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Wednesday

PSAT testing for sophomores and juniors at GHS

Thursday

8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.: Elementary Health Screening at Elementary School

3:30 p.m.: Cross Country regions at Webster
4:30 p.m.: Volleyball matches at Tiospa Zina.
C match at 4:30 p.m., JV at 5 p.m. followed by varsity match

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

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



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A silhouette of a person with their arms raised in a field at sunset. The person is standing on a grassy field, and their arms are raised high in the air. The background is a bright orange and yellow sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The person is wearing a long-sleeved shirt and pants. The overall mood is one of joy and triumph.

“Miracles
come in
moments.
Be ready
and
willing.”

-Wayne Dyer

Chicken Soup
for the Soul

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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")**

Groton Area Help Wanted

The Groton Area School District is seeking qualified applicants for a part-time Assistant Business Manager. Job description and application materials can be found under the employment tab at www.grotonarea.com. Questions should be directed to Joe Schwan, Superintendent at 605-397-2351.

Help Wanted

We are Hiring Nurses – RN or LPN,
Full or Part Time. Cooks/Dietary Aid.

NEW WAGE PACKAGE!!!

Contact Brynn Pickrel 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**

0913.1005

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Rix Family Thank You

Heartfelt thanks to all who attended the memorials for Jerry. Thank you also for the cards, gifts, beautiful plants and flowers, baked goods, casseroles, meat and cheese trays, fruits and pizzas.

Thank you to Pastor Thomas for his care and support and the UMW for the lunch served at the funeral.

Thank you to the doctors and nurses who took such wonderful care of Jerry. He also had exceptional care from Sis, Sylvia and Debra of Bethesda Adult Services and from Avera Home Health Care.

We can never thank enough the people that comforted us with kind words and hugs.

One never knows how much family, friends and church means to you until you need them.

Thanks to all!!

Ann Rix

Roger and Pam Rix and Family

Elaine and Fred Wolken and Family

Teresa and Larry Enze and Family

Netters beat Hitchcock-Tulare

Groton Area's volleyball team defeated Hitchcock-Tulare Tuesday night in Tulare, 3-1. Game scores were 25-17, 25-19, 20-25 and 25-17.

Attacks: 153-183, 54 kills. Gia Gengerke 37-49, 22 kills; Jennie Doeden 40-47, 13 kills.

Setting: 171-171, 50 assists. Miranda Hanson 137-137, 46 assists.

Serving: 89-95, 9 aces. Eliza Wanner 20-21, 3 ace serves; Jessica Bjerke 17-18, 2 ace serves.

Digs: 107. Payton maine 23, Eliza Wanner 22.

Blocks: Jessica Bjerke 1 solo block.

Groton won the JV match, 25-19, 20-25 and 15-11.

Groton Coffee Cup League

10-9-17 Team Standings: James Valley 12 1/2, Ten Pins 12, Kens 9 1/2, Jungle Lanes 6

High Games: Sandi Bistodeau 173, Vickie Kramp 172, Joyce Walter 171

High Series: Joyce Walter 504, Vickie Kramp 489, Mary Jane Jark 414

Conde National League

10-9-17 Team Standings: Giants 13, Cubs 12 1/2, Mets 11, Colts 9, Pirates 8 1/2, Braves 6

Men's High Games: Butch Farmen 224, 201; Troy Lindberg 221; Lance Frohling 213; Ryan Bethke 211

Men's High Series: Butch Farmen 599, Ryan Bethke 555, Troy Lindberg 529, Lance Frohling 518

Women's High Games: Mary Larson 200, 180, 167; Joyce Walter 172; Renee Hanlon 157

Women's High Series: Mary Larson 547, Joyce Walter 445, Renee Hanlon 403

The Life of Violet Muth



Safely in the arms of Jesus, receiving the hugs she so freely gave Violet Charlotte Muth, 98, passed on September 29, 2017. A long time resident and first grade teacher in Bremerton, WA, Vi mercifully succumbed to her long battle with dementia.

Born January 4, 1919 in Minneapolis, MN to Gust and Ruth Davidson, she and her brother, Philip Davidson (deceased), spent the early years on the farm near Huffton, SD. She attended Northern State Teacher's College, receiving a teacher's certificate and began her teaching career at a one room school house in Putney, SD. World War II found her migrating to San Diego, CA where she worked as quality assurance for aircraft components. Not "Rosie the Riveter" but Vi with white gloves and clipboard. She married Frank Anton Muth (deceased) in October of 1946 and moved to Bremerton where Frank was employed at PSNS. She continued working with children, volunteering at various preschools. In the early 1960's, due to Frank's illness, she graduated from the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA with a Bachelor's Degree in Education. She resumed her teaching career at Haddon Elementary. During her career she was active in leadership roles of the BEA, WEA, NEA and local chapter of the teacher's sorority, ADK. She retired from the Bremerton School District in the 1981.

In retirement, Vi volunteered at the American Cancer Society Thrift Shop at Sheridan Village; spent numerous days enjoying her granddaughter; traveled with friends and family in both the United States and other countries; enjoyed friendships; and was active in Esther's Circle at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church.

She is survived by her son and "Daughter" -in- law, Bill and Jackie of Covington; granddaughters, Catherine and Karen of Seattle; great grandsons, Beckett and Kellan Altmaier; and niece, Barbara Davidson of Aberdeen, SD.

A funeral service will be held at 11:00 a.m., on Saturday, October 14th at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel. Interment will be next to her husband in Groton Union Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers please do as she would do---- Hug one another.

South Dakotans Need to Be Proactive to Protect Their Personal Information after the Equifax Data Breach

BROOKINGS, S.D. - The Equifax data breach announced on September 7, 2017, affected thousands of South Dakotans.

To find out if your personal information was affected go to www.equifaxsecurity2017.com and click on 'Potential Impact.' Once you have entered the requested information, you will receive one of two messages:

1. Personal information was not impacted; or
2. Personal information may have been impacted.

Now that you know whether your information was impacted, what do you do?

You have a few options, explained Lorna Saboe-Wounded Head, SDSU Extension Family Resource Management Field Specialist including; credit monitoring, fraud alerts and a credit freeze.

"This data breach has reminded consumers that our personal information is not private. Consumers need to be diligent about monitoring and protecting personal information," said Saboe-Wounded Head.

"Equifax is offering free credit and identity theft monitoring for a year," said Saboe-Wounded Head. "Keep in mind the monitoring is for Equifax only, not for Experian or TransUnion, the other two credit reporting agencies. Also, the monitoring is for one year only. After the year is over, you will need to purchase the credit and identity theft monitoring in order to continue the service."

Free fraud alert

A free fraud alert can be placed on your credit report, which is good for 90 days.

"When you register for fraud alert with one credit report bureau, the other bureaus will be contacted to add the alert," said Saboe-Wounded Head. "Freezing your credit file is the most effective option."

She explained that this action will prevent anyone from using your credit, including you.

The downside to freezing your credit is if you need access to your credit you will need to unfreeze. There is a charge for setting up and removing the credit freeze. Also, you have to set up the credit freeze with each credit bureau separately.

More information

Saboe-Wounded Head has prepared resources to help consumers make better decisions about how to monitor their credit after the data breach.

The iGrow article "Equifax Breach: Was My Personal Information Impacted?" explains how to check if your information was impacted and provides information for monitoring your credit report and identifying signs of fraud.

The article "25 Ways to Be Vigilant after the Equifax Data Breach," written by Dr. Barbara O'Neill from Rutgers Cooperative Extension, also provides steps you can take to monitor your credit.

To view these articles, visit iGrow.org.

If you have never reviewed your credit report, read the article "Reading Your Credit Report" to learn about the information contained in the report.

"The information in your credit report affects your credit score," Saboe-Wounded Head explained.

To learn about how your score is calculated and how your credit score impacts your access to affordable credit, read "Understanding Your Credit Score."

Since a credit freeze is recommended as the best option, read Dr. Barbara O'Neill's article "Credit Freeze in the Wake of the Equifax Hack" to learn about the process.

All articles can be found on the SDSU Extension website www.iGrow.org.

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Middle School Music Festival

Groton Area musicians were among the many area students who took part in the middle school music festival held in Mellette Tuesday evening. Groton's Cody Swanson was the guest conductor for the choir and Reid Johnson was the guest band conductor.

Students spent the whole day at Mellette practicing for the evening performance. You can also watch the performances at GDILIVE.COM.

WEB Water Development Association, Inc Annual Members Meeting December 1, 2017

WEB Water will hold its Annual Members Meeting on FRIDAY, December 1, 2017 at the Dakota Event Center (DEC) in Aberdeen. The meeting is open to all members.

Three director positions are up for election, two rural and one bulk. Nominating petitions and instructions can be obtained from the WEB Water Office at 38456 W Highway 12, Aberdeen, SD 57401, by phone (605) 229-4749 or by email at dbohlander@webwater.org. The deadline for filing petitions is 4:30 p.m., Thursday, November 9, 2017.

The bulk director representing District #8 includes towns and bulk members in Brown County in South Dakota and Dickey County in North Dakota. The incumbent director, Les Hinds, Groton, SD, is seeking re-election to a second term.

The rural director representing District #1 includes rural Walworth and Potter Counties in South Dakota. There is no incumbent director.

The rural director representing District #6 includes rural Day, Clark and Marshall Counties in South Dakota. There is no incumbent director.

The nominating rules are available at the WEB Water office or with the nominating petition. The WEB Water Board meets on the third Thursday of each month and provides review and oversight of the rural water system which covers 17 counties. WEB Water has been providing water service to customers since May 26, 1986 and currently has over 8,700 rural meters, 109 towns and bulk members, and 5 ethanol plants.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Tyler Bowling

Public Affairs Specialist

2200 N Maple Ave Suite 301 Rapid City, SD 57701

Email: tyler.bowling@ssa.gov

Website: www.socialsecurity.gov

Question:

I'm trying to figure out the best time to retire based on my future earnings. How can I calculate my own retirement benefit estimate?

Answer:

We suggest you use our Retirement Estimator at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator. Our Retirement Estimator produces estimates based on your actual Social Security earnings record, so it's a personalized, instant picture of your future estimated benefit. Also, you can use it to test different retirement scenarios based on what age you decide to start benefits. For example, you can find out your estimated monthly payments if you retire at age 62, 70, or any age in between. Try it out now at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator.

Question:

I am nearing my full retirement age, but I plan to keep working after I apply for Social Security benefits. Will my benefits be reduced because of my income?

Answer:

No. If you start receiving benefits after you've reached your full retirement age, you can work while you receive Social Security and your current benefit will not be reduced because of the earned income. If you keep working, it could mean a higher benefit for you in the future. Higher benefits can be important to you later in life and increase the future benefit amounts your survivors could receive. If you begin receiving benefits before your full retirement age, your earnings could reduce your monthly benefit amount. After you reach full retirement age, we recalculate your benefit amount to leave out the months when we reduced or withheld benefits due to your excess earnings. Learn more about Social Security reading our publication, *How Work Affects Your Benefits*, at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10069.html.

Question:

If I retire at age 62, will I be eligible for Medicare?

Answer:

No. Medicare starts when you reach 65. If you retire at 62, you may be able to continue medical insurance coverage through your employer or purchase it from a private insurance company until you become eligible for Medicare. For more information see our publication, *Medicare*, at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs, or call us at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

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Today in Weather History

October 11, 1997: High winds and hail caused nearly \$20,000 in damage to rural Meade County homes.

1846: A major hurricane, likely a Category 5, moved through the Caribbean Sea. This Great Havana Hurricane struck western Cuba on 10 October. It hit the Florida Keys on 11 October, destroying the old Key West Lighthouse and Fort Zachary Taylor.

1906: Games 1 and 2 of all Chicago World Series were played amid snow flurries. Snow would not happen again in a World Series until 1997. The high temperature for game 3 played on this day was 43 degrees.

