

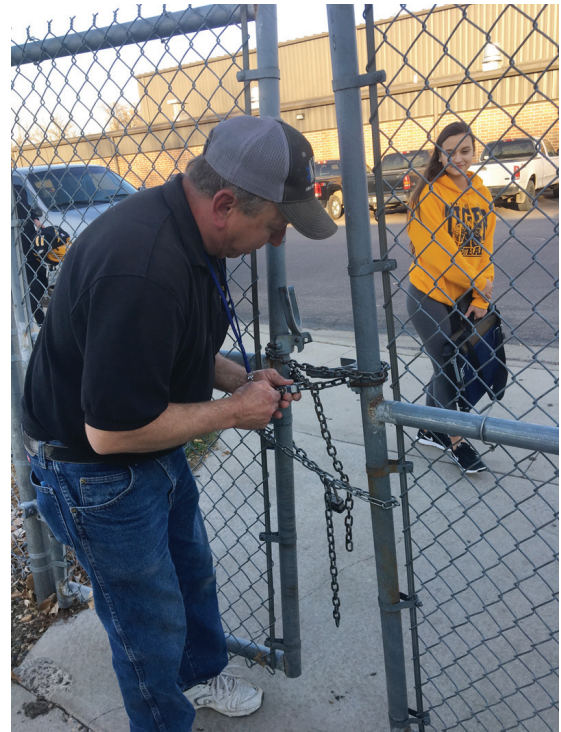
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Saturday, Oct. 21

**State Cross Country in Rapid City
Robotics in Groton
School Surplus Auction at 1 p.m.**



Wow! The gate was double locked at the entrance to the football field. Mike Nehls begins to unlock the gate for the fans to enter. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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

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

© 2017 Groton Daily Independent

"From minor scratches to a complete rebuild . . . we can do it all"

NOW OPEN

Harris
Auto Body ABDN

**225 Brown County Hwy 19 South
Aberdeen: 605/725-4900**

Chicken Soup
for the Soul

“HOW
BEAUTIFUL A
DAY CAN BE
WHEN
KINDNESS
TOUCHES IT.”

-GEORGE ELLISTON

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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
Housekeeping.

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

0913.1006



David McGannon was tilling up the pumpkin patch Saturday morning, getting it ready for winter and for next year's Pumpkin Fest. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Lady Beetle Invasion Steele County, ND Extension Service

There have been questions about the Asian lady beetle "invasion" that occurs during this time of year. Here's a background of the beetle and why we're seeing vast numbers of them:

- The Asian lady beetle was purposely introduced from Asia to the US during the mid-1960s to control and feed on pecan aphids in California. In the late-90s, Asian lady beetle populations moved up to Minnesota and the Dakotas

- Their importance: these beetles feed on soybean aphids, which contribute to major yield losses in soybeans, if not controlled. The Asian lady beetle is a biological control option for managing soybean aphids

- So, why are they "bugging" me?! The beetles seek out sunny sides of buildings. They are moving out of soybean fields due to soybean harvest

- Once the beetles reach buildings, they crawl to find cracks and openings around doors and windows, any spot that will let them get inside for the winter

- Luckily, the beetles do not sting or destroy/eat fabrics, wood, consume our food, or damage property. However, some can bite hard enough to puncture skin, causing minor discomfort. These bites are incidental, as the beetles are searching for moisture or food. They can secrete a strong-smelling yellowish liquid from their legs, called reflex bleeding. This liquid can stain light colored surfaces

- Prevention is the most effective step in managing lady beetles. Check the outside of your home for spaces and cracks that may allow insects easy entry. Lady beetles can fit through openings as small as 1/8 inch in size. Use a silicone caulk to seal any gaps.



**Photo courtesy of
U of MN Extension**

Groton Area seniors set new record

This year's Groton Area seniors have set a new record with Thursday's 56-6 win over Bennett County. Their combined four-year record is now 31 wins, which tops the 2010 record of 30 wins. The other teams to make the top 10 were 2017 with 29 wins, 2012 and 2011 with 28 wins each, 1973 with 27 wins, 2009, 1980, 1972 and 1970 with 26 wins each. Coach Shaun Wanner has been coaching for 17 years in Groton and has a record of 95-67. After Wanner was Bobby Dubbs (1965-76) with a record of 58-28 and Richard Donovan (1976-87) with a record of 51-47. Special thanks to Tom Woods for his hard work in researching Groton Area football stats.

Overall, Groton Area has a record of 355 wins, 391 losses and 31 ties, playing 777 games with 49 different teams. Sioux Falls Christian will be the 50th team that Groton has played as the Tigers will travel to Sioux Falls Christian on Thursday to play the Sioux Falls Christian Chargers at 7 p.m. on Bob Young Field on the campus of the University of Sioux Falls.

The Bennett County game was carried live on GDILIVE.COM with over 1,300 viewers. The game was sponsored by Groton Vet Clinic, Johnson Agency, Professional Management Services, Lori's Pharmacy, Bahr Spray Foam & Construction, Olson Development, Doug Abeln Seed Company, Mike-N-Jo's Body-N-Glass, Blocker Construction, Groton American Legion Post #39, McGannon Plumbing, Heating, Cooling & Sheet metal; Erickson Insurance Agency, Northern Plains Psychological Associates with Dr. Franne Sippel, John Sieh Agency, Weber Landscaping, Milbrandt Enterprises Inc., James Valley Seed with Doug Jorgensen, Allied Climate Professionals with Kevin Nehls, Groton Ford and Producer's Hybrids with John Wheeting. Make sure you tell these sponsors "thank you" and to patronize them as well.

First Downs: Groton Area 20, Bennett County 2

Rushing: Groton Area 30-308 (Marshall Lane 12-137, 2 touchdowns; Lucas Seric Shabazz breaks free to score a touchdown for the Tigers. (Photo by Julianna Kosel)



Marshall Lane hands the ball off to Brandon Keith with blockers Brandyn Anderson (60), Grady O'Neill (54), Seric Shabazz (24) and coming up the back is Austin Jones (18).

(Photo by Julianna Kosel)

Groton Area	24	24	8	X	- 56
Bennett County	6	0	0	X	- 6



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Andy Rintala makes this catch before being taken down by Bennett County's Isaiah Johnson. (Photo by Julianna Kosel)

6-39, 1 touchdown; Seric Shabazz 2-18.) Bennett County: 9 for minus 5.

Passing: Groton Area: Marshall Lane completed 4 of 7 passes for 51 yards, 2 touchdown. Bennett County: Tee Allen completed 4 of 10 passes for 96 yards, 1 touchdown, 1 interception; Tyler Byrne attempted 1 pass and it was intercepted.

Receivers: Groton Area: Andy Rintala 2 for 44 yards; Sheric Shabazz 1 for 12 yards, 1 touchdown; Brandon Keith 1 for minus 5 yards. Bennett County: Isaiah Johnson 1 for 79 yards, 1 touchdown; Seth Livermont 1 for 26 yards.

Fumbles: Groton Area had 2, recovered both. Bennett County had none.

Penalties: Groton Area had 7 for 65 yards. Bennett County had 4 for 21 yards.

Defense: Groton Area: Brandon Keith 5 tackles, Luke Thorson 4 tackles, Andy Rintala 1 interception for 35 yards, Korbin Blackmun 1 interception for 10 yards, Seric Shabazz 1 sack for minus 2 yards, Peyton Johnson 1 sack for minus 1 yard.

Record: Groton Area: 6-3. Bennett County: 4-5.

First Quarter

7:57: Groton: Lucas Hinman, 1 yard run. (PAT: Marshall Lane run.). This drive went 81 yards, 5 plays and 5 first downs.

5:42: Groton: Marshall Lane, 3 yard run. (PAT Seric Shabazz run). This drive went 45 yards, 3 plays and 3 first

downs

2:41: Groton: Andy Rintall 65 yard punt return. (PAT: Marshall Lane run)

2:14: Bennett County: Isaiah Johnson, 79 yard pass play from Tee Allen. (PAT: pass attempt failed) This drive went 81 yards, 2 plays and 2 first downs.

Second Quarter

11:53: Groton: Lucas Hinman 25 yard run. (PAT: Marshall Lane to Jonathan Doeden). This drive went 90 yards, 6 plays and 3 first downs.

2:07: Groton: Marshall Lane 3 yard run. (PAT: Lucas Hinman run). This drive went 31 yards, 6 plays and 2 first downs.

0:01: Groton: Darien Shabazz, 3 yard run. (PAT: Korbin Blackmun run). This drive went 33 yards, 4 plays and 2 first downs).

Third Quarter

4:45: Groton: Seric Shabazz 12 yard pass from Marshall Lane. (PAT: Brandon Keith from Lane). End of game.

Groton's seniors and captains Luke Thorson, Brandon Keith, Seric Shabazz and Marshall Lane greet the captains of Bennett County, Daniel Winsand, Tyler Byrne, Seth Livermont and Shawn Saxton.

(Photo by Julianna Kosel)



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EarthTalk®

From the Editors of E - The Environmental Magazine

Dear EarthTalk: How can we keep our kids safe from environmental hazards all around us in our everyday lives?

-- Jennifer Nichols, Wareham, MA

Children are affected by the same environmental hazards as adults, only they're more vulnerable given their smaller size and the fact that their bodies are still developing. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), harmful exposures can start as early as in utero.

"Proportionate to their size, children ingest more food, drink more water and breathe more air than adults," reports WHO. "Additionally, certain modes of behavior, such as putting hands and objects into the mouth and playing outdoors can increase children's exposure to environmental contaminants."

Some of the most common contaminants we should be vigilant about avoiding include pesticides (in foods), lead (in old paint), asbestos (in insulation and construction materials), BPA (in plastic food/drink containers and the lining of cans), PFCs (in non-stick cookware, carpeting and mattresses) and flame retardants (in furniture and drapery). And, of course, many branded household cleaners contain potentially hazardous ingredients (bleach, ammonia, diethanolamine, triethanolamine) as well.

Given how common these elements are in today's world, keeping kids safe isn't an easy task. For starters, choose organic food and drink whenever possible to cut down on the pesticides your kids ingest. While pesticides work well to keep away the bugs that can ruin harvests, they also can cause neurological and reproductive problems for humans who ingest traces of them. Apples, celery, strawberries, peaches, spinach, nectarines, grapes, bell peppers, potatoes, blueberries, lettuce and kale/collard greens are the worst offenders in the produce aisle, according to the Environmental Working Group (EWG), so definitely spring for organic versions of these particular fruits and veggies. Packaged and processed foods likely contain plenty of pesticide residues, too, unless they are marked as certified organic.

To avoid household cleaners, the Organic Consumers Association (OCA) recommends ditching the expensive specialized products that likely contain harmful chemical additives. "A few safe, simple ingredients like soap, water, baking soda, vinegar, lemon juice and borax, aided by a little elbow grease and a coarse sponge for scrubbing, can take care of most household cleaning needs." Look for specific formulations on organicconsumers.org, as well as links to some environmentally friendly name-brand household cleaners.

While there is less we can do individually about air pollution if we want our kids to spend time outdoors, at the macro level we can all help by driving our cars less and turning down our thermostats (to reduce the emissions we cause) and ordering less stuff online (to cut down on air pollution from shipping).

Parents, teachers and caregivers should educate themselves about what to avoid and become expert label readers so they can make health-smart choices. Meanwhile, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) is urging pediatricians to take a greater interest in the environmental impacts on the health of their patients and discuss with parents how to keep kids safe in and around the home, the neighborhood, and at school.

CONTACTS: WHO, www.who.int; EWG, www.ewg.org; OCA, www.organicconsumers.org; CDC, www.cdc.gov.

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss and is a registered trademark of the nonprofit Earth Action Network. To donate, visit www.earthtalk.org. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.

ROSLYN, SOUTH DAKOTA

4-PLEX FOR SALE

The following real estate is for sale:

Lots Seven (7), Eight (8) and Nine (9), Block Twenty-two (22), Original Plat, Roslyn, Day County, South Dakota;

A/k/a 716 1st Street, Roslyn, South Dakota; st Consisting of lots and 4-plex apartment house, currently unoccupied and has been for five (5) years. Property is to be sold "AS IS". Apartment units have electric baseboard heat and electric hot water heaters. Apartment units also include electric ranges, refrigerators, and washers/dryers.

No warranties are being offered on the appliances ("AS IS").

Interested parties should submit sealed bids to Law Office of Danny R. Smeins, P.C., 506 Main Street, Webster, SD 57274, or hand delivered to the same address prior to 5:00 p.m. on the 14th day of November, 2017. Bids will be opened after the bid deadline, and Seller will identify the bidders that will be invited to raise their bid on the 17 day of November, 2017 at 3:00 p.m. at the Law Office of Danny R. Smeins, P.C. in Webster, South Dakota. Not all bidders will be invited to raise their bid.

Successful bidder will be required to execute a standard Purchase Agreement and make an earnest money deposit.

SELLER RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS.

Direct all inquiries, questions or requests for real estate information to Danny R. Smeins, Attorney at Law, at (605) 345-4875 or (605) 448-5964 or Ray Lardy, Roslyn Homes, Inc., at (605) 228-1597 or Richard Galbraith at (605) 229-0180.

2 day Day Dog Obedience Training



Seminar

Friday October 27th 6-pm -9p.m.
Saturday October 28th 9am -11 am

Held at (A & S Hardware Hank and Rental)

Junction Hwy 12-25 in Webster, SD

K-9 Classics Dog Obedience hosting

Friday: Basic: Sit, Stay, Come & Down.

Saturday: Behavioral Issues

Why does my dog do that?

Q&A

Great information, Great fun

\$100 per dog

Pre register-A&S Hardware Hank and Rental

345-3821 K-9 Classics 880-1779



Pheasant Season: A South Dakota Family Tradition

We grew up hunting. Dad took us big-game hunting, but it was my Grandma Dorris who made bird hunting such a big part of our family heritage. Still today, it's something that brings the family together. (And how grateful this mom is for that!)

As much as pheasant season is a family tradition for us, it was our family business for years as well. When things got tight after we were hit by the Death Tax, we looked to diversify. They say: "When you don't know what to do, do what you know." Well, that's exactly what we did. We focused our attention on hunting and started up a hunting lodge.

It wasn't always easy. I remember many nights where I'd come in from the field during harvest at 10 or 11 at night and still have dozens of birds to clean and package. I'd work through the early hours of the morning, turn around, and do it all again. It was hard work, but I loved it.

Small businesses like this are spread across South Dakota, and they come alive this time of year. Overall, outdoor activities support around 18,000 full- and part-time jobs in South Dakota, providing more than \$500 million of income.

With such a significant impact on our economy and our family dynamics, I've always fought hard to protect the state's pheasant habitats. In the 2014 Farm Bill, for instance, I made sure we included critical protections for our region's native grasslands in the final legislative language. We've seen this "sodsaver" program work, and I'm now working to expand the idea nationwide.

Those efforts become especially important in years like this. A tough winter and a devastating drought took a big hit on our pheasant populations. It's an issue I heard a lot about throughout the summer, but especially during a recent stop in Mobridge – a community in prime South Dakota hunting territory that was hit particularly hard by the dry conditions.

This year's pheasant counts are about 65 percent below the 10-year average. That leaves about 1.68 pheasants per mile. Still, South Dakota Department of Tourism Secretary Jim Hagen says: "Pheasant harvest could – read could – still approach a million birds: That is, if hunters come and hunt."

The lower counts won't be deterring our family. In fact, our son Booker is probably more excited about bird hunting this year than he's ever been. I can't tell you how many crack-of-dawn mornings he's had recently, heading out early to find Hamlin County's best spots for duck hunting. With the pheasant season now open, I'm confident he'll be keeping us well fed.

I love that Booker's gotten so excited about this distinctly South Dakota sport. It's like a little piece of my Grandma Dorris still lives on through his excitement for bird hunting.

To all of the hunters reading this, have a safe pheasant season. Hope to see you out there!

Marshall County, South Dakota PRIVATE LAND SALE - 155 +/- ACRES

Legal Description: The Northeast Quarter (NE ¼) of Section Nine (9), Township One Hundred Twenty-six (126), Range Fifty-nine (59), West of the 5th P.M., except five acres of said land in the northeast corner of said land which is used for cemetery purposes, Marshall County, South Dakota.

155 acres with the total acres to be determined by survey or the acres used by Farm Service Agency in Marshall County, South Dakota.

SELLERS: Estate of Nancy L. Wright
Clark Wright & Elizabeth LaRocque Co- Personal Representatives

ATTORNEY FOR SELLERS: Rick A. Ribstein – Ribstein & Hogan Law Firm, 621 6th Street, Brookings, SD 57006. Phone: (605) 692-1818

REVISED SALE/AUCTION FORMAT: Preliminary written bids will be accepted by Rick A. Ribstein, Attorney for Sellers, until 5:00 o'clock p.m. on Friday, October 20, 2017. Prospective purchasers will be notified by mail that they are invited to a private auction to be held in Amherst, South Dakota, on Friday, November 3, 2017. Sellers reserve the right to reject any or all bids.

PRELIMINARY WRITTEN BID FORMAT: Preliminary written bids may be submitted in the form of a letter mailed or delivered to Seller's Attorney at the address printed above. Preliminary bid letters should include bidder's name and mailing address, the preliminary bid amount, and should be accompanied by a check for a down payment equal to 5% of the preliminary bid amount. Down payment checks should be payable to Ribstein & Hogan Trust Account.

TERMS: 5% down with preliminary written bid. A 10% additional nonrefundable earnest money payment required on the day of sale and balance at closing. Possession will be subject to existing tenant's rights under their current lease and their rights to harvest the 2017 crops, with Fall tillage privileges for a new buyer(s) to be permitted with approval of the current tenants. Cost of owner's policy of title insurance and closing fees split 50/50. Sellers will pay the 2016 taxes due in 2017, and all prior taxes. 2017 taxes will be prorated until the day of closing.

INQUIRIES: Informal packages available upon request from Seller's Attorney. Questions about the real estate or auction format should be directed to Seller's Attorney by mail, or by calling (605) 692-1818. Ask for Rick A. Ribstein, Attorney or Sheila Maffett, Legal Secretary.

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Today in Weather History

October 21, 1987: Cold arctic air continued to invade the central U.S. Eleven record lows were reported in the Great Plains Region, including lows of 12 degrees at Valentine, Nebraska, and 9 degrees at Aberdeen, South Dakota. Temperatures warmed rapidly during the day in the Southern and Central Plains Region. Goodland, Kansas warmed from a morning low of 24 degrees to an afternoon high of 75 degrees.

1934: A severe windstorm lashed the northern Pacific coast. In Washington State, the storm claimed the lives of 22 persons, and caused 1.7 million dollars damage, mostly to timber. Winds, gusting to 87 mph at North Head, WA, produced waves twenty feet high on the Puget Sound.

