

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 129 ~ 1 of 48



Today's Event
Youth Rally, 7 p.m., GHS Gym

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- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 1- Schultz Construction Ad
- 2- Youth Rally tonight
- 3- Family Fun Night
- 4- Farmers Union PSA
- 4- Cochran receives GFP award
- 5- Today in Weather History
- 6- Today's Forecast
- 7- Yesterday's Weather
- 7- Today's Weather Info
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- 8- Daily Devotional
- 9- 2018 Community Events
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Youth Rally is Tonight

We are very excited to invite you to the Groton Youth Rally that will feature the Former Harlem Globetrotter Melvin Adams at the Groton Area High School Arena, 406 N 2nd Street, Groton, SD. The Rally will be on Wed., Nov. 15th at 7pm.

Please reserve this night for a great time here in Groton and bring the whole family. Tickets will be sold for \$7 in advance at the Groton Dairy Queen and Aberdeen Anchors of Faith, and \$10 at the door, with a family rate of \$20.

Melvin Adams

Former Harlem Globetrotter

Entertaining and challenging communicator

Two-time NCAA All-American

Melvin Adams has been an NCAA All-American basketball player, professional basketball competitor and member of the world famous Harlem Globetrotters. He is currently a communicator and entertainer. His energetic and engaging presentation style make him a favorite for events of all kinds.

Melvin has had the privilege of speaking to over 3,000,000 youth through school assemblies, basketball clinics/camps and other events. In addition to speaking responsibilities, he is also frequently engaged in interviews and guest appearances in various forms of media. Melvin's passion for reaching America's youth has provided countless opportunities to speak, perform and share with groups.



Melvin was born in 1971 and grew up in the ghetto of Houston, Texas. He was challenged early in life with extremely negative circumstances; however, he dreamed of playing professional basketball. At the age of 13, his father died. With the consistent pressure of financial burdens and surrounded by hopeless situations, Melvin turned to sports where hard work and endless practices kept him from trouble. During these years, he led the district in assists and steals, and averaged 16 points per game for the Eisenhower High School's Eagles.

Melvin graduated from San Jose Christian College where he was a two-time NCAA III All-American basketball player. He remains the all-time scoring, assists and steals leader in the Warrior's history. After college, Melvin continued to focus on basketball and was given the opportunity to play professional basketball. He later joined the Harlem Globetrotters and was named Mr. Globetrotter numerous times. The award is presented yearly to the teammate that most exemplifies the excitement and energy associated with the Harlem Globetrotters.

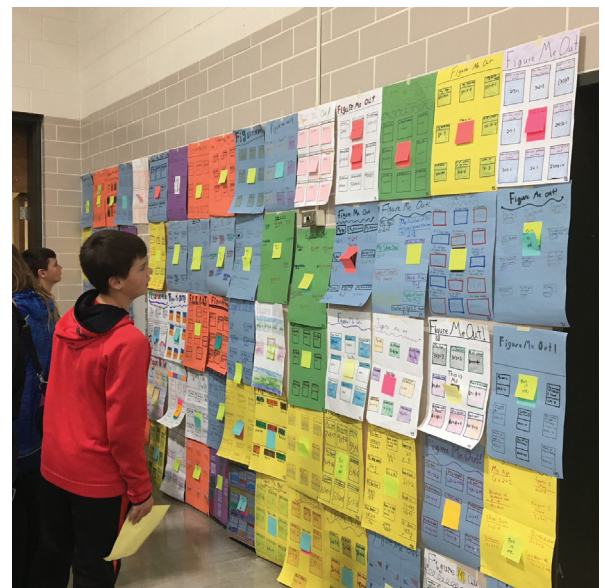
On March 17, 2000 Melvin Adams retired from the Harlem Globetrotters to fulfill a new dream - to challenge individuals to personal success through focus, work and determination. Today, he is privileged to speak before student and adult audiences sharing his personal story and inspiring others to fulfill their dreams.

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It was Family Night at the GHS Gym with teachers having various activities and several college representatives were also present. There was also entertainment including Hattie Weismantel (photo below left) who played the piano. The bottom right photo features students who made up math problems and you had to guess who they were. It was part of Jordan Kjellsen's math class. (Photos by Paul Kosel)





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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")**

Brown County Conservation Officer Receives Game, Fish and Parks Distinguished Achievement Award



Brown County conservation officer, Nick Cochran receives South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks' (GFP) Distinguished Achievement Award. Pictured (L-R): GFP Secretary Kelly Hepler, Cochran, Division of Wildlife director Tony Leif.

BROOKINGS, S.D. – Brown County conservation officer Nick Cochran was awarded the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks' (GFP) Distinguished Achievement Award at the GFP Commission's November meeting.

Cochran, who is a 15 year veteran with GFP was awarded the Department's highest honor in part for his excellent service to hunters, anglers, GFP and his community.

"Nick has been the face and voice of the Department in the Aberdeen area for 12 years," said GFP wildlife director, Tony Leif. "He has gained the public's trust and respect with accountability and his willingness to be available at any time."

Cochran also serves on the local Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation board, recruits mentors for youth looking to become active in the outdoors and is instrumental in Aberdeen's successful Youth Sportfest.

"Nick is an excellent communicator with the public and takes the time to explain a law, management technique or procedure until an individual has a full understanding," said Leif. "He is a prime example of our Department's expectation of serving the public by inspiring confidence through compassion."

Today in Weather History

November 15, 1988: A mixture of sleet, freezing rain and snow fell from north central South Dakota into west central Minnesota before changing over to all snow by the afternoon of the 15th. Snow continued across Minnesota during the morning hours on the 16th, along with increasing winds. The winds and falling snow created near zero visibility due to blowing snow in the northwest and west central Minnesota. A 60 mph wind gust was recorded in Morris, MN. Snow and blowing snow blocked roads, caused power outages and closed schools. Snow in many locations accumulated over a sheet of ice that coated roads from preceding rainfall.

1926 - A hurricane came inland near Daytona Beach, FL. The hurricane caused 2.5 million dollars damage in eastern Florida, including the Jacksonville area. (David Ludlum)

1939 - The temperature at Lewiston, ID, hit 117 degrees to establish an all-time record high for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1943 - On a whim, and flying a single engine AT-6, Lieutenant Ralph O'Hair and Colonel Duckworth were the first to fly into a hurricane. It started regular Air Force flights into hurricanes. (The Weather Channel)

1987: On November 15 and 16, intense thunderstorms rumbled through the South-Central US producing 49 tornadoes in Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi during a 34 hour period. Of the 49 tornadoes, four were F3, 12 were F2, 27 were F1, and 6 were F0. These severe storms caused 11 deaths and 303 injuries. This storm system also brought heavy rain to central Louisiana where five stations recorded over 10 inches in 24 hours. The highest amount was 14.22 inches at Olla on the 16.

2007: Tropical Cyclone Sidr, a Category 4 storm on the Saffir-Simpson scale, brings torrential rain 150-mph winds and a four ft storm surge to the Bangladesh coast. At least 3200 people die, and millions are left homeless. Since records began in 1877, Sidr obtained the title of the second-strongest cyclone to make landfall in Bangladesh.








1988 - Hot weather prevailed in the north central U.S. Williston, ND, reported a record high of 108 degrees. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the eastern U.S., and in southeastern Texas. Richland County, SC, was soaked with up to 5.5 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in the southwestern U.S. Yuma, AZ, experienced their most severe thunderstorm of record. Strong thunderstorm winds, with unofficial gusts as high as 95 mph, reduced visibilities to near zero in blowing dust and sand. Yuma got nearly as much rain in one hour as is normally received in an entire year. The storm total of 2.55 inches of rain was a record 24 hour total for July. Property damage due to flash flooding and high winds was in the millions. (Storm Data)


1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Wisconsin and northern Illinois to New England, with 103 reports of large hail and damaging winds through the day. Thunderstorms in Wisconsin produced hail three inches in diameter near Oshkosh, and wind gusts to 65 mph at Germantown. (The National Weather Summary)


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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
						
Partly Sunny and Breezy then Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Sunny
High: 33 °F	Low: 19 °F	High: 45 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 43 °F	Low: 20 °F	High: 33 °F

TODAY





30s 

except in the low 40s southwest of Pierre

COOL

THURSDAY




37 to 50° 

except 50 to 65° west of the Missouri River

winds gusting 35 to near 45 mph

BREEZY & WARMER

 National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

www.weather.gov/abr

Published on: 11/15/2017 at 4:46AM

GRAPHIC CREATED:
11/15/2017 4:34 AM

Today will be cool, with highs in the 30s (and low 40s southwest of Pierre) as dry Canadian high pressure sinks into the region. Breezy and warmer conditions can be expected Thursday, with winds gusting 35 to near 45 mph.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 46.3