1925 - Widespread early season snows fell in the northeastern U.S., with as much as two feet in New Hampshire and Vermont. The heavy snow blocked roads and cancelled football games. (David Ludlum)

1954 - A deluge of 6.72 inches of rain in 48 hours flooded the Chicago River, causing ten million dollars damage in the Chicago area. (9th-11th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - More than thirty cities in the Upper Midwest reported record low temperatures for the date, including Waterloo IA and Scottsbluff NE where the mercury dipped to 16 degrees. Tropical Storm Floyd brought heavy rain to southern Florida, moisture from Hurricane Ramon produced heavy rain in southern California, and heavy snow blanketed the mountains of New York State and Vermont. (The National Weather Summary)







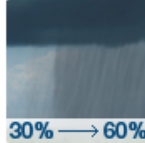
1988 - Low pressure brought gale force winds to the Great Lakes Region, with snow and sleet reported in some areas. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the north central U.S. The mercury hit 84 degrees at Cutbank MT and Worland WY. The temperature at Gunnison CO soared from a morning low of 12 degrees to a high of 66 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Much of the nation enjoyed "Indian Summer" type weather. Nine cities in the central U.S. reported record highs for the date as temperatures warmed into the 80s and 90s. Record highs included 90 degrees at Grand Island NE and 97 degrees at Waco TX. Strong winds along a cold front crossing the Northern High Plains Region gusted to 80 mph at Ames Monument WY during the early morning. (The National Weather Summary)

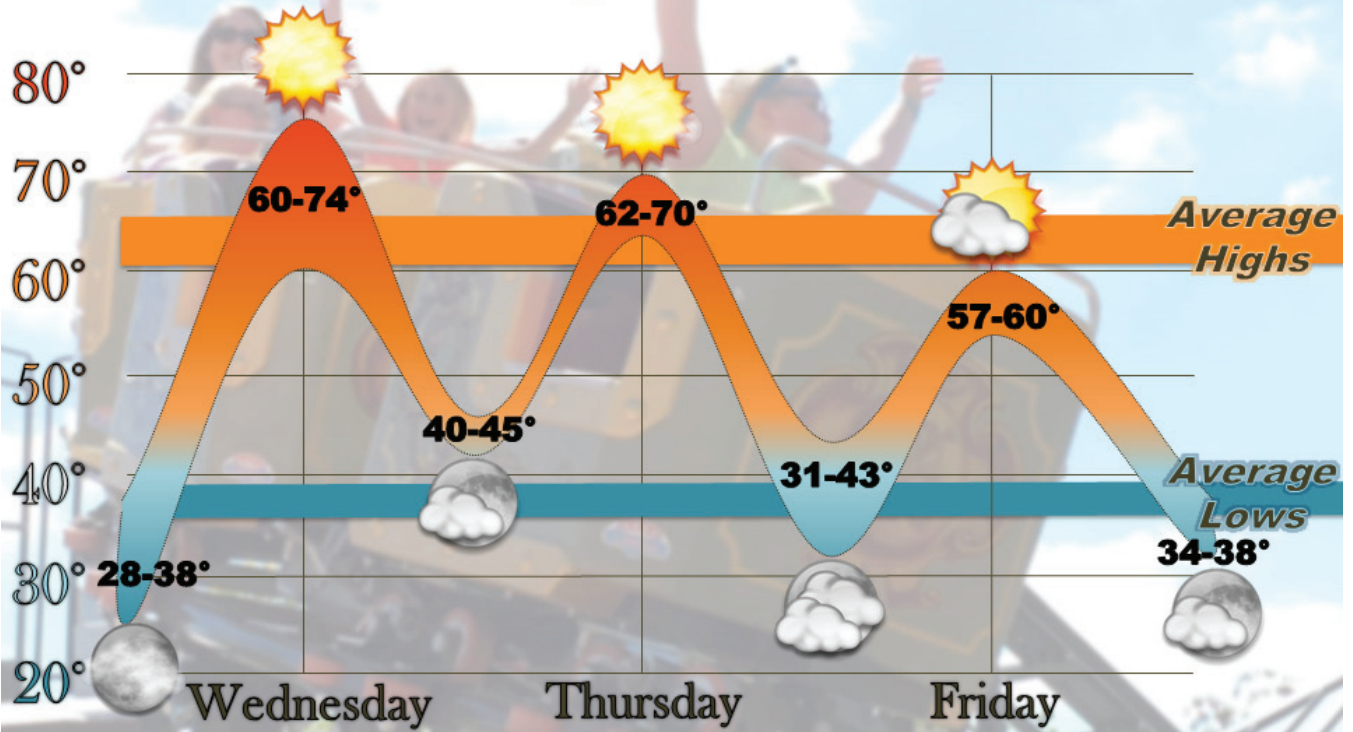
2005: A tropical depression, formerly Hurricane Vince, became the first tropical cyclone make landfall in Spain since 1842.

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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
						
Sunny then Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Chance Showers then Showers Likely
High: 64 °F	Low: 43 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 58 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 54 °F

3-Day Temperature Outlook



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

www.weather.gov/abr

GRAPHIC CREATED:
10/11/2017 5:37 AM

Published on: 10/11/2017 at 5:41AM

Temperatures will be on their way up today and tomorrow as highs climb into the 60s and 70s. Although, we will have to deal with some breezy and gusty southerly winds both today and on Thursday. Conditions will remain dry until the weekend.

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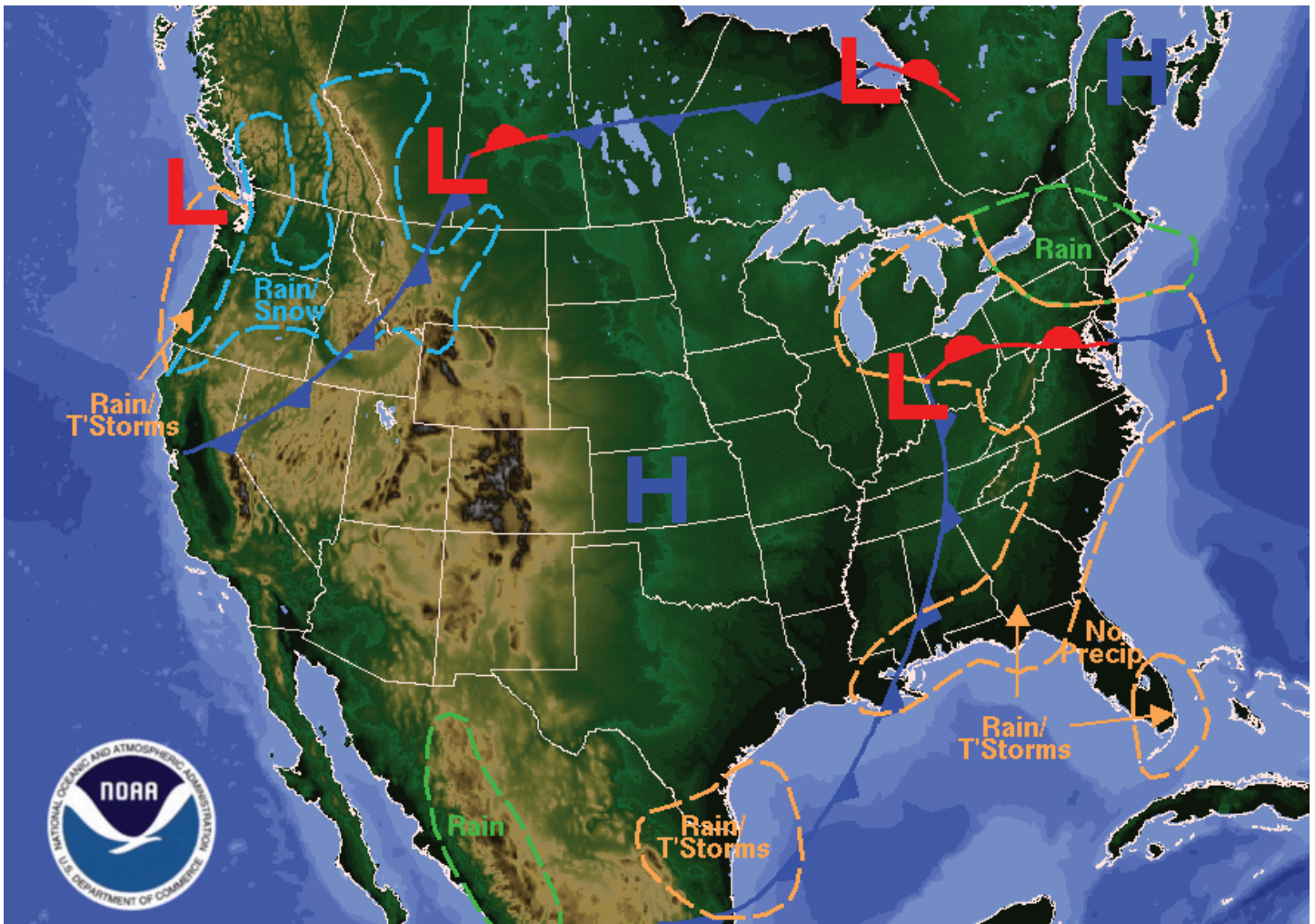
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 59.4 at 4:14 PM
Low Outside Temp: 23.9 at 6:22 AM
High Gust: 12 mph at 2:39 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 93° in 2015
Record Low: 16° in 1935
Average High: 60°F
Average Low: 35°F
Average Precip in Oct: 0.80
Precip to date in Oct: 0.19
Average Precip to date: 19.28
Precip Year to Date: 13.28
Sunset Tonight: 6:54 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:46 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Wed, Oct 11, 2017, issued 4:47 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds 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)



ETERNAL TEARS

One day, John promised us, "God will wipe away all tears." Sickness and sadness, sorrow and suffering – whatever causes people pain or problems – will be gone, banished forever. We all look forward to that special day!

So it is strange when David said that "God will record my sorrows, and list my tears on His scroll and in His record." Whatever could be God's reason for doing this to David? And might He do the same to us? Does it make sense that God would make a permanent record of grief – David's grief and our grief as well?

God knew of David's suffering and He knows when we suffer. Our God is a God who cares for us and has compassion for us when we are gripped with grief. Why keep such a record?

Because God will respond to our suffering!

Too often when we are overcome with illness or are struggling with sickness, we turn to the products we have stored in our medicine cabinet or to the countless remedies on the shelves of our pharmacies. And if and when they do not work we turn to a physician and seek his counsel and cure. It is the normal thing to do.

Unfortunately, all too often we only pray when all else fails. It is as if God was not aware of our sickness or had no time to be concerned with our health.

Not so, says David. God has a permanent record of each and every tear that falls from our eyes because they matter to Him. This is His way of saying, "I do care!"

Prayer: Thank you, Father, for Your constant concern and never-ending care. We praise You for our well-being. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 56:8 Record my misery; list my tears on your scroll — are they not in your record?

2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- 11/18/2017-3/31/2018 Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meal- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/28/2018 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 3/24/2018 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/5/2018 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/28/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program at the Cemetery, Lunch to follow at the American Legion (Memorial Day)
- 6/14/2018 Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- 6/15/2018 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/16/2018 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2018 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/22/2018 Summer Fest (4th Sunday in July)
- 9/8/2018 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/6/2018 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/12/2018 Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2018 Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/10/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

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News from the Associated Press

Tuesday's Scores By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Mobridge-Pollock, 25-8, 25-15, 25-19
Alcester-Hudson def. Irene-Wakonda, 26-24, 21-25, 25-11, 25-18
Baker, Mont. def. Harding County, 25-15, 22-25, 23-25, 25-21, 15-3
Brookings def. Yankton, 30-28, 18-25, 25-17, 19-25, 15-12
Burke/South Central def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 23-25, 25-13, 25-16, 25-14
Chester def. West Central, 25-23, 22-25, 25-23, 25-23
Colman-Egan def. Bridgewater-Emery, 16-25, 25-21, 23-25, 25-23, 15-10
Dakota Valley def. Lennox, 25-16, 25-8, 25-10
Deubrook def. Dell Rapids, 25-17, 24-26, 21-25, 26-24, 15-7
Edmunds Central def. Wakpala, 25-8, 25-3, 25-8
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-7, 25-18, 19-25, 25-22
Faith def. Dupree, 25-15, 25-9, 25-9
Florence/Henry def. Estelline, 25-19, 25-10, 25-17
Freeman Academy/Marion def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-16, 25-18, 28-26
Gregory def. Colome, 25-19, 18-25, 20-25, 25-21, 15-13
Groton Area def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 25-17, 25-19, 20-25, 25-17
Hamlin def. DeSmet, 25-19, 25-13, 25-20
Hanson def. Menno, 25-20, 25-14, 25-13
Harrisburg def. Watertown, 25-19, 20-25, 25-19, 25-18
Hendricks, Minn. def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-15, 17-25, 22-25, 25-17, 15-6
Herreid/Selby Area def. Faulkton, 25-15, 16-25, 25-21, 20-25, 15-13
Huron def. Pierre, 27-25, 25-8, 12-25, 25-11
James Valley Christian def. Sanborn Central/Woonsocket, 26-24, 25-13, 25-18
Langford def. Webster, 25-12, 32-30, 19-25, 22-25, 15-11
Lead-Deadwood def. Red Cloud, 25-22, 25-21, 25-21
Lemmon def. Grant County, N.D., 25-14, 25-18, 21-25, 24-26, 15-10
Lisbon, N.D. def. Britton-Hecla, 25-12, 25-16, 25-14
Madison def. Milbank Area, 25-14, 25-14, 26-24
McCook Central/Montrose def. Garretson, 25-19, 25-14, 25-11
McIntosh def. Bison, 16-25, 25-15, 25-17, 25-6
Miller def. Platte-Geddes, 25-22, 25-15, 25-11
Mitchell Christian def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-17, 25-22, 17-25, 25-10
Parkston def. Wagner, 25-20, 25-23, 16-25, 25-17
Ponca, Neb. def. Vermillion, 25-16, 25-21, 25-17
Potter County def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 25-12, 30-28, 25-7
Rapid City Central def. Sturgis Brown, 14-25, 25-8, 25-23, 25-19
Rapid City Christian def. Edgemont, 25-22, 25-11, 25-23
Rapid City Stevens def. Douglas, 25-13, 25-6, 25-21
Scotland def. Bon Homme, 18-25, 25-18, 25-9, 18-25, 16-14
Sioux Falls Christian def. Tri-Valley, 25-7, 25-9, 25-7
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-20, 25-18, 25-15
Sioux Valley def. Arlington, 25-23, 25-15, 25-20
St. Francis Indian def. Crazy Horse, 25-16, 25-18, 25-13

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Standing Rock, N.D. def. McLaughlin, 19-25, 13-25, 25-18, 25-15, 16-14
Sully Buttes def. Stanley County, 25-16, 25-9, 25-9
Tea Area def. Beresford, 27-25, 25-16, 15-25, 25-22
Warner def. Redfield/Doland, 25-12, 25-18, 25-17
Wessington Springs def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-18, 25-22, 22-25, 25-13
Wilmot def. Waubay/Summit, 25-6, 25-22, 25-16
Winner def. Chamberlain, 25-15, 25-11, 25-17
Wolsey-Wessington def. Highmore-Harrold, 25-21, 25-22, 27-25

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

07-16-24-61-62, Mega Ball: 2, Megaplier: 5

(seven, sixteen, twenty-four, sixty-one, sixty-two; Mega Ball: two; Megaplier: five)

Estimated jackpot: \$36 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$128 million

Trump administration: Court can't suspend pipeline decision

By MATTHEW BROWN, Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Attorneys for the Trump administration said a federal judge has no authority to second-guess a presidential permit for the Keystone XL oil pipeline as they seek to stop a lawsuit that would block the project.

