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The Groton Area Veteran's Day program was held yesterday. Pictured in back, left to right, are Stella Meier, Kamryn Flihs, Jackson Cogley, Jordan Bjerke and Jacob Lewandowski who all had Veteran interviews; in front, left to right are Alex Stange, MC; Veterans Kiersten Sombke, Jerry Erdmann, Leonard Broman holding a photo of his brother Glen Broman, and MC Marshall Lane. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

Mark Malmberg, DDS

19 North 6th St.

Oakes, N.D.

701-742-3401



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**

- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Mark Malmberg, DDS Ad
- 1- Veteran's Program Photos
- 8- Legion Turkey Party Ad
- 9- Farmers Union PSA
- 9- Dr. Holm's Column
- 10- Rep. Noem's Weekly Column
- 11- Today in Weather History
- 11- Roslyn 4-Plex for sale
- 12- Today's Forecast
- 13- Yesterday's Weather
- 13- Today's Weather Info
- 13- National Weather Map
- 14- Daily Devotional
- 15- 2018 Community Events
- 15- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 16- News from the Associated Press

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Bruce Babcock and Doug Hamilton presented the colors at the Veteran's Day Program held Friday afternoon in the GHS Arena. They represented Groton American Legion Post #39. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



Marshall Lane and Alex Stange were the masters of ceremony. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



The first and second graders sang, "America, of Thee I Sing." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

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The Chamber Choir, directed by Cody Swanson, sang the "Star Spangled Banner." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



The High School Choir, directed by Cody Swanson, sang the "America." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



The junior kindergarten and kindergarten students sang, "American Heroes." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

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The junior high band, under the direction of Desiree Yeigh, performed, "March On, America!"
(Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

The fourth, fifth and sixth graders sang, "America, Land of the Free."

(Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



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Kayla Lehr was the spring 2017 Americanism Poetry contest winner representing the Groton Legion Auxiliary. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



Paisley Mitchell was the spring 2017 Americanism Poetry contest winner representing the Columbia Legion Auxiliary. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

Kamryn Fliehs interviewed Kiersten Sombke and she gave her report at the Veteran's Day program. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



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Jordan Bjerke interviewed Leonard Broman and Jackson Cogley interviewed Glen Broman for their Veteran's recognition. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



Jacob Lewandowski interviewed Jerry Erdmann as he gave his report at the Veteran's Day program. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

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The Groton Area High School Band, under the direction of Austin Fordham, played the "Service Songs" at the end of the program. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



Micah Poor played "Taps" as the colors were retired. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



Stella Meier interviewed Maggie Hensley as she gave her report at the Veteran's Day program. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

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Groton Post No. 39 American Legion



Annual



Turkey Party

Saturday, Nov. 11, 2017

Starting at 6:30 p.m.

Groton Legion Post Home, 10 N. Main.

Turkey, Ham and Bacon
to be given away

FREE ADMISSION

**DOOR
PRIZE!**

Lunch served
by Auxiliary



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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")**

Sharing a Treasure Chest of Knowledge

Richard P. Holm, MD

As part of our Prairie Doc volunteer work to spread science-based public health information, we have assembled a group of pre-professional college women and men to help us out. Almost every Thursday night at 7 PM (6 mountain time), these young "Prairie Doc Assistants", or PDAs, answer telephone call-in questions for our TV show on PBS. This changing group, initiated by our friend and advisor Mr. Judge Kelley, has been helping us for more than four years.

These kids not only help answer phone calls during live shows, but they help research medical topics, and even help others during medical mission trips. In return, we give them the opportunity to meet our medical guests for 30 minutes before the show, and we help them find shadowing experiences with physicians. They need to experience a taste of what it would be like in med school and in the real world after starting practice, before they commit to it.

My first two years of medical school, back in the 70's, required putting my nose into books, memorizing how the normal human body works, and understanding what can happen when illness strikes. The second two years, and the internship and residency that followed, were spent learning from an older and experienced master who taught by example. This mentor-based teaching style is a lot like the medieval way of learning, like being an apprentice to a silversmith who knows what he's doing, and who guides you in making your first silver tea service. In medicine, I think the hands-on, one-on-one, mentoring experience is what matters the most, but the book-learning part is still necessary. Now, med schools are mixing together the book-learning and the mentoring throughout the four years of education, which is a better deal in my opinion.

During my life of medical practice, I have mentored many apprentice nurse practitioner students, P.A. students, medical students, and medical residents; all while I was caring for patients. I asked the patient permission first and very rarely had anyone say "no" to having a student in the room. How else are they to learn how to listen, examine, and think in their quest to become a high-quality care giver? Besides, having a student watching can only make a doctor try harder and be better.

Now, I find myself encouraging college students into the glorious and rewarding field of medicine. Indeed, what an honor it has been to have a treasure chest of knowledge that can be used to help others!



True Patriots

Every November, we set aside time to recognize those who have acted on our behalf to protect freedom and defend our liberties – those who have worn our nation’s uniform – who have earned the title “Patriot” and can call themselves a “United States Veteran.”

More than 72,000 veterans call South Dakota home. Each has spent years serving so others could enjoy the blessings of liberty that we celebrate in this country. As a small token of gratitude for their sacrifices, our office hosted a Veterans Day Open House this year in Sioux Falls. For a few hours, we sat down and talked with South Dakota veterans over cookies and coffee, helping many navigate complicated federal programs, such as Social Security and VA benefits. I’m incredibly grateful to those who took the time to stop in, and I hope others recognize our door is always open to you.

In addition to helping veterans get the federal benefits to which they’re entitled, I’ve been fighting to make sure the promises made to veterans are kept. This summer, for instance, President Trump signed legislation I supported that aims to expand whistleblower protections within the VA and streamline the process required to fire any VA employee. This is a critical step in improving VA operations.

More recently, we worked with the president to give troops the largest pay raise in years and expand veterans’ access to education and workforce training. I’m glad both have been signed into law.

Additionally, the House passed the Black Hills National Cemetery Act, which I introduced. The legislation would expand the Sturgis-area cemetery by 200 acres, ensuring we keep this important promise to veterans for decades to come. I’m hopeful the Senate will take up the bill soon.

This is all in addition to legislation we passed last Congress to increase mental health access for veterans and incentivize small businesses to hire those who have served.

There’s more work to do, however. I continue to fight to keep the Hot Springs VA open. There are changes that must be made to the VA CHOICE Program, which the House Veterans Affairs Committee is working very hard on.

There is no way to fully compensate our veterans for the sacrifices they’ve made, but this November, I encourage you to take a moment and personally thank one of South Dakota’s 72,000 patriots and their families. There is a price to freedom, and we can never forget that.

Today in Weather History

November 11, 1982: Wet snow and winds gusting to over 50 mph snapped almost a thousand power lines and poles. Snowfall amounts were 4 to 6 inches but ranged to nearly a foot or more in Brookings County. Wind Gusts of 75 mph were recorded in McCook County. Several semi-trucks jackknifed on ice covered roads, and numerous other automobile accidents were also reported.

November 11, 2000: Heavy snow of 6 to 14 inches fell across central and northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota on November 11th and 12th, causing driving difficulties throughout the region.

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.

Many vehicles became stuck in the snow or slid into ditches. There were also several accidents, and many events were canceled. Some snowfall amounts include, 14.0 inches in Miller; 13.8 inches near Mellette; 12.5 inches in Highmore; 11.5 inches near Iona; 11 inches in Wilmot; 10 inches in Aberdeen, near Bryant, and Artichoke Lake MN; 9.5 inches in Clark; and 9.0 inches in Clear Lake, near Onida, and Webster.

1911: A powerful cold front, known as the Great Blue Norther of 1911, produced some the most extreme temperature changes to the Nation's midsection. Ahead of the cold front, a warm and moist environment caused a severe weather outbreak with several strong tornadoes reported in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan. An estimated F4 tornado occurred from Janesville to Milton, Wisconsin and caused extensive damage to several farms and killed nine people. The citizens of Janesville, Wisconsin, reported blizzard conditions with a temperature near zero within an hour of the tornado.






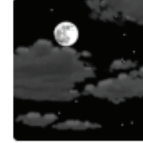

1940: An Armistice Day storm raged across the Great Lakes Region and the Upper Midwest. A blizzard left 49 dead in Minnesota, and gales on Lake Michigan caused shipwrecks resulting in another 59 deaths. Up to seventeen inches of snow fell in Iowa, and at Duluth MN the barometric pressure reached 28.66 inches. The blizzard claimed a total of 154 lives and killed thousands of cattle in Iowa. Huge snowdrifts isolated whole towns.

1955 - An early arctic outbreak set many November temperature records across Oregon and Washington. The severe cold damaged shrubs and fruit trees. Readings plunged to near zero in western Washington, and dipped to 19 degrees below zero in the eastern part of the state. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A deepening low pressure system brought heavy snow to the east central U.S. The Veteran's Day storm produced up to 17 inches of snow in the Washington D.C. area snarling traffic and closing schools and airports. Afternoon thunderstorms produced five inches of snow in three hours. Gale force winds lashed the Middle and Northern Atlantic Coast. Norfolk VA reported their earliest measurable snow in 99 years of records. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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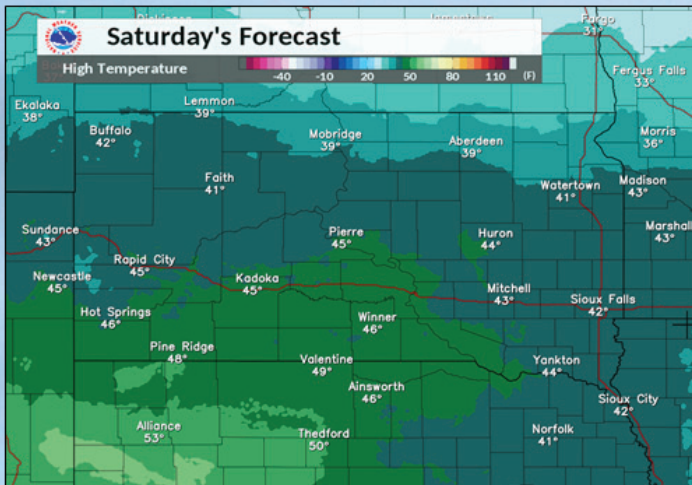
Veterans Day Day	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 39 °F	Low: 16 °F	High: 40 °F	Low: 25 °F	High: 44 °F	Low: 30 °F	High: 49 °F

Warmer Today With Less Wind

Highs in the 30s and 40s



Winds around 10 mph



Scattered rain and snow showers southwest & south central SD – mainly late afternoon and evening



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

www.weather.gov/abr

GRAPHIC CREATED:
11/11/2017 5:01 AM

Published on: 11/11/2017 at 5:05AM

Temperatures will be a bit warmer today for most areas as highs rise into the 30s and 40s across the region. The coolest temperatures will reside across northern areas. Winds will be much lighter than what we saw on Friday and will generally favor a north to northeast direction by later this afternoon. There will be a few scattered rain and snow showers across parts of southwest and south central South Dakota later this afternoon and evening, but amounts will remain rather light.

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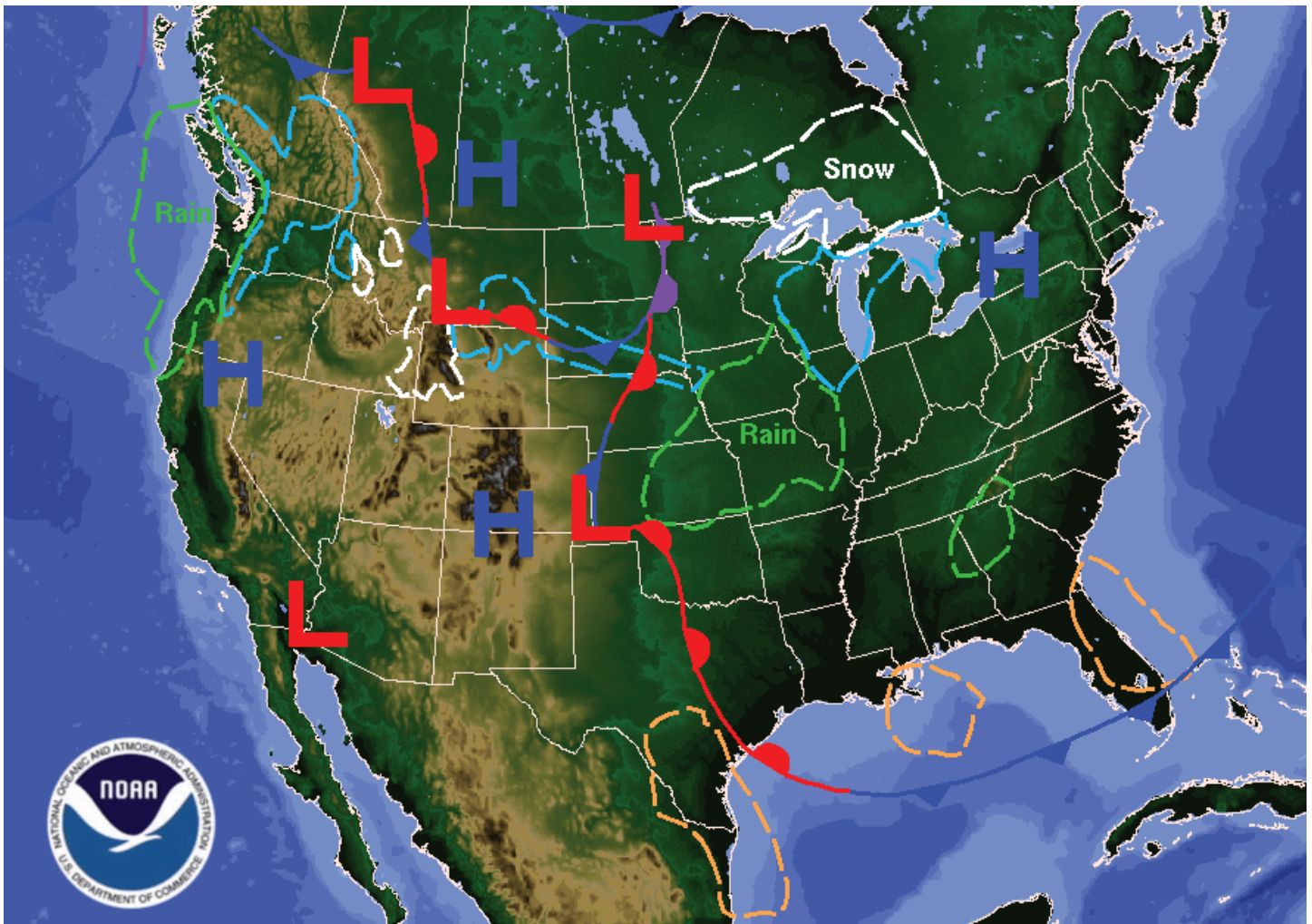
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 26.0 at 2:45 PM
Low Outside Temp: 15.6 at Midnight
High Gust: 33 at 2:01 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 70° in 1912
Record Low: -8° in 1966
Average High: 42°F
Average Low: 21°F
Average Precip in Nov: .32
Precip to date in Nov: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 20.79
Precip Year to Date: 13.47
Sunset Tonight: 5:07 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:28 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sat, Nov 11, 2017, issued 3:56 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Reinhart 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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THE RIGHT TIME

David did not have a calm and quiet life. It was a life that was filled with trials and tragedies, anxieties and anguish. He had moments of ecstasy followed by days of despair. He was honest with God and willing to admit his mistakes. Yet, he lived with the fact that forgiveness does remove the consequences of sin.

In Psalm 69 David cries out to God to "Save me, O God for the waters have come up to my neck." And that was just the beginning of his list of problems. Listen to his prayer: "I am sinking to the depths of the mire...I am in deep waters and floods are overwhelming me...I am worn out in calling to You for help... my eyes fail because they cannot see You, O God, and I am forced to restore what I did not steal!" Could things be any worse?

The easy way out would have been for him to give up on God. He even said, "You, God know my folly and my guilt is not hidden from You." Why care for me, God?

Why not cave in, David? Why not give up? Time after time you willingly made a mess of your life. God owes you nothing and now you are getting what you deserve!

But David did not give up on himself or God. He knew God loved him in spite of his wrong doings. So he prayed, "In the time of Your favor, in Your great love answer me with Your salvation!" My life is in Your hands!

David was often beaten down. But his faith always lifted him up. In spite of his sins and short comings he knew that God would not abandon him. God's love is as eternal as He is.

Life is never hopeless as long as our hope is in God.

Prayer: Lord, give us patience as we place our hope in You to deliver us from any problem that would destroy us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

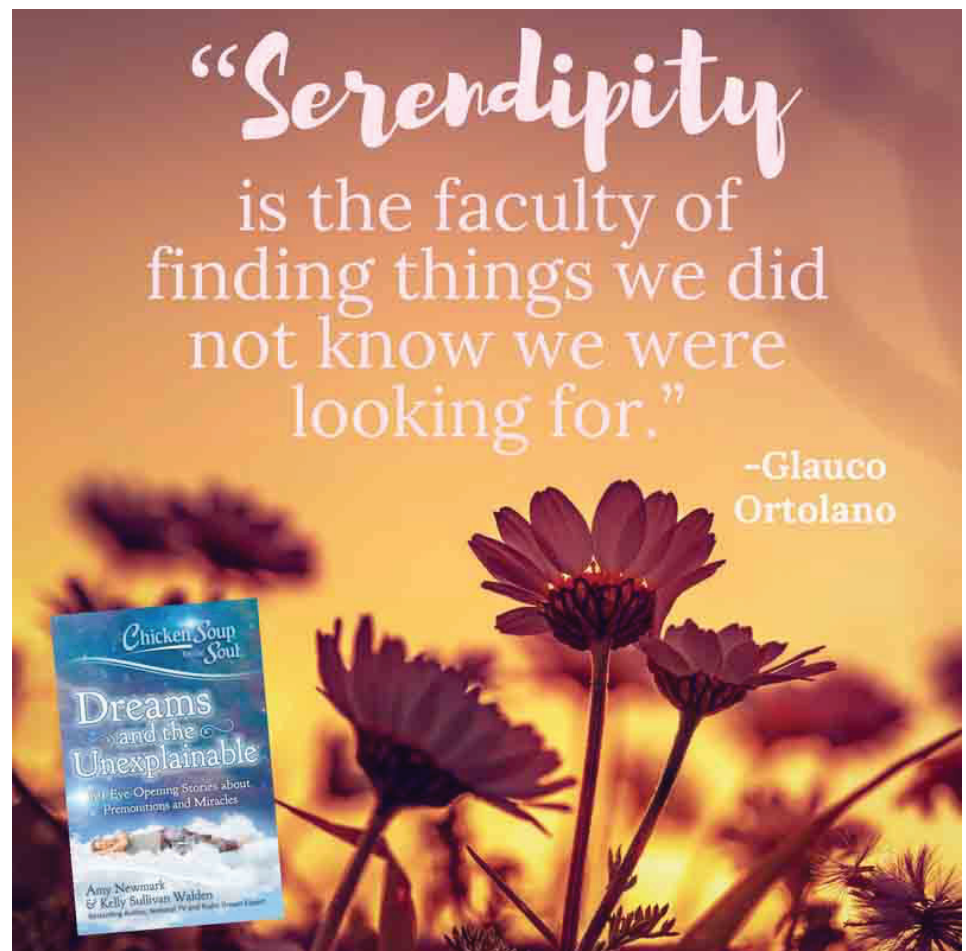
Scripture for Today: Psalm 69:13 But I pray to you, Lord, in the time of your favor; in your great love, O God, answer me with your sure salvation.

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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

Frustration sets in after coal mine health study suspended

By **MICHAEL VIRTANEN, Associated Press**

GLEN DANIEL, W.Va. (AP) — Chuck Nelson spent his life in this corner of Appalachia, working for years in the coal mines — a good job in the economically depressed area. But he says the industry that helped him earn a living cost him his health, and his wife's, too.

The 61-year-old Nelson blames his kidney and liver disease on the well water he drank for years, and his wife's more severe asthma on dust and particles from surface mines near their home.

Some of his neighbors agree — and say surface mining in the mountains has been a primary culprit for various health problems. Some studies agreed with them but in the end were inconclusive. A new federal study was supposed to provide the most comprehensive review to date, but the Trump administration — a coal industry advocate — suspended it three months ago, citing budget reasons.

Nelson and his neighbors weren't surprised — a previous federal study was canceled, too. The suspension feeds the mistrust they've long harbored for politicians who routinely side with businesses: If the study "comes out negative against the coal industry, it's swept under the rug, and the funding's stopped by these politicians who cater to the coal industry," Nelson said.

Studies and experts agree on some points: Mountaintop mining can release coal dust into the air that is carried on the wind. Debris from surface mines can harm streams, and the coal slurries from underground mines can seep chemically-treated waste into groundwater. Pollution can increase disease risks, but that's complicated by other factors.

"With environmental damage or environmental issues, the problem is that most diseases that we are now concerned about are long-term diseases that take decades to appear," said David Rosner, Columbia professor of sociomedical sciences.

Rosner, a member of the organization overseeing the extensive mining study but not directly involved, said the canceled review would've been crucial. "The science has actually created doubt rather than certainty about cause," he said. "What this becomes in the hands of politicians is an excuse for inaction."

The goal of the scuttled study — by National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine — was a consensus from experts in various fields on potential short- and long-term health effects, focused on West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee.

