.

Paul Seamus Ryan, vice president of policy and litigation at Common Cause, said periodic mailings touting a lawmaker's efforts or highlighting a local event benefit incumbents.

"When the spending is being done principally or disproportionately by legislators who are running for office, it certainly seems to be an abuse of taxpayer dollars," said Ryan, whose Washington, D.C., organization advocates government transparency. "You don't have to say 'Vote for me' in order to effectively encourage someone to vote for you."

All 80 Assembly seats were on the ballot in 2016, while only 20 of 40 Senate seats were.

Such mail is prohibited within 60 days of an election, which helps explain why Gomez's flurry — he sent more taxpayer-funded mail in two weeks than the entire previous year — ended two months before the primary election for the Los Angeles congressional seat Xavier Becerra vacated when he was appointed state attorney general.

Once Gomez was within two months of the election, his congressional campaign logged its first mailing expense, according to Federal Election Commission records.

Gomez, a Democrat, won that election and the June runoff to become California's newest congressman.

Voters passed a law in 1988 prohibiting the use of public money for mass mailings to prevent lawmakers from spending tax dollars for political and campaign purposes. But the Fair Political Practices Commission, a California board that enforces campaign finance laws, has since written rules outlining exemptions that allow lawmakers to send non-campaign mail.

"It may not be a campaign piece, but it can be made to make the candidate or officeholder look as good as possible," commission spokesman Jay Wierenga said.

Each chamber's leadership establishes members' operating budgets, which include money for mailings. There's no cap on how much a lawmaker can spend on mailings.

In response to the AP's records request, the Assembly provided a breakdown on the number, cost and content of mailings sent by the chamber's top spenders.

During the first six months of this year, Assembly members spent more than \$600,000 on mailings. Republican Catharine Baker was tops with more than \$70,000, followed by Gomez, then Democrat Rudy Salas, who spent more than \$50,000, according to the Assembly's latest expenditures report.

Baker, whose office did not respond to a request for comment, represents a predominantly Democratic district in the San Francisco Bay Area. She sent mailings outlining her positions on innovation, California's bullet train project and small businesses.

Salas, who represents a competitive Central Valley district, issued a statement saying the mailings are an "excellent tool that constituents have told me they appreciate."

Bob Stern, a former Fair Political Practices Commission general counsel, said lawmakers should communicate with their constituents, and spending on mail in nonelection years generally doesn't bother him. But he said the commission should impose greater restrictions during election years.

"It gives incumbents an unfair advantage," he said, noting Gomez's example is a "perfect case of where it shouldn't be allowed."

Gomez spokeswoman Bertha Guerrero defended the mailings but did not answer questions about whether he used them to further his campaign. "During his entire time in the California Assembly, Congressman Jimmy Gomez put a priority on being accessible, responsive and engaging with constituents," she said in a statement.

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Assembly members spent nearly \$300,000 more in 2016 than in 2015, even though blackout periods for mail leading up to last year's elections gave them less time to spend. The previous election cycle, they spent nearly \$500,000 more.

In 2016, Assemblyman Marc Steinorth spent the most — nearly \$270,000. He narrowly won re-election in a Southern California district where Democrats outnumber Republicans.

Former Assemblywoman Young Kim spent the second-highest amount — more than \$220,000 — leading up to an election in Orange County where she was defeated by Sharon Quirk-Silva, a Democrat Kim unseated in 2014.

Baker was next, spending roughly \$220,000, followed by David Hadley, who spent more than \$195,000. Like Kim, Hadley was defeated by a Democratic challenger he had unseated the previous election: Al Muratsuchi.

Spokespeople for Steinorth and Kim did not comment on their spending.

Hadley said he consulted with GOP leaders and decided to spend on mailings, adding his seat was a priority for the party because it's a swing district.

He said he often sent mail to invite constituents to town halls or to request feedback. When part of his district faced water-quality issues, he said he gleaned valuable information about the scope of the problem through a mailed survey.

"In general, people really appreciated having been contacted," Hadley said.

Escalating tit for tat, US orders Russian consulate closed

By JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Escalating a diplomatic tit-for-tat, the United States abruptly ordered Russia on Thursday to shutter its San Francisco consulate and close offices in Washington and New York, intensifying tensions between the former Cold War foes. Washington gave Moscow 48 hours to comply.

The Trump administration described its action as retaliation for the Kremlin's "unwarranted and detrimental" demand earlier this month that the U.S. cut its diplomatic staff in Russia. But Moscow declared it a major escalation, with a top Russian lawmaker saying the move heralded "the hot phase of diplomatic war."

"The United States is prepared to take further action as necessary and as warranted," State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said. Still, she said the U.S. hoped both countries could now move toward "improved relations" and "increased cooperation."

