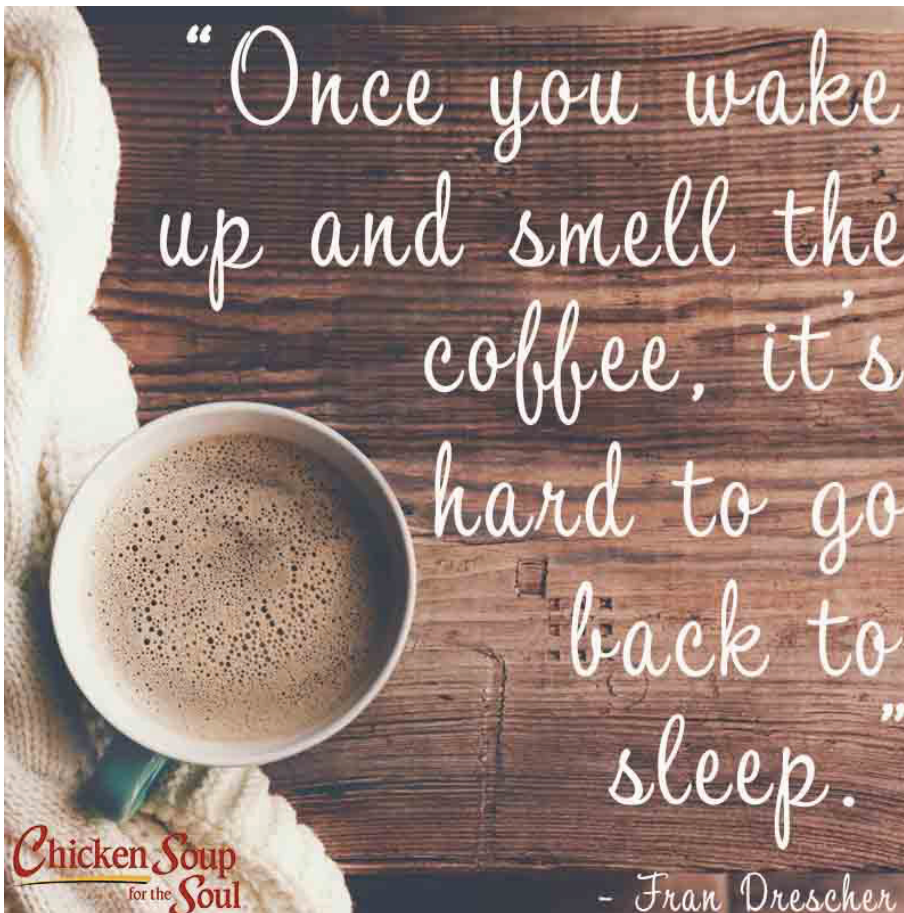


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Athletic Banquet is Cancelled

The annual Kiwanis sponsored Athletic Banquet that was scheduled for April 30, 2018, has been cancelled. Each individual sport will have their own awards event.

The football awards banquet will be held Tuesday, Nov. 14, 7 p.m., at the Olive Grove Club House.

Midwest Masonry & concrete Pumping

Greg Heilman, owner

405 E 1st Ave., Groton

Greg: 253/929-9137

Mike: 605/492-7041

midwestmasonry1@yahoo.com



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- Athletic Banquet cancelled
- 1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 1- Midwest Masonry Ad
- 2- Weekly Vikings Roundup
- 3- NSU Men's BB loses to NW Missouri State
- 3- Farmers Union PSA
- 4- Today in Weather History
- 4- Roslyn 4-Plex for sale
- 5- Today's Forecast
- 6- Yesterday's Weather
- 6- Today's Weather Info
- 6- National Weather Map
- 7- Daily Devotional
- 8- 2018 Community Events
- 9- News from the Associated Press

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Weekly Vikings Roundup By Jordan Wright

The Minnesota Vikings traveled to the nation's capital to face off against the Washington Redskins this past Sunday, November 12. Coming off their bye week the team was relatively healthy, and they got out of the gate quickly, scoring 28 points in the first half on their way to a 38-30 win. The Vikings are now 7-2 and are in first place in the NFC North.

Case Keenum had an up and down day on Sunday, completing 21 of 29 passes for 304 yards and four(!) touchdowns – although he did throw two interceptions (and at least two more passes that should have been picked). The Vikings weren't able to get much going on the ground against the Redskins – Latavius Murray led the team with 17 carries for 68 yards and a touchdown, with Jerick McKinnon pitching in 10 carries for 32 yards. As a team, the Vikings totaled 102 yards on 31 carries for a meager 3.3 yards per carry.

Adam Thielen was once again the star of the show for the Vikings offense, catching 8 passes for 166 yards and a touchdown. By now, everyone knows his incredible story, but it's time that we put that to rest and simply start calling him one of the best wide receivers in the NFL. Stefon Diggs only caught 4 passes, but still had 78 yards and a touchdown. Together, Thielen and Diggs make one of the best receiver duos in the league – and should be catching balls in Minnesota for many more years to come.

The Vikings defense was missing one of its leaders, Everson Griffen, but they still played well. As a unit, the Vikings defense had one sack, five tackles for a loss, seven pass breakups, and five quarterback hits. Redskins quarterback Kirk Cousins did throw for 327 yards, but it took him 45 attempts to get there and a good chunk of the yardage came late in the game when the outcome was already decided. Sunday's game was the first time the Vikings defense gave up more than 17 points since week 2, but this time the offense had their back and was able to put more of the load on their shoulders to bring home the victory.

With Griffen out, the team was without their emotional leader on the field. There wasn't one single player who stepped up to fill the void, but there were a few who attempted. Defensive end Danielle Hunter was the only Viking player to bring down Kirk Cousins, and he also added a tackle for a loss and two quarterback hits. Safety Harrison Smith was second on the team in tackles (8), and although he didn't fill out any other stat category, he still made plays all over the field. Eric Kendricks led the team in tackles (10), Anthony Barr made a couple splash plays, and Andrew Sendejo made a few nice hits to jar the ball loose from receivers (and he did it without drawing any unnecessary flags). It was slightly disconcerting to see the defense give up 30 points and nearly 400 yards of offense, but it was great to see the team get the win when the defense wasn't playing lights out.

Case Keenum played well enough to get the win, but in my opinion he didn't do enough to hold off Teddy Bridgewater. Teddy was active for his first game in nearly two years, and I believe we will see him get the start next week against the 7-2 Los Angeles Rams. ESPN is giving the Vikings a 63 percent chance to win the game, but it will be a tough matchup against a Rams team that is putting up nearly 33 points per game behind second year quarterback Jared Goff. The Rams also have one of the better running backs in the NFL, Todd Gurley, so they are truly a two-headed monster that will be difficult to shut down. The game will be on Sunday, November 19 at noon Central Time on Fox. Skol!

Have any questions or comments? Reach out to me on Twitter (@SkolJWright)



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")**

NSU Men's Basketball Drops Sunday Match-up to No. 1 Northwest Missouri State

St. Joseph, Mo. – The Northern State University men's basketball team dropped their second game of the season, 71-60 to No. 1 Northwest Missouri State. The Wolves drop to 1-1 overall after a battle with the defending national champions.

The Wolves jumped out to a quick start, taking the lead in the first few minutes of play, however the Bearcats took over from there. Northern sat within two at halftime, however Northwest broke things open in the second half leading by as much as 16 with just under three minutes in the contest.

The Wolves shot 46.3 percent from the floor, 37.5 percent from the arc, and 66.7 percent from the foul line in the game. They tallied a game leading 22 points off the bench, as well as 32 points in the paint, 11 second chance points, and eight points off turnovers.

Carter Evans led the team in the game and off the bench with 14 points. The senior shot 53.8 percent from the floor, adding a team leading five rebounds and three blocks as well. DJ Pollard was second on the team with 13 points, shooting at a 55.5 percent clip. Pollard added two rebounds and two assists.

Ian Smith and Darin Peterka followed close behind with nine and eight points respectively. Smith knocked down 4-of-7 from the floor and led the team with four assists, and matched Evans team leading of five rebounds. Peterka added five rebounds of his own, as well as a team leading three steals.

Logan Doyle and Justin Decker rounded out the starters with six and two points respectively. Doyle was second on the team with four rebounds and two assists. Bo Fries and Gabe King added five and three points each, playing a combined 35 minutes.

The Wolves return to action this Wednesday for a 7:30 p.m. match-up against Southwest Minnesota State in non-conference play on the road. Northern will then return home for the 2017 Wachs Arena opener against Jamestown at 7 p.m. on Friday the 17th.

Today in Weather History

November 13, 1985: Snowfall of 4 to 8 inches spread from the southwest part of South Dakota on the morning of the 13th to the northeast part of the state by early morning on the 14th. Winds gusted to 35 mph in the western half of the state and produced considerable blowing and drifting snow, which significantly reduced visibilities. The snowfall caused many accidents, including a four-vehicle pileup that occurred three miles east of De Smet in Kingsbury County, during the afternoon of the 13th. Some snowfall amounts include; 7.0 inches in Britton; 5.5 inches in Timber Lake and 5.0 inches in Leola.

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.

1833: In 1833, observers were familiar with the Leonid meteor shower, but the event that year was very intense and leads to the first formulation of a theory on the origin of meteors. By some estimates, the 1833 Leonid meteor shower had 240,000 meteors in a nine-hour period.

1933 - The first dust storm of the great dust bowl era of the 1930s occurred. The dust storm, which had spread from Montana to the Ohio Valley the day before, prevailed from Georgia to Maine resulting in a black rain over New York and a brown snow in Vermont. Parts of South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa reported zero visibility on the 12th. On the 13th, dust reduced the visibility to half a mile in Tennessee. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1946: General Electric scientists produced snow in the Massachusetts Berkshires in the first modern-day cloud seeding experiment. Scientist Vincent Schaefer dropped six pounds of dry ice pellets into a cloud over Pittsfield, MA. The cloud seeding experiment produced snowfall, as a 4-mile long cloud was converted into snow flurries. The success of the experiment became the basis of many weather modification projects.








1953 - Strong southeasterly winds associated with a Pacific cold front reached 70 mph at Sacramento CA to equal their all-time record. The previous record had been established in a similar weather pattern on December 12th of the previous year. (The Weather Channel)

1981 - A powerful cyclone brought high winds to Washington State and Oregon. The cyclone, which formed about 1000 miles west of San Francisco, intensified rapidly as it approached the Oregon coast with the central pressure reaching 28.22 inches (956 millibars). A wind trace from the Whiskey Run Turbine Site, about 12 miles south of Coos Bay in Oregon, showed peak gusts to 97 mph fifty feet above ground level. The wind caused widespread damage in Washington and Oregon, with 12 deaths reported. As much as four feet of snow fell in the Sierra Nevada Range of northern California. (Storm Data)

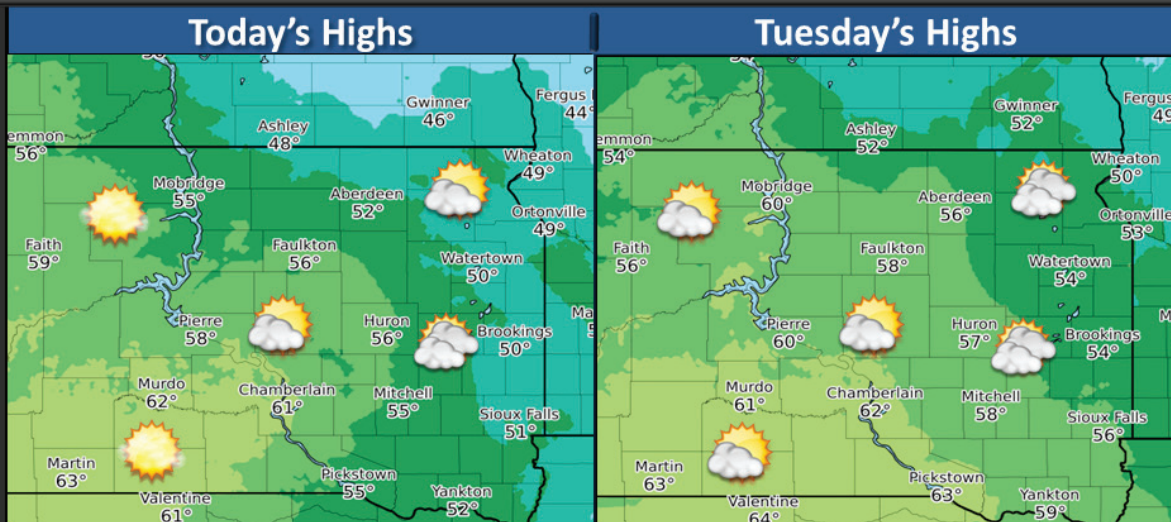
1987 - A storm moving off the Pacific Ocean produced rain and gale force winds along the northern and central Pacific coast, and heavy snow in the Cascade Mountains. Cold weather prevailed in the southeastern U.S. Five cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Asheville NC with a reading of 21 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
						
Decreasing Clouds	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny and Breezy
High: 51 °F	Low: 28 °F	High: 56 °F	Low: 26 °F	High: 36 °F	Low: 19 °F	High: 45 °F

Mild Temps Today and Tuesday



- *Low confidence temperature forecast for eastern areas*
- *Low clouds in NE/KS could spread north today and Tuesday*
- *High temperatures may be impacted by areal coverage of clouds. Still some uncertainty in this.*

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD

 weather.gov/Aberdeen  National Weather Service Aberdeen  @NWSAberdeen | Updated: 11/13/2017 4:54 AM Central

Published on: 11/13/2017 at 5:01AM

A mild air mass will spread across the region today and Tuesday, with highs generally in the 50s and 60s. The warmest air will reside across southwest and south central South Dakota. Low clouds could throw a wrench into the high temperature forecast across eastern areas today and Tuesday. There is currently an area of low clouds moving northward out of Nebraska and Kansas, which could make it into eastern South Dakota later today. Another batch of clouds could affect eastern areas late tonight and linger through early Tuesday. There is still some uncertainty in areal coverage and extent of cloud cover, which could have impacts on high temperatures. Nonetheless, we are still talking about rather mild temperatures compared to what we have been experiencing lately, so it will still feel rather nice out there the next couple days!