In May, the West Virginia Coal Association told scientists that large-scale mountaintop mining was mostly a thing of the past. State surface-mining production dropped from about 44 million tons (40 million metric tons) of coal in 2012 to 14 million tons (13 million metric tons) last year, it said.

Association Vice President Jason Bostic declined to say whether the study should resume to resolve any remaining questions.

West Virginia's Department of Environmental Protection said it conducts significant surface water quality sampling. Agency officials shared with academy scientists their two-week testing near a mountaintop mine in 2012 that found no conclusive evidence that blasting affected air quality.

Bostic blames higher illnesses rates on poverty: "Bad health in central Appalachia or Appalachia as a whole is not new."

Neither is coal mining.

In late September, Nelson drove an ATV up old logging roads to Alpha Natural Resources' mining operation, where part of Coal River Mountain is gone. The air had a faint grayish hue 100 feet above the mine. Large coal trucks looked like children's toys on the broad, flat landscape below. On the horizon stood the treeless outlines of three other mines. Some houses stood in a distant valley.

Joan Linville, 79, a miner's widow from the hamlet of Van, says she believes her stomach cancer was caused by drinking water polluted by mines. "We did have well water. We used it for everything," she said.

Linville and others hoped the new \$1 million study would erase any doubts. But in canceling it in Au-

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gust, the Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement said officials were reconsidering grants over \$100,000 largely for budget reasons.

Yet academies spokesman William Kearney said the mining study was the only project stopped, with the group having five others underway.

In a 2016 study in the journal *Environmental Science & Policy*, Indiana University professor Michael Hendryx examined data from 1968 to 2014 and found higher death rates in 37 central Appalachian counties with mountaintop mining than those without it, after adjusting for age, poverty, smoking, obesity and available doctors.

In a 2010 study in *Geospatial Health*, Hendryx found that West Virginia residents near mining sites had higher death rates from lung and other cancers after controlling for similar variables. Coal contains known carcinogens, including arsenic, cadmium, chromium, nickel and beryllium, he wrote.

In a 2012 study in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, Yale's Dr. Jonathan Borak found fault with some of Hendryx's studies and concluded the mortality rates in central Appalachia were related to cultural factors: poverty, rural location, education, diet, smoking and obesity, but "not per se" to coal mining pollution.

Borak's work was funded by the National Mining Association, but he said that didn't affect his conclusions. Like Hendryx, he presented his information to the National Academies, whose study he thinks was stopped for political reasons.

"I think the interference with the scientific process for political reasons is lamentable," Borak said.

Friday's Scores By The Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL

Class 11AA Championship: Pierre 24, Harrisburg 21

Class 11B Championship: Sioux Falls Christian 27, Bridgewater-Emery 12

South Dakota State stifles UC Irvine in 65-54 win

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — David Jenkins Jr. scored 16 points, Mike Daum and Reed Tellinghuisen each had 12 points, and South Dakota State pulled away from UC Irvine 65-54 Friday night.

Daum made a 3 and a layup with 12:18 to go during a 17-8 Jackrabbits run to break a 31-all score. Eyassu Worku, Elston Jones and Evan Leonard made layups to bring UC Irvine within 49-47, but Tellinghuisen and Daum made back-to-back 3s.

South Dakota State was 14 for 35 from beyond the 3-point line. Defensively, the Jackrabbits forced 18 UC Irvine turnovers that led to 18 points.

Worku led the Anteaters with 12 points but missed 13 of 18 shots. Leonard finished with 10 points and Jonathan Galloway grabbed 13 rebounds. UC Irvine shot just 5 for 19 (26 percent) from 3-point range and 5 for 12 (42) from the free-throw line.

Volunteers help South Dakota school get new gym floor

By SAMUEL BLACKSTONE, Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Next time you step atop a wooden gymnasium floor, peer down at the multitudes of slender wooden planks beneath your feet. Then, imagine removing them, one by one, sanding down the staples holding them together, one by one, and reinstalling them all in a new gym, one by one.

For a group of volunteers with St. Paul's Lutheran School and Church, imagination isn't necessary.

Last March, the school placed the winning \$5 bid for gymnasium equipment housed within the former National American University building, across the street from the Pennington County Courthouse. Along with the gymnasium's wooden floor, four basketball hoops, two digital scoreboards, a digital sound system

and a retractable wooden bleacher were included in the sale.

The auction came after the school's request to have the equipment donated to its gymnasium failed to receive a unanimous vote of support from the Pennington County Board of Commissioners. Donations of surplus county property must be approved unanimously. The board member who voted against the donation, Commissioner George Ferebee, opined that other area organizations should have the same opportunity to acquire the equipment.

At the auction a few weeks after that decision, St. Paul's School board member Mel Preble placed the winning \$5 bid after another man — who supported the failed donation effort and said he wanted to be sure there were two bids — opened the bidding at \$1.

In this case, the money was an afterthought.

"It wasn't as simple as paying \$5 and getting a floor," Stephen Gurgel, principal of St. Paul's Lutheran School, told the Rapid City Journal. "Not only was it \$5, but it was the labor. They were going to junk the floor because there was so much expense trying to take it out piece by piece. I think that's what weeded out a lot of people in the process."

The true price was paid by dozens of volunteers and, by Gurgel's estimation, more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time. Overall, it cost the school about \$20,000 to install, sand, polish, paint and treat the wooden flooring. Previously, the school's gym floor was a simple, unforgiving and slick concrete surface. Gurgel said it would have likely cost the school more than \$100,000 to install the floor he now stood atop, a long-term goal that was unlikely to be accomplished for 10 to 15 years.

Instead, with the help of volunteers, it took 18 months. In August, the school unveiled the new gymnasium floor to school and churchgoers.

"As the school board and church council discussed it there was a lot of hesitation just because we knew how much work it was going to take," Gurgel said last week as he stood atop the floor, the scent of fresh polish and wood treatment still palpable.

"We really appreciate our volunteers, but we don't want to overwork them, too. You could tell we were tired when we were done. We were all tired."

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

Future uncertain for Sioux Falls Arena

By **JOE SNEVE**, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The plain metal dome on Sioux Falls' northern skyline isn't as flashy as the stars that have performed under its roof — icons from Cher and Bob Dylan to Kiss and Metallica.

Today, the marquee names have moved next door to the Denny Sanford Premier Center, but the Sioux Falls Arena still sees regular use, hosting basketball games, the El Riad Shrine Circus and dozens of trade shows each year.

But the civic venue's future is in question as it faces major repairs and questions about whether it offers the type of space that's most needed to draw large events to the city. City officials will likely have to make a decision in the coming year about whether to restore, renovate or rebuild on the site of the storied building.

When it was built in 1961 for the price of \$1.4 million, the arena was billed as a "majestic mountain of concrete, steel, bricks and blocks." The 30,000-square-foot venue has hosted thousands of concerts, sporting events and conventions since then.

Elvis Presley performed there twice, the second time marking his second to last concert ever. And blues legend Stevie Ray Vaughan performed there just a few months before he died in a helicopter crash two states to the east.

At one time it was a statewide destination for "State Bs" basketball tournaments, luring thousands of rural South Dakotans to Sioux Falls each year.

"I'd say we got our money's worth," said Terry Torkildson, general manager of the company that man-

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ages the arena and Premier Center.

Torkildson's company, SMG, has helped the city enter a new entertainment era marked by the opening of the Premier Center.

The arena still plays a role in drawing artists and visitors to Sioux Falls. It's used for concert pre-parties, banquets and, this weekend, the annual Autumn Fest, a traveling arts and craft show that's been on Sioux Falls' calendar for decades.

But the arena now has more "dark days" when it's not in use than event days.

Meanwhile, the aging "war horse," as Mayor Mike Huether refers to it, faces several expensive repairs in the coming years. Some officials wonder if it makes sense to dump more money into maintenance and upgrades if its days are numbered anyway.

The 68-foot-tall structure has changed little since its construction. Incremental improvements have been made over the years — upgrading locker rooms, installing retractable floor seating and hanging more modern scoreboards — but the guts of the building like the air ducts, rafters and wooden seats still remain.

"If we're going to encounter more and more expenses just to keep it up, it's just a good time in the business cycle to evaluate it," city finance director Tracy Turbak told the Argus Leader .

The city's convention center is effective for drawing trade groups and industry conventions, but the Sioux Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau said it misses out on larger events that need more space and on-site hotel rooms than Sioux Falls can offer.

"In the convention world, it's not often you need an arena. You need meeting rooms and flat floor space," CVB Executive Director Teri Schmidt said. "The interest is there to come to Sioux Falls. We just don't have enough space "

The Sheraton hotel has about 250 rooms, but Schmidt says there's demand for another 350.

With all that in mind, City Hall hired a Minneapolis consultant this fall to study the arena's use and its place in the entertainment and convention markets. The consultant's report, due later this year, is also expected to map out possible long-term scenarios for the property whether the arena building stays or not.

The City Council approved \$63,000 for the consultant last month. Turbak said it was without any pre-conceived notions of what the future might hold. The recommendations might range from demolition to a new life as a multi-level reception hall. The directive to the consultant, Conventions, Sports & Leisure International, was deliberately open-ended to avoid skewing the outcome.

But that's not to say people like Schmidt and Huether don't have their own wish lists.

Huether recently stood on the arena's main floor as crafters unloaded vans and trailers full of exhibits and goods. The mayor reminisced about the arena's role in the debate around locating the Premier Center on the same campus.

One of the selling points for building the \$117 million event center there was to bolster the amount of floor space used to sell Sioux Falls to conventions and trade shows. That need hasn't changed. Huether said he'd prefer more hotel development north of Russell Street so the city can get creative with the arena and add more floor space to the facility.

That could include retrofitting the building to make it more like the rest of the convention center.

"If we could get our hands on those pieces of property (on Russell Street), I think that would really determine what ultimately happens with the Sioux Falls Arena," Huether said. "Those are perfect locations for two to three more hotels."

Sioux Falls isn't the first city to deal with an aging arena. Event centers, auditoriums and arenas around the country have been restored and re-purposed in recent decades, many of which will be studied as the consultant puts together its recommendation, said Kristoffar Nelson, a senior project manager for Conventions, Sports & Leisure.

"We will be exploring a number of markets and facilities that have faced similar situations regarding the consideration of the re-use of an aging arena," he said.

In one example, the city of Long Beach, California, used a flying steel truss system to convert its existing arena floor into an intimate space for receptions and concerts.

Whatever decision is made by the city will carry high stakes for the Sioux Falls' visitor and convention

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industry. The arena is part of every pitch the CVB makes, and it's a tool in SMG's bag when luring touring performances here. The city's Sports Authority, responsible for recruiting NCAA tournaments to town, also considers it a strength.

But a trade-off for more hotel and convention space is worth considering, said Sports Authority Executive Director Bryan Miller.

The current configuration is used by sporting teams and is an important piece of the pitch for tournaments. Having two regulation-sized basketball courts on-site is a major appeal for the NCAA when choosing host sites, Miller said, because teams need venues to practice in between games. It means players don't have to be bused between locations.

But more full-service hotels would also better equip Sioux Falls to host more tournaments, too, he said. "The hotel and the arena would be my biggest two pieces," Miller said. "If they tear it down and add a hotel . that would be all right because we can always find another practice facility for some things."

The consultant expects to have its work completed and report submitted to City Hall by year's end. But with the earliest major repairs scheduled for 2019, the city has about a year to figure out its plan for the arena's future use.

Huether said whatever the recommendations, the city should find a way to add a hotel without sacrificing the floor-space the arena provides.

"It is critical, that floor space, and to have it be contiguous is just so vital," he said. "So to me, we've got to find a way to do both and if you bring an architect in here, they could find a way to do something beautiful."

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

06-23-38-42-58, Mega Ball: 24, Megaplier: 2

(six, twenty-three, thirty-eight, forty-two, fifty-eight; Mega Ball: twenty-four; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$71 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$90 million

Iowa dairy family expands farm to generate more revenue

By BENNET GOLDSTEIN, Telegraph Herald

GUTTENBERG, Iowa (AP) — Of the professions Maureen Seevers contemplated as a child — meteorologist, astronaut, the things kids think about — she found herself drawn down to earth, to the dairy barns where she grew up on the family farm.

"Once I got to where I wanted to go to college, I was a little more realistic and decided that I would follow what I already know best, and that was the farming life," she told the Telegraph Herald . "I love working with animals. I love being outside ... most days."

Seevers, 32, and her siblings, Travis Kregel, 30, and Megan Kregel, 28, work on their parents' farm in Guttenberg. They grow corn, beans and cover crops and milk about 370 cows.

The farm has been in their family for six generations, and the siblings hope to take full ownership of the operation when their parents, Gary and Darlene Kregel, retire.

In anticipation, the family expanded its dairy operation in 2013 and 2014.

"The operation has to generate more income to basically support four families," Gary said. "You simply

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have to farm more acres or milk more cows or have access to off-farm income.”

But in a saturated market, where milk prices are low, expanding operations to bring new families into the business can present more challenges for new producers. It can be difficult to find processors to accept their milk as a result of overproduction.

Some dairy farmers-to-be might reconsider.

Entering the profession is “less and less common,” said Carrie Corlett, northeast Iowa and southwest Wisconsin field representative with Dairy Farmers of America.

Although states and the federal government offer beginning farmer loans and tax credits, startup costs still can be prohibitive.

“It’s extremely hard to get into the dairy industry and operate a farm if you’re not working or employed at a dairy where someone wants to transition you in,” Megan Kregel said. “It’s not only cows. It’s facilities. It’s machinery. There is land. There is a lot of overhead.”

Expanding operations is one of many strategies that farmers use to increase the profitability of their dairy operations so that beginning farmers can join the business, said Tera Montgomery, University of Wisconsin-Platteville professor of dairy and animal science.

Others might include installing robotic milkers or selling value-added products in addition to milk, such as ice cream and cheese.

Dairy farmers can expand without necessarily having to purchase more land, noted Larry Tranel, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach dairy field specialist.

“The big question is how many more cows do you need to make a profit?” he said. “A simple equation might be another 60 or 80 cows to support an additional person. . There tends to be a little economy of scale depending on the system they are getting involved with.”

With more hands in the expanded operation, each sibling can specialize in a different area of the business, Seevers said.

“We each have different interests,” she said.

For farmers without heirs to succeed them and aspiring farmers without land, ISU Extension offers a matchmaking service called Ag Link.

“We have electronic databases for young people who love to farm,” said David Baker, farm transition specialist with the Beginning Farmer Center.

Megan noted that without an existing operation into which to transition, it would be “nearly impossible” to become an independent dairy owner.

Looking to the future, she admitted there is “always a level of anxiousness and a level of nervousness in being involved in agriculture.”

“We never know what price we are going to receive,” she said. “But overall, it’s exciting. . It’s exciting to see your hard work pay off.”

Information from: Telegraph Herald, <http://www.thonline.com>

Zinke says Democrats holding Interior nominees ‘hostage’

By MATTHEW DALY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke says Senate Democrats are holding the department’s nominees “hostage” to a political agenda that includes opposition to his review of presidentially designated monuments.

In a sharply worded letter to Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin, the Senate’s No. 2 Democrat, Zinke said it’s unfortunate that Democrats have placed holds on four Interior nominees, including the department’s top lawyer and budget chief.

The nominees “have nothing to do with this monument review, yet they have been forced to sit on the sidelines” for months, Zinke wrote Thursday. “As a former Navy SEAL, this is not the type of hostage situation I am accustomed to.”

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Zinke offered to meet with Durbin, who requested a briefing last month along with other Democratic senators to discuss the monument review.

President Donald Trump ordered the review this spring following complaints by congressional Republicans that previous presidents had misused a century-old law intended to protect federal lands, creating oversized monuments that hinder energy development, logging and other uses. Trump called some monument designations by his Democratic predecessors "massive land grabs."

Zinke has recommended that Trump shrink four large monuments in the West, including the sprawling Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments in Utah.

Zinke also recommended that Nevada's Gold Butte and Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou monuments be reduced in size, although exact details remain unclear. The proposals have prompted an outcry from environmental groups and Democrats who accuse Trump and Zinke of engaging in a secretive process aimed at helping industry groups that have donated to GOP campaigns.

Opponents have promised to take the Trump administration to court to block any attempts to rescind or reduce the monument designations. Former Presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton designated the monuments under the 1906 Antiquities Act, which allows presidents to protect sites considered historic or geographically or culturally important.

In a letter last month, Durbin and 15 other senators complained that Zinke's recommendations "threaten important natural, archaeological and cultural resources," especially Bears Ears, a 1.3-million acre site in southeastern Utah that is home to thousands of Native American artifacts, including ancient cliff dwellings and petroglyphs.

"National monuments have preserved our country's unique public lands, extraordinary history and our common culture as a people," the senators wrote in an Oct. 23 letter to Trump. "We urge you not to reduce their boundaries in any way."

Durbin and several other senators wrote a separate letter to Zinke seeking a meeting about the monument review, which they said has been conducted virtually in secret.

Zinke responded Thursday that he visited the four monuments that are being shrunk and met with or talked to lawmakers and governors in all four states.

"While the review does not affect the state of Illinois, I nonetheless understand your interest in this matter, and I appreciate the written comments you and your colleagues provided throughout this review process," Zinke wrote to Durbin.

Durbin has placed holds on the nominees in his leadership role. Spokesman Ben Marter said Durbin looked forward to meeting with Zinke, although no date has been set.

"That was probably harder than it needed to be, but the secretary has now reached out to schedule a meeting and Sen. Durbin is looking forward to it," Marter said.

Durbin has placed holds on four Interior nominees: Susan Combs, nominated as assistant secretary for policy, management and budget; Joseph Balash, assistant secretary for land and minerals management; Ryan Nelson, solicitor; and Brenda Burman, commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, which oversees dams and water projects in 17 Western states.

Vietnam War memorial being dedicated in Belle Fourche

BELLE FOURCHE, S.D. (AP) — Officials in Belle Fourche are dedicating a Vietnam War memorial this weekend.

City Councilman and Veterans of Foreign Wars member Monte Talkington tells the Black Hills Pioneer that the Saturday morning ceremony will be the culmination of years of work and fundraising.

Half of the \$8,500 cost of the black marble memorial has been raised, including \$1,000 collected by middle school students through penny collections.

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

Salty suit: Wahpeton sunflower seed company eyes competitor

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — A North Dakota sunflower seed company is suing a competitor in South Dakota over a packaging slogan.

KFGO radio reports that Wahpeton-based Giant Seeds is accusing Mount City, South Dakota-based Wild Dutchman Products, Inc. of misleading consumers about the amount of salt in its sunflower seeds with the statement: "Half the salt. All the flavor."

Giant Seeds says test results from two independent laboratories show that Giants have less salt than Wild Dutchman products.

The suit is asking for Wild Dutchman to stop using the slogan and recall the disputed products. It also seeks damages to be determined during a trial.

Giant Seeds bills itself as the official sunflower seed of the Minnesota Twins, Colorado Rockies and San Francisco Giants.

Wild Dutchman did not respond to numerous requests for comment.

Information from: KFGO-AM, <http://www.kfgo.com>

Michigan biologists to study river fish amid chemical fears

ROCKFORD, Mich. (AP) — Biologists with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality are planning to take a second look at fish in the Rogue River because of growing water contamination concerns from nearby tannery dump sites.

Testing from four years ago found elevated levels of toxic industrial chemicals in fish north of the Rockford dam, prompting the state to issue limits to eating those fish in a health advisory, the Grand Rapids Press reported .

New test results released Thursday show that the same chemicals known to have been used by Wolverine World Wide in waterproofing shoes are present in the river both north and south of the dam. Wolverine had a landfill in Belmont, from which a pollution plume has contaminated private drinking water wells with unsafe chemical levels, according to environmental tests.

Scientists said the toxins are perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, a class of chemicals tied to cancer, thyroid problems and other diseases.

Some environmentalists said the new findings mean the state should revisit the health advisory over a wider fishing area that extends south of the dam.

"I think the state should consider expanding the advisory and to other fish species as well," said Bill Wood, director of the West Michigan Environmental Action Council. "It seems like every time there's testing that's expanded, that we keep finding it more and more. It seems the science continues to evolve with what level is safe."

The department is planning for a wider Rogue River fish study in 2018 in response to the growing number of Wolverine dump sites in the Belmont area and contaminated groundwater, said Joseph Bohr, aquatic biologist for the department's Water Resources Division.

"We are planning to collect some fish upstream and downstream of Rockford next year just to see the extent," he said.

The state Health Department is waiting on that fish collection before making any changes to the health advisory for fish consumption.

Information from: The Grand Rapids Press, <http://www.mlive.com/grand-rapids>

Grandparents: Teen was home with flu before deputy fired

By TODD RICHMOND, Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — A Wisconsin eighth-grader fatally shot by a sheriff's deputy on a Native American reservation came home from school with the flu the morning of the shooting but it's unclear why he left the home, his grandparents said Friday.

An Ashland County sheriff's deputy shot 14-year-old Jason Pero just before noon on Wednesday outside his home on the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa reservation, a sprawling wooded area about 300 miles (483 kilometers) north of Madison. Investigators said deputies were responding to a call about a male subject walking down the street with a knife around 11:40 a.m.

Authorities have released no information about what led up to the shooting.

Relatives have questioned whether the boy had a knife. The Wisconsin Department of Justice, which is investigating the incident, has said a knife was recovered from the scene. A department spokeswoman declined to comment Friday except to say the deputy has been placed on administrative leave.