1957 - The second in a series of unusual October storms hit southern California causing widespread thunderstorms. Santa Maria was drenched with 1.13 inches of rain in two hours. Hail drifted to 18 inches in East Los Angeles. Waterspouts were sighted off Point Mugu and Oceanside. (20th-21st) (The Weather Channel)

1966: An avalanche of mud and rocks buries a school in Aberfan, Wales, killing 148 people, mostly young students. The elementary school was in a valley below where a mining operation dumped its waste. In the days leading up to October 21, there was heavy rain in the area. After five months of investigation and the deposition of more than 100 witnesses, it was determined that the tip had blocked the natural course of water down the hill. As the water was soaked into the tip, pressure built up inside until it cracked, with devastating results. The site of the disaster later became a park.

1975: Carlton Fisk made history on this day because of a walk-off home run in the 1975 World Series, after rain had postponed it for three days.

1987 - Cold arctic air continued to invade the central U.S. Eleven record lows were reported in the Great Plains Region, including lows of 12 degrees at Valentine NE, and 9 degrees at Aberdeen SD. Temperatures warmed rapidly during the day in the Southern and Central Plains Region. Goodland KS warmed from a morning low of 24 degrees to an afternoon high of 75 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)








1988: Hurricane Joan, the last hurricane of the season, neared the coast of Nicaragua packing 125 mph winds. Joan claimed more than 200 lives as she moved over Central America, and total damage approached 1.5 billion dollars. Crossing more than 40 degrees of longitude, Hurricane Joan never strayed even one degree from the 12-degree north parallel. After crossing Central America into the Pacific, the cyclone was renamed Tropical Storm Miriam, with the system's dissipation occurring southwest of Mexico.

1989 - Unseasonably cold weather continued to grip the south central and southeastern U.S. Twenty cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Calico AR with a reading of 26 degrees, and Daytona Beach FL with a low of 41 degrees. Squalls in the Great Lakes Region finally came to an end, but not before leaving Marquette MI buried under 12.7 inches of snow, a record 24 hour total for October. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2010: Tornadoes do occur in South America. A tornado rampaged through Poza del Tigre, a northern Argentinean town, leaving at least six are dead and over 100 wounded.

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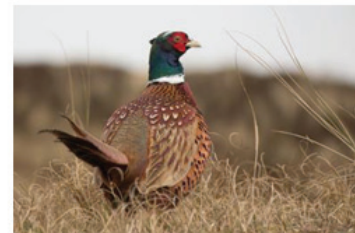
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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Chance Showers and Breezy	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Partly Cloudy	Sunny
High: 60 °F↓	Low: 34 °F	High: 66 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 54 °F

Today's Outlook



light morning showers



Highs 55 to 65°

Breezy west to northwest winds

Graphic Created
10/21/2017 5:04 AM

Published on: 10/21/2017 at 5:12AM

Cooler today, with light morning showers. Expect breezy winds out of the west to northwest through the day behind a cold front that is exiting eastern South Dakota this morning, and western Minnesota by early afternoon.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 76.7

Low Outside Temp: 58.3

High Gust: 38

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 86° in 1947

Record Low: 9° in 1987

Average High: 55°F

Average Low: 31°F

Average Precip in Oct: 1.60

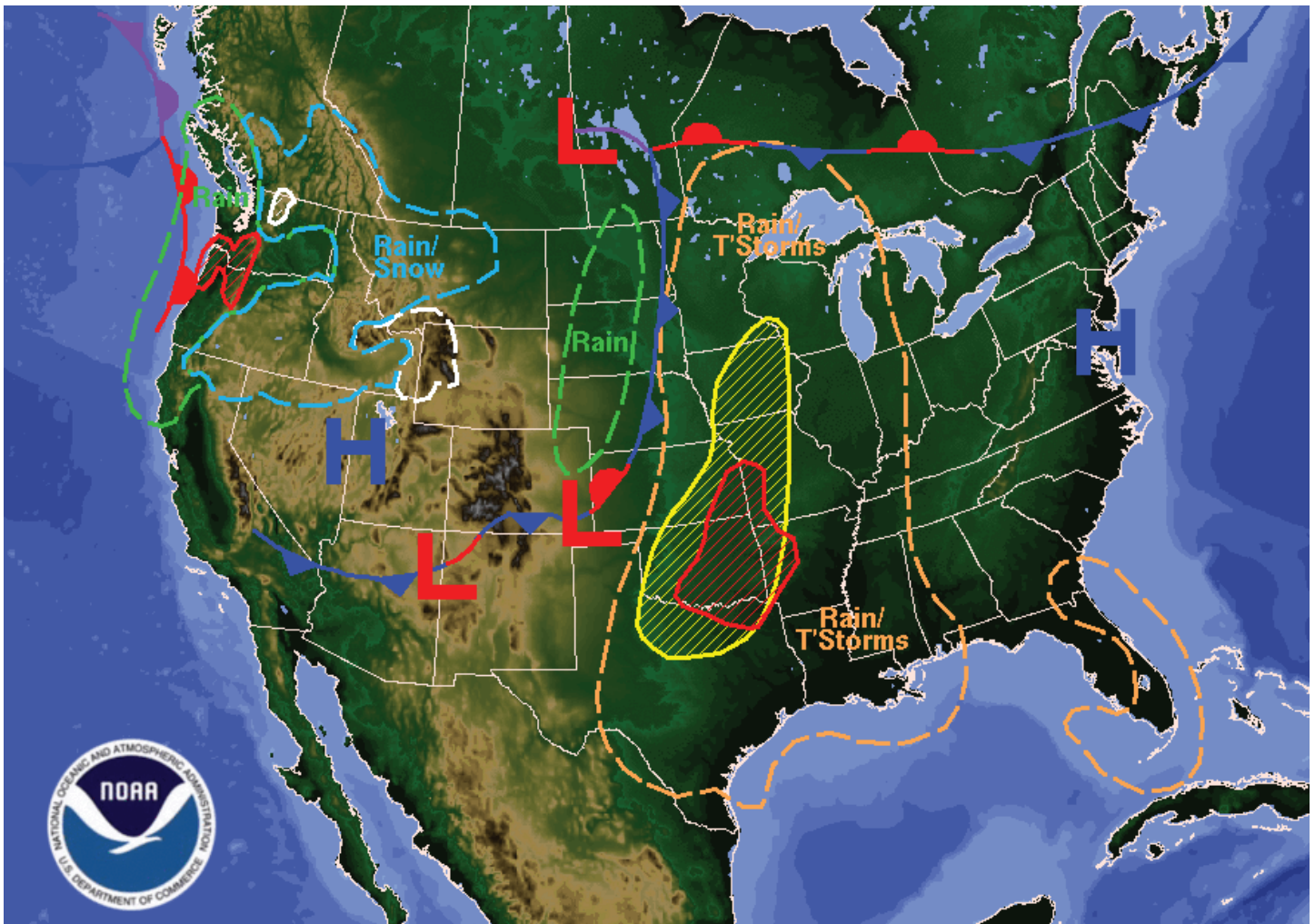
Precip to date in Oct: 0.67

Average Precip to date: 19.97

Precip Year to Date: 13.47

Sunset Tonight: 6:37 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:59 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sat, Oct 21, 2017, issued 4:53 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Santorelli with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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WILLING TO WAIT

A pastor decided to change the order of service. He convinced himself that his congregation was bored and disinterested in his messages because they had been following the same format for several years.

For years the ushers would take up the offering, the choir would sing and then he would preach. To "mix" things up he decided that he would have the choir sing, then he would preach and the ushers would take up the offering at the close of the service.

Little Janie sat quietly through a particularly boring message. Finally, realizing that something was different she whispered to her Mom, "Do you think if we paid him now he would quit?"

Waiting is often difficult. We pray from a deep reservoir of faith believing that God is anxiously waiting to hear and answer our prayers. Sometimes the answers come quickly. Other times we do not understand the delay and lose heart and hope. We may even wonder if God is deaf to our requests.

Sometimes physicians give us a prescription with a bit of advice: "Now I assure you that this medication will work. But you are going to have to wait a few days before you are relieved of all of your symptoms. Be patient."

"Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him," said David. He was able to rest in God because of God's faithfulness to him in the past. He had been deeply disappointed by many others but never by his Lord who always protected and defended him.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to be patient as we wait on You to answer our prayers. May our hope equal our need. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 62:5 Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him.

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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 Meat- 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

News from the Associated Press

Tribe: Public safety on Minnesota reservation worsened

ONAMIA, Minn. (AP) — Leaders of a Native American tribe say public safety on their central Minnesota reservation worsened last year when a nearby county terminated an agreement that allowed tribal police to provide law enforcement.

Mille Lacs County's decision to terminate the agreement with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe ended 25 years of cooperation between the tribe and county sheriff's office, Minnesota Public Radio reported. County officials said they ended the agreement because the relationship had ceased to be cooperative and the band was exercising law enforcement authority outside of its jurisdiction.

Without the agreement, tribal officers don't have authority under state law to act as peace officers and pursue investigations, leaving those functions to the county sheriff's office. Tribal police can arrest suspects but must turn them over to the sheriff's office.

Interim tribal Police Chief Sara Rice said it's a frustrating situation.

"All the officers know that they can at least make a dent in this," Rice said. "It's never going to go away completely. But you can help to deter it in some way, or hold people accountable for what they're doing and what they're bringing here."

But Mille Lacs County Attorney Joe Walsh disputes that law enforcement on the reservation has gotten lax since the agreement was revoked. He said the county hired about 10 new deputies and is providing equal coverage as before.

The move came amid a growing problem of opioid abuse in the area. The tribe says it's had nearly 50 overdoses this year, including a few deaths.

"It's drug dealers, drug users, just the criminal element that's here," said Pete Nayquonabe, a resident on the reservation. "You can see it and feel it. And there's just a feeling of not being safe anymore."

Rice said opioid addiction has led to an increase in burglaries, thefts and elder abuse.

"They're being taken advantage of, or stuff's missing from their houses," she said. "It's all to get the next high."

Gov. Mark Dayton urged the county and the band to work out a new agreement in mediation.

Information from: Minnesota Public Radio News, <http://www.mprnews.org>

Pheasant hunters not fazed by lower South Dakota bird counts

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Reports that that South Dakota's pheasant population is down are not deterring hunters from out of state.

Many of the state's airports were hopping in advance of Saturday's non-resident pheasant opener, which is expected to be challenging after the state's annual survey showed a 45 percent decrease in birds from the year before.

Hunters flying into Aberdeen Friday afternoon were greeted with promotional tumblers, pheasant sandwiches and tickets that offered a chance to win a free shotgun. One hunter who arrived, 77-year-old Eli Karter of Osprey, Florida, says the lower bird counts just mean a little more work.

Jim Kelly, who flew into Sioux Falls with a group of 21 hunters from North Carolina, says he's not worried about the numbers because his party always gets its limit of pheasants.

Former South Dakota surgeon to surrender medical license

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A retired South Dakota surgeon who is now a patient advocate will surrender his medical license rather than participate in a revocation hearing.

The south Dakota Board of Medical and Osteopathic Examiners was set to hold a hearing Oct. 27 to revoke Dr. Lars Aanning's medical license after accusing him of committing "moral turpitude," the Argus Leader reported.

Aanning, 78, admitted last year to lying on behalf of another physician during a medical malpractice lawsuit nearly 20 years ago. He said he was coached by the doctor's lawyers on what to say and how to answer questions.

The statute of limitations for perjury has passed, but the board accused Aanning of violating the public's trust by damaging the faith in doctors to be truthful. But Aanning said it's commonplace for doctors to protect their colleagues when medical errors occur.

Aanning said the board pursued his license because he helped expose shoddy medicine in a separate case. "I can't help but feel that this is an attempt to curtail my investigative activities," he said.

Aanning helped expose Dr. Allen Sossan, a convicted burglar-turned-spine surgeon who practiced in Yankton. Sossan fled the U.S. after being sued by dozens of patients after botching several surgeries that in some cases led to the deaths of patients. A grand jury indicted Sossan for lying on his medical license by not disclosing his previous conviction.

"Almost 10 years ago, I reported Alan Sossan to the SDBMOE for harming — even killing — patients, and the SDBMOE never lifted a finger to prevent him from inflicting more harm on South Dakotans," Aanning said. "My complaint does not appear to have even been investigated by the SDBMOE. The license of this doctor was never restricted or suspended and when his license finally elapsed, nothing further was done to protect patients in other states."

Margaret Hansen, the board's executive director, said the board still needs to accept the surrender of Aanning's license.

"It's in their hands," Aanning said. "I'm not going to go to any hearing."

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

North Dakota Native American student graduation rate lagging

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Native American students in North Dakota are struggling in school despite the state's overall high school graduation rate remaining high.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction held a Dropout Prevention and Re-engagement Summit on Oct. 1, The Bismarck Tribune reported. The summit was scheduled after teachers of Native American students across the state requested to know more information about dropout prevention strategies.

The total graduation rate was nearly 90 percent for the 2015-16 school year, the most recent data available. But the rate for Native American students was at about 65 percent.

State Superintendent Kirsten Baesler said that since the No Child Left Behind Act was enacted in 2002 achievement gaps for all subgroups have gone down, except for Native American students.

"That is not OK, and it keeps me up at night. Obviously, what we were doing for 15 years was not working. We have to re-examine that, and we have to do things differently," said Baesler.

She also said that the replacement for No Child Left Behind will help with these efforts.

Sandy Addis is the keynote speaker and director of the Clemson University's National Dropout Prevention Center. She said the state is "significantly ahead of the nation," in terms of its high school graduation rate.

Addis said while there has been some progress among Native American students, there's much more room to improve. She notes that low-income student graduation rates continue to fall behind.

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BHSU honors longtime American Indian Studies instructor

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — Black Hills State University has honored a longtime instructor in its American Indian Studies program.

The Black Hills Pioneer reports that the school this week dedicated the Jace DeCory Center for American Indian Studies.

DeCory retired earlier this year after a 33-year career at the Spearfish school. She's a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe.

University President Tom Jackson says DeCory has been a leader in the Native American community, an influence on students over several decades and "the soul" of the American Indian Studies program.

The South Dakota Legislature established the Center for American Indian Studies at BHSU in 1974. Its purpose is to provide educational opportunities for Native American students, including opportunities to study the history, culture, and languages of Native peoples.

Information from: Black Hills Pioneer, <http://www.bhpioneer.com>

Friday's Scores By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Aberdeen Central def. Brookings, 25-18, 25-21, 25-23
Aberdeen Roncalli def. Clark/Willow Lake, 25-18, 25-20, 25-23
Andes Central/Dakota Christian def. Mitchell Christian, 28-26, 25-9, 25-13
Avon def. Menno, 25-16, 19-25, 25-21, 25-20
Bison def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-15, 25-20, 22-25, 25-20
Bon Homme def. Viborg-Hurley, 29-27, 25-14, 23-25, 25-21
Bridgewater-Emery def. Sanborn Central/Woonsocket, 25-19, 22-25, 25-8, 25-15
Castlewood def. Oldham-Ramona/Rutland, 25-10, 25-13, 25-19
Chester def. Colman-Egan, 25-11, 25-23, 25-20
Dakota Valley def. Vermillion, 25-16, 25-12, 25-18
Ethan def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-13, 25-23, 25-12
Eureka/Bowdle def. Dupree, 26-24, 25-19, 24-26, 18-25, 16-14
Flandreau def. Deuel, 18-25, 28-26, 25-18, 25-16
Hanson def. Freeman Academy/Marion, 25-11, 25-17, 25-20
Harrisburg def. Huron, 24-26, 25-22, 25-16, 25-19
Hitchcock-Tulare def. Sully Buttes, 25-23, 12-25, 21-25, 25-12, 15-13
Hot Springs def. Custer, 28-26, 29-27, 18-25, 25-17
Howard def. Garretson, 25-16, 25-14, 25-12
Ipswich def. Leola/Frederick, 25-23, 25-22, 20-25, 25-22
Madison def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 26-24, 27-29, 25-17, 25-21
McCook Central/Montrose def. Canistota, 25-20, 25-16, 25-13
Milbank def. Britton-Hecla, 25-20, 25-9, 25-20
Miller def. Wessington Springs, 25-6, 25-8, 25-8
Mitchell def. Pierre, 25-20, 25-21, 25-17
Philip def. Bennett County, 25-18, 25-8, 23-25, 25-16
Potter County def. Faith, 19-25, 25-18, 23-25, 25-15, 15-9
Rapid City Central def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 25-17, 20-25, 20-25, 25-23, 15-6
Redfield/Doland def. Hamlin, 25-12, 25-22, 25-21
Sioux Falls Washington def. Rapid City Central, 25-21, 25-12, 25-20
Sioux Falls Washington def. Rapid City Stevens, 25-19, 25-21, 27-25
Spearfish def. Red Cloud, 25-10, 25-12, 25-20

St. Thomas More def. Sturgis Brown, 25-17, 25-20, 23-25, 26-24

Tea Area def. Tri-Valley, 25-16, 25-18, 25-19

Warner def. Mobridge-Pollock, 25-7, 25-13, 25-8

Watertown def. Yankton, 25-13, 25-13, 26-24

Waverly-South Shore def. Waubay/Summit, 25-13, 27-25, 25-13

Wilmot def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 25-13, 25-10, 25-9

South Dakota man turns ranch into wildlife haven

By NICK LOWREY, Capital Journal

FORT PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — John Moisan is a hunter.

That fact becomes apparent when he looks out at the 640 acres of land he owns in Tripp County a few dozen miles south of Presho. Moisan sees the cuts and draws, the cattails and trees not as impediments to farming and cattle but as goldmines for pheasants, grouse and deer. Driving around his property in the back of a friend's pickup, he points to the grass he's planted as his proudest achievement, not the rows of sorghum that also thrive on his land.

Hunched over in an elevated box blind, surrounded by the early September sights, sounds and smells of a central South Dakota grassland, he pointed out where a friend killed a giant whitetail deer buck a year or two before. That hunter had been sitting in the same blind Moisan was in. That was beside the point though, he said, the fact is, that buck wouldn't have been anywhere near the blind 15 years ago.

Back then, just about every square inch of the property had been covered in wheat stubble. From the soggiest draw to the windiest hill top, one plant had dominated the landscape. From time to time, a covey of prairie grouse could fly in to feed on the waste grain. A few mule deer also could be seen wandering through on occasion. But not much actually lived on the property, Moisan said.

When he first saw the property back in 2002, an eagle was giving the place a once over, too. Moisan took that as inspiration to buy the place and turn it into something special — a place to harbor and grow wild things. Having a place where he could hunt with his five children was one of the motivations that spurred his purchase of what he would come to call Eagle View Ranch.

"This is my way of giving back to nature," Moisan told the Capital Journal .

Moisan grew up back in the soil bank days of the late 50s and early 60s, when pheasants were like locusts in their multitudes. Moisan lived with his mother and her parents on a small piece of ground near Watertown. His grandpa, an old market hunter who'd fought in World War I and spent World War II guiding military brass from the local air base on pheasant hunts, took him hunting when there was time.