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 45.3

Low Outside Temp: 17.1

High Gust: 16

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 71° in 2016

Record Low: -11° in 1919

Average High: 41°F

Average Low: 20°F

Average Precip in Nov: .37

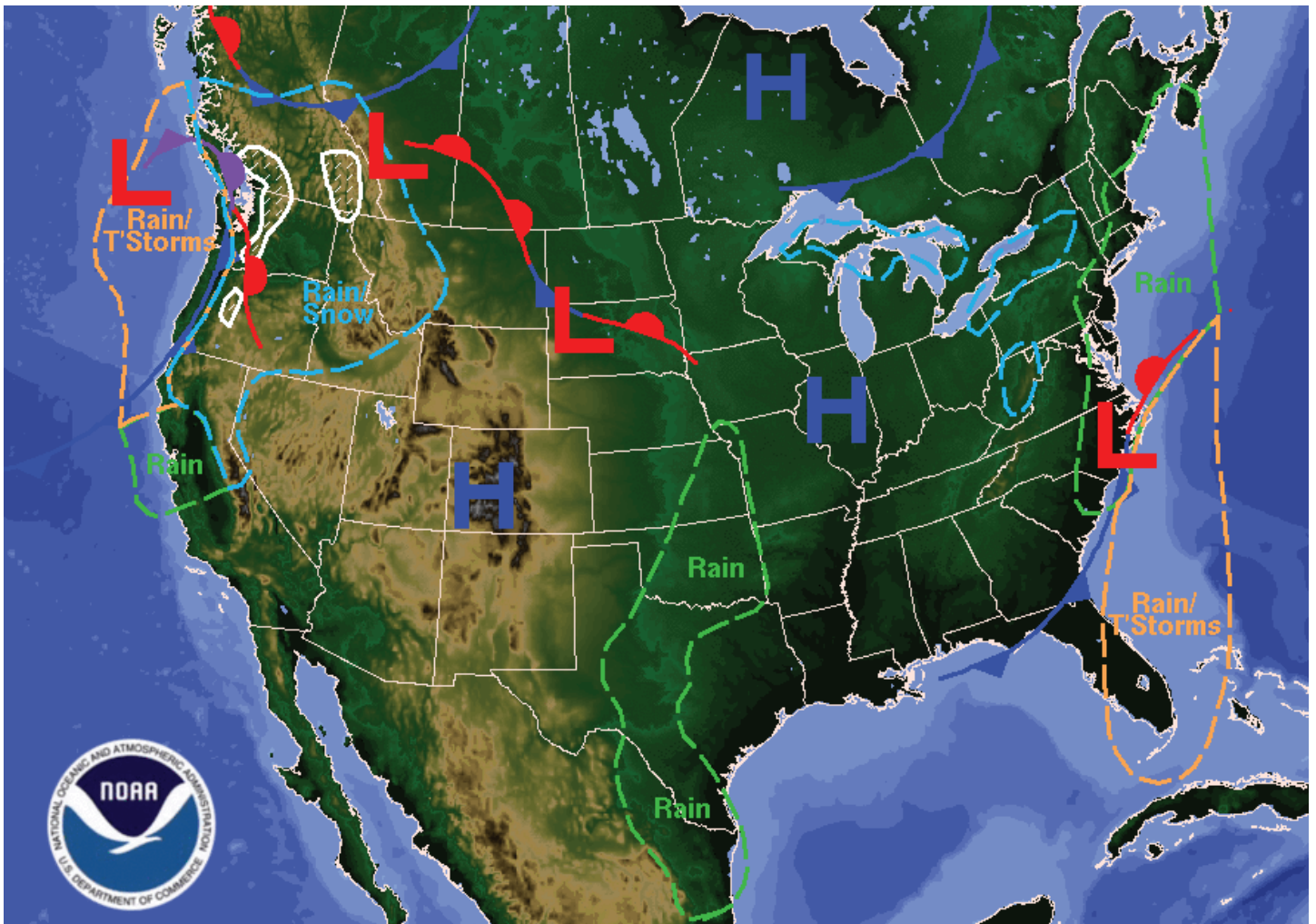
Precip to date in Nov: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 20.84

Precip Year to Date: 13.47

Sunset Tonight: 5:05 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:31 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Mon, Nov 13, 2017, issued 4:50 AM EST

DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center

Prepared by McReynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain

Rain and T'Storms

Rain and Snow

Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)

Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)

Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)

Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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ETERNAL SECURITY

Many place their hope in the stock market or the price of gold or the property they own. Some look to the security of a pension or promise of a retirement account. Others hide money fearing the collapse of the economy. A few store food in containers that they have been told will last for years should a famine occur. Yet in the final analysis all of us know – deep down inside of us – that there is no promise that cannot be broken or possession that cannot be taken from us.

Psalm 71 was written by an old person. It seems as though he is reflecting on a life that has had many ups and downs, problems and pitfalls. But it is a Psalm that proclaims the faithfulness of God – past, present and future. "From my birth I have relied on You...You brought me forth from my mother's womb...I will always have hope and praise You more and more!"

If there is any comfort we can take from God's Word it is this: The record of His deeds in the past gives us the assurance of His grace today and hope for tomorrow. In this Psalm the author gives us a powerful description of the fact that there is no shadow of doubt in his mind that God's great acts in the past are sufficient evidence for us to believe that He will be with us today as well as tomorrow: "I declare Your power to the next generation, Your mighty acts to all who are to come!"

What more can we ask for? Whatever God has done for anyone at any time, He can do for us. He alone is faithful and worthy of worship. He alone endures forever.

Prayer: We rejoice together, Father, knowing that You have been with us and will be with us forever. Thank You! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 71:5 For you have been my hope, Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth.

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

Pilot of small plane makes emergency landing, escapes injury

GRAYSLAKE, Ill. (AP) — Authorities say the pilot of a small plane escaped injury after making an emergency landing near an airport in suburban Chicago.

Officials the single-engine Cessna was heading from Pierre, South Dakota, to Chicago Executive Airport in Wheeling, Illinois, when it reportedly had engine trouble.

The plane landed Sunday evening about 100 to 150 feet (30 to 46 meters) short of the runway at Campbell Airport in Grayslake. The plane skidded into a farm field and across a bridge before coming to a stop. The pilot was able to get out of the plane.

The pilot was from village of Cary, Illinois. The cause of the crash is under investigation.

Spruce tree in South Dakota reminds family of 2011 flood

By **DAVE ASKINS**, Capital Journal

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A 15-foot Black Hills Spruce stands watch behind a house on the Pierre side of the Missouri River, across from La Framboise Island.

Gordon Van Ash wound 40 feet of colored lights around the tree, adding to the 100 feet he'd woven through its branches a few days before.

More lights are needed now than when the City of Pierre placed it there, in early December 2011. Back then the spruce measured maybe nine feet. As the 86-year-old Van Ash put it, "The darn thing grew!"

The current tree is a replacement of one that stood there before. It was sacrificed to the temporary levee built in summer 2011 along Island View Drive, to hold back the water from the flood that year.

So, for Gordon Van Ash and his wife Lois Van Ash, the new tree serves as a reminder of the 2011 flood. The way they endured the flood waters is now documented in a 10-page booklet with the title "Bummer Summer Survivor," which Lois Van Ash wrote for family members.

It's a story of a family filling sandbags, city workers constructing the levee, National Guardsmen patrolling the top of the 12-foot wall, border patrol agents recruited from the Mexican border checking ID cards to prevent looting, and the couple packing up essentials in case they had to leave quickly.

In "Bummer Summer," Lois Van Ash chronicled the loss of the first tree: "Was sad to see our favorite tree cut down, then left on the corner in all its beauty." While many trees were lost, she wrote about the one that "was so pretty the last time I saw it laying on its side on the corner."

The current tree is a reminder of more than the flood. The final page of the "Bummer Summer Survivors" tells the story of the original tree, and why the City of Pierre placed it there, sometime in the 1980s.

The first tree to be placed there, also a Black Hill Spruce, was a memorial to Lois and Gordon Van Ash's daughter, Jeanine Van Ash, who was working as a city employee when she died in 1980 at age 19. According to the Capital Journal's front-page coverage, she was found in the "wet well" of the sewage treatment plant. It was her first day of work for the city.

The tree was replaced in a way that made Lois Van Ash wonder if it were magic, a miracle, or Santa Claus —because an unlikely confluence of events allowed the city to surprise the Van Ash family with a new tree. It was in early December, during the only time they left town that year, there was no snow to impede planting, and the city had just received a suitable tree.

Like the original, the replacement tree is framed by the kitchen window that looks out to the river, back past the garage, a pickup truck, and a boat. The truck is still painted with the "Gordy's Plumbing" logo, though it's been altered to read "Gordy's Done Plumbing." He's been retired for six years.

Asked what he does with his spare time in retirement, Gordon Van Ash at first simply pointed at the boat. It's apparent from the words Lois Van Ash wrote that he likes to fish: "(After the flood) when the fishing ban was lifted, Dad and his two sons pulled 51 fish in the boat in two hours. Can only keep four

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walleye apiece, so it was a fast catch and release.”

After pointing, Gordon Van Ash clarified, “Fishing and horsing around.”

The description “horsing around” probably covers a lot of ground, and water, not all of it necessarily mischief. It might include disassembling the solar-electricity generator powering the tree lights, to diagnose an apparent short circuit — as he did while seated at the kitchen table.

The seats at the table offer a clear view of the tree through the window. Gordon and Lois Van Ash enjoy looking through that window, not just at the tree. “It’s kinda fun to sit in front of the window and watch whatever interesting things go by,” Gordon Van Ash said.

He picked up a small digital camera, remarking, “I’ve taken a lot of pictures at this window.” Scrolling through three years’ worth of images, he finds one that was taken last fall, of a deer crossing through the backyard near the river bank. “You don’t know you’re living downtown!” he exclaimed.

Gordon Van Ash described how he’ll throw a piece of bread out in the back for a squirrel to eat. He was late one morning, and the squirrel came up to the window as if to investigate why the bread was tardy.

Even though their lives inside the house seem oriented toward the river, the address is Missouri Street, which is on the opposite side of the house. In a play on the name, the title page of “Bummer Summer Survivors” notes that it was “written in the house on Misery Street.” And in conversation, Gordon calls the place where they live “East Misery Street.”

But sitting with the pair at their kitchen table, it’s apparent they enjoy their life on the river.

Their granddaughter, Jeanine Maskovich — who was named for her aunt — confirmed the pair loves their life there and loves to talk about it.

The spirit that flows through “Bummer Summer Survivors” is not one of miserableness, but of gratitude. Lois summed up the replacement of the tree this way: “Knowing how many cared to make this Van Ash family happy, I feel my cup runneth over.”

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

Sioux Falls group works to end homelessness in the city

By JOE SNEVE, Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — After spending two decades behind bars, Rick Roseland was released in 2016 to a world that looked vastly different than when he entered the prison system.

Technological changes, the advent of the internet and transformed social norms made re-entry into society a challenge and played a role in him ending up on the street and sleeping in a different place every night for six months.

Knowing he wanted more out of his second chance, Roseland turned to the Sioux Falls metro’s network of social services and today has his own apartment, a dog and new lease on life.

“I wasn’t no saint, and I still ain’t,” the 61-year-old told the Argus Leader on Nov. 1, the day City Hall kicked off its Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month to shine a light on poverty in Sioux Falls and highlight success stories in the community. “But if you try and you want to go forward, people are there to help.”

Stacey Tieszen, coordinator for Homeless Advisory Board that serves to harmonize city, county and non-profit social service agency efforts, said there’s plenty of opportunity to create more success stories like Roseland’s in Sioux Falls and Minnehaha County considering the number of people still living in poverty here.

She pointed to statistics from the schools, the county human services office and various homeless shelters in Sioux Falls. The Sioux Falls School District, for example, has identified 438 of its students as homeless so far this school year, the county has received nearly 1,200 applications for housing assistance from people living without a home this year, and the Bishop Dudley Hospitality House where Roseland spent a few nights last year had served 1,367 unique guests through October.

“The numbers ... are very real and very, very scary for our community,” Tieszen said.

While dozens of non-profits and governments in the Sioux Falls area work tirelessly to help people like Roseland, Tieszen said it takes more to reduce, let alone end, homelessness. Chief among them is aware-

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ness and making the community come to grips with what's going, she said.

That's why this year, HAB is hoping to get everyday people who might not otherwise think about poverty's place in Sioux Falls to volunteer their time or money to aid non-profits in their battle against homelessness.