The teen's grandfather, Alan Pero, told The Associated Press on Friday that the boy lived with him and his wife and they had raised him since he was a year old. He said his grandson dreamed of joining the military.

"He got murdered out in front of the house here," Pero said in a phone interview. "He's a boy. There's warning shots. There's Tasers. There's pepper spray. You don't go right on a 14-year-old kid and go for the kill zone."

"I'm really having a hard time keeping my anger in," his wife added. "You don't come up to a 14-year-old boy and pull a gun on him and just fire. ... That's baloney. We're asking questions. We're not getting answers."

Pero said his grandson had been sick for a few days. The boy went to school Wednesday morning but came back to the house feeling nauseous, he said. The grandparents weren't home, but Jason's uncle was at the house and told the grandparents that Jason got a 7-Up, laid on the couch and started watching TV.

The uncle was downstairs doing laundry when the boy apparently left. Pero said the uncle doesn't know why or how the boy left the house.

Investigators searched the home and that the family discovered a dull butcher knife was missing, Pero said. The boy's mother and other relatives have said they're not convinced Jason had a knife. His grandfather said that even if he did, "maybe he was carving, maybe he was doing something, but he'd never hurt a fly. Never in his life."

Cheryl Pero said she was working at a day care when she saw squad cars "flying by like crazy, and I just got a really sick feeling in my stomach knowing they were (heading in the direction of her house)."

She came home and saw her house ringed off with yellow police tape. In the yard was her grandson's body.

"At first I didn't really know that was him lying there," she said. "When I was finally able to get a glance and recognize the clothing, that's when I lost it. They cut off his shirt. It was laying there and they were doing (chest) compressions. That's all I have my head."

Both grandparents described their grandson as a gentle boy who played the drums for his tribe and wanted to become a Marine.

"He was a big old teddy bear," Alan Pero said. "He teased his little nephews once in a while but that was the meanest part he had."

The Bad River reservation covers 124,655 acres along Lake Superior. The area is largely untouched wilderness, marked by thick forests and swamps. Tribal members consider the environment sacred, particularly Gichi Gami, the Chippewa name for Lake Superior.

The tribe led the fight against Republican legislation that dramatically relaxed Wisconsin's iron mining regulations for an open-pit mine near the reservation. The mine never materialized. In January, the tribe called for removing 12 miles (19 kilometers) of an Enbridge oil pipeline from their reservation.

The sheriff's office provides law enforcement services on the reservation along with the tribal police department.

This story has been corrected to show the teenager's grandfather said a knife was missing from their house, not that his grandson took it.

Follow Todd Richmond on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/trichmond1>

Sign up for the AP's weekly newsletter showcasing our best reporting from the Midwest and Texas: <http://apne.ws/2u1RMfv>

NC officials will take action after recent chemical spill

WILMINGTON, N.C. (AP) — The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality says a spill resulting in an increase of toxic chemical levels in a river hadn't been reported by a chemical company until regulators approached.

The StarNews reports state Environmental Quality officials said in a Thursday statement the department will take action against Chemours for the spill, which was identified after Environmental Protection Agency tests showed a GenX spike in the Cape Fear River.

When asked about the test, the company told state officials a chemical they identify as a precursor to GenX had spilled Oct. 6 during planned maintenance. State officials didn't specify what enforcement actions they're considering.

Last week, Chemours CEO Mark P. Vergnano said the company didn't have to stop GenX from reaching the drinking water but took action as part of "good-faith" efforts.

Information from: The StarNews, <http://starnewsonline.com>

Delaware coastal cleanup nets 3.8 tons of trash this year

DOVER, Del. (AP) — Environmental officials say Delaware's annual coastal cleanup netted almost 4 tons of trash from the state's waterways and coastline this year.

The cleanup effort involved almost 1,600 volunteers who picked up 3.8 tons of trash from 47 sites along 75 miles of shoreline stretching from Wilmington to Fenwick Island.

Officials say about one-quarter of the trash consisted of recyclables — mostly aluminum cans, and glass and plastic beverage bottles.

But the haul also included a cellphone, a Parmesan cheese shaker, a large rug, a statue of the Virgin Mary, a vacuum cleaner, a mermaid doll, Mardi Gras beads, televisions and 16,158 cigarette butts.

Endangered Florida panther hit, killed by vehicle

NAPLES, Fla. (AP) — An endangered Florida panther has been struck and killed by a vehicle.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission says the male panther's remains were found Tuesday in Collier County. Officials say the panther was almost 4 years old.

It's the 20th fatal collision this year, out of 25 total panther deaths. Biologists will study the panther's remains.

Florida panthers once roamed the entire Southeastern United States but now their habitat mostly is confined to southwest Florida. Only about 230 Florida panthers remain in the wild.

Poultry producer accused of polluting Delaware groundwater

MILLSBORO, Del. (AP) — Delaware state regulators say a poultry producer polluted the groundwater near a processing plant and must supply bottled water to area residents whose wells may be contaminated.

The News Journal of Wilmington reports that Mountaire Farms is facing fines and other sanctions because the groundwater near its Millsboro-area plant may be contaminated with fecal coliform and high

levels of nitrogen nitrate.

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources says the contamination entered the groundwater through a state-permitted spray irrigation system that allows Mountaire to apply wastewater from its processing plant to nearby farmland. That wastewater, which contains both poultry and human waste, is supposed to be thoroughly treated.

Mountaire's executive vice president of business strategy and administration did not return the newspaper's requests for comment.

Mountaire says it is the seventh-largest chicken producer in the U.S.

Independent committee looking to rename Squaw Peak

PROVO, Utah (AP) — A new group is beginning a push to change the name of Squaw Peak in Provo to something more honorable to Native American women.

The Repeak Committee is leading the effort to remove the word "squaw" from the name of the iconic jagged mountain, The Daily Herald reported Thursday.

The push comes after a U.S. government board voted to rename another geological feature, Moab's Negro Bill Canyon, to Grandstaff Canyon.

Provo resident Chauma Jansen, who is working with the new independent committee, believes the term Squaw is both derogatory and demeaning.

"It is meant to belittle somebody or belittle their worth. Historically it has been used to (mean) prostitution as well as sexual violence against women," said Jansen, whose heritage is Navajo, Sioux and Assiniboine.

The mountain located near Brigham Young University was named around the 1850s. The origins are cloudy of the name are cloudy. The most common story is that it was named after a member of the Timpanogos Ute tribe who fell to her death as they were being pursued by white settlers, BYU history professor Jay Buckley said. But, he said, the story may be more anecdotal than historic fact.

The committee is preparing a proposal to send to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, which is responsible for standardizing geographic names.

A Squaw Peak in Arizona was renamed in 2003 to Piestewa Peak in honor of Lori Piestewa, the first Native American woman to be killed in US military combat.

The Provo group hopes to rename the mountain after a Ute woman, and has reached out to the tribe for name recommendations and approval.

It hopes to finalize the proposal by February. The group will present its message at a lecture at Utah Valley University next week.

Information from: The Daily Herald, <http://www.heraldextra.com>

Undercover video shows dairy farm worker kicking cows

OKEECHOBEE, Fla. (AP) — An undercover video that purports to show workers kicking cows in the head and hitting them with metal rods has prompted authorities to open a criminal investigation at one of Florida's largest dairy farms.

Okeechobee County Sheriff Noel Stephen said during a news conference Thursday that he assigned an investigator to the case involving Larson Dairy. And Florida-based Publix supermarkets announced it has suspended milk deliveries from Larson, adding in a statement the company is "shocked" by the treatment of cows.

Publix said it has contacted the Florida Department of Agriculture about the alleged abuse. In a statement the company said, "we are disturbed by the images and shocked by the cruelty toward animals."

The video was shot by an investigator with Animal Recovery Mission, a Miami Beach-based animal cruelty group, who began working at the dairy in August.

"Dairy supervisors and milkers beat, stab and torment dairy cows with steel construction rebar," the

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narrator says. "The sharp metal rods pierce and penetrate the cows' bodies. Kept hidden from tours and visitors to the dairy, the cows are brutalized."

In a statement, Jacob Larson said an employee seen in the video hitting cows has been fired, adding that the "unusual use of force is simply unacceptable on our dairy or on any other farm."

"We have strict protocols involving animal care and clearly the behavior shown in this video goes against everything we stand for and will not be tolerated," Larson said. "The employee involved and featured in the video has been terminated. Further corrective action will be taken if necessary as we continue to analyze the video and conduct an on-farm investigation."

Larson, whose family has been in the dairy business since 1947 and in Okeechobee County since 1971, questioned the tactics of the animal rights group.

"We are equally concerned about the manner in which this video was brought to our attention," Larson said. "Had the 'undercover' employee brought this to our attention when it occurred, we may have been able to prevent it earlier."

Richard Couto, the founder and lead investigator for the animal rights group, said members didn't choose the Larson dairy because of cruelty reports but within an hour of starting the undercover operation found "strong sounds of animal abuse."

"We wanted to see what was happening in a typical, larger scale dairy setting in the state of Florida," he said.

The sheriff said the material received by his office, including still photos and video, indicated three workers were involved.

He said he's known the Larson family for years and said they wouldn't condone such behavior.

"Had they known about it," Stephen said, "they would have fired them on the spot."

House Speaker: Change laws after nuclear plant failure

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — The South Carolina House speaker is proposing six laws aimed at protecting consumers from the consequences of a failed project to build two nuclear reactors.

South Carolina Electric & Gas Co. and the state-owned utility Santee Cooper have sought to insulate themselves from the hemorrhaging costs of their ill-fated joint venture at the V.C. Summer Nuclear Station, which they abandoned on July 31 after Westinghouse, the chief contractor, declared bankruptcy. The utilities had already spent more than \$9 billion by then, collecting nearly \$2 billion in interest from ratepayers along the way.

House Speaker Jay Lucas of Hartsville announced his proposals on Thursday, saying they would "gut existing laws" that allowed utilities to charge customers before the reactors were complete, and help avoid another expensive construction failure.

"The legislation introduced today lowers current rates and prevents consumers from paying a single penny more for the costly failed project," the Republican's statement said.

Lucas' legislation would cut SCE&G customer rates by 18 percent, the amount they're currently paying for the project. A typical residential customer would save about \$27 per month. The hit to SCE&G would total about \$37 million per month, or nearly \$450 million per year.

Another proposal would allow refunds of what customers have already paid, if regulators conclude there had been "poor management" by SCE&G. Still another would prevent Santee Cooper from collecting money to reimburse itself the costs of ending the project.

Currently, Santee Cooper is not subject to Public Service Commission oversight. The proposed legislation would change that, and shake up its management structure as well, removing Santee Cooper's board of directors, the Public Service Commissioners and even the panel that that interviews prospective members of the regulatory panel. Their replacements would be required to pass rigorous qualifications.

Lucas also would give the Office of Regulatory staff, a state watchdog agency, more power.

Santee Cooper spokeswoman Mollie Gore said the utility is reviewing the proposals. SCE&G had no immediate comment, but previously dismissed such ideas as "radical and disruptive."

Incoming CEO Jimmy Addison of SCANA, SCE&G's parent company, said making the utility pay its share of the project would scare off investors and lenders, making it harder to finance day-to-day operations, including purchasing fuel, hiring contractors for repairs and paying employees. Already, SCANA stock has dropped 25 percent, reducing the company's market capitalization to \$6.3 billion, since the project was abandoned.

Conservationists push for stricter poaching laws in Missouri

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — Conservationists and lawmakers dissatisfied with Missouri's anti-poaching laws believe the current fines and penalties do little to prevent the act.

Missouri's fines cover a range of wildlife code violations, from importing a live prohibited species into the state to taking a deer from a public roadway. No fine exceeds \$300 plus court costs, a factor that supporters of stiffer penalties believe leads to a large number of poaching cases, the Columbia Missourian reported.

Conservation agents have detected a total of nearly 74,000 wildlife code violations over the last three years while on patrol. Of those violations, they've taken action on less than 22,000, said Larry Yamnitz, chief of the Conservation Department's Protection Division.

Protection Division Regional Supervisor Tom Strother said some people simply don't care about the penalties.

"I think the low fines can contribute to some people saying, 'Well, I'll just give you a small amount for the fine,'" Strother said. "If I'm going to get caught one out of 100 times, I'll just give you the small amount."

Former Republican Rep. Linda Black proposed a bill to increase poaching fines after a poacher killed a bull elk in 2015. The bill would have required those convicted of certain poaching violations to pay restitution to the state of \$750 for a wild turkey, \$1,500 for a white-tailed deer and \$3,500 for a black bear or elk. The bill failed to make it to the House floor for debate.

Republican Reps. Donna Lichtenegger and Jered Taylor introduced bills in late 2016 and early 2017 nearly identical to Black's, but those never made it out of committee.

"The bill died as of May 15 when our last day of session was," Taylor said. "There are some people with concerns. There is a lot of support for it out there as well."

Taylor said he plans to re-file the bill in January.

"This should be a bipartisan issue," said Brandon Butler, executive director of the Conservation Federation of Missouri. "It shouldn't matter if it's urban or rural. This should be something we all want to move forward on: protecting our wildlife."

Information from: Columbia Missourian, <http://www.columbiamissourian.com>

Residents protest Detroit refinery over pollution concerns

DETROIT (AP) — Demonstrators are urging a Detroit oil refinery to relocate nearby residents over concerns about pollution.

Dozens of protesters gathered Thursday at the Marathon Petroleum refinery to voice concerns about the company's lack of action. The demonstration came weeks after a federal appeals court ruled against a district court's decision that residents' claims of injury due to harmful air pollution from the oil giant fell past the statute of limitations, the Detroit News reported.

Marathon officials said they created a buyout program allowing some residents to sell their homes during the refinery's expansion, which was completed in 2012. But protesters said Marathon ignored some polluted areas.

"They are our personal polluters," said Wendy Kyles, who attributed her late relatives' health issues to emissions from the site. "So they should do us a personal favor and get us out of here."

Marathon offered the buyout program because the expansion "moved its fence line closer to that neighborhood (Oakwood Heights), which was a residential island surrounded on all sides by industry and the

Rouge River," said company spokesman Jamal Kheiry.

The company said it doesn't currently have plans for another buyout program.

The refinery was built in 1930 and bought by Marathon in 1959. Those who live around the facility have long complained about pollutants and raised concerns about health problems they believe are associated with it.

"They're not doing anything to understand where the people are coming from," said Rachel Cabell, who has lived near the facility for more than 30 years. "If you live it every day, you can relate."

Information from: The Detroit News, <http://detnews.com/>

South Dakota public schools to oppose 'school choice'

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's public schools want to shut down "school choice" discussions in the state before they begin.

Statewide public school groups are preparing to oppose bills that would expand school choice more than two months before legislators convene in Pierre for the 2018 session, the Argus Leader reported .

The Associated School Board of South Dakota added the new resolution to its priorities this year in response to U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, said Todd Thoenke, president of the group and member of the Sioux Falls school board. The U.S. Education Department plans to increase spending for charter schools and voucher programs under DeVos, who is a vocal advocate for school choice.

"It's a scary road to go down," Thoenke said.

He and other Sioux Falls school board members met Wednesday to look at legislative priorities for both the Associated School Board of South Dakota and the Large School Group, an organization that lobbies for public schools.

In addition to opposing using federal funds to expand school choice, the groups also gave early support to an effort to repeal the state's existing school choice program. State lawmakers approved a program last year that diverts tax dollars to cover private school tuition in the form of sizable tax credits for insurance companies who give money for private school scholarships.

It's unclear whether state legislators will take on school choice expansion. But Thoenke said that won't stop schools from getting ahead of the issue.

"It's going to be really interesting to see who shows up in Pierre," he said. "Either they're being really quiet, or we'll see a group that comes ready to fight."

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

Oklahoma cattle producers reject fee increase

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — The Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry says that a referendum to increase the drop-off fee for cattle by \$1 per head has been defeated.

Oklahoma Agriculture Secretary Jim Reese announced Thursday that the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association rejected the measure, which would've raised the fee and generated an additional \$3.2 million to be used to promote beef sales.

Some ranchers opposed the measure and requested the Montana-based Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund and the Organization for Competitive Markets file an injunction to stop the vote.

The Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association supported the measure.

Richard Thorpe is the association's president. He says he was disappointed the measure didn't succeed.

Thorpe says that cattle raisers in Texas "have seen an immense benefit from their state-level checkoff program."

MidAmerican plans to spend \$1B to update wind turbines

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — MidAmerican Energy says it plans to spend \$1 billion updating more than 700 older wind turbines across Iowa.

The turbines will be retrofitted with newer, more efficient components, including longer blades, to extend their lifespans an estimated 20 years, said Spencer Moore, MidAmerican Energy's vice president of generation.

Each upgraded turbine will annually net between 19 and 28 percent more energy, the company said.

The Des Moines Register reports that the project is beginning with MidAmerican's first three wind farms, built in 2004 in northern Iowa. The entire project will likely update seven wind farms.

The utility company's turbines are designed so they can be upgraded as they age and technology advances, Moore said. The old equipment from the wind farms will likely get recycled by the manufacturer, General Electric.

Construction crews often work overnight, when winds die down. Work stops when the wind exceeds 20 mph.

The company also plans to add 1,000 more turbines around the state. That project is estimated to cost \$3.9 billion. The company currently has more than 2,000 turbines in Iowa.

The company expects the upgrades and expansion will allow it to supply about 95 percent of its customer's energy needs through wind. The utility said wind energy helps keep electricity costs low.

Both projects are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2020, before the United States' production tax credits are phased out. A U.S. House tax bill released last month looks to roll back the credits.

Iowa got almost 37 percent of its energy last year from wind.

Reclaim Appalachia sees potential for reclaimed mine sites

By ANDREA LANNOM, The Register-Herald

TAMARACK, W.Va. (AP) — West Virginia could produce profitable niche crops grown on reclaimed mine sites.

At least that's what Nathan Hall, president of Reclaim Appalachia envisions.

Hall spoke about uses for reclaimed sites at the West Virginia Good Jobs Conference last Tuesday at Tamarack. The goal of the conference is to bring together entrepreneurs, funders, local community leaders and government agencies to trade ideas, provide mentorship and support entrepreneurs in Southern West Virginia.

Reclaim's first operational site is located next to the Buck Harless Wood Products Industrial Park in Holden, a property owned by the Mingo County Redevelopment Authority.

Reclaim and Refresh Appalachia have partnered to develop an active commercial agroforestry site, which is on about 50 acres of land that was mined and reclaimed in the late 1990s, managing crops including blackberries, hazelnuts, lavender and pawpaws. The site also has animals including chickens, hogs, goats and honeybees, which are managed with "rotational grazing techniques."

Hall said he first started work on the Mingo County site early last year. The business has five full time crew members and one crew chief. Of those six employees, four are former coal miners.

According to Reclaim's website, the organization intends to replicate the model on more mined properties and on a larger scale.

"With any post surface mine landscape, this model works well," Hall said. "It's especially suited to areas where it's not feasible to turn into a big shopping center or a golf course."

Hall said the model is designed to be long term and said sites like these may not see profit until a few years down the road.

"This approach is never profitable in year one or even year two," he said. "It's more of a three-five year horizon to get into the black. A lot of agricultural investments like this are longer term.

"With animals, you have to establish a breeding stock. It takes some time before you're able to send animals to slaughter," Hall said. "And with perennial plants, it takes a year of establishment to get fruit

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— sometimes three to four years. We are looking at this as a longer-term investment but this is a pretty common way to invest in projects you see on the West Coast and the Northeast. A lot of investors know this is not a quick turnaround.”

However, down the road, Hall said he envisions West Virginia as being primary producers of niche produce on the East Coast.

“If we produce enough at a low cost and upgrade to high value products, move it six to nine hours away, there is a huge amount of ways to use these lands in ways that we’ve barely started to scratch the surface,” he said.

Hall mentioned the possibility of products including lavender or grapes — plants that can thrive in the rocky soil.

“You could even have things like goat meat, which is something you don’t think about as something to eat in this area,” Hall said. “There are huge markets for it, maybe not here but the conditions are great for these sites.”

Hall spoke about some of the struggles with using these sites including the rocky terrain itself.

“You think about nice farmland where there is this loose, fluffy, brown soil you can almost scoop your hand into,” he said. “This soil, you can’t get a shovel to go more than 2 inches. The only thing that can survive is something with a shallow breeding system.”

Another issue is invasive species of plants that were planted for reclamation. However, Hall said animals including goats and hogs can eat the shrubby plants while also adding nutrients to the soil.

“I’m a fan of high-intensity rotational grazing,” he said. “You have people out there tending fences and maintaining the animals and the site regularly. It has a more diversified income. And there is a benefit to the land through manure and reducing unwanted vegetation. You can eventually replant to better quality pastures if you do rotational.”

He said stacking systems including orchards and animals have been efficient in maintaining the land along with adding a larger labor force.

“You have the animals in between the orchard growth keeping the areas maintained,” he said. “It’s benefiting the roots and the trees. You’re also able to sell the meat and eggs while harvesting fruit and berries.”

Hall isn’t the first or the only person to grow crops on reclaimed mine sites. Hall mentioned one in particular back in the 1990s in Kentucky where there was a hog farm on a former mine site.

“There are a lot of activity in these spaces,” he said. “We are more focused on stacking systems and having this multi-faceted approach. Other folks want one piece. . It’s an interesting time to be involved. We can learn from each other and grow a new sector of the economy.”