It was a harsh welcome to Washington for new Russian Ambassador Anatoly Antonov, who arrived only hours after the U.S. announcement. At the airport, Antonov cited a maxim of former Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin as he urged caution and professionalism.

"We don't need hysterical impulses," Russian news agencies quoted Antonov as saying.

The closures on both U.S. coasts marked perhaps the most drastic diplomatic measure by the United States against Russia since 1986, near the end of the Cold War, when the nuclear-armed powers expelled dozens of each other's diplomats.

And it comes amid some of the broadest strains in their relationship ever since. The two countries have clashed over the wars in Ukraine and Syria, but most significantly over American allegations that Russia meddled in the 2016 U.S. election to boost President Donald Trump's chances of victory. Investigations continue into whether Trump's campaign colluded with Moscow.

By Saturday, the Russians must close their consulate in San Francisco and an official residence there. Though Russia can keep its New York consulate and Washington embassy, trade missions housed in satellite offices in both of those cities must shut down, a senior Trump administration official said. The official briefed reporters on a conference call on condition of anonymity.

Outside the consulate building high atop a hill overlooking the San Francisco Bay, there were no visible signs of an exodus Thursday. Consular officials walked in and out of the stately building, and Russian citizens who had scheduled appointments said they were able to pick up or renew their passports.

"It's sad, because I've lived many years in the U.S. and there are strong ties between the countries,"

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said Kate Stanton, a San Francisco real estate agent who said she holds dual U.S.-Russian citizenship.

American counterintelligence officials have long kept a watchful eye on Russia's outpost in San Francisco, concerned that people posted to the consulate as diplomats were engaged in espionage. The U.S. late last year kicked out several Russians who posted there, calling it a response to election interference.

The U.S. isn't expelling any Russian officials this time. Those who work at the shuttered offices can be reassigned elsewhere in the United States, the senior official said.

One of the buildings is believed to be leased, but Russia will maintain ownership over the others, said the official, adding that Moscow can determine if it wants to sell them or otherwise dispose of the properties.

The forced closures are the latest in an intensifying exchange of diplomatic broadsides.

In December, former President Barack Obama kicked out dozens of Russian officials, closed Russian recreational compounds in New York and Maryland, and imposed sanctions on Russian people and businesses. Russian President Vladimir Putin withheld from retaliating. The next month, Trump took office after campaigning on promises to improve U.S.-Russia ties.

But earlier this month, Trump begrudgingly signed into law stepped-up sanctions on Russia that Congress pushed to prevent him from easing up on Moscow. The Kremlin retaliated by telling the U.S. to cut embassy and consulate staff down to 455 personnel, from a level hundreds higher.

Russia said 755 personnel in all would have to go to reach the new limit. The U.S. never confirmed how many diplomatic staff it had in the country at the time. As of Thursday, the U.S. has complied with the order to reduce staff to 455, officials said.

The reductions are having consequences for Russia. The U.S. has temporarily suspended non-immigrant visa processing for Russians seeking to visit the United States and will only resume soon at a "much-reduced rate." The U.S. will process visas only at the embassy in Moscow, meaning Russians can no longer apply at U.S. consulates in St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg and Vladivostok.

Despite the exchange of penalties, there have been narrow signs of U.S.-Russian cooperation that have transcended the worsening ties. In July, Trump and Putin signed off on a deal with Jordan for a cease-fire in southwest Syria. The U.S. says the truce has largely held.

But the Kremlin may now respond in kind. American officials argued that Russia should refrain from retaliation, noting that Moscow's ordering of U.S. diplomatic cuts was premised on bringing the two countries' diplomatic presences into "parity."

"The United States hopes that, having moved toward the Russian Federation's desire for parity, we can avoid further retaliatory actions by both sides," the State Department's Nauert said.

Both countries now maintain three consulates on each other's territory and ostensibly similar numbers of diplomats. Exact numbers are difficult to independently verify.

Associated Press writers Vladimir Isachenkov and Jim Heintz in Moscow, and Garance Burke in San Francisco contributed to this report.

Reach Josh Lederman on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/joshledermanAP>

French labor law changes will make it easier to hire, fire

By ELAINE GANLEY, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — President Emmanuel Macron's most daring undertaking, reforming France's nearly sacrosanct labor laws, got cheers and jeers as it went public Thursday. It trims union powers, adds a voice for small businesses and creates easier ways to hire and fire workers.

The measures meant to foster growth, reduce the nation's stubbornly high unemployment and revolutionize the way the French work will get a hearing in the streets, with two protests planned for September.

Overhauling France's complex labor laws, which authorities say have proved a hindrance to investors and employers, is part of a larger program by Macron to stimulate France's sluggish economy. The high-stakes move comes just as the new 39-year-old president's popularity is sinking. But plans to make the

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labor market more flexible were at the heart of his election campaign.