Tieszen said this month her and other homeless advocates are distributing to-do lists outlining 14 different ways laymen and laywomen can get involved, such as attending a press conference, donating items to homeless shelters, participating in the Annual Walk a Mile event sponsored by the St. Francis House or riding public transit.

Taking those actions can give someone a glimpse into the life of a homeless person and inspire them to make change in the community, Tieszen said.

"We call them working poor, but I also call them very invisible," she said. "We don't know ... because they're struggling in silence."

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

Sioux Falls mall Santa loses home, belongings in fire

OKATON, S.D. (AP) — A longtime Santa at a Sioux Falls mall has lost his home and belongings in a fire. The Murdo Fire Department has set up a GoFundMe page for Dale Buxcel. Buxcel's home was destroyed by a fire near Okaton in central South Dakota in the early morning of Nov. 10.

Buxcel has been at the Empire Mall for the last 22 years as Santa Claus.

The Argus Leader reports the Murdo Fire Department set up the GoFundMe page to help Buxcel rebuild and replace everything when he comes home after the holidays.

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

Daum leads South Dakota State to 78-54 victory

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Mike Daum scored 22 points and grabbed 13 rebounds to lead South Dakota State to a 78-54 victory over the University of Mary on Sunday.

Daum, a junior forward who is tied with Campbell's Chris Clemons as the nation's top returning scorer (25.1 ppg) and is on three national award watch lists, shot 6 of 12 from the floor and made 9 of 11 free throws. He notched his 33rd 20-point game and moved into 10th on the program's all-time scoring list at 1,430.

The Jackrabbits (2-0) led 39-28 at halftime behind 14 points from Daum and 11 by David Jenkins Jr., using a 15-3 edge in second-chance points.

A 13-2 run with eight points from Daum and capped by Lane Severyn's 3-pointer with 14:27 left gave the Jackrabbits a 52-32 lead and they remained comfortably in front.

Jenkins finished with 13 points and Ian Theisen 10 for the Jackrabbits.

Brody Sharkey led the Division II Marauders with nine points.

Rural areas at risk as water levels drop in massive aquifer

DENVER (AP) — The draining of a massive aquifer that underlies portions of eight states in the central U.S. is drying up streams, causing fish to disappear and threatening the livelihood of farmers who rely on it for their crops.

Water levels in the Ogallala aquifer have been dropping for decades as irrigators pump water faster than rainfall can recharge it.

An analysis of federal data found the Ogallala aquifer shrank twice as fast over the past six years compared with the previous 60, The Denver Post reports.

The drawdown has become so severe that streams are drying at a rate of 6 miles per year and some highly resilient fish are disappearing. In rural areas, farmers and ranchers worry they will no longer have

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enough water for their livestock and crops as the aquifer is depleted.

The aquifer lost 10.7 million acre-feet of storage between 2013 and 2015, the U.S. Geological Survey said in a June report.

"Now I never know, from one minute to the next, when I turn on a faucet or hydrant, whether there will be water or not," said Lois Scott, 75, who lives west of Cope, Colorado, north of the frequently bone-dry bed of the Arikaree River.

A 40-foot well her grandfather dug by hand in 1914 gave water until recently, she said, lamenting the loss of lawns where children once frolicked and green pastures for cows. Scott's now considering a move to Brush, Colorado, and leaving her family's historic homestead farm.

"This will truly become the Great American Desert," she said.

Also known as the High Plains Aquifer, the Ogallala underlies 175,000 square miles (453,000 square kilometers), including parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Texas. That's one of the primary agricultural regions of the U.S., producing \$35 billion in crops annually.

Farmers and ranchers have been tapping into the aquifer since the 1930s to boost production and help them get by in times of drought.

However, overpumping has dried up 358 miles of surface rivers and streams across a 200-square-mile area covering eastern Colorado, western Kansas and Nebraska, according to researchers from Colorado State University and Kansas State University.

If farmers keep pumping water at the current pace, another 177 miles of rivers and streams will be lost before 2060, the researchers determined.

"We have almost completely changed the species of fish that can survive in those streams, compared with what was there historically. This is really a catastrophic change," said Kansas State University conservation biologist Keith Gido, one of the authors of a report on the aquifer published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

If all pumping stopped immediately, it would still take hundreds of years for rain-fed streams and rivers to recharge the aquifer, Gido said.

Information from: The Denver Post, <http://www.denverpost.com>

Group holds fundraiser for museum to display farm life

By MARK WINEKA, Salisbury Post

MILLBRIDGE, N.C. (AP) — As she walked toward her car with an antique drill press, Lisa Elium wasn't sure what her husband's reaction would be when he saw it back home.

But it was something she had to buy at the Country Life Museum auction on a recent weekend.

"It's nostalgia," Elium explained.

And that's partly what the Country Life Museum will offer visitors in the near future — a nostalgic view of rural life and farm equipment from years past.

But members of the Carolina Antique Power Association, the nonprofit group behind the establishment of the museum at Sloan Park, also hope some of the school children who visit the museum will be inspired to be the farmers and agricultural researchers of tomorrow.

"Farming is kind of dying out," said Conita Small, a member of CAPA. "We can't let it go. I feel like this will put some of that love back for kids in Rowan County."

Small said if the museum inspired just one child to pursue agriculture as a career, it will be worth it to the CAPA members, who have worked for years to raise the money and build the enormous shell of a building that could house the Country Life Museum as early as next spring.

CAPA held a significant fundraiser toward that goal recently. The day included a garage sale, a one-hour live auction of 43 donated items, a raffle of several high-priced prizes, live gospel and bluegrass music and \$8 chicken-and-dumpling dinners.

The museum building is located near the entrance to Sloan Park, and CAPA members, who already are

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meeting here, will be the curators of rotating exhibits and supply much of the manpower in staffing the museum when needed.

"We all believe in it," Small said. "That's why we work so hard."

Much of what's shown at the museum will be on temporary loans from Rowan County families, and CAPA members say they will make a concerted effort to keep things fresh.

Small noted the auction included farm scales for livestock that could weigh upwards of 1,000 pounds. "More than half the kids in Rowan County haven't seen scales that weigh over 300 pounds," she said.

A couple of used tractors were among the many high-quality items auctioned off by Glenn Hester, who donated his time. Likewise, Debbie Suggs Catering contributed the food, and this kind of generosity of time and materials has fueled everything behind the museum.

Georgia Adams, who bought some children's books and other things at the garage sale, said she knows a lot about Sloan Park and hopes to learn more about the Country Life Museum as it develops.

She especially looks forward to bringing her grandchildren here, she said. Adams learned about the recent fundraiser for the Country Life Museum when she bought raffle tickets the week before at the Salisbury Farmers Market.

Looking around the crowd, Randy Elium, president of CAPA, knew many of the people and said, "These are grass-roots supporters of the Country Life Museum."

The 4,800-square-foot building with a concrete floor and tall garage doors on both ends will be able to house large pieces of equipment such as the 1976 John Deere 8430 tractor parked outside.

"That was a big boy in its day," Randy Elium said as he retrieved the tractor's keys, climbed into the cab and fired it up.

The museum will afford plenty of room to display these kinds of big tractors and many other pieces of equipment.

Things left to do on the building include signs, the finishing of interior walls and shelving for displays. CAPA members hope the recent event went a long way toward paying off the loan for the building itself.

Information from: Salisbury Post, <http://www.salisburypost.com>

More businesses may come to South Dakota after housing boom

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Officials of a southeast South Dakota city hope that a housing boom in a portion of the city will soon be followed by an increase in businesses.

U.S. Census Bureau data shows that southeast Sioux Falls has a population growth rate that's three times faster than the rest of the city.

However, there are still few retail and restaurant options in the area, the Argus Leader reported.

That portion of the city used to be farm land, but is now divided up among investors and developers.

More residential development had to happen in that portion of the city in order to get businesses interested, said Joel Dykstra, CEO of RMB Associates, a development firm that owns land in the area.

"There's no secret recipe," he said. "There's no easy answer for success. It takes a lot of different factors and they all have to come together."

The increased residential development will hopefully attract young professionals, who tend to want shopping and entertainment options, said Mike Cooper, the city's planning director.

"The commercial developers will always tell you that they count rooftops," Cooper said.

Barrel House was one of the first restaurants to move into the neighborhood. Owner Mark Fonder said the area's growth and a lack of eateries inspired him to open up his restaurant there.

"There was a few other spots that I was looking at," Fonder said. "I guess I just like the neighborhood around here."

The restaurant has become a popular neighborhood spot that draws people in from nearby apartments, he said.

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

South Dakota student climbs 25 routes for 25th birthday

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — A college student in South Dakota found a challenging way to celebrate his 25th birthday.

Kevin Isely climbed 25 routes on Nov. 4 along the northern edge of the Black Hills National Forest. A student at Black Hills State University, the Minnesota resident planned 25 different routes within Spearfish Canyon as a mental and physical challenge, reported Black Hills Pioneer .

"I was turning 25 and still an undergrad, so I was feeling old and asked, 'What is something that would make me feel young?'" Isely said.

He had never climbed 25 routes in a single day before his birthday.

"I've only ever done 10 or 12 pitches in a day," he said.

Isely began climbing about three years ago when his roommate took him on a climbing trip. Now he tries to get others involved in the sport.

Rock climbing routes are rated by difficulty on a scale that ranges from 5.0 to 5.15d. A relatively easy climb is rated as a 5.0, and feels comparable to climbing a ladder.

Isely usually climbs in the mid 5.10's and 5.11's, but he planned to keep his ascents relatively easy because of the number he intended to accomplish. He started his birthday climb with 5.4 ascents and eventually took on more challenging routes of 5.8 and 5.10.

Unexpected snow and low temperatures made Isely's climb slippery and demanding. The canyon's sharp pockets caused excruciating pain in his hands as darkness neared, he said. But after repeating a route in the dark, he completed his birthday goal of 25 climbs in 12 hours.

"Although I didn't reach my original goal of 25 different routes, I think I had 20 different routes, I'm still really happy and proud because I gave everything I had to finish the 25 climbs," Isely said.

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

Trump embraces Duterte as Asia trip winds down

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — His lengthy Asia trip down to its final days, President Donald Trump opted Monday to publicly prioritize strategic interests over human rights, declining to shine a spotlight on the violent drug war overseen by his Philippine host.

Trump repeatedly praised Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, calling him by his first name, sharing a joke about the media and even complimenting Manila's weather. What he did not do was what many predecessors have done before: highlight human rights abuses while overseas.

Duterte has overseen a bloody drug war that has featured extrajudicial killings. He has even boasted about killing people with his own hands. But during brief remarks to reporters, Trump said he and Duterte have "had a great relationship" and avoided questions on whether he'd raise human rights issues with the Filipino leaders.

The White House later said the two leaders discussed the Islamic State, illegal drugs and trade during the 40 minute meeting. Spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said human rights came up "briefly" in the context of the Philippines' fight against illegal drugs. She did not say if Trump was critical of Duterte's program.

That appeared to conflict with the Filipino version of the meeting. Harry Roque, a spokesman for Duterte, said "there was no mention of human rights. There was no mention of extralegal killings. There was only a rather lengthy discussion of the Philippine war on drugs with President Duterte doing most of the explaining."

On the sidelines of an international summit, Trump looked to strengthen ties with Pacific Rim allies, aiming to strike bilateral, rather than multinational trade agreements, and increase pressure on North

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Korea to abandon its nuclear program. He met with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday and highlighted their two nations' "deeper and more comprehensive" ties, looking to strengthen a relationship that is vital to the U.S. vision of an Indo-Pacific region that attempts to de-emphasize China's influence.

He jointly met with Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, with whom he had a contentious phone call last winter, and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who hosted the president in Tokyo earlier in the trip. Trump raved about his accomplishments on his five-nation journey, particularly on trade and on North Korea, which the White House has suggested may be designated a state sponsor of terror.

Trump said he would wait until his return to Washington on Wednesday to elaborate with a "major statement" on those two topics but hinted at progress while in Manila.

"We've made some very big steps with regard to trade — far bigger than anything you know," Trump told reporters, pointing to business deals forged between U.S. and foreign companies.

"We've made a lot of big progress on trade. We have deficits with almost everybody. Those deficits are going to be cut very quickly and very substantially," Trump said.

"Except us," Turnbull chimed in, to laughs.

"You're the only one," Trump responded. Trump also said the trip had been "very fruitful" for the United States and pointed to the warm welcomes he had received in capitals like Tokyo, Seoul and Beijing.

"It was red carpet like nobody, I think, has probably ever received," Trump said. "And that really is a sign of respect, perhaps for me a little, but really for our county. And I'm really proud of that."

Trump met privately with Turnbull later Monday. But his interactions with Duterte drew the most scrutiny.

Advisers had said that while Trump was always unlikely to publicly chastise Duterte, he might offer criticisms behind closed doors. Trump would hold his tongue in public to avoid embarrassing Duterte, whom he is urging to help pressure North Korea and fight terrorism, and to avoid pushing him into the arms of China. Duterte has seemed less committed to the strategic partnership with the U.S.

Duterte's war on drugs has alarmed human rights advocates around the world who say it has allowed police officers and vigilantes to ignore due process and to take justice into their own hands. Government officials estimate that well over 3,000 people, mostly drug users and dealers, have died in the ongoing crackdown. Human rights groups believe the victim total is far higher, perhaps closer to 9,000.

The opening ceremonies of the Association for Southeast Asian Nations conference began with pageantry, including a group photo of the leaders and the summit's traditional handshake. That cross-body handshake, during which each leader shakes the opposite hands of those next to him or her, briefly baffled Trump, who then laughed as he figured out where to place his arms.