Information from: The Register-Herald, <http://www.register-herald.com>

Fellow farmers help family after passing

By GENE ZALESKI, The Times and Democrat of Orangeburg

BRANCHVILLE, S.C. (AP) — Branchville farmer Otis “Larry” McAlhany lived and breathed farming his entire life.

He grew up on the farm with his father Tom Clint Sr. and continued to till the land to help support his family through the years.

It was no different in 2017 when McAlhany planted 300 acres of corn, 250 acres of peanuts and 300 acres of soybeans.

But on Labor Day morning, McAlhany died of what family members believe was a heart attack. He was 67.

Seeing that he was about halfway done harvesting his corn crop, other farmers decided to take it upon themselves to help the McAlhany family in their hour of need.

Thad Wimberly was joined in the effort by his father Harry, Ronnie Weathers, Ernie Kirven, Blaine Huffelfinger and Jonathan Berry.

“The passing was just a shock to the community,” Thad Wimberly said. “No one was expecting that.

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When I heard the news of him passing, I called Blaine, who works with him, and he said he had about 100 acres left of corn to cut."

"I pulled together what we were doing and stopped where we were at to help him get his crop out of the field," Wimberly said. "We knocked it out that day. I really felt like we needed to do that as a community and for a fellow farmer."

By that afternoon, the entire crop was harvested and shipped. Later, Steve McAlhany and Bryan Delk harvested McAlhany's peanut and soybean crop.

Wimberly had known and worked with McAlhany for many years.

"I have helped him sell his crop ... and have handled his grain," Wimberly said. "He has been a good friend."

While generally private people, farmers do love one another as a family," Wimberly said.

"When the right thing needs to be done, we pull together to get it done," he said.

McAlhany's daughter, Tracy Mills, said the outreach shows the heart of a farmer and the heart of Branchville.

"It just shows you what a close-knit area that Branchville is for everyone to come together to show love and support of other local farmers," she said.

Mills said she just knows her father is looking down on what has been done for him.

"He would be smiling and smiling and saying 'thank you so much,'" Mills said.

Teresa McAlhany, who was married to Larry for about six years, said her husband was a hard worker who would give the coat off his back to others.

"He was not happy if he was not on the tractor or playing with dirt," Teresa said. "That was his life."

"He would go out many times at night to help pull hunters out with trucks who may have gotten bogged down in holes," she said. "He would just do things for others."

As to what he would say about the help received on the day of his death, Teresa said, "He would probably be at a loss for words."

"He would probably feel guilty he was not out there doing it himself," she said. "But he would be grateful they stepped up to help him out."

"Farmers just don't get the support they need from the outside, but in actuality they are a pretty close-knit group of people," she said. "They help when one is down."

Now a couple of months since his passing, Mills says her heart still grieves for her father, who was the example of a family man who loved spending time with his only grandchild, Becky.

"He will be very missed," Mills said. "I was his number one. I was his firstborn and nothing will ever change that."

Her father's passing is also the passing of an era. Mills works in the medical field and her brother is a school teacher. Neither has plans to return to the family farm.

"The future of the farm died when my daddy passed away," she said. "It costs so much to keep it going."

Information from: The Times & Democrat, <http://www.timesanddemocrat.com>

TVA boosts pay of nation's highest-paid federal employee

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (AP) — The Tennessee Valley Authority is raising the pay of its CEO after the utility lowered its carbon emissions, injury rates and costs.

News outlets report TVA's board of directors voted Thursday to increase Bill Johnson's salary by 5.5 percent. Johnson was paid nearly \$5 million in fiscal 2016, with a reported base salary of roughly \$995,000.

The compensation package for Johnson, the highest-paid federal employee in the nation, is more than \$6 million, including retirement and other benefits. The board says Johnson's pay is still low compared to salaries of utility companies not in public service.

The Knoxville-based TVA was established by an act of Congress in 1933 to help the Tennessee Valley overcome environmental and economic problems. TVA provides power for Tennessee and parts of six bordering states.

Rice industry to create field burning guidelines in Arkansas

BRINKLEY, Ark. (AP) — The Arkansas Rice Farmers board has approved the establishment of a task force that will look to address concerns, consider farmer burning plans and develop smoke management guidelines.

The Jonesboro Sun reports that the task force was formed by members of the Arkansas Rice Industry at a meeting Tuesday.

Arkansas Rice Federation executive director Lauren Waldrip Ward says that the burning season is nearly finished, but that the board wants to address the issue as soon as possible.

The federation is partnering with the Arkansas Agriculture Department and the Arkansas Prescribed Fire Council and other row crop partners to create the voluntary guidelines.

The guidelines will be based on a model from the state Prescribed Fire Council that's already in place.

Information from: The Jonesboro Sun, <http://www.jonesborosun.com>

Rapid City wants lawsuit over adult-themed store dismissed

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City officials are asking a federal judge to dismiss a lawsuit filed by a man who wants to open an adult-themed store.

The City Council in September voted to deny David Eliason a conditional use permit to open a sex shop called Dick and Jane's Naughty Spot because no locations complied with zoning requirements. Eliason sued in October, contending his constitutional rights were violated.

The Rapid City Journal reports the city has hired outside lawyers to help the city attorney's office fight the lawsuit.

Eliason used to own sex shops in Sioux Falls and Tea, and has faced similar restrictions before. A federal judge ruled against the city of Sturgis in 2013 when it attempted to force Eliason's store out of its location.

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

Reservation crash kills man, pregnant wife and toddler son

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (AP) — Oglala Sioux officials have released details of a crash on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation that killed a family from Wanblee.

The Rapid City Journal reports that the crash last Saturday killed 42-year-old Waylon Red Elk Sr., his 34-year-old pregnant wife, Jaylene Pretends Eagle, and their 1-year-old son, Waylon Red Elk Jr.

Tribal Police Chief Mark Mesteth says the crash in Porcupine involved another vehicle with a driver believed to be drunk.

Funeral services for the victims are scheduled for 10 a.m. Monday at the Crazy Horse School in Wanblee.

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

Prosecutors file multiple counts against deer farm owner

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Prosecutors have filed multiple charges against a Trempealeau County deer farmer and his employee alleging they captured wild deer to facilitate illegal hunts.

The state Department of Natural Resources said in a news release that Travis Brush, owner of Brush Ranch Outfitters in Galesville, and his employee, Randall Hoff, lured wild deer into their deer farm.

The DNR said Brush and Hoff altered fencing to allow wild deer to enter the farm and allowed customers to hunt deer on the farm all year long. They also used illegal bait.

Online court records indicate multiple charges were filed against both men this week. The records didn't indicate a defense attorney for either them.

A message left at the deer farm Friday wasn't immediately returned.

Dirty water at airport prompts testing of neighborhood wells

FAIRBANKS, Alaska (AP) — Contaminated water has been found at the Fairbanks International Airport, prompting officials to plan tests at private wells in nearby neighborhoods.

Testing on the neighborhood wells will begin Monday will look for perfluorinated compounds, which are commonly found in fire-fighting foam, the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner reported .

The airport well is the third area in the Fairbanks North Star Borough found with the contaminant.

"The safety of Fairbanks residents is paramount," said Jeff Roach, airport manager. "As soon as (the contaminants) were discovered on airport property, FAI initiated the process of testing neighboring properties. We will share test results with residents as they become available."

Angie Spear, manager of airport Division Operations, said the foam probably was used in the early 1990s. Fire-fighting foam was used at the Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Training sites.

Studies have linked the contaminant to numerous cancers, but research is limited.

Spear said none of the airport's contaminated wells pose a risk to residents or business owners.

Six wells on airport property were tested, and four were found to be above the Environmental Protection Agency's lifetime health advisory level of 70 parts per trillion.

Geologist Marcy Nadel said groundwater in the region generally flows to the northwest, which is where the bulk of testing will take place.

Spear said the testing area is larger than what is required because of "an abundance of caution."

"We're basically trying to identify if a plume exists and what is impacted," Spear said. "We don't know what risks are there, and that's why we need to test to be sure."

The airport will offer bottled water to those living in the test area, Spear said.

Information from: Fairbanks (Alaska) Daily News-Miner, <http://www.newsminer.com>

\$80M in claims won't be paid in Northern Beef bankruptcy

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Almost \$80 million that more than 100 businesses, investors, government entities and others claim they're owed won't be paid out in bankruptcy proceedings for the Northern Beef Packers plant in South Dakota.

Court documents show there's slightly more than \$1 million available to pay a long list of bills, the American News reported . Attorney Forrest Allred, the bankruptcy trustee, told the newspaper that the available money will cover administration fees, wage claims and some back taxes.

Of the \$1.08 million available for claim payments, \$214,331 has been spent, and the bankruptcy court is considering \$329,403 in payments to cover bankruptcy and attorney fees.

Allred said \$180,000 of the money already spent went to a settlement in a class action lawsuit to cover a portion of the lost wages of workers.

There are 60 more individual wage claims that haven't been resolved. Allred said the remaining funds will be depleted by the tax claims once wage claims are addressed.

That will leave 111 unsecured claims totaling more than \$79 million unpaid. But Allred said that figure hasn't been verified since there isn't enough money to cover it.

Northern Beef operated a beef processing plant in Aberdeen from 2012 until July 2013, when the company laid off its employees, filed bankruptcy and closed.

The plant was sold at a bankruptcy sale in December 2013. The new ownership group has no ties or obligations to the bankruptcy proceedings.

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

Animal rights groups demand action against Iowa fur farm

By DAVID PITT, Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Federal inspectors have repeatedly ordered a southeast Iowa fur farm to improve the grim living conditions for ferrets, foxes, raccoons and skunks it sells to government laboratories and pet stores.

Many of the animals have been forced to live in sweltering heat or maggot-infested filth, sometimes with decomposing carcasses in their cages, officials found over the last two years.

So far no charges or enforcement action has been taken against the Ruby Fur Farm near New Sharon, 65 miles (105 kilometers) southeast of Des Moines. However, animal rights groups are calling for rescue of the animals, revocation of the farm's federal license and fines for neglect.

U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors documented the most recent problems when they returned to the farm seven times between December and August after finding suffering animals.

A building housing 290 raccoons reached 100 degrees in July, with many of the animals panting and drooling and 26 in "severe heat distress," according to a July 21 inspection report.

Reports from 2015 show injured or sick raccoons as well as skunks and ferrets that didn't receive veterinary treatment. In one cage a skunk was found living with its dead cage-mate.

A December 2016 report noted: "One dead, decomposing, headless juvenile ferret was found incorporated into the fecal material buildup on the wire floor in the corner of the cage," which also housed a live adult and six juvenile ferrets.

Federal contracts show that even as USDA inspectors were writing up the reports about the farm's treatment of raccoons, the agency was signing contracts to buy animals from the company for research. It spent nearly \$30,000 in June and December of 2015 and in July 2016.

The business since 2007 received more than \$67,000 from USDA contracts to provide skunks, raccoons, and foxes. USDA has expansive research enterprises with divisions that focus on food safety, animal health and food production improvements. One of the contracts indicates raccoons were obtained by a USDA lab in Colorado focusing on wildlife diseases, and another noted young foxes would be used as "research models."

The farm is licensed to Randy Ruby as a registered federal dealer by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and it holds state permits as an animal dealer and a pet shop.

Ruby declined to discuss the reports with The Associated Press when reached by telephone. He referred calls to The Cavalry Group, a Missouri-based animal business advocacy organization to which he is a member.

Its president, Mindy Patterson, said some of the USDA inspectors' claims are exaggerated and when there has been an issue Ruby has addressed them immediately.

"What we witnessed up close and personal this summer was Randy Ruby's farm being targeted and harassed with hyper-aggressive inspections," she said. "We have time-tested agriculture practices to ensure the health and safety of both people and animals that are being redefined as inhumane treatment of animals by these groups who have nothing but an emotion-based agenda."

The farm's website says it has been in business for more than 65 years and raises "our animals with tender, loving care, and we can ship them anywhere in the world."

Michael Budkie, executive director of Stop Animal Exploitation Now, an Ohio-based nonprofit that monitors U.S. research and animal holding facilities, has called for the termination of the fur farm's federal animal dealer's license and rescue of the animals.

In an Oct. 16 letter to Robert Gibbens, a veterinarian and the USDA's director of Animal Welfare Operations based in Colorado, Budkie asked the agency to fine Ruby Fur Farm. He said inspection reports clearly demonstrate "a total disregard for the health and well-being of these animals."

USDA spokesman R. Andre Bell confirmed the agency has discussed the farm with an animal rights group but declined to say whether it was considering enforcement action or terminating the license. He also declined to discuss whether USDA's purchases of animals from the fur farm had any impact on its

enforcement of animal welfare regulations.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture, which has issued state permits for the farm to operate as a pet shop and registered federal dealer, has no enforcement action pending, said spokesman Dustin Vande Hoef. The agency can revoke the permits if it were to find standard of care issues but it has received no complaints, he said.

Any animal neglect charges must come from a law enforcement officer under Iowa law.

Mahaska County Sheriff Russ VanRenterghem said he accompanied a USDA inspection team to the fur farm three or four times in July.

"I don't see any violations," he said, describing the farm's owners as "very reputable, very good people."

Iowa is ranked the second worst in the nation for animal welfare behind Kentucky, according to the Animal Legal Defense Fund's annual rankings released in January.

Iowa enforcement is weak because with a few exceptions animal neglect is not considered a felony, and laws defining adequate shelter conditions are unclear, the group said.

"In general if I was picking a state to be an animal in, Iowa would be very far down my list," said David Rosengard, a staff attorney for the group's criminal justice program. "I could be neglected. I could be starved. I could be abandoned and the person who did that wouldn't face the sort of repercussions they would have to deal with in a lot of other states."

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Authorities ID Minnesota man killed in South Dakota crash

LA PLANT, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified a Minnesota man who died in a single-vehicle crash in South Dakota.

The Highway Patrol says 34-year-old Christopher Churchill, of Maple Lake, Minnesota, was driving a pickup truck that went out of control on an icy U.S. Highway 212 in Dewey County and rolled in the ditch.

The crash happened west of La Plant on Monday night. Churchill died later at an Eagle Butte hospital.

The lone passenger in the pickup suffered what the patrol said were minor injuries.

Frustration sets in after coal mine health study suspended

By MICHAEL VIRTANEN, Associated Press

GLEN DANIEL, W.Va. (AP) — Chuck Nelson spent his life in this corner of Appalachia, working for years in the coal mines — a good job in the economically depressed area. But he says the industry that helped him earn a living cost him his health, and his wife's, too.

The 61-year-old Nelson blames his kidney and liver disease on the well water he drank for years, and his wife's more severe asthma on dust and particles from surface mines near their home.

Some of his neighbors agree — and say surface mining in the mountains has been a primary culprit for various health problems. Some studies agreed with them but in the end were inconclusive. A new federal study was supposed to provide the most comprehensive review to date, but the Trump administration — a coal industry advocate — suspended it three months ago, citing budget reasons.

Nelson and his neighbors weren't surprised — a previous federal study was canceled, too. The suspension feeds the mistrust they've long harbored for politicians who routinely side with businesses: If the study "comes out negative against the coal industry, it's swept under the rug, and the funding's stopped by these politicians who cater to the coal industry," Nelson said.

Studies and experts agree on some points: Mountaintop mining can release coal dust into the air that is carried on the wind. Debris from surface mines can harm streams, and the coal slurries from underground mines can seep chemically-treated waste into groundwater. Pollution can increase disease risks, but that's complicated by other factors.

"With environmental damage or environmental issues, the problem is that most diseases that we are

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now concerned about are long-term diseases that take decades to appear," said David Rosner, Columbia professor of sociomedical sciences.

Rosner, a member of the organization overseeing the extensive mining study but not directly involved, said the canceled review would've been crucial. "The science has actually created doubt rather than certainty about cause," he said. "What this becomes in the hands of politicians is an excuse for inaction."

The goal of the scuttled study — by National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine — was a consensus from experts in various fields on potential short- and long-term health effects, focused on West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee.

In May, the West Virginia Coal Association told scientists that large-scale mountaintop mining was mostly a thing of the past. State surface-mining production dropped from about 44 million tons (40 million metric tons) of coal in 2012 to 14 million tons (13 million metric tons) last year, it said.

Association Vice President Jason Bostic declined to say whether the study should resume to resolve any remaining questions.

West Virginia's Department of Environmental Protection said it conducts significant surface water quality sampling. Agency officials shared with academy scientists their two-week testing near a mountaintop mine in 2012 that found no conclusive evidence that blasting affected air quality.

Bostic blames higher illnesses rates on poverty: "Bad health in central Appalachia or Appalachia as a whole is not new."

Neither is coal mining.

In late September, Nelson drove an ATV up old logging roads to Alpha Natural Resources' mining operation, where part of Coal River Mountain is gone. The air had a faint grayish hue 100 feet above the mine. Large coal trucks looked like children's toys on the broad, flat landscape below. On the horizon stood the treeless outlines of three other mines. Some houses stood in a distant valley.

Joan Linville, 79, a miner's widow from the hamlet of Van, says she believes her stomach cancer was caused by drinking water polluted by mines. "We did have well water. We used it for everything," she said.

Linville and others hoped the new \$1 million study would erase any doubts. But in canceling it in August, the Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement said officials were reconsidering grants over \$100,000 largely for budget reasons.

Yet academies spokesman William Kearney said the mining study was the only project stopped, with the group having five others underway.

In a 2016 study in the journal *Environmental Science & Policy*, Indiana University professor Michael Hendryx examined data from 1968 to 2014 and found higher death rates in 37 central Appalachian counties with mountaintop mining than those without it, after adjusting for age, poverty, smoking, obesity and available doctors.

In a 2010 study in *Geospatial Health*, Hendryx found that West Virginia residents near mining sites had higher death rates from lung and other cancers after controlling for similar variables. Coal contains known carcinogens, including arsenic, cadmium, chromium, nickel and beryllium, he wrote.

In a 2012 study in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, Yale's Dr. Jonathan Borak found fault with some of Hendryx's studies and concluded the mortality rates in central Appalachia were related to cultural factors: poverty, rural location, education, diet, smoking and obesity, but "not per se" to coal mining pollution.

Borak's work was funded by the National Mining Association, but he said that didn't affect his conclusions. Like Hendryx, he presented his information to the National Academies, whose study he thinks was stopped for political reasons.

"I think the interference with the scientific process for political reasons is lamentable," Borak said.

Trump: Putin denies, is "insulted" by meddling accusation

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — President Donald Trump said Russia's Vladimir Putin once again vehemently denied interfering in the 2016 U.S. elections during their discussions on the sidelines of an economic summit Saturday. Trump declined to say whether he believed Putin, but made clear he's not interested in dwelling on the issue.

"He said he absolutely did not meddle in our election. He did not do what they are saying he did," Trump said of Putin, speaking with reporters aboard Air Force One as he traveled to Hanoi, the second-last stop of his Asia trip.

"Every time he sees me, he said: 'I didn't do that.' And I believe, I really believe that when he tells me that he means it," Trump said, noting that Putin is "very insulted" by the accusation. Trump called the accusation an "artificial barrier" erected by Democrats — once again casting doubt on the U.S. intelligence community's conclusion that Russia did try to interfere in the election to help Trump win.

Trump and Putin did not have a formal meeting while they were in Vietnam for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, but the two spoke informally several times on the event's sidelines and reached an agreement on a number of principles for the future of war-torn Syria.

But Trump made clear that the issue of Russian meddling in the election hovers over the leaders' relationship and said it jeopardized their ability to work together on issues including North Korea's escalating nuclear program and the deadly conflict in Syria.

"Having a good relationship with Russia's a great, great thing. And this artificial Democratic hit job gets in the way," Trump told reporters. "People will die because of it."

Trump danced around the question of whether he believed Trump's denials, telling reporters that pressing the issue would have accomplished little.

"He said he didn't meddle. I asked him again. You can only ask so many times," said Trump.

"Well, look, I can't stand there and argue with him," he added later. "I'd rather have him get out of Syria, to be honest with you. I'd rather have him, you know, work with him on the Ukraine than standing and arguing about whether or not - cause that whole thing was set up by the Democrats."

Trump's suggestion that he may believe Putin over his own nation's intelligence community is certain to re-ignite the firestorm over the issue of election meddling. Meanwhile, a special counsel investigation of potential collusion between Moscow and Trump campaign aides so far has resulted in two indictments for financial and other crimes unrelated to the campaign, as well as a guilty plea. Congressional committees have also been interviewing campaign and White House staff.

Earlier Saturday, the Kremlin issued a statement saying the leaders had reached agreement on a number of principles for the future of civil war-torn Syria now that the Islamic State group has largely been pushed out. Among the agreements' key points, according to the Russians, were an affirmation of de-escalation zones, a system to prevent dangerous incidents between American and Russian forces, and a commitment to a peaceful solution governed by a Geneva peace process.

The Kremlin quickly promoted the agreement as the White House stayed silent. Trump told reporters that the deal was reached "very quickly" and that it would save "tremendous numbers of lives." And he praised his relationship with Putin the two "seem to have a very good feeling for each other and a good relationship, considering we don't know each other well."

Snippets of video of from the summit in the sea-side city of Danang showed Trump and Putin shaking hands and chatting, including during the world leaders' traditional group photo. The two walked together down a path to the photo site, conversing amiably, with Trump punctuating his thoughts with hand gestures and Putin smiling.

Journalists traveling with Trump were not granted access to any of the APEC events he participated in in the picturesque tropical seaside city Saturday.