Justice Department attorneys are due in U.S. District Court in Montana on Wednesday to defend the administration's March approval of the 1,179-mile pipeline — a lightning rod in the debate over what to do about climate change.

The TransCanada proposal would transport Canadian crude oil through Montana and South Dakota to Nebraska, where it would connect with an existing system of lines to carry oil to Gulf Coast refineries.

The Obama administration rejected the project before the proposal was revived in March by President Donald Trump, who said it would create jobs and lead to greater energy independence.

Conservation groups and Native American organizations that sued over the project argue that an environmental review completed in 2014 was inadequate. They've asked U.S. District Judge Brian Morris to revoke its permit.

Government attorneys said in their motion to throw out the case that Morris can't interfere because the Constitution gives Trump authority over matters of foreign affairs and national security.

"The remedy that plaintiffs seek — an injunction against the presidential permit — is not available because such an order would impermissibly infringe on the president's authority," Justice Department attorney Bridget McNeil wrote.

The project's economics have shifted considerably since the pipeline was proposed in 2008, with low oil prices and the high cost of extracting Canadian crude from Alberta's oil sands now casting doubt on whether it would be profitable.

Opponents say those market changes undercut arguments from Keystone supporters that oil sands crude would get to consumers by another means if the pipeline was not built.

The opponents said the current market conditions should have been weighed by the State Department before it issued the permit.

"In a low oil market world, adding close to a million barrels a day of capacity out of the tar sands is a

lifeline for that industry. You can't say it's going to find its way to market whether this pipeline is built," said attorney Doug Hayes with the Sierra Club, one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuits.

A State Department spokeswoman said the agency does not comment on lawsuits.

A TransCanada executive in August raised doubts about Keystone's prospects and said the Calgary-based company would decide later this year about whether to start construction.

Company spokesman Matthew John said Tuesday that the project was in the national interests of the U.S. and Canada. He declined to address the lawsuits or the pipeline's economic prospects.

TransCanada last week cancelled plans for a pipeline that would have carried crude from Alberta to New Brunswick on the Atlantic coast. The company cited regulatory delays and "the associated cost implications" faced by its Energy East Pipeline proposal.

In the U.S., Keystone has faced heated opposition from landowners whose property would be crossed by the line and farmers who live downstream from river crossings.

Opponents planned a rally ahead of Wednesday's hearing in Great Falls to draw attention to their concerns.

Among the protesters will be Dena Hoff, who farms along the Yellowstone River near the small city of Glendive, Montana, 13 miles downstream of where Keystone XL would cross the waterway. Hoff worries about a repeat of a 2015 oil pipeline spill into the Yellowstone at the edge of her property that fouled Glendive's drinking water supply.

"They're talking about endangering one of the most historic, iconic and economically important rivers in this part of the country," she said.

The Nebraska Public Service Commission must decide by Nov. 23 whether to give approval. South Dakota and Montana regulators have approved the project.

Follow Matthew Brown on Twitter at www.twitter.com/matthewbrownap .

South Dakota conservative group names ex-Democrats in GOP

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A conservative group says its review of voter registration data in South Dakota found that about 1 in 7 Republican lawmakers in the state Legislature previously registered to vote as a Democrat.

The South Dakota Citizens for Liberty named the lawmakers Monday as part of a legislative scorecard report, the Argus Leader reported . A group official said the party switches raise questions about lawmakers' commitment to conservative ideology, but some Republicans disputed that claim and defended their current and past party choices.

Tonchi Weaver, a lobbyist for the group, said constituents need to know if a lawmaker changes their party affiliations "and doesn't change their philosophy."

"I have never shied away from the fact that I was a Democrat," Republican Rep. Larry Rhoden said. "But I've always said it doesn't matter where you came from, it matters where you go."

Others, including Republican Rep. Jean Hunhoff, denied the report of their voting records and said they were unfairly targeted.

"I've never registered as a Democrat. I've always been a Republican," Hunhoff said. "I've never even heard of that group."

South Dakota Citizens for Liberty, which formed in 2010, said it advocates for limited government, low taxes and adherence to the U.S. Constitution.

South Dakota Republican Party Chair Dan Lederman said he "didn't view the party change of former Democrats becoming Republicans as something to be ashamed of, but rather a badge of honor."

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

Details scarce about complaint to new government watchdog

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A new government watchdog board that has the power to investigate statewide officeholders and executive branch employees has received its first complaint.

A spokeswoman for the state Attorney General's office said Tuesday that the complaint was filed July 26. But Attorney General spokeswoman Sara Rabern says details including the person who filed the complaint, whom it was filed against and its substance currently aren't public information.

Draft meeting minutes show the State Government Accountability Board entered into executive session to discuss the complaint at a September meeting. The minutes say the four-member panel decided to delay action.

The board of former judges that lawmakers approved this year took effect July 1. It can investigate a range of allegations including bribery and theft of public funds. The panel's next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 16.

South Dakota community celebrates new bridge to trail

By TOM GRIFFITH, Rapid City Journal

SAVOY, S.D. (AP) — On a sun-struck Thursday, surrounded by cascading autumn leaves above a stunning waterfall, saviors of Spearfish Canyon gathered to dedicate the newest improvement to a special place that "is being loved to death."

Some 50 representatives of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, Spearfish Canyon Foundation, U.S Forest Service and area chambers of commerce celebrated completion of the new Spearfish Falls Trail, the second of a three-phase attempt to preserve and protect the most visited spots in one of the Black Hills' most popular destinations, the Rapid City Journal reported .

The first phase, completed in 2008, targeted Roughlock Falls with upgrades to trails and railings to improve accessibility as well as to protect the environmentally sensitive canyon from continued erosion caused by heavy visitation.

The second phase greatly improved access to Spearfish Falls, added an observation deck which cantilevers over the sides of the falls, and placed interpretive signage and maps along the trail that are intended to educate and engage hikers.

In addition to grant assistance from the federal Recreational Trails Program, the National Guard provided backing during last summer's Operation Golden Coyote by removing an aging bridge that spanned the creek and building a new one, as well as construction of a lower observation deck.

All told, the game, fish and parks department invested about \$400,000 in the project, according to Assistant Director Al Nedved. But Nedved's boss said the project was truly the result of public-private partnerships.

"Today is a celebration of partnerships, first with Homestake/Barrick, then with the Spearfish Canyon Foundation, and finally the commitment of the state of South Dakota to preserve this area that has been loved to death," said Kelly Hepler, secretary of the state game, fish and parks department.

Custer State Park Director Matt Snyder, who helped oversee the project, praised the foundation for acquiring the land and his department's staff for making the new trail system a reality.

"This is a great day, and a great project coming to completion," Snyder said in remarks made near the Latchstring Inn. He added that, while the project is substantially complete, "there will be some improvements, some tweaks to come. Our work is never done."

Spearfish Canyon Foundation Past President Susan Johnson said her nonprofit organization had raised nearly \$800,000 and worked with local landowners and Barrick over the past decade to acquire properties included in the new trail system.

"This project took passion and patience," Johnson said. "We love being a part of this."

Before heading out on a one-hour guided hike along the new trail with her grandparents, Katie Ceroll, director of the state game, fish and parks department's Division of Parks and Recreation, said she found great satisfaction in witnessing how all of the partners in the project greeted Thursday's dedication.

"The biggest part today was just watching the partners' contentment and seeing the smiles on all of their faces," Ceroll said. "The true experience resulting from this partnership revolves around families and providing a multigenerational opportunity to recreate together."

A third-phase project in Spearfish Canyon, projected for completion next summer, will include a trail network linking Roughlock Falls, Spearfish Falls and the Savoy pond, located about two miles southwest of the Spearfish Canyon Lodge, according to Shannon Percy, district park supervisor for GF&P.

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

South Dakota synagogue celebrates 100 years

By KELDA J.L. PHARRIS, Aberdeen American News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Like many settlers of the Northern Plains, Jewish immigrants moved west from East Coast landings with sights set on prosperity offered by the Homestead Act of 1862.

"The earliest people from the 1800s were here because of the pogroms in eastern European countries. It was affectively ... ethnic cleansing is the modern term." Jerry Taylor told the Aberdeen American News Pogroms are riots with the intent of persecuting ethnic groups.

"They put pressure on the Jews to leave," he said. "At the time, the United States was trying to fill this vast emptiness of the middle of the country. Here it was, free land. And in the Jewish countries Jews couldn't own land."

Taylor is a member of Aberdeen's Congregation B'nai Isaac. The synagogue is celebrating its 100th anniversary.

The first rabbi to serve Aberdeen and surrounding area was Julius Hess. He arrived in 1914 and was integral to getting a permanent temple for the young Jewish community.

One of the first services for Hanukkah, in December 1916, also celebrated the preliminary plans to build a temple. At the time, the synagogue had 33 charter members with more than 60 people attending the festival of lights.

Ultimately, the temple was not built, but instead purchased from the First Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1917.

Congregation B'nai Isaac was incorporated May 5, 1917, by founders Ben Brussel, Isadore Predemstky, Samuel Calmenson, William Ribnick, Isadore Kraywetz, Maz Anton and Harry Abramsdn, according to American News archives.

Hess gave the dedication in both English and Yiddish. The service also included the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner," according to newspaper accounts.

A number of rabbis served B'nai Isaac into the early 1970s. Lay clergy have conducted ceremonies, holiday gatherings and regular services since, with the occasional visiting rabbi stopping by. For the past several years, the lay clergy duties have been fulfilled by Herschel Premack of Aberdeen. His father came to the area in 1916 at the age of 18.

The wealth of families who were members through the congregation's 100-plus years have left their stamp on the region.

The first efforts to work the prairie didn't come easy to Jewish settlers.

"A lot of the Jews were not farmers and moved on to other occupations," Taylor said.

Premack gave the example of one family running an Army surplus store and eventually growing it into a clothing store. Others ran delis and markets.

"Those were the years where every other block had a grocery store," Premack said. "A lot of them would wind up settling someplace and have a store. Then their kids would spread to other towns and open stores."

A history of those first families has been recorded. Matt Remmich was tasked with the job. He's a graduate student at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. He previously attended a Bible group in the basement of the synagogue while an undergrad student Northern State University. Later he worked with the South Dakota State Historical Society, so the congregation thought he'd be perfectly suited for the task.

Names of now-closed Aberdeen businesses like Feinstein's and Pred's were started by some of the first Jewish families to move to town.

"It's really interesting that a lot of the people in the region will always remember those two iconic stores," Remmich sai. He said several people have told him they had a coat or a family hand-me-down from one of the shops.

The local Jewish community ebbed and flowed through the years. In the 1930s Dust Bowl era, many decided to head farther west to California, Arizona and Nevada.

Then, in 1950, the synagogue building was lifted to have a basement put in. A sign of facility improvement meant stabilization for the previously waning Jewish community.

A number of rabbis had columns or moments of reflection in Aberdeen newspapers. In one, Rabbi Benjamin Mazor warned against the trappings of credit card debt. The rabbis also had posts and leadership roles with various community clubs.

The congregation's religious services evolved with its changing numbers, including going without a full-time rabbi. But the congregation as a whole has always been an active outreach to the community, an advocate for new residents and an educational tool to help people better understand Judaism.

"We've always worked with the diversity committees. When they started several years ago, we were part of that. We've always been available when new people come to town, sometimes even when people are job-searching and want to know if there's a Jewish community here," Bea Premack said. "St. Mary's (Catholic Church, just to the east of the synagogue) invited us to do a Passover Seder a couple years ago."

A Seder is a ritual and ceremonious dinners served during the Passover holiday.

Members of the congregation offer services to Jewish people who find themselves in the hospital. The temple has good relationships with Northern State University and Presentation College, Premack said. Sometimes classes pass through for tours or the congregants will set up informational booths at events.

The now-synagogue is one of the 10 oldest buildings in Aberdeen according to American News archives. It was built in 1886 for the Wesleyan Methodist Church. It's also touted as the oldest synagogue in continuous use in South Dakota, according to a pamphlet printed for the open house.

There are two other synagogues in South Dakota — Synagogue of the Hills in Rapid City and Mount Zion Temple in Sioux Falls.

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

High-poverty South Dakota school increases students' scores

By MEGAN RAPOSA, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — It only takes five minutes in a Laura B. Anderson Elementary School classroom to see students there like learning.

When teacher Fred Jackson asked his fifth-grade students to solve a multiplication problem on the board, their pencils popped up almost in unison.

Down the hall of the northeast Sioux Falls school, Kim Runia's classroom of second-graders raised their hands excitedly, practically fighting for a chance to demonstrate appropriate behavior for "independent reading time."