Associated Press writers Ken Thomas and Laurie Kellman in Washington contributed to this report.

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

Powerful earthquake on Iran-Iraq border kills over 340

By **NASSER KARIMI and AMIR VAHDAT, Associated Press**

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — A powerful 7.3 magnitude earthquake that struck the Iraq-Iran border region killed over 340 people across both countries, sent people fleeing their homes into the night and was felt as far away as the Mediterranean coast, authorities reported on Monday.

Iran's western Kermanshah province bore the brunt of the temblor, with Iran's state-run news agency reporting the quake killed 341 people in the country and injured 5,953. The area is a rural, mountainous region where residents rely mainly on farming to make a living.

In Iraq, the earthquake killed at least seven people and injured 535 there, all in the country's northern, semiautonomous Kurdish region, according to Iraq's Interior Ministry.

The magnitude 7.3 quake was centered 19 miles (31 kilometers) outside the eastern Iraqi city of Halabja, according to the most recent measurements from the U.S. Geological Survey.

The earthquake struck 23.2 kilometers (14.4 miles) below the surface, a shallow depth that can have

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broader damage. Magnitude 7 earthquakes on their own are capable of widespread, heavy damage.

Iranian social media and news agencies showed images and videos of people fleeing their homes into the night. More than 100 aftershocks followed.

The quake's worst damage appeared to be in the town of Sarpol-e-Zahab in Kermanshah province, which sits in the Zagros Mountains that divide Iran and Iraq.

Kokab Fard, a 49-year-old housewife in Sarpol-e-Zahab, said she could only flee empty-handed when her apartment complex collapsed.

"Immediately after I managed to get out, the building collapsed," Fard said. "I have no access to my belongings."

Reza Mohammadi, 51, said he and his family ran out into the alley following the first shock he felt.

"I tried to get back to pick some stuff but it totally collapsed in the second wave," Mohammadi said.

Those in Sarpol-e-Zahab also said the power and water were out in the town as telephone and cellphone lines were spotty.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei offered his condolences on Monday morning and urged rescuers and all government agencies to do all they could to help those affected, state media reported. President Hassan Rouhani is scheduled to tour earthquake-damaged areas Tuesday.

The semi-official ILNA news agency said at least 14 provinces in Iran had been affected by the earthquake.

Officials announced that schools in Kermanshah and Ilam provinces would be closed on Monday because of the temblor.

In Iraq, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi issued a directive for the country's civil defense teams and "related institutions" to respond to the natural disaster. Brig. Gen. Saad Maan, an Interior Ministry spokesman, gave the casualty figures for Iraq.

The quake could be felt across Iraq, shaking buildings and homes from Irbil to Baghdad, where people fled into the streets of the capital.

Amina Mohammed, who survived the quake in Darbandikhan, Iraq, said she and her sons escaped their home as it collapsed around them.

"I think it was only God that saved us," she said. "I screamed to God and it must have been him to stop the stairs from entirely collapsing on us."

The Iraqi city of Halabja, closest to the epicenter, is notorious for the 1988 chemical attack in which Saddam Hussein's regime killed some 5,000 people with mustard gas — the deadliest chemical weapons attack ever against civilians.

Iraqi seismologist Abdul-Karim Abdullah Taqi, who runs the earthquake monitoring group at the state-run Meteorological Department, said the main reason for the lower casualty figure in Iraq was the angle and the direction of the fault line in this particular quake, as well as the nature of the Iraqi geological formations that could better absorb the shocks.

However, the temblor did visible damage to the dam at Darbandikhan, which holds back the Diyala River.

"There are horizontal and vertical cracks on the road and in the body of the dam and parts of the dam sank lower," said Rahman Hani, the director of the dam.

Turkey dispatched emergency aid to northern Iraq as officials expressed their "deep sadness" at the tragedy. Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said his country took immediate action to provide medical and food aid to northern Iraq.

Kerem Kinik, Turkish Red Crescent's vice president, told The Associated Press from Habur border crossing that 33 aid trucks were en route to Iraq's city of Sulaimaniyah, carrying 3,000 tents and heaters, 10,000 beds and blankets as well as food.

A Turkish military cargo plane arrived in Iraq as the official Anadolu news agency reported multiple dispatches by Turkey's disaster agency. Ankara also said it would help Iran if Tehran requests assistance.

Relations between Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region and Turkey were strained following the Iraqi Kurds' controversial September independence referendum.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his country stands with the region in difficult times and wished the Iraqi and Iranian people a speedy recovery. Speaking en route to Sochi, Russia, Erdogan also

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said a convoy of 50 aid trucks has already crossed the border into Iraq. Meanwhile, Pakistan's government also extended its deepest condolences for the loss of life and injuries suffered by "our Iranian and Iraqi brethren."

Foreign Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif said Pakistanis' "thoughts and prayers are with the Iranian and Iraqi brothers who lost their lives in this tragic calamity and we pray for the speedy recovery of the injured."

Iran sits on many major fault lines and is prone to near-daily quakes. In 2003, a magnitude 6.6 earthquake flattened the historic city of Bam, killing 26,000 people. The last major casualty earthquake in Iran struck in East Azerbaijan province in August 2012, killing over 300 people.

Associated Press writers Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates; Susannah George in Irbil, Iraq; Balint Szlanko in Darbandikhan, Iraq; Zeynep Bilginsoy in Istanbul; Zarar Khan in Islamabad and Sinan Salaheddin in Baghdad contributed to this report.

Spain to brief EU on alleged cyber-meddling in Catalonia

BRUSSELS (AP) — Spain's foreign minister says he will brief his European Union counterparts on alleged cyber-meddling from Russian territory and elsewhere aimed at spreading misinformation about the independence push in the northeastern region of Catalonia.

Alfonso Dastis said he would tell the EU's top diplomats Monday in Brussels that data showed internet traffic by media networks "in Russia and other countries" after a banned Oct. 1 secession referendum in Catalonia.

Referring to a recent London meeting between WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and a prominent Catalan pro-independence figure, Dastis also said there were signs that Assange and others "are trying to interfere and manipulate" amid the Catalonia crisis.

Spain said last week that the signs don't necessarily mean the Russian government is involved. Spain's government hasn't provided evidence to back the interference claim.

Seoul: N. Koreans fire at soldier trying to defect to South

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean soldiers shot at and wounded a fellow soldier who was crossing a jointly controlled area at the heavily guarded border to defect to South Korea on Monday, the South's military said.

North Korean soldiers have occasionally defected to South Korea across the border. But it's rare for a North Korean soldier to defect via the Joint Security Area, where border guards of the rival Koreas stand facing each other just meters (feet) away, and be shot by fellow North Korean soldiers.

The soldier bolted from a guard post at the northern side of Panmunjom village in the Joint Security Area to the southern side of the village, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement. He was shot in the shoulder and elbow and was taken to a South Korean hospital, the South's Defense Ministry said. It wasn't immediately known how serious the soldier's injuries were or why he decided to defect.

South Korean troops found the injured soldier south of the border after hearing sounds of gunfire, a South Korean Defense Ministry official said, requesting anonymity, citing department rules. South Korean troops didn't fire at the North, he said.

The defection came at a time of heightened tension over North Korea's nuclear weapons program, and could escalate animosities between the rival countries. North Korea has typically accused South Korea of enticing its citizens to defect, something the South denies.

About 30,000 North Koreans have defected to South Korea since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, but most travel through China.

Panmunjom, once an obscure farming village inside the 4-kilometer-wide (2 1/2-mile-wide) Demilitarized

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Zone that separates the two Koreas, is where an armistice was signed to pause the Korean War. Jointly controlled by the American-led U.N. Command and North Korea, the DMZ is guarded on both sides by hundreds of thousands of combat-ready troops, razor-wire fences and tank traps. More than a million mines are believed to be buried inside the zone.

American presidents often visit Panmunjom and other DMZ areas during their trips to South Korea to reaffirm their security commitment to the South. President Donald Trump planned to visit the DMZ to underscore his stance against North Korea's nuclear program when he came to South Korea last week as part of an Asian tour, but his plans were thwarted by heavy fog that prevented his helicopter from landing at the border area.

At Panmunjom, North Korean soldiers wearing lapel pins with the images of late North Korean leaders often use binoculars to monitor visitors from the South. They stand only several meters (yards) away from tall South Korean soldiers wearing aviator sunglasses standing motionless like statues. This makes the area a popular stop for visitors from both sides.

Areas around Panmunjom were the site of bloodshed and defection attempts by North Koreans in the past, but there have been no such incidents in recent years.

The most famous incident was in 1976, when two American army officers were killed by ax-wielding North Korean soldiers. The attack prompted Washington to fly nuclear-capable B-52 bombers toward the DMZ in an attempt to intimidate North Korea.

In 1984, North Korean and U.N. Command soldiers traded gunfire after a Soviet citizen defected by sprinting to the South Korean sector of the truce village. The incident left three North Korean soldiers and one South Korean soldier dead. In 1998, a North Korean soldier fled to South Korea via Panmunjom.

Moore threatens lawsuit over story that threatens campaign

By HOPE YEN and KEVIN FREKING, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Alabama Republican Roy Moore says a lawsuit will be filed over the newspaper report carrying allegations that he had sexual contact with a 14-year-old girl four decades ago and that neither Democrats nor Republicans want to see him win a special Senate election.

While pressure to quit the race four weeks before Election Day intensified from within the Republican Party, Moore assured supporters Sunday night at a Huntsville, Alabama, gym that the Washington Post story was "fake news" and "a desperate attempt to stop my political campaign."

Moore said allegations that he was involved with a minor child are "untrue" and said the newspaper "will be sued," drawing a round of applause. The former judge also questioned why such allegations would be leveled for the first time so close to the special election in spite of his decades in public life.

"Why would they come now? Because there are groups that don't want me in the United States Senate," he said, naming the Democratic Party and the Republican establishment and accusing them of working together. He added, "We do not plan to let anybody deter us from this race."

The Post story quoted four women by name, including the woman who alleged the sexual contact at 14, and had two dozen other sources.

Moore also tried to raise money from the controversy, writing in a fundraising pitch sent about midafternoon that the "vicious and sleazy attacks against me are growing more vicious by the minute." He told supporters, "I'm counting on you to stand with me at this critical moment by chipping in a donation to help me bust through the vicious lies and attacks and get the truth out to as many voters as possible before December 12."

Another fellow Republican, Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, urged Moore to drop out of the race. He said Moore's explanations had been inadequate and that Republicans should consider Sen. Luther Strange as a write-in candidate to run against Moore. Strange lost the Republican primary to Moore in September.

Even if Moore were to step aside, his name would likely remain on the ballot. And any effort to add Strange as a write-in candidate would threaten to divide the GOP vote in a way that would give the Democratic candidate a greater chance of winning.

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Toomey did not rule out the possibility that Senate Republicans might work to unseat Moore if he wins the special election against Democrat Doug Jones.

"You know, this is a terrible situation, nearly 40-year-old allegation, we'll probably never know for sure exactly what happened," Toomey said on "Meet the Press" on NBC. "But from my point of view, I think the accusations have more credibility than the denial. I think it would be best if Roy would just step aside."

The White House, pointedly noting that President Donald Trump did not back Moore during the primary, said Trump will likely weigh in on the Senate race when he returns from Asia later this week. The White House has already made clear that Moore should step aside if the allegations are proven to be true.

"I think there's a special place in hell for those who actually perpetrate these crimes," White House legislative aide Marc Short said Sunday.

"But, having said that, he hasn't been proved guilty," Short added. "We have to afford him the chance to defend himself."

Moore is an outspoken Christian conservative and former state Supreme Court judge. The Post reported last Thursday that he had sexual contact with a 14-year-old girl and pursued three other teenagers decades earlier.

While he called the allegations "completely false and misleading," in an interview with conservative radio host Sean Hannity he 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."

The story stirred concern among anxious GOP officials in Washington in a key race to fill the Senate seat once held by Jeff Sessions, now the U.S. attorney general. Losing the special election to a Democrat would imperil Republicans' already slim 52-48 majority in the Senate, which is hoping to pass a tax overhaul later this year. But a Moore victory also would pose risks if he were to join the Senate GOP with a cloud of sexual misconduct allegations.

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

Over the weekend, more Republicans distanced themselves from Moore, including Sens. Bob Corker of Tennessee and Tim Scott of South Carolina.

Toomey and Short appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press," Scott spoke on CBS' "Face the Nation."

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. POWERFUL EARTHQUAKE ON IRAN-IRAQ BORDER KILLS HUNDREDS

Iran bore the brunt of the 7.3 magnitude temblor, which sent people fleeing their homes in the middle of the night and was felt as far west as the Mediterranean coast, authorities say.

2. TRUMP, DUTERTE MEET IN PHILIPPINES

Trump says nothing about human rights and both leaders ignored shouted questions from reporters about the Filipino leader's violent drug crackdown.

3. WHAT STATEMENT TRUMP IS TEASING AS 'MAJOR'

The White House suggests the president may designate North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism when he returns to Washington later this week.

4. SAUDI ARABIA SAYS IT WILL REOPEN YEMEN AIRPORTS, SEAPORTS

The Saudi-led coalition fighting Yemen's Houthi rebels were criticized for the closure by the U.N. and aid groups who say it could bring millions of people closer to "starvation and death." The rebels vow retaliation against the kingdom.