Opponents have feared changes will weaken France's hard-won worker protections that have become globally synonymous with the envied French lifestyle. Left-wing opponents fear the changes hand too much power to profit-focused bosses.

"Nobody today can seriously say that our ... labor law favors recruitment," Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said in unveiling the five measures. "The labor law as it is in our country is often perceived as an obstacle to recruiting, an obstacle to investment."

Still, Philippe conceded the government was treading on risky territory politically.

Even before the reforms were unveiled, the hardline CGT union called for a day of action Sept. 12, and on Thursday it encouraged retirees and students to join in. Far-left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon has called for another protest on Sept. 23.

One key measure proposed by the government trims the role of unions, notably in small- and medium-size companies — which the prime minister said make up nine out of 10 companies in France and are "at the heart" of the reforms "for the first time."

Under the reforms, companies with fewer than 50 employees can negotiate work rules with an elected colleague — not unionized — and companies with fewer than 20 employees can negotiate directly with their workers.

Another new measure caps the financial penalty for companies sued by dismissed employees, easing concerns of bosses who fear that firing has become too costly. The measure creates a scale of remuneration based on the employee's seniority.

Yet another change simplifies the departures of a group of employees if the company needs to adapt its staff, with direct negotiations with those leaving.

French subsidiaries of multinationals need no longer justify firings based on the international economic climate. If the company is performing poorly, it can now use France alone as its reference to justify the layoffs.

Labor Minister Muriel Penicaud said the reforms aim to not just change France's work rules but "to change the behavior of social dialogue in our country."

But the way the reforms are being enacted is also divisive — via a special procedure that avoids a lengthy debate in parliament. The draft reforms are to be presented at a Cabinet meeting Sept. 20, after endorsement by the Council of State, the nation's highest administrative body. They are to be ratified by the end of the year.

"All the fears we had are confirmed," said the head of the communist-backed CGT union, Philippe Martinez. "(It's) the end of the labor contract."

The head of the more moderate CFDT, Laurent Berger, said his union "is disappointed" but would not join in the September protest.

The union that represents small- and medium-size businesses praised the measure that allows for negotiations with employees' representatives — not unions — calling it a "major advance" for social dialogue.

However, the main employer's union in France, MEDEF, called the changes "the beginning of an interesting reform" that will need vigilance as the measures are put into practice.

France's conservative party, The Republicans, said some measures will help simplify life for companies, but questioned whether the package had the sweep to "relaunch investments and jobs in France."

Foreign investors and France's European neighbors were watching Macron's plan closely. France is the No. 2 economy in the 19-nation eurozone, but its chronic 10 percent unemployment has long weighed on the region's growth. Partners have repeatedly called on France to reform its job market to boost Europe economically.

Macron said the labor law overhaul was essential.

"We must see things as they are: We are the only major economy of the European Union which hasn't vanquished mass unemployment in more than three decades," Macron told the newsmagazine Le Point.

Sylvie Corbet in Paris contributed.

Iraq says Tal Afar 'fully liberated' from Islamic State

By SINAN SALAHEDDIN, Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — The northern town of Tal Afar has been "fully liberated" from the Islamic State group, Iraq's prime minister said Thursday, further shrinking the territory controlled by the extremists who overran nearly a third of the country three years ago.

The militants have suffered a series of major defeats in recent months, including the loss of Mosul, the second-largest city, in July.

Iraqi troops "eliminated and smashed" the militant group in al-Ayadia district, northwest of Tal Afar, where they had fled last week, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said in a statement.

"To Daesh criminals we say: Wherever you are we will come to liberate and you have to choose only death or surrender," al-Abadi added, using an Arabic acronym for the group.

With the fall of Tal Afar, all of Ninevah province is "in the hands of our brave troops," he said. The ethnically mixed province was the first to fall to the Islamic State when its militants swept across large parts of Iraq and Syria in the summer of 2014.

The group still controls a large area of eastern Syria, along the border with Iraq, as well as parts of Raqqa, the capital of the group's self-styled caliphate, where it is battling U.S.-backed and Kurdish-led Syrian forces.

Iraqi officials often declare areas liberated before the fighting has completely ended, and the militants have been known to carry out surprise counterattacks. The Tal Afar operation began nearly two weeks ago.

The announcement on Tal Afar came a day after Jordan and Iraq reopened their only border crossing after a two-year closure. They were able to reopen it after Iraqi forces drove IS from most of the vast Anbar province in western Iraq.

Al-Abadi vowed to retake all areas still under IS control. In Iraq, they are now largely confined to the northern town of Hawija and a handful of others — Qaim, Rawa and Ana — near the Syrian border.

In a separate statement, the Iraqi military confirmed that their next target is Hawija, but did not elaborate.

Iraqi state TV interrupted its regular programs and played national songs, showing a live feed from Tal Afar, where soldiers danced and celebrated the victory.