"This is one of the happiest groups of children I've ever encountered," Principal Jayne Zielenski told the Argus Leader. "They are smiling, and they have every reason to not be smiling."

More than 8 in 10 of the kids come from low-income families or other groups that traditionally fall into achievement gaps. They're smiling, but they're not all excelling academically. In fact, about three-quarters of them are testing below proficiency on state reading and math tests.

But that doesn't mean they're not learning.

This fall, Laura B. Anderson students saw enough improvement in standardized test scores to move the school up a level in state rankings after two years of classification as a "focus school," meaning kids in those achievement gaps were doing particularly poorly on standardized tests.

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It's an impressive achievement, especially because the school moved in and out of the "focus" category in two years, the shortest possible time-frame within the South Dakota Department of Education's classification system.

"It's difficult to move the needle, especially when you're talking about large numbers of students," said Mary Stadick Smith, spokeswoman for the department.

But now that the ranking has changed, Zielenski faces tough choices to keep the momentum going, especially as "focus"-specific grant funding runs dry for the school.

"We definitely will have to back down a bit on something because there just won't be the funds there," she said.

Zielenski doesn't want to downplay the hard work of Laura B. Anderson teachers and support staff in favor of a funding discussion, but she recognizes giving teachers time to provide thoughtful, data-driven instruction costs money.

Laura B. Anderson first received its designation as a "focus" school in 2015.

Focus schools differ from other school classifications because the designation places less emphasis on the overall school performance score — a compilation of data including test scores, student growth and attendance rates — and more emphasis on the performance of what the state calls the "gap group."

The most recent definition of the gap group for the state includes students from low-income families, black, Native American and Hispanic students, students with disabilities, and students with limited English.

Zielenski doesn't know exactly how many LBA students fall into that gap group, and, frankly, it's not important, she said. When she learned LBA had dipped into the "focus" category, she wasn't looking at subdividing students.

"We needed to raise our expectations for every single one of them," Zielenski said.

Improving student performance started with getting a very clear picture of where they were starting out. And that meant using student data to set goals.

Second-grade teacher Nicole Larson talks about goal-setting with her students as a way to "grow our brains."

In the last two years, Larson and other teachers at the school have worked more intentionally with tracking the progress of each individual student and differentiating instruction so all kids are working at their level.

In practice, this might mean instead of having all kids reading the same book, Larson might break the class into three groups, with each group reading at a different level.

Fourth- and fifth-graders in Katie Ellwein's classroom work on math on their Chromebooks, using a program that adapts as students answer questions correctly or incorrectly, again, helping students learn regardless of the starting point.

"When they're working at their level, they're more engaged," Larson said.

Amanda Parker has seen the effects of differentiating instruction firsthand in her own child's progress.

Her daughter, Gabrielle Parker, was a third-grade student at Laura B. Anderson last year and was learning beyond her grade level.

"They put her in an advanced class at LBA," Parker said. "She was learning the cells in the body and plant organisms. She was teaching me things by the end of the school year."

Parker also appreciated the attention teachers gave to setting long-term goals. Her daughter was among several students who took a field trip to the University of Sioux Falls to see what college is like and what they're working toward.

In a conference room near the principal's office at Laura B. Anderson, an entire wall is dedicated to visualizing student performance.

Multicolored index cards span various categories of student achievement. Each card has a student's name, photo and description of their performance on the most recent assessment.

"This is what made the difference," Zielenski said.

Of course, a wall full of index cards isn't responsible for the academic growth of 320 students, but shifting to a data-driven teaching model played a major role.

Teachers met regularly in teams that bring together special education teachers, reading specialists, English language learner teachers and any other support staff who interact with kids.

Everyone has a seat at the table, and they create consistent assessments to see how kids are doing in math and reading at any point in time.

For example, third graders may all answer the same three questions about a reading assignment. Their performance on that small assessment then helps teachers get immediate feedback as to how kids are doing so they can pace their lessons accordingly.

"There's no wasted learning time in a classroom for a student," said Instructional Coach Stephanie Muchow.

The level of teacher collaboration is aided by the consistent professional development Zielenski has provided her staff.

When Laura B. Anderson became a focus school, it received additional federal grant funding to the tune of about \$26,000 annually.

A portion of that extra money paid to send teachers to conferences with professional learning communities. Zielenski said getting all her teachers to these training opportunities helped create buy-in for the data-driven instruction model.

Part of the grant funds also went to cover the costs of Summer Climb, a two-year-old summer learning program the Sioux Falls School District started to improve reading and math scores in schools with high rates of poverty.

Zielenski hopes to continue offering Summer Climb and professional development opportunities for her teachers, but she recognizes the school's belt will tighten.

The federal grant continues one more year, but then Zielenski knows her budget will need to get more "creative."

Laura B. Anderson teachers will continue to use data-driven instruction, and the index card wall in the office isn't going anywhere.

Where the changes likely will come is in the amount of time teachers have to collaborate. Last year, teachers took a full day each quarter to meet and go over student progress.

In future years, the funds may not be there to hire substitutes for these full-day meetings or send teachers to conferences as frequently.

Zielenski's not worried about the quality of instruction, though. Teachers already have a commitment to meeting students where they are and helping set goals.

Larson, for one, said the move to focus school gave her more drive to help students succeed. Now that the school is in the "progressing" category, she's going to keep making sure her students keep moving forward.

"When students have clear goals," Larson said. "They come to school with a purpose."

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

South Dakota celebrates Native American's Day

By JIM HOLLAND, Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The sweet aroma of smoldering sage wafted through the air at Main Street Square as the late morning sunshine chased away the persistent chill of an October day.

Native Americans' Day participants — adults and children alike — smudged themselves with the smoke, waving it toward themselves with outstretched palms and washing it over their bodies and around their heads in a ritual of spiritual cleansing dating back centuries.

Recognizing cultural similarities and the cleansing of differences is what Native Americans' Day is all about, said Kobi Ebert of the Oyate Okolakiciye Prevention Coalition, which was established in 2010 to prevent underage drinking.

"This is a celebration of all cultures, Native American and non-Native alike," Ebert told the Rapid City Journal .

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The activities at Main Street Square started with prayers in Lakota by Kay Allison, a signing of the Lord's Prayer and a Hoop Dance by her daughter, Marina Allison. Also included were displays of cultural art, along with a mixing of old and contemporary flute and guitar music by Sequoia Crosswhite, cultural relations adviser at the Children's Home Society.

"It's a great opportunity to express the lives and the things the indigenous peoples of the Americas shared with the newcomers from Europe," Crosswhite said. "It's also an opportunity to share with the kids what happened back in those times."

Native Americans' Day, formerly known as Columbus Day, is celebrated in South Dakota. In 1989 the state Legislature approved a proposal by then-Gov. George S. Mickelson, at the urging of newspaper publisher Tim Giago, to rename the holiday.

Many places have adopted Indigenous Peoples Day in lieu of Columbus Day since then.

The first Native Americans' Day in South Dakota was celebrated in 1990, 100 years after the Wounded Knee Massacre.

"It's awesome for (Mickelson's) legacy to carry on here in 2017," Crosswhite said.

This year's celebration at Main Street Square was the third sponsored by the Oyate Okolakiciye Prevention Coalition.

Event organizers at Crazy Horse Memorial near Custer first had to clear 5 inches of snow at the memorial grounds before the events, which included hands-on activities, a program, food drive, Native American performers and a buffalo stew feed.

Vaughn Vargas was recognized as Native American Educator of the Year during ceremonies at Crazy Horse. Vargas, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, was named the Rapid City Police Department's first cultural advisory coordinator by Police Chief Karl Jegeris in 2015.

Jadwiga Ziolkowski of Crazy Horse Memorial said Vargas was honored for establishing understanding between police officers and Native Americans.

"The honor is based upon the fact that education comes in different ways and how you educate others," she said. "The work that he does as community advisory coordinator of the Rapid City Police Department is so very important for so many young people."

Crosswhite said Mickelson's legacy in his efforts to create Native Americans' Day serve to help break down barriers between cultures as exemplified by the Lakota saying, "Mitakuye oyasin," meaning, "We are all from one." The phrase is also commonly translated as "all my relatives."

Ebert also made that observation as children played on the turf courtyard at Main Street Square.

"You see these children out here running and playing together and learning that we are so alike in many ways," she said.

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

No insanity defense for suspect in 2015 Roslyn slaying

WEBSTER, S.D. (AP) — Testimony is beginning this week in the trial of a man accused of fatally shooting another man in his Roslyn home two years ago.

A jury was selected last week to hear the case of 46-year-old Jason Lewandowski, who faces murder and other charges in the death of 33-year-old Jeremy Hendrickson in late 2015.

Defense attorney Tom Sannes tells the American News that Lewandowski maintains his innocence and will not mount an insanity defense.

The trial comes after a judge last month declined to accept a plea deal in which Lewandowski would have pleaded guilty to manslaughter. It's scheduled to run through Oct. 20.

Defendant's name has been corrected in summary, third graph of this story.

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

California winery owner watching wildfires from Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls man with a Napa Valley connection is fearful the wildfires that have killed 11 people and caused widespread devastation will consume his business in wine country.

Dan Blue co-owns Jessup Cellars in Yountville near where the fires burned Tuesday. Blue tells KELO-TV the winery tasting room has lost power, as has much of the community. One of his partners, as well as their winemaker, have evacuated their homes.

Blue says the smoke in the air can get into the grapes so it will complicate the wine-making process. And if replanting the vineyards is necessary, it takes four years before it bears fruit.

Information from: KELO-TV, <http://www.keloland.com>

Former British prime minister draws a crowd in Black Hills

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Former British Prime Minister David Cameron drew a crowd when he visited the Black Hills.

Cameron indulged a 51st birthday wish by horseback riding through the Black Hills on Monday. He later spoke to about 1,800 people at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City, touching on topics including Russian President Vladimir Putin and the United Kingdom's ongoing exit from the European Union.

The Rapid City Journal reports his talk was part of the John T. Vucurevich Foundation's annual speaker series.

Cameron served as prime minister for six years and led the British Conservative Party for 11 years. Since stepping down last year, he's been active in spreading awareness of Alzheimer's disease.

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

Inmate serving life for murder conspiracy dies after illness

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A state prison inmate serving a life sentence for a Lawrence County murder conspiracy has died following an illness.

State corrections officials say 82-year-old Donald Wiegiers died Saturday at a Sioux Falls hospital. An autopsy will be conducted.

The Rapid City Journal reports that Wiegiers was sentenced to life in 1983 for conspiracy to commit murder in the 1981 contract killing of Deadwood businessman Russell Keller.

The man convicted of shooting and stabbing Keller, David Waff, is serving a life sentence at the State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls. The man believed to have masterminded the killing, Keller's business partner and stepfather-in-law, Melvin Brown, hanged himself at the Lawrence County Jail in 1982.

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

A cigarette, a car backfire: Small sparks can make big fires

By PAUL ELIAS, Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A carelessly discarded cigarette, a downed power line, a car's backfire or a chainsaw's pull. Just about anything could have started any one of the wildfires now tearing through Northern California, authorities said.

"Every spark is going to ignite a fire," said Ken Pimlott, the state's top firefighter. He said the risk remains "extreme for new starts."

Pimlott said Tuesday that investigators are looking into the causes, but no determination has been made at any of the 17 sites of major wildfires blazing in Northern California.

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Pimlott, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection director, said "98 percent" of all wild-fires are started by people and it's unlikely lightning is to blame for any of the fires that exploded overnight Sunday, killing at least 17 people so far.

California's most dangerous wildfire season comes in autumn, when summer heat and insects have left brush dead and dried out, and winds are especially hot, dry and strong.

"This is traditionally California's worst time for fires," Pimlott said.

Pimlott said firefighters typically respond to 300 blazes a week during this season, but nearly all are extinguished quickly and with minimal damage. It's unusual to have many major fires burning at once, he said.

However, conditions were ripe for wildfires in California wine country after record rains last winter created an abundance of dry vegetation, which combined with low humidity and unusually high winds gusting to 79 mph to create fast-moving infernos.

None of the major fires has been contained. They are spread over a 200-mile region north of San Francisco from Napa in the south to Redding in the north, taxing firefighting resources.

"Our primary effort is going to put containment lines in as quickly as possible," Pimlott said Tuesday.

Napa County Fire Chief Barry Biermann said fires had been moving too fast and unpredictably for firefighters to attack directly.

"The winds were extremely erratic during those conditions of high winds and a lot of things happened," Biermann said Tuesday. He and others said resources are stretched thin as firefighters battle so many major blazes simultaneously.

California Office of Emergency Services director Mark Ghilarducci said more than 4,000 firefighters, law enforcement officials and others are responding. Airplanes are dropping fire retardant and fresh firefighters from Southern California and Nevada are streaming in to help. Lines are being dug on the south side of many blazes in preparation for northerly winds picking up.

The U.S. Department of Defense is sending a large drone to help map the fires and assess damage. The California National Guard is also providing gasoline to firefighters and other first responders because many service stations in the area are without power and unable to pump fuel.

The biggest and most devastating fire is burning in Santa Rosa, a city of 175,000 people 45 miles north of San Francisco. A fire there swept through several neighborhoods and business districts, destroying at least 550 homes and 21 commercial buildings. Many residents had only minutes to flee. Eleven of the 17 fatalities found so far have occurred in and near Santa Rosa.