White House officials had worked quietly behind the scenes negotiating with the Kremlin on the prospect of a formal meeting. The Russians raised expectations for such a session and Trump told reporters aboard

Air Force One en route to Asia that it was "expected we'll meet with Putin" to discuss issues including ramping up pressure on North Korea to halt its nuclear and ballistic weapons program. As speculation built, the two sides tried to craft the framework of a deal on the future of Syria that Trump and Putin could announce in a formal bilateral meeting, according to two administration officials not authorized to speak publicly about private discussions.

Though North Korea and the Ukraine had been discussed, the two sides focused on trying to strike an agreement about a path to resolve Syria's civil war once the Islamic State group is defeated, according to officials. But the talks stalled and, minutes before Air Force One touched down in Vietnam, White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders told reporters the meeting was off.

Trump will be attending a state dinner in Hanoi Saturday night. On Sunday, he'll meet with the country's president and prime minister before heading to his last stop: The Philippines.

Associated Press writers Laurie Kellman, Darlene Superville and Josh Lederman in Washington contributed to this report.

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Some GOP political operatives fear Roy Moore could lose race

By STEVE PEOPLES and KIMBERLY CHANDLER, Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — His party suddenly and bitinglly divided, Alabama Republican Roy Moore emphatically rejected increasing pressure to abandon his Senate bid as fears grew among GOP leaders that a once-safe Senate seat was in jeopardy just a month before a special election.

Moore, an outspoken Christian conservative and former state Supreme Court judge, attacked a Washington Post report that he had sexual contact with a 14-year-old girl and pursued three other teenagers decades earlier as "completely false and misleading."

In an interview Friday with conservative radio host Sean Hannity, Moore, now 70, did not wholly rule out dating teenage girls when he was in his early 30s.

Asked if that would have been usual for him, Moore said, "Not generally, no." He added: "I don't remember ever dating any girl without the permission of her mother." As for the encounter with 14-year-old Leigh Corfman, as described by Corfman in Thursday's Post article, he said, "It never happened."

The story has produced a wave of concern among anxious GOP officials in Washington but little more than a collective shrug from many Republicans in Alabama, which holds a special election on Dec. 12 to fill the seat previously held by Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

"Humphrey Bogart started dating Lauren Bacall when she was a teenager," said state Auditor Jim Ziegler, referring to the then-19-year-old actress.

"I'll always vote for him," said 28-year-old Erica Richard, of Altoona, Alabama, adding that she wouldn't change her mind even if the allegations of sexual misconduct are proved true. "He's a good man. I love him and his family, and they are all good people."

Despite such support, experienced Republican operatives believe the Alabama Senate seat, held by the GOP for the last 20 years, is now at risk.

They fear the controversy could exacerbate the party's broader challenge in the era of President Donald Trump in appealing to college-educated suburban voters — the same group that fueled a big Democratic victory in the Virginia governor's race this week.

Those familiar with recent polling of the Alabama race suggest it was always going to be close despite the state's strong Republican leanings — largely because of Moore's controversial past.

In the immediate aftermath of the Post report Thursday, a wave of national Republican leaders called for Moore to drop out of the race if the allegations are true. They included the White House, the head of the House Freedom Caucus Mark Meadows, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz.

On Friday, the Senate GOP's campaign arm formally ended its fundraising agreement with Moore.

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The GOP's 2012 presidential nominee Mitt Romney condemned his colleagues' caveat — "only if the allegations are true."

"Innocent until proven guilty is for criminal convictions, not elections. I believe Leigh Corfman," he said of the Alabama woman who said Moore molested her when she was 14. "Her account is too serious to ignore. Moore is unfit for office and should step aside."

Facing a tough re-election, Rep. Barbara Comstock, R-Va., likened Moore to Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, former Rep. Anthony Weiner and former Fox News executive Roger Ailes, all men accused of sexual misconduct.

"The defense from some of his supporters is beyond disgusting," Comstock wrote. "Moore should not serve in the U.S. Senate."

Sens. Mike Lee, R-Utah, and Steve Daines, R-Mont., withdrew their endorsements.

Yet there is no sign Moore is going away quietly. And the Alabama secretary of state's office reported that it's too late to remove his name from the ballot.

The Republican Party's options, including the possibility of a write-in campaign, "are all being researched," said Steven Law, who leads the pro-Republican Senate Leadership Fund.

Those who think Moore should be replaced have little hope of that happening.

"I don't think anyone expects Roy Moore to drop out of this race," Law said. "I think he enjoys being an object of intense controversy. The fact that this has happened may make him even more committed."

Moore was twice removed from his state Supreme Court position, once for disobeying a federal court order to remove a 5,200-pound (2,359-kilogram) granite Ten Commandments monument from the lobby of the state judicial building and later for urging state probate judges to defy the U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized gay marriage.

He also previously said homosexuality should be illegal, and last week he refused to back off comments that Rep. Keith Ellison, D-Minn., should not be allowed to serve in Congress because he's a Muslim.

Virtually the entire Republican establishment — including Trump — opposed Moore's primary bid in September.

On Saturday, Trump deflected questions about whether Moore should drop out of the race.

The Republican president, who's in Asia, said he's been too busy reading documents and hasn't had time to catch up on television news coverage about Moore. He referred back to a written statement that White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders read to reporters earlier that said Trump believes Moore will "do the right thing and step aside" if the allegations are true.

In Friday's radio interview, Moore cast the Post story as an effort by Democrats — "and maybe even establishment Republicans" — to undermine his campaign. He also mentioned an effort to investigate his accusers.

"We're also doing an investigation and we have some evidence of some collusion here, but we're not ready to put that to the public just yet," he said without elaboration.

Democrats, meanwhile, were quietly stepping up their mobilization efforts in Alabama, though being careful not to publicly ignite partisan backlash by attempting to capitalize on the troubling allegations.

Democratic candidate Doug Jones stood to gain advantage in places where Moore had shown weakness in past statewide elections. Some Republicans conceded that Moore would likely suffer in the state's reliably, mainstream-Republican suburbs.

"It's a bad situation," said Henry Barbour, a Republican National Committeeman from neighboring Mississippi. "Do people find it believable? If they do, he will lose."

Peoples reported from New York. Associated Press writers Alan Fram in Washington, Thomas Beaumont in Des Moines, Iowa, and Brynn Anderson in Altoona contributed to this report.

Asia-Pacific forum sticks to free-trade gospel despite Trump

By **TRAN VAN MINH** and **ELAINE KURTENBACH**, Associated Press

DANANG, Vietnam (AP) — An annual Pacific Rim summit is sticking with its tradition of promoting free trade and closer regional ties, shrugging off President Donald Trump's "America First" approach.

The leaders of the 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum said Saturday that they had recommitted to fighting protectionism and "all unfair trade practices." They also expressed support for multi-country institutions and regional as well as country-to-country trade agreements.

Trade ministers from 11 of the Pacific Rim countries announced an agreement on pushing ahead with a free-trade deal, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, whose destiny had been cast into doubt after Trump pulled the U.S. out.

Efforts to get an agreement on how to proceed without the U.S. stumbled at the last moment, with leaders unable to formally endorse the proposal. But trade ministers announced a preliminary deal, with some details to be worked out later.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told reporters that environmental protection, labor rights, gender issues and the auto industry were areas needing work, though he did not go into specifics.

"We got a lot of work done, but there is still more work to do," Trudeau said.

The revisions required for the 11 remaining TPP countries to continue talks required a difficult balance between high standards and pragmatism, said Japanese Economy Minister Toshiimitsu Motegi.

"The substance is something all the TPP countries can agree on," said Motegi. "This will send a very strong message to the U.S. and the other countries in the region."

Trudeau said his unexpected absence from a TPP leaders' meeting on Friday, which caused consternation among his fellow leaders and confusion about Canada's stance, stemmed from an extra-long meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

"We were not ready to close the TPP 11 yesterday," he said.

The ministers dropped some key provisions the Americans had required on protection of intellectual property, among others. They also changed the trade accord's name to the unwieldy Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, or CPTPP.

Those trade talks took place on the sidelines of APEC summitry: ceremonial arrivals in bright tailored shirts to a gala banquet, a closed-door retreat and scores of bilateral meetings between the 21 leaders attending the event in this coastal resort city.

Increasingly, APEC summits have become more of an opportunity for such side talks, and for host nations to showcase their growing affluence.

Trump's dramatically different stances from his predecessor, Barack Obama — such as his "America First" trade strategy and his skepticism over climate change — were apparent in Danang. But his hosts and the other leaders took it in stride.

As an institution, apart from its pageantry and its tradition of drawing leaders together for face-to-face meetings, APEC mainly serves as a laboratory for trying out policies and encouraging "best practices," said Alan Bollard, executive director for APEC's secretariat. Unlike the TPP trade pact, whose decisions will eventually be enforced, APEC's statements are nonbinding.

"We're in an easier place to try things out, to test policy sensitivities even if we don't get everybody around the table," Bollard said.

The declaration issued Saturday contain calls for continued work to improve food security, to help ensure the benefits of economic growth are more evenly shared and to make member countries more business-friendly, among a slew of development-related plans. It also contained measures addressing climate change.

As a developing country with a fast-growing export sector, this year's host country, Vietnam, has a strong interest in open trade and access for its exports to consumers in the West given the role foreign investment and trade have played in helping its economy to grow at a more than 6 percent pace. Danang, Vietnam's third-largest city, is in the midst of a construction boom as dozens of resorts and smaller hotels pop up along its scenic coastline.

APEC's members are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, the U.S. and Vietnam.

The countries participating in the newly renamed Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.

Anger rises as toxic air chokes India's capital

By NICK PERRY, Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — As thick smog crept over India's capital this past week and smudged landmarks from view, Nikunj Pandey could feel his eyes and throat burning.

Pandey stopped doing his regular workouts and said he felt tightness in his lungs. He started wearing a triple layer of pollution masks over his mouth. And he became angry that he couldn't safely breathe the air. "This is a basic right," he said. "A basic right of humanity."

Pandey is among many people in New Delhi who have become more aware of the toxic air in recent years and are increasingly frustrated at the lack of meaningful action by authorities.

This past week the air was the worst it's been all year in the capital, with microscopic particles that can affect breathing and health spiking to 75 times the level considered safe by the World Health Organization.

Experts have compared breathing the air to smoking a couple of packs of cigarettes a day. The Lancet medical journal recently estimated that some 2.5 million Indians die each year from pollution.

United Airlines suspended its flights between New Delhi and Newark, New Jersey, for Saturday and Sunday because of the heavy air pollution in the Indian capital, said Sonia, an airline official who uses one name.

Pandey said the millions of rural folk who have moved to the city understand the problem better than they once did, and are trying everything from tying scarves over their faces to eating "jaggery," a sugar cane product that some people believe offers a range of health benefits.

Masks once considered an affectation of hypochondriac tourists are these days routinely worn by government workers and regular people on the street.

Volunteers handed out thousands of green surgical masks this week to make a point about the pollution, but such masks likely have a limited impact on keeping out the tiny particles from people's lungs.

"This is truly a health emergency," said Anumita Roychowdhury, the executive director of research and advocacy at New Delhi's Centre for Science and Environment.

She said doctors in recent days have been dealing with a 20 percent spike in emergency hospital admissions from people suffering heart and lung problems. And that's in a city, she said, where one in every three children already has compromised lungs.

Seema Upadhyaya, who heads a primary school, said she has never before witnessed so many children suffering from respiratory illnesses as she has this year. That has prompted changes to the curriculum.

"It's impacting everybody," she said.

Authorities have been taking extraordinary measures to try to mitigate the immediate crisis. They have temporarily closed schools and stopped most trucks from entering the city.

The government put off a decision for rationing car usage starting Monday as pollution levels started coming down in the city, said Kailash Gahlot, New Delhi's transport minister.

But everyone agrees such measures don't address the root causes, which remain hard to solve.

Roychowdhury said the city's pollution has been trapped this week by a lack of wind at ground level, colliding winds in the upper atmosphere, and cooling temperatures.

Air quality typically gets worse at this time of year as nearby farmers burn fields and people build street fires to keep warm. The conditions this week prompted the capital's top elected official, Arvind Kejriwal, to describe his city as a "gas chamber."

While crop burning has been banned in and around the capital, officials say it's hard to punish impoverished farmers for continuing traditional methods that have been handed down through the generations.

Pandey said it's part of a broader problem in India.

"Your water is not healthy, your food is not healthy, your vegetables are polluted, they are poisoned," he said. "I mean, everything is polluted right now."

Roychowdhury said she is encouraged there is rising awareness of the air quality problem, both among residents and the medical community. But she says authorities need to do more.

She said officials have been asking people this week to use more public transport, but at the same time the city doesn't have enough buses and hasn't bought any new ones in recent years.

"What we are saying, and the Supreme Court has already asked for it, is that there should be a comprehensive plan for all sources of pollution," she said.

Meanwhile, people like Pandey say they are going to have to suffer through, because New Delhi is where they need to be based for work opportunities and their families.

"We are India, right?" he said. "We just try to survive in whatever condition we are in. That is how it is."

Trump pushes 'America first' during tough trade talk in Asia

By JILL COLVIN and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

DANANG, Vietnam (AP) — President Donald Trump stood before a summit of Asian leaders keen on regional trade pacts and delivered a roaring "America first" message Friday, denouncing China for unfair trade practices just a day after he had heaped praise on President Xi Jinping in Beijing.

"We are not going to let the United States be taken advantage of anymore," Trump told CEOs on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation conference. "I am always going to put America first, the same way that I expect all of you in this room to put your countries first."

The president — who pulled the United States out of the Pacific Rim trade pact known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership — said the U.S. would no longer join "large agreements that tie our hands, surrender our sovereignty and make meaningful enforcement practically impossible."

Instead, he said, the U.S. will pursue one-on-one trade deals with other nations that pledge fair and reciprocal trade. The message stood in sharp contrast to the behind-the-scenes negotiations taking place among other countries at the summit on a successor to TPP.

As for China, Trump said he'd spoken "openly and directly" with Xi about the nation's abusive trade practices and "the enormous trade deficits they have produced with the United States."

It was a stark change in tone from the day before, when Trump was Xi's guest of honor during a state visit in Beijing. There, Trump opted for flattering Xi and blaming past U.S. presidents for the trade deficit.

Trump said China's trade surplus, which stood at \$223 billion for the first 10 months of the year, was unacceptable. He repeated his language from Thursday, when he said he did "not blame China" or any other country "for taking advantage of the United States on trade."

But Trump added forceful complaints about "the audacious theft of intellectual property," "massive subsidizing of industries through colossal state-owned enterprises," and American companies being targeted by "state-affiliated actors for economic gain" — without singling China out by name.

U.S. officials have raised similar concerns in the past about China, especially with regard to intellectual property.

On Saturday, Trump attended meetings with leaders of the 21-member APEC countries. Later in the day, he was to fly to Hanoi, the capital, to attend a state banquet before formal meetings Sunday with Vietnam's president and prime minister.

In a major breakthrough, trade ministers from 11 nations remaining in the Trans-Pacific Partnership — representing roughly 13.5 percent of the global economy — said Saturday they had reached a deal to proceed with the free-trade pact after it was thrown into doubt when Trump abandoned it.

Behind the scenes, White House officials quietly negotiated with the Kremlin over whether Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin would hold a formal meeting on the sidelines in Danang, with the Russians raising expectations for such a session.

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As speculation built, the two sides tried to craft the framework of a deal that Trump and Putin could announce in a formal bilateral meeting, according to two administration officials not authorized to speak publicly about private discussions.

Though North Korea and the Ukraine had been discussed, the two sides focused on trying to strike an agreement about a path to resolve Syria's civil war once the Islamic State group is defeated, according to officials. But the talks stalled and, just minutes before Air Force One touched down in Vietnam, White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders told reporters that the meeting was off.

When asked about the outcome, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov later snapped at reporters: "Why are you asking me? Ask the Americans."

Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that even without a formal meeting, "Both presidents are in town, and their paths will cross one way or another."

That they did Friday night during the summit's welcome gala: The two men, each wearing traditional Vietnamese shifts, shook hands and greeted one another as they stood side-by-side for the group photo of world leaders.

The two men shook hands and spoke briefly again during Saturday's meeting, according to a Fox News videographer who was the only American journalist allowed into the room. Journalists traveling with Trump were not permitted to observe any of the APEC events he participated in.

Trump and Putin were also seen chatting as all leaders walked to an outdoor location for their traditional group photo.

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Trump opposition inspires Dem focus on statehouse wins

By ALAN SUDERMAN, Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — President Donald Trump said he would "drain the swamp" in Washington. Progressives are hoping to make good on that vow, leveraging anti-Trump feeling to limit corporate influence in statehouses across the country.

They point to what just happened in Virginia, where Democrats rode a backlash against the president to sweeping victories. The surprise winners in House races include some first-time politicians who vowed never to take contributions from the state's most powerful corporation.

Together with Gov.-elect Ralph Northam's win over the GOP's Ed Gillespie, a former corporate lobbyist and Washington insider, and key wins in other state legislatures, the victories have lifted Democratic hopes of even more success in next year's critical midterm elections.

Opposition to Trump has inspired a new breed of independent-minded Democratic candidates, said Carolyn Fiddler, a longtime Democratic operative focused on state legislatures who now works at the liberal blog Daily Kos.

"They are going to bring a very public-interest vision to governing, and they don't have the deep corporate ties that establishment politicians have," she said. "It's going to change the way business is done in some of these state capitals."

Virginia's CEOs, lobbyists, lawmakers and other powerbrokers are still scrambling to make sense of the election's implications. Democrats won at least 15 seats in the House, all but erasing a business-friendly Republican majority that almost everyone assumed was safe. Democrats may even flip the chamber, depending on the outcome of three races that remained too close to call on Friday.

The newly elected Democrats — 11 women among them — include the House's first openly transgender lawmaker, its first Latina members, and its first female Asian-American. Thirteen of them have taken a pledge to reject any donations from a regulated utility such as Dominion Energy, Virginia's most influential corporation and largest corporate political donor.

The company has cultivated deep relationships with leaders in both parties, securing bipartisan support for laws boosting its bottom line. But critics have long complained that lawmakers are too cozy with the company.

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"I certainly intend to directly challenge their power over the General Assembly," said Lee Carter, an IT specialist, Marine veteran and member of the Democratic Socialists of America who won a surprise victory Tuesday. He said Dominion is one of several corporate interests that will "have to get used to a new way of doing things."

Dominion spokesman David Botkins said the company is "looking forward to getting to know the new members and working together" on energy issues.

Virginia's largely unregulated campaign finance system has fostered strong ties between lawmakers in both parties and the businesses they regulate. An examination by The Associated Press in 2016 found a handful of lawmakers, including senior members in both parties, rely almost entirely on business interests and their representatives for campaign contributions.

Virginia also doesn't prohibit lawmakers from spending from their campaign accounts for personal use, and many lawmakers rely on corporate donations to subsidize their official office budgets.

Northam has said he wants to limit corporate money in elections and ban personal use of campaign funds.

Carter defeated Jackson Miller, a GOP House leader whose list of top donors reads like a who's who of corporate influence, including Dominion, Realtor groups, bankers, hospitals and car dealers. Many of the other defeated Republicans got their campaign cash from similar sources.

Democratic state Sen. Chap Petersen, a fierce Dominion critic, sees a new era at the General Assembly. "We have a new legislature that is reform minded, which is not beholden to the large corporate interests," he said.

Whether that vision gets dashed after the opening of January's session remains to be seen. Republicans still control the state Senate, and Democratic legislators have yet to resolve many of the tensions over corporate influence on their party that played out between Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders in last year's presidential race.

Democratic Senate Minority Leader Dick Saslaw said the General Assembly will remain a place that supports industries of all kinds, regardless of the election outcome.

"That's not going to change, because we're a pro-business state," he said.

Community to honor church attack victims on Veterans Day

By **CLAUDIA LAUER and EMILY SCHMALL, Associated Press**

SUTHERLAND SPRINGS, Texas (AP) — Veterans Day has special meaning this year in the small South Texas community where a church massacre occurred last weekend. Nearly half of the victims had ties to the U.S. Air Force.

The church attack victims with military backgrounds will receive a full military salute Saturday on the grounds of the community hall in Sutherland Springs as Veterans Day is observed, said Alice Garcia, president of the Sutherland Springs Community Association.

Her husband and the association's vice president, Oscar Garcia, said they want to "honor those that have fallen, people killed in a moment after putting in years of military service." Speakers will include U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar.

Devin Patrick Kelley killed more than two dozen people in a shooting Nov. 5 at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs. Kelley died of what appeared to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound after the massacre.

Kelley had ties to the Air Force as well. The former airman was given a bad conduct discharge after pleading guilty to assaulting his then-wife and her son.

The Air Force chief of staff, Gen. David Goldfein, has said that 12 of those killed at the church had direct connections to the Air Force, "either members or with family ties."

That includes a couple who had decided to retire in nearby La Vernia after meeting when they were in the service together more than 30 years ago. On Thursday a military funeral was held for Scott and Karen Marshall, both 56, at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph.

Kelley shot and killed 25 people at the church. Authorities have put the official toll at 26, because one of the victims was pregnant.

US, S. Korea start drills in show of force against N. Korea

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The United States and South Korea on Saturday started joint naval exercises that will involve three U.S. aircraft carriers in what military officials describe as a clear warning to North Korea.