Low Outside Temp: 34.3

High Gust: 23

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 72° in 1953

Record Low: -8° in 1900

Average High: 40°F

Average Low: 19°F

Average Precip in Nov: .41

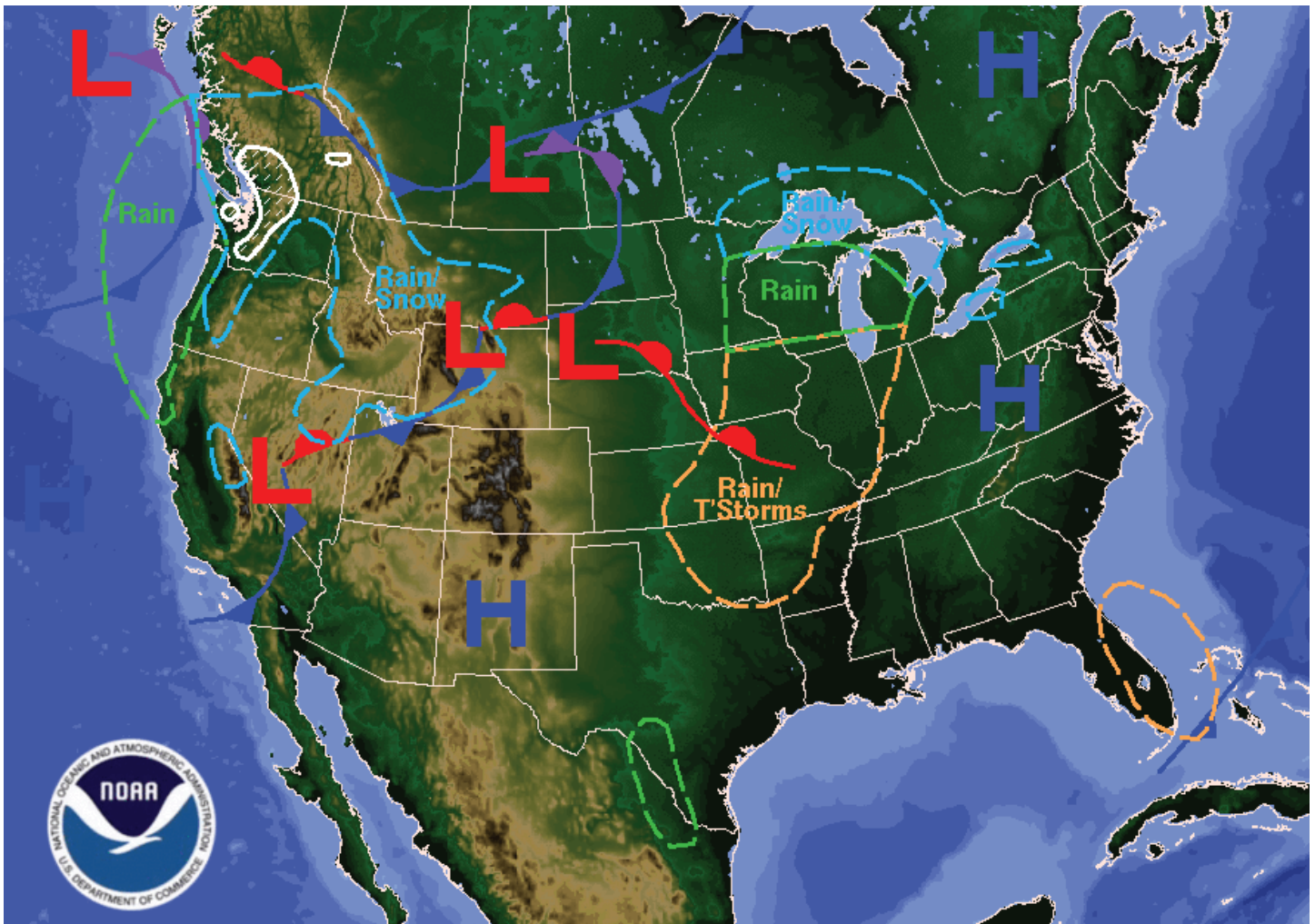
Precip to date in Nov: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 20.88

Precip Year to Date: 13.47

Sunset Tonight: 5:03 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:34 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Tue, Nov 14, 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)



LEGACIES THAT LIVE

What others did in the past influences what we do today. What is done today will influence what goes on in the future. It's like dominoes: stand them on end and place them in a line – one after another – and if the one at the beginning or end of the line is pushed over, all of them will fall down.

We all leave legacies. And all legacies are different because everyone is different. We seldom realize that we actually leave two different types of legacies. Most of the time we think of leaving a legacy of valuables: money, stocks, property, insurance, vehicles, jewelry – things that have monetary value.

But we rarely think of the legacy we leave that has eternal value – a value that has moral and spiritual influence or impact on the lives of others. Whether or not we realize it or want to admit it, we cannot not influence or impact the lives of others.

The writer of Psalm 71 was very conscious of the spiritual values he would leave behind. "Even when I am old and grey," he wrote, "do not forsake me my God, till I declare Your power to the next generation, Your mighty acts to all who are to come."

In the preceding verses he recalled the goodness of God in his life: "You are my refuge, my rock, my fortress, my hope, my confidence, my teacher, my Savior." God had been with Him, had honored and protected him and made his life worthwhile. He wanted others to know this God.

So, he asked God to spare him so he could share His faith and hope.

Prayer: Lord of our lives – may every day of our life be a witness to others and may we leave a legacy of Your love. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 71:18 Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come.

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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

01-14-21-22-28, Mega Ball: 19, Megaplier: 3

(one, fourteen, twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-eight; Mega Ball: nineteen; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$82 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$103 million

Hydroponic histrionics? Organic purists assail designation

By LISA RATHKE, Associated Press

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — Can you call a tomato grown in a nutrient solution instead of dirt “organic”? Some purists don’t think so.

The National Organic Standards Board, which advises the U.S. Department of Agriculture, voted this month against a proposal to exclude hydroponics and aquaponics — the raising of plants without soil and fish using the same water — from the USDA’s organic certification program.

Many traditional organic farmers and their supporters say allowing hydroponic farms to be certified organic erodes the integrity of the \$16 billion U.S. organic produce industry.

To them, organic farming is about far more than not using toxic pesticides; it’s rooted in enhancing the fertility of soils, a concept developed in the early 20th century by pioneering organic farmers. Organic farmers worked hard to create the National Organic Program in 2000, an achievement they say is now being watered down by allowing hydroponic farms to be part of it.

“Unfortunately those very things that it was created to do, which I think in the beginning it did do, is now really damaging because they’re certifying things that none of us believe are organic,” said Dave Chapman, of Long Wind Farm in East Thetford, Vermont.

Traditional organic farmers “feel like this is a complete slap in the face,” said Andrianna Natsoulas, executive director of Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York. “They feel that organic now is a complete joke and it means absolutely nothing, and their years of working and their dedication and their commitment is for naught.”

The Organic Trade Association said it did not support the proposal to prohibit hydroponics because of the way it was written.

Marianne Cufone, executive director of the Recirculating Farms Coalition, which represents hydroponic and aquaponic farmers, said the law left room for the meaning of organic to expand. She said she was shocked that so many people opposed hydroponic and aquaporin farming from being labeled as such.

“I thought it was an absolute no-brainer that hydroponics and aquaporin, when done well, can meet organic standard and why wouldn’t anyone want that included,” she said. “They’re excellent on water reduction. They’re excellent on space use. They’re excellent on intensive production, so we’re using less resources and creating more food. That just seems smart.”

Many such farms are interested in becoming certified organic because it’s a growing market, she said. “And it essentially puts this style of farming at a premium as well,” she said.

That leaves traditional organic farmers really concerned about the competition they’ll face in the marketplace, Natsoulas said.

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Diane Nancekivell, of Middlebury, Vermont, typically pays that premium to get organic produce. While shopping at Healthy Living Market & Cafe in South Burlington, Vermont, she said she was excited to get hydroponic fruits and vegetables in the winter and has no problem with them not being grown in soil.

Fellow shopper Chrysanne Chotis, of South Burlington, Vermont, said she didn't find the flavor of hydroponic produce as interesting as other produce she buys.

Some farmers are going to start working on finding an alternative to USDA certification that represents "real organic farmers," Chapman said.

"It's a tough thing. Nobody wants to do it ... but what else can we do? If you believe in it, what else can you do?"

Daum leads South Dakota State past Alabama State, 94-63

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Mike Daum scored 30 points and grabbed 13 rebounds as South Dakota State swept its three-game, season-opening home stand, topping Alabama State 94-63 Tuesday night.

Daum hit 9 of 15 shots from the field, including 5 of 7 from three-point range. David Jenkins Jr. knocked down 5 of 9 shots from deep and finished with 20 points.

As a team the Jackrabbits hit 17 of 29 three-point attempts (58.6 percent) while knocking down 30 of 56 overall from the field (53.6 percent).

Steve Rogers knocked down five 3-pointers on eight attempts off the bench to lead Alabama State (0-3). Rogers was 5 of 10 overall and finished with 17 points. Reginald Gee and Terrance LeFlore each scored 13 points for the Hornets.

Alabama State shot 21 of 60 from the field (35 percent) and was 11 of 25 from long range (44 percent).

Fishermen cast their nets for Asian carp on Illinois River

PEORIA, Ill. (AP) — Fishermen in Peoria are sending their nets out into the Illinois River with hopes of catching Asian carp.

Orion Briney has spent more than 35 years as a commercial fisherman and he tells the (Peoria) Journal Star that he has an advantage when the water is cold. He says the low temperatures slow down the carp, which are known to jump and flip in the water or flee at high speeds.

The carp are considered an invasive species and efforts have been underway to keep them out of the Great Lakes.

Briney and his crew sell the carp they catch at markets. He says they catch bighead carp, silver carp, grass carp and buffalo fish. Some of the fish they catch weigh close to 35 pounds (16 kilograms).

Information from: Journal Star, <http://pjstar.com>

Shoreline permits for Washington state coal terminal denied

LONGVIEW, Wash. (AP) — A county hearing examiner has denied two shoreline permits that Millennium Bulk Terminals needs for its \$680 million coal-export terminal project on the Columbia River in Washington state.