Many roads are closed throughout Northern California, though U.S. Route 101 was reopened in two spots Tuesday. California Highway Patrol officers are helping with security at evacuation centers and providing escorts to rescue vehicles traveling in dangerous areas, commissioner Warren Stanley said.

He also had a request for motorists in the area:

"Anybody who is driving around — if you're smoking in your car — please do not throw your cigarettes out the window."

Spanish PM demands clarity from Catalonia on independence

By CIARAN GILES, Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy demanded on Wednesday that the Catalan leader clarify whether he has declared independence, issuing a veiled threat that the central government could limit or rescind the region's autonomy if he has.

He said the Catalan government's response would be crucial in deciding "events over the coming days."

It is the first time that Rajoy has openly said that Article 155 of the Spanish constitution will be the next step taken by the government if Catalan authorities don't backtrack. He said the government "wants to offer certainty to citizens" and that it is "necessary to return tranquility and calm."

Rajoy issued the demand following a special Cabinet meeting to respond to an announcement from the head of the wealthy Catalonia region, Carles Puigdemont, that he was proceeding with a declaration of independence but was suspending it for several weeks to facilitate negotiations.

In a highly anticipated speech Tuesday night, Puigdemont said the landslide victory in a disputed Oct. 1 referendum gave his government in the regional capital, Barcelona, the grounds to implement its long-held desire to break century-old ties with Spain.

But he proposed that the regional parliament suspend the effects of the declaration to commence a dialogue and help reduce tension, in what is Spain's worst political crisis in decades. The central government in Madrid has given little indication it is willing to talk, saying it did not accept the declaration and did not consider the referendum or its results to be valid.

Spanish Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Saenz de Santamaria said the Catalan leader "doesn't know where he is, where he is going and with whom he wants to go."

She said Puigdemont had put Catalonia "in the greatest level of uncertainty seen yet."

Article 155 of the Constitution allows the central government to take some or total control of any of its 17 regions if they don't comply with their legal obligations. This would begin with a Cabinet meeting and a warning to the regional government to fall into line. Then, the Senate could be called to approve the measure.

Some 2.3 million Catalans — or 43 percent of the electorate in the northeastern region — voted in the referendum. Regional authorities say 90 percent were in favor and declared the results valid. Those who opposed the referendum had said they would boycott the vote.

Rajoy's government had repeatedly refused to grant Catalonia permission to hold a referendum on the grounds that it was unconstitutional, since it would only poll a portion of Spain's 46 million residents.

Catalonia's separatist camp has grown in recent years, strengthened by Spain's recent economic crisis and by Madrid's rejection of attempts to increase self-rule in the region.

The political deadlock has plunged Spain into its deepest political crisis in more than four decades, since democratic rule was restored following the dictatorship of Gen. Francisco Franco.

Aritz Parra in Barcelona, Spain, contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to say that Catalonia is a region, not a province.

Hotel questions revised timeline of Las Vegas massacre

By MICHAEL BALSAMO, Associated Press

A day after authorities revised the timeline of events on the night of the Las Vegas mass shooting, the hotel where the gunman was staying is casting doubt on the changes.

Police said earlier this week that they believe Stephen Paddock shot a hotel security guard through the door of his high-rise hotel suite six minutes before he unleashed a barrage of bullets into a crowd at a musical performance below. The injured guard ran down a hall using his radio and possibly a hallway phone to call for help, reporting he had been shot in the leg.

That account differs dramatically from the one police gave last week: that Paddock ended his hail of fire on the crowd, where 58 people were killed and hundreds injured, in order to shoot through his door and wound the unarmed guard, Jesus Campos.

But late Tuesday, the company that owns the Mandalay Bay hotel casino questioned the new timeline.

"We cannot be certain about the most recent timeline," said Debra DeShong, a spokeswoman for MGM Resorts International. "We believe what is currently being expressed may not be accurate."

Las Vegas police did not respond Tuesday night to questions about the hotel's statement or whether investigators stand behind the revised timeline released earlier in the week.

The revised timeline raises questions about whether better communication could have allowed officers to respond more quickly and take out the gunman before the attack. It remains unclear if police ever received a call for help from the injured guard.

"This changes everything," said Joseph Giacalone, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a former New York City police sergeant. "There absolutely was an opportunity in that timeframe that

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some of this could've been mitigated."

Nicole Rapp, whose mother was knocked to the ground at the Route 91 Harvest Festival and trampled by panicked concertgoers as bullets rained from above, said she's "having a hard time wrapping my head around" why police changed the timeline of the shooting.

"It's very confusing to me that they are just discovering this a week later," she said. "How did we not know this before? It's traumatic for the victims and their families not to be sure of what happened."

Undersheriff Kevin McMahill said on Tuesday that the guard had been responding to a door alarm on the hotel's 32nd floor when he heard an odd drilling sound.

Paddock had power tools and was trying to drill a hole in a wall, perhaps to mount another of the security cameras he set up around him, or to point a rifle through, but he never completed the work, Clark County Sheriff Joe Lombardo said. He also drilled holes and bolted a metal bar to try to prevent the opening of an emergency exit door near his room.

As the guard notified maintenance and security of the stairwell issue, several single shots were fired into the hallway before he shot again, unloading more than 200 rounds at the guard and a maintenance man, McMahill said. Campos, the security guard, was struck in the leg and injured, police said.

Campos reported to hotel security dispatchers that he was shot before Paddock opened fire on the crowd, Assistant Sheriff Tom Roberts told The Los Angeles Times on Tuesday.

It wasn't clear exactly what time Campos called for help or if the hotel had relayed the information about the shooting to police. Las Vegas police did not respond to questions from The Associated Press about whether hotel security or anyone else in the hotel called 911 to report the hallway shooting.

"Our officers got there as fast as they possibly could and they did what they were trained to do," another Las Vegas assistant sheriff, Todd Fasulo, said Tuesday.

The six minutes that transpired between the hallway shooting and the start of the gunman's fusillade wouldn't have been enough time for officers to stop the attack, said Ron Hosko, a former FBI assistant director who has worked on SWAT teams. Rather than rush in without a game plan, police would have been formulating the best response to the barricaded gunman, he said.

"Maybe that's enough time to get the first patrolman onto the floor but the first patrolman is not going to go knock on that customer's door and say 'What's going on with 200 holes in the door?'" Hosko said.

McMahill defended the hotel and said the encounter that night between Paddock and the security guard and maintenance man disrupted the gunman's plans. Paddock fired more than 1,000 bullets and had more than 1,000 rounds left in his room, the undersheriff said.

"I can tell you I'm confident that he was not able to fully execute his heinous plan and it certainly had everything to do with being disrupted," McMahill said. He added: "I don't think the hotel dropped the ball."

Associated Press writers Ken Ritter and Sally Ho in Las Vegas, Anita Snow in Phoenix and Sadie Gurman in Washington contributed to this report.

For complete coverage of the Las Vegas shooting, click here: <https://apnews.com/tag/LasVegasmassshooting> .

California wildfires reduces years-long dreams to embers

By JONATHAN J. COOPER and ELLEN KNICKMEYER, Associated Press

SANTA ROSA, Calif. (AP) — Jose Garnica worked for more than two decades to build up his dream home that was reduced to ashes in a matter of minutes by the deadly firestorm striking Northern California.

Garnica, who moved to the U.S. from Mexico over 20 years ago, had finally decided he could afford to upgrade parts of his Santa Rosa house after building a stable career with the local garbage company and saving nearly everything he and his wife earned.

Over the past two years, he replaced the siding and installed a new air conditioner, stainless steel appliances and new flooring. He bought a new 60-inch (1.5-meter) television. On Saturday, the 44-year-old

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got an estimate to replace the fence, one of the last items on his list.

But at 3:30 a.m. Monday, he watched his house become one of the more than 2,000 homes and businesses destroyed by the series of blazes across the region that had killed at least 17 people.

"You feel helpless," he said Tuesday. "There's nothing you can do. Everything, your whole life, goes through your mind in a minute. Everything you had done. I left all my family behind in Mexico to get a better life. Finally we were just coming to the comfort level, and this happens."

Garnica tried to save the home with a garden hose. He and a neighbor tried to cut open the neighbor's above-ground pool, hoping the water would protect their homes. In 15 minutes, the entire neighborhood caught fire, he said.

"If I knew this was going to happen, maybe those 45 minutes I spent trying to put the fire down, I should've just grabbed all the belongings," Garnica said. "But I didn't think it was going to happen."

Those destructive flames raced across the wine country of Napa and Sonoma counties and the coastal beauty of Mendocino further north, leaving little more than smoldering ashes and eye-stinging smoke in their wake. Whole neighborhoods are gone, with only brick chimneys and charred laundry machines to mark sites that were once family homes.

"This is just pure devastation, and it's going to take us a while to get out and comb through all of this," said Ken Pimlott, chief of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. He said the state had "several days of fire weather conditions to come."

In some torched neighborhoods, fire hydrants still had hoses attached, apparently abandoned by firefighters who had to flee.

The wildfires already rank among the deadliest in California history, and officials expected the death toll to increase as the scope of destruction becomes clear. At least 185 people were injured during the blazes that cropped up Sunday night. Nearly 200 people were reported missing in Sonoma County alone.

David Leal, 55, and his wife and stepson salvaged a few decorative items from their Santa Rosa home, including a wind chime, tiles from the backsplash in the kitchen, a decorative sun and a cross.

"Our plan is to keep those things, and when we rebuild, they'll be mementos of what we've lived through, and of, just, resilience," Leal said. "It's hard not to get emotional."

In the meantime, Leal got a post office box so the family can get mail, a new laptop and some clothes. They're living out of their two vehicles for now.

"We'll be back home again sooner than later, and with our chins held high," he said, choking back tears. "And hopefully we'll be amongst our neighbors and friends as they do the same."

Leal, a U.S. Navy veteran, evacuated with his family, two dogs and cat to nearby Petaluma late Sunday after seeing fierce, hot winds and flames whipping in the distance.

"We didn't have time to think about what to grab. We grabbed what we saw," he said. He got his external hard drive, which was lying out, but left his laptop.

Garnica also hung onto hope, saying he was not back at square one.

"I came into the States with nothing. I didn't have anything," Garnica said. "I think I'm better off than how I came in. At least I got a job. I got a family. I'm healthy."

Knickmeyer reported from Sonoma, California. Associated Press writers Jocelyn Gecker, Olga R. Rodriguez, Sudhin Thanawala, Juliet Williams and Andrew Dalton in San Francisco and Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento contributed to this report.

Follow the AP's complete wildfire coverage here: <https://apnews.com/tag/Wildfires>.

Video of fatal attack on Kim Jong Nam shown at women's trial

By EILEEN NG, Associated Press

SHAH ALAM, Malaysia (AP) — A security camera video showing the estranged half brother of North Korea's leader being attacked at a Malaysian airport and the two suspects hurrying away afterward was

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presented at their murder trial on Wednesday.

The video shows Kim Jong Nam arriving at the departure hall at the Kuala Lumpur international airport on Feb. 13 and moving to a check-in area. A woman identified in court as Vietnamese suspect Doan Thi Huong approaches Kim and clasps both hands on his face from behind before fleeing.

The second suspect, Indonesian Siti Aisyah, can't be seen during the alleged attack but police officer Wan Azirul Nizam Che Wan Aziz testified that he identified her as a person seen running away in a different direction.

Wan Azirul told the court that Huong's manner was "aggressive" and she didn't apologize to Kim, like she did to another person she approached at the airport two days earlier. A video of that encounter, which was described as a practice session for smearing Kim's face with VX nerve agent, was also shown to the court.

The women are seen in other videos hurrying to separate restrooms, holding their hands away from their bodies as if to avoid contact. Wan Azirul testified that their hands were in normal positions after they left the restrooms. He said there were restrooms on the floor where the attack took place, but the women went to restrooms one floor down.

Prosecutors contend the women knew they were handling poison, and a chemical weapons expert who testified earlier said VX could be removed safely by careful hand-washing within 15 minutes of exposure. The expert, a government chemist, detected traces of VX on Huong's fingernail clippings and on both women's clothing, and testified that the amount of VX detected on Kim's face exceeded a fatal dose.

"She seemed to be anxious," Wan Azirul told the court. "From my observation, Doan has been informed and knew what needed to be done. Even though she seemed to be in a panic, she knew what to do."

Their defense lawyers have said Huong and Aisyah were duped by suspected North Korean agents into believing they were playing a harmless prank for a TV show.

Wan Azirul testified that Kim was carrying \$100,000 in cash in his backpack.

Security videos shown later in the day traced Kim's movements after he was attacked. He gestured to his eyes and face while meeting with police officers, and he appeared to stagger as he walked with one officer to the airport medical clinic. An unconscious Kim was later seen being pushed on a gurney and pumped with oxygen by medical staff.

Videos of the women show they went to the airport taxi stand after leaving the restrooms.

One showed Huong, wearing a white long-sleeve top emblazoned with the letters "LOL" — the acronym for laughing out loud — and a blue skirt, waiting at the taxi stand. Aisyah, dressed in a gray sleeveless top, jeans and a scarf, then arrived and got into a taxi that appeared to be waiting for her while Huong was still in the taxi line.

Wan Azirul said Aisyah removed her scarf during the attack on Kim and put it back on after she came out of the restroom.

Huong and Aisyah have pleaded not guilty to murder charges that carry a mandatory death sentence if they are convicted.