5. ISLAMIC STATE GROUP IN SOMALIA COULD BE 'SIGNIFICANT THREAT'

Experts say its nascent presence in the country could grow if it attracts fighters fleeing collapsing strong-

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holds in Syria and Iraq. The U.S. military this month carried out its first drone strikes against IS there.

6. EX-MEMBERS SAY CHURCH USES POWER, LIES TO KEEP GRIP ON KIDS

An AP investigation finds that a secretive evangelical church in North Carolina used positions of authority, deception and intimidation to bring children into the sect or keep them from leaving.

7. ROHINGYA BOY FLOATS ACROSS RIVER TO FLEE MYANMAR VIOLENCE

Nabi Hussain, 13, used a yellow plastic oil drum to cross the 2 1/2-mile waterway to Bangladesh, a symbol of the desperation the persecuted Muslim minority is feeling.

8. MOORE THREATENS SUIT OVER STORY THAT COULD SINK CAMPAIGN

The Alabama Republican Senate candidate says he'll sue the Washington Post for publishing allegations that he had sexual contact with a 14-year-old girl some four decades ago.

9. GLOBAL CARBON POLLUTION RISES AFTER 3 STRAIGHT FLAT YEARS

The report by the Global Carbon Project team dashes hopes that emissions from the burning of coal, oil and gas had peaked.

10. WHO'S UNBEATABLE ON THE ROAD

Tom Brady threw three TD passes and the New England Patriots matched their own AFC record with their 12th consecutive road victory, pummeling Denver 41-16.

Yemen rebels vow escalation as Saudis look to relax blockade

By AHMED AL-HAJ, Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — Saudi Arabia announced Monday that the Saudi-led coalition fighting Shiite rebels in Yemen will begin reopening airports and seaports in the Arab world's poorest country, days after closing them over a rebel ballistic missile attack on Riyadh.

The announcement from the Saudi mission at the United Nations came after the coalition fighting Yemen's rebels, known as Houthis, faced widespread international criticism over the closure, with the U.N. and over 20 aid groups saying it could bring millions of people closer to "starvation and death."

"The first step in this process will be taken within 24 hours and involves reopening all the ports in areas controlled by" Yemen's internationally recognized government, which the coalition backs, read the mission's statement.

Those ports are in Yemeni cities of Aden, Mocha and Mukalla. For ports in rebel-held or disputed territories, such as the city of Hodeida, the mission said it has asked the U.N. to send a team of experts to discuss ways to make sure weapons can't be smuggled in.

The Saudi-led coalition hopes that will prevent "the smuggling of weapons, ammunitions, missile parts and cash that are regularly being supplied by Iran and Iranian accomplices to the Houthi rebels," the statement said.

Despite the Saudi announcement, a top leader of Yemen's Shiite rebels on Monday vowed retaliation against the oil-rich kingdom over its disastrous blockade of his war-torn country. The war has killed over 10,000 civilians, displaced 3 million people and left much of the infrastructure in ruins.

The fiery comments by Saleh al-Sammad, the head of the Presidency Council of the Houthis, came during a rally of thousands of rebel supporters marching down a main boulevard in the capital, Sanaa.

Al-Sammad said that with the blockade, the coalition "shut down all doors for peace and dialogue." The more the blockade tightens, he said, the more the Houthis will develop their abilities to "respond to the assault of the enemy."

After two years of a devastating war, the Houthis still control much of Yemen's north while the south falls under the embattled President of Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, whose government is recognized by the international community and who is supported by the Saudi-led coalition.

Saudi Arabia announced it shut down all ports after a Houthi ballistic missile attack near Riyadh's international airport.

The missile was intercepted but Saudi Arabia and the United States both accused Iran of supplying the missile, saying it bore "Iranian markings." The Houthis have denied that.

For its part, Iran long has denied supplying 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.

Associated Press writers Maggie Michael in Cairo and Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, contributed to this report.

Trump does not publicly rebuke Duterte for drug war killings

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has sanctioned a bloody drug war that features extrajudicial killing. He called Barack Obama a "son of a whore." This week, he boasted that he murdered a man with his own hands.

All that went unmentioned in public by President Donald Trump when the leaders held talks Monday in the Philippines.

Reporters saw the beginning of the leaders' bilateral meeting in during which Trump praised Duterte's hospitality, the organization of the summit he was hosting and even Manila's weather. Trump said nothing about human rights and both leaders ignored shouted questions about the violent drug crackdown. The two men also shared a laugh in the meeting when Duterte called reporters "spies."

Later, White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said that the 40-minute meeting focused on ISIS, illegal drugs, and trade. Human rights, she added, briefly came up in the context of the Philippines' fight against illegal drugs. She did not say if Trump was critical of the violence.

That appeared to conflict with the Philippines' version of the meeting. Harry Roque, a spokesman for Duterte, said "there was no mention of human rights. There was no mention of extralegal killings. There was only a rather lengthy discussion of the Philippine war on drugs with President Duterte doing most of the explaining."

Breaking with his presidential predecessors, Trump has largely abandoned publicly pressing foreign leaders on human rights, instead showing a willingness to embrace international strongmen for strategic gain. He has cozied up to autocrats such as Saudi Arabia's King Salman, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi and Russian President Vladimir Putin. And earlier in this trip to Asia he made no mention of human rights during multiple appearances in Beijing with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"Trump seems very comfortable with strongmen. It's not just that he won't criticize Duterte. I wouldn't be surprised if he patted him on the back," said Mike Chinoy, senior fellow at U.S.-China Institute at the University of Southern California, before the meeting.

Duterte's war on drugs has alarmed human rights advocates around the world who say it has allowed police officers and vigilantes to ignore due process and to take justice into their own hands. Government officials estimate that well over 3,000 people, mostly drug users and dealers, have died in the ongoing crackdown. Human rights groups believe the victim total is far higher, perhaps closer to 9,000.

"Human rights groups, I think, will be quite disappointed by the visit," said Amy Searight, director of the Southeast Asia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "It's unlikely that human rights or rule of law or due process are going to be topics that President Trump will raise."

Duterte has strenuously defended the violence and boasted of participating himself.

Late last year, he bragged that he personally pulled the trigger and killed three people years ago while serving as mayor of Davao City. And last week, while in Vietnam for an international summit, he said he took his first life years earlier.

"When I was a teenager, I had been in and out of jail, rumble here and there," Duterte said during a speech in Danang, where he briefly crossed paths with Trump on the sidelines of an international summit. "At the age of 16, I already killed someone."

He claimed he fatally stabbed the person "just over a look." His spokesman later tried to downplay the comment, saying, "I think it was in jest."

Trump has shown little interest in pressuring Duterte to rein in the violence, instead saluting him during

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a May phone call.

"I just wanted to congratulate you because I am hearing of the unbelievable job on the drug problem," Trump told Duterte, according to a transcript of the conversation that later leaked. "Many countries have the problem, we have a problem, but what a great job you are doing and I just wanted to call and tell you that."

Trump also criticized Obama during the call, noting that his predecessor "did not understand" the drug problem the Philippines faces. Meanwhile, Duterte was openly critical of Obama in the final year of his presidency, including cursing his name.

White House officials have suggested there is a strategy behind Trump's flattery of Duterte.

Advisers have said that while Trump was always unlikely to publicly chastise the Philippine president, he may offer criticisms behind closed doors. Trump would plan to hold his tongue in public in order not to embarrass Duterte, whom he is urging to help pressure North Korea and fight terrorism, and to avoid pushing him into the arms of China.

"If the administration is not going to care about human rights in China, why would you care in the Philippines?" asked Gordon Chang, Asia expert and author of "Nuclear Showdown: North Korea Takes On the World." He said the "logical thing to do is keep them close and not let Duterte flirt with China. In our struggle with China, we need all the friends when we can get."

Duterte has seemed less committed to the strategic partnership with the U.S. Searight said a good relationship is "vital to the United States given its location on the South China Sea and the enhanced access that the American military has gotten in recent years with the Philippines."

White House aides have suggested that Trump's strategy has worked before, pointing to his interactions with el-Sissi. Trump refrained from chastising the Egyptian leader but quietly worked with him to help engineer the release of American prisoner Aya Hijazi in April.

Trump dismissed the notion that he buddied up to dictators. He said Saturday he has great relationships with all sorts of leaders, "every person in that room today," after leaving a summit in Vietnam attended by Duterte and Putin, among others.

Human rights groups have expressed dismay at Trump's public silence, believing that the spotlight an American president can shine on human rights abuses overseas can rally pressure on an authoritarian regime to change its ways.

"In the old days, we used to call on the U.S. government to raise human rights issues during these trips," said John Sifton, Asia advocacy director at Human Rights Watch. But given the administration's lack of credibility in raising human rights abuses, he said, they have pivoted to a different tack, focusing on international attention.

"We haven't given up," Sifton said.

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

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Chairman: House won't agree to nix property tax deduction

By KEVIN FREKING, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The chairman of the House's tax-writing committee is expressing confidence that chamber won't go along with the Senate's proposal to eliminate the deduction for property taxes, setting up a major flashpoint as Republicans aim to put a tax cut bill on President Donald Trump's desk before Christmas.

The GOP is moving urgently on the first rewrite of the U.S. tax code in three decades, but key differences promise to complicate the effort.

Among the biggest differences in the two bills that have emerged: the House bill allows homeowners to deduct up to \$10,000 in property taxes while the Senate proposal unveiled by GOP leaders last week

eliminates the entire deduction.

The deduction is particularly important to residents in states with high property values or tax rates, such as New Jersey, Illinois, California and New York. Rep. Kevin Brady, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, said that he worked with lawmakers in those states to ensure the House bill "delivers this relief" and that he was committed to ensuring it stays in the final package.

"It's important to make sure that people keep more of what they earn, even in these high-tax states," Brady, R-Texas, said during an appearance on "Fox News Sunday."

The Senate's tax-writing committee will wade through its newly unveiled measure starting Monday. The legislation in the House and Senate carries high political stakes for President Donald Trump and Republican leaders in Congress, who view passage of tax cuts as critical to the GOP's success at the polls next year.

The House is expected to vote on its measure on Thursday. The House Ways and Means Committee approved it last week on a party-line 24-16 vote.

Democrats are solidly opposed to the GOP revamp, so the Republicans must find agreement among themselves to have any hope of passage.

Both the House and Senate versions of the legislation would eliminate deductions for state and local income taxes and sales taxes paid. Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said in response to Brady's pledge that Republicans should fully restore what is referred to as the SALT deduction, or millions of middle-class families would end up paying higher federal income taxes, not less.

"The House's so-called 'compromise' would be saying to the middle class we'll only chop off four of your fingers instead of all five," Schumer said in a statement.

A key feature of both bills is a reduction in the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 20 percent. But the Senate version delays the cut for one year. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on CBS's "Face The Nation" that he was confident the issue would not be a stumbling block to reaching an agreement.

"Obviously we would prefer if they kicked in sooner rather than later, but we're going to work with the Senate on that issue," Mnuchin said.

Mnuchin also rebuffed projections that the proposed tax cuts would increase the national debt. He said that creating sustained economic growth of 3 percent or higher would generate trillions of dollars in additional revenue to the government. He did not specify over what time frame that would occur.

"This is all about growth," Mnuchin said.

Texas town holds 1st Sunday service since church attack

By CLAUDIA LAUER, Associated Press

SUTHERLAND SPRINGS, Texas (AP) — Hundreds of mourners crowded into the tiny town of Sutherland Springs for the first Sunday service since a gunman stormed the First Baptist Church a week earlier, killing more than two dozen people in the worst mass shooting in Texas history.

After an emotional sermon held outdoors under a massive white tent, congregants and the public were invited to return to the church for the first time since the tragedy. A chilling memorial set up inside the church included 26 white chairs — including one for the unborn baby of a victim who was pregnant — bearing each victim's name or nickname painted in gold.

Pastor Frank Pomeroy shared his personal heartache and a message that the community bound together by faith can move past the evil that attacked the church seven days earlier.

"Rather than choose darkness as that young man did that day, we choose life," Pomeroy said during the service, his voice cracking as he spoke about his 14-year-old daughter, Annabelle, who was among those killed in the Nov. 5 rampage.

"I know everyone who gave their life that day," he said, pausing to gather himself. "Some of whom were my best friends and my daughter." He wiped his eyes, then added, "I guarantee they are dancing with Jesus today."

Initially, the church had planned to hold Sunday's service at an adjacent community center, which can accommodate a few dozen people. But when organizers realized hundreds planned to attend, the service

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was moved to a massive white tent erected in a baseball field.

So many people turned up that the tent's side flaps had to be opened for an overflow crowd so that those who couldn't get a seat could see and hear what was going on inside. Mark Collins, a previous pastor at First Baptist, said it was the largest gathering in the church's 100-year history.

The front three rows were reserved for survivors of the attack and the families of those killed. Many arrived early, as a steady rain fell on the tarp roof, offering hugs to each other and prayers.

Congregants wept during the service and a moving version of "Amazing Grace," led by three singers and a man on guitar, as the voices of hundreds sang along.

Some bowed their heads, others raised their hands and swayed as the music played, and tears streamed down their faces.

"Amazing Grace" was also played at halftime at Floresville High School at Friday night's game, in tribute to the victims.

Later Sunday, the First Baptist Church opened its doors for the first time since the shooting. The inside had been transformed into a memorial with its walls, floor and pulpit painted white.