Those were good days to be a budding hunter. Between 1958 and 1963, South Dakota's pheasant population never fell below 7.5 million. Hunters annually took home between 2.2 and 3.2 million birds. Hunter success has never again reached such heights. So it is safe to say the young Moisan got plenty of hunting in before the soil bank era ended and the number of pheasants in South Dakota plunged from 10 million in 1963 to 5 million in 1964.

Moisan helped his grandparents and, in addition to developing his love for wildlife, he forged a deep connection to the land. He graduated high school and went on to college at the University of South Dakota where he joined the ROTC.

This was the early 1970s and the Vietnam War was still raging. Moisan became an artillery officer and served for a few years.

After his military career, Moisan returned to South Dakota and started working on a master's degree. He spent a summer managing grasslands with the Corps of Engineers and learned a deeper respect for the land. His time working on the grassland also helped strengthen his desire to own some land.

Eventually, Moisan went to work for the State of South Dakota and moved to the Pierre area. He spent 30 years in state government. During that time, he raised five kids, trained many hunting dogs and developed many relationships with landowners all over the state who let his family and him hunt.

By the late 1990s and early 2000s, commercial pheasant hunting was becoming bigger business and

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finding private land to hunt was becoming harder and harder for Moisan to do. In 2002, his family came into some money.

The early 2000s were a transitional time in South Dakota agriculture. Corn was in the early stages of taking off as a major cash crop. Land values had yet to skyrocket in response to the ethanol boom and the rise in the price of corn that soon followed. Farm land was still reasonably affordable

At about that time, 640 acres of contiguous land in Tripp County came on the market. Nearly every square inch of the property was planted to wheat. There was just one small pasture to the northeast and it had routinely been grazed to the dirt.

"I saw it as a fixer-upper farm," Moisan said.

It was a tremendous opportunity, Moisan thought. He and a business partner offered \$400 per acre and eventually paid \$412.40. Today, the price per acre for farm ground can run up to \$2,500. It didn't take long for Moisan to be confronted by just how tough restoring the newly christened Eagle View Ranch would be.

For more than 100 years, the family that owned the land had abused it. Wheat was about the only thing they'd grown there. Just about everywhere a plow could hit had been tilled. This included the tops of hills and the bottoms draws, places prone to erosion and flooding.

After a century of tillage and erosion from wind and rain, there wasn't much more than a few inches of topsoil left on most of the farm. Gravel was exposed on the tops of hills.

There were old oil filters, fan belts and all manner of broken tractor parts sprinkled liberally across the landscape. Crumbling barns and other buildings filled what had been a farmyard and there was very little water anywhere on the farm. There wasn't much in the way of wildlife, either.

"It was a hell of a mess," Moisan said.

He and his partner hadn't had nearly enough money to buy the place outright. There was a mortgage to pay and a hefty property tax bill to consider as well, Moisan said. So he needed a renter to produce a crop to help pay the mortgage and taxes. The guy he found wasn't that great a farmer and largely kept doing what the previous owners had done.

"I lost \$30,000 one year," Moisan said.

In 2004, Moisan turned to the Conservation Reserve Program, which pays landowners to take land out of production and turn it into wildlife habitat, especially when the land's soil is highly erodible. He learned about a program contained in the program called CP38, which is better known as State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement or SAFE. The idea is to put the least-productive portions of farm fields to better use as wildlife habitat.

Moisan heard about the program at a Pheasants Forever banquet in Pierre. The Farm Service Agency office in Tripp County, though, wasn't familiar with it. Still they worked with Moisan to enroll 130 acres into the program.

He planted 42 acres of trees, totaling about 66,000 individual plants. The rest of that first 130 acres was planted to grass. Moisan's renter was not happy about the change. Farming around the trees was going to make things a bit more difficult and the renter didn't much care if the newly planted CRP acres hadn't actually been producing a profitable crop.

Moisan was forced to part ways with that first renter after just a few years.

Moisan's goal for Eagle View Ranch was to create a haven for wildlife, while at the same time making enough money to break even on the property financially. The plan revolved planting 30 percent of the property to native grasses and enrolling it into CRP, keeping 30 percent of the property as farm ground and another 30 percent would be pasture land. The remaining acres would be used for stock dams, drainage basins and a few more manicured acres around the small mobile home and few remaining barns that made up the farmyard.

Moisan said he based his plan on a master's degree thesis written by Emmett Keyser. The thesis focused on pheasant habitat requirements. Keyser's thesis found that a mix of about one-third crop, one-third undisturbed grass and one-third disturbed grass was ideal for pheasant production.

Making his plan a reality was a tall order. One that would require an experienced, forward-thinking farmer and a thorough understanding of federal, state and privately funded conservation programs.

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Understanding the conservation programs came only after countless hours of study and practice. What Moisan discovered was that the people who manage federal conservation programs at the country level often interpret the programs differently from each other. The end result is that the USDA officers in Tripp County will enforce different rules than their counterparts in Hughes County even if they're working with the same program.

A big part of navigating federal conservation programs, Moisan discovered, was knowing more about what was available than those at his local FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service offices.

"One thing about NRCS offices in the area is that they don't actively tell people about the programs available to them," Moisan said.

Still, he was able to get 30 percent of his land enrolled into CRP. Moisan also was able to get a new dam built with the help of a cost share between the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and himself.

The work isn't over once the land is enrolled either, Moisan said. He spends a lot of time working with the FSA and NRCS offices in Tripp County to figure out what he can and can't do to improve wildlife habitat on his property.

"The biggest hurdle I've seen was what the NRCS and what the FSA told me I could plant was really far apart," Moisan said.

Last summer, for example, Moisan devised a plan to mow some of his CRP in irregular strips. The idea was to confound pheasant nest predators such as foxes, skunks and coyotes, while at the same time allowing his renter to take some much needed hay and meeting management goals included in the CRP contract. Moisan's plan wasn't accepted because the contract requires that mowing take place in blocks of no less than 10 acres. So, he had to go back to the drawing board.

Though Moisan was able to enroll the acres he needed into CRP, the crop portion of Eagle View Ranch's operations proved harder to turn profitable. In 2010, when another renter parted ways with Moisan, the landowner was forced to find another farmer, this time he hoped to find someone who shared his vision. Or at least one that understood it.

The man Moisan needed turned out to be Mick Rowe. Rowe farmed over 1,000 acres in and around Tripp County and had embraced the practice of no-till farming. The idea behind no-till farming is to leave plenty of crop residue in the ground after harvesting. That leaves more organic matter in the ground and helps moisture make its way into the ground. Leaving the roots and stems in the dirt also has the important effect of reducing soil erosion.

Rowe said he picked the idea up from Dwayne Beck, who runs the Dakota Lakes Research Farm south of Pierre. Beck has been at the forefront of a revolution of sorts in dry land farming. Farmers from Kansas to Canada have implemented no-till and other farming practices Beck has pioneered.

It can take a few years but, eventually, no-till farming and a good crop rotation plan leads to healthier soil that in turn leads to better yields, with reduced need for such things as fertilizer. The increased moisture retention also helps crops such as corn and sorghum weather central South Dakota's often dry climate. Rowe said it took him six years to break even on Moisan's land.

"There's just no topsoil," Rowe said. "It's all been eroded away."

Rowe also has embraced modern technology. He's started using satellite imagery to help him plant more efficiently in the spring and to help identify where and how to use chemicals, which ends up reducing the amount needed and, by extension, the cost of the chemicals. That translates into more money in his pocket and Moisan's pocket.

That's critical, Moisan said, because even with land enrolled in the CRP program, there's no way he could afford to keep his ranch without profitable farm ground.

"The way I've got it setup now, the land pays for itself," Moisan said.

Precision doesn't come without some sacrifice, though. Rowe said he's invested many thousands of dollars in both hardware and software.

It didn't take long after Moisan started planting trees and grass for wildlife to respond. When his land

was a desert of wheat stubble most of the year, the only birds he saw there were some grouse that comuted in for dinner in the afternoon. They weren't really huntable in that situation.

After planting trees and grass on his marginal cropland, it took about three years before Moisan started seeing a difference in the number of pheasants on his land. By 2008, Moisan said, his sons and friends were able to harvest hundreds of birds in a season.

"The pheasant and grouse crop just exploded," Moisan said.

He started letting people who asked hunt on Eagle View Ranch provided they cleaned up after themselves. Moisan said if people who asked to hunt had kids and dogs with them they'd be even more likely to get permission to hunt.

"You could sit on the deck, have breakfast and 60 to 70 pheasants would walk across the yard," Moisan said of the pheasant population on his property.

For four years, the hunting was incredible, Moisan said. Then, in 2012, the pheasant population tanked. Only a few birds were killed on Eagle View Ranch that year. In 2013, Moisan said he stopped hunting the property.

The birds still haven't come back, he said, even though the habitat on his property is some of the best around.

"I just don't understand that," Moisan said. "If the wildlife comes back, I've got a five-star hotel with a sign out that says vacancy."

Still, he's proud of what he's done with Eagle View Ranch.

"My goal is pretty much achieved," Moisan said. "To be able to take a piece of dirt that had been abused for 100 years and turn it into something special, is priceless."

Information from: Pierre Capital Journal, <http://www.capjournal.com>

DIY craft businesses gain popularity in South Dakota

By MEGAN RAPOSA, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — When mother-daughter team Patience Pickner and Chelsea Tracy opened a home decor store near downtown Sioux Falls earlier this year, their goal was to provide a unique experience for buying home decor.

And one way to sell customers on that experience was to help them make the decor themselves.

The store, Conversation Piece, now hosts regular "make-and-take" events, in which customers work through a craft with step-by-step guidance from Pickner. They all leave with their own handmade project.

"That's a huge draw," Tracy told the Argus Leader. "People are excited to be working with their hands."

More Sioux Falls businesses are jumping on the make-and-take trend in recent years as a way to not only get customers in the door but also to educate them on products and build relationships to ensure they keep coming back.

While there are no set rules for what a make-and-take looks like, they all typically involve a class-like setting where an instructor guides attendees through a craft project step-by-step. Customers usually pay for the materials, and the business provides the tools to put it all together.

Often, customers turn make-and-take events into a social event.

In her first week in business, AR Workshop owner Tracy Hinkkanen has seen groups from mothers and daughters to friends to bridal parties at the new do it yourself franchise in Sioux Falls.

AR Workshop's entire business model hinges on the popularity of make-and-take. Customers choose a time to work on a craft, such as a farmhouse-style sign or a centerpiece box, and as they're guided through the project, they can have a few drinks and socialize with friends.

The early success of AR Workshop solidifies for Hinkkanen the popularity of DIY as a social experience.

"People are, first of all, really, really busy," she said. "And so when they get together with friends, it feels good to be productive ... They also get to create something, that sense of satisfaction."

Make-and-take events also give employees a chance to educate customers about products.

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At New You Infrared Spa, Manager Stacey Harris hosts make-and-take events about essential oils. It's a way to bring in new customers and also a way to share the benefits of essential oils in a no-pressure environment.

"We tell them to try it out," Harris said. "They're trusting that we're not just trying to sell them something. We're really trying to help them."

The personal interactions during a make-and-take help customers see the passion employees and business owners have for their work.

"We become closer to our customers because people can sense when you're passionate about what you do. ... They become a little extended family for us," Harris said.

Landscape Garden Centers has hosted make-and-take events for about six years, said Betty Tarrell, retail store manager.

In the last few years, Tarrell has seen these events become more popular, and in the spring, she's hosting up to four events per week.

"It's worthwhile to us because we are passionate about our industry, and we like to pass that passion to our customers," Tarrell said.

Make-and-take events empower customers to use Landscape Garden Centers' products confidently, Tarrell said. It's a way for employees and employers to create a shared passion for gardening, flowers, fairy gardens and arrangements.

That's true for other businesses as well. Harris sees repeat customers coming back again and again for a certain essential oil they first tried at a make-and-take.

For Tracy, make-and-take events give customers a chance to try their hand at DIY decor, but they also get a chance to see the offerings at Conversation Piece.

It gets customers in the door, having fun and interacting with employees, and, often, they come back. "You build that personal relationship," Tarrell said. "And I think you build customers for life."

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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Friday:

Mega Millions

06-23-63-66-73, Mega Ball: 9, Megaplier: 2

(six, twenty-three, sixty-three, sixty-six, seventy-three; Mega Ball: nine; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$20 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$173 million

AP FACT CHECK: Kelly distorts congresswoman's actions

By TERRY SPENCER and CALVIN WOODWARD, Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump's chief of staff distorted the facts when he accused a "selfish" Florida Rep. Frederica Wilson of grandstanding at a building dedication in the memory of two slain FBI agents in 2015.

John Kelly said she stunned the audience at the somber ceremony by recounting how she had been the driving force behind raising money for the building, the FBI's South Florida headquarters. But a video of her remarks at the dedication shows she never took credit for getting the government to come up with the money for the project. Indeed, the building was approved several years before she entered Congress.

The long-ago episode has become caught up in a swirl of recriminations, sparked days ago when Trump

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made an empty boast that he surpassed previous presidents in reaching out to families of the fallen. One such outreach backfired, leaving a family feeling that their late son, Sgt. La David Johnson, was disrespected by Trump in a phone conversation with his widow, according to the aunt who raised him.

In addition, both Trump and Kelly implied nefarious motives by Wilson in listening to that call — “SECRETLY,” as Trump put it in a tweet. Trump called while Wilson was in the car with the widow — a friend — and other family members, and the call was put on speakerphone.

In that circumstance, the limo driver listened in, too — there was no escaping it.

On Thursday, flush with fury, Kelly spoke about the building dedication and more as he challenged Wilson’s criticisms of Trump’s behavior on the phone with Myeshia Johnson. Her husband was one of U.S. four soldiers killed in Niger early this month.

A look at Kelly’s comments and Trump’s tweet:

KELLY: “And a congresswoman stood up, and in a long tradition of empty barrels making the most noise, stood up there in all of that and talked about how she was instrumental in getting the funding for that building, and how she took care of her constituents because she got the money, and she just called up President Obama, and on that phone call, he gave the money, the \$20 million, to build the building, and she sat down. And we were stunned, stunned that she’d done it. Even for someone that is that empty a barrel, we were stunned.”

THE FACTS: Kelly’s recollection is incorrect. In her nine-minute speech at the April 10, 2015, dedication ceremony, a video of which was found by the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, Wilson never mentions the building’s financing.

She did, though, spend up to three minutes talking about an effort she did lead — to have the building named after the special agents, Ben Grogan and Jerry Dove, who were killed in a 1986 gun battle in Miami. She recounted how she was asked by the FBI four weeks earlier to expedite a bill through Congress to name the building after Grogan and Dove. She said the process normally takes eight months to a year.

“I went into attack mode,” she told the audience. She said she approached then-Speaker John Boehner, telling him “the FBI needs your help and our country needs your help.” She said Boehner got the bill to the House floor for a vote in two days. She said she then rushed the bill to Florida Sens. Bill Nelson and Marco Rubio, who got the bill passed by that chamber two days later. President Barack Obama signed the bill three days before the dedication ceremony. The audience responded with loud applause.

“It’s a miracle but it speaks to the respect that our Congress has for the Federal Bureau of Investigation,” she said.

She then asked all first responders to stand so they could receive applause.

Wilson then recited the biographies of agents Grogan and Dove and detailed the gun battle in which they were killed and five other agents wounded.

After the video emerged, the White House tried to amend Kelly’s complaint. Trump spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Kelly was stunned that the Democratic congresswoman talked about “her own actions in Congress” at the event, glossing over Kelly’s erroneous claim that Wilson had bragged about raising the money.

KELLY: “It stuns me that a member of Congress would have listened in on that conversation. Absolutely stuns me. And I thought at least that was sacred.”

TRUMP: “The Fake News is going crazy with wacky Congresswoman Wilson(D), who was SECRETLY on a very personal call, and gave a total lie on content!”

THE FACTS: Kelly also listened in on what Trump called a “very personal call.” So did other people in the White House. “There were several people in the room from the administration that were on the call, including the chief of staff, General John Kelly,” Sanders confirmed this week.

At the other end, Trump’s call came when the family was in a limousine at or en route to Miami International Airport to meet Johnson’s casket. The slain soldier’s aunt and uncle, Richard Johnson and Cowanda Jones-Johnson, who raised him as parents, were in the car. So was Johnson’s wife and the Democratic

congresswoman.

Wilson knew Sgt. Johnson as a member of her 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project, founded to help minority boys find success in life.

She said in TV interviews she wasn't secretly listening in — everyone in the car heard — and in fact wanted to get on the call and "curse him out" but was not given the phone.

A president's phone calls to bereaved military families are generally not made public, but that's not to say anyone is sworn to secrecy.

Natasha De Alencar, widow of Army Staff Sgt. Mark De Alencar, released video of her conversation with Trump, which she found comforting.

The video has been playing on CNN and the White House has not complained publicly.

Woodward reported from Washington. Find AP Fact Checks at <http://apne.ws/2kxb8bd>

54 Egyptian police killed in ambush, say officials

By MENNA ZAKI, Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — At least 54 policemen, including 20 officers and 34 conscripts, were killed when a raid on a militant hideout southwest of Cairo escalated into an all-out firefight, authorities said Saturday, in one of the single deadliest attacks by militants against Egyptian security forces in recent years.

The officials said the exchange of fire began late Friday in the al-Wahat al-Bahriya area in Giza province, about 135 kilometers (84 miles) southwest of Cairo.

The firefight began when security forces acting on intelligence moved against a militants' hideout in the area. Backed by armored personnel carriers and led by senior counterterrorism officers, the police contingent drew fire and rocket-propelled grenades, according to the officials.

The officials said what happened next is not clear, but indications suggest that the force ran out of ammunition and that the militants captured several policemen and later killed them. One officer managed to escape in his armored vehicle, they added.

The officials said the police force appeared to have fallen into a carefully planned ambush set up by the militants. The death toll could increase, they added, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief media.

Those killed included two police brigadier-generals, a colonel and 10 lieutenant colonels.

Egypt's Interior Ministry, which is in charge of police, announced a much lower death toll, saying in a statement read over state television that 16 were killed in the shootout. It added that 15 militants were killed or injured.

The last time Egypt's security forces suffered such a heavy loss of life was in July 2015 when militants from the extremist Islamic State group carried out a series of coordinated attacks, including suicide bombings, against army and police positions in the Sinai peninsula, killing at least 50. However, the army said only 17 soldiers and over 100 militants were killed.

An official statement issued Saturday said Friday's incident would be investigated, suggesting that the heavy death toll may have been partially caused by incompetence, intelligence failures or lack of coordination. The officials said prosecutors will look into whether the police's counterterrorism agents failed to inform the military of the operation or include them.

Two audio recordings purportedly by policemen who took part in the operation circulated online late Friday. One policeman, apparently using a two-way radio, was heard in the nearly two-minute recording pleading for help from a higher-ranking officer.

"We are the only ones injured, sir," the policeman said. "We were 10 but three were killed. After their injury, they bled to death, sir."

"They took all the weapons and ammunition," he added, "We are now at the foot of a mountain."