The Daily News reports Hearing Examiner Mark Scheibmeir rejected the permits Tuesday despite recommendations from Cowlitz County staff that he approve the permits with conditions.

Scheibmeir wrote in his decision that Millennium couldn't show that it would adequately compensate for 10 significant adverse impacts — from rail capacity to noise pollution to tribal resources — identified in the state's environmental impact statement.

Millennium will appeal the decision to the state's shoreline hearing board.

In a statement, Millennium CEO Bill Chapman said "the decision is based primarily on issues outside the shoreline area applicable to any new terminal or transportation project in the state of Washington."

Information from: The Daily News, <http://www.tdn.com>

Judge weighs motion to dismiss Twin Metals mining lawsuit

By STEVE KARNOWSKI, Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Government lawyers asked a federal judge Tuesday to dismiss a lawsuit by developers of the proposed Twin Metals copper-nickel mine who are seeking to regain their mineral rights leases, arguing that their dispute belongs in a different court.

The Obama administration last December declined to renew the long-standing leases that Twin Metals Minnesota needs for the underground mine it wants to build in northeastern Minnesota. At the time, the government cited the potential for irreparable harm to the nearby Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness from acid mine drainage.

Twin Metals sued to get those leases back, saying it has already invested \$400 million in the project. The company's congressional supporters, meanwhile, are trying both to persuade the Trump administration and to pass legislation to reverse the lease decision. They're also trying to undo a related decision that imposed at least a two-year moratorium on minerals exploration in a watershed that flows into the Boundary Waters, including the Twin Metals site southeast of Ely.

Sean Duffy, an attorney for the Bureau of Land Management and other federal agencies involved, urged U.S. District Judge Susan Richard Nelson to dismiss the lawsuit, arguing that it's a contract dispute that under federal law can be brought only in the Court of Federal Claims. He also argued that the government had the discretion to refuse to automatically renew the leases.

But Twin Metals lawyer Daniel Volchok framed the case as a property rights dispute that the district court has the jurisdiction to hear. He said no rational prospector would undertake the huge investment of time and money necessary to develop a mine if its mineral rights weren't secure. He said the government was obligated to renew Twin Metals' leases instead of "pulling the rug out" from under the company. And he maintained that Twin Metals already has bought and paid for the metals under the land covered by the leases.

"They are ours," he said. "We own these minerals."

Alex Ward, an attorney for Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, an environmental group that was granted intervenor status, backed the government's arguments. He said Twin Metals still has a legal path for recouping its lost investments and lost profits by going to the Court of Federal Claims, which has the power to award monetary damages but not to order renewal of the leases. He said it might not be the remedy Twin Metals prefers, but the company must follow the rules.

"Money damages are an adequate alternative remedy," he said.

Volchok countered that Twin Metals doesn't want monetary damages, it wants to mine.

"The plaintiffs are miners," he said. "They want to finish the project they started."

Nelson took the arguments under advisement. She said she would study them carefully but did not say when she would rule.

The Bureau of Land Management first issued the leases in 1966 to a predecessor of Twin Metals and renewed them in 1989 and 2004. But by the time Twin Metals sought another renewal in 2012, strong opposition had developed to copper-nickel mining in northeastern Minnesota, primarily because of concerns about the pristine Boundary Waters. The problem is that the vast, untapped reserves of copper, nickel and precious metals in the region are bound up in sulfide ores that can leach sulfuric acid and other pollutants when exposed to air and water.

Twin Metals, which is owned by Chilean mining company Antofagasta PLC, is separate from another proposed mine, PolyMet, which is much further along in development and has also aroused strong opposition from environmentalists. While the proposed PolyMet mine near Babbitt and processing plant near Hoyt Lakes are just a few miles from the Twin Metals site, they lie in a different watershed that flows toward Lake Superior instead of the wilderness.

Backers of both projects insist they can mine without harming the environment while bringing thousands

of badly needed jobs to the economically struggling Iron Range.

Pipeline opponents ask regulators to reconsider approvals

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Opponents of two proposed natural gas pipelines are asking federal regulators to reconsider their approval of the projects.

Dozens of environmental groups and individuals filed rehearing requests this week with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission regarding the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley pipelines. The commission signed off on the projects last month.

Commission spokeswoman Tamara Young-Allen says the commission is required to respond within 30 days.

Atlantic Coast Pipeline spokesman Aaron Ruby says FERC and more than a dozen other state and federal agencies conducted a review of the project in "a rigorous and transparent process." A spokeswoman for the Mountain Valley Pipeline couldn't immediately be reached.

Lawmakers could put amendments to voters in primary election

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's House speaker said Tuesday that lawmakers may put their own constitutional amendments to voters in next year's June primary — separate from citizens' initiatives on the fall general election ballot.

Republican Rep. Mark Mickelson said that officials have discussed the idea because the November 2018 ballot could be "cluttered" with a slew of other initiatives. Mickelson said lawmakers next year could advance amendments asking voters to increase legislator pay, repeal a crime victims' measure and end citizens' ability to gather signatures to propose constitutional changes.

"If we have bipartisan, well-supported proposed constitutional amendments, I think that's an option we could consider," Mickelson said of the primary election proposal. That date would avoid the expense of a separate election, he said.

Initiative campaigns have submitted signatures for eight ballot questions — including two proposed laws from Mickelson — to the Secretary of State's office to get on the November 2018 ballot.

House Minority Leader Spencer Hawley panned the proposal to put lawmakers' amendments on the June ballot, saying constitutional changes shouldn't be decided in a lower-turnout primary election. Hawley said he expects Democrats to oppose such a law.

Democratic Rep. Susan Wismer said major GOP primary races for governor and U.S. House signal high Republican turnout in June, while Democrats currently don't have any high-profile intraparty contests to drive their voters to the polls. Republicans hold supermajorities in the Legislature.

"They're picking their voters when they decide to change an election date to their advantage," Wismer said. "It's just another example of what happens when you allow one party to be in such extreme control for so many years."

Mitch Richter, co-sponsor of a proposed government ethics constitutional amendment, said that it's unfortunate legislators don't "want to let everybody play by the same set of rules."

The draft bill putting the 2018 Legislature's amendments to voters at the next primary election was among the legislative Executive Board's documents for its Monday meeting, but lawmakers didn't act on the plan at the hearing. The proposal contains an emergency provision that would block voters from referring it to the ballot if it's approved.

Michigan investigation into tannery waste disposal expands

ROCKFORD, Mich. (AP) — Michigan officials say the state's investigation into old tannery waste disposal has expanded.

The state Department of Environmental Quality said it's now investigating 75 sites for toxic industrial chemicals that were used by Wolverine World Wide to waterproof shoes.

The department, which is using tips from the public to compile a list of sites, has referred about 26 locations to the shoe manufacturer for further testing, department spokesperson Mel Brown said.

The latest testing area includes about 100 homes in Rockford. Private well tests indicate that sludge may have been used as fertilizer in the area, and there may have been waste dumping in a local gravel pit, according to the department.

Brown has urged residents to drink bottled water until testing is completed.

"We'd rather err on the side of caution with drinking water while we're getting these test results back," Brown said.

Wolverine has distributed bottled water to residents as it conducts tests.

Scientists said the toxins are perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, which is a class of chemicals that has been tied to cancer, thyroid problems and other diseases. The chemicals can also be found in firefighting foams, cleaning products, household cookware and carpets, and some food packaging.

Snyder has created the Michigan PFAS Action Response Team to oversee the response to contaminants found across the state. Retired Michigan Chief Deputy Attorney General Carol Isaacs will lead the team and help coordinate the response among local, state and federal agencies.

"This team will be instrumental in establishing protocols and best practices that will allow all partners to comprehensively address these contaminants across Michigan," Snyder said.

Lawsuit filed by Dakota Access protesters to proceed

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — An appeals court ruled Tuesday that a federal judge in North Dakota was correct in not barring police from using harsh methods against Dakota Access pipeline protesters.

There have been no protests since February, but the decision will allow a lawsuit to proceed in which pipeline opponents allege they were subjected to police brutality and their civil rights were violated.

The plaintiffs sued last November seeking to stop police from using tactics against protesters such as chemical agents and water cannons. U.S. District Judge Daniel Hovland refused the request and they appealed, putting on hold the rest of their lawsuit, which seeks unspecified damages for alleged police brutality and rights violations.

The protesters' attorney, Rachel Lederman, said her clients look forward to proceeding with those claims.

"We are determined to keep fighting for justice and we are optimistic that when we are able to present all the evidence, the district court judge and jury will determine that law enforcement's use of force was illegal," she said.

Lederman said she also believes the plaintiffs' case has been bolstered by developments since it was put on hold. Documents leaked to an online magazine in May show that TigerSwan, a private security company hired by Texas-based pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners, used military-style counterterrorism measures, had a close working relationship with public law enforcement and used propaganda.

Lederman said she hopes Hovland "will see that he has been misinformed about the nature of that (anti-pipeline) movement due to the efforts of these hired mercenaries, and will be able to take a fresh view of the evidence as the case moves forward."

TigerSwan has maintained that its efforts were aimed at creating a safe working environment and that it is the victim of a smear campaign.

Law enforcement — who allege that protesters made threats against officers and public officials, including the governor — asked Hovland in February to dismiss the lawsuit, saying police are entitled to immunity and protesters had failed to present any plausible claims that their rights were violated.