The videos, including some that had already been released by news media, were captured from security cameras around the airport. The two women appeared to be on their own and there was no indication that they knew each other.

Earlier, the court was shown a video of Huong buying a taxi voucher at the airport two hours before the attack on Kim. Aisyah, meanwhile, was seen in another security video meeting with an unidentified man at a cafe near the attack area 45 minutes before the assault on Kim.

The video showed the man, wearing a black baseball cap and glasses, arriving at the cafe holding a white plastic bag. He then set up his cellphone on a selfie stick on a table just before Aisyah arrived. They chatted and had a drink, and the man handed a ticket to Aisyah before she left. Wan Azirul later identified the ticket as a taxi voucher.

The judge, lawyers and the two suspects are expected to visit the crime scene next week.

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. NORTHERN CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES DEATH TOLL EXPECTED TO RISE

The fast-moving blazes, many of which tore through the wine country of Sonoma and Napa counties, destroyed more than 2,000 homes and businesses and left at least 17 people dead.

2. WHAT COULD CAUSE WILDFIRES

A discarded cigarette, a downed powerline, a car's backfire or a chainsaw's pull. Just about anything that can cause a spark could start an out-of-control blaze.

3. HOTEL QUESTIONS REVISED TIMELINE BY POLICE OF VEGAS MASSACRE

An MGM Resorts International spokeswoman says the company, which owns the Mandalay Bay hotel where the gunman stayed, believes "what is currently being expressed may not be accurate."

4. WHERE TRUMP IS HEADED

The president will pitch his tax plan as a boon for truckers in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania — the latest stop on a cross-country tour aimed at selling his tax reform proposal.

5. PUERTO RICANS LEAVE EN MASSE AS HURRICANE WOES LINGER

With conditions still grim back home — about 85 percent lacking electricity and 40 percent without running water — tens of thousands have fled to the U.S. mainland.

6. CRITICS SAY TRUMP BIRTH CONTROL RULE IGNORES SCIENCE

Some doctors and researchers say it overlooks known benefits of contraception while selectively citing data that raise doubts about effectiveness and safety.

7. LATEST REVELATIONS MAY SEAL WEINSTEIN'S FATE IN HOLLYWOOD

Gwyneth Paltrow and Angelina Jolie add their own accounts to a deluge of sexual harassment and assault accusations against the disgraced movie mogul.

8. VIDEO OF FATAL ATTACK ON KIM JONG NAM SHOWN AT MURDER TRIAL

Security footage shows the estranged half brother of North Korea's leader being accosted at a Malaysian airport and two female suspects hurrying away afterward.

9. NFL MAY CHANGE POLICY THAT PLAYERS 'SHOULD' STAND FOR ANTHEM

An NFL spokesman sidesteps a question of whether "should" would be changed to "must" when owners meet in New York next week.

10. WHY UNITED STATES MISSED THE WORLD CUP

A year of defensive breakdowns under two coaching staffs did in the U.S. team, which will miss the premier soccer competition for the first time since 1986.

Trump to pitch tax plan as boon for truckers

By JILL COLVIN and JOSH BOAK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump will pitch his tax plan as a boon for truckers in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania Wednesday — the latest stop on a cross-country tour aimed at selling his tax reform proposal.

Trump will be speaking in front of an audience of roughly 1,000 people, including lots of truckers, against a backdrop of big rigs at a local air plane hangar, according to the White House. Trump is pitching a plan that would dramatically cut corporate tax rates from 35 percent to 20 percent, reduce the number of personal income tax brackets and boost the standard deduction.

At his latest stop, Trump will argue that his tax reform framework will benefit truckers by lowering their tax rates, boosting manufacturing, and making it easier for families to pass their trucking businesses onto their children, the White House says.

"When your trucks are moving, America is growing. That is why my administration is taking historic steps to remove the barriers that slow you down," he's expected to say, according to excerpts provided by the White House. "America first means putting American truckers first."

Trump has left it up to Congress to fill in many specifics of his plan, which leaves out details such as

which income levels his new tax brackets would apply to.

Trump's proposal includes cutting the top income tax rate, getting rid of the alternative minimum tax, and eliminating the federal estate tax. He also wants to encourage multinational companies to bring back, or repatriate, cash that they've kept overseas. All told, there's more than \$1 trillion in cash held abroad by S&P 500 companies, according to Deutsche Bank.

"We will eliminate the penalty on returning future earnings back to the United States and we will impose a one-time low tax on money currently parked overseas so it can be brought back home to America, where it belongs," Trump is expected to say Wednesday, adding that his "Council of Economic Advisers estimates that this change alone would likely give the typical American household a \$4,000 pay raise."

The \$4,000 in additional income estimate comes from a back of the envelope calculation by White House economics adviser Kevin Hassett based on companies returning 71 percent of their foreign profits over the course of eight years.

This estimate appears to assume that the returned profits would flow to workers in the form of higher wages. But many economists say much of it would likely be returned to investors in the form of stock dividends and buybacks.

Paltrow and Jolie accounts may have sealed Weinstein's fate

By LINDSEY BAHR, AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — They waited years to speak, but two of Hollywood's most powerful women might have helped seal the fate of Harvey Weinstein.

Both Gwyneth Paltrow and Angelina Jolie added their first-person accounts of uncomfortable experiences with Weinstein to the ever-growing list of accusations against the movie mogul from women alleging decades of systematic sexual harassment and assault. The accusers have come from everywhere — actresses you've heard of, actresses you haven't, models, assistants, employees, a reporter and young women who found themselves in the orbit of the powerful executive.

But, as the story often goes, no one expected it to go this high.

Speaking to The New York Times, in the paper's second round of Weinstein exposés, Paltrow describes a now familiar-sounding scene of her at age 22 being asked to meet Weinstein, who had just cast her as the title character in the adaptation of Jane Austen's "Emma." She was summoned to Weinstein's hotel room, where he proceeded to touch her and suggest a massage in the bedroom.

Jolie also remembered Weinstein making advances in a hotel room early in her career. She never worked with him again.

The damning accounts came just hours after The New Yorker published its own explosive investigation into Weinstein's conduct that included three accusations of rape: One from Italian actress and director Asia Argento. There were accounts of harassment from Mira Sorvino and Rosanna Arquette and others too. The New Yorker also reported that 16 former and current executives and assistants at The Weinstein Co. and Miramax either witnessed or knew of Weinstein's unwanted sexual advances: "All sixteen said the behavior was widely known within both Miramax and the Weinstein Company."

It is a list that continued to grow Tuesday as the minutes ticked by. After the one-two punch of the Times and The New Yorker articles Tuesday, more accusations followed too. One from a former actress who recounted Weinstein meeting her wearing a bathrobe with nothing on underneath at the Sundance Film Festival in 2008, the other from actress Heather Graham, who says he implied she would have to sleep with him for a role.

A representative for the mogul vehemently denied allegations of non-consensual sex in a statement to the magazine.

"I can't think of a movie-business scandal of this scale," author and entertainment writer Mark Harris tweeted on Tuesday. "It pushes into and implicates every corner of the industry."

The entertainment industry, which Weinstein ruled for so long, is quaking at the revelations from Paltrow, Jolie and others.

"These are people who everyone knows and everyone respects," said Anne Thompson, the editor at

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large of IndieWire. "I thought he was done before."

Paltrow might have been early in her career when she met Weinstein in that hotel room, but she was hardly an unknown in Hollywood circles.

"Gwyneth Paltrow is a child of Hollywood," Thompson said. "She's Steven Spielberg's goddaughter. This is someone who all the powerful people in Hollywood know very well as a family friend."

Tuesday's revelations might be the death knell for the era of Harvey Weinstein.

After last week's initial report from the Times, which spotlighted accounts from Ashley Judd and sexual harassment settlements given to people like Rose McGowan, condemnations trickled in from Hollywood and Washington D.C. But as the days went by and accusations both continued and escalated, it soon turned into a flood. Now President Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, George Clooney, Meryl Streep, Matt Damon, Ben Affleck, Leonardo DiCaprio, Jennifer Lawrence, Bob Iger, Jeffrey Katzenberg, Judd Apatow, Judi Dench, Glenn Close and more and have all come out with statements against him and in support of the women who are speaking out.

Even Weinstein's wife of 10 years, Marchesa designer Georgina Chapman, said Tuesday that she plans to divorce him. The company he helped co-found not only fired him, but its board of directors, including his brother Bob Weinstein, stated that Weinstein's "alleged actions are antithetical to human decency" and that they had no knowledge of this conduct. The University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts rejected a \$5 million pledge from Weinstein that was intended for a female filmmaker endowment.

Weinstein, it seems, has no one left on his side but his lawyers, and possibly Lindsay Lohan, who said in an Instagram story late Tuesday that she feels "very bad" for him.

For now, everyone is waiting to see where the chips will fall and who will be implicated or exposed in what The New Yorker described as a "culture of complicity" that could extend far outside the confines of Miramax and Weinstein Company employees.

Weinstein himself has not commented since the initial Times expose published last week. Others are wondering whether accusations will come out against more powerful men in the industry, or if real changes might start to be implemented.

"I worry that when predators like Weinstein go away, the whole web of obstacles for women in business remains," wrote actor Alan Alda on Twitter. "Still lots of work to be done."

The same thing is on the mind of Cathy Schulman, the president of the advocacy group Women in Film, who says that the culture that allowed Weinstein to operate for so long is related to the vast underrepresentation of women in Hollywood in all aspects of the business.

"One thing I haven't seen is a lot of statements from the big corporations. I haven't seen the studios and networks and agencies make comments. At the end of the day, what are they going to do? It's those people who make decisions about which content to finance. Are they going to make a change because of all this? That's the big question mark," she asked.

"Frankly if everyone is going to speak up and it's going to be yesterday's fish wrap and let's wait for a hiatus and bring the guys back, then what have we really done?"

AP Film Writer Jake Coyle contributed from New York.

US misses World Cup because of numerous defensive breakdowns

By RONALD BLUM, AP Sports Writer

COUVA, Trinidad (AP) — Standing in the stadium tunnel near the U.S. locker room after the Collapse in Covina, captain Michael Bradley was asked over and over what went wrong.

How had the United States, a regional power that had made seven straight World Cup appearances, failed to qualify for next year's tournament?

What led to the Americans' stunning, crushing, almost farcical 2-1 loss to already eliminated Trinidad and Tobago that caused them to tumble to fifth in the six-nation final round of the North and Central American and Caribbean region.

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A year of defensive breakdowns under two coaching staffs did in the U.S., which finished with three wins, three losses and four ties.

"We like to hang our hat on the fact that we outwork teams and we press teams," goalkeeper Tim Howard said. "They won a lot of second balls tonight and put us under pressure."

A relentless work ethic the Americans relied on for years was absent too often.

"You can't go and score four, five goals every game. We have to be able to be hard to play against," forward Jozy Altidore said. "We weren't hard enough to play against too many times on these nights."

In this cycle, the Americans not only lost their first home qualifier since 2002, they lost two home games in a qualifying cycle for the first time since 1957 — during their 40-year absence from soccer's top event.

"When you lose the first two games and you drop points on too many days, your margin for error goes away, and so you know you're at the mercy of a night like this, where everything possible goes against you, both here and in the two other games," Bradley said. "When we start the hex poorly, when we don't take the points that we should on some other days, then you leave open the chance on the last day this can happen."

Bradley is 30 and may not play in another World Cup. Howard (38) and Clint Dempsey (34) will never again appear on soccer's biggest stage.

"If I said disappointment, it would be an understatement," Howard said.

A look at what went wrong in qualifying for the United States:

NOV. 11, 2016

The U.S. had been 30-0-2 in qualifying at home since a 3-2 loss to Honduras at Washington's RFK Stadium in September 2001 and scheduled its opener of the hex against Mexico at Columbus, Ohio, where the Americans had won four straight qualifiers against El Tri by 2-0 scores. Miguel Layun put Mexico ahead in the 20th minute with a shot that deflected off defender Timmy Chandler and past Howard. Bobby Wood tied the score in the 49th, but in the 89th minute 37-year-old Rafa Marquez got away from defender John Brooks, who was blocked by Altidore, and Marquez nodded in Layun's corner kick for the go-ahead goal in Mexico's 2-1 win.

NOV. 15, 2016

Costa Rica routed the visiting United States 4-0, the Americans' first four-goal loss in qualifying since 1980. Brooks' giveaway led to an attack culminating in Johan Venegas beating Brooks to a cross for the opening goal. Christian Pulisic's turnover set up Cristian Bolanos' goal, Brooks misplayed a looping pass leading to the third goal and Chandler was late to a cross as Joel Campbell scored his second of the night. Coach Jurgen Klinsmann was fired six days later and replaced by Bruce Arena, the U.S. coach from 1998-2006.

"There's going to need to be some urgency," Bradley said before boarding the team bus. "We're going to have to look collectively real hard in the mirror at ourselves."

MARCH 28, 2017

Four days after a 6-0 rout of Honduras at San Jose, California, in the first competitive match of Arena's return, Clint Dempsey's 39th-minute goal gave the U.S. the lead at Panama City. Gabriel Gomez tied the score four minutes later when he beat Tim Ream and Jorge Villafana to a loose ball following a thrown-in for an open 4-yard shot past Howard. The score finished 1-1.