The second recording was purportedly by a policeman warning others. "I can't identify any direction. Only planes can see us. Take care every one," he was heard saying, adding that militants were pursuing them.

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The authenticity of the recordings could not be immediately verified.

The heavy loss of life will likely lead to the restructuring and streamlining of the country's counterterrorism effort, the officials said, with better coordination between the police, military and security agencies high on the list of objectives.

It's also likely to be cited by government critics as a vindication of their long-held argument that suppressing freedoms, jailing opponents and cracking down on civil society does not, as the pro-government media insists, help in the war against terror.

No militant group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, which bore all the hallmarks of the Islamic State group. A local affiliate of the extremist group is spearheading an insurgency whose epicenter is in the Sinai Peninsula, which borders Israel and the Gaza Strip.

The United States condemned the attack in a statement issued by State Department, offering "profound condolences to the families of the deceased and the government and people of Egypt... at this difficult time."

The incident comes a few days after militants staged a brazen daylight attack in the heart of el-Arish, the largest city in the Sinai Peninsula, attacking a church and a nearby bank and reportedly making away with some \$1 million. Seven were killed in the Monday attack.

Attacks by militants have significantly increased since the 2013 ouster by the military of an Islamist president, who was freely elected but whose one-year rule proved divisive. Attacks have also spread outside Sinai and into the country's mainland and areas close to the porous Libyan border to the west.

The country has been under a state of emergency since April, following a spate of suicide bombings targeting minority Christians that have killed more than a 100 since December. The attacks were claimed by IS.

Egypt blamed the attacks on the Christians on militant cells trained and armed in neighboring Libya, where mostly Islamist militias, including extremist groups like IS, control territory or maintain a foothold in the vast, oil-rich nation. In response, Egypt has stepped up security along its desert border with Libya, where it supports an eastern-based army general fighting militant groups.

In July 2014, gunmen armed with rocket-propelled grenades attacked a border guard post in Egypt's western desert in a brazen assault that killed 21 troops deployed close to the Libyan border.

Associated Press writer Thomas Strong in Washington D.C. contributed to this report.

Tillerson's Mideast aim is a Saudi-Iraqi axis against Iran

By MATTHEW LEE, AP Diplomatic Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — As U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson visits the Middle East this weekend, he'll hope to achieve something that has eluded top American diplomats for a generation: sealing a new alliance between Saudi Arabia and Iraq that would shut the doors of the Arab world to neighboring Iran.

While the United States strives to heal the rift between the Gulf Arab states and Qatar, and resolve civil wars in Yemen and Syria, Tillerson is the Trump administration's point man on an even more ambitious and perhaps even less likely geopolitical gambit.

U.S. officials see a new axis that unites Riyadh and Baghdad as central to countering Iran's growing influence from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea, particularly as the Iraqi government struggles to rebuild recently liberated Islamic State strongholds and confronts a newly assertive Kurdish independence movement.

History, religion and lots of politics stand in Tillerson's way. He arrived in Riyadh on Saturday and planned to visit Qatar on Monday.

The effort to wean Iraq from Iran and bond it to Saudi Arabia isn't new, but U.S. officials are optimistically pointing to a surer footing they believe they've seen in recent months. They're hoping to push the improved relations into a more advanced phase Sunday when Tillerson participates in the inaugural meeting of the Saudi Arabia-Iraq Coordination Committee in Riyadh.

Tillerson will seek Saudi financial generosity and political support for Iraq, its embattled northern neighbor. Two U.S. officials said Tillerson hopes the oil-rich Saudis will contribute to the massive reconstruction

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projects needed to restore pre-IS life in Iraqi cities such as Mosul and lend their backing to Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi. He is treading delicately among a host of powerful countries on Iraq's borders which are increasingly trying to shape the future of the ethnically and religiously divided nation.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to publicly preview Tillerson's plans.

Shiite-majority Iraq and Sunni-led Saudi Arabia, estranged for decades after Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, have tried in recent years to bridge their differences.

Nevertheless, the relationship is still plagued by suspicion.

Saudi Arabia reopened its embassy in Baghdad in 2015 after a quarter-century, and earlier this year unblocked long-closed border crossings. But the emergence of arch-Saudi rival Iran as a power player in Iraq continues to gnaw at Riyadh and Washington.

Iran's reported intervention in Iraq's semi-autonomous northern Kurdish region, following last month's much criticized vote for independence in a referendum, has deepened the unease.

President Donald Trump wants to see "a stable Iraq, but a stable Iraq that is not aligned with Iran," H.R. McMaster, his national security adviser, said this past week. He suggested Saudi Arabia could play a pivotal role.

The U.S. view is that the alternative may mean more conflict in Iraq, which endured years of insurgency after the U.S.-led 2003 invasion and ethnic warfare when the Islamic State group rampaged across the country in 2014.

"Iran is very good at pitting communities against each other," McMaster said Thursday at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. "This is something they share with groups like ISIS, with al-Qaida. They pit communities against each other because they use tribal and ethnic and sectarian conflicts to gain influence by portraying themselves as a patron or protector of one of the parties in the conflict and then they use that invitation to come in and to help to advance their agenda and, in Iran's case, I think is a hegemonic design."

Trump and his national security team have framed much of the Middle East security agenda around counteracting Iran, which they see as a malign influence that poses an existential threat to Israel and other American allies and partners in the region. They also accuse Iran of menacing the United States and its interests at home and elsewhere in the world.

Shortly after taking office, Tillerson identified improving Saudi-Iraqi ties as a priority in the administration's broader policy to confront and contain Iran. Officials say he has devoted himself to the effort.

On his second official trip abroad, Tillerson in February canceled a planned "meet and greet" with staffers at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City to focus on the matter, according to one of the U.S. officials.

Tillerson's decision to skip that gathering was widely criticized at the time as a sign of disengagement with his employees, but the official said Tillerson adjusted plans to speak by secure telephone to Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir on the Iraq rapprochement.

Tillerson, according to the official, implored al-Jubeir to visit Baghdad as a sign of Saudi goodwill and commitment to the effort to defeat IS, which then still held about half of Mosul.

Al-Jubeir agreed. Two days later, he made a surprise trip to the Iraqi capital. He was the first Saudi foreign minister to do so in 27 years.

Trump has no plan to block scheduled release of JFK records

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump says he doesn't plan to block the scheduled release of thousands of never publicly seen government documents related to President John F. Kennedy's assassination.

"Subject to the receipt of further information," he wrote in a Saturday morning tweet, "I will be allowing, as President, the long blocked and classified JFK FILES to be opened."

The National Archives has until Thursday to disclose the remaining files related to Kennedy's 1963 as-

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assassination. The trove is expected to include more than 3,000 documents that have never been seen by the public and more than 30,000 that have been previously released but with redactions.

Congress mandated in 1992 that all assassination documents be released within 25 years, but Trump has the power to block them on the grounds that making them public would harm intelligence or military operations, law enforcement or foreign relations.

"Thank you. This is the correct decision. Please do not allow exceptions for any agency of government," tweeted Larry Sabato, director of the University of Virginia Center for Politics and author of a book about Kennedy, who has urged the president to release the files. "JFK files have been hidden too long."

The anticipated release has had scholars and armchair detectives buzzing. But it's unlikely the documents will contain any big revelations on a tragedy that has stirred conspiracy theories for decades, Judge John Tunheim told The Associated Press last month. Tunheim was chairman of the independent agency in the 1990s that made public many assassination records and decided how long others could remain secret.

Sabato and other JFK scholars believe the trove of files may, however, provide insight into assassin Lee Harvey Oswald's trip to Mexico City weeks before the killing, during which he visited the Soviet and Cuban embassies. Oswald's stated reason for going was to get visas that would allow him to enter Cuba and the Soviet Union, according to the Warren Commission, the investigative body established by President Lyndon B. Johnson, but much about the trip remains unknown.

Longtime Trump friend Roger Stone, who wrote a book alleging that Johnson was the driving force behind Kennedy's assassination, had personally urged the president to make the files public, he told far-right conspiracy theorist and radio show host Alex Jones this past week.

"Yesterday, I had the opportunity to make the case directly to the president of the United States by phone as to why I believe it is essential that he release the balance of the currently redacted and classified JFK assassination documents," Stone said, adding that "a very good White House source," but not the president, had told him the Central Intelligence Agency, "specifically CIA director Mike Pompeo, has been lobbying the president furiously not to release these documents."

"Why? Because I believe they show that Oswald was trained, nurtured and put in place by the Central Intelligence Agency. It sheds very bad light on the deep state," he said.

After the president announced his decision, Stone tweeted: "Yes ! victory !"

The files that were withheld in full were those the Assassination Records Review Board deemed "not believed relevant," Tunheim said. Its members sought to ensure they weren't hiding any information directly related to Kennedy's assassination, but there may be nuggets of information in the files that they didn't realize were important two decades ago, he said.

"There could be some jewels in there because in our level of knowledge in the 1990s is maybe different from today," Tunheim said.

The National Archives in July published online more than 440 never-before-seen assassination documents and thousands of others that had been released previously with redactions.

Among those documents was a 1975 internal CIA memo that questioned whether Oswald became motivated to kill Kennedy after reading an AP article in a newspaper that quoted Fidel Castro as saying "U.S. leaders would be in danger if they helped in any attempt to do away with leaders of Cuba."

Funeral starts for soldier at center of Trump fight

By TERRY SPENCER, Associated Press

COOPER CITY, Fla. (AP) — Mourners filled a church in Florida on Saturday to honor a U.S. soldier whose combat death in Africa led to a political fight between President Donald Trump and a Florida congresswoman.

The widow of Sgt. La David T. Johnson held the arm of an Army officer as she led her family, dressed in white, into the Christ the Rock Community Church in suburban Fort Lauderdale. The family asked that reporters remain outside.

Johnson, 25, was one of four U.S. Special Forces troops killed Oct. 4 in an ambush in Niger in an attack by militants linked to the Islamic State group. Four soldiers from Niger also died.

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Debbie Valin and her teenage daughter, Michelle Shawn, held a U.S. flag outside the church in Cooper City more than an hour before the service.

"We are here for the military. We are grateful for the people who serve," said Valin, whose grandson just completed Marine boot camp.

Fred Walker, a Marine veteran, planted small flags along the driveway into the church.

"It's about doing the right thing for the soldiers. They are not acknowledged enough," said Walker, who served from 1983 to 1989 as a tank gunner and substance abuse counselor.

The fight between Trump and Rep. Frederica Wilson has taken the focus off Johnson, whose widow, Myeshia, is due to have a daughter in January. Sgt. Johnson told friends she will be named La'Shee. The couple, who were high school sweethearts, already had a 6-year-old daughter, Ah'Leeysa, and 2-year-old son, La David Jr. An online fundraiser has raised more than \$600,000 to pay for the children's education.

The Miami Herald reports that Johnson's mother died when he was 5 and that he was raised by his aunt. His family enrolled him in 5000 Role Models, a project Wilson began in 1993 when she was an educator to mentor African-American males and prepare them for college, vocational school or the military. He worked at Walmart for several years before joining the military in 2014.

A year before he enlisted, Johnson was featured in a local television newscast for his ability to do bicycle tricks, earning the nickname "Wheelie King." He said he learned his tricks by going slow.

"Once you feel comfortable, you could just ride all day," he told the interviewer.

The fight between the president and Wilson began Tuesday when the Miami-area Democrat said Trump told Myeshia Johnson in a phone call that her husband "knew what he signed up for" and didn't appear to know his name, a version later backed up by Johnson's aunt. Wilson was riding with Johnson's family to meet the body and heard the call on speakerphone. She was principal of a school Johnson's father attended.

Trump tweeted Wilson "fabricated" his statement and the fight escalated through the week. Trump in other tweets called her "wacky" and accused her of "SECRETLY" listening to the phone call.

Trump's chief of staff, John Kelly, entered the fray on Thursday. Kelly asserted that the congresswoman had delivered a 2015 speech at an FBI field office dedication in which she "talked about how she was instrumental in getting the funding for that building," rather than keeping the focus on the fallen agents for which it was named. Video of the speech contradicted his recollection.

Wilson, who is black, fired back Friday when she told The New York Times "The White House itself is full white supremacists."

The retorts persisted on Saturday morning, with Trump tweeting: "I hope the Fake News Media keeps talking about Wacky Congresswoman Wilson in that she, as a representative, is killing the Democrat Party!"

Trump jabs back at 'wacky' congresswoman as spat rolls on

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Unwilling to put the tussling behind, President Donald Trump on Saturday jabbed back at the Democratic lawmaker who has slammed him for his words of condolence to a military widow, calling Rep. Frederica Wilson "wacky" and contending she is "killing" her party.

Trump's broadside came a day after the White House defended chief of staff John Kelly after he mischaracterized Wilson's remarks and called her an "empty barrel" making noise. A Trump spokeswoman said it was "inappropriate" to question Kelly in light of his stature as a retired four-star general.

The fight between Trump and the Miami-area Democrat began Tuesday said Trump told the pregnant widow of a service member killed in the African nation of Niger that her 25-year-old husband "knew what he signed up for." Wilson was riding with the family of family of Sgt. La David Johnson to meet the body and heard the call on speakerphone.

The administration has attempted to insist that it's long past time to end the political squabbling over Trump's compassion for America's war dead.

But Trump added to the volley of insults with his tweet on Saturday morning: "I hope the Fake News

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Media keeps talking about Wacky Congresswoman Wilson in that she, as a representative, is killing the Democrat Party!" That came after she had added a new element by suggesting a racial context.

His tweet came hours before mourners were to attend Johnson's funeral in a suburb of Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Kelly asserted that the congresswoman had delivered a 2015 speech at an FBI field office dedication in which she "talked about how she was instrumental in getting the funding for that building," rather than keeping the focus on the fallen agents for which it was named. Video of the speech contradicted his recollection.

Wilson, in an interview Friday with The New York Times, brought race into the dispute.

"The White House itself is full of white supremacists," said Wilson, who is black, as is the Florida family Trump had called in a condolence effort this week that led to the back-and-forth name calling.

Trump, in an interview with Fox Business Network, then called Wilson's criticism of Kelly "sickening." He also said he had had a "very nice call," with the late sergeant's family.

The spat started when Wilson told reporters that Trump had insulted the family of Johnson, who was killed two weeks ago in Niger. She was fabricating that, Trump said. The soldier's widow and aunt said no, it was the president who was fibbing.

Then Kelly strode out in the White House briefing room on Thursday, backing up the president and suggesting Wilson was just grandstanding — as he said she had at the FBI dedication in 2015.

After news accounts took issue with part of that last accusation, White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders chastised reporters for questioning the account of a decorated general.

"If you want to go after General Kelly, that's up to you," she said. "But I think that if you want to get into a debate with a four-star Marine general, I think that that's something highly inappropriate."

Video of the FBI office dedication in Miami, from the archives of South Florida's Sun-Sentinel, shows that Wilson never mentioned the building's funding, though she did recount at length her efforts to help name the building in honor of the special agents.

That did nothing to deter Sanders, who said "If you're able to make a sacred act like honoring American heroes about yourself, you're an empty barrel."

Sanders also used a dismissive Southwest rancher's term, calling Wilson, who often wears elaborate hats, "all hat and no cattle."

Wilson was in the car with the family of Johnson, who died in an Oct. 4 ambush that killed four American soldiers in Niger, when Trump called to express his condolences on Tuesday. She said in an interview that Trump had told Johnson's widow that "you know that this could happen when you signed up for it ... but it still hurts." Johnson's aunt, who raised the soldier from a young age, said the family took that remark to be disrespectful.

The Defense Department is investigating the details of the Niger ambush, in which Islamic militants on motorcycles brought rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns, killing the four and wounding others. The FBI said it is assisting, as it has in the past when American citizens are killed overseas.

Sanders said Friday that if the "spirit" in which Trump's comments "were intended were misunderstood, that's very unfortunate."

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writers Ken Thomas in Washington and Terry Spencer in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, contributed reporting.

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

Court, for now, blocks immigrant teen's access to abortion

By JESSICA GRESKO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An appeals court is blocking, for now, an abortion sought by a pregnant 17-year-old immigrant being held in a Texas facility, ruling that the government should have time to try to release

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her so she can obtain the abortion outside of federal custody.

A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia issued its ruling Friday hours after arguments from lawyers for the Trump administration and the teenager. The court ruled 2-1 that the government should have until Oct. 31 to release the girl into the custody of a sponsor, such as an adult relative in the United States. If that happens, she could obtain an abortion if she chooses. If she isn't released, the case can go back to court.

The judge who dissented wrote that the court's ruling means the teen will be forced to continue an unwanted pregnancy for "multiple more weeks."

The teen, whose name and country of origin have been withheld because she's a minor, is 15 weeks pregnant. She entered the U.S. in September and learned she was pregnant while in custody in Texas.

She obtained a court order Sept. 25 permitting her to have an abortion. But federal officials have refused to transport her or temporarily release her so that others may take her to have an abortion. A lower federal court ruled that she should be able to obtain an abortion Friday or Saturday, but the government appealed.

Federal health officials said in a statement that for "however much time" they are given they "will protect the well-being of this minor and all children and their babies" in their facilities.

Susan Hays, legal director of the Texas group Jane's Due Process, which works with pregnant minors seeking an abortion and had offered to help pay for the teen's abortion, said the court appeared to be "punting" the final decision on whether the teenager would be entitled to an abortion.

Brigitte Amiri, the ACLU lawyer who represented the teen in court, said in a statement that the group is "investigating all avenues to get justice for her."

"Justice is delayed yet again for this courageous and persistent young woman. She continues to be held hostage and prevented from getting an abortion because the Trump administration disagrees with her personal decision," Amiri said. "Our client and women across this country should be able to access a safe, legal abortion without federal officials stepping in to interfere."

The teenager's lawyers have argued that even a brief delay in allowing her to obtain an abortion could mean she may need a more complex procedure, one possibly not available in the region where she lives. If that happens, she could have to travel hundreds of miles to obtain an abortion, and if her case drags on she could lose her right to an abortion all together, her lawyers said. Texas law bans most abortions after the 20th week of pregnancy.

During arguments at the appeals court, Amiri told the judges that all the government needed to do was "get out of the way." An attorney appointed to represent the teen's interests had said she could transport her to and from appointments necessary for the procedure, and the federal government would not have to pay for it.

But administration lawyer Catherine Dorsey told the judges that the federal Department of Health and Human Services, which is responsible for sheltering children who illegally enter the country unaccompanied by a parent, has a policy of "refusing to facilitate" abortions and that releasing the teenager would require arranging a transfer of custody and follow-up care.

During arguments, Judge Brett Kavanaugh said releasing the girl to a sponsor seemed to be the best option. That, he said, would get her out of the facility where she is being held, allow her to obtain an abortion and leave the government out of it. But Amiri said a sponsor hadn't yet been found and that the process could take months. At least one potential sponsor has fallen through.

In a two-page order, Kavanaugh and Judge Karen Henderson, both of whom were appointed by Republican presidents, said that if a sponsor is found by Oct. 31 and the teenager released, the government agrees she "will be lawfully able, if she chooses, to obtain an abortion on her own pursuant to the relevant state law."