Attorneys from Bakke Grinolds Wiederholt, a firm representing law officers, said Tuesday they were pleased that Hovland will now be able to rule on their motion.

Hovland indicated in February that he didn't think protesters were likely to succeed on the merits of their claims.

The pipeline began moving oil from North Dakota to Illinois in June following months of delays caused

by legal battles and more than half a year of protests in North Dakota that resulted in 761 arrests.

Opponents, including four Native American tribes, fear a leak could cause catastrophic environmental harm. The developer says its pipeline is safe.

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

Documents: Puerto Rico utility ignored advice on repair deal

By MATTHEW DALY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Puerto Rico's bankrupt electric utility ignored advice from its own lawyers before signing an expanded contract worth \$300 million with a tiny Montana company to repair its damaged power grid, newly released documents show.

The law firm, Greenberg Traurig, recommended that the state-run power authority be allowed to terminate the deal within 10 days for any breach by the company, Whitefish Energy Holdings. The firm also recommended that the utility be allowed to seek damages from Whitefish and that the company be required to hold a bond for such a large contract, the documents show.

Those recommendations and others were ignored as the power authority expanded a no-bid deal with Whitefish, which is based in Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's hometown and had just two employees when Hurricane Maria hit in September.

The Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, also known as PREPA, signed an expanded contract with Whitefish on Oct. 17 without making changes recommended by the law firm. The contract built on an earlier agreement PREPA and Whitefish signed days after the hurricane hit on Sept. 20.

The authority moved to cancel the contract Oct. 29 at the urging of Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rossello, although Whitefish remains in Puerto Rico and is expected to continue work through Nov. 30. The company has been paid more than \$10 million so far.

The Oct. 17 contract raised the total payments allowed to Whitefish to \$300 million, including linemen hired at a rate of more than \$300 per hour.

The documents were released by the House Natural Resources Committee ahead of a hearing Tuesday.

Rep. Rob Bishop, R-Utah, the panel's chairman, said "a legacy of dysfunction" at PREPA has created "a competence deficit" that threatens Puerto Rico's ability to improve conditions for its 3.4 million citizens.

"Confidence in the utility's ability to manage contracts and time-sensitive disaster related infrastructure work is long gone," Bishop said.

The utility's executive director acknowledged mistakes Tuesday as the utility sought immediate help in the aftermath of the storm, which destroyed the island's power grid. More than 50 percent of the island remains without power nearly two months later.

"In retrospect, there are some steps in our contracting process with Whitefish that we could have done better," Ricardo Ramos told the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. "I chose to contract with Whitefish because my priority was securing the immediate assistance that we needed to begin restoring power as quickly as possible to our most critical customers."

Whitefish was one of only two companies that offered immediate services, Ramos said. The other company required a guaranteed payment of \$25 million — money the bankrupt utility did not have, he said.

Lawmakers from both parties criticized the power authority for failing to seek mutual assistance from other public power providers — assistance that was offered to Florida and Texas utilities following hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

"Let's be very clear about this. The reason why you have mutual aid contracts is to rebuild at cost," said Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash. "So the notion that someone comes in there to gouge the Puerto Rican government and the U.S. taxpayer, charging them an exorbitant rate and then writing a contract so that it can't be reviewed properly, was a great injustice to the U.S. taxpayer."

Ramos said he believed PREPA was "unable to meet the requirements for mutual assistance" from other utilities that belong to the American Public Power Association, such as providing accommodations

for workers and other logistics.

Whitefish said in a statement that allegations the company "gouged" taxpayers were unfair.

"There were no 'market prices' for this type of storm work on an island that had virtually no power and no external communications and whose access roads and transportation infrastructure were destroyed," the company said, calling the scope of work needed in Puerto Rico "unprecedented."

The company had to pay premium rates to attract workers at a time when basics such as housing, food and water "required enormous efforts," the statement said.

Rossello has asked the federal government for \$94.4 billion as the island struggles to recover from the damage inflicted by Hurricane Maria, with much of the U.S. territory without power and thousands still homeless. So far, Congress has approved nearly \$5 billion in aid for Puerto Rico.

Report: Maryland fishermen may have made rare moonfish catch

OCEAN CITY, Md. (AP) — A Maryland fishing party may have made a rare catch— a 105-pound (47-kilogram) opah, or moonfish.

Local news outlets report Capt. Austin Ensor and three crew members set sail Sunday and are believed to have caught the moonfish off Ocean City.

Ensor says they had just caught an 80-pound (36-kilogram) swordfish when the fish grabbed their bait. After over an hour, they reeled it in.

According to the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, the moonfish can be found in open waters in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, but catching one is rare off the East Coast.

Gregg Bortz with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources says the department cannot currently confirm the catch or if it was the first time an opah had been caught in Maryland.

Endangered Florida panther hit, killed by vehicle

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

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission says the male panther's remains were found Monday in Hendry County, just north of the Dinner Island Ranch Wildlife Management Area. Officials say the panther was 6 years old.

It's the 21st fatal collision this year, of 26 total panther deaths. Biologists will study the panther's remains.

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

Minnesota farm provides fresh shrimp to local restaurants

By HANNAH YANG, Agri News

SPRING VALLEY, Minn. (AP) — Aaron TerBeest, of Spring Valley, runs his own farm, but his livestock is a little bit on the shrimpy side.

The 31-year-old man runs a shrimp farm called Kedron Valley Farm, and has been officially licensed since May 2017. This past season marked the first time that TerBeest was able to harvest his shrimp for direct-to-consumer and direct-to-restaurant sales.

"There's always some risk that comes with any sort of farming operation," the 2004 Kingsland graduate told the Agri News. "Aquaculture is no exception."

TerBeest graduated from Winona State University in 2009 with a psychology degree. However, it was the background through his stepfather's dairy farm that got him gradually interested in pursuing agriculture.

This career move was something he never thought of for himself.

"No, never," he said with a laugh. "Never crossed my mind. I've never been to the ocean myself. I've got a background in arborist with orchards and things like that. This kind of popped up. I thought to myself 'Well, that's kind of interesting.' It was working well for some other small producers. ... This never would've crossed my mind."

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But how did TerBeest get into shrimp farming? It all started with reading an article on small-scale shrimp farms that began popping up throughout the Midwest. Then slowly, he began taking classes and attended seminars to learn about the feasibility and diversifying farming.

While Minnesota is known for dairy and harvesting corn and soybeans, shrimp may not necessarily register as a potential livestock in the area, let alone Spring Valley. TerBeest said he's been amused by the response he receives from customers at the Rochester Farmers Market.

"People see the 'fresh shrimp sign,' they ask 'What truck did the shrimp come out of?'" he said. "We then tell them, 'No we've come from 25 miles away in Spring Valley.' They kinda do a double take, and then listen to how we produce our food."

TerBeest usually orders his shrimp eggs from a hatchery based in California. His main type of shrimp that's harvested in Spring Valley is called Pacific white shrimp, more commonly known as "white-leg shrimp."

"They're usually the size of an eyelash, when we get them," he added.

The farm uses a four-phase system with a couple different sized tanks stacked on top of each other, along with a nursery at the very top. When TerBeest receives the shrimp from the hatchery — around 20,000 — in shipments. Usually, 70 percent of the shrimp survive during a four-month production cycle.

For TerBeest, one of the most important aspects of raising shrimp is to feed them high-quality shrimp feed without antibiotics or other chemicals. He also said that the farm reuses its water to be more environmentally conscious.

The farm could see anywhere between 60,000 to 70,000 live shrimp ready to be harvested out of the more than 30,000 gallons of salt water, and be taken to be sold directly to their consumers or restaurants around the Rochester area.

"We just started marketing to restaurants like Forager," TerBeest said. "They're really big on local foods and local producers. A lot of places were really excited to try some fresh, local shrimp and we've been at the farmer's market to sell directly to the consumer. We've just got a deal with People's Food Co-op downtown."

Currently with the major construction that's happening at a local road, TerBeest is mostly delivering the shrimp to his clients if orders are placed over the phone. His shrimp had repeat customers and positive feedback.

It goes to show, the smallest critters often have the biggest flavor.

"They can't believe the difference in taste and texture from fresh shrimp versus the peeled and deveined pre-thawed ones at the typical grocery store," he said. "Chefs love fresh ones. ... People can see what they're missing out on from something close by."

Information from: Agri News, <http://www.agrinews.com/>

Minnesota corn, soybean farmers see slight production dip

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Profits are expected to remain steady for Minnesota corn and soybean farmers despite a slight production dip in 2017.

A U.S. Department of Agriculture report estimates that the state's corn production will be 1.45 billion bushels, a 6 percent decrease from last year. Yields are expected to average about 190 bushels per acre, a decrease of three bushels from last year.

The department predicts the state's soybean production will be 373 million bushels, down 4 percent from last year. Yields are projected to be about 46 bushels per acre, six bushels below 2016 numbers.

Scattered production problems and hail damage have caused the slight declines, said Dale Nordquist, associate director of the Center for Farm Financial Management at the University of Minnesota Extension.

He told The Star Tribune that weather this year wasn't as consistent across the state as it was last year, "but it's still a darn good crop."

A global surplus of grains means profits aren't significantly increasing, even with a healthy export market for corn and soybeans, said Ed Usset, a grain-marketing economist at the University of Minnesota.

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"Farmers have had thin-to-negative margins over the last few years," Usset said. "This report confirms that we should expect more of the same in the year ahead, because there's just no quick fix out there right now."