Broken windows and ceiling tiles had been replaced and bullet holes filled. The church's pews, the carpet and all equipment had been removed. All that filled the space were the 26 white chairs, each with a red rose tied to it except for one that had a pink rose for the unborn baby.

A line of about 85 people snaked from the church entrance and curved around the block, including people who traveled from as far away as the East Coast, said Collins, the church's former pastor who has returned to help in the tragedy's aftermath.

Constructing the memorial wasn't an easy decision, he said. Some members have said they never wanted to step foot inside the site, he said, while others have said they needed to see it.

Next Sunday's service is expected to take place on the grounds of the church, likely in a makeshift structure, Collins said. Church members will have to decide whether to demolish the church, as some have said is likely, he said, but plans are also being discussed to build a new structure nearby.

The gunman, Devin Patrick Kelley, went aisle to aisle looking for victims and shot crying babies at point-blank range, according to witness accounts. The dead ranged in age from 18 months to 77 years old. About 20 people were wounded in the shooting.

Kelley died of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound after he was shot and chased by two men who heard the gunfire at the church. Investigators have said the attack appeared to stem from a domestic dispute involving Kelley and his mother-in-law, who sometimes attended services at the church but wasn't there the day of the shooting.

Kelley had a history of domestic violence: He was given a bad conduct discharge from the Air Force after pleading guilty to assaulting his first wife and stepson.

The church has reached out to Kelley's family and was praying for them, Collins said.

"Our hearts and prayers go out to his family," he added.

For Sunday's service, people from other churches dropped off handmade prayer cloths and tiny wooden crosses, among other gifts. Mental health organizations provided tissues and brought therapy dogs to the service.

Republican Sen. John Cornyn spoke at the service, saying lives were stolen as darkness overtook one man's heart.

"The pain of losing 26 members is overwhelming," Cornyn said. "Many lives have been changed forever. ... I can't imagine what you've been grappling with ever since."

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Liz Smith, syndicated gossip columnist, dies at 94

By CHRISTINA PACIOLLA

Liz Smith, the syndicated gossip columnist whose mixture of banter, barbs, and bon mots about the glitterati helped her climb the A-list as high as many of the celebrities she covered, died Sunday at the age of 94.

Joni Evans, Smith's literary agent, told The Associated Press she died of natural causes.

For more than a quarter-century, Smith's column — titled simply "Liz Smith" — was one of the most widely read in the world. The column's success was due in part to Smith's own celebrity status, giving her an insider's access rather than relying largely on tipsters, press releases and publicists.

With a big smile and her sweet southern manner, the Texas native endeared herself to many celebrities and scored major tabloid scoops: Donald and Ivana Trump's divorce, Woody Allen and Mia Farrow's impending parenthood. One item proved embarrassingly premature: In 2012, she released a column online mourning the death of her friend Nora Ephron. But Ephron, who was indeed gravely ill, did not die until a few hours later and an impending tragedy that Ephron had tried to keep secret became known to the world.

Smith held a lighthearted opinion of her own legacy.

"We mustn't take ourselves too seriously in this world of gossip," she told The Associated Press in 1987. "When you look at it realistically, what I do is pretty insignificant.

"Still, I'm having a lot of fun."

"I was fortunate enough to work with the amazing Liz Smith," Al Roker tweeted. He said that during his time at WNBC, she was nothing short of "fabulous."

"Liz Smith was the definition of a lady," actor James Woods tweeted. "She dished, but always found a way to make it entertaining and fun."

After graduating with a degree in journalism from the University of Texas, Smith recalled buying a one-way ticket to New York in 1949 with a dream of being the next Walter Winchell.

But unlike Winchell and his imitators, Smith succeeded with kindness and an aversion to cheap shots. Whether reporting on entertainers, politicians or power brokers, the "Dame of Dish" never bothered with unfounded rumors, sexual preferences or who's-sleeping-with-whom.

"When she escorts us into the private lives of popular culture's gods and monsters, it's with a spirit of wonder, not meanness," wrote Jane and Michael Stern in reviewing Smith's 2000 autobiography, "Natural Blonde," for the New York Times Book Review.

But it may have been the question of her own sexuality which kept her from discussing that of the stars. A subject in the gay press for many years, Smith acknowledged in her 2000 book that she had relationships with both men and women, and confirmed a long-rumored, long-term relationship with archaeologist Iris Love.

Evans said Smith had a series of small strokes earlier this year but nothing serious that slowed her down. She was still having breakfast, lunch and dinner outings with friends, family and associates, Evans said. She called her "a light."

Born Mary Elizabeth Smith in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1923, she was the daughter of devout Baptist mother and an eccentric father. Smith said her dad received his divine inspiration more from the race track than the pulpit.

As a young girl, Smith quickly fell in love with the silver screen, since movies were one of the few things her mother did not consider a sin.

After a brief marriage while attending Hardin-Simmons University, Smith earned her journalism degree and headed off for New York with two suitcases and \$50.

For nearly 30 years, Smith bounced from job to job: publicist for singer Kaye Ballard; assistant to Mike Wallace and Candid Camera creator Allen Funt; ghostwriter for Igor Cassini's "Cholly Knickerbocker" gossip column.

Smith ultimately wrote for nine New York newspapers and dozens of magazines, but it was a stint writing for Cosmopolitan that led to her break. While establishing herself as an authority on Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, Smith attracted the attention of the New York Daily News.

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She started her own column at the tabloid in 1976. A gossip star was born.

In 1978, during a strike at the News, Smith helped usher in the era of celebrity journalism on television by joining WNBC-TV for three nights a week commentary. Ten years later she jumped to Fox, and she later did work for the cable channel E! Entertainment Television.

During that time, Smith migrated from the News to the rival New York Post and finally to Newsday, ultimately earning salaries well into six figures. Her column was syndicated nationwide, drawing millions of readers.

She was married a second time, but it was also short-lived.

In between all the parties, movie premieres and late-night soirees at celebrity hangouts like Elaine's, Smith found time to host an ever-widening array of charity fund-raisers.

She raised money for groups such from Literacy Volunteers, which teaches adults to read and write, to the Women's Action Alliance, which promotes full equality for women.

She is survived by several nieces and nephews. A memorial service will be held to honor her this spring.

Turkey denies report of plan to kidnap cleric Gulen from US

BY ZEYNEP BILGINSOY, Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkey has dismissed as “utterly false, ludicrous and groundless” a report that Turkish officials may have discussed paying millions of dollars to have a U.S.-based Muslim cleric kidnapped.

The Wall Street Journal reported Friday that Special Counsel Robert Mueller was investigating an alleged plot involving former U.S. National Security Adviser Michael Flynn and his son to hand Fethullah Gulen over to Ankara for as much as \$15 million.

Turkey blames the cleric and his supporters for a July 2016 military coup attempt that killed 250 people. Gulen, who lives in Pennsylvania, has denied being behind it.

The Turkish Embassy in Washington reiterated demands late Saturday for the United States to extradite Gulen so he can stand trial. The embassy in a statement rejected “all allegations that Turkey would resort to means external to the rule of law” to get Gulen back on Turkish soil.

Flynn's lawyers also have disputed the Journal report that Mueller was looking into a meeting where Flynn allegedly discussed a plan that would pay him and his son “to forcibly remove” Gulen.

Flynn, a retired lieutenant general, did lobbying work for Turkey last year.

“Out of respect for the process of the various investigations regarding the 2016 campaign, we have intentionally avoided responding to every rumor or allegation,” the lawyers said in a statement.

“But today's news cycle has brought allegations about General Flynn, ranging from kidnapping to bribery, that are so outrageous and prejudicial that we are making an exception to our usual rule: they are false,” they said.

Michael Flynn Jr.'s attorney declined to comment on the allegations.

Gulen has been living in the U.S. for nearly two decades. He is a former ally of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan until their 2013 public falling-out led the government to declare Gulen's network a terror group.

Nearly 50,000 people are behind bars in Turkey and more than 100,000 civil servants have been dismissed from their jobs for alleged links to the cleric's network in the government's crackdown after the failed coup.

Also behind bars in Turkey for alleged links to Gulen is U.S. pastor Andrew Brunson, who has lived in Turkey for over 20 years. Erdogan said in September the U.S. was pressing Turkey to return a “cleric” while refusing to hand over another “cleric.”

The Turkish Embassy said the Turkish people find Gulen's continued refuge in the U.S. “perplexing and deeply frustrating.”

Complicating relations further is the case of a Turkish-Iranian businessman on trial in the U.S. for evading U.S. sanctions on Iran. A former Turkish economy minister and an executive of a state-owned Turkish bank have also been indicted.

In a meeting last week, Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim and U.S. Vice President Michael Pence

discussed the cases among other sources of strain, including the U.S. backing of Syrian Kurdish militants in the war against the Islamic State group.

Turkey has been infuriated by the U.S. support for a group it considers an extension of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK, which has waged an insurgency within Turkey for more than 30 years.

Lebanon PM says he will return to seek settlement

By SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — In his first TV interview since he announced his surprise resignation last weekend, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri said Sunday he will return to his country from Saudi Arabia "within days" to seek a settlement with the militant group Hezbollah, his rivals in his coalition government.

Hariri, looking downcast and tired, denied he was being held against his will in the kingdom and said he was compelled to resign to save Lebanon from imminent dangers, which he didn't specify.

He held back tears at one point and repeated several times that he resigned to create a "positive shock" and draw attention to the danger of siding with Iran, Hezbollah's main patron, in regional conflicts.

"We are in the eye of the storm," Hariri said.

A political crisis has gripped Lebanon since Hariri read his televised resignation from Saudi Arabia on Nov. 4 in which he accused Iran of meddling in his country in a vicious tirade that was uncharacteristic of the usually soft-spoken 47-year old premier.

The live interview on Future TV was designed in part to dispel rumors that Hariri, who holds Lebanese and Saudi citizenship, was under house arrest by Saudi authorities who have escalated their rhetoric against Iran and Hezbollah. Many feared Saudi Arabia was dragging Lebanon into its rivalry with Iran and called for Hariri to return home to ensure he was acting of his own free will.

"I am free to travel tomorrow if I wanted to. But I have a family. I saw what happened when my father was martyred. I don't want the same thing to happen to my children," Hariri said.

His father, former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, was killed by a car bomb in Beirut in 2005. Hezbollah members are being tried in absentia for the killing. Saad Hariri's family lives in the Saudi capital of Riyadh.

Hariri sounded less belligerent in Sunday's interview than he did during the resignation announcement. He said he realizes his resignation was unconventional, adding he was ready to return to formally submit it and seek a settlement with Hezbollah.

He suggested he may be willing to withdraw it but said that would be conditional on Hezbollah committing to remaining neutral on regional conflicts, putting the onus back on the militant group.

He singled out Hezbollah's involvement in Yemen as the main cause of the kingdom's ire. Saudi Arabia has stepped up its rhetoric against Hezbollah and Iran, accusing both of supporting Shiite rebels in Yemen known as Houthis. A Saudi-led coalition has been at war with the Houthis since March 2015 in a bloody, stalemated conflict that is causing a major humanitarian disaster.

Hezbollah has also sent thousands of fighters to Lebanon's neighbor, Syria, to support the forces of Syria's President Bashar Assad.

Hariri said the unity government he formed a year ago was supposed to stick to an agreement not to interfere in regional affairs but that Hezbollah has not kept its end of the deal.

"If we want to go back on the resignation, we have to return to the policy of distancing ourselves" from regional conflicts. "I will come back to Lebanon to work. ... We can't deal with any more ambiguity in this issue. There must be a final settlement with Hezbollah on this regional aspect."

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah has said Saudi Arabia has declared war on Lebanon, instead of confronting Iran. Nasrallah said Saudi Arabia was holding Hariri against his will to meddle in Lebanon's affairs.

Hariri repeatedly tried to dispel that he was forced to resign, describing his relations with the Saudi king and crown prince as amicable, almost family-like. He also said he is looking into security arrangements before returning to Lebanon, suggesting his life was in danger.

Maha Yahya, the head of Carnegie Middle East, tweeted after the interview that Hariri's words suggests his resignation was not final and that Hezbollah's withdrawal from the government was no longer a key

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demand.

The interview followed pressure from Lebanese officials, who said Hariri's resignation was not accepted because it was declared in Saudi Arabia.

Lebanon President Michel Aoun said before the interview that the "mysterious circumstances for Hariri's stay in the Saudi capital of Riyadh makes all his positions questionable and in doubt and not of his own volition." Several local TV stations, including Hezbollah's, decided not to show the interview in line with the president's comments.

Hariri had not been heard from since the resignation announcement, but met with foreign diplomats, and appeared with Saudi royalty and in Abu Dhabi.

He refused to comment on the recent wave of arrests of scores of people in Saudi Arabia, including princes and business leaders, calling it an internal affair. He said it was mere "coincidence" that the announcement of his resignation from Riyadh coincided with the wave of arrests. He said rumors that he was involved in the purge were "dreams."

In the wake of the crisis in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia has asked its citizens to leave the country, and many Lebanese fear further economic sanctions or even military action.

Hariri first held the post of prime minister in 2009 for nearly two years before Hezbollah forced the collapse of his government. Hezbollah ministers withdrew because of differences over a U.N.-backed tribunal investigating his father's assassination.

Hariri was appointed prime minister in late 2016 and headed a 30-member coalition government that included Hezbollah. But it has again been an uneasy partnership between Hariri, who heads a Sunni-led camp loyal to Saudi Arabia, and Hezbollah, which represents a faction loyal to Shiite Iran.