Judge Patricia Millett, who was appointed by a Democrat, President Barack Obama, would have allowed the girl to obtain an abortion as the lower court had ruled. Millett wrote that the girl "has already been forced by the government to continue an unwanted pregnancy for almost four weeks, and now, as a result of this order, must continue to carry that pregnancy for multiple more weeks."

Associated Press reporter Nomaan Merchant in Houston contributed to this report.

Follow Jessica Gresko on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/jessicagresko>

Polls indicate Japanese PM Abe headed for easy victory

By KEN MORITSUGU, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's leader may have made the right call after all, if not for his country then for himself. Media polls indicate Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling coalition will handily win a general election Sunday, possibly even retaining its two-thirds majority in the more powerful lower house of parliament.

Japanese voters may not love Abe, but they appear to want to stick with what they know, rather than hand the reins to an opposition with little or no track record. Uncertainty over North Korea and its growing missile and nuclear arsenal may be heightening that underlying conservatism.

"I buy into Prime Minister Abe's ability to handle diplomacy," said Naomi Mochida, a 51-year-old woman listening to Abe campaign earlier this week in Saitama prefecture, outside of Tokyo. "I think the most serious threat we face now is the North Korea situation. I feel Prime Minister Abe has been showing the best tactics to handle the situation, compared to other politicians including past prime ministers."

Abe dissolved the lower house a little more than three weeks ago on the day it convened for a special session, forcing the snap election. The timing seemed ripe for his ruling Liberal-Democratic Party, or at least better than waiting.

Support for Abe's Cabinet, the standard measure of a government's popularity in Japan, had bounced back from summertime lows. The main opposition force, the Democratic Party, was in more disarray than usual after its leader had resigned. Holding off would only give a potential rival, Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike, more time to organize a challenge.

The election is "mainly about the Abe administration trying to lock in its position ... and with success, get Prime Minister Abe re-elected as president of the LDP in September and rule until after the Tokyo Olympics, until 2021," Michael Green, a Japan expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., said on a call with journalists.

Koike, her hand forced by Abe's decision, hastily launched a new party to contest the election. Her Party of Hope briefly stole the limelight from Abe, attracting a slew of defectors from the Democrats. Its populist platform includes phasing out nuclear power by 2030, and putting on hold an increase in the consumption tax due in 2019.

But Abe's gambit appears to be paying off. The initial excitement for the Party of Hope has waned. Koike, the party leader, decided not to run for the 465-seat lower house and won't even be in Japan on election day. She is heading to Paris for a global conference of mayors that will discuss issues such as climate change.

The Democratic Party has imploded. Its more liberal members have launched yet another grouping, the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, which is now outpolling the Party of Hope.

"To be honest, I wish we had strong opposition," said Ko Horiguchi, a 71-year-old retiree listening to Abe's campaign speech. "But look at their sorry situation right now."

For the rest of the world, an Abe victory would likely mean a continuation of the policies he has pursued in the nearly five years since he took office in December 2012.

That includes a hard line on North Korea. Abe says it's not the time for dialogue and has pushed for tougher sanctions to try to pressure leader Kim Jong Un to abandon the country's weapons development.

He has backed a loose monetary policy that has boosted the stock market and breathed temporary life into a long-stagnant Japanese economy, though many of the gains haven't filtered down to working people, raising doubts about the sustainability of the recovery.

A strong election showing would boost Abe's chances of being reappointed to another three-year term as leader of the Liberal-Democratic Party next September, extending his premiership. That could make Abe the longest-serving prime minister in the post-World War II era.

It would also give him more time to try to win over a reluctant public to his longtime goal of revising the

postwar Japanese Constitution. He may get the two-thirds majority he needs in parliament for a constitutional amendment, but any change also needs approval in a public referendum.

Associated Press journalists Kaori Hitomi in Kumagaya, Japan, and Mari Yamaguchi contributed to this story.

Judge tosses \$417M award against Johnson & Johnson

By **ROBERT JABLON, Associated Press**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A judge on Friday tossed out a \$417 million jury award to a woman who claimed she developed ovarian cancer by using Johnson & Johnson talc-based baby powder for feminine hygiene.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Maren Nelson granted the company's request for a new trial, saying there were errors and jury misconduct in the previous trial that ended with the award two months ago.

Nelson also ruled that there wasn't convincing evidence that Johnson & Johnson acted with malice and the award for damages was excessive.

The decision will be appealed even though Eva Echeverria has died, said her attorney, Mark Robinson Jr.

"We will continue to fight on behalf of all women who have been impacted by this dangerous product," he said in a statement.

Echeverria alleged Johnson & Johnson failed to adequately warn consumers about talcum powder's potential cancer risks. She used the company's baby powder on a daily basis beginning in the 1950s until 2016 and was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2007, according to court papers.

Echeverria developed ovarian cancer as a "proximate result of the unreasonably dangerous and defective nature of talcum powder," she said in her lawsuit.

Her attorney contended that documents showed that Johnson & Johnson knew about the risks of talc and ovarian cancer for three decades.

The company said it was pleased with the ruling.

"Ovarian cancer is a devastating disease — but it is not caused by the cosmetic-grade talc we have used in Johnson's Baby Powder for decades. The science is clear and we will continue to defend the safety of Johnson's Baby Powder as we prepare for additional trials in the U.S.," spokeswoman Carol Goodrich said in a statement.

Similar allegations have led to hundreds of lawsuits against the New Jersey-based company. Jury awards have totaled hundreds of millions of dollars.

However, on Tuesday a Missouri appellate court threw out a \$72 million award to the family of an Alabama woman who has died, ruling that the state wasn't the proper jurisdiction for such a case.

The court cited a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in June that placed limits on where injury lawsuits could be filed, saying state courts cannot hear claims against companies not based in the state where alleged injuries occurred.

Bannon faults George W. Bush for 'destructive' presidency

By **MICHAEL R. BLOOD, Associated Press**

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Former White House adviser Steve Bannon depicted former President George W. Bush as bumbling and inept, faulting him for presiding over a "destructive" presidency during his time in the White House.

Bannon's scathing remarks on Friday night amounted to a retort to a Bush speech in New York earlier this week, in which the 43rd president denounced bigotry in Trump-era American politics and warned that the rise of "nativism," isolationism and conspiracy theories have clouded the nation's true identity.

But Bannon, speaking to a capacity crowd at a California Republican Party convention, said Bush had embarrassed himself and didn't know what he was talking about.

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Bannon said Bush has no idea whether “he is coming or going, just like it was when he was president.” “There has not been a more destructive presidency than George Bush’s,” Bannon added, as boos could be heard in the crowd at the mention of Bush’s name.

The remarks came during a speech thick with attacks on the Washington status quo, echoing his call for an “open revolt” against establishment Republicans. He called the “permanent political class” one of the great dangers faced by the country.

A small group of protesters gathered outside the hotel where Bannon spoke, chanting and waving signs — one displaying a Nazi swastika. The protesters were kept behind steel barricades on a plaza across an entrance road at the hotel, largely out of view of people entering for the event. No arrests were reported.

Bannon also took aim at the Silicon Valley and its “lords of technology,” predicting that tech leaders and progressives in the state would try to secede from the union in 10 to 15 years. He called the threat to break up the nation a “living problem.”

He also tried to cheer long-suffering California Republicans, in a state that Trump lost by over 4 million votes and where Republicans have become largely irrelevant in state politics. In Orange County, where the convention was held, several Republican House members are trying to hold onto their seats in districts carried by Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential contest.

“You’ve got everything you need to win,” he told them.

He ended his speech with a standing ovation.

Bannon is promoting a field of primary challengers to take on incumbent Republicans in Congress. But in California, the GOP has been fading for years.

The state has become a kind of Republican mausoleum: GOP supporters can relive the glory days by visiting the stately presidential libraries of Ronald Reagan and Richard Nixon, but today Democrats control every statewide office and rule both chambers of the Legislature by commanding margins.

Not all Republicans were glad to see Bannon. In a series of tweets last week, former state Assembly Republican leader Chad Mayes said he was shocked by the decision to have the conservative firebrand headline the event.

“It’s a huge step backward and demonstrates that the party remains tone deaf,” Mayes tweeted.

California Republicans have bickered for years over what direction to turn — toward the political center or to the right.

Bannon also argued that the coalition that sent Trump to the White House, including conservatives, Libertarians, populists, economic nationalists, evangelicals, could hold power for decades if they stay unified.

“If you have the wisdom, the strength, the tenacity, to hold that coalition together, we will govern for 50 to 75 years,” he said.

Most of the state’s governors in the 20th century were Republicans, and state voters helped elevate a string of GOP presidential candidates to the White House. But the party’s fortunes started to erode in the late 1990s after a series of measures targeting immigrants, which alienated growing segments of the state’s population.

In 2007, then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger warned party members that the GOP was “dying at the box office” and needed to move to the political center and embrace issues like climate change to appeal to a broader range of voters. In 2011, a state Republican Party committee blocked an attempt by moderates to push the state GOP platform toward the center on immigration, abortion, guns and gay rights.

The decline continued. Republicans are now a minor party in many California congressional districts, outnumbered by Democrats and independents. Statewide, Democrats count 3.7 million more voters than the GOP.

Political scientist Jack Pitney, who teaches at Claremont McKenna College, said he doubted the speech would color the 2018 congressional contests, which remain far off for most voters.

More broadly, he said Bannon’s politics would hurt the GOP, including among affluent, well-educated voters who play an important part in county elections.

“Inviting him was a moral and political blunder,” Pitney said in an email.

Killer of Navajo Nation girl gets life prison sentence

By RUSSELL CONTRERAS, Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — A man who pleaded guilty to the murder and sexual assault of an 11-year-old girl on the largest American Indian reservation was sentenced Friday to life in prison in a case that drew national attention over abducted Native American children.

Tom Begaye was sentenced by U.S. District Judge William P. Johnson in Albuquerque, New Mexico, for the May 2016 killing of Ashlynnne Mike on the Navajo Nation.

Her abduction and killing prompted calls to expand the Amber Alert missing child notification system and the death penalty to U.S. tribal communities. The alert system has not been fully adopted.

Begaye stood motionless as Mike's mother, Pamela Foster, called him a "monster" who took away her daughter.

"I have tried to get up each day on a positive note, and this is not possible because I still miss my sweet baby," Foster said.

Prosecutors said Begaye lured Mike and her younger brother into his van after the pair got out of school.

After realizing they were in danger, the siblings "reached out discreetly and held hands" before Begaye took Mike from the van to a secluded desert area, where he raped her and killed her with a crowbar, prosecutor Niki Tapia-Brito said.

Tapia-Brito said Begaye then left the boy near the famed Shiprock rock formation that rises more than 1,500 feet (460 meters) above the isolated desert spot. The boy found his way to a highway, Tapia-Brito said.

Ashlynnne was reported missing, but an Amber Alert that would have sent information about missing children via cellphone messages and information to the media did not go out until the next day.

Her body was later found in an area near the Arizona-New Mexico border.

Begaye agreed in August to plead guilty and faced a mandatory life sentence without parole.

James Loonam, Begaye's lawyer, said his client is intellectually disabled and was regularly beaten as a child. That information was provided in court not as an excuse for Begaye's actions but as an effort to "make peace" and protect children in the future, Loonam said.

The death led to pending federal legislation that would expand the Amber Alert system to tribal communities and calls for Navajo Nation to end its opposition to the death penalty.

Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona introduced legislation in April that would expand the notification system. He said more than 7,700 American Indian children are listed as missing in the U.S.

Navajo Nation president Russell Begaye, who is not related Tom Begaye, said all cellphone companies are part of the Amber Alert system on the reservation but the tribe's police districts do not have the equipment yet to fully participate.

Russell Begaye told The Associated Press he informed prosecutors that the tribe would have supported the death penalty for Tom Begaye.

"This particular case I was surprised, actually," Begaye said. "I was thinking the U.S. attorney general would say yeah, this one deserves the death penalty."

Elizabeth Martinez, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Attorney's Office in New Mexico, said in a statement that the U.S. attorney general decides whether or not to seek the death penalty based on the recommendation of the U.S. attorney and after carefully considering the defendant's background

"In this case, the attorney general decided against seeking the death penalty," Martinez said.

The Navajo Nation and many other Native American tribes oppose the death penalty.

American Indian tribes for decades have been able to tell federal prosecutors if they want a death sentence considered for certain crimes on their land. Nearly all have rejected that option.

Tribes and legal experts say the decision goes back to culture and tradition, past treatment of American Indians and fairness in the justice system.

Legal experts said they are aware of only one tribe, the Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma, that has supported it.

Follow Russell Contreras on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/ruscontreras>

TV Academy could boot Weinstein; new allegation revealed

By BRIAN MELLEY and AMANDA LEE MYERS

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Another influential entertainment organization said Friday it would consider booting disgraced film mogul Harvey Weinstein as another woman accused the Oscar winner of sexual abuse.

The Television Academy, which bestows Emmy awards, said a disciplinary hearing set for November could lead to termination of his membership.

Weinstein, accused of sexually harassing and abusing numerous women over decades, has been fired from The Weinstein Co., a TV and movie film production company he co-founded with his brother Bob. He has been expelled from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the Producers Guild and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts.

He now faces criminal inquiries in three cities after an Italian actress told Los Angeles detectives that Weinstein raped her in a hotel room in 2013.

Attorney David Ring, who represents the 38-year-old actress, said Friday that she provided graphic details to police about the incident that occurred while she was in the city for the Los Angeles, Italia Film, Fashion and Art Fest.

The actress, who has not been named, met Weinstein in Rome previously and spoke with him briefly at the film festival before he arrived uninvited at her hotel room.

Weinstein bullied his way in and raped her, Ring said.

"Her greatest regret is opening that door," Ring said. "She had no idea what was coming."

Police confirmed Thursday they are looking into the woman's allegations.

Ring said the rape has had a "humongous impact on her life." While she's relieved to have reported it to police, she is also "extremely scared," he said.

The actress has had no interaction with Weinstein since the night in 2013, Ring said.

He said his client never received a settlement and wasn't sure yet if she would sue Weinstein.

Sallie Hofmeister, a representative for Weinstein, said in a statement that Weinstein "unequivocally denies allegations of non-consensual sex."

The Los Angeles investigation comes after announcements last week by police in New York and London that they are taking a new look at allegations involving the Oscar-winner.

On Friday, a former actress said Weinstein ruined her career ambition after he exposed himself to her during a 1989 business meeting in his office. Heather Kerr said he told her to sit on the couch and repeated saying she needed to be "good" if she wanted to succeed.

He then pulled down his zipper, exposed himself and forced her to touch his genitals, she said.

Kerr said she backed away, left the room and hurried out of the building. After some theater work, she quit acting.

"I felt so powerless," she tearfully recalled. "I didn't think anyone would believe me. I was nobody. Why would they?"

Kerr, whose acting credits in the 1980s include the TV shows "The Facts of Life" and "Mama's Family," spoke at a news conference with attorney Gloria Allred.

More than 40 women have accused Weinstein, 65, of harassment or abuse. Actresses Gwyneth Paltrow, Angelina Jolie and Lupita Nyong'o have all accused Weinstein of harassment, while actresses Asia Argento and Rose McGowan said he raped them.

Nyong'o accused Weinstein of several incidents of harassment in an op-ed piece published by The New York Times on Thursday, including a 2011 incident in which she said the mogul tried to give her a massage at his Connecticut home.

She refused, instead giving the mogul a massage and leaving when he said he wanted to take off his pants, Nyong'o wrote.

Also on Thursday, a group of about 30 staffers for The Weinstein Company stated in a letter published online by The New Yorker that they didn't know they were "working for a serial sexual predator."

The employees say they knew of Weinstein's "infamous temper" and that he could be "manipulative," but didn't know "that he used his power to systematically assault and silence women."

Representatives for Weinstein and The Weinstein Company didn't immediately return a request for comment on the letter Friday.

The stories of harassment and abuse dating back decades has led to the downfall of a producer who once ruled Hollywood's awards season with a string of contenders including "Shakespeare in Love," for which he shared an Oscar, and films such as "The King's Speech" and "Silver Linings Playbook."

Since The New York Times published its initial expose on Oct. 5, honors conferred on Weinstein by Harvard University and the British Film Institute have been rescinded, and several Democratic lawmakers have donated political contributions they received from Weinstein to charity.

Charges, insults fly after Trump aide assails congresswoman

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House on Friday rushed to defend chief of staff John Kelly after he mischaracterized the remarks of a Democratic congresswoman and called her an "empty barrel" making noise. A Trump spokeswoman said it was "inappropriate" to question Kelly in light of his stature as a retired four-star general.

The administration also insisted it's long past time to end the political squabbling and insult trading over President Donald Trump's compassion for America's war dead, even as it lobbed fresh vilification at Florida Rep. Frederica Wilson.

She kept the barbed exchanges going, adding a new element by suggesting a racial context.

Taking cues from a president who hates to back down, the administration staunchly defended Kelly, who a day before had denounced Wilson's criticism of Trump — and added his condemnation of past remarks she had made at a Miami event.

Kelly said she delivered a 2015 speech at an FBI field office dedication in which she "talked about how she was instrumental in getting the funding for that building," rather than keeping the focus on the fallen agents for which it was named. Video of the speech contradicted his recollection.

Wilson, in an interview Friday with The New York Times, brought race into the dispute.

"The White House itself is full of white supremacists," said Wilson, who is black, as is the Florida family Trump had called in a condolence effort this week that led to the back-and-forth name calling.

Trump, in an interview with Fox Business Network, then called Wilson's criticism of Kelly "sickening." And, in a comment that seems unlikely to be the last word, he said he actually had had a "very nice call," with the family of Sgt. La David Johnson.

It all started when Wilson told reporters that Trump had insulted the family of Johnson, who was killed two weeks ago in Niger. She was fabricating that, Trump said. The soldier's widow and aunt said no, it was the president who was fibbing.

Then Kelly strode out in the White House briefing room on Thursday, backing up the president and suggesting Wilson was just grandstanding — as he said she had at the FBI dedication in 2015.

After news accounts took issue with part of that last accusation, White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders chastised reporters Friday for questioning the account of a decorated general.

"If you want to go after General Kelly, that's up to you," she said. "But I think that if you want to get into a debate with a four-star Marine general, I think that that's something highly inappropriate."

Sen. Lindsey Graham, a South Carolina Republican and an Air Force veteran, rejected Sanders' contention that questioning a general was out of line, saying simply, "No, not in America."

Video of the FBI office dedication in Miami, from the archives of South Florida's Sun-Sentinel, shows that Wilson never mentioned the building's funding, though she did recount at length her efforts to help name the building in honor of the special agents.

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That did nothing to deter Sanders, who said "If you're able to make a sacred act like honoring American heroes about yourself, you're an empty barrel."

Sanders also used a dismissive Southwest rancher's term, calling Wilson, who often wears elaborate hats, "all hat and no cattle."