In his announcement, al-Abadi alluded to an agreement brokered by Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group that allowed hundreds of IS fighters to evacuate the Lebanon-Syria border and head toward IS-held territory in eastern Syria, near Iraq.

Iraq and the U.S.-led coalition criticized the deal, saying the extremists should be killed on the battlefield and not be allowed to regroup elsewhere.

Al-Abadi said Iraqi forces "didn't allow them to flee" al-Ayadia.

"That's our firm stance against those criminals," he added.

The coalition praised what it called a "stunning victory," but it warned that "dangerous work remains to completely remove explosive devices, identify ISIS fighters in hiding and eliminate any remaining ISIS holdouts." ISIS is another acronym for the militant group.

Neighboring Turkey, which has long ties to Tal Afar's ethnic Turkmen community, welcomed the liberation of the town. But the Foreign Ministry emphasized in its statement that Iraqi security forces and residents should assume control and not "militant groups acting on their own agendas."

It appeared to be referring to state-sanctioned, mostly Shiite Arab militias who took part in the operation to drive out IS, a Sunni extremist group. Turkey has previously warned against any attempt to upset the demographic balance in northern Iraq.

Islamic State defenses in Tal Afar collapsed much more quickly than expected. After previous setbacks, however, the group has brutally underscored its resilience by launching surprise offensives to retake territory or by inspiring or orchestrating attacks in other parts of the world.

"They have been suffering massive losses for months now and seem to be disintegrating in terms of

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strength and the ability to strike back," said Natasha Underhill, a terrorism expert at Nottingham Trent University.

She warned that "tackling the power of its ideology is far more significant, as it is this which inspires other groups or those home-grown groups like we have seen emerge across Europe."

Associated Press writers Qassim Abdul-Zahra in Baghdad and Zeynep Bilginsoy in Istanbul contributed to this report.

Public mourns Princess Diana on 20th anniversary of death

By **DANICA KIRKA, Associated Press**

LONDON (AP) — Kathy Martin joined the stream of visitors laying tributes to Princess Diana outside the gates of Kensington Palace on Thursday, just as she did 20 years ago.

The 55-year-old Diana devotee vividly remembers Aug. 31, 1997. She was wakened by an early morning phone call from family in Australia telling her the princess had died in a Paris car accident, then raced to the palace with her daughter and was among the first to leave a floral tribute. Throngs of people began arriving 10 minutes later, adding cards, teddy bears and mountains of flowers.

Martin returns to Kensington Palace, where Diana once lived, every year on the anniversary of her death, on Christmas and on the princess' birthday. On Thursday, she brought picture collages, poems and a Victorian spongecake decorated with Diana's picture, which she shared with other royal fans.

"She was just the beautiful, warming, caring humanitarian," Martin said. "She touched all walks of life. Diana always put a smile on the face and that's something for people."

The weeks leading up to the anniversary have been filled with television documentaries and newspaper stories reflecting on the princess and her contributions to the country and to the monarchy. Diana's sons, Princes William and Harry, added to the buildup with a series of heart-wrenching interviews in which they talked about their mother's love and the pain of her death.

On Thursday though, it was the public's turn to recall "The People's Princess." Fans like Martin gathered at the palace to mark the two decades since Diana's death triggered a flood of grief across Britain and beyond. Her admirers began paying tribute to the princess before dawn, placing candles shaped in the letter "D" at the palace gates.

"We had never met her and been nowhere near her, but I think she touched so many people because of who she was, the way she conducted herself in the context of where she was living and who she became," said Mara Klemich, 55, a well-wisher from Sydney.

William and Harry weren't scheduled to take part in any events Thursday. They honored their mother Wednesday, visiting a garden at Kensington Palace where she used to stroll and talk to gardeners about their ever-changing displays. The princes and the Duchess of Cambridge, William's wife, met with well-wishers afterward.

The 36-year-old princess died in the early hours of Aug. 31, 1997. Her Mercedes, pursued by paparazzi, crashed into a concrete pillar in the Alma Tunnel in Paris while traveling at more than 60 mph (100 kph).

Diana, her boyfriend Dodi Fayed and their driver Henri Paul were all killed. Her bodyguard, Trevor Rees-Jones, was injured but survived.

In Paris, royal watchers gathered at the tunnel Thursday to remember Diana's life. Some wept.

"It's been 20 years now, but there are people you don't forget, and she is one of them," said Sylviane Rives, who works nearby. "That is what I wrote on a little card for her."

Those who didn't go to the palace or to the tunnel took to social media to express their grief and to recall her kindness.

The co-designer of Diana's wedding dress, Elizabeth Emanuel, tweeted a picture of the princess shortly after her arrival at St. Paul's Cathedral for her 1981 wedding. In the image, the designers and bridesmaids straighten the dress' immense train, unfurling a sea of white that flowed in her wake.