JUNE 11, 2017

Arena changed seven starters with only two off days following a 2-0 win over Trinidad and Tobago at Commerce City, Colorado. Bradley's 40-yard chip in Mexico City's thin air put the U.S. ahead in the sixth minute at Estadio Azteca, but Carlos Vela equalized in the 23rd minute to finish a field-length move, cutting inside of 35-year-old left back DaMarcus Beasley for a 23-yard shot that beat goalkeeper Brad Guzan to the near post. The game ended 1-1.

SEPT. 1, 2017

Marco Urena spun around Ream, caught Howard leaning and beat the goalkeeper to the far post in the 30th minute. Urena doubled the lead in the 82nd with an 18-yard shot after David Guzman intercepted a poor pass by Geoff Cameron, giving Costa Rica a 2-0 win at Harrison, New Jersey.

SEPT. 5, 2017

Romell Quioto put Honduras ahead in the 27th minute at San Pedro Sula after defender Omar Gonzalez failed to clear the ball with a slide tackle and left an open shot. Wood's 85th-minute goal salvaged a draw that kept the Americans in fourth place, behind Panama but ahead of Honduras on goal difference. "He just kind of like fell over the ball a little bit," Arena said of Gonzalez.

OCT. 10, 2017

A 4-0 rout of Panama days earlier in Orlando, Florida, moved the Americans back into third place and put them in position to qualify with a win over Trinidad and Tobago, almost certainly with a tie (because of goal difference) or even a defeat if Panama failed to beat Costa Rica and Honduras did not defeat Mexico. A loss coupled by either a Costa Rica or Honduras defeat would mean a two-game playoff for the U.S. next month against Australia.

But 28 years after the U.S. won at Trinidad and Tobago to return to the World Cup for the first time since 1950, the Soca Warriors went ahead in the 17th minute when Gonzalez tried to clear a cross but sent the ball off his left shin and looping over Howard. Alvin Jones scored on a 35-yard shot in the 37th and while Pulisic cut the gap in the 47th, Dempsey hit a post in the 77th, and both Panama and Costa Rica rallied from halftime deficits to win.

Critics say Trump birth control rule ignores science

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration's new birth control rule is raising questions among some doctors and researchers, who say it overlooks known benefits of contraception while selectively citing data that raise doubts about effectiveness and safety.

"This rule is listing things that are not scientifically validated, and in some cases things that are wrong, to try to justify a decision that is not in the best interests of women and society," said Dr. Hal Lawrence, CEO of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, a professional society representing women's health specialists.

Two recently issued rules — one addressing religious objections and the other, moral objections — allow more employers to opt out of covering birth control as a preventive benefit for women under the Obama health care law. Although the regulations ultimately address matters of individual conscience and religious teaching, they also dive into medical research and scholarly studies on birth control.

It's on the science that researchers are questioning the Trump administration. They say officials ignored some recent research and stretched other studies.

"The interpretation is very selective in terms of the science that they use," said Alina Salganicoff, director of women's health policy at the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation. "It's always possible to find one study that validates your claim, but you have to look at the quality of the study and the totality of the research. You can make an argument that you don't agree because of your religious or moral objections, but that is a different discussion."

In a statement, Health and Human Services Department spokeswoman Caitlin Oakley responded to critics, saying: "The rules are focused on guaranteeing religious freedom and conscience protections for those Americans who have a religious or moral objection to providing certain services based on their sincerely held beliefs."

The administration also says some parts of the rules are meant to illustrate the sorts of concerns that religious objectors may have, and don't necessarily reflect government policy.

Here's a look at examples from the Trump administration's birth control rules that are raising questions:
THE MORNING-AFTER PILL

Emergency contraception is birth control for use after unprotected sex, often called the "morning-after pill."

Referring to the morning-after pill as well as intrauterine devices or IUDs, the regulations state that the Food and Drug Administration "includes in the category of 'contraceptives' certain drugs and devices that

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may not only prevent conception (fertilization), but also may prevent implantation of an embryo.”

Because of that, “many persons and organizations” believe emergency contraception methods cause “early abortion,” the regulations add.

But Princeton researcher James Trussell said that while studies years ago suggested the morning-after pill might affect the lining of a woman’s uterus and interfere with the implantation of a fertilized egg, more recent studies have not found such an effect.

“The preponderance of the evidence, and certainly the most recent evidence, is that there is no post-fertilization effect,” said Trussell.

That’s not included in the administration’s rule.

“The actual medical evidence is that it blocks ovulation,” or the release of an egg from the ovaries, explained Lawrence, the ob-gyn. “If you don’t ovulate, there is no egg to get fertilized. It’s not blocking implantation.”

EFFECTIVENESS OF BIRTH CONTROL

The Trump administration’s rule takes issue with the science behind the Obama-era decision to require most employers to cover birth control as preventive care.

It suggests that some studies cited in a key 2011 report did not show a direct cause-and-effect link between increased birth control use by women and a decline in unintended pregnancy.

But Adam Sonfield of the Guttmacher Institute said solid research does in fact exist. The organization does studies on reproductive health that are cited by opposing sides in the political debate.

For example, Sonfield cited a Guttmacher report which found that women who used birth control consistently year-round accounted for only 5 percent of unintended pregnancies in 2008.

“The vast majority of women use birth control at some point in their lives,” said Sonfield. “As a medical service, it’s far more universal than almost anything covered by insurance.”

George Washington University public health professor Susan Wood, a former women’s health chief for the FDA, said there’s very clear clinical data that contraception prevents pregnancy. Why else would the FDA approve birth control pills?

“They are just using this as a smoke screen,” Wood said of the administration. “They are picking out things that they like, and leaving out (studies) that support access to contraception.”

THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

The Trump administration’s rule suggests there may be a link between birth control and promiscuity.

It cites a study finding that between 1960 and 1990, “as contraceptive use increased, teen sexual activity outside of marriage likewise increased.” (The administration added a caveat that the study did not prove a cause-and-effect link.)

Lawrence, the ob-gyn, said he thinks that’s a stretch.

“There were a whole lot of other things going on in the ‘60s,” he said, such as changing social mores about sex before marriage. Also, many people relied on condoms, diaphragms and spermicides.

“The world of birth control in 2018 is about as similar to the world of birth control in 1960 as a Ralph Nader Chevy Corvair is to a space shuttle,” he said.

24 receive ‘genius grants’ from MacArthur Foundation

By SARA BURNETT, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A director who has taken opera from the concert hall to the streets of Los Angeles and an organizer who helped put a human face on the plight of young undocumented immigrants are among this year’s MacArthur fellows and recipients of the so-called “genius” grants.

The Chicago-based John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation on Wednesday announced the 24 fellows, who each receive \$625,000 over five years to spend any way they choose. The recipients work in a variety of fields, from computer science to theater, immunology and photography.

The foundation has awarded the fellowships annually since 1981 to people who show “exceptional creativity in their work and the prospect for still more in the future.” Previous winners have included “Hamilton”

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playwright Lin-Manuel Miranda, and author-journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates. There is no application process. Instead, an anonymous pool of nominators brings potential fellows to the foundation's attention. Those selected learn they've been chosen shortly before the awards are announced.

For opera director and producer Yuval Sharon the news that he had been selected was "an enormous shock and honor." When the foundation called, he assumed they were seeking a referral for someone else who'd been nominated.

"I'm totally amazed," said Sharon, 37, the founder and artistic director of The Industry, a Los Angeles-based production company that produces operas in nontraditional spaces and formats. A 2015 production transported audience members and performers to various locations in Los Angeles via limousines, with singers and musicians performing along the way and at each stop.

His next work, an adaptation of the radio program "War of the Worlds" will utilize decommissioned World War II sirens to broadcast the performance occurring inside the theater onto the streets. The sounds of performers stationed outdoors — and likely the traffic and other street noise — will then be transmitted back into the concert hall.

Sharon said he comes across many people who don't think opera is for them, but he hopes hearing about these kinds of "audacious experiments" will peak their interest.

Another fellow, Cristina Jiménez Moreta, is co-founder and executive director of United We Dream, a national network of groups led by immigrant youth.

Moreta, 33, and her parents came to the U.S. illegally from Ecuador when she was a child. At 19, she revealed her undocumented status publicly. It was a move that put her and her family at risk of deportation, but also placed her at the forefront of a movement to change the way immigrants are perceived.

She was instrumental in pressing for the 2012 adoption of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, the now-endangered executive order that allowed thousands of undocumented young people to live without fear of deportation.

Moreta said the fellowship is recognition of the resilience shown by her parents and other immigrants who "had the courage to stand up and say 'we are here, this is our home and we are fighting.'"

The first people she told were her parents, who were fearful when she started organizing but now join her in marches and to pass petitions.

"They're very proud," she said.

Also selected was Deyoud Bey, a photographer and educator from Chicago whose portraits often feature people from marginalized communities. For "The Birmingham Project," he commemorated the 1963 bombing at a church in Birmingham, Alabama, that killed six children, with a series of portraits of Birmingham residents who were the age of each of the children killed and the age they would be if they had lived.

Others announced Wednesday were writer and cultural critic Viet Thanh Nguyen — whose novel, "The Sympathizer," about a communist double agent, won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for fiction — and Derek Peterson, a historian of East Africa and professor at the University of Michigan.

Online: www.macfound.org

This story has been corrected to show 24 recipients of MacArthur grants, not 23.

Wildfires leave chimneys, charred appliances in their wake

By JONATHAN J. COOPER and ELLEN KNICKMEYER, Associated Press

SANTA ROSA, Calif. (AP) — The flames that raced across California wine country left little more than smoldering ashes and eye-stinging smoke in their wake. House after house is gone, with only brick chimneys and charred laundry machines to mark sites that were once family homes.

The wildfires burned so hot that windows and tire rims melted off cars, leaving many vehicles resting on their steel axles. In one driveway, the glass backboard of a basketball hoop melted, dripped and solidified like a mangled icicle.

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Newly homeless residents of Northern California took stock of their shattered lives Tuesday while the blazes that have killed at least 17 people and destroyed more than 2,000 homes and businesses kept burning. Hundreds more firefighters joined the battle against the uncontained flames.

"This is just pure devastation, and it's going to take us a while to get out and comb through all of this," said Ken Pimlott, chief of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. He said the state had "several days of fire weather conditions to come."

The wildfires already rank among the five deadliest in California history, and officials expected the death toll to increase as the scope of destruction becomes clear. At least 185 people were injured during the blazes that started Sunday night. Nearly 200 people were reported missing in Sonoma County alone.

Seventeen wildfires raged Tuesday across parts of seven counties. Fire crews and other resources were being rushed in from other parts of the state and Nevada.

More than 240 members of the California National Guard helped ferry fuel to first responders because so many gas stations were without power. Guard members were also helping with medical evacuations and security at evacuation centers, said Maj. Gen. David Baldwin.

In addition to knocking out electricity, the blazes damaged or destroyed 77 cellular sites, disrupting communication services that officials were rushing to restore, said Emergency Operations Director Mark Ghilarducci.

The fires that started Sunday night moved so quickly that thousands of people were forced to flee with only a few minutes of warning. Some did not get out in time.

"It's literally like it exploded. These people ran out of their homes literally with minutes notice, barely with the clothes on their back," Pimlott said, adding that authorities didn't have time to give more notice. "They burned so quickly, there was not time to notify everybody."

Among the victims were 100-year-old Charles Rippey and his wife, Sara, who was 98. The couple was married for 75 years and lived in a residential neighborhood in Napa.

Their son, Mike Rippey, said he and his siblings couldn't imagine how either parent would have navigated life if just one had survived the flames.

"We knew there's no way they would ever be happy, whoever was the last one. So they went together, and that's the way it worked," he said stoically.

A thick, smoky haze cloaked much of Napa and Sonoma counties, where neighborhoods hit by the fires were completely leveled. Authorities warned residents not to return to their houses for safety reasons, citing the risk of exposed electrical and gas lines and unstable structures including trees.

About 3,200 people were staying in 28 shelters across Napa and Sonoma counties.

"I don't know how long I'm going to be here, or what's happening at home," said Santa Rosa evacuee Kathy Ruiz, who had found her way to a center at Sonoma County Fairgrounds. "That's what I'm starting to think about now, am I going to have a home to go back to?"

In the Santa Rosa suburb known as Coffey Park, Robyn Pellegrini let out a cry of grief as she approached the smoldering ruins of the duplex she had shared with her husband and their 6-year-old son. Daniel Pellegrini held his wife before they went searching for something they could salvage for their child.

With bare hands, they sifted through the remains of the exterior wall, which had collapsed into dust inside the house and covered all the other debris in their boy's room. They found a stuffed animal — charred but still recognizable as a turtle. Robyn Pellegrini let out joyful gasps when they found pieces of his rock collection.

A young boy across the street, whose home was spared, brought over one of his own stuffed animals to share.

"You lose all your photos," said Tony Pellegrini, Daniel's father. "You feel like you lost a part of your life."

Officials hoped cooler weather and lighter winds would help crews get a handle on the fires.

"The weather has been working in our favor, but it doesn't mean it will stay that way," said Brad Alexander, a spokesman of the governor's Office of Emergency Services.

In Washington, President Donald Trump said he spoke with Gov. Jerry Brown to "let him know that the

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federal government will stand with the people of California. And we will be there for you in this time of terrible tragedy and need.”

The government declared a disaster, which should give the state help putting out the flames.

More than 400 miles away from the wine-making region, flames imperiled parts of Southern California, too.