Wilson was in the car with the family of Johnson, who died in an Oct. 4 ambush that killed four American soldiers in Niger, when Trump called to express his condolences on Tuesday. She said in an interview that Trump had told Johnson's widow that "you know that this could happen when you signed up for it ... but it still hurts." Johnson's aunt, who raised the soldier from a young age, said the family took that remark to be disrespectful.

The Defense Department is investigating the details of the Niger ambush, in which Islamic militants on motorcycles brought rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns, killing the four and wounding others. The FBI said it is assisting, as it has in the past when American citizens are killed overseas.

Sanders said Friday that if the "spirit" in which Trump's comments "were intended were misunderstood, that's very unfortunate."

Trump told associates he was furious about what he perceived as unfair media coverage of the phone-call controversy. He posted on Twitter late Thursday: "The Fake News is going crazy with wacky Congresswoman Wilson(D), who was SECRETLY on a very personal call, and gave a total lie on content!"

Wilson said the family had put his phone call on speakerphone, and stood by her account.

Sanders said Trump chose to tweet about the controversy because it "should have ended yesterday after General Kelly's comments. But it didn't. It continued, and it's still continuing today."

Kelly, whose son was killed in Afghanistan in 2010, was outraged over what he saw as Wilson trying to score political points off a tragedy, according to two White House officials not authorized to discuss private conversations.

Sanders said it was "a personal decision" by Kelly to discuss the matter publicly.

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writers Ken Thomas in Washington and Terry Spencer in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, contributed reporting.

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Q&A on the GOP effort to overhaul the nation's tax system

By **MARCY GORDON, AP Business Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Divided Republicans in Congress are tackling an ambitious overhaul of the nation's tax system that would deeply cut levies for corporations and double the standard deduction used by most average Americans.

Despite controlling Congress and the White House, Republicans failed to carry out their years-long promise to dismantle and replace former President Barack Obama's health care law. They say the nearly \$6 trillion tax plan, to bring the first major revamp in three decades, is their once-in-a-generation opportunity. President Donald Trump sets it as his highest legislative priority.

But can they deliver? What are the next steps for Congress? How would the changes affect the average taxpayer? Some questions and answers:

WHAT DOES THE TAX PLAN DO? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Trump and Republican leaders unveiled the proposal last month, pitching it as a boon to the middle class and a needed spark to economic growth and job creation. It's only an outline, with Congress left to put meat on the bones as lawmakers turn it into complex legislation.

The plan calls for reduced taxes for most individuals, slashing the corporate tax rate from 36 percent to 20 percent, and doubling the standard deduction used by most average Americans to \$12,000 for individuals and \$24,000 for families. The number of tax brackets would shrink from seven to three, with tax rates

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of 12 percent, 25 percent and 35 percent. (Now make that four, with an added bracket for high-income earners, rate to be determined, House Speaker Paul Ryan said Friday.) Inheritance taxes on multimillion-dollar estates would be repealed.

It would bring far-reaching changes for businesses large and small, with fallout too for American companies beyond U.S. borders. The American middle-class family could take advantage of a heftier child tax credit and the extra money that could come from the bigger standard deduction.

But there are too many holes in the spare nine-page plan, like the income levels that would fit with each tax bracket and what might happen to other deductions used by middle-class people, to know how it actually would affect individual taxpayers and families. Other looming unknowns are how it would be paid for and how much it might add to the mounting \$20 trillion national debt.

HOW DO THE PLAN'S BACKERS AND OTHERS SAY IT WOULD AFFECT AVERAGE PEOPLE?

The Trump administration is promising that the tax cuts — “which will be the biggest in the history of our country!” — would bring a \$4,000 pay raise annually for the average family. Trump expanded that number even further Friday, telling Fox Business Network’s Maria Bartiromo, “It can be \$5,000 average per individual, per group.”

That might sound like the pledge of “a chicken in every pot” that’s been attributed to President Herbert Hoover in the 1920s. But Trump’s claim is based on fuzzy math, in the view of skeptical tax experts and Democratic lawmakers.

Rather than helping the middle class, Democrats charge, the plan mainly would benefit wealthy individuals — like Trump — and big corporations.

The partisan debate over the plan is all about who’s got the middle class’s back. You’ll be hearing those two words a lot out of Washington in coming weeks.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Now that Senate Republicans have muscled through a \$4 trillion budget plan, and the House is poised to adopt it, the ground has been laid for serious work to begin on filling in the details and whipping up complex tax legislation. The budget plan provides for \$1.5 trillion over 10 years in debt-financed tax cuts, busting earlier GOP pledges of strict fiscal discipline. More bad news on the federal budget deficit came Friday, when the government reported it rose to \$666 billion in the just-completed fiscal year, an \$80 billion increase.

But the work won’t be quick. Strap in for a long slog in separate House and Senate committee hearings, drafting meetings and closed-door negotiations. And a feast for lobbyists descending on lawmakers, especially members of the two tax-writing committees. The swarm depicted in “Showdown at Gucci Gulch,” the book chronicling lobbying in the landmark 1986 tax overhaul under President Ronald Reagan, is about to get its second act.

The Republicans are promising to get a final bill to Trump’s desk by Christmas — already slippage from the earlier Thanksgiving deadline. The House version of the legislation is expected to come forward by early next month. The Senate has its own ideas and may well craft its own bill, which means the differences would have to be hammered out in a potentially contentious joint conference.

THAT SOUNDS HARD. AND THE REPUBLICANS THEMSELVES ARE DIVIDED?

Complicating the picture further, the tax plan already has driven a sharp wedge through House Republicans, cracking open regional fault lines within the majority party. The plan would eliminate the federal deduction for state and local taxes, a widely popular break used by some 44 million Americans, especially in high-tax, Democratic-leaning states like New York, New Jersey and California.

Republican lawmakers from those states have revolted, balking at supporting the tax plan when their votes are so critically needed. Their opposition has led the GOP leaders in Congress to hear out the fractious GOP members and seek a compromise with them. At the same time, the White House has made overtures on the tax plan to conservative Democrats in the House and Democratic senators from states

that Trump won in the 2016 election.

This story has been corrected to reflect that the proposed tax rate for the third bracket is 35 percent, not 25 percent.

New Battle of the Alamo is brewing over Texas shrine revamp

By WILL WEISSERT, Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Remember the Alamo? A new Texas battle is brewing over how best to do so. Land Commissioner George P. Bush is overseeing a 7-year revamp of the shrine where 189 Texas independence fighters were killed by Mexican Gen. Santa Anna's troops in 1836. The site's size would quadruple after excavation and restoration of historical structures, the closing of nearby streets and the building of a more than 100,000-square foot museum to house artifacts and guide visitors through the Alamo's history. The project has raised the ire of some conservatives, who worry that the Battle of the Alamo will be sanitized by "political correctness" at a time when Confederate monuments are being removed across the country. Even though the Alamo battle was well before the Civil War, some of the participants were slaveholders.

A flashpoint has been the fate of the Cenotaph, a 60-foot (18.29-meter) granite monument near the Alamo completed in 1940 and engraved with the names of those killed during the battle. The city of San Antonio wants to move it to a site somewhat farther away. But critics fear the Cenotaph will suffer the fate of some Confederate monuments and be banished.

Hundreds of protesters showed up at the Alamo last weekend, some wearing colonial costumes and holding signs reading "Leave the Alamo Alone."

The ruling Republican Party of Texas was so concerned that its executive committee voted 57-1 in September to urge Bush to keep the focus of the overhaul on the battle itself and calling for more transparency in how the effort is funded.

"This isn't just some memory that's popular in movies, these were living, breathing people," said Lee Spencer White, a descendant of Gordon C. Jennings, who at 56 was the oldest defender killed at the Alamo. "The Alamo's personal."

The criticism from fellow Republicans has put the latest political star of the Bush family on the defensive. The 41-year-old son of former Florida governor and presidential candidate Jeb and Mexican-born mother Columba, Bush has used funds for his re-election bid next year on a website and radio ads defending the restoration.

"My focus isn't on the politics, it's on preserving the Alamo," Bush said via email. "I'm focused on telling the story of the heroic battle for freedom — proudly, purposefully and better than ever before."

Bush's critics say his Hispanic heritage isn't an issue, noting that many Tejanos — Texans of Hispanic descent — played prominent roles during the Battle of the Alamo. They included Gregorio Esparza, who was given the chance to flee beforehand but stayed and was killed in battle. Still, during the Cenotaph protest, one demonstrator bellowed: "Vote George P. Santa Anna Bush out of office" to applause.

During the war of independence from Mexico, Texas forces occupied the Alamo, which had been founded by Spaniards as a Franciscan mission in 1718 but was relocated to its current spot, now in the heart of San Antonio, America's seventh-largest city, in 1724. Though vastly outnumbered by Mexican soldiers, the defenders held out during a 13-day siege before being overrun on March 6, 1836. Their bravery became a rallying cry and Texas won independence the following month, then became part of the United States nine years later.

Supporters of the Alamo revamp emphasize that there is good reason to upgrade the site visited by 2.5-plus million people a year. The existing shrine is small and offers relatively little to see. Nearby is what some have called a "carnival" atmosphere, with Ripley's Believe It or Not!, and other buildings that are being bought up in the renovation.

Bush's office is working with a Philadelphia-based historic preservation and architecture firm with the

goal of presenting the Alamo's full history. The site's public space would expand from around two acres to 9.5 acres, though public outcry already halted a proposal to build glass walls around the entire area. Santa Anna ordered the original walls around the Alamo torn down after the battle, but remnants remain underground and plans are to excavate and possibly place them under glass for visitors to view.

Pop icon Phil Collins, who spent decades collecting Alamo artifacts, has begun donating most of them to Texas, including a leather pouch belonging to slain defender Davey Crockett, as well as the knife of Jim Bowie, namesake of today's fixed blade Bowie knife. The renovation project calls for the artifacts to be displayed in the new museum.

Jerry Patterson, a Republican who was Bush's predecessor as land commissioner, said the issue of slave owners among the Alamo independence fighters is sure to be raised. Alamo commander William Travis owned slaves and Bowie, his co-commander, traded them.

"History's full of warts," Patterson said. "There are no men, icons of the past, that will stand up to modern scrutiny."

San Antonio has pledged \$38 million for the revamp and the Texas Legislature has approved \$106.5 million since 2015. The project's total cost could reach \$450 million, though much of that may be raised privately. State contracts suggest Bush's office paid nearly \$4.9 million on an Alamo renovation master plan, but Bush wouldn't say exactly how much has been spent so far.

Exactly what the new Alamo will look like also isn't clear. Artists' renderings were released previously, but Bush's office says those weren't official. Construction hasn't started but is scheduled to finish by 2024, when the Alamo turns 300 at its current location.

The controversy is lost on most Alamo tourists, including Sue and Dave Gay who visited recently from Rochester, New York.

"You can't change what it is," said Sue Gay, a 50-year-old nurse, said of the current Alamo site. "Just because it's small doesn't make it any less significant."

Suicide bombings in Afghanistan hit mosques, killing 63

By AMIR SHAH, Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Suicide bombers struck two mosques in Afghanistan during Friday prayers, a Shiite mosque in Kabul and a Sunni mosque in western Ghor province, killing at least 63 people at the end of a particularly deadly week for the troubled nation.

The Afghan president issued a statement condemning both attacks and saying that country's security forces would step up the fight to "eliminate the terrorists who target Afghans of all religions and tribes."

In the attack in Kabul, a suicide bomber walked into the Imam Zaman Mosque, a Shiite mosque in the western Dashte-e-Barchi neighborhood where he detonated his explosives vest, killing 30 and wounding 45, said Maj. Gen. Alimast Momand at the Interior Ministry.

The suicide bombing in Ghor province struck a Sunni mosque, also during Friday prayers and killed 33 people, including a warlord who was apparently the target of the attack, said Mohammad Iqbal Nizami, the spokesman for the provincial chief of police.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for either attack, the latest in a devastating week that saw Taliban attacks kill scores across the country.

The U.S. government strongly condemned the attacks in Kabul and Ghor, as well as other attacks carried out across Afghanistan this week.

"In the face of these senseless and cowardly acts, our commitment to Afghanistan is unwavering. The United States stands with the government and people of Afghanistan and will continue to support their efforts to achieve peace and security for their country," said State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert in a statement.

In the Kabul attack, eyewitness Ali Mohammad said the mosque was packed with worshippers, both men and women praying at the height of the Muslim week. The explosion was so strong that it shattered windows on nearby buildings, he said.

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Local residents who rushed to the scene to help the victims were overcome with anger and started chanting, "Death to ISIS"— a reference to the Islamic State group which has staged similar attacks on Shiite mosques in recent months.

Abdul Hussain Hussainzada, a Shiite community leader, said they are sure that Afghanistan's IS affiliate was behind the attack. "Our community is very worried," Hussainzada told The Associated Press.

Dasht-e-Barchi is a sprawling neighborhood in the west of Kabul where the majority of people are ethnic Hazaras, who are mostly Shiite Muslims, a minority in Afghanistan, which is a Sunni majority nation.

As attacks targeting Shiites have increased in Kabul, residents of this area have grown increasingly afraid. Most schools have additional armed guards from among the local population.

The so-called Islamic State in Afghanistan has taken responsibility for most of the attacks targeting Shiites, whom the Sunni extremist group considers to be apostates. Earlier this year, following an attack claimed by IS on the Iraqi Embassy in Kabul, the militant group effectively declared war on Afghanistan's Shiites, saying they would be the target of future attacks.

Several mosques have been attacked following this warning, killing scores of Shiite worshippers in Kabul and in western Herat province. Residents say attendance at local Shiite mosques in Kabul on Friday has dropped by at least one-third.

Hussainzada, the spiritual head of Afghanistan's ethnic Hazaras, said the suicide bomber had positioned himself at the front of the prayer hall, standing with other men in the first of dozens of rows of worshippers before exploding his device. He appeared to be Uzbek, added Hussainzada.

Members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan militant group, who are in Afghanistan in the hundreds, have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State affiliate, known as the Islamic State Khorasan Province — an ancient term for what today includes parts of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia.

The attack on the Sunni mosque in Ghor province took place in the Do Laina district, according to Nizami, the police spokesman. Nizami says the target apparently was a local commander, Abdul Ahed, a former warlord who has sided with the government. Seven of his bodyguards were also killed in the bombing.

In his statement, President Ghani said the day's attacks show that "the terrorists have once again staged bloody attacks but they will not achieve their evil purposes and sow discord among the Afghans."

It has been a brutal week in Afghanistan, with more than 70 killed, mostly policemen and Afghan soldiers but also civilians as militant attacks have surged. The Taliban have taken responsibility for the earlier assaults this week that struck on security installations in the east and west of the country.

Overnight on Wednesday and into Thursday, the Taliban killed at least 58 Afghan security forces in attacks that included an assault that nearly wiped out an army camp in southern Kandahar province.

And on Tuesday, the Taliban unleashed a wave of attacks across Afghanistan, targeting police compounds and government facilities with suicide bombers, and killing at least 74 people, officials said.

Afghan forces have struggled to combat a resurgent Taliban since U.S. and NATO forces formally concluded their combat mission at the end of 2014, switching to a counterterrorism and support role.

EU leaders struggle to break through Brexit talks impasse

By LORNE COOK and VANESSA GERA, Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Leaders of Britain and the 27 other European Union members agreed Friday that much remains to be done in Brexit talks amid deep divisions about the terms of their breakup, particularly on how much London should pay in the divorce.

While EU President Donald Tusk said that "reports of a deadlock between the European Union and the United Kingdom have been exaggerated," many other leaders were far less upbeat as a two-day summit in Brussels wrapped up.

French President Emmanuel Macron said "there is a lot of work left to do" in the highly complex talks on Britain's exit from the bloc, which will take place on March 29, 2019.

"We have not gone even halfway down the road," Macron told reporters.

British Prime Minister Theresa May urged her EU counterparts to bring new momentum to the talks,

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even as an interim goal was missed to widen the talks from the more immediate divorce issues to future EU-U.K. relations and trade arrangements after Britain leaves.

The aim is now to widen the talks in mid-December, but doubt remains over whether that deadline can be met.

"I am ambitious and positive for Britain's future and for these negotiations. But I know we still have some way to go," May said, after informal breakfast talks with the other leaders.

Despite calls from both sides to accelerate the negotiations, they remain bogged down on the terms of divorce, which the EU insists must be finalized before talks move onto trade. The main divorce issues include the rights of citizens affected by Brexit, the status of the Ireland-Northern Ireland border and the exact sum of Britain's exit bill — which the EU estimates at 60-100 billion euros (\$70-120 billion), compared with a possible 20 billion euro offer from London.

May has promised to pay into the EU budget until 2020, but has not committed her country to future financial obligations or specified what these would be.

She said her government is now going through this "line by line."

To try to break the deadlock, May's EU partners agreed Friday to begin discussing among themselves what their joint position should be on future relations and trade. That would get them ready to tackle the issue at their next summit on Dec. 14-15, provided they find the divorce terms are settled, and shows the British a measure of goodwill.

May argues that the divorce terms and future relations are closely interlinked and cannot therefore be negotiated separately. She acknowledged Friday that much remains to be done on some of the divorce issues before the European Union sees "enough progress" to move on.

She said both sides were within "touching distance" on citizens' rights but still had more work to do on settling the border between EU member country Ireland and Northern Ireland, which is part of the U.K., and agreeing on the Brexit bill.

Ireland's leader, Leo Varadkar, praised May for what he called her "very positive language" but said "we're a long way" from getting to the next step.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the way things proceed next depend largely on the British government.

"We would hope that we would be ready in December to initiate phase two," Merkel said, but added: "This depends to a large extent on Britain preparing progress to such an extent that we can call it sufficient. The topic of financial commitment is of course the dominating issue in that regard."

Several officials also say that changes to the format of the negotiations are being considered. At the moment, Brexit negotiators meet roughly every three weeks for four days, bringing the media spotlight on the process and raising expectations about what can be achieved. The idea would be to do away with rounds and hold talks on a rolling basis.

Reflecting those concerns, Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, said that "we all — not only the U.K. but us also — (must) go for real negotiations and not just negotiating in the media by rhetoric."

She said that an address May made to the EU leaders Thursday night appeared to be made up of extracts from a previous speech and said that it is now time to move "from words to real deeds."

Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat was more upbeat. He praised May's address as her "best performance yet."

"It conveyed a warm, candid and sincere view that she wants progress to be made," Muscat said.

Raf Casert and Angela Charlton contributed to this report.

US says 2 more American victims confirmed in Cuba attacks

By JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two more U.S. government workers have been confirmed to be victims of invisible attacks in Cuba, the United States said Friday, raising the total to 24.

The tally has inched upward since the U.S. first disclosed in August that embassy workers and their families in Havana had been harmed by unexplained, mysterious incidents affecting their health. The Trump administration later said it had determined the incidents were “specific attacks” that are ongoing, but investigators have not yet identified a weapon or a culprit.