The four-day drills that began in waters off South Korea's eastern coast come as President Donald Trump continues a visit to Asia that has been dominated by discussions over the North Korean nuclear threat.

The battle groups of the USS Ronald Reagan, the Theodore Roosevelt and the Nimitz will successively enter the exercise area during the drills that run until Tuesday, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

The three carriers will be likely together in the drills around Monday, according to a South Korean military official, who didn't want to be named, citing office rules.

The exercises will also involve 11 U.S. Aegis ships and seven South Korean naval vessels, including two Aegis ships. The Aegis technology refers to missile tracking and guidance.

They will aim to enhance combined operation and aerial strike capabilities and also display "strong will and firm military readiness to defeat any provocation by North Korea with dominant force in the event of crisis," Seoul's military said in a statement.

It's the first time since a 2007 exercise near Guam that three U.S. carrier strike groups are operating together in the Western Pacific, according to the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet. The U.S. carriers will also participate in separate exercises with three Japanese destroyers on Sunday, according to Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force.

The United States has been sending its strategic assets, also including long-range bombers, to the region more frequently for patrols or drills amid accelerating North Korean efforts to expand its nuclear weapons program.

In recent months, North Korea has tested intercontinental ballistic missiles that could reach the U.S. mainland with further development and has conducted its most powerful nuclear test. It also flew two new midrange missiles over Japan and threatened to launch them toward Guam, a U.S. Pacific territory and military hub.

Trump continued his tough talk against Pyongyang on Friday in a speech to business leaders at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Danang, Vietnam, saying that the region's future "must not be held hostage to a dictator's twisted fantasies of violent conquest and nuclear blackmail," referring to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Trump had also delivered a sharp warning to North Korea in a speech at South Korea's parliament on Wednesday, telling the country: "Do not underestimate us. And do not try us."

Sri Lanka govt faces pressure over torture, rape allegations

By JAMEY KEATEN & PAISLEY DODDS, Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — Sri Lanka's government faced increasing pressure Friday to answer for alleged human rights violations following an Associated Press investigation that found more than 50 men who said they were raped, branded or tortured as recently as this year.

The men's anguished descriptions of their abuses come nearly a decade after Sri Lanka's civil war ended and days ahead of a review of the Indian Ocean nation by the U.N.'s top human rights body.

Doctors, psychologists, lawmakers and rights groups have appealed to the United Nations to investigate the new allegations published by The Associated Press on Wednesday. The AP reviewed 32 medical and psychological evaluations and interviewed 20 men who said they were accused of trying to revive a rebel group on the losing side of Sri Lanka's 26-year civil war. All the men are members of the country's Tamil ethnic minority.

Although combat ended in 2009, they say the torture and abuse occurred from early 2016 to as recently as July of this year.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., the top ranking Democrat on the subcommittee that oversees U.S. foreign

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aid, said the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee has made aid to the government conditional on its compliance with international standards for arrest and detention, as well as accountability for war crimes.

Sri Lanka has received \$76 million in U.S. foreign assistance since 2015.

"These accounts of torture are horrific and contradict the Sri Lankan government's professed commitment to reconciliation and justice," Leahy said, adding, "I will be looking for convincing evidence that torture has ended and those responsible are being punished."

Several doctors wrote to U.N. Human Rights chief Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini and called for an independent investigation.

"As forensic experts, we have collectively seen many hundreds of Sri Lankans who have fled their country following torture over the years," the physicians' letter said. "We continue to receive a worrying number of cases from Sri Lanka despite the change of government."

One of the men in the AP investigation said he was held for 21 days in a small room where he was raped 12 times, burned with cigarettes, beaten with iron rods and hung upside-down. Another man described being abducted from home by five men, driven to a prison, and taken to a "torture room" pocked with blood splatters on the wall.

Most of the men say they their captors identified themselves as members of the Criminal Investigations Department, a police unit that investigates serious crimes. Some, however, said it appeared their interrogators were soldiers.

Rep. Eliot Engel, top-ranking Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said policymakers in Washington cannot ignore the torture reports.

"The seriousness of these reports should also make the United States wary of advancing our military relationship with Sri Lanka until a full accounting has occurred," he said Friday.

Sri Lanka's diplomatic mission in Geneva did not respond to repeated calls or an email Friday seeking comment.

U.N. human rights office spokesman Rupert Colville said, "We are currently looking into these alarming allegations to work out the best way for them to be further investigated."

The AP's investigation into the recent Sri Lankan torture allegations came months after another investigation in which the AP found that 134 U.N. peacekeepers from Sri Lanka were implicated in a child sex ring in Haiti between 2004 and 2007. Despite evidence of child rape, no Sri Lankan peacekeeper was ever prosecuted.

In August, rights groups in South America filed lawsuits against Gen. Jagath Jayasuriya, a Sri Lankan ambassador in the region. He is accused of overseeing military units that attacked hospitals and killed, disappeared and tortured thousands of people at the end of the country's civil war.

Upon the ambassador's return to Sri Lanka, President Maithripala Sirisena vowed that neither Jayasuriya nor any other "war hero" would face prosecution — a pledge that rights groups said illustrates continued impunity in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka, which has denied the allegations of torture and war crimes, goes before the U.N.'s Human Rights Council in Geneva next week as part of a regular examination known as the Universal Periodic Review. All 193 U.N. member states usually undergo such reviews about every 4-1/2 years, but Wednesday's review may hold added significance.

The new allegations suggest that Sri Lanka still has not stopped using torture — a practice it was highly criticized for during and after the war against the Tamil Tigers rebel group.

Yasmin Sooka, director of the South Africa-based Foundation for Human Rights, said she hopes the review will spur member states to ask Sri Lanka tough questions. She also urged the U.N. to establish an independent body to investigate the allegations — much like it did in Guatemala.

"There is no real framework for witness security in Sri Lanka," said Sooka. "As it stands now, the very people who are accused of such violations would essentially be in charge of investigating themselves."

Many ethnic minority Tamils contend the government continues to target them as part of a larger plan to destroy their culture. Tamils speak a different language and are largely Hindu, unlike the country's largely

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Buddhist Sinhalese majority.

More than 100,000 people were estimated to have died in the war, including at least up to 40,000 civilians in its final months, according to U.N. estimates. Sri Lankan authorities have denied targeting civilians and dispute the death toll.

Justice C.V. Wigneswaran, chief minister for Sri Lanka's Northern Province and a former Supreme Court judge, sent a letter to the AP on Friday confirming similar rights abuses he has heard from Tamils in his northern constituency. He said he has previously urged the U.N. rights chief to demand an independent investigation.

"Unfortunately, this was overlooked," he told the AP on Friday. "If the international mechanism was in place it would have acted as a deterrent to these military sadists."

Despite Sri Lanka's failure so far to investigate war crimes allegations stemming from its 26-year civil war against the Tamils and the latest accusations, the country's international profile is on the rise.

It still participates in U.N. peacekeeping missions and recently was asked to sit on a U.N. leadership committee trying to combat sexual abuse, despite its peacekeepers being implicated in the Haiti sex ring.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric told The Associated Press late Friday that Secretary-General Antonio Guterres invited all 193 U.N. member states to be a part of the Circle of Leadership on sex abuse "and it is particularly important for troop-contributing countries to play a role."

Dujarric said all troops and police who are put forward for U.N. peacekeeping missions are investigated "to ensure that they do not have a prior history of misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse, while serving in a U.N. peace operation."

Katy Daigle in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and Matthew Pennington and Richard Lardner in Washington contributed to this report.

Louis C.K. says he misused his power and 'brought pain'

By MARK KENNEDY, AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — With his career imploding over allegations of sexual misconduct, comedian Louis C.K. confessed Friday to masturbating in front of women and expressed remorse for wielding his influence "irresponsibly."

The comedian said in a statement that the harassment claims by five women detailed in a New York Times report published Thursday "are true."

"I can hardly wrap my head around the scope of hurt I brought on them," he said.

"There is nothing about this that I forgive myself for," he wrote. "And I have to reconcile it with who I am. Which is nothing compared to the task I left them with."

He apologized to the cast and crew of several projects he's been working on, his family, children and friends, his manager and the FX network, among others.

The 438-word statement ends with the comedian vowing to stop talking and leave the spotlight, stating, "I will now step back and take a long time to listen."

The comedian stepped forward on the same day the indie distributor The Orchard said it will scrap the release of C.K.'s film "I Love You, Daddy." C.K. has already been edited out of the upcoming HBO benefit "Night of Too Many Stars" and his work is being scrubbed from the cable network's vaults.

More fallout came Friday when Netflix said it will not produce a second planned standup special starring the comedian, citing his "unprofessional and inappropriate behavior." He had been tapped for two specials, with the first airing in April. At least five of the comedian's stand-up specials remain on Netflix.

In a further blow, FX Networks and FX Productions said they are ending their association with C.K., which means cancellation of a deal with his production company, Pig Newton, and removing him as executive producer on the four shows FX is making with him, including "Better Things," "Baskets," "One Mississippi" and "The Cops." His compensation is ended as well, FX said.

C.K. behaved professionally on all his series for FX, "as far as we know," according to a statement Friday.

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"However, now is not the time for him to make television shows," FX said. "Now is the time for him to honestly address the women who have come forth to speak about their painful experiences, a process which he began today with his public statement."

Actress and writer Pamela Adlon, whose work with C.K. includes TV's "Better Things," said Friday that she and her family "are devastated and in shock after the admission of abhorrent behavior by my friend and partner."

"I feel deep sorrow and empathy for the women who have come forward," she wrote, asking for privacy to process the situation before she could say more.

Adlon, who stars in "Better Things," also appeared on his comedy "Louie" and is in "I Love You, Daddy," the new film that was pulled from release Friday following allegations of sexual harassment by C.K.

He lost another film Friday, when Universal Pictures and Illumination Entertainment said they have "terminated their relationship" with C.K. on the planned animated comedy "The Secret Life of Pets 2."

C.K. provided the voice of Max the dog in "The Secret Life of Pets," which was released last year.

The comedian's publicist, Lewis Kay, also announced Friday on Twitter that "As of today, I no longer represent Louis C.K."

C.K. is the latest high-profile man caught in a flood of accusations that began after an October report in the New York Times alleging that Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein had sexually harassed or assaulted several women. Others who face sexual harassment or assault accusations include "House of Cards" star Kevin Spacey and filmmaker Brett Ratner.

The widening allegations have also reached former "Gossip Girl" actor Ed Westwick. The BBC scrapped a TV series in the wake of rape allegations against Westwick. The broadcaster also paused filming on the 1980s-set sitcom "White Gold," which stars Westwick. He has been accused of raping two women, charges he denies. On Instagram, he called the allegations "unverified and provably untrue."

"ER" actor Anthony Edwards revealed that he was molested when he was 12 by director and producer Gary Goddard. In a post Friday on Medium, Edwards said he's been in therapy for years over the assault and confronted Goddard over it 22 years ago at an airport. Goddard, he said, "swore to his remorse."

A spokesman for Goddard said he "unequivocally" denies the allegations.

"Gary was a mentor, teacher and a friend to Anthony, which makes this story all the more disturbing to him," spokesman Sam Singer said in a statement.

"He has nothing but the greatest respect for Anthony as a person," the statement added. "Gary is saddened by the false allegations."

Actor Jeremy Piven also took to social media to once again declare his innocence of sexual misconduct, saying on Twitter he hopes the string of sexual harassment allegations will lead to "a constructive dialogue on these issues" but warned about "false accusations."

"We seem to be entering dark times — allegations are being printed as facts and lives are being put in jeopardy without a hearing, due process or evidence. I hope we can give people the benefit of the doubt before we rush to judgment," he wrote.

Piven, who has been accused by two women of sexual misconduct, faces a fresh accusation made against him from an advertising executive. Tiffany Bacon Scourby told People magazine that Piven held her down while he performed a sex act at a hotel 14 years ago.

The crisis has also roiled the world of journalism, with editors at The New Republic and NPR losing their jobs. The latest accusation involved Rolling Stone: Ben Ryan, a freelance writer, accused the magazine's publisher, Jann Wenner, of sexual harassment, saying Wenner offered a writing contract if Ryan spent the night at the publisher's Manhattan townhouse. Wenner acknowledges he did attempt to have a sexual liaison but denied offering a writing contract for sex.

In other developments, Jenny McCarthy also reiterated an allegation she made against Steven Seagal, saying she fled from a 1995 audition with Seagal after he repeatedly asked her to take off her clothes for a part that didn't require nudity.

McCarthy recounted her encounter with Seagal during a tryout for "Under Siege 2" on her Sirius XM radio show Thursday, a day after actress Portia de Rossi accused Seagal of unzipping his pants during an

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audition.

McCarthy said Seagal was the only person in the room when she showed up to read for her part, she said. After declining his invitation to sit next to him on a couch, McCarthy, who said she purposefully wore a loose-fitting garment to the audition so the focus would be on her acting instead of her body, said Seagal asked her to remove her clothes. When McCarthy countered that she was told the part didn't require her to be naked, she said Seagal told her that it involved "off-camera nudity."

"I know you must have a beautiful body underneath there. Can you lower it so I can see your breasts," she recalled Seagal saying.

A representative for Seagal didn't immediately return a request for comment Friday, but a Seagal spokesman has denied McCarthy's accusations to The Daily Beast. McCarthy told the same story to Movieline in 1998.

Associated Press writer Patrick Mairs in Philadelphia and TV Writers David Bauder in New York and Lynn Elber in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

Pacific trade deal closer but leaders won't endorse it yet

By TRAN VAN MINH and ELAINE KURTENBACH, Associated Press

DANANG, Vietnam (AP) — Trade ministers from 11 Pacific Rim countries said they reached an agreement Saturday to proceed with the free-trade Trans-Pacific Partnership deal that was in doubt after President Donald Trump abandoned it. However, an immediate formal endorsement by the countries' leaders meeting in Vietnam appeared unlikely.

A statement issued in the early hours Saturday said an accord was reached on "core elements" of the 11-member pact. The compromise was delayed by last-minute disagreements that prevented the TPP leaders from meeting to endorse a plan on Friday.

"Ministers are pleased to announce that they have agreed on the core elements of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership," the 11 nations said in a statement.

A news conference was scheduled for later Saturday morning Vietnam time.

Japan's delegate to the talks, Economy Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, told reporters that disagreements that cropped up Friday had been resolved in five hours of talks that stretched late into the night.

"We have confirmed there was no mistake about us having reached a basic agreement," Motegi said.

Asked by reporters if the deal had the support of Canada, whose Prime Minister Justin Trudeau did not show up for the meeting planned for Friday, Motegi said "yes."

"Canada did agree, and that means the 'top' also agreed," he said. Japanese media reported that the Japanese and Vietnamese co-chairs of the ministerial meetings would hold a news conference Saturday on the sidelines of the summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, which wraps up later Saturday.

Canada's Minister for International Commerce Francois-P Champagne said in a tweet Saturday that "after lots of work, big progress on the 'Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership.'"

Trudeau said days earlier that Canada would not be rushed into an agreement.

New Zealand's Trade Minister David Parker told reporters that leaders who gathered for Friday's meeting expecting a final report on the talks were surprised by Trudeau's absence. Late Thursday, there had been "no distance between the parties," he said.

Despite enthusiasm for sticking with the plan following the U.S. withdrawal under Trump in January, criticism over various issues persists. Detractors of the TPP say it favors corporate interests over labor and other rights. Trudeau said days before arriving in Danang that he would not be rushed into signing an agreement that did not suit Canada's interests.

Aspects of the trade pact have raised hackles also over a requirement that companies be allowed to sue governments for lack of enforcement of related laws.

The proposed basic agreement reached in Danang said that the ministers maintained "the high standards, overall balance and integrity of the TPP while ensuring the commercial and other interests of all

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participants and preserving our inherent right to regulate, including the flexibility of the parties to set legislative and regulatory priorities.”

The TPP member countries are trying to find a way forward without the U.S., the biggest economy and, before Trump took office, one of its most assertive supporters. Trump has said he prefers country-to-country deals and is seeking to renegotiate several major trade agreements to, as he says, “put America first.”

Trump reiterated his markedly different stance on trade before the 21-member APEC summit convened late Friday with a gala banquet.

The U.S. president told an APEC business conference that “we are not going to let the United States be taken advantage of anymore.” He lambasted the World Trade Organization and other trade forums as unfair to the United States and reiterated his preference for bilateral trade deals, saying “I am always going to put America first.”

Trump said he would not enter into large trade agreements, alluding to U.S. involvement in the North American Free Trade Agreement and the TPP.

In contrast, Chinese President Xi Jinping told the same group that nations need to stay committed to economic openness or risk being left behind.

The Chinese president drew loud applause when he urged support for the “multilateral trading regime” and progress toward a free-trade zone in the Asia-Pacific. China is not part of the TPP.

APEC operates by consensus and customarily issues nonbinding statements. TPP commitments would eventually be ratified and enforced by its members.

But even talks this week on a declaration to cap the APEC summit had to be extended for an extra half day as ministers haggled over wording. It’s unclear what the exact sticking points were, but officials have alluded to differences over the unequal impact more open trade has had on workers and concerns over automation in manufacturing that could leave many millions in a wide array of industries with no work to do.

As a developing country with a fast-growing export sector, this year’s host country, Vietnam, has a strong interest in open trade and access for its exports to consumers in the West. The summit is an occasion for its leaders to showcase the progress its economy has made thanks largely to foreign investment and trade. Danang, Vietnam’s third largest city, is in the midst of a construction boom as dozens of resorts and smaller hotels pop up along its scenic coastline.

APEC’s members are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, the U.S. and Vietnam.

Associated Press writer Robert Gillies in Toronto contributed to this report.

UK panel rules Uber drivers have rights on wages, time off

By DANICA KIRKA, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Uber lost the latest round in the battle over its operating model Friday, when a British panel ruled that the company’s drivers are workers, not independent contractors, in a decision with broad implications for the so-called gig economy.

The Employment Appeal Tribunal upheld a lower panel’s decision, agreeing that the two drivers in this case were “workers” under British law and therefore should receive the minimum wage and paid holidays. Uber said it would appeal.

Judge Jennifer Eady rejected Uber’s argument that the men were independent contractors, because the drivers had no opportunity to make their own agreements with passengers and the company required them to accept 80 percent of trip requests when they were on duty.

The tribunal, Eady wrote in her decision, found “the drivers were integrated into the Uber business of providing transportation services.”

The ride-hailing service said it has never required drivers in the U.K. to accept 80 percent of the trips offered to them and that drivers make well above the minimum wage. Employment lawyers expect the

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case to be heard by higher courts as early as next year.

"Almost all taxi and private hire drivers have been self-employed for decades, long before our app existed," Tom Elvidge, Uber's acting general manager for the U.K., said in a statement. "The main reason why drivers use Uber is because they value the freedom to choose if, when and where they drive and so we intend to appeal."

San Francisco-based Uber has expanded rapidly around the world by offering an alternative to traditional taxis through a smartphone app that links people in need of rides with drivers of private cars. That has drawn protests from taxi drivers who say Uber and similar services are able to undercut them because they don't face the same licensing and regulatory requirements.

Though the company argued that the case applies to only two drivers, Uber has tens of thousands of drivers in the U.K. who could argue they deserve the same status as the former drivers covered by Friday's decision. The court says some 40,000 drivers use the platform in the U.K., though the company said the number had grown since the submission to 50,000.

"Uber cannot go on flouting U.K. law with impunity and depriving people of their minimum wage rights," said James Farrar, who with Yaseen Aslam brought the case against Uber. "We have done everything we can, now it is time for the mayor of London, Transport for London and the Transport Secretary to step up and use their leverage to defend worker rights rather than turn a blind eye to sweatshop conditions."

The ruling also has implications for more than 100,000 independent contractors in Britain's so-called gig economy, where people work job-to-job with little security and few employment rights. Such employment, often for companies that use mobile phone apps to provide everything from food delivery to health care, has surged as the Internet cuts the link between jobs and the traditional workplace.

The case is just one of many focused on the rights of British workers in both the new and old economies — from Deliveroo food delivery drivers to foster carers and plumbers. So far, the trend in the biggest cases is clear: In eight of eight challenges in U.K. courts, workers have won.

But the case is also likely to be watched beyond Britain as courts internationally grapple with issues spawned by the rise of the gig economy, said Sean Nesbitt an employment law expert at the law firm, Taylor Wessing.

Uber, because of its size, is closely watched around world and across industries as a lead example of how new, disruptive business models can fit into society. Such new business models are fueling the debate about how to balance the wish to encourage economic growth and innovation while protecting individuals' rights, Nesbitt said.

Courts are looking to each other to see how similar issues are being addressed. Nesbitt noted, for example, that Eady referred in her judgment to a case in North Carolina — which is unusual because the U.S. legal system is quite different.

"There will be an echo around the world," Nesbitt said. "At the core of this is a debate about what it means to control people and anxiety about bargaining power."

While the case is separate from London's decision not to renew Uber's license, observers are likely to watch Uber's response to see if a company known for hard-hitting tactics is willing to change. Following the licensing decision, Uber's new CEO, Dara Khosrowshahi, acknowledged that Uber "got things wrong" in the past and said the company would change as it moves forward. Uber is also appealing that decision.

In the meantime, the ripple effects of the case will expand.

"We anticipate that tens of thousands drivers will now seek to make substantial back-dated claims," said Paul Jennings of Bates Wells Braithwaite, who represented the drivers. "Our clients have fought tirelessly to gain the rights that they clearly should have been afforded from the outset."