While the harvest means there won't be significant profits for farmers, it will keep them in a good financial place, Nordquist said.

"What it does is it makes it possible for producers to stay afloat for another year in these challenging times," he said.

The state saw record-breaking corn and soybean harvests in 2015 and 2016. The state's 2016 corn crop value was about \$5 billion and its 2016 soybean crop value was about \$3.6 billion.

Information from: Star Tribune, <http://www.startribune.com>

University of South Dakota holds forum on sex assault

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — University of South Dakota officials said they're taking steps to better train staff and students on proper ways to respond to sexual assault.

The comments came at a campus forum held Monday on sexual assault awareness that drew a near-capacity crowd. It followed the arrests late last month of two university football players on rape-related charges.

A \$300,000 grant was gifted to the university in October 2016 to educate students on sexual assault and offer more campus resources, the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan reported .

The grant came from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Violence Against Women, according to Kim Grieve, vice president of student services and dean of students. The grant's goal is to turn the university into a safe place for every student, Grieve said.

Many students at the Monday forum noted they're not required to receive training on avoiding or reporting sexual assault incidents.

"There is online training available," said Grieve. "Students must complete the training, but currently we don't have a 'hold on account' capability (to ensure students complete the course), but we highly encourage students to take the training."

Students at the forum also mentioned a waitlist for services at a campus counseling center. Debra Robertson, a coordinator at the counseling center, said the waitlist may be misunderstood and noted that individuals experiencing trauma aren't ever initially placed on the waitlist.

"Counselors are trying to contact everyone who contacts the office," Robertson said. "We are interviewing for an additional counselor, and anyone who requires medical services is seen immediately."

University officials said they're formulating a strategic plan to work with the grant money, which will be revealed in a kick-off event planned for January.

Information from: Yankton Press and Dakotan, <http://www.yankton.net/>

Environmental group to sue SCE&G over old coal tar in river

By JEFFREY COLLINS, Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — An environmental group said Tuesday it plans to sue a South Carolina utility that insists there is no way to remove coal tar that has settled at the bottom of a river.

The tar sits on about a dozen acres of the Congaree River in downtown Columbia, the byproduct of a plant that burned coal to make gas for cooking in the first half of the 1900s.

South Carolina Electric & Gas initially promised to remove the coal tar after some of the material emerged from under sediment in 2010.

But the company could not find a removal solution that would also meet the permit requirements of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies, said Ginny Jones, a spokeswoman for SCANA, the

parent company of SCE&G.

"Cost was not a factor in the recent determination to move forward with the capping," Jones said in an email Tuesday.

Instead, SCE&G will cover the tar with a special fabric and hold that in place with stone or sediment.

But Congaree Riverkeeper said SCE&G intentionally skewed its research into whether the tar could be removed and that's why it could not get a permit.

In a statement about their intention to sue, the group and the Southern Environmental Law Center produced a report from a different engineering group that said SCE&G's solution will cost about \$7.6 million, but the tar could be removed by building temporary dams around the coal tar and digging it up at a cost of about \$18 million.

"This cover-up plan means the tar will remain in the river forever, with the very real risk that it will continue contaminating more of the river in perpetuity," Congaree Riverkeeper Bill Stangler said. "We deserve better from SCE&G and our regulators."

State environmental officials have done repeated testing of water quality and found the river safe for recreational use, Jones said.

SCE&G's capping process has been used many times before and the site would be closely monitored, Jones said.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approved SCE&G's plan last month.

Follow Jeffrey Collins at <http://twitter.com/JSCollinsAP> . See his work at <https://apnews.com/search/jefrey%20collins>

Nebraska utility works to increase renewable energy sources

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The Omaha Public Power District says it plans to use renewable sources to provide half the energy it sells to retail customers by 2020.

The electric utility announced the plan Monday during the annual Nebraska Wind and Solar Conference in Lincoln, The Omaha World-Herald reported .

President and CEO Tim Burke said the utility is working on a request for proposals to add up to 300 megawatts of wind energy. The company announced in July that it also plans to build a 160 megawatt wind farm in Wayne County. That project is expected to be completed in 2019.

Less than 20 percent of the utility's 2016 retail sales came from renewable energy sources, such as wind turbines, natural gas extracted from a landfill and hydropower from dams. The company has previously relied on coal to provide more than half of the electricity it generates.

Greenhouse gases from fossil fuels such as coal have been a large contributor to climate change for the past 60 years, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The utility's planned renewable energy additions mirror efforts from the state's other two large electric utilities to seek out energy resources that don't emit greenhouse gases.

The Lincoln Electric System uses renewable sources for about 48 percent of the retail energy it provides, while the Nebraska Public Power District gets about 60 percent of its electricity from sources that don't emit greenhouse gases.

The Omaha Public Power District serves Omaha and surrounding areas.

Information from: Omaha World-Herald, <http://www.omaha.com>

EPA awards \$12M to Iowa's drinking water loan program

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded more than \$12 million to Iowa's drinking water revolving loan program to help finance improvements to water projects around the state.

The funding will be used for projects that will improve municipal drinking water and wastewater infra-

structure, as well as help protect public drinking water systems. The funding may also be used to make projects more sustainable by increasing water and energy efficiency and to reduce water pollution.

The money is an annual capitalization grant awarded to Iowa's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program.

NC sanctions chemical company over unreported spill

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — North Carolina regulators want to penalize an under-fire chemical company after it didn't report the spill of an unregulated compound.

The Department of Environmental Quality said Tuesday that The Chemours Co. violated its wastewater discharge permit by failing to report the spill at its chemical plant south of Fayetteville.

The company did not respond to invitations to comment.

Chemours could be fined, but first gets an opportunity to respond to the state violation notice.

North Carolina's environmental agency says Chemours is required to give notice within 24 hours of abnormal waste discharges.

The agency says it questioned Chemours officials after noticing a spike of the unregulated chemical GenX earlier this month. The department says the company admitted to a spill four weeks earlier of a GenX precursor.

Iowa company recalls food for vending machines in 3 states

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Federal officials say an Iowa company has recalled salads and sandwich wraps sent out to vending machines in three states because they were distributed without federal inspection.

Marengo-based Pride of Iowa Sandwiches is recalling products containing more than 230 pounds of chicken, pork and beef sent to vending machines in Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota.

The recall was announced Monday by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which considers the products a health hazard and advises consumers to avoid eating them.

They include packaged Deli Fresh branded Caesar salads and wraps containing chicken, roast beef and bacon.

There have been no confirmed reports of illness.

Details are available at the Food Safety and Inspection Service website at www.fsis.usda.gov.

The problem was discovered during a routine USDA inspection last week.

US oil and gas 'resurgence' expected as global demand grows

LONDON (AP) — Oil will continue growing as a source of energy for over two decades, with the U.S. set to become the undisputed leader in crude and gas production, the International Energy Agency said Tuesday.

The report from the Paris-based agency will come as grim news for officials attending global climate talks in Bonn, Germany, as they grapple with ways to contain carbon emissions. Scientists just this week said that emissions of the heat-trapping gas rose this year after three years of not growing.

The IEA said oil production will be driven by continued growth in energy-hungry industries. Though solar power is set to become the cheapest source of new electricity generation and the boom years for coal are over, oil and gas will continue to meet the bulk of the world's energy needs, the IEA said.

Oil demand is forecast to keep rising until 2040, with natural gas growing by a sharp 40 percent.

A more widespread use of electric cars will not be enough to consign oil to the past, said IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol.

"It is far too early to write the obituary of oil, as growth for trucks, petrochemicals, shipping and aviation keep pushing demand higher," said Birol.

Total energy demand is expected to have grown by 30 percent by 2040 — and would be growing twice that without efforts to improve energy efficiencies.

The price of oil has risen over 30 percent since June to a two-year high of around \$57 a barrel in New

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York trading amid evidence of stronger economic growth around the world. But analysts expect the price to not rise much further in coming months as the U.S. ramps up production.

The IEA echoed that view, saying it expects the U.S. to see a resurgence in its oil and gas industries and become the world's biggest net exporter by the end of the 2020s. Asian countries will become the biggest net importers of oil and gas, taking in 70 percent of imports by 2040 as their economies expand at a fast clip.

Environmental activists decried the IEA forecasts as discounting any efforts by countries to limit emissions as part of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

"None of its core scenarios for the future of energy provide a reasonable chance that the world will avoid climate catastrophe," said Adam Scott, senior advisor at Oil Change International.

Aggravated assault charge filed in frying pan attack

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls woman is facing an aggravated assault charge after police say she hit a man in the head with a frying pan.

Police say the 49-year-old woman apparently didn't like the man's singing and struck him at her home Saturday afternoon. The victim and a friend left and called police. KSFY-TV says his injuries weren't serious. Authorities say drugs or alcohol were not involved.

Information from: KSFY-TV, <http://www.ksfy.com>

Winnebago Tribe makes move to take over troubled hospital

WINNEBAGO, Neb. (AP) — The Winnebago Tribal Council has taken steps to take over management of a hospital on a Native American reservation in northeastern Nebraska.

The Sioux City Journal reports that the council voted last week to initiate the process of taking control of the Omaha Winnebago Hospital.

The tribe hopes to assume operation of the hospital by July 1.

Self-governance allows Native American tribes to assume administration of federal programs. A steering committee has been formed to help the Winnebago Tribal Council prepare for the negotiations and eventual management of the hospital.