The disclosure that 24 people have been harmed suggests that nearly half the American government workers serving in Cuba have been attacked. The U.S. had roughly 50 personnel posted to the Embassy in Havana until earlier this month when, in response to the attacks, the State Department pulled out roughly 60 percent of the staff. Yet some of the victims were spouses of U.S. workers, and several were temporary workers who rotated in to Cuba for short-term stints.

State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said the two additional victims “do not reflect new attacks.”

“The assessments are based on medical evaluations of personnel who were affected by incidents earlier this year,” Nauert said.

Nauert said the most recent attack is still believed to have been near the end of August. A U.S. official told The Associated Press previously that attack occurred Aug. 21. The official wasn’t authorized to disclose the exact date and requested anonymity.

“Our personnel are receiving comprehensive medical evaluations and care,” Nauert said. “We can’t rule out additional new cases as medical professionals continue to evaluate members of the embassy community.”

The United States “can’t rule out additional new cases as medical professionals continue to evaluate members of the embassy community,” Nauert added.

The attacks started last year and affected American diplomats, intelligence officials and their spouses in Havana. They began in staffers’ homes in Havana, but the AP disclosed in September that they later occurred in hotels as well. The attacks in hotels began after the U.S. complained to President Raul Castro’s government, and Cuban security officials dramatically increased patrols around the U.S. workers’ homes, officials said.

Cuba has vehemently denied any knowledge or involvement in the attacks, emphasizing its eagerness to cooperate with the investigation being led by the FBI. The United States hasn’t blamed Cuba or any other actor of perpetrating the attacks, but has faulted Castro’s government for failing to stop them, arguing it’s Cuba’s responsibility under international law to protect foreign diplomats on its soil.

“I do believe Cuba’s responsible. I do believe that,” President Donald Trump said last week. “And it’s a very unusual attack, as you know. But I do believe Cuba is responsible.”

Asked Friday whether Trump was satisfied with the investigation, White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders wouldn’t say. She called it an “ongoing investigation” and “something we can’t weigh in further at this time.”

A few Canadians were also affected by the attacks, which caused a variety of physical symptoms. The U.S. has said that vestibular, cognitive, vision and other problems have been reported by the victims, with some experiencing memory and balance issues, headaches and ringing in the ears. The union that represents American diplomats has said some have been diagnosed with permanent hearing loss and mild traumatic brain injury, known as concussions.

Some of the cases involved mysterious, blaring sounds that led to investigators to consider whether a sonic weapon was involved. The AP last week released a recording of what some American workers heard.

Reach Josh Lederman on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/joshledermanAP> . Follow the AP’s coverage of the Cuba attacks at <http://apnews.com/tag/CubaHealthMystery> .

Devastation in Raqqa raises questions about cost of victory

By **BASSEM MROUE** and **ZEINA KARAM**, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Kurdish-led forces on Friday declared victory over the Islamic State group in Raqqa, the former “capital” of its self-proclaimed caliphate where militants had terrorized the population for four years — setting up a climactic last stand for the extremists in the last vestiges of territory they control.

But the spectacular devastation of the depopulated city raised questions about the cost of victory against a fanatical opponent and laid bare the difficulties of rebuilding areas where the jihadis put up a ferocious defense, leaving scorched earth and traumatized societies in their wake.

From Fallujah, Ramadi and Mosul in Iraq to Kobani, Manbij and Raqqa in Syria, protracted military campaigns that eventually succeeded in flushing out the militants have left behind a trail of destruction so vast that they appeared to have been undertaken with little regard for the day after.

The United Nations estimated in September that 80 percent of Raqqa, a once-vibrant metropolis on the Euphrates River, was uninhabitable as a result of the years of fighting and airstrikes. Associated Press drone footage taken Thursday showed bombed-out shells of buildings and heaps of concrete slabs piled on streets littered with destroyed cars. Entire neighborhoods were turned to rubble, with no sign of civilian life — testimony to the thousands of bombs dropped on the city mainly by U.S. warplanes.

The months of clashes and artillery shelling did not spare any building, and what little of the city that remained was littered with land mines and booby traps. There was no water, electricity or health care service.

Still, whether there was another way to wrest control of the city from the extremists is debatable.

In a symbolic move on Friday, the Kurdish-led militia known as the Syrian Democratic Forces — America’s main partner in liberating the city — made its formal declaration of victory from inside the city’s stadium, which had been used as a huge prison and an arms depot by the extremists.

An SDF commander also handed over administration of the city to a council of local officials and tribal leaders and a 3,000-strong U.S.-trained police force tasked with governance and security.

“We call upon all countries and peace-loving forces and all humanitarian organizations to participate in rebuilding the city and villages around it and help in removing the scars of war that were inflicted by the (IS) group,” said Talal Sillo, a senior SDF commander.

But nobody is expecting aid to come rushing in. If previous cities recaptured from IS are any example, only a few people have trickled back and the only reconstruction that has happened was undertaken by private initiative.

Much of what happens next in Raqqa depends on questions with no clear answers, including how Turkey responds, and whether the U.S. stays long enough to stabilize the city and protect gains made by its Kurdish partners. So far, the U.S. has shown little appetite for longer-term engagement or involvement in nation-building in Iraq and Syria.

At a briefing in August, Brett McGurk, the top U.S. envoy to the coalition battling the IS group, said no one should look to the United States to foot the bill for long-term reconstruction. “This is an international problem,” he said.

On Friday, the U.S.- led anti-IS coalition said in a statement that Raqqa will return to local governance and leadership and that the city’s residents now have a chance to control their own future.

But most Raqqa residents have long fled, with tens of thousands of the city’s former inhabitants scattered across refugee camps or abroad. There is nothing for them to return to, and many of the predominantly Sunni Arab population distrust their liberators and the Raqqa Civil Council, which they see as a cover for the Kurdish-led SDF.

“We are calling upon the international community to help in rebuilding Raqqa, a city that has been destroyed while defending the whole world,” Omar Alloush, a member of the civil council told the AP.

He acknowledged, however, that politics would likely get in the way, noting for instance that all borders between the SDF-controlled areas and Turkey, the closest neighbor but a sworn enemy of the Kurds, are closed, and that material needed for reconstruction would have to come either from Iraq or from areas

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controlled by the Syrian government, which has vowed to eventually retake control of Raqqa.

In a sign of the complications to come, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday slammed the United States for backing the SDF and demanded an explanation for posters hung in Raqqa of Abdullah Ocalan, the imprisoned leader of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which Turkey considers a terrorist organization.

Syrian President Bashar Assad has vowed to recapture every inch of Syria, including Raqqa. His forces have neutralized the threat from Turkey and Saudi-backed rebels trying to topple him, and are currently focused on fighting IS in its last remaining stronghold in Syria in the eastern province of Deir el-Zour.

Backed by its Russian and Iranian allies, Syrian government forces have retaken 90 percent of Deir el-Zour city from IS in the past month and are making fast advances in IS-held areas of the province with the same name. The IS leadership is believed to be in hideouts in the province, but appears to be losing control.

Following Deir el-Zour, the Syrian government may want to go after Raqqa, or negotiate a return of the city with the Kurds. Syrian state-owned media has not reported or commented on the SDF's capture of Raqqa this week.

Rashad al-Kattan, a fellow at the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center warned in an analysis this week that the euphoria that followed the fall of Raqqa can quickly evaporate.

"The challenges are immense for stabilization efforts there, especially after the very high cost the city and its residents had to pay in terms of destruction and displacement," he wrote.

Associated Press writer Zeynep Bilginsoy in Istanbul contributed to this report.

Budget deficit hits \$666B, an \$80B spike for the year

By ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal budget deficit rose to \$666 billion in the just-completed fiscal year, a spike that comes as Republicans are moving to draft a tax code rewrite that promises to add up to \$1.5 trillion to the national debt over the coming decade.

The sobering deficit numbers, released Friday by the Treasury Department and the White House budget office, followed Senate passage Thursday night of a 10-year budget plan that shelves GOP concerns on deficits and debt in favor of a tax overhaul.

Still, House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin insisted Friday on "CBS This Morning": "We're Republicans. We're sensitive to the deficit."

President Donald Trump and his GOP allies on Capitol Hill promise this year's tax legislation will spark a burst of economic growth — and hope it will pay big political dividends for their party.

Friday's budget figures represent an \$80 billion jump over last year's \$585 billion deficit, which itself was way up over the previous year's \$438 billion.

The administration says the sour deficit report shows a need to pass the tax overhaul measure.

"Through a combination of tax reform and regulatory relief, this country can return to higher levels of GDP growth, helping to erase our fiscal deficit," said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

"These numbers should serve as a smoke alarm for Washington, a reminder that we need to grow our economy again and get our fiscal house in order. We can do that through smart spending restraint, tax reform and cutting red tape," said White House budget director Mick Mulvaney.

Democrats argue that the GOP should work with them on a bipartisan approach to revamping the tax code without adding to the deficit.

"With the deficit as large and growing as quickly as it is, Republicans pursuing a reckless plan that would blow a huge hole in the deficit and put Medicare and Medicaid at risk is the height of irresponsibility," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

Mulvaney drafted Trump's May budget plan, which promised to balance the budget within a decade, but only through politically unrealistic cuts and rosy assumptions of economic growth. But Trump hasn't

promoted the effort, which was quickly shelved by the GOP in Congress.

The White House in July revised its short-term deficit outlook significantly to warn of worsening deficits. Since then, a bad hurricane season has forced the government to spend billions in disaster relief.

The deficit issue has largely fallen in prominence in Washington in recent years, and Trump doesn't speak of the issue. He has ruled out cuts to Social Security and Medicare. Earlier, gridlock between former President Barack Obama and congressional Republicans took hold after failed attempts at budget deals. Most economists don't believe the deficit is very worrisome in the short term, though it is creeping above 3 percent of the size of the economy, a threshold that bears watching.

The picture over the long run is more problematic, at least under a conventional view that if deficits continue to rise and the national debt grows, government borrowing will "crowd out" private lending and force up interest rates. And if interest rates go up, the government would have to pay much more to finance the more than \$14 trillion in Treasury debt held by investors.

Spanish PM to unveil measures to fight Catalan separatists

By ARITZ PARRA, Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Spain's prime minister says his government will unveil specific measures Saturday to halt Catalonia's independence bid but refused to confirm if that included plans to hold a regional election in January.

The opposition Socialists are supporting the conservative government's effort to rein in the country's deepest political crisis in decades. The Socialists' main negotiator, Carmen Calvo, said earlier Friday that an early election in the prosperous northeastern region of Catalonia had been agreed upon as part of the deal.

Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, commenting on the unprecedented constitutional step his government is taking to assume control of Catalonia, said on the sidelines of a European Union summit in Brussels that "the goal is double: the return to legality and the recovery of institutional normalcy."

The move is likely to further inflame tensions between Spain and Catalonia's pro-independence activists. Catalonia's government says it has the mandate to secede from Spain after it held a disputed referendum on Oct. 1. It certainly does not want a new regional election.

The central government will hold a special Cabinet session on Saturday to begin activating Article 155 of Spain's 1978 Constitution, which lets central authorities take over all or some of the powers of any of the country's 17 autonomous regions.

The measure, which has never been used since democracy was restored after Gen. Francisco Franco's dictatorship, needs to be approved by the Senate. Rajoy's conservative Popular Party has an absolute majority in the Senate, so it should pass easily as early as Oct. 27.

Spain's government has also agreed on the move with the center-right, pro-business Citizens party, Rajoy told reporters in Brussels.

King Felipe VI, meanwhile, threw his weight behind efforts to block Catalan independence, saying at a public event Friday night that Catalonia "is and will be an essential part" of Spain.

"Spain will deal with this unacceptable attempt at secession by using the Constitution," Felipe said in a speech in Oviedo, in northern Spain's Asturias region.

Although not officially on the agenda of a European Union summit Friday, the Catalan crisis was the main topic in Brussels corridors. Rajoy has insisted the political deadlock is a domestic Spanish affair but acknowledged that it was a cause of concern for his fellow EU leaders.

He accused the Catalan separatist authorities of acting against the rule of law and democracy and said: "This is something that goes directly against the basic principles of the European Union."

European leaders have supported Rajoy in Spain's escalating conflict with the separatists.

"We believe that people should be abiding by the rule of law and uphold the Spanish constitution," British Prime Minister Theresa May said.

Offering his "full, entire support," French President Emmanuel Macron blamed extremist forces for "feeding" on separatism as a kind of division within Europe and a "factor of destabilization."

Meanwhile, some bank customers in Catalonia withdrew symbolic amounts of money to protest financial institutions that have moved their official headquarters from Catalonia to other locations in Spain amid the political crisis.

The pro-independence umbrella group Cry for Democracy called on consumers to put pressure on banks that made the decision. By Friday morning, dozens of people were lining up at a CaixaBank branch in downtown Barcelona, most of them withdrawing 150 or 160 euros from ATMs — the closest amounts to Article 155 of the constitution.

CaixaBank and Banco Sabadell, the largest Catalan lenders, are among nearly 1,000 financial institutions and businesses that have moved their official registration out of Catalonia in the past few weeks.

"These banks are traitors," said Oriol Mauri, a 35-year-old owner of a children's game business in Barcelona. "They need to see that it's lots of us who are angry."

Mauri, who withdrew 150 euros, said he wasn't worried about businesses fleeing Catalonia.

"I'm not afraid of economic repercussions," Mauri said. "Our power as consumers is perhaps the only way to influence and have our voice heard in Europe."

Ana Coll, a 55-year-old pharmacist who withdrew 160 euros, said peaceful street protests haven't been enough to influence the decision-makers in Spain and Europe.

"We need to step up our actions and do something that really hurts, and that is targeting the money," she said.

But not everybody saw the measure as productive.

"This is like shooting yourself in the foot. It's not going to solve anything" said 42-year-old consulting firm worker Oscar Garcia, who compared the action to "the tantrum of a kid who doesn't get what he wants."

Questions and answers on proposed ban on laptops in luggage

By JOAN LOWY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — First the U.S. government temporarily banned laptops in the cabins of some airplanes. Now it is looking to ban them from checked luggage on international flights, citing the risk of potentially catastrophic fires.

The Federal Aviation Administration recently recommended that the U.N. agency that sets global aviation standards prohibit passengers from putting laptops and other large personal electronic devices in their checked bags.

The FAA says in a filing with the International Civil Aviation Organization that the lithium-ion batteries in laptops can overheat and create fires.

Some questions and answers about the shifting U.S. policy.

WHY IS THE FAA WORRIED ABOUT THIS DANGER NOW?

The FAA has long been concerned about the potential hazardous of lithium batteries. The agency's tests of the risks of shipping large quantities of batteries as cargo on airliners showed that when a single battery overheats, it can cause other nearby batteries to overheat as well. That can result in intense fires and the release of explosive gases.

Based on those test results, the FAA was able to convince ICAO two years ago to ban cargo shipments of lithium batteries on passenger planes and to require that batteries shipped on cargo planes be charged no more than 30 percent. The risk of overheating is lower if the battery isn't fully charged.

More recently, the FAA conducted 10 tests of fully charged laptops packed in suitcases. In one test, an 8-ounce aerosol can of dry shampoo — which is permitted in checked baggage — was strapped to the laptop. A heater was placed against the laptop's battery to force it into "thermal runaway," a condition in which the battery's temperature continually rises. There was a fire almost immediately and an explosion within 40 seconds with enough force to potentially disable the fire suppression system.

Other tests of laptop batteries packed in suitcases with goods like nail polish remover, hand sanitizer and rubbing alcohol also resulted in large fires, although no explosions.

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ISN'T THE GOVERNMENT CONTRADICTING ITSELF BY FIRST SAY LAPTOPS SHOULD BE CHECKED, THEN SAYING THEY SHOULDN'T?

The different messages are the result of two agencies with different missions: security versus safety.

Last March, the Department of Homeland Security imposed a ban on laptops in the cabins of planes coming into the U.S. from 10 Middle Eastern airports to prevent them from being used as a tool in an attack. Many passengers put their laptops in their checked bags instead. The ban was fully lifted in July after airports in the region took steps to improve security.

This ban is being sought by the FAA, which is focused on the risk of an accidental explosion more than the prospect of a terrorist attack.

WHEN WILL THIS GO INTO EFFECT?

There are no guarantees that there will be ban on packing laptops in checked bags.

The FAA is presenting its case at a meeting this week and next of ICAO's dangerous goods panel. European aviation safety regulators, aircraft manufacturers and pilots' unions have endorsed the proposal.

Even if the panel were to agree with the proposal, it would still need to be adopted at higher levels of ICAO. And it would only apply to international flights.

WILL THE U.S. IMPOSE A BAN ON CHECKING LAPTOPS ON DOMESTIC FLIGHTS?

This is unclear. Individual countries can decide whether to implement domestic bans. The United States has not indicated if it will do so.

The effect of such a ban may not be great, since many passengers don't check bags to avoid surcharges, and those that do often prefer to carry on electronics.

WILL THE U.S. CONTINUE TO PUSH FOR THE INTERNATIONAL BAN?

This is also unclear. The FAA, which favors the ban, is handling negotiations for the U.S. at the ICAO meeting. But, for future meetings, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao is having another agency, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, take the lead.

It's not clear if that agency, known as PHMSA, will share the FAA's position.

PHMSA previously led dangerous goods negotiations, but the Obama administration put the FAA in charge after congressional Democrats complained that PHMSA officials were too cozy with the industries they regulated.

The Transportation Department said in a statement that PHMSA "has a unique and highly effective" approach to regulating the transportation of hazardous materials, and that it will consider what impact any change in aviation rules might have on transportation. The statement also said PHMSA will collaborate with the FAA.

Follow Joan Lowy on Twitter at http://www.twitter.com/AP_Joan_Lowy

No distress call after fishing boat with foreign crew wrecks

By CALEB JONES, Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — A boat that ran aground off Honolulu while transporting foreign fishermen to work in Hawaii's commercial fishing industry has raised new questions about the safety and working conditions for foreign laborers in this unique U.S. fleet.

A long, cramped journey to the United States for a group of fishermen from Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines and Kiribati ended with a U.S. Coast Guard rescue last week after their fishing vessel smashed into a reef just off Waikiki's shore. No one aboard the boat called for help after the crash.

A 2016 Associated Press investigation revealed the Hawaii fleet exploits a loophole in federal law to employ men from impoverished Southeast Asian and Pacific nations for a fraction of the pay an American

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worker would get, with some making as little as 70 cents an hour.

Under the law, U.S. citizens must make up 75 percent of the crew on most American commercial fishing boats. But in Hawaii, the loophole carved out to support one of the state's biggest industries exempts commercial fishing boat owners from federal rules enforced almost everywhere else.

The men do not have authorization to enter the United States, so they are confined to boats while docked in Honolulu and not eligible for most basic labor protections. The AP report revealed instances of abuse and claims of human trafficking among the fleet.

When the Pacific Paradise ran aground just before midnight Oct. 10, eyewitnesses saw the wreck, and authorities raced to rescue the men with jet skis, boats and a helicopter. The 79-foot boat carried 19 foreign men and a captain, who officials say was the only U.S. citizen aboard.