Marine drill instructor gets 10 years for abusing recruits

By EMERY P. DALESIO, Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — A Marine Corps drill instructor was sentenced Friday to 10 years in prison for choking, punching or otherwise tormenting recruits, especially three Muslims — one of whom ultimately killed himself by leaping down a stairwell.

A military jury handed out the punishment to Gunnery Sgt. Joseph Felix a day after convicting him of abusing more than a dozen trainees at the Marine boot camp at Parris Island, South Carolina.

Among other things, he taunted the Muslims as “terrorists” or “ISIS” and ordered two of them to climb into an industrial clothes dryer, spinning one of them around in the scorching machine until he renounced his faith, the jury decided.

Felix, a 34-year-old Iraq veteran, was also ordered to forfeit all pay, demoted to private and given a dishonorable discharge.

Felix was a central figure in what was found to be a group of abusive drill instructors at Parris Island. After the March 2016 suicide at the base, a hazing investigation led to charges against Felix, five other drill instructors and the training battalion’s commanding officer. Eleven others faced lesser discipline.

Abusive drill instructors have long been stock characters in books and movies like “Full Metal Jacket.” But that 1987 film was set during the Vietnam War, and the Felix trial shows that since then the Marines have drawn clearer lines between what instructors can and cannot do, said Michael Hanzel, a former Navy attorney who attended the proceedings at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

“This generation now, there’s things that I think that we’re much more focused on. In particular, in this trial, it’s calling people names based on their religion and targeting people based on their religion,” said Hanzel, now a private attorney specializing in military law. “I don’t think anyone would say that was acceptable ever, but it probably was not prosecuted in the past the way it would be now.”

The charges against Felix included commanding recruits to choke each other; ordering them to drink chocolate milk and then training them until they vomited; and punching recruits in the face or kicking them to the ground.

“He wasn’t making Marines. He was breaking Marines,” prosecutor Lt. Col. John Norman told the jury on Wednesday. He called Felix a bully who heaped special abuse on three Muslim recruits because of their faith.

One of them, Raheel Siddiqui, a 20-year-old Pakistani-American from Taylor, Michigan, hurled himself to his death after what the jury decided was mistreatment by Felix that included slapping Siddiqui and calling him a terrorist. Siddiqui’s family sued the Marine Corps last month for \$100 million.

The government did not charge Felix with any crime directly related to Siddiqui’s death. The judge, Lt. Col. Michael Libretto, did not allow testimony about whether Felix’s actions were responsible for the recruit’s suicide.

Felix also was convicted of ordering Lance Cpl. Ameer Bourmeche into a dryer, which then was turned on as Felix demanded, “Are you still Muslim?” Bourmeche testified that he twice affirmed his faith and Felix and another drill instructor twice sent him for a bruising, scorching tumble inside the machine.

After a third spin, Bourmeche said, he feared for his life and renounced his religion. The drill instructors then let him out, he said.

Felix was found guilty as well of ordering Bourmeche to simulate chopping off the head of a fellow Marine while reciting “God is great” in Arabic.

The jury decided Felix also ordered Rekan Hawez, a native of Iraqi Kurdistan, to climb into the dryer. The machine was never turned on.

Felix was convicted, too, of rousing nearly two dozen recruits from their sleep, ordering them to lie on the floor, and then walking on them along with two other drill instructors.

In a closing statement Wednesday, defense attorney Navy Lt. Cmdr. Daniel Bridges, said the government unfairly fashioned contradictory witness accounts into a case against the brawny drill instructor who called all recruits “terrorist.”

Follow Emery P. Dalesio on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/emerydalesio> . His work can be found at <https://apnews.com/search/emery%20dalesio>

Tax split between House, Senate poses a big challenge

By **ANDREW TAYLOR and MARCY GORDON, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House and Senate tax overhaul plans are broadly similar, but crucial differences are creating headaches for Republican leaders determined to keep myriad interest groups and factions of the GOP satisfied. And then there's the ambitious timetable they've set of finishing in time to get legislation to President Donald Trump by Christmas.

The most politically challenging decisions involve dealing with popular and widely used tax deductions, structuring tax cuts for business and balancing personal income tax rates between middle-class families and the rich.

All of these decisions come against a generous — but firm — 10-year, \$1.5 trillion cap on the measure's cost to the federal deficit. Both House and Senate have adopted accounting gimmicks to squeeze tax cuts that appear larger down to fit that restraint.

Trump's enormously expensive demand for a cut in the corporate tax rate to 20 percent — from the current 35 percent — is a big complication, as is unrest among House Republicans hailing from affluent suburban districts who are upset over the proposed loss of the deduction for state income taxes.

Here's a rundown on the major differences between the House and Senate bills:

INDIVIDUAL TAX RATES

The Senate measure keeps the current number of personal income tax brackets, seven, though it changes the rates to 10, 12, 22.5, 25, 32.5, 35 and 38.5 percent. That last top bracket for the wealthiest earners carries a higher rate of 39.6 percent under current law.

The House bill goes further toward simplifying the tax system. It shrinks the number of brackets from seven to four, with rates of 12, 25, 35 and 39.6 percent.

Lots of numbers here for congressional negotiators to play with, to move up or down.

The inheritance tax on multimillion dollar estates, called the estate tax, is an especially hot-button issue. Democrats point to the proposed GOP changes as proof that the Republicans are out to help wealthy people like Trump and his family.

Currently, when someone dies, the person inheriting the estate must pay taxes on its value above \$5.5 million for individuals, \$11 million for couples. The House bill initially doubles those limits and then repeals the whole tax after 2023. The Senate version doubles those exemption amounts — but doesn't repeal the tax.

To repeal or not to repeal? That may be the class-warfare question.

DEDUCTIONS

The Senate bill would eliminate a taxpayer's ability to deduct state income taxes and local property taxes. But the final bill may have to closely track a House compromise that provides a property tax deduction of up to \$10,000 or else risk a revolt from GOP lawmakers from New York, New Jersey, and California.

The Senate bill preserves popular individual tax breaks for large medical expenses, mortgage interest, electric vehicles and college costs that were targeted by the House. The House limits deductibility of mortgage interest to the first \$500,000 of a loan, riling the real estate and housing industries, and eliminates a deduction for medical expenses that's often taken by families facing crippling nursing home costs.

BUSINESS:

Both the House and Senate versions slash the tax rate for corporations to 20 percent from the current 35 percent. But there's a big twist: The Senate bill delays the rate cut for a year.

The delay was put in to reduce the bill's cost by \$100 billion or so — but it's opposed by the White House and House Republicans. Wall Street hates it too. U.S. stock markets sold off Thursday in response to news of the proposed deferral, with industrial and technology stocks leading the decline, before recouping some

of the losses by the close of trading.

Might the implementation delay be traded for a smaller corporate tax cut, something above 20 percent? Trump actually had been demanding 15 percent and reportedly was initially furious at the 20 percent figure. The issue is setting the corporate rate at a level that experts and tax writers believe would bring the U.S. closer to its overseas competitors.

The electric car industry — notably makers Tesla and Chevrolet — and producers of wind power for generating electricity are losers under the House bill. The tax credit of up to \$7,500 for plug-in electric vehicles would be repealed, and the credit for wind energy would be reduced. But the Senate version retains the incentives.

The loss of tax credits for renewable energy would free billions to help pay for the corporate tax cuts in the legislation. But in addition to environmentalists' objections, the prospect also angers some Republican senators, including powerful Chuck Grassley of Iowa, who has vowed to defend the credit.

There's a special rate for businesses whose profits are counted in the owners' personal tax returns. Millions of U.S. businesses use this "pass-through" format. The House bill taxes many of them at a maximum 25 percent, down from 39.6 percent currently, and adds a lower minimum rate. The Senate version would set a new 17.4 percent deduction for "pass-through" income, aimed to help smaller businesses.

Saudi arrest of Binladin family scion shatters royal entente

By AYA BATRAWY, Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Among those caught in the unprecedented arrests this week of top princes, wealthy businessmen and senior officials was the scion of one of Saudi Arabia's most recognizable families: Bakr Binladin, the chairman of the kingdom's pre-eminent contractor — and Osama bin Laden's half-brother.

It was a stunning end to a decades-old alliance between the ruling Al Saud and Binladin families that saw the Saudi Binladin Group secure a near-monopoly on mega-expansion projects in Islam's two holiest sites, Mecca and Medina, throughout the reigns of successive Saudi monarchs.

The government says 201 people have been taken into custody in the purge, which comes amid an anti-corruption probe it says uncovered at least \$100 billion in graft and embezzlement.

Saudi critics and experts have called the arrests a bold and risky move by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman aimed at consolidating power as he sidelines potential rivals, silences critics and dismantles alliances built with other branches of the royal family.

The 32-year-old crown prince, who is the son of King Salman and is popularly known by his initials MBS, is leading the anti-corruption investigation. He's also the force behind the so-called Vision 2030 plan, a blueprint for how to restructure the country and wean it from its dependence on oil revenue.

The arrests of Binladin and the others not only signal the end of old alliances, but also speak to the larger demands being made on the business community to pay into the crown prince's economic vision in an era of lower oil prices.

"This is the beginning of the rise of economic nationalism," said Ayham Kamel, head of the Middle East and North Africa division of the Eurasia Group.

A centerpiece of that plan is NEOM, a \$500 billion project that promises to be the world's most futuristic and technologically-advanced city, which was unveiled by the crown prince at a headline-grabbing global investment conference in Saudi Arabia last month.

But instead of receiving major pledges to the project by Saudi business leaders, MBS "got deafening silence", Kamel said.

Since the 1950's, the Binladins have been the royal family's go-to contractor for some of its most sensitive projects, including construction of private palaces in the immediate boon years after oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia.

As the royal family spent lavishly on trips abroad and new palaces at home, the Binladins became their creditors, as well as contractors.

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Reliable and discreet, the Binladin Group would go on to build confidential defense projects in the kingdom, as well as landmark skyscrapers, universities, a military hospital, an airport, a financial district and much more.

Run as a private company by members of the large Binladin family, the firm is no stranger to political upheaval and changes in the kingdom. In fact, part of its success has been in its ability to adapt to the whims of kings and princes.

"The Binladins were able to remain essential to the royal family despite very dramatic events within the royal family," said Steve Coll, author of "The Bin Ladens: An Arabian Family in the American Century."

The Binladins were also no strangers to controversy. They weathered the blow to the family name and reputation after the 9/11 attacks in New York masterminded by Osama bin Laden, a son of family patriarch Mohammed Binladin.

In 1931, the elder Binladin, a poor Yemeni migrant who had traveled north in the 1920s to the Red Sea port of Jiddah, founded the company that bears his name. He married some two dozen women and fathered more than 50 children, including the future al-Qaida leader.

After the 9/11 attacks, the Binladins hired lawyers and public relations specialists in the U.S. to try to communicate their disdain for Osama bin Laden, and their willingness to cooperate with Washington, Coll said.

In the 1990s, under pressure from the Saudi government, Bakr Binladin oversaw proceedings to strip his brother of all his shares in the family's company and wealth, a move that came as the kingdom stripped the al-Qaida leader of his nationality.

"Bakr achieved what he set out to do, which is he kept the company intact, he kept it legitimate in the international economy and went on to concentrate primarily on construction in the region, and in Saudi Arabia in particular," Coll said.

The Binladin Group was crucial to Saudi rulers in 1979 when militants laid siege to Islam's holiest site in Mecca for 15 days. The company, which had been working on expansion projects there, helped flush the rebels out of tunnels because they had the blueprints and maps, Coll said.

But while the Al Saud-Binladin alliance has been a pillar of how the royal family retained power over the years, the needs of the kingdom have changed, Kamel said.

"They helped the Al Saud family in their time of need, but the utility of that relationship has been exhausted," he said. "It is no longer attractive for Al Saud to retain that, nor can they afford to."

In 2015, the Binladin Group suffered two major blows: the collapse of oil prices and the collapse of one of its cranes.

The crane disaster killed 111 hajj pilgrims on the pristine marble floors of the Grand Mosque housing the cube-shaped Kaaba. The firm came under investigation, a travel ban was imposed on Bakr Binladin and the company remains embroiled in litigation to this day.

The collapse of oil prices delayed government payments to contractors, and by 2016, the Binladin Group was forced to cut tens of thousands of jobs. Disgruntled workers complained they had not been paid in months and hundreds took to the streets of Mecca in rare protests, setting company buses alight.

At the time, the company was in the midst of the largest expansion in the history of the Grand Mosque, a project initiated by the late King Abdullah that included the construction of one of the world's tallest towers topped by a neon clock. The firm was also involved in controversial construction projects ordered by the king that historians say wiped out key traces of Mecca's history dating back to the Prophet Muhammad.

In many ways, the Binladins were seen as part of the old guard—a part of the economy that was based on personal relationships and not transparent, Coll said.

As part of that system, the Binladin Group appeared to be doing well financially before the collapse of oil prices, though it does not disclose its figures. Bakr Binladin is known to have private planes and real estate around the world.

It may have cost the Binladins heavily as the crown prince moves to take down old alliances and power bases. "You could easily see them caught up in a story about corruption and privilege," Coll said.

Follow Aya Batrawy on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ayaelb>

US joins calls for PM's return to Lebanon from Saudi Arabia

By ZEINA KARAM and BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanese officials insisted Friday on the return home of Prime Minister Saad Hariri from Saudi Arabia, and the leader of the militant group Hezbollah said the Saudis had "declared war" on Lebanon by holding Hariri against his will.

The U.S. added its voice to those urging that Hariri be allowed to return to Lebanon. A political crisis has gripped the country and shattered the relative peace maintained by its coalition government ever since his stunning announcement Nov. 4 from the Saudi capital that he was resigning.

The announcement from the Saudi-aligned Hariri jolted Lebanon and thrust it back into the regional rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The move and exceptionally strong statements by the Saudis against Iran that followed have deepened the mystery about Hariri's fate and led to rumors that he is being held in the kingdom against his will, despite his denials.

For the past year, Hariri has headed a coalition government that included members of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militia. He cited meddling in Lebanon and elsewhere in the region by Iran and Hezbollah in his decision to step down, adding that Iran's arm into the region will be "cut off."

Saudi Arabia appears to want to see Lebanon headed by someone would form a government without Hezbollah, perhaps believing Hariri has become too lenient toward the group.

In a message apparently aimed at the Saudis but which could easily include Iran, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson cautioned against using Lebanon as "a venue for proxy conflicts."

If Hariri wants to step down, Tillerson said, he needs to "go back to Lebanon" and formally resign, "so that the government of Lebanon can function properly."

Lebanese President Michel Aoun told Saudi Charge d'Affaires Walid al-Bukhari on Friday that the manner in which Hariri resigned "was unacceptable," a Lebanese official told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations. He called for Hariri's return.

In a televised speech, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said Hariri was being detained in Saudi Arabia and that his "forced" resignation was unconstitutional because it was made "under duress."

"It is clear that Saudi Arabia ... declared war on Lebanon," he said.

Nasrallah said he was certain that Hariri was forced to resign as part of what he called a Saudi policy of meddling in Lebanon's affairs. Hariri is being prevented by Saudi officials from returning to Lebanon, he said, adding that his detention should not be accepted.

But Tillerson said he's seen "no indication" that Hariri was being held against his will.

An official in French President Emmanuel Macron's office also said Hariri has told foreign ambassadors in Saudi Arabia, where he has been since the resignation announcement, that he is not a prisoner.

The French and U.S. ambassadors met with Hariri, who "says he is not a prisoner, the (Saudi crown) prince says he is not a prisoner," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

Macron visited Saudi Arabia on Thursday and met with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to discuss the tensions between the kingdom and Lebanon, a former French protectorate.

The official said Hariri did not ask to see Macron, and French officials "don't have any specific signs" that Hariri's life is in danger.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian told Europe-1 radio that "to our knowledge," Hariri is not being held against his will, adding that France believes "he is free in his movements, and it is up to him to make his choices."

The crisis was widely seen as a bid by Saudi Arabia to wreck Lebanon's coalition government to try to undermine and limit Iran's influence in the country through the power that Hezbollah wields.

In the first concrete action against Lebanon after days of threats by Saudi government officials, Saudi

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Arabia and other Gulf countries ordered their citizens to leave the country amid the soaring tensions. Dozens of citizens of Gulf Arab countries were seen leaving Lebanon early Friday via Beirut's international airport.

In remarks to reporters while flying from China to Vietnam, Tillerson said Washington "supports the stability of Lebanon and is opposed to any actions that could threaten that stability."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also said it's essential that Lebanon remain peaceful, warning that a new conflict could have "devastating consequences" in the region.

Hariri's appointment as prime minister and the formation of a government was a result of a tacit agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia to sideline Lebanon from other regional proxy wars, particularly in neighboring Syria.

Iran is widely seen to have prevailed over mainly Sunni rebels in Syria, and with the wars in Yemen and the crisis in Qatar at an impasse, the Saudi crown prince may have decided to try to curb Iran's influence in Lebanon.

It is unclear what Saudi Arabia's long-term calculation is with Hariri. So far, it appears to have united the Lebanese against the kingdom, with most people seeing the incident as an affront and a humiliation for him.

Any Saudi military moves in Lebanon would likely be opposed by the international community, which wants to see Lebanon remain calm. Many fear an escalation will pave the way for Israel to strike Hezbollah. The two have fought a number of wars, but there appears to be no immediate indication of an attack.

There is concern that Saudi Arabia could impose punitive measures that would hurt Lebanon's fragile economy.

Lebanese officials are acting with caution, insisting on Hariri's return before starting the complicated task of forming a new government.

In his speech, Nasrallah said Saudi Arabia is punishing Lebanon's people instead of his group. He said the kingdom has shifted its attention to Lebanon after a failed 30-month war in Yemen and with Saudi-backed rebels in Syria suffering setbacks.

"If you think that you can defeat Lebanon, the resistance (Hezbollah) ... then you are wrong, mistaken and will fail, the way you did in all arenas," Nasrallah said.

Without providing any proof, Nasrallah said that Saudi Arabia had asked Israel to attack Hezbollah in return for billions of dollars.

Nasrallah said war with Israel is unlikely amid the Hariri crisis, adding that the group is watching carefully for any Israeli attempts to use it to begin hostilities against Lebanon. He said Israel is cautious and unlikely to make such a move.

Still, he warned Israel against "miscalculation" or "taking advantage of the situation."

Associated Press writers Sylvie Corbet and Angela Charlton in Paris, Josh Lederman in Washington and Sarah El Deeb in Beirut contributed.

US Air Force official: Missile targeting Saudis was Iranian

By JON GAMBRELL, Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran manufactured the ballistic missile fired by Yemen's Shiite rebels toward the Saudi capital and remnants of it bore "Iranian markings," the top U.S. Air Force official in the Mideast said Friday, backing the kingdom's earlier allegations.

The comments by Lt. Gen. Jeffrey L. Harrigian, who oversees the Air Force's Central Command in Qatar, further internationalizes the yearslong conflict in Yemen — the Arab world's poorest country.

Saudi Arabia long has accused Iran of giving weapons to the Shiite rebels known as Houthis and their allies, though Tehran has just as long denied supplying them. Riyadh quickly backed up Harrigian's allegations in a statement to The Associated Press.

"There have been Iranian markings on those missiles," Harrigian told journalists at a news conference in Dubai ahead of the Dubai Air Show. "To me, that connects the dots to Iran."

There was no immediate reaction from Tehran.

Saudi Arabia says it shot down the missile Nov. 4 near Riyadh's international airport, the deepest yet to

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reach into the kingdom. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry later said investigators examining the remains of the rocket found evidence proving "the role of Iranian regime in manufacturing them." It did not elaborate, though it also mentioned it found similar evidence after a July 22 missile launch. French President Emmanuel Macron similarly this week described the missile as "obviously" Iranian.

Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said in a statement Tuesday that the July launch involved an Iranian Qiam-1, a liquid-fueled, short-range Scud missile variant. Iran used a Qiam-1 in combat for the first time in June when it targeted Islamic State group militants in Syria over twin militant attacks in Tehran.

Harrigian declined to offer any specifics on what type of missile U.S. officials believed it was, nor did he show any images of the debris. He also didn't explain how Iran evaded the blockade by the Saudi-led coalition, which intensified after the missile targeting Riyadh.

"How they got it there is probably something that will continue to be investigated over time," the lieutenant general said. "What has been demonstrated and shown based on the findings of that missile is that it had Iranian markings on it. That in itself provides evidence of where it came from."

The Houthis have described using Burkan-2 or "Volcano" Scud variants in their recent attacks, including the one Nov. 4. Those missiles are reminiscent of the Qiam, wrote Jeremy Binnie of Jane's Defense Weekly in a February analysis.

"The Burkan-2 is likely to heighten suspicions that Iran is helping Yemen's rebel forces to develop their ballistic missile capabilities," Binnie wrote.

Adding to that suspicion is the fact that Yemen's missile forces previously never had experience in disassembling and rebuilding the weapons, said Michael Knights, a fellow at The Washington Institute For Near East Policy who previously worked in Yemen.

It is "not a stretch to believe that Tehran is supporting the Houthi missile program with technical advice and specialized components," Knights wrote in an analysis Thursday. "After all, the Houthis have rapidly fielded three major new missile systems in less than two years while under wartime conditions and international blockade."

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Culture and Information later contacted the AP and sent military briefing papers alleging Iran smuggled weapons into Yemen by boat and truck.