The move comes more than two years after the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services terminated the hospital's Medicare contract after the Indian Health Service and hospital officials failed to correct serious quality-of-care deficiencies the agency had found.

Information from: Sioux City Journal, <http://www.siouxcityjournal.com>

South Dakota hunter's body found in Day County lake

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota law enforcement officials believe a Bristol man drowned in a Day County lake while hunting alone and trying to retrieve a downed bird.

The American News reports that the 63-year-old man was reported missing in early November. The Day County Sheriff's Office says his body was found on Nov. 5 in Lake Jessie.

The sheriff's office isn't releasing the man's name. Day County Sheriff Barry Hillestad says officials believe he went hunting on Oct. 30.

Hillestad says the hunter wasn't reported missing for a few days because he lived alone. No foul play is suspected in his death.

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

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. ZIMBABWE UNDERGOES 'BLOODLESS CORRECTION'

The army in the southern African nation says it has President Mugabe and his wife in custody and is securing government offices and patrolling the capital's streets following a night of unrest.

2. SESSIONS SEEKS BALANCE IN PONDERING CLINTON PROBE

In asking senior federal prosecutors to examine Republican grievances, the attorney general may be trying to placate Trump while maintaining the credibility of the Justice Department.

3. TRUMP NOW FACING ALABAMA SENATE SCANDAL

The president returns from a long tour of Asia and walks straight into GOP panic over the sexual misconduct accusations dogging Roy Moore.

4. CHINA SENDING ENVOY TO NORTH KOREA FOLLOWING TRUMP VISIT

The move comes amid an extended chill in relations between the neighbors over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons and missile programs.

5. NORTHERN CALIFORNIA GUNMAN KILLS 4, WOUNDS 10 IN RAMPAGE

Kevin Neal was free on bail for a charge of stabbing a neighbor and had been the subject of a domestic violence call the day before the attack.

6. FAMILY FUNERAL FOR A THIRD OF TEXAS CHURCH SHOOTING VICTIMS

A survivor of the shooting massacre at the small church in Sutherland Springs holds a funeral for his family: his pregnant wife and three of her children, his parents, a brother, and a toddler niece.

7. WHAT IS NOW A TARGET OF GOP IN TAX BILL

Ending "Obamacare's" requirement that Americans get insurance coverage, which would help pay for tax cuts.

8. SCIENTISTS IN CALIFORNIA TRY 1ST GENE EDITING INSIDE THE BODY

Through an IV, 44-year-old Brian Madeux received billions of copies of a corrective gene and a genetic tool to cut his DNA in a precise spot.

9. 'PEOPLE ARE GOING TO HATE ME OVER THIS'

People magazine names Blake Shelton its Sexiest Man Alive for 2017, and the country music star jokes that he's going to use it "in every conversation."

10. WHAT MIGHT SELL FOR \$100 MILLION

A mystical painting of Christ holding a crystal orb by Leonardo da Vinci is being auctioned at Christie's in New York.

Northern California gunman kills 4, wounds 10 in rampage

By DON THOMPSON and PAUL ELIAS, Associated Press

RANCHO TEHAMA RESERVE, Calif. (AP) — The gunman behind a rampage in Northern California was out on bail for a charge of stabbing a neighbor, had been the object of complaints from neighbors who said he had been firing off hundreds of rounds of ammunition, and had been the subject of a domestic violence call the day before the attack.

Yet Kevin Neal was free and able to use a semiautomatic rifle and two handguns Tuesday to shoot 14 people, killing four, in seven different locations across his rural community, including an elementary school, before he died in a shootout with police.

It's not yet clear what the terms of Neal's bail were, and whether he would have been allowed to possess and fire the weapons on his property at the end of a dirt road in Rancho Tehama Reserve. Nor did sheriff's officials give details on the domestic violence call.

But his many contacts with authorities raised questions of why he was out of custody and able to go on the 45-minute rampage that began with the killing of two neighbors in an apparent act of revenge before

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he went looking for random victims.

Cristal Caravez and her father live across a ravine from the roadway where the gunman and his first victims lived.

She said they and others heard constant gunfire from the area of the gunman's house, but couldn't say for sure it was him firing.

"You could hear the yelling. He'd go off the hinges," she said. The shooting, "it would be during the day, during the night, I mean, it didn't matter."

She and her father, who is president of the homeowners association, said neighbors would complain to the sheriff's department, which referred the complaints back to the homeowners association.

"The sheriff wouldn't do anything about it," said Juan Caravez.

The gunman's sister, Sheridan Orr, said her brother had struggled with mental illness throughout his life and at times had a violent temper.

She said Neal had "no business" owning firearms.

Tehama County Assistant Sheriff Phil Johnston said the shooter was facing charges of assaulting one of the feuding neighbors in January and that she had a restraining order against him.

Johnston did not comment on the shooter's access to firearms.

Johnston declined to identify the shooter until his relatives were notified, but he confirmed the gunman was charged with assault in January and had a restraining order placed against him. The district attorney, Gregg Cohen, told the Sacramento Bee he is prosecuting a man named Kevin Neal in that case.

Neal's mother told The Associated Press her son, who was a marijuana grower, was in a long-running dispute with neighbors he believed were cooking methamphetamine.

The mother, who spoke on condition she be named only as Anne, lives in Raleigh, North Carolina, where she raised Neal. She said she posted his \$160,000 bail and spent \$10,000 on a lawyer after he was arrested in January for stabbing a neighbor. Neal's mother said the neighbor was slightly cut after Neal grabbed a steak knife out of the hand of the neighbor who was threatening him with it.

She wept as she told The Associated Press she spoke to Neal on the phone on Monday.

"Mom it's all over now," she said he told her. "I have done everything I could do and I am fighting against everyone who lives in this area."

She said Neal apologized to her during their brief conversation, she thought for all the money she had spent on him, saying he was "on a cliff" and the people around him were trying to "execute" him.

"I think the motive of getting even with his neighbors and when it went that far — he just went on a rampage," Johnston said.

Police said surveillance video shows the shooter unsuccessfully trying to enter a nearby elementary school after quick-thinking staff members locked the outside doors and barricaded themselves inside when they heard gunshots.

Johnston said the gunman spent about six minutes shooting into Rancho Tehama Elementary School before driving off to continue shooting elsewhere. Johnston said one student was shot but is expected to survive.

He said the 45-minute rampage ended when a patrol car rammed the stolen vehicle the shooter was driving and killed him in a shootout.

Johnston said officials received multiple 911 calls about gunfire at an intersection of two dirt roads. Minutes later, more calls reporting shots flooded in from different locations, including the school.

Witnesses reported hearing gunshots and children screaming at the school, which has one class of students from kindergarten through fifth grade.

The shootings occurred in the rural community of Rancho Tehama Reserve, a homeowners association in a sparsely populated area of rolling oak woodlands dotted with grazing cattle about 130 miles north of Sacramento.

Many there live in poverty, but others are better off.

"It's not a bad community at all," said Harry Garcia, who was minding his parents' convenience store La Fortuna Market. "Some people keep their properties nice- some don't. They rough it out here. Some go

with minimum stuff. Some don't even have power out here."

Elias reported from San Francisco. Associated Press writers Jocelyn Gecker, Janie Har and Olga Rodriguez in San Francisco, Michael Balsamo in Los Angeles and researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York also contributed to this story.

Airbus to sell 430 planes to Phoenix-based Indigo for \$49.5B

By JON GAMBELL, Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Airbus signed a \$49.5 billion deal on Wednesday to sell 430 airplanes to the Phoenix-based private equity firm that owns Frontier Airlines, striking the European aerospace company's biggest deal ever at the Dubai Air Show.

Meanwhile, Boeing reached an agreement with low-cost carrier FlyDubai to sell 225 Boeing 737 MAX 10 aircraft — a deal valued at \$27 billion. The developments came ahead of the biennial air show closing on Thursday.

"It's ended up going out on a high," airline analyst John Strickland of JLS Consulting said. "It shows once again the importance of this part of the world to the big airplane manufacturers."

The Airbus deal with Indigo Partners will see 273 A320neos and 157 A321neos split up among Denver-based Frontier, JetSMART of Chile, Volaris of Mexico and Wizz Air of Hungary, all ultra-low-cost airlines associated with Indigo.

The A320neo and the A321neo are twin-engine, single-aisle planes popular among airlines because of their reduced fuel consumption.

The surprise announcement came after Airbus on Sunday suffered the embarrassment of believing it had struck a major deal with the state-owned carrier Emirates to sell its A380 double-decker jumbo jet, only to see Boeing sit on the podium with the airline and sign a \$15.1 billion deal.

"Just to clarify: This is not an A380 press conference," joked John Leahy, Airbus' sales chief, as the start of the announcement.

A320neos list for \$108.4 million apiece and A321neos at \$127 million. Airlines and manufacturers negotiate lower prices for big deals like these, something Indigo's managing partner Bill Franke was quick to stress afterward speaking to journalists.

"Here's hoping," he said. "Their objective is to sell aircraft at the best possible and our objective is to buy aircraft at the best possible price. I've known Mr. Leahy for 25 years. Sometimes he wins, sometimes I win."

Asked if he won this round, Franke said: "That'll be a good question."

Airbus' previous biggest-ever sale came in August 2015, when it sold 250 A320neos to Indian budget airline IndiGo, a deal estimated to be worth \$26 billion at list prices. IndiGo and Indigo Partners are separate firms with separate management.