A business graduate of Georgetown University in Washington, he headed his father's Saudi-based construction business for years. The company has struggled with debts for years before closing down in July.

Earlier Sunday, thousands of people attending Lebanon's annual marathon used the event to urge Hariri to return home. One woman raised a placard reading: "We want our prime minister back."

Hariri was a regular participant in the marathon, giving the race a big boost. This year, Aoun encouraged runners to call on Hariri to return.

Spectators along the route wore hats and held signs reading "Running for you" and "Waiting for you." Billboards with pictures of Hariri rose overhead.

Joanne Hamza, a physical education teacher who wore a cap with a picture of Hariri on it, said his absence "has been unifying. All Lebanese, from all sects, are missing their leader. This is somehow reassuring but we still want him with us."

In the northern city of Tripoli on Saturday, unknown assailants burned posters of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in a sign of the rising tensions. Interior Minister Nohad Machnouk tweeted that those acts did not reflect the "true feelings" of the people of Tripoli or Lebanon, and called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice.

Associated Press writer Zeina Karam in Beirut contributed.

Slovenia's president wins second term in runoff election

By JOVANA GEC, Associated Press

BLEED, Slovenia (AP) — Slovenia's President Borut Pahor was re-elected to a second term Sunday after winning a runoff election against a former comedian who currently serves as the mayor of a northern town.

Pahor, 54, a veteran politician known as the "King of Instagram" for his frequent use of social media, won 53 percent of the vote to challenger Marjan Sarec's 47 percent, results from Slovenian election authorities showed after a completed preliminary count.

Pahor thanked voters and vowed to further boost their faith in democracy. He congratulated his opponent for his performance.

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"I will be a president of all," Pahor said. "I'll bring people together and build on what brings us closer." Pahor is only the second Slovenian president to win a second term in office since the country gained independence from the former Yugoslavia in 1991.

The country of 2 million people in Central Europe is the birthplace of U.S. first lady Melania Trump and known for its Alpine mountains and lakes.

A former model like the U.S. first lady, the telegenic, blue-eyed politician has held a number of public posts and was Slovenia's prime minister before he first was elected president in 2012.

Sarec was a well-known satirical comedian before entering politics in 2010 to run for mayor in Kamnik. He conceded defeat and congratulated Pahor on Sunday night, but said his success as a relative political newcomer showed Slovenian citizens wanted change.

"I'm proud to have had a possibility to run against the premiere league," Sarec said at his headquarters in Kamnik. "My result is good. It speaks for itself."

Analysts had warned that Sarec's ability to make it into the runoff showed Slovenians' discontent with established politicians. Critics accused Pahor of avoiding taking stands on important issues.

Election authorities said less than 42 percent of eligible voters cast ballots in Sunday's election. Slovenia's official STA news agency says that's the lowest turnout for a presidential race since Slovenia split from the former Yugoslavia in 1991.

Key topics facing Slovenia include the economy, a border dispute with Croatia and the future of the European Union, which Slovenia joined in 2004.

Slovenia's presidency carries no executive powers, but the office-holder proposes a prime minister and his or her opinion on important issues holds weight. Pahor and Sarec, while both centrists, clashed on issues such as the privatization of Slovenia's biggest bank and the composition of the country's anti-corruption body.

After voting Sunday, Pahor complained that he has been falsely viewed as a populist — which he says he is not — while Sarec was trying to assume the role of a "statesman." Pahor suggested that the "change of roles" cost him public support.

In his victory speech, Pahor, who has sought to portray himself as a unifier president, also said that he will strive to help solve problems and bridge any divisions that might exist in the Slovenian society.

Ali Zerdin contributed from Ljubljana, Slovenia and Dusan Stojanovic contributed from Belgrade, Serbia.

New mass graves found in Iraq could contain up to 400 bodies

KIRKUK, Iraq (AP) — Iraqi security forces have found mass graves in an area recently retaken from the Islamic State group that could contain up to 400 bodies, an Iraqi official said Sunday.

The bodies of civilians and security forces were found in an abandoned base near Hawija, a northern town retaken in early October, Kirkuk governor Rakan Saed said. He didn't say when authorities will start exhuming the bodies from the mass graves.

Khalaf Luhaibi, a local shepherd who led troops to the site, said IS used to bring captives to the area and shoot them dead or pour oil over them and light them on fire. The area was strewn with torn clothing and what appeared to be human bones and skulls.

Iraqi forces have driven IS from nearly all the territory it once controlled. Authorities have already uncovered several mass graves in other newly liberated areas.

U.S.-backed Iraqi forces have driven the extremists from nearly all the territory they once controlled, with some fighting still underway near the western border with Syria.

On Saturday, Iraq's Prime Minister announced an operation to capture a patch of territory on the western edge of the country near the border with Syria. Hours later, Iraqi Defense Ministry announced capturing Romana area, saying the troops will head to nearby town of Rawa.

According to Ahmed al-Asadi, a spokesman for the Shiite-majority paramilitary forces, Rawa is the last Iraqi town held by IS who still control some scattered small villages in mainly desert areas.

Study suggests women less likely to get CPR from bystanders

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE, AP Chief Medical Writer

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Women are less likely than men to get CPR from a bystander and more likely to die, a new study suggests, and researchers think reluctance to touch a woman's chest might be one reason.

Only 39 percent of women suffering cardiac arrest in a public place were given CPR versus 45 percent of men, and men were 23 percent more likely to survive, the study found.

It involved nearly 20,000 cases around the country and is the first to examine gender differences in receiving heart help from the public versus professional responders.

"It can be kind of daunting thinking about pushing hard and fast on the center of a woman's chest" and some people may fear they are hurting her, said Audrey Blewer, a University of Pennsylvania researcher who led the study.

Rescuers also may worry about moving a woman's clothing to get better access, or touching breasts to do CPR, but doing it properly "shouldn't entail that," said another study leader, U Penn's Dr. Benjamin Abella. "You put your hands on the sternum, which is the middle of the chest. In theory, you're touching in between the breasts."

The study was discussed Sunday at an American Heart Association conference in Anaheim.

Cardiac arrest occurs when the heart suddenly stops pumping, usually because of a rhythm problem. More than 350,000 Americans each year suffer one in settings other than a hospital. About 90 percent of them die, but CPR can double or triple survival odds.

"This is not a time to be squeamish because it's a life and death situation," Abella said.

Researchers had no information on rescuers or why they may have been less likely to help women. But no gender difference was seen in CPR rates for people who were stricken at home, where a rescuer is more likely to know the person needing help.

The findings suggest that CPR training may need to be improved. Even that may be subtly biased toward males — practice mannequins (they're not called "woman-nequins") are usually male torsos, Blewer said.

"All of us are going to have to take a closer look at this" gender issue, said the Mayo Clinic's Dr. Roger White, who co-directs the paramedic program for the city of Rochester, Minnesota. He said he has long worried that large breasts may impede proper placement of defibrillator pads if women need a shock to restore normal heart rhythm.

The Heart Association and the National Institutes of Health funded the study.

Men did not have a gender advantage in a second study discussed on Sunday. It found the odds of suffering cardiac arrest during or soon after sex are very low, but higher for men than women.

Previous studies have looked at sex and heart attacks, but those are caused by a clot suddenly restricting blood flow, and people usually have time to get to a hospital and be treated, said Dr. Sumeet Chugh, a cardiologist at Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute in Los Angeles. He and other researchers wanted to know how sex affected the odds of cardiac arrest, a different problem that's more often fatal.

They studied records on more than 4,500 cardiac arrests over 13 years in the Portland area. Only 34 were during or within an hour of having sex, and 32 of those were in men. Most already were on medicines for heart conditions, so their risk was elevated to start with.

"It's a very awkward situation, and a very horrifying situation to be one of the two people who survives," but more would survive if CPR rates were higher, Chugh said.

Results were published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology.

Marilynn Marchione can be followed on Twitter: @MMarchioneAP

Dubai Air Show opens with Emirates' \$15.1B Boeing buy

By JON GAMBRELL and AYA BATRAWY, Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Long-haul carrier Emirates purchased 40 American-made Boeing 787-10 Dreamliners on Sunday at the start of the biennial Dubai Air Show, a \$15.1 billion deal certain to please U.S. President Donald Trump who has touted the plane's sales as a job creator in America.

The deal appeared to surprise Boeing's archrival Airbus, whose staff had attended a long-delayed news conference and left the room just moments before the announcement.

Airbus has pinned hopes of continuing production of its double-decker jumbo jet on Emirates, the world's largest operator of the aircraft which took delivery of its 100th A380 earlier this month. Reports circulated before the air show that a major A380 sale would be coming.

But instead, Emirates CEO and Chairman Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum explained how the airline considered the Airbus A350 and decided to pick the Boeing 787-10.

"We were comparing the two apples," he said, but found that the Boeing 787 is "the best option" for Emirates "given its maintenance and so on."

It's the second time Airbus has lost out on selling the A350 to Emirates. In June 2014, the state-owned Emirates cancelled an order for 70 A350s after a "fleet requirement" review.

The Boeing 787-10 typically lists for \$312.8 million. Delivery will begin in 2022.

Chicago-based Boeing Co. already has 171 787-10s on order. Among those waiting for the aircraft are Abu Dhabi-based Etihad.

The twin-engine 787-10, however, has been a focus of Trump since he came into office. In February, he visited the Boeing plant in North Charleston, South Carolina, which manufactures the carbon-fiber, 330-seat plane Trump described as "an amazing piece of art."

"As your president I'm going to do everything I can to unleash the power of the American spirit and to put our great people back to work," Trump said at the time. "This is our mantra: Buy American and hire American."

Sheikh Ahmed made a point to say the deal will help create more jobs, echoing Trump's mantra. The deal was signed in the presence of Dubai's ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who also serves as the United Arab Emirates' prime minister and vice president.

"The order will take Emirates' total (number of) wide body aircraft of the Boeing to 204 aircrafts, units worth over \$90 billion," Sheikh Ahmed said. "This is a long-term commitment that supports hundreds of thousands of jobs, not only at Boeing but also throughout the aviation supply chain."

Trump and the White House made no immediate comment on the sale amid the president's trip to the Philippines on Sunday.

Emirates' business has suffered under Trump's travel bans affecting predominantly Muslim nations, as well as the recent ban on laptops in airplane cabins. Emirates said it slashed 20 percent of its flights to the U.S. in the wake of the restrictions, though Dubai International Airport remains the world's busiest international travel hub.

Emirates now relies solely on the Airbus 380 and the Boeing 777 for its flights, making it the largest operator of both. It now has 165 Boeing 777s in its fleet today.

Last week, the U.S. plane manufacturer secured an order valued at more than \$37 billion at list price for 300 of its single-aisle and double-aisle planes during Trump's visit to China. Trump also was present for the signing ceremony last month between Boeing and Singapore Airlines for 39 new aircraft, including 19 of the 787 Dreamliner, in a deal worth up to \$14 billion.

While a big sale, the Dubai Air Show opened Sunday on what seemed to be a quieter note. The only other major sale for airplane manufacturers involved Azerbaijan Airlines, which will buy five Boeing 787-8s, two other freighter aircraft and landing gear maintenance from it for some \$1.9 billion. The UAE's Defense Ministry signed a \$1.6 billion deal with Lockheed Martin to upgrade dozens of its F-16 fighters.

It's a far cry from 2013, when airlines made \$140 billion in new orders before the collapse of global oil prices. Prices have rebounded recently to around \$60 a barrel.

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Other airlines than Emirates are taking part, but missing from the trade show this year is one of the region's largest long-haul carriers, Qatar Airways, amid a diplomatic fallout between Qatar and four Arab nations. Qatar Airways previously had played a big role in the Dubai Air Show, reserving a large pavilion and displaying its latest aircraft to visitors.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain cut ties with Qatar in June over its ties with Iran and its support of Islamist groups, accusing the small Gulf state of supporting extremists, charges it denies. The Arab quartet cut direct flights with Qatar and closed their airspace to Qatari aircraft.

Meanwhile, Emirates unveiled new, state-of-the-art, first class private suites.

In an industry first, passenger suites in the middle aisle without windows will be fitted with "virtual windows" relaying the sky outside via fiber optic cameras on the plane. There's also a video call feature in the suites that connects passengers to the cabin crew, as well as temperature control and various mood lighting settings.

Emirates President Tim Clark declined to say how much a ticket in the 40 square-foot (3.7-square-meter) private suite will cost. The private suites will be available on the airline's Boeing 777.

Trump offers to mediate in protracted South China Sea feud

By JIM GOMEZ, Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — President Donald Trump on Sunday offered to mediate in the South China Sea disputes, while his Chinese counterpart played down concerns over Beijing's military buildup and the prospects of war in the contested waters.

Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping spoke separately about the territorial rifts ahead of an annual summit of Southeast Asian nations that also includes the U.S., China and other global players. The disputes are expected to get the spotlight at the summit, along with the North Korean nuclear threat and terrorism.

The long-simmering disputes are one issue where the two major powers' influence, focus and military might have been gauged, with the U.S. and China both calling for a peaceful resolution but taking contrasting positions in most other aspects of the conflict.

Unlike China, the U.S. is not a claimant to the potentially oil-rich and busy waters, but it has declared that it has a national interest in ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight and the peaceful resolution of the disputes. Several nations back an active American military presence in the region to serve as a counterweight to China's increasingly assertive actions, including the construction of seven man-made islands equipped with military installations.