"The parts are later assembled under supervision of Iranian military experts, who also help the Houthi militia plan attacks targeting Saudi civilians," the ministry said in a statement to the AP. "Smuggled Iranian Qiam or Zelzal warheads are mounted onto Yemeni-made Burkan ballistic missiles."

The U.S. already is involved in the war in Yemen and has launched drone strikes targeting the local branch of al-Qaida, though it stopped offering targeting information under the Obama administration over concerns about civilian casualties. That prohibition continues today, though the Air Force continues to refuel warplanes in the Yemen theater and offers support in managing airspace over the country, Harrigian said. The Saudi-led coalition also uses American-made bombs and ordinance in its attacks.

The U.S. has come under attack once amid the Yemen war. In October 2016, the U.S. Navy said the USS Mason came under fire from two missiles launched out of Yemen. Neither reached the warship, though the U.S. retaliated with a Tomahawk cruise missile strikes on three coastal radar sites in Houthi-controlled territory on Yemen's Red Sea coast.

At the time, authorities said the missiles used in that attack were Silkworm missile variants, a type of coastal defense cruise missile that Iran has been known to use.

When the Houthis seized Sanaa in September 2014, their allied fighters also took control of the country's ballistic missile stockpile. The Yemeni military was widely believed to possess around 300 Scud missiles at the time, though exact figures remain unknown.

The Saudi-led coalition entered the war in March 2015 on the side of Yemen's internationally recognized government. It then attacked Sanaa's ballistic missile base in April 2015, touching off massive explosions that killed several dozen people. Saudi Arabia implied at the time that the Scud arsenal in Yemen had been seriously degraded, if not entirely destroyed, as a result of the airstrikes.

But by June 2015, the rebels fired their first ballistic missile into Saudi Arabia near the southwestern city

of Khamis Mushait. In the time since, Yemen's rebels have fired over 70 ballistic missiles into Saudi Arabia, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies' missile defense project.

For its part, Iran long has denied offering any arms to Yemen, though it has backed the Houthis and highlighted the high civilian casualties from the Saudi-led coalition's campaign of airstrikes.

But others in Iran have been coy about the ballistic missiles in Yemen. Mehdi Taeb, an influential hard-line cleric who is a brother to the intelligence chief of the hard-line Revolutionary Guard, said in April that Iran tried three times to send missiles to Yemen. The Guard, answerable only to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, oversees Iran's missile program.

The cleric said ultimately the administration of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani ordered the transfers stopped over negotiations on the nuclear deal with world powers, without offering a specific time for the attempted shipments.

"They said come back because the Americans said, 'If you send missiles to Yemen, we will end the negotiations,'" Taeb said.

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

Report: IS leader may be in eastern Syrian city of Boukamal

By **BASSEM MROUE**, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A media outlet linked to the Syrian military said Friday that the Islamic State group's leader may be holed up in an IS pocket in the eastern town of Boukamal, which government forces and their allies recaptured this week before losing parts of it later.

The claim was denied by Syrian opposition activists who said the government is trying to make up for losses it suffered in Boukamal when large parts were retaken by the extremists again on Friday.

The whereabouts of al-Baghdadi are not known and if he is killed or captured it would be another blow for the organization that has lost more than 90 percent of lands it once controlled in Iraq and Syria where the group declared a caliphate in June 2014.

Al-Baghdadi's whereabouts and the question of whether he is dead or alive have been a continuing source of mystery and confusion.

The Syrian Central Military Media said that, as Syrian troops and their allies conducted search operations in Boukamal, they "got the information" that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi might be "in one of the pockets" in the town. The report did not elaborate on how the soldiers heard about al-Baghdadi or what they were doing about the information.

Rami Abdurrahman, who heads the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group, and Omar Abu Laila, a Europe-based opposition activist originally from Syria's eastern province of Deir el-Zour both denied the report that al-Baghdadi is in Boukamal.

Boukamal, IS' last major stronghold in Syria, was taken on Thursday after IS militants withdrew from it. Abdurrahman said IS launched a counteroffensive on Boukamal capturing more than 40 percent of the town, mostly its northern neighborhoods.

"The fighting is ongoing, now close to the town's center," Abdurrahman said, adding that when IS fighters withdrew from Boukamal on Thursday it was a trap they set to hit back at government forces and their allies.

Abu Laila said IS fighters control most of Boukamal adding that government claims that al-Baghdadi is in the town is to cover for their losses.

In September, al-Baghdadi released an audio in which he urged his followers to burn their enemies everywhere and target "media centers of the infidels." It was his first purported audio in nearly a year.

Al-Baghdadi has only appeared in public once in 2014 in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul.

Russian officials said in June there was a "high probability" that al-Baghdadi was killed in a Russian airstrike on the outskirts of the Syrian city of Raqqa, the group's de facto capital that the extremists lost last month. U.S. officials later said they believed he was still alive.

Al-Baghdadi's whereabouts are unknown but he is believed to be in IS' dwindling territory in eastern Syria. Opposition activists say he is also likely somewhere in the wide desert that stretches toward Iraq.

Slovenia's president faces former actor in runoff vote

By JOVANA GEC, Associated Press

BLLED, Slovenia (AP) — Slovenia is holding a runoff presidential election on Sunday that is pitting President Borut Pahor against challenger Marjan Sarec, a former actor who is the mayor of the northern town of Kamnik.

Pahor, a veteran politician, has been favored to win after leading the vote by a large margin in the first round of balloting on Oct. 22. But analysts say it could be a tight race: Sarec has already surprised Pahor by forcing a runoff, and has narrowed the gap since the first round.

Below is some background on the race being decided in nature-loving Slovenia, the home country of U.S. first lady Melania Trump:

A PRESIDENT WHO IS 'KING OF INSTAGRAM'

A former fashion model, Pahor has been in politics for decades, holding a number of public positions. He was Slovenia's prime minister before he took office as president in December 2012.

Pahor, who turned 54 earlier this month, has sought to portray himself as a president of all Slovenians, regardless of their political preferences. Critics say, however, that Pahor is simply avoiding taking a stand on important issues. He has been nicknamed Slovenia's "King of Instagram" for his frequent presence on social media.

THE COMPETITION

Pahor's opponent, Marjan Sarec, is an ambitious opponent who has won support from many Slovenians fed up with the political elite in the small EU state.

Sarec was a well-known satirical comedian who imitated politicians before entering politics himself in 2010 to run for mayor of Kamnik. Sarec won against an established candidate and gave up acting so he could fully commit to the job. The 39-year-old is currently serving his second term as mayor.

WHAT OPINION SURVEYS SAY

Pre-election surveys have suggested that Pahor could win some 56 percent of the votes, and Sarec around 44. Pahor finished first among nine candidates in the first round of voting in October with 47 percent — not enough to avoid a runoff — while Sarec had 25 percent.

WHY THE VOTE MATTERS

Slovenia's presidency holds no executive powers. However, the president proposes the prime minister who runs the government and the office-holder's opinions carry weight on important issues.

Key topics facing Slovenia include the economy, a border dispute with neighboring Croatia stemming from the 1990s' breakup of the former Yugoslavia, the future of the European Union, the large numbers of migrants and refugees who have reached Europe or are attempting to.

ELECTION DAY

Slovenia, which has a population of around 2 million, has about 1.7 million voters. Polling places are set to open Sunday at 0600 GMT (1 a.m.) and close 12 hours later. Initial results are expected a few hours after the polls close.

Ali Zerdin contributed from Ljubljana, Slovenia.

US cities, states defy Trump, still back Paris climate deal

By FRANK JORDANS and DOROTHEE THIESING, Associated Press

BONN, Germany (AP) — A group of U.S. states, cities, businesses and universities said Saturday they are still committed to curbing global warming even as U.S. President Donald Trump's administration is walking away from the Paris climate accord.

But the alliance, which has an economy larger than Japan and Germany combined, says it won't be able to achieve the necessary cut in greenhouse gas emissions without some efforts at the federal level.

"It is important for the world to know, the American government may have pulled out of the Paris agreement, but the American people are committed to its goals, and there is nothing Washington can do to stop us," former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg said at a global climate meeting in Bonn, Germany.

Gov. Jerry Brown of California echoed those comments.

"In the United States, we have a federal system, and states have real power as do cities. And when cities and states combine together, and then join with powerful corporations, that's how we get stuff done," he said.

His speech was briefly interrupted by anti-coal and anti-fracking protesters, who held up banners and shouted "We're still in! Trump's still out!"

The group calling itself "America's Pledge" said states, cities and private groups have been taking considerable steps to reduce emissions by promoting renewable energy use and climate-friendly transportation systems.

"This is a pledge, and it's a pledge that you can cash, because it's real," Brown said. "We are doing real stuff in California."

In a report, however, the group said that "we cannot underscore strongly enough the critical nature of federal engagement to achieve the deep decarbonization goals the U.S. must undertake after 2025."

Daniel Firger, one of the report's contributors, said it was intended to show that many in the U.S. aren't prepared to wait for Trump to change his mind on climate change again or wait for the next administration to tackle the issue.

"The good news around Trump's announcement to withdraw is that it has galvanized a groundswell of bottom-up support from all corners of the U.S. economy," Firger told The Associated Press.

Cities, regions and businesses in other nations around the world could look to the group for inspiration and support, he said, noting that the lessons learned by local authorities and businesses in the U.S. could be applied elsewhere.

Jordans reported from Berlin. Kirsten Grieshaber contributed from Berlin.

Asia-Pacific forum sticks to free-trade gospel despite Trump

By TRAN VAN MINH and ELAINE KURTENBACH, Associated Press

DANANG, Vietnam (AP) — An annual Pacific Rim summit is sticking with its tradition of promoting free trade and closer regional ties, shrugging off President Donald Trump's "America First" approach.

The leaders of the 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum said Saturday that they had recommitted to fighting protectionism and "all unfair trade practices." They also expressed support for multi-country institutions and regional as well as country-to-country trade agreements.

Trade ministers from 11 of the Pacific Rim countries announced an agreement on pushing ahead with a free-trade deal, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, whose destiny had been cast into doubt after Trump pulled the U.S. out.

Efforts to get an agreement on how to proceed without the U.S. stumbled at the last moment, with leaders unable to formally endorse the proposal. But trade ministers announced a preliminary deal, with some details to be worked out later.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told reporters that environmental protection, labor rights, gender issues and the auto industry were areas needing work, though he did not go into specifics.

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"We got a lot of work done, but there is still more work to do," Trudeau said.

The revisions required for the 11 remaining TPP countries to continue talks required a difficult balance between high standards and pragmatism, said Japanese Economy Minister Toshimitsu Motegi.

"The substance is something all the TPP countries can agree on," said Motegi. "This will send a very strong message to the U.S. and the other countries in the region."

Trudeau said his unexpected absence from a TPP leaders' meeting on Friday, which caused consternation among his fellow leaders and confusion about Canada's stance, stemmed from an extra-long meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

"We were not ready to close the TPP 11 yesterday," he said.

The ministers dropped some key provisions the Americans had required on protection of intellectual property, among others. They also changed the trade accord's name to the unwieldy Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, or CPTPP.

Those trade talks took place on the sidelines of APEC summitry: ceremonial arrivals in bright tailored shirts to a gala banquet, a closed-door retreat and scores of bilateral meetings between the 21 leaders attending the event in this coastal resort city.

Increasingly, APEC summits have become more of an opportunity for such side talks, and for host nations to showcase their growing affluence.

Trump's dramatically different stances from his predecessor, Barack Obama — such as his "America First" trade strategy and his skepticism over climate change — were apparent in Danang. But his hosts and the other leaders took it in stride.

As an institution, apart from its pageantry and its tradition of drawing leaders together for face-to-face meetings, APEC mainly serves as a laboratory for trying out policies and encouraging "best practices," said Alan Bollard, executive director for APEC's secretariat. Unlike the TPP trade pact, whose decisions will eventually be enforced, APEC's statements are nonbinding.

"We're in an easier place to try things out, to test policy sensitivities even if we don't get everybody around the table," Bollard said.

The declaration issued Saturday contain calls for continued work to improve food security, to help ensure the benefits of economic growth are more evenly shared and to make member countries more business-friendly, among a slew of development-related plans. It also contained measures addressing climate change.

As a developing country with a fast-growing export sector, this year's host country, Vietnam, has a strong interest in open trade and access for its exports to consumers in the West given the role foreign investment and trade have played in helping its economy to grow at a more than 6 percent pace. Danang, Vietnam's third-largest city, is in the midst of a construction boom as dozens of resorts and smaller hotels pop up along its scenic coastline.

APEC's members are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, the U.S. and Vietnam.

The countries participating in the newly renamed Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.

US stocks on two-day losing streak as health stocks fall

By MARLEY JAY, AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — So that's what a losing streak feels like. Stocks fell for the second day in a row Friday, which hadn't happened in a month, as Amazon put a scare into yet another industry: medical device and health care equipment companies.

Those companies slumped after an analyst for Citi Investment Research said Amazon might be on the verge of shaking up their industry by speeding up distribution and cutting prices. Energy companies gave up some of their recent gains while retailers, media companies and household goods companies moved

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higher. Stocks finished the week with small losses, ending an eight-week winning streak.

One factor in those losses was uncertainty over the Republican plan to cut taxes. Stocks dipped Thursday after Senate Republicans proposed leaving corporate tax rates alone in 2018 before cutting them in 2019. That surprised investors, who pulled stocks down slightly from their recent record highs.

"We would expect a little bit more of that as we get more delays and uncertainty in the tax plan," said Sean Lynch, the co-head of global equity strategy for Wells Fargo Investment Institute. Lynch said an eventual tax cut for companies, and for at least some individuals, would give investors "a dose of confidence" that company earnings will grow a bit faster and the economy and stock market will rise for a bit longer.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index lost 2.32 points, or 0.1 percent, to 2,582.30. The Dow Jones industrial average slid 39.73 points, or 0.2 percent, to 23,422.21. The Nasdaq composite turned higher and rose 0.89 points to 6,750.94. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks inched up 0.26 points to 1,475.27.

The S&P 500 set an all-time high on Wednesday, but finished the week down 0.2 percent. The index had gained five percent over its winning streak, the longest in almost four years. The Russell 2000, which is comprised of smaller companies that might benefit more from a corporate tax cut, fell 1.3 percent this week. That was its largest loss in three months.

Citi Investment Research analyst Amit Hazan wrote Friday that Amazon is making quick progress in the medical supply field and could soon start distributing goods to hospitals, as some organizations appear interested in working with the online retail giant.

"New online distribution/wholesaling models like Amazon's will come to dominate the supply chain" in coming years, Hazan said.

Baxter International, which sells intravenous pumps and other hospital equipment, fell \$1.35, or 2.1 percent, to \$64.04. Becton, Dickinson dipped \$5.25, or 2.3 percent, to \$219.23. Medical device maker Medtronic slid \$1.48, or 1.8 percent, to \$79.33.

Competition with Amazon has hurt retailers for years and the online giant has also pressured supermarkets and grocery stores with its purchase of Whole Foods. In recent weeks, health care product companies, medication distributors and drugstores have all fallen as Wall Street wondered what Amazon's logistics expertise and its willingness to slash prices will do to their businesses. Drugstores CVS and Walgreens jumped Friday; investors may be relieved that Amazon could turn its focus to industries they are less involved in.

Long-suffering department stores made gains Friday. J.C. Penney advanced 42 cents, or 15.3 percent, to \$3.17 after it said a closely-watched sales measurement grew for the first time in more than a year. The company also took a smaller quarterly loss than analysts had expected. Macy's built on its 11 percent jump a day ago and added another 48 cents, or 2.5 percent, to \$19.98. Competitor Kohl's rose \$1.87, or 4.5 percent, to \$43.04. All of those companies have seen their sales and stocks tumble in large part because of increasing online competition.

Walt Disney Co. rose \$2.10, or 2 percent, to \$104.78 after it said it received bigger payments from cable companies for ESPN and offered more details about its planned sports streaming services. The company also announced plans for a new "Star Wars" film trilogy. "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," released in late 2015, grossed about \$2 billion and investors have high hopes for next month's "The Last Jedi."

U.S. crude oil lost 43 cents to \$56.74 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, used to price international oils, gave up 41 cents to \$63.52 a barrel in London.

Wholesale gasoline gave up 1 cent to \$1.81 a gallon. Heating oil lost 1 cent to \$1.93 a gallon. Natural gas rose 1 cent to \$3.21 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Bond prices slumped. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 2.38 percent from 2.34 percent.

Gold dropped \$13.30, or 1 percent, to \$1,274.20 an ounce. Silver fell 10 cents to \$16.87 an ounce. Copper lost 1 cent to \$3.08 a pound.

The dollar rose to 113.54 yen from 113.32 yen. The euro fell to \$1.1618 from \$1.1643.

The FTSE 100 index in Britain fell 0.7 percent. The French CAC 40 lost 0.5 percent and the German DAX dipped 0.4 percent. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 index lost 0.8 percent and South Korea's Kospi fell 0.3 percent. In Hong Kong, the Hang Seng dipped less than 0.1 percent.

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AP Markets Writer Marley Jay can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MarleyJayAP> His work can be found at <https://apnews.com/search/marley%20jayt>

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Nov. 11, the 315th day of 2017. There are 50 days left in the year. This is Veterans Day in the U.S., Remembrance Day in Canada.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 11, 1918, fighting in World War I ended as the Allies and Germany signed an armistice in the Forest of Compiègne (kohm-PYEHN'-yeh).

On this date:

In 1620, 41 Pilgrims aboard the Mayflower, anchored off Massachusetts, signed a compact calling for a "body politick."

In 1778, British redcoats, Tory rangers and Seneca Indians in central New York killed more than 40 people in the Cherry Valley Massacre.

In 1831, former slave Nat Turner, who'd led a violent insurrection, was executed in Jerusalem, Virginia.

In 1889, Washington became the 42nd state.

In 1917, Liliuokalani (lee-LEE'-oo-oh-kah-LAH'-nee), Hawaii's first and only queen and its last monarch, died in Honolulu at age 79.

In 1921, the remains of an unidentified American service member were interred in a Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery in a ceremony presided over by President Warren G. Harding.

In 1938, Irish-born cook Mary Mallon, who'd gained notoriety as the disease-carrying "Typhoid Mary" blamed for the deaths of three people, died on North Brother Island in New York's East River at age 69 after 23 years of mandatory quarantine.

In 1942, during World War II, Germany completed its occupation of France.

In 1966, Gemini 12 blasted off on a four-day mission with astronauts James A. Lovell and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin Jr. aboard; it was the tenth and final flight of NASA's Gemini program.

In 1972, the U.S. Army turned over its base at Long Binh to the South Vietnamese, symbolizing the end of direct U.S. military involvement in the Vietnam War.

In 1987, following the failure of two Supreme Court nominations, President Ronald Reagan announced his choice of Judge Anthony M. Kennedy, who went on to win confirmation.

In 1992, the Church of England voted to ordain women as priests.

Ten years ago: President Gen. Pervez Musharraf said Pakistan would stick to its January schedule for parliamentary elections, but set no time limit on emergency rule. Marking his fifth Veterans Day since the invasion of Iraq, President George W. Bush honored U.S. troops past and present at a tearful ceremony in Texas.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery and said the Sept. 11 generation had "written one of the greatest chapters" in the country's military service, toppling a dictator and battling an insurgency in Iraq, pushing back the Taliban in Afghanistan and decimating al-Qaida's leadership.

One year ago: President-elect Donald Trump shook up his transition team as he plunged into the work of setting up his administration, elevating Vice President-elect Mike Pence to head the operations. Three days after Election Day, President Barack Obama used his last Veterans Day speech to urge Americans to learn from the example of veterans as a divided nation sought to "forge unity" after the bitter 2016 campaign. Actor Robert Vaughn, 83, died in Connecticut.

Today's Birthdays: Actress June Whitfield (TV and film: "Absolutely Fabulous") is 92. Actress Bibi Andersson is 82. Country singer Narvel Felts is 79. Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., is 77. Americana roots singer/songwriter Chris Smither is 73. Rock singer-musician Vince Martell (Vanilla Fudge) is 72. The president

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of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega, is 72. Rock singer Jim Peterik (PEE'-ter-ihk) (Ides of March, Survivor) is 67. Golfer Fuzzy Zoeller is 66. Pop singer-musician Paul Cowsill (The Cowsills) is 66. Rock singer-musician Andy Partridge (XTC) is 64. Singer Marshall Crenshaw is 64. Rock singer Dave Alvin is 62. Rock musician Ian Craig Marsh (Human League; Heaven 17) is 61. Actor Stanley Tucci is 57. Actress Demi Moore is 55. Actress Calista Flockhart is 53. Actor Philip McKeon is 53. Rock musician Scott Mercado is 53. Actor Frank John Hughes is 50. TV personality Carson Kressley is 48. Actor David DeLuise is 46. Actor Adam Beach is 45. Actor Tyler Christopher is 45. Actor Leonardo DiCaprio is 43. Actor Scoot McNairy is 40. Rock musician Jonathan Pretus (Cowboy Mouth) is 36. NFL quarterback Mark Sanchez is 31. Actress Christa B. Allen is 26. Actor Tye Sheridan is 21. Actor Ian Patrick is 15.

Thought for Today: "Life happens too fast for you ever to think about it. If you could just persuade people of this, but they insist on amassing information." — Kurt Vonnegut, American author (born this date in 1922, died 2007).