Shares in Airbus rose on the news, trading 2.7 percent higher at 85.75 euros in Paris in an otherwise lower market.

Franke is a pioneer of the cheap tickets and high fees airline business that has spread overseas and is growing in the United States. Such carriers offer low base fares but adds fees to stow a carry-on bag, get an assigned seat and other extras. That's led to soaring customer complaints against Frontier.

President Donald Trump also came up in Franke's conversation with journalists on Thursday, as Franke said the American leader would be happy to know the A321neos purchased by Indigo would undergo final assembly in the Airbus plant in Mobile, Alabama.

Shortly after, FlyDubai and Chicago-based Boeing Co. announced their \$27 billion deal. FlyDubai said the planes would bring the low-cost carriers total fleet on order up to 320. FlyDubai has begun to code-share flights with Emirates; both airlines are owned by Dubai's government.

Boeing 737 MAX 10s, a twin-engine, single aisle plane capable of carry 230 passengers, have a list price of \$124.7 million. They'll complement FlyDubai's fleet of Boeing 737s and keeps them a Boeing-only shop, something Airbus no doubt had hoped to change.

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"Today marks the next chapter in FlyDubai's success story," FlyDubai CEO Ghaith al-Ghaith said.

Until Wednesday, the only major deal announced at the Dubai Air Show came on Sunday, when long-haul carrier Emirates purchased 40 Boeing 787-10 Dreamliners in a \$15.1 billion deal.

That deal also saw Emirates CEO and Chairman Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum bring up the 787-10 buy's ability to create jobs. Trump himself promoted that during a February visit to the South Carolina plant that builds the carbon-fiber, 330-seat plane.

Airbus, which is based in Toulouse, France, has pinned hopes of continuing production of its A380 double-decker jumbo jet on Emirates, the world's largest operator of the aircraft. Reports circulated before the air show that a major A380 sale would be coming.

Airbus employees even filled a news conference on Sunday, expecting the A380 sale, instead to find state-owned Emirates making the deal with Boeing in front of Dubai's ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

Strickland said that while the massive Airbus sale Wednesday likely took months to negotiate, it still helped Airbus save face at the air show.

"It would have been great relief," the analyst said.

Emirates now relies solely on the Airbus 380 and the Boeing 777 for its flights, making it the largest operator of both. It has 165 Boeing 777s in its fleet today and took possession of its 100th A380 earlier this month.

The Emirates' snub even came up at the news conference Wednesday, when a reporter asked Airbus if another deal could be coming.

"I think you've got to walk over to the chalet with Emirates on the door and ask them," Airbus' Leahy said.

Follow Jon Gambrell on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/jongambrellap> . His work can be found at <http://apne.ws/2galNpz> .

Zimbabwe army has Mugabe, wife in custody, controls capital

By FARAI MUTSAKA, Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Zimbabwe's army said Wednesday it has President Robert Mugabe and his wife in custody and was securing government offices and patrolling the capital's streets following a night of unrest that included a military takeover of the state broadcaster.

The night's action triggered speculation of a coup, but the military's supporters praised it as a "bloodless correction." South Africa's president said he spoke with Mugabe, who was "fine" but confined to his home.

For the first time, this southern African nation is seeing the military oppose the 93-year-old Mugabe, the world's oldest head of state and one of the longest-serving authoritarian rulers. Mugabe has been in power since Zimbabwe's independence from white minority rule in 1980.

The whiplash developments followed Mugabe's firing of his deputy, which had appeared to position the first lady, Grace Mugabe, to replace Emmerson Mnangagwa as one of the country's two vice presidents at a party conference next month. But the first lady has proved unpopular among some Zimbabweans, and Mnangagwa had significant support from the military.

It was not clear Wednesday where Mnangagwa was, though he fled the country last week citing threats to him and his family.

Armed soldiers in armored personnel carriers stationed themselves at key points in Harare, while Zimbabweans formed long lines at banks in order to draw the limited cash available, a routine chore in the country's ongoing financial crisis. People looked at their phones to read about the army takeover and others went to work or to shops.

In an address to the nation after taking control of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, Major General Sibusiso Moyo said early Wednesday the military is targeting "criminals" around Mugabe, and sought to reassure the country that order will be restored.

Mugabe and his wife appeared to be in the custody of the military. "Their security is guaranteed," Moyo

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said.

"We wish to make it abundantly clear that this is not a military takeover," he said. "We are only targeting criminals around (Mugabe) who are committing crimes that are causing social and economic suffering in the country in order to bring them to justice."

Moyo added "as soon as we have accomplished our mission, we expect that the situation will return to normalcy." The army spokesman called on churches to pray for the nation. He urged other security forces to "cooperate for the good of our country," warning that "any provocation will be met with an appropriate response."

All troops were ordered to return to barracks immediately, with all leave canceled, said Moyo. The broadcast was sent out from the ZBC headquarters in Pocket's Hill near Harare's Borrowdale suburb.

South African President Jacob Zuma said he was sending his ministers of defense and state security to Zimbabwe to meet with Mugabe and the military there. He said he hopes Zimbabwe's army will respect the constitution and that the situation "is going to be controlled."

The head of Zimbabwe's influential war veterans association, once a staunch supporter of Mugabe, said they stand with the army and that Mugabe should be recalled as president and ruling party leader.

Victor Matemadanda told reporters that the ruling party should establish a commission of inquiry into Mugabe and why he decided to let his wife insult veterans and the armed forces.

The military actions appear to put Zimbabwe's army in control. Army commander Constantino Chiwenga had threatened on Monday to "step in" to calm political tensions. Mugabe's ruling ZANU-PF party responded by accusing the general of "treasonable conduct."

The army has been praised by the nation's war veterans for carrying out "a bloodless correction of gross abuse of power." The military will return Zimbabwe to "genuine democracy" and make the country a "modern model nation," said Chris Mutsvangwa, chairman of the war veterans' association, told The Associated Press in Johannesburg.

The U.S. Embassy closed to the public Wednesday and encouraged citizens to shelter in place, citing "the ongoing political uncertainty through the night." The British Embassy issued a similar warning, citing "reports of unusual military activity."

Tillerson says US considers individual sanctions for Myanmar

By ESTHER HTUSAN, Associated Press

NAYPYITAW, Myanmar (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Wednesday that his country was deeply concerned by "credible reports" of atrocities committed by Myanmar's security forces and called for an independent investigation into a humanitarian crisis that has seen hundreds of thousands of Muslim Rohingya flee to Bangladesh.

Speaking at a joint news conference with leader Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar's capital, Tillerson said the U.S. would consider individual sanctions against people found responsible for the violence, but he would not advise "broad-based economic sanctions" against the entire country.

"All of that has to be evidence based," Tillerson said. "If we have credible information that we believe to be very reliable that certain individuals were responsible for certain acts that we find unacceptable, then targeted sanctions on individuals very well may be appropriate," he said.

Tillerson's one-day visit comes as a new report said there was "mounting evidence" of genocide against the Rohingya in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state, where a government security operation has caused more than 600,000 Rohingya to flee to neighboring Bangladesh.

Tillerson also met with Myanmar's powerful military chief, Min Aung Hlaing, who is in charge of operations in Rakhine.

A senior U.S. State Department official said Tuesday that Tillerson would use the visit to "express concerns over the displacement and violence and insecurity affecting Rohingya populations and other local populations and discuss ways to help Burma stakeholders implement commitments aimed at ending the crisis and charting productive ways forward."

Myanmar was formerly known as Burma.

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Though Suu Kyi has been the de facto head of Myanmar's civilian government since her party swept elections in 2015, she is limited in her control of the country by a constitution written by the military junta that ruled Myanmar for decades. The military is in charge of the operations in northern Rakhine, and ending them is not up to Suu Kyi.

Still Suu Kyi has faced widespread criticism for not speaking out in defense of the Rohingya. At Wednesday's news conference Suu Kyi denied she had been silent on the issue, saying she had personally commented on the situation as well as issued statements through her office.

"I haven't been silent," she said. "What people mean is what I say is not interesting enough. But what I say is not meant to be exciting. It's meant to be accurate. And it's aimed at creating more harmony and a better future for everybody. Not setting people against each other."

The report by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the advocacy group Fortify Rights found there is "mounting evidence" of genocide against the Rohingya. It accused security forces and civilians of mass killings — including burning victims alive including infants — rape and other abuses, and called on the international community to take action.

"These crimes thrive on impunity and inaction," said Matthew Smith, the head of Fortify Rights. "Condemnations aren't enough. Without urgent international action towards accountability, more mass killings are likely."

Myanmar's military has denied the accusations, most recently with a statement Monday. The military said it had interviewed thousands of people during a monthlong investigation into the conduct of troops in Rakhine after Rohingya insurgents launched a series of deadly attacks there on Aug. 25.

While the report acknowledged that battles against militants from the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army had left 376 "terrorists" dead, it also claimed security forces had "never shot at the innocent Bengalis" and "there was no death of innocent people."

Myanmar's government and most of the Buddhist majority say the members of the Muslim minority are "Bengalis" who migrated illegally from Bangladesh and do not acknowledge the Rohingya as a local ethnic group even though they have lived in Myanmar for generations.

Obama health mandate now target of GOP in big tax bill

By MARCY GORDON, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama health care law's requirement that Americans get insurance coverage is now pinned as a target of Republican lawmakers, as they look to end the individual mandate to help pay for deep cuts in their tax legislation.