The 20 men were at sea for at least 12 days before they crashed, the minimum time it would take to get from American Samoa to Hawaii, according to two fishing industry experts. The Coast Guard would not confirm how long the vessel was at sea.

Once rescued, the men met U.S. customs officials and were escorted to a pier to begin work on other boats. Customs and Border Protection said privacy restrictions prevented the agency from "disclosing the names of passengers, crew members and other law-abiding travelers," spokesman Frank Falcon said in an email.

Customs officials deny entry to foreign workers, but Hawaii uses federal forms stamped "refused" as proof that they are legally allowed to work after going through customs and therefore can be given fishing licenses, the AP found.

The state Department of Land and Natural Resources provided fishing license records for the vessel, including the captain who was born in Vietnam and is now a U.S. citizen living in Hawaii and four foreign crew members.

Hawaii state Rep. Kaniela Ing said he was concerned that only five fishing licenses were registered with the state. The 15 other workers "are completely unaccounted for, and we don't know where they are and what they're doing here," he said.

The vessel wasn't carrying any fish when it crashed, the Coast Guard said.

"The issue isn't whether or not there's evidence that they're being trafficked, it's that there's no evidence to the contrary," Ing said. "There's nothing saying these folks are here legally and aren't being exploited because there's no record."

He tried in vain to get tightened regulations passed last year and may introduce legislation again but said the longline fishing industry is powerful because people love sushi.

The boat is owned by Honolulu-based TWOL LLC. A man who answered a phone number associated with the company identified himself as part-owner David Tran and referred questions to his lawyer, Brian Ho. Ho refused to answer questions Wednesday.

State Division of Aquatic Resources Administrator Bruce Anderson said it was unusual for a fishing boat to be in the crash area, which has no charted shipping lanes and where fishing isn't allowed.

"Either they missed the harbor or perhaps they had some mechanical problems and drifted ashore, or it was just careless seamanship, the captain was drunk or asleep or whoever was at the helm didn't realize that they were as close to shore as they were," Anderson said.

The Coast Guard would not comment, citing its ongoing investigation.

Steve Kokinos, president of Ocean Marine Brokerage Services in Louisiana, said the crash seemed suspicious.

"If they're not calling for help ... they didn't want authorities around them, they were hoping they could probably get it off or they could disappear into the night," Kokinos said.

He also thought it would be difficult to have 20 people on a vessel its size.

"I would be surprised if there were more than 10 bunks, unless they had done some modifications to the boat," Kokinos said, adding the conditions for the foreign workers were "probably deplorable."

Sean Martin, president of the Hawaii Longline Association, an industry group, said officials closely monitor

vessels when departing and returning to pick up crews. Boats must go to designated piers at the direction of state and federal officials and give 120 hours advance notice of arrival when returning from American Samoa with foreign crews, he said.

The Hawaii fleet's treatment of foreign fishermen has led environmental and advocacy groups to file a complaint with the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, an autonomous body of the Organization of American States, which works to protect human rights. The U.S. is a member of that organization.

The complaint asks the commission to determine the responsibility of the U.S. government for human rights abuses against foreign workers in Hawaii.

Minnesota wild rice rule irks industry and environmentalists

By STEVE KARNOWSKI, Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency kicks off a week of public hearings Monday on changing a water quality standard that's meant to protect wild rice, a proposal that has managed to anger environmentalists and industry alike.

The proposal would change Minnesota's standard for sulfate discharges into waters where wild rice grows from the current flat limit of 10 milligrams per liter to a more complicated formula based on the characteristics of individual lakes and streams. Here's a look at some of the issues:

THE SULFATE STANDARD

Minnesota's existing standard, adopted in 1973, is based on research from the 1930s and 40s that found wild rice doesn't grow well in waters with higher sulfate levels.

When the state finally moved toward enforcing the standard several years ago, it triggered pushback from the iron mining industry and communities that operate wastewater treatment facilities. They said complying would be too expensive and challenged the validity of the old science.

The 2011 Legislature directed the state agency to study whether the old standard needed updating based on new science. The ensuing research found that sulfates by themselves aren't the problem. The problem is that sulfates in the water get converted by bacteria in sediments into sulfides that are toxic to wild rice plants. The agency says the research also found that iron in sediments tends to neutralize sulfides, while organic carbon leads to more sulfides. The proposed rules are a lake-by-lake approach intended to limit sulfides to 120 micrograms per liter.

"We believe the changes we're proposing are an innovative and precise approach to protecting wild rice," MPCA Commissioner John Linc Stine has said.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WILD RICE

Wild rice, also called manoomin, is more than just an important food for American Indian tribes in the upper Midwest, it's central to the Ojibwe migration story, which holds that their ancestors in the East were instructed by the Creator to go west to "where the food grows on the water."

Native American activists aren't just worried about sulfates. The potential threat to wild rice waters is a main reason why tribal groups oppose Enbridge Energy's proposal to replace its aging Line 3 crude oil pipeline across northern Minnesota with a new pipeline that would follow a new corridor much of the way.

INDUSTRY OPPOSITION

The Iron Mining Association of Minnesota opposes the proposed new standard. It says the science is still flawed and there's no proof it will protect wild rice. But it says the costs to mining companies and wastewater treatment facilities of complying would exceed \$1 billion.

Mining supporters plan to rally before marching to Tuesday's hearing in Virginia, Minnesota. They've held two public events this week to prepare.

ENVIRONMENTAL OPPOSITION

Environmental groups are urging their supporters to attend the hearings, too.

WaterLegacy, the Minnesota Environmental Partnership and several tribes say the state should keep — and enforce — the existing standard instead of replacing it with an equation they say is unenforceable and would allow more sulfate pollution in some wild rice waters. They cite research by University of Minnesota

Duluth biologist John Pastor that undercuts the theory that iron protects against sulfides.

They also say the agency's proposed list of 1,300 wild rice waters missed water bodies that should have been on the list.

THE HEARINGS

The hearings will be Monday in St. Paul, Tuesday in Virginia, Bemidji on Wednesday, Cloquet on Thursday and Brainerd on Friday. There will also be a public videoconference Nov. 2 from the state agency's offices in Detroit Lakes, Duluth, Mankato, Marshall, Rochester and St. Paul.

The Office of Administrative Hearings is taking written comments through Nov. 22.

The agency has not set a deadline for deciding on the new rules, which also require approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Monsanto sues Arkansas board for banning disputed herbicide

By ANDREW DeMILLO, Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — A major agribusiness company sued Arkansas regulators on Friday for banning its version of an herbicide that's drawn complaints from farmers across several states who say the weed killer has drifted onto their crops and caused widespread damage.

Monsanto asked a state judge to block the Arkansas Plant Board from enforcing a rule it adopted last year that prevents its dicamba product from being used each year from April 15 through September 15.

Dicamba has been around for decades, but problems arose over the past couple of years as farmers began to use it on soybean and cotton fields where they planted new seeds engineered to be resistant to the herbicide. Because it can easily evaporate after being applied, the chemical sometimes settles on neighboring fields.

The panel approved the restriction on Monsanto's XtendiMax herbicide in November, and several months later the state adopted a wider temporary ban that included other dicamba weed killers in response to farmer complaints. The plant board last month rejected a petition from the company to allow its herbicide to be used.

"The Plant Board's arbitrary approach also has deprived, and if left unchecked will continue to deprive, Arkansas farmers of the best weed management tools available - tools that are available to farmers in every other soybean- and cotton-producing state in the nation," the company said in its lawsuit filed in Pulaski County Circuit Court.

A spokeswoman for the state Agriculture Department said the agency did not have an immediate comment on the suit.

Farmers have also complained about dicamba causing damage on their crops in other states, including Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota and Tennessee. Missouri banned the use and sale of three dicamba herbicides in July but lifted the ban within a week after approving new labels and restrictions for its use.

Monsanto is challenging the restrictions as Arkansas moves closer to adopting another temporary ban on dicamba herbicides for next year. The Arkansas Plant Board last month gave initial approval to regulations that prohibit the use of dicamba from April 16 through Oct. 31, 2018. The board has received nearly 1,000 complaints about the herbicide so far this year.

The 18-member board, which is made up of various members of the agriculture community, is holding a public hearing on the new restrictions next month before the plan goes to lawmakers. Monsanto said it may amend its lawsuit to challenge the new ban if it's ultimately adopted by the state.

The lawsuit comes a week after the Environmental Protection Agency announced it had reached a deal with Monsanto along with BASF and DuPont, which also make dicamba herbicides, for new voluntary restrictions for the weed killer's use. Under the deal, dicamba products will be labeled as "restricted use" beginning with the 2018 growing season, requiring additional training and certifications for workers applying the product to crops.

The new federal rules will also limit when and how the herbicide can be sprayed, such as time of day and when maximum winds are blowing below 10 mph. Farmers will be required to maintain specific records

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showing their compliance with the new restrictions.

Monsanto's lawsuit accuses the Arkansas board of acting outside its authority in prohibiting its herbicide's use and failing to consider research Monsanto had submitted to federal regulators. The suit also asks the judge to prevent the board from requiring it to submit research by University of Arkansas researchers in order to gain approval for herbicides in the state.

Dicamba also may be a factor in the slaying of an Arkansas soybean farmer who was allegedly shot by a worker from a nearby farm where the chemical had been sprayed. Farm worker Allan Curtis Jones, 27, is accused of shooting Mike Wallace, 55, in a confrontation over dicamba, which Wallace believed had drifted onto his farm and damaged his soybeans. Jones is set to go to trial in December.

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US stocks end higher; S&P 500, Dow on 6-week winning streak

By ALEX VEIGA, AP Business Writer

Wall Street capped a week with no shortage of milestones with a few more Friday.

U.S. stocks closed modestly higher, lifting the Standard & Poor's 500 index to its fifth record close in a row. The Dow Jones industrial average, which crossed past the 23,000 mark for the first time on Wednesday, also finished the day with its fifth-straight all-time high.

Banks led the gainers Friday. Technology companies also posted big gains, helping to drive the Nasdaq composite to a record high.

The latest milestones came as investors drew encouragement from the Senate's passage of a budget bill that is expected to ease the path for the White House's tax cut proposal.

"Market expectations for an impactful tax reform have been running fairly low," said Mike Baele, managing director at U.S. Bank Private Wealth Management. "That changed a bit today with the Senate passing the budget resolution for 2018."

The S&P 500 index rose 13.11 points, or 0.5 percent, to 2,575.21. The Dow gained 165.59 points, or 0.7 percent, to 23,328.63. The Nasdaq composite added 23.99 points, or 0.4 percent, to 6,629.05. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks picked up 7.20 points, or 0.5 percent, to 1,509.25.

The S&P 500 and the Dow are now on a six-week winning streak.

President Donald Trump's plans to slash corporate taxes and make other business-friendly changes to the nation's tax laws have helped lift U.S. stocks in recent weeks. Under the administration's tax plan, the first major overhaul of the tax code in three decades, corporations would see their top tax rate cut from 35 percent to 20 percent.

On Thursday, the Senate narrowly passed a \$4 trillion budget resolution that now goes to the House of Representatives. The bill sets the stage for tax legislation later this year that could pass through the Senate without the threat of a filibuster by Democrats. It also adds \$1.5 trillion to the deficit over the next 10 years.

Should tax reform pass, it's also a good bet that interest rates will move higher, which will benefit banks and other financial companies. That's one reason banks and bond yields rose Friday.

Higher bond yields allow banks to charge higher interest rates on mortgages and other loans. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 2.38 percent from 2.32 percent late Thursday.

Synchrony Financial gained \$1.33, or 4.2 percent, to \$33.04. Citizens Financial Group picked up 90 cents, or 2.4 percent, to \$38.33. Both also reported higher quarterly earnings than analysts had been expecting.

Technology sector companies also had a good day.

PayPal Holdings climbed 5.5 percent after the payment technology company reported big gains in new users and transactions. The stock rose \$3.72 to \$70.97.

While still early in the third-quarter earnings season, strong earnings helped push the market higher this week.

Just under 12 percent of S&P 500 companies have released quarterly results through Friday. Of those, 78 percent reported earnings and revenue that beat financial analysts' estimates, according to S&P Global

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Market Intelligence.

"Companies have been able to, once again, beat expectations up to this point," said Baele. "The combination of strong economic data, good earnings and now the prospect of fiscal stimulus is really helping to support equities."

Shares in several companies made big moves Friday after traders reviewed their latest quarterly results. Skechers USA soared 41.4 percent after the shoe company said that its profit and sales were stronger than analysts expected. The stock rose \$9.96 to \$33.99.

Atlassian jumped \$9.92, or 24.6 percent, to \$50.17. The business software company's earnings and revenue beat Wall Street's forecasts. It also raised its forecast.

Semiconductor company Maxim Integrated also posted better-than-expected results. Its stock rose \$2, or 4 percent, to \$52.09.

General Electric bounced back after the industrial conglomerate slashed its annual forecast and reported a disappointing third quarter. The stock gained 25 cents, or 1.1 percent, to \$23.83.

Other companies put traders in a selling mood with their latest quarterly results or outlooks didn't recover. NCR gave up 10.8 percent after the company cut its annual revenue forecast and said orders for ATMs were weaker than it expected. Its shares lost \$4 to \$33.05.

Oil prices closed higher after wavering between small gains and losses for much of the day.

Benchmark U.S. crude added 18 cents to settle at \$51.47 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, used to price international oils, gained 52 cents to \$57.75 a barrel in London.

The gains helped lift most of the energy companies in the S&P 500. Helmerich & Payne climbed \$1.06, or 2.1 percent, to \$52.

In other energy trading, wholesale gasoline rose 3 cents to \$1.68 a gallon. Heating oil picked up 3 cents to \$1.81 a gallon. Natural gas gained 4 cents to \$2.92 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Gold fell \$9.50 to \$1,280.50 an ounce. Silver lost 18 cents to \$17.09 an ounce. Copper was little changed at \$3.17 a pound.

The dollar strengthened to 113.50 yen from 112.65 yen on Thursday. The euro fell to \$1.1780 from \$1.1830.

Major stock indexes overseas were mixed Friday.

In Europe, Germany's DAX and the FTSE 100 index of leading British shares finished flat. The CAC 40 in France added 0.1 percent. In Asia, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 finished less than 0.1 percent higher ahead of parliamentary elections on Sunday. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's party is expected to retain a comfortable lead.

Elsewhere, South Korea's Kospi added 0.7 percent, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng index rebounded 1.2 percent after a big sell-off the day before.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Oct. 21, the 294th day of 2017. There are 71 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 21, 1917, members of the 1st Division of the U.S. Army training in Luneville (luhn-nay-VEEL'), France, became the first Americans to see action on the front lines of World War I.

On this date:

In 1797, the U.S. Navy frigate Constitution, also known as "Old Ironsides," was christened in Boston's harbor.

In 1805, a British fleet commanded by Adm. Horatio Nelson defeated a French-Spanish fleet in the Battle of Trafalgar; Nelson, however, was killed.

In 1892, schoolchildren across the U.S. observed Columbus Day (according to the Gregorian date) by reciting, for the first time, the original version of "The Pledge of Allegiance," written by Francis Bellamy for The Youth's Companion.

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In 1917, legendary jazz trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie was born in Cheraw, South Carolina.

In 1941, superheroine Wonder Woman made her debut in All-Star Comics issue No. 8, published by All-American Comics, Inc. of New York.

In 1942, the MGM musical "For Me and My Gal," starring Judy Garland and featuring the film debut of Gene Kelly, premiered in New York.

In 1959, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, opened to the public in New York.

In 1966, 144 people, 116 of them children, were killed when a coal waste landslide engulfed a school and some 20 houses in Aberfan, Wales.

In 1967, the Israeli destroyer INS Eilat was sunk by Egyptian missile boats near Port Said (sah-EED'); 47 Israeli crew members were lost. Tens of thousands of Vietnam War protesters began two days of demonstrations in Washington, D.C.

In 1971, President Richard Nixon nominated Lewis F. Powell and William H. Rehnquist to the U.S. Supreme Court. (Both nominees were confirmed.)

In 1986, pro-Iranian kidnappers in Lebanon abducted American Edward Tracy (he was released in Aug. 1991).

In 1991, American hostage Jesse Turner was freed by his kidnappers in Lebanon after nearly five years in captivity.

Ten years ago: Wildfires driven by powerful Santa Ana winds killed one person near San Diego and destroyed several homes and a church in Malibu. Vice President Dick Cheney said in a speech to The Washington Institute for Near East Policy that the United States and other nations would not allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon. The Boston Red Sox won the American League championship in Game 7 of their series with the Cleveland Indians, 11-2.

Five years ago: Five years ago: Former senator and 1972 Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern, 90, died in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. A Wisconsin man opened fire at the Brookfield spa where his wife worked, killing her and two others and wounding four other women before turning the gun on himself. The San Francisco Giants beat the St. Louis Cardinals 6-1 in Game 6 of the National League Championship Series, forcing a final deciding game. Garth Brooks was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame along with trailblazing singer Connie Smith and keyboard player Hargus "Pig" Robbins.

One year ago: Cyberattacks on server farms of a key internet firm repeatedly disrupted access to major websites and online services including Twitter, Netflix and PayPal across the United States. The United Nations celebrated Wonder Woman's 75th birthday by naming the comic book character as its new Honorary Ambassador for the Empowerment of Woman and Girls, a decision that prompted protests from both inside and outside the world organization (the designation was rescinded in Dec. 2016).

Today's Birthdays: Actress Joyce Randolph is 93. Author Ursula K. Le Guin is 88. Rock singer Manfred Mann is 77. Musician Steve Cropper (Booker T. & the MG's) is 76. Singer Elvin Bishop is 75. TV's Judge Judy Sheindlin is 75. Actor Everett McGill is 72. Musician Lee Loughnane (LAHK'-nayn) (Chicago) is 71. Actor Dick Christie is 69. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is 68. Actress LaTanya Richardson Jackson is 68. Musician Charlotte Caffey (The Go-Go's) is 64. Movie director Catherine Hardwicke is 62. Singer Julian Cope is 60. Rock musician Steve Lukather (Toto) is 60. Actor Ken Watanabe (wah-tah-NAH'-bee) is 58. Actress Melora Walters is 57. Rock musician Che (chay) Colovita Lemon is 47. Rock singer-musician Nick Oliveri (Mondo Generator) is 46. Christian rock musician Charlie Lowell (Jars of Clay) is 44. Actor Jeremy Miller is 41. Country singer Matthew Ramsey (Old Dominion) is 40. Actor Will Estes is 39. Actor Michael McMillian is 39. Reality TV star Kim Kardashian (kahr-DASH'-ee-uhn) West is 37. Actor Matt Dallas is 35. Actress Charlotte Sullivan is 34. Actor Aaron Tveit (tuh-VAYT') is 34. Actor Glenn Powell is 29. Country singer Kane Brown is 24.

Thought for Today: "A man is what he thinks about all day long." — Ralph Waldo Emerson, American essayist, poet and philosopher (1803-1882).