"Thinking of the wonderful times we spent with Diana and the great joy she brought into our lives and

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all those who knew her," Emanuel said.

Elton John offered a tribute, posting an image on social media with his hand on her shoulder. Both are smiling.

The pop icon, who memorably performed his moving song "Candle In The Wind" at Diana's funeral, wrote "20 years ago today, the world lost an angel. #RIP."

As the day wore on, images of the day two decades ago ran on the television newscasts and websites, reminding the nation of events long past. Aerial photographs offered reminders of the carpet of flowers that people brought to the palace, one bouquet at a time.

The intense outpouring will likely not be the final time the country mourns for Diana, said Pauline Maclaran, co-author of "Royal Fever: The British Monarchy in Consumer Culture." Like other cultural icons, such as Marilyn Monroe or James Dean, Diana will live on — even if the royals may have said all they wish on the subject.

"Maybe a new generation doesn't relate to her that much," Maclaran said. "But that will change. ... The media will find new and innovative ways to reinvent her."

Associated Press journalists Kevin Scott in London, and Oleg Cetinic, in Paris contributed to this story.

Wells Fargo says 3.5 million accounts involved in scandal

By KEN SWEET, AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The scope of Wells Fargo's fake accounts scandal grew significantly on Thursday, with the bank now saying that 3.5 million accounts were potentially opened without customers' permission between 2009 and 2016.

That's up from 2.1 million accounts that the bank had cited in September 2016, when it acknowledged that employees under pressure to meet aggressive sales targets had opened accounts that customers might not have even been aware existed. People may have had different kinds of accounts in their names, so the number of customers affected may differ from the account total.

Wells Fargo said Thursday that about half a million of the newly discovered accounts were missed during the original review, which covered the years 2011 to 2015.

After Wells Fargo acknowledged the fake accounts last year, evidence quickly appeared that the sales practices problems dated back even further. So Wells Fargo hired an outside consulting firm to analyze 165 million retail bank accounts opened between 2009 and 2016.

Wells said the firm found that, along with the 2.1 million accounts originally disclosed, 981,000 more accounts were found in the expanded timeline. And roughly 450,000 accounts were found in the original window.

The scandal was the biggest in Wells Fargo's history. It cost then-CEO John Stumpf his job, and the bank's once-sterling industry reputation was in tatters. The company ended up paying \$185 million to regulators and settled a class-action suit for \$142 million.

New managers have been trying to amends with customers, politicians and the public.

But it's been tough, as new revelations keep coming. Wells Fargo said last month that roughly 570,000 customers were signed up for and billed for car insurance that they didn't need or necessarily know about. Many couldn't afford the extra costs and fell behind in their payments, and in about 20,000 cases, cars were repossessed.

Other customers have filed lawsuits against Wells Fargo saying they were victims of unfair overdraft practices. Wells Fargo is also still under several investigations for its sales practices problems, including a congressional inquiry and one by the Justice Department.

Wells Fargo said Thursday that of the 3.5 million accounts potentially opened without permission, 190,000 of those incurred fees and charges. That's up from 130,000 that the bank originally said. Wells Fargo will refund \$2.8 million to customers, in addition to the \$3.3 million it already agreed to pay.

In addition, San Francisco-based Wells admitted that 528,000 customers were likely signed up for online

bill payment without authorization. It'll refund \$910,000 in fees to those customers.

Since last fall, Wells has changed its sales practices, ousted other executives and called tens of millions of customers to check on whether they truly opened the accounts.

"To rebuild trust and to build a better Wells Fargo, our first priority is to make things right for our customers, and the completion of this expanded third-party analysis is an important milestone," Wells Fargo CEO Tim Sloan said in a statement.

Source: Grand jury hears from lobbyist in Trump Tower chat

By CHAD DAY and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A grand jury used by Special Counsel Robert Mueller has heard secret testimony from a Russian-American lobbyist who attended a June 2016 meeting with President Donald Trump's eldest son, The Associated Press has learned.

A person familiar with the matter confirmed to the AP that Rinat Akhmetshin had appeared before Mueller's grand jury in recent weeks. The person spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the secret proceedings.

The revelation is the clearest indication yet that Mueller and his team of investigators view the meeting, which came weeks after Trump had secured the Republican presidential nomination, as a relevant inquiry point in their broader probe into Russian interference in the 2016 election.

The meeting included Donald Trump Jr.; the president's son-in-law, Jared Kushner; and his former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort. Emails released by Trump Jr. show he took the meeting expecting that he would be receiving damaging information about Hillary Clinton as part of what was described to him as a Russian government effort to aid the Trump campaign.

The Financial Times first reported Akhmetshin's grand jury appearance. Reached by the AP, Akhmetshin declined comment. Peter Carr, a spokesman for Mueller, also declined comment Wednesday night.