A fire in northeastern Orange County threatened thousands of homes Monday, turned the sky over Disneyland a hazy orange and rained ash on neighborhoods.

By Tuesday evening, however, winds had died and temperatures were cooler. Most evacuations were lifted in Anaheim, Orange and Tustin, with just a few roads still off-limits.

Crews managed to stop the fire from growing and had surrounded more than a quarter of the fire area.

However, fire engines were still protecting neighborhoods around the clock.

“We can’t afford to let one spark, one ember get into any of these homes,” Orange County fire Capt. Larry Kurtz said.

Some of the largest blazes in Northern California were in Napa and Sonoma counties, home to dozens of wineries that attract tourists from around the world. The fires sent smoke as far south as San Francisco, about 60 miles (96 kilometers) away.

Sonoma County established a hotline to help families looking for missing loved ones. It’s possible that many of the people reported missing were safe but simply could not be reached because of the widespread loss of cellphone service and other communications.

Much of the damage was in Santa Rosa, a far larger and more developed city than usually finds itself at the mercy of a wildfire. The city is home to 175,000 people, including wine-country wealthy and the working class.

It was unusual for so many fires to take off at the same time. Other than the windy conditions that helped drive them all, there was no known connection between the blazes, and authorities have not cited a cause for any of them.

Knickmeyer reported from Sonoma, California. Associated Press writers Jocelyn Gecker, Olga R. Rodriguez, Sudhin Thanawala and Juliet Williams in San Francisco and Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento contributed to this report.

Follow the AP’s complete wildfire coverage here: <https://apnews.com/tag/Wildfires> .

Could Vegas police have taken down the gunman sooner?

By MICHAEL BALSAMO, Associated Press

The revised timeline given by investigators for the Las Vegas massacre raises questions about whether better communication might have allowed police to respond more quickly and take out the gunman before he could kill and wound so many people.

On Monday, Sheriff Joe Lombardo said Stephen Paddock shot and wounded a Mandalay Bay hotel security guard outside his door and sprayed 200 bullets down the hall six minutes before he opened fire Oct. 1 from his high-rise suite on a crowd at a country music festival below.

That was a different account from the one police gave last week: that Paddock shot the unarmed guard, Jesus Campos, after unleashing his barrage of fire on the crowd, where 58 people were killed and hundreds injured.

Late Tuesday, a spokeswoman for Mandalay Bay questioned the latest timeline of events provided by police.

“We cannot be certain about the most recent timeline that has been communicated publically (sic), and we believe what is currently being expressed may not be accurate,” said Debra DeShong, a spokeswoman for MGM Resorts International, which owns the Mandalay Bay hotel casino.

The sheriff had previously hailed Campos as a “hero” whose arrival in the hallway may have led Paddock to stop firing. But on Monday, Lombardo said he didn’t know what prompted Paddock to end the gunfire

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and take his own life.

How crucial were the minutes that elapsed before the massacre began?

"This changes everything," said Joseph Giacalone, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a former New York City police sergeant. "There absolutely was an opportunity in that timeframe that some of this could've been mitigated."

Giacalone added: "By engaging the shooter ahead of time during this event, it could've saved a lot of heartache."

Campos reported to hotel security dispatchers that he was shot before Paddock opened fire on the crowd, Assistant Sheriff Tom Roberts told The Los Angeles Times. Campos ran down the hall, away from Paddock's room, after he was shot and may have used both his radio and a hallway phone to call for help, he said.

It wasn't clear exactly what time Campos called for help or if the hotel had relayed the information about the shooting to police. Las Vegas police did not respond to questions from The Associated Press about whether hotel security or anyone else in the hotel called 911 to report the hallway shooting.

A representative for Campos' union didn't immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

"Our officers got there as fast as they possibly could and they did what they were trained to do," another Las Vegas assistant sheriff, Todd Fasulo, said Tuesday.

But the sheriff has said that Las Vegas police officers searching the hotel for the gunman during the attack did not learn the guard had been shot until they got off the elevator on the 32nd floor and met him in the hallway.

Nicole Rapp, whose mother was knocked to the ground and trampled by panicked concertgoers as bullets rained from above, said she's "having a hard time wrapping my head around" why police changed the timeline of the shooting.

"It's very confusing to me that they are just discovering this a week later," she said. "How did we not know this before? It's traumatic for the victims and their families not to be sure of what happened."

Fasulo explained the change in the timeline by saying that dozens of investigators have been using different sources of information — including surveillance video, computers, police body cameras, cellphones and interviews — and that not all clocks were in sync.

Last week, police said Paddock had shot at concertgoers for 10 minutes and stopped firing around 10:15 p.m. The first officers arrived on the 32nd floor at 10:17 p.m. and encountered the wounded guard at the elevator bank about a minute later, police said.

The security guard had been responding to a door alarm on the floor when he heard an odd drilling sound, Undersheriff Kevin McMahill told KNPR on Tuesday. That was when Paddock fired hundreds of rounds at the guard and a maintenance man, McMahill said.

Paddock had power tools and was trying to drill a hole in a wall, perhaps to mount another of the security cameras he set up around him, or to point a rifle through, but he never completed the work, Lombardo said. He also drilled holes and bolted a metal bar to try to prevent the opening of an emergency exit door near his room.

The six minutes that transpired between the hallway shooting and the start of the gunman's fusillade wouldn't have been enough time for officers to stop the attack, said Ron Hosko, a former FBI assistant director who has worked on SWAT teams. Rather than rush in without a game plan, police would have been formulating the best response to the barricaded gunman, he said.

"Maybe that's enough time to get the first patrolman onto the floor but the first patrolman is not going to go knock on that customer's door and say 'What's going on with 200 holes in the door?'" Hosko said.

McMahill defended the hotel and said the encounter that night between Paddock and the security guard and maintenance man disrupted the gunman's plans. Paddock fired more than 1,000 shots and had more than 1,000 rounds left in his room, the undersheriff said.

"I can tell you I'm confident that he was not able to fully execute his heinous plan and it certainly had everything to do with being disrupted," McMahill said. He added: "I don't think the hotel dropped the ball."

Associated Press writers Ken Ritter and Sally Ho in Las Vegas, Anita Snow in Phoenix and Sadie Gurman

in Washington contributed to this report.

For complete coverage of the Las Vegas shooting, click here: <https://apnews.com/tag/LasVegasmassshooting>.

Asian shares higher after Wall Street sets new record high

By KELVIN CHAN, AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — Asian stocks advanced Wednesday after Wall Street's main index closed at a fresh record high and Spain's Catalonia crisis eased after an independence leader backed away from plans to break away immediately.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 index rose further a day after its highest close in 21 years, adding 0.2 percent to 20,870.24. South Korea's Kospi rose 0.6 percent to 2,449.53 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng climbed 0.2 percent to 28,545.98. The Shanghai Composite in mainland China edged up 0.2 percent to 3,387.54. Australia's S&P/ASX 20 advanced 0.6 percent to 5,770.10. Shares in Southeast Asia were mostly higher.

GLOBAL OUTLOOK: Sentiment brightened after the International Monetary Fund's raised its latest forecast for global growth to 3.6 percent for this year and 3.7 percent in 2018, the fastest rates since 2010. It expects growth to accelerate in the United States, the 19-country Eurozone, Japan and China this year, with a pickup in investment, industrial production and consumer and business confidence underpinning the improved global outlook.

SPANISH TURMOIL: Catalonia's president backed away from plans to immediately break away from Spain following results of a disputed Oct. 1 referendum in favor of the region's independence, easing pressure on the euro. In a speech, regional President Carles Puigdemont said he would delay a declaration of independence for several weeks to give dialogue a chance.

US DATA: Markets will be watching for the release of the Federal Reserve's September meeting minutes later in the day for new hints on the U.S. central bank's stance on interest rates, which many analysts expect will be raised one more time by the end of the year. Also on the horizons are the first corporate earnings as the U.S. quarterly reporting season gets underway.

MARKET VIEW: "Rosy equity market conditions in the U.S., coupled with the sharp upturn in crude prices ought to provide a push for Asian markets this morning," said Jingyi Pan, market strategist at IG in Singapore.

WALL STREET: Major U.S. benchmarks finished on a high note again, with the Dow Jones industrial average gaining 0.3 percent to a record 22,830.68. The Standard & Poor's 500 added 0.2 percent to 2,550.64 and the Nasdaq composite picked up 0.1 percent to 6,587.25.

ENERGY: Oil futures extended gains. Benchmark U.S. crude oil rose 12 cents to \$51.04 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract added \$1.34, or 2.7 percent, to settle at \$50.92 a barrel on Tuesday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, gained 5 cents to \$56.66 a barrel in London.

CURRENCIES: The dollar rose to 112.46 yen from 112.44 yen in late trading Tuesday. The euro slipped to \$1.1804 from \$1.1808 after hitting an intraday high of \$1.1829 following Puigdemont's speech.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 11, the 284th day of 2017. There are 81 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 11, 1942, the World War II Battle of Cape Esperance began in the Solomon Islands, resulting in an American victory over the Japanese.

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On this date:

In 1779, Polish nobleman Casimir Pulaski, fighting for American independence, died two days after being wounded during the Revolutionary War Battle of Savannah, Georgia.

In 1890, the Daughters of the American Revolution was founded in Washington, D.C.

In 1910, Theodore Roosevelt became the first former U.S. president to fly in an airplane during a visit to St. Louis.

In 1932, the first American political telecast took place as the Democratic National Committee sponsored a program from a CBS television studio in New York.

In 1958, the lunar probe Pioneer 1 was launched; it failed to go as far out as planned, fell back to Earth, and burned up in the atmosphere.

In 1968, Apollo 7, the first manned Apollo mission, was launched with astronauts Wally Schirra, Donn Fulton Eisele and R. Walter Cunningham aboard. The government of Panama was overthrown in a military coup.

In 1979, Allan McLeod Cormack and Godfrey Newbold Hounsfield were named co-recipients of the Nobel Prize for Medicine for their work in developing the CAT scan X-ray.

In 1984, Challenger astronaut Kathryn D. Sullivan became the first American woman to walk in space as she and fellow Mission Specialist David C. Leestma spent 3 1/2 hours outside the shuttle.

In 1987, the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt was unfurled for the first time on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.; the 7,000-pound quilt bore the names, personal effects and, in some cases, the ashes of victims of AIDS.

In 1991, testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Anita Hill accused Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of sexually harassing her; Thomas re-appeared before the panel to denounce the proceedings as a "high-tech lynching."

In 1992, in the first of three presidential debates, three candidates faced off against each other in St. Louis: President George H.W. Bush, Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton and businessman Ross Perot.

In 2002, former President Jimmy Carter was named the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Ten years ago: The Bush administration reported that the federal budget deficit had fallen to \$162.8 billion in the just-completed budget year, the lowest amount of red ink in five years. Cold medicines for babies and toddlers were pulled off shelves amid concerns about unintentional overdoses. Briton Doris Lessing won the 2007 Nobel Prize in literature. Werner von Trapp, a member of the musical family made famous by the musical "The Sound of Music," died in Waitsfield, Vermont, at age 91.

Five years ago: Vice President Joe Biden and Republican opponent Paul Ryan squared off in their only debate of the 2012 campaign; the two repeatedly interrupted each other as they sparred over topics including the economy, taxes and Medicare.

One year ago: President Barack Obama, in an op-ed on CNN's website, sought to reinvigorate his six-year-old call for the U.S. to send humans to Mars by the 2030s. Samsung Electronics said it was stopping production of Galaxy Note 7 smartphones permanently, a day after halting global sales of the ill-fated devices amid reports that batteries were catching fire.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Earle Hyman is 91. Former U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry is 90. Actor Ron Leibman is 80. Actor Amitabh Bachchan is 75. Country singer Gene Watson is 74. Singer Daryl Hall (Hall and Oates) is 71. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., is 67. Rhythm-and-blues musician Andrew Woolfolk is 67. Actress-director Catlin Adams is 67. Country singer Paulette Carlson is 66. Actor David Morse is 64. Actor Stephen Spinella is 61. Actress-writer-comedian Dawn French is 60. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Steve Young is 56. Actress Joan Cusack is 55. Rock musician Scott Johnson (Gin Blossoms) is 55. Comedy writer and TV host Michael J. Nelson is 53. Actor Sean Patrick Flanery is 52. Actor Lennie James is 52. College Football Hall of Famer and former NFL player Chris Spielman is 52. Actor Luke Perry is 51. Country singer-songwriter Todd Snider is 51. Actor-comedian Artie Lange is 50. Actress Jane Krakowski is 49. Rapper U-God (Wu-Tang Clan) is 47. Actress Constance Zimmer is 47. Bluegrass musician Leigh Gibson (The Gibson Brothers) is 46. Rapper MC Lyte is 46. Figure skater Kyoko Ina is 45. Actor Darien Sills-Evans is 43. Actor/writer Nat Faxon is 42. Singer NeeNa Lee is 42. Actress Emily Deschanel is 41. Actor Matt

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Bomer is 40. Actor Trevor Donovan is 39. Actress Michelle Trachtenberg is 32. Actress Lucy Griffiths is 31. Golfer Michelle Wie is 28.

Thought for Today: "Life was meant to be lived, and curiosity must be kept alive. One must never, for whatever reason, turn his back on life." — Eleanor Roosevelt, American first lady (born this date in 1884, died 1962).