"I'm a very good mediator and arbitrator," Trump said at a news conference with Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang in Vietnam's capital, Hanoi, before flying to Manila for the summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Trump's offer faces major obstacles. For one, China has steadfastly opposed what it calls U.S. meddling in the disputes and has balked at the U.S. Navy's incursions into what Beijing considers its territorial waters in the South China Sea.

The Philippines, the head of ASEAN's rotational chairmanship, said member states of the 10-nation regional bloc have to consult each other but thanked Trump for the offer.

"He is the master of the art of the deal but, of course, the claimant countries have to answer as a group or individually ... mediation involves all the claimants and nonclaimants," Philippine Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano told reporters.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said Xi, during a meeting in Danang, Vietnam, where they attended the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum this past week, assured him of China's peaceful intentions in the strategic waterway, where Beijing, the Philippines, Vietnam and three other governments have overlapping claims.

When he raised concerns over China's increasing military capability in the South China Sea, Duterte said Xi replied, "No, it's nothing."

"He acknowledged that war cannot be promoted by anybody, (that) it would only mean destruction for

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all of us," Duterte told reporters after flying back to Manila. "He knows that if he goes to war, everything will blow up."

The Chinese leader, however, would not back down on Beijing's territorial claim, Duterte said, and justified his decision not to immediately demand Chinese compliance with a ruling by a U.N.-linked tribunal that invalidated China's sweeping claims in the South China Sea on historical grounds.

China has dismissed that ruling as a "sham" and did not participate in the arbitration case that the Philippines filed during the administration of Duterte's predecessor. Duterte took steps to thaw frosty relations with China after he won the presidency last year.

"If you go to the negotiating table and you start with the statement that I am here to claim validity of our ownership, you're wasting your time. They will not talk about it," Duterte said of China.

The ASEAN summit opens Monday under extra-tight security at a theater and convention complex by Manila Bay. Duterte hosted a gala dinner Sunday for leaders including Trump, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who all wore traditional barong shirts.

Riot police used shields and water hoses Sunday to push back hundreds of left-wing activists who tried to hold a protest at the U.S. Embassy and carried placards that read "Ban Trump." At least 20 protesters were injured in the brief scuffle and one was arrested, according to protest leaders, adding that the demonstrators dispersed after burning a mock U.S. flag.

Associated Press writer Teresa Cerojano contributed to this report.

GE cuts dividend before it lays out company's future

BOSTON (AP) — General Electric slashed its dividend in half as investors gathering in Boston, where Chairman and CEO John Flannery is expected to lay out a significant retooling of the U.S. conglomerate.

GE's quarterly dividend is being cut to 12 cents per share, from 24 cents, starting next month, the company said Monday.

Flannery says cost-cutting maneuver is part of the measures GE will undertake to make the company simpler and stronger. General Electric Co. is expected to announce further plans, including a potential reshaping of the company's health, aviation, lighting and transportation units.

Last month Flannery, who became CEO in August, said that GE would shed business units worth more than \$20 billion over the next year or two. It has been paring businesses for well over a decade now.

After reporting disappointing third-quarter results in October, Flannery said that aside from the exit from certain businesses, GE was planning major cost cuts across the board. The company has already surpassed its goal of cutting \$1 billion in industrial costs this year. It plans more than \$2 billion in cuts next year, double the original target, to go with at least \$20 billion in divestments over the next year or two, the executive said.

Shares of General Electric Co. rise 2.2 percent to \$20.94 in premarket trading.

This Week: Consumer prices, Wal-Mart earns, housing starts

By The Associated Press

A look at some of the key business events and economic indicators upcoming this week:

JUST A BLIP?

Economists expect that a gauge of U.S. consumer prices edged higher in October after a big jump the previous month.

The Labor Department's consumer price index, due out Wednesday, is projected to show a gain of 0.1 percent for October. Consumer prices jumped 0.5 percent in September, the largest increase in eight months. That reflected a spike in energy prices in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, which shut Gulf Coast refineries and drove up gas prices.

Consumer price index, monthly percent change, seasonally adjusted, by month:

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May -0.1
June 0.0
July 0.1
Aug. 0.4
Sept. 0.5
Oct. (est.) 0.1
Source: FactSet
ON A ROLL

Wall Street expects another strong quarterly report card from Wal-Mart Stores.

The world's largest retailer posted improved earnings and revenue in the first half of its current fiscal year. The company has been scaling back new store growth in the U.S. and focusing on its online business as it takes on Amazon.com and more traditional rivals, like Target. Wal-Mart serves up its third-quarter results Thursday.

EYE ON CONSTRUCTION

The Commerce Department issues its latest monthly tally of new residential construction starts Friday.

Construction of new homes and apartments slid 4.7 percent in September, the biggest decline in six months. Builders say they are hamstrung by shortages of skilled workers and land parcels ready for new construction. Despite the slowdown, homebuilding is still running 6.1 percent higher than a year ago.

Housing starts, monthly, seasonally adjusted annual rate:

May 1,129,000
June 1,217,000
July 1,185,000
Aug. 1,183,000
Sept. 1,127,000
Oct. (est.) 1,190,000
Source: FactSet

Uber seals multibillion-dollar investment from Softbank

By TOM KRISHER, AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Japanese technology conglomerate SoftBank has reached a deal with Uber to invest billions in the ride-hailing giant.

Uber Technologies Inc. confirmed the investment in a statement Sunday without giving details.

But a person briefed on the deal told The Associated Press that SoftBank Group will buy about \$1 billion worth of new Uber stock, then will offer to purchase shares from investors and Uber employees with the goal of reaching a 14 percent stake in the company. Uber currently is valued at \$68.5 billion, but stock offers will be based on a lower valuation, so it's unknown just how much the total deal multibillion-dollar deal will be worth, said the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because details were not released.

Uber's statement said it reached an agreement with a consortium led by SoftBank and Dragoneer Investment Group. The deal is a vote of confidence in the company's potential and "will help fuel our investments in technology and our continued expansion at home and abroad, while strengthening our corporate governance," the statement said.

The move also clears the way for Uber, among the most valuable tech firms in the world, to sell stock to the public. Under the deal, the initial public offering will take place before the end of 2019.

SoftBank in Tokyo declined comment.

Such IPO deals generally take some time to be finalized, as they involve many people.

The long-awaited deal was made public in October but was delayed by a corporate governance and legal dispute between investor Benchmark Capital and ousted CEO Travis Kalanick. Both sides ended their feud on Sunday, clearing the way for the SoftBank investment, the person said.

Kalanick, who controls three of 11 seats on the Uber board, agreed to allow a majority of board members

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to vote on any future appointments he makes, according to the person. Benchmark agreed to suspend a lawsuit against Kalanick and drop it once Softbank gets through a one-month tender offer period that will start in about two weeks. Benchmark, a major Silicon Valley venture capital firm that was among Uber's early backers, alleged in the lawsuit that Kalanick covered up turmoil and legal threats at Uber.

The deal allows early investors such as Benchmark to sell at least some of their shares at a handsome profit. But there will likely be some wrangling over how much shares are worth in the coming weeks.

AP Business Writer Yuri Kageyama in Tokyo contributed to this report.

Chinese spend billions shopping online on 'Singles Day'

By SAM McNEIL, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese consumers have spent billions of dollars shopping online for anything from diapers to diamonds on "Singles Day," a day of promotions that has grown into the world's biggest e-commerce event.

China's largest e-commerce giant, Alibaba Group, said Sunday sales by the thousands of retailers on its platforms for the 24-hour period on Saturday amounted to 168.3 billion yuan (\$25.3 billion), setting a new record for the company. It was 39 percent more than sales clocked last year on Alibaba's platforms of 120.7 billion yuan.

By comparison, American shoppers last year spent more than \$5 billion shopping online on Thanksgiving Day and Black Friday, according to Adobe, which tracks such data. Shoppers also spent \$3.39 billion on Cyber Monday last year, the largest single online shopping day in the U.S., Adobe said.

In China, Alibaba's main rival, online retailer JD.com, did not provide a sales figure only for Saturday but said cumulative sales over the 11-day period starting on Nov. 1 through Saturday totaled 127 billion yuan (\$19 billion).

Starting at midnight Friday, diamonds, Chilean frozen salmon, tires, diapers, beer, shoes, handbags, and appliances were shipped out from JD.com's distribution centers on trucks bound for deliveries across China.

China is already the world's largest e-commerce market and the share of online shopping that makes up all consumer spending grows every year. Boston Consulting Group forecasts online spending will rise by 20 percent a year, hitting \$1.6 trillion by 2020, compared with 6 percent growth for off-line retail.

Singles Day was begun by Chinese college students in the 1990s as a version of Valentine's Day for people without romantic partners.

Zhang Jingjing, a 30-year-old clerk for an engineering company, prepared for Singles Day by building a shopping list on Alibaba's retail platform Tmall and watching for when prices dip. She then clicks and snags a long-sought item at a discount.

"I have often emptied my 'shopping cart' on Singles Day," Zheng said. "I have been watching those goods for a long time and know very well their original prices."

The spending gives a boost to the ruling Communist Party's efforts to nurture consumer-based economic growth and reduce reliance on trade and investment. China has 731 million internet users, up 6 percent from 2016, according to government statistics.

Associated Press news assistant Liu Zheng contributed to this report.

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, Nov. 13, the 317th day of 2017. There are 48 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 13, 1977, the satirical comic strip "Li'l Abner" by Al Capp appeared in newspapers for the last time. On this date:

In 1789, Benjamin Franklin wrote in a letter to a friend, Jean-Baptiste Leroy: "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."

In 1849, voters in California ratified the state's original constitution.

In 1909, 259 men and boys were killed when fire erupted inside a coal mine in Cherry, Illinois.

In 1927, the Holland Tunnel opened to the public, providing access between lower Manhattan and New Jersey beneath the Hudson River.

In 1937, the NBC Symphony Orchestra, formed exclusively for radio broadcasting, made its debut.

In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a measure lowering the minimum draft age from 21 to 18.

In 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling that struck down laws calling for racial segregation on public city and state buses.

In 1969, speaking in Des Moines, Iowa, Vice President Spiro T. Agnew accused network television news departments of bias and distortion, and urged viewers to lodge complaints.

In 1974, Karen Silkwood, a 28-year-old technician and union activist at the Kerr-McGee Cimarron plutonium plant near Crescent, Oklahoma, died in a car crash while on her way to meet a reporter.

In 1985, some 23,000 residents of Armero, Colombia, died when a volcanic mudslide buried the city.

In 1994, Sweden voted in a non-binding referendum to join the European Union, which it did the following year.

In 2015, Islamic State militants carried out a set of coordinated attacks in Paris on the national stadium, restaurants and streets, and a crowded concert hall, killing 130 people in the worst attack on French soil since World War II.

Ten years ago: Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto (BEN'-uh-zeer BOO'-toh) demanded the resignation of U.S.-backed President Gen. Pervez Musharraf (pur-VEHZ' moo-SHAH'-ruhv), dashing Western hopes the two would form an alliance to confront strengthening Islamic extremists. French rail workers went on a nine-day strike over President Nicolas Sarkozy's (sahr-koh-ZEEZ') bid to strip away labor protections. CC Sabathia won the AL Cy Young Award to become the first Cleveland pitcher in 35 years to earn the honor.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama put a hold on the nomination of Afghan war chief Gen. John Allen to become the next commander of U.S. European Command as well as the NATO supreme allied commander in Europe amid questions over documents and emails involving Allen and Tampa socialite Jill Kelley (a Pentagon investigation cleared Allen of professional misconduct). Christie's auctioned off the Archduke Joseph Diamond in Geneva for nearly \$21.5 million, a world auction record price per carat for a colorless diamond. Davey Johnson of the Washington Nationals and Bob Melvin of the Oakland Athletics were named managers of the year by the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

One year ago: President-elect Donald Trump named Republican Party chief Reince Priebus (ryns PREE'-bus) as White House chief of staff and conservative media executive Stephen Bannon as his top presidential strategist. Leon Russell, who performed, sang and produced some of rock 'n' roll's top records, died in Nashville at age 74.

Today's Birthdays: Journalist-author Peter Arnett is 83. Actor Jimmy Hawkins is 76. Country singer-songwriter Ray Wylie Hubbard is 71. Actor Joe Mantegna is 70. Actress Sheila Frazier is 69. Actress Frances Conroy is 64. Musician Andrew Ranken (The Pogues) is 64. Actress Tracy Scoggins is 64. Actor Chris Noth (noth) is 63. Actress-comedian Whoopi Goldberg is 62. Actor Rex Linn is 61. Actress Caroline Goodall is 58. Actor Neil Flynn is 57. Former NFL quarterback and College Football Hall of Famer Vinny Testaverde is

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54. Rock musician Walter Kibby (Fishbone) is 53. Comedian and talk show host Jimmy Kimmel is 50. Actor Steve Zahn is 50. Actor Gerard Butler is 48. Writer-activist Ayaan Hirsi Ali is 48. Actor Jordan Bridges is 44. Actress Aisha Hinds is 42. Rock musician Nikolai Fraiture is 39. NBA All-Star Metta World Peace (formerly Ron Artest) is 38. Actress Monique Coleman is 37. Actor Rahul Kohli is 32. Actor Devon Bostick is 26.

Thought for Today: "What is politics but persuading the public to vote for this and support that and endure these for the promise of those?" — Gilbert Highet, Scottish-born American author and educator (1906-1978).