The confirmation of Akhmetshin's grand jury testimony comes after he spoke at length about his involvement in the Trump Tower meeting in an interview with the AP last month.

Akhmetshin, a former Soviet military officer who served in a counterintelligence unit, is also a well-known Washington lobbyist. He has been representing Russian interests trying to undermine the story of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, who died in a Russian prison and is the namesake of a U.S. sanctions law.

Akhmetshin has been reported to have ties to Russian intelligence but he has denied that, calling the allegations a "smear campaign."

Mueller and his team first signaled their interest in the Trump Tower gathering last month by contacting an attorney for at least some of the Russians who attended.

The meeting at issue was disclosed earlier this year to Congress and first revealed by The New York Times.

Trump Jr. has offered evolving explanations for the circumstances of the meeting, initially saying that the purpose was to discuss adoption and later acknowledging that he anticipated receiving information that he thought could be damaging to Clinton.

In addition to Akhmetshin, other attendees at the meeting included Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya, music publicist Rob Goldstone — who helped arrange the gathering — and a translator. Ike Kaveladze, who also goes by the name Irakly Kaveladze, also attended the meeting. Kaveladze works for a Russian developer who partnered with Trump on the 2013 Miss Universe pageant in Moscow.

An email exchange posted to Twitter by Trump Jr. showed him conversing with Goldstone, who wanted him to meet with someone he described as a "Russian government attorney," who supposedly had dirt on Clinton as "part of Russia and its government's support for Mr. Trump."

"If it's what you say I love it especially later in the summer," Trump Jr. wrote in one email response.

Another contact between Trump associates and Russia was revealed this week when Trump's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, acknowledged that the Trump Organization was pursuing a Trump Tower real estate complex in Moscow in 2015. Cohen said he had reached out to a press secretary for Russian President Vladimir Putin about approvals.

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In a letter this month to the House intelligence committee, Stephen Ryan, a lawyer for Cohen, dismissed as "false" and "wholly unsubstantiated" claims about Cohen included in a dossier of salacious allegations about the president's connections with Russia.

Associated Press writer Desmond Butler contributed to this report.

After Taiwan stop, fugitive Red Bull heir's path a mystery

By **JERRY HARMER, JOHNSON LAI and MARTHA MENDOZA, Associated Press**

BANGKOK (AP) — As a hit-and-run charge effectively expires, the whereabouts of an heir to the Red Bull energy-drink empire accused of killing a Bangkok police officer five years ago remain unknown. The fugitive, whose family is worth billions, has apparently found a way to disappear.

The Associated Press recently confirmed Vorayuth "Boss" Yoovidhya's last known location: Taiwan. Two sources with knowledge of the investigation said he flew there from Singapore, where he had fled shortly before he was supposed to make an April court appearance in Bangkok.

The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to reporters about the case, said Vorayuth stayed at the luxurious Mandarin Oriental in Taipei before leaving the island May 3. Since then, the trail has gone cold.

The statute of limitations on the hit-and-run charge Vorayuth faces expires Sunday, though it effectively ended at 5 p.m. Friday, said Prayuth Petchkhun, a deputy spokesman for the attorney general's office. "After that, even if you found the suspect, you wouldn't be able to bring him to the court until Monday," he said.

The expired charge might have been easier to prove than what would be the sole remaining count against him: causing death by reckless driving.

For more than four years, Vorayuth missed court appearances while living a high-flying and even public life. Relying in part on public social-media posts from his family and friends, the AP found that Vorayuth had gone to Formula One races, snowboarded in Japan and cruised Venice, all while failing to show up for court dates.

No warrant was issued for his arrest until this April, after the AP report.

"We have informed the police of our decision to file charges against him several months ago and this is police's responsibility to bring the suspect in," Prayuth said.

In May, Thai authorities revoked Vorayuth's passport and said it would ask Interpol to send an international alert. The agency's "red notice," however, was issued only this week — and it has yet to be posted on Interpol's public website.

An Interpol spokesperson, who asked not to be named according to agency policy, said it keeps red notices off the public site only if "the requesting country has asked that it not be publicized."

Vorayuth easily could have another passport, and could be in any of many places — even his home city. The AP revealed this month that Vorayuth's family, worth an estimated \$9.7 billion, has been using offshore companies to cloak purchases of jets and luxury properties.

"In a country like Thailand, money talks," said Ken Gamble, of IFW Global, a cyber-intelligence firm used by governments and police agencies. "Fugitives can often outsmart the authorities if they know what they're doing and they have contacts on the ground. Someone of his caliber, he'll have some pretty good advisers."

Vorayuth is accused of slamming his Ferrari into motorcycle police Sgt. Maj. Wichan Glanprasert in 2012, dragging the officer's body down a main Bangkok street before racing home.

In hiding from the authorities, Vorayuth is doing more than just evading capture: He is laying a path to legal impunity through Thailand's statute of limitations. A speeding charge expired four years ago.

With the hit-and-run count gone as well, the last charge is causing death by reckless driving. For that, Vorayuth has offered a defense: He has consistently told authorities it was the policeman who drove recklessly, not him.

"I am confident that prosecutors can prosecute the suspect on the remaining charge, which will expire in 10 years' time," Prayuth said. "We still have time to prosecute the case."

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International attention brought to the case renewed cries of impunity and corruption in Thailand. Yet two days after the AP's first reports in March, Vorayuth again failed to show up for his Bangkok court appointment, this time because, his lawyer said, he was on a mission in the United Kingdom. Indeed, a week later AP did meet up with Vorayuth outside his family's luxury home in London, but he wouldn't say anything.

Prosecutors again pledged to take action, and set yet another court date: April 27. Vorayuth left the country days before that appointment, this time flying by private jet to Singapore. He changed his Facebook identity that month from "Boss Yoovidhya" to "Bee Toh." And his family's flow of more than 100 social media posts that included his image — birthdays, family dinners, parties and many Red Bull races — abruptly stopped.

On April 28, Vorayuth flew to Taiwan. The Mandarin Oriental did not reply to several requests to confirm that he stayed at the hotel.

It's unclear whether Thai police knew he was in Taipei at the time, or, if, they did, whether they requested his arrest. Thai police spokesman Col. Krissana Pattanacharoen, while refusing to confirm Vorayuth's stay in Taiwan, said that without an Interpol red notice, no police force had any authority to act against a foreign national on its soil.

The sources who spoke to the AP said that when Vorayuth left Taiwan, his announced destination had been Singapore again, but they disagree over whether he ended up going there.

"I think he's being protected," said Richard Dailly, of Kroll, a global security consultant.

A glance back at Vorayuth's travel shows he traveled to at least nine countries since the fatal crash, regularly cheering on Team Red Bull at Formula One races, and making annual trips to Japan and the UK. The family, through an offshore company, owns at least five properties in one of London's most expensive areas.

It's also possible that Vorayuth is back in Thailand, not only because of his resources but also because of weaknesses in Thailand's immigration controls. Interpol maintains a database of more than 75 million stolen and lost passports, but Thailand does not yet use it systematically.

"Not all 58 formal checkpoints are linked to the online database," Maj. Gen. Choochat Thareechat, Commander of the Thai Immigration Bureau's Investigation Division, confirmed to the AP this week. He added that immigration police still must investigate any travel document that looks suspicious.

Vorayuth also could be traveling on a second passport of unknown origin. Many governments sell citizenship as a way of raising revenue, and Thailand's upper class has been known to buy them.

"For the world's elite, they provide something that is less tangible and more desirable than any material object, ensuring personal mobility and security," said Mara Ispas of Henley & Partners, a citizenship consulting firm.

Private investigators say the biggest threat to Vorayuth's freedom may be the suspect himself.

"He probably likes to eat in nice places, travel to nice places. He's reliant on his servants, and that is always a risk for rich people," said Gamble, of IFW Global. "People always give them up. There will be too many people who know where he is and what he's doing."

While not speaking about Vorayuth specifically, former San Jose police chief Rob Davis, now a law enforcement consultant, said that while money can help fugitives hide, ubiquitous social media — the clues which led AP to Vorayuth in the first place — makes it tougher.

"Sometimes these people can't help themselves," he said.

Johnson Lai reported from Taipei, Taiwan. Martha Mendoza, a former Asia correspondent, reported from San Jose, California.

Global stocks mostly higher after rise on Wall Street

By YURI KAGEYAMA, AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Global shares were mostly higher Friday, taking their cue from optimism on Wall Street set off by a report showing spending by U.S. consumers growing in July, along with wages and salaries.

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KEEPING SCORE: France's CAC 40 was up 0.7 percent in early trading at 5,121.18, while Germany's DAX added 0.4 percent to 12,107.80. Britain's FTSE 100 rose 0.2 percent to 7,447.93. U.S. shares were also set to drift higher, with Dow futures edging up 0.2 percent to 21,994. S&P 500 futures were also higher, up 0.1 percent at 2,473.40.

ASIA'S DAY: Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 edged up 0.2 percent to finish at 19,691.47, while Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added nearly 0.2 percent to 5,724.60. South Korea's Kospi lost 0.2 percent to 2,357.69. Hong Kong's Hang Seng was little changed at 27,969.38. The Shanghai Composite rose 0.2 percent to 3,367.12. Most Southeast Asian markets were closed for a holiday.

UPBEAT U.S.: The U.S. Commerce Department said consumer spending grew at its fastest pace in three months. Companies that sell everything from cosmetics to toys to shoes advanced as investors bet Americans would shop more. Biotech drug companies, drug distributors, and scientific equipment companies made some of the biggest gains in health care. Technology companies advanced for the fourth day in a row and closed at record highs.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude slipped 46 cents to \$46.77 a barrel. It jumped \$1.27 to \$47.23 a barrel in New York on Thursday, recouping recent losses over Tropical Storm Harvey as the rains hitting the Gulf Coast began to abate. Brent crude, used to price international oils, fell 28 cents to \$52.58 a barrel in London.

CURRENCIES: The dollar dipped to 110.17 yen from Thursday's 110.53 yen. The euro rose to \$1.1885 from \$1.1876.

Follow Yuri Kageyama on Twitter at 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 Friday, Sept. 1, the 244th day of 2017. There are 121 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On September 1, 1939, World War II began as Nazi Germany invaded Poland.

On this date:

In 1807, former Vice President Aaron Burr was found not guilty of treason. (Burr was then tried on a misdemeanor charge, but was again acquitted.)

In 1897, the first section of Boston's new subway system was opened.

In 1905, Alberta and Saskatchewan entered Confederation as the eighth and ninth provinces of Canada.

In 1914, the last passenger pigeon in captivity, "Martha," died at the Cincinnati Zoo.

In 1923, the Japanese cities of Tokyo and Yokohama were devastated by an earthquake that claimed some 140,000 lives.

In 1945, Americans received word of Japan's formal surrender that ended World War II. (Because of the time difference, it was Sept. 2 in Tokyo Bay, where the ceremony took place.)

In 1951, the United States, Australia and New Zealand signed a mutual defense pact, the ANZUS treaty.

In 1969, a coup in Libya brought Moammar Gadhafi to power.

In 1976, U.S. Rep. Wayne L. Hays, D-Ohio, resigned in the wake of a scandal in which he admitted having an affair with "secretary" Elizabeth Ray.

In 1983, 269 people were killed when a Korean Air Lines Boeing 747 was shot down by a Soviet jet fighter after the airliner entered Soviet airspace.

In 1987, peace demonstrator S. Brian Willson lost his lower legs when he was hit by a train at the Concord Naval Weapons Station in California while protesting weapons shipments to Central America.

In 1995, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland. (The hall opened to the public the next day.)

Ten years ago: Idaho Sen. Larry Craig announced his resignation, saying he would leave office on Sep-

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tember 30, 2007, in the wake of fallout over his arrest and guilty plea in a Minnesota airport gay sex sting. (However, Craig later reversed his decision, saying he would serve out the rest of his term.) Clay Buchholz threw a no-hitter in his second major league start, just hours after being called up by the Boston Red Sox. Buchholz struck out nine, walked three and hit one batter to give the Red Sox a 10-0 victory over Baltimore.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama ridiculed the just-completed Republican National Convention as better-suited to an era of black-and-white TV and "trickle-down, you're on your own" economics, and declared that Mitt Romney "did not offer a single new idea" for fixing the economy. Lyricist Hal David, 91, who teamed with Burt Bacharach on dozens of timeless songs for movies, television and a variety of recording artists in the 1960s and beyond, died in Los Angeles.

One year ago: A massive fireball and explosion erupted at SpaceX's main launch pad at Cape Canaveral, destroying a rocket as well as a satellite that Facebook was counting on to spread internet service in Africa. Dallas police Chief David Brown, who oversaw the response to a July 2016 sniper attack that killed five of his officers, announced his retirement effective in October. Fred Hellerman, a member of the influential folk music quartet the Weavers, died in Weston, Connecticut, at age 89.

Today's Birthdays: Actor George Maharis is 89. Conductor Seiji Ozawa (SAY'-jee oh-ZAH'-wah) is 82. Attorney and law professor Alan Dershowitz is 79. Comedian-actress Lily Tomlin is 78. Actor Don Stroud is 74. Conductor Leonard Slatkin is 73. Singer Archie Bell is 73. Singer Barry Gibb is 71. Rock musician Greg Errico is 69. Talk show host Dr. Phil McGraw is 67. Singer Gloria Estefan is 60. Former White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers is 56. Jazz musician Boney James is 56. Singer-musician Grant Lee Phillips (Grant Lee Buffalo) is 54. Country singer-songwriter Charlie Robison is 53. Retired NBA All-Star Tim Hardaway is 51. Rap DJ Spigg Nice (Lost Boyz) is 47. Actor Ricardo Antonio Chavira is 46. Actor Maury Sterling is 46. Rock singer JD Fortune is 44. Actor Scott Speedman is 42. Country singer Angaleena Presley (Pistol Annies) is 41. Actor Boyd Holbrook is 36. Actress Zoe Lister-Jones is 35. Rock musician Joe Trohman is 33. Actress Aisling (ASH'-ling) Loftus is 27.

Thought for Today: "When nothing is sure, everything is possible." — Margaret Drabble, British author.