Senate Republicans showed Tuesday they're intent on scrapping the Affordable Care Act's insurance mandate, and the idea was endorsed by scores of GOP lawmakers in the House.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, chairman of the Finance Committee, confirmed late Tuesday he was revising the bill to include repeal of the insurance mandate "to help provide additional relief to low- and middle-income families."

The surprise renewal of the failed effort to eliminate the health care law's mandate came a day after President Donald Trump renewed pressure on Republican lawmakers to include the repeal in their sweeping legislation to revamp the tax system. It carries high political stakes for Trump, who lacks a major legislative achievement after nearly 10 months in office.

The move by Republicans on the Senate Finance Committee upended the debate over the tax measure just as it was inching closer to passage following months of fine-tuning and compromise. It turned the debate into an angry partisan referendum on health care and President Barack Obama's signature law, the Affordable Care Act.

The Finance panel digs into a third day of work on the Senate tax bill on Wednesday. The completed House tax bill, pointed toward a vote in that chamber Thursday, does not currently include repeal of the health insurance mandate. Trump plans an in-person appeal to House Republicans before the vote.

Promoted as needed relief for the middle class, the House and Senate tax overhaul bills would deeply

cut corporate rates, double the standard deduction used by most Americans and limit or repeal completely the federal deduction for state and local property, income and sales taxes. Republican leaders deem passage of the first major tax overhaul in 30 years as imperative for the GOP to preserve its majorities in next year's elections.

Republican efforts to dismantle the health care law collapsed this past summer as moderate Republicans joined with Democrats in rejecting the repeal — a bitter disappointment for Trump, who lashed out at the Senate GOP for failing. Adding the repeal of the mandate to the tax measure would combine two of Trump's legislative priorities.

Beyond Trump's prodding, the repeal move was dictated by the Republicans' need to find revenue sources for the massive tax-cut bill, which calls for steep reductions in the corporate tax rate and elimination of some popular tax breaks.

The "Obamacare" mandate requires most people to buy health insurance coverage or face a fine. Without being forced to get coverage, fewer people would sign up for Medicaid or buy federally subsidized private insurance. Eliminating the mandate in the tax legislation would save an estimated \$338 billion over a decade, which could be used to help pay for the deep cuts.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that repealing the requirement that people buy health coverage would mean 4 million additional uninsured people by 2019 and 13 million more by 2027.

It "will cause millions to lose their health care," Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, the senior Democrat on the Finance Committee.

Feeling ambushed without advance notice, minority Democrats warned that with fewer healthy people in the insurance risk pool, the price of premiums would rise.

"Rather than learning the lessons from their failure to repeal health care, Republicans are doubling down on the same partisan strategy that would throw our health care system into chaos," said Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer. "If the American people weren't already outraged by this bill, injecting health care into it will certainly do the trick."

To win over moderate Senate Republicans to the tax legislation, the Senate may take up at the same time a bipartisan compromise to shore up health care subsidies, Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., indicated Tuesday. Thune is a member of the Finance panel.

Hatch's revised version of the tax bill would double the child tax credit to \$2,000 from the current \$1,000 — a change that presidential daughter Ivanka Trump has pushed for. The credit would rise to \$1,600 under the House bill.

Also, Hatch's revision makes slight reductions in individual tax rates for three moderate income brackets, numbers three, four and five of a total seven. The rates are reduced from the original Senate bill and the current system. The new rates are 10, 12, 22.5, 25, 32.5, 35 and 38.5 percent. The House bill shrinks the current seven brackets to four: 12, 25, 35 and 39.6 percent.

Associated Press writers Kevin Freking, Andrew Taylor and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar in Washington contributed to this report.

Trump returns, faces Alabama Senate scandal

By ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump spent five days in Asia largely keeping the Alabama Senate scandal at bay. He won't be so lucky on U.S. soil.

The president returned to Washington on Tuesday night and walked straight into a party panic over the sexual misconduct accusations dogging GOP Senate candidate Roy Moore. Having pushed publicly and privately for Moore to get out of the race, Republicans believe their last best shot is Trump, who they hope can persuade his fellow political rebel to fall in line.

Trump has given little indication of whether he's interested in playing the role of party heavy. Press

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secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders has echoed other Republican leaders, saying last Friday that Moore should step aside if the allegations are true. But as other Republicans began to call for Moore to quit the race, Trump was notably silent in public. On Tuesday, he didn't address the issue when he spoke with reporters aboard Air Force One as he flew back to Washington, nor did he respond to shouted questions about Moore as he entered the White House that night.

For Trump and Republicans, there are no good options. If Moore wins, they can either spend an already harrowing midterm election cycle defending their new colleague, or overturn the will of Alabama voters by casting him out of the Senate. If Moore loses and the seat flips to Democratic control, the party loses a critical vote in its razor-thin Senate majority, with issues like tax reform and immigration set to be considered in the coming months.

"I have to get back into the country to see what's happening," Trump told reporters over the weekend as he flew from Danang, Vietnam to Hanoi during his five-nation tour of Asia.

But behind the scenes, he was vexed by the issue. In an interview with the Wall Street Journal on Tuesday, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Trump had been involved in dealing with the Moore situation "in great detail" during the trip. McConnell said he and Trump discussed the question on Friday, with chief of staff John Kelly and Vice President Mike Pence weighing in on subsequent days.

Trump's 12-day trip, the longest of his presidency, was quickly overshadowed at home by the shocking accusations of sexual assault on minors by Moore, who was embraced publicly by the White House last month after winning the state's GOP primary.

The shocking revelations dominated cable news for days, as Moore denied the allegations and pledged to stay in the race.

Even Chinese President Xi Jinping was drawn in. "Who is Roy Moore?" Xi asked Trump privately after they delivered joint statements to reporters, in a moment described by two White House officials not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

GOP officials cautioned that the actions of Washington Republicans, including the president, were unlikely to affect Moore's decision-making — and that any moves against him could backfire in an anti-establishment political environment.

The president backed Moore's unsuccessful rival, Sen. Luther Strange, in the Republican primary. Moore has the backing of Trump's former chief strategist, Steve Bannon. And Bannon's conservative news site, Breitbart, has led the charge in trying to discredit the allegations against Moore, as it tries to boost the nationalistic candidate.

One person familiar with the president's thinking said Trump has been slow to call for Moore to exit the race in part because he risked embarrassment if, as expected, Moore defied him.

On Tuesday, the Republican National Committee halted its efforts on Moore's behalf, following similar action by the National Republican Senatorial Committee on Friday. Three Republicans familiar with the RNC's decision, but not authorized to discuss it publicly, said Trump signed off on the move to cut Moore loose.

Moore was already a pariah among national Republicans even before the recent allegations of inappropriate contact with minors. A twice-removed state judge, Moore's anti-gay and anti-Muslim rhetoric have long repelled the GOP mainstream.

McConnell has openly floated the possibility of having Attorney General Jeff Sessions, whose move from the Senate to the Cabinet necessitated the special election, run for his old seat as a write-in candidate.

A source close to Sessions says he has told friends he is not interested in returning to the Senate.

Associated Press writers Jonathan Lemire and Alan Fram contributed to this report.

China sending envoy to North Korea following Trump visit

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Following President Donald Trump's visit to Beijing, China said Wednesday that it would

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send a high-level special envoy to North Korea amid an extended chill in relations between the neighbors over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons and missile programs.

Song Tao, the head of China's ruling Communist Party's International Department, will travel to Pyongyang on Friday to report on outcomes of the party's national congress held last month, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Xinhua said Song, as president and party leader Xi Jinping's special envoy, would carry out a "visit" in addition to delivering his report, but gave no details about his itinerary or meetings. It also made no mention of Trump's trip to Beijing or the North's weapons programs, although Trump has repeatedly called on Beijing to do more to use its influence to pressure Pyongyang into altering its behavior.

Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang downplayed any connection between Song's trip and Trump's visit, saying it was "common practice" for the Communist Party and North Korea's ruling Workers' Party to exchange views.

"The purpose of this visit is to brief about the party congress and exchange views on issues of common interest and bilateral interest," Geng said at a regularly scheduled briefing.

Song would be the first ministerial-level Chinese official to visit North Korea since October 2015, when Politburo Standing Committee member Liu Yunshan met with leader Kim Jong Un. Liu delivered a letter to Kim from Xi expressing hopes for a strong relationship, although the respite in frosty ties proved short-lived. Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin visited Pyongyang in October of last year.

The two ruling parties have long-standing ties that often supersede formal diplomacy, even while Beijing has long been frustrated with Pyongyang's provocations and unwillingness to reform its economy.

However, Song is not directly connected to China's efforts to convince Pyongyang to cease its nuclear weapons program and return to talks, downplaying the chances for a breakthrough in that highly contentious area.

China is also North Korea's largest trading partner and chief source of food and fuel aid, although it says its influence with Kim's regime is often exaggerated by the U.S. and others. While it is enforcing harsh new U.N. sanctions targeting the North's sources of foreign currency, Beijing has called for steps to renew dialogue.

Beijing is also opposed to measures that could bring down Kim's regime, possibly depriving it of a buffer with South Korea and the almost 30,000 U.S. troops stationed there, and leading to a refugee crisis and chaos along its border with the North.

In Beijing last week, Trump urged Xi to pressure North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons program.

China can fix the problem "easily and quickly," Trump said in remarks to journalists alongside Xi. He urged Xi to "hopefully work on it very hard."

"If he works on it hard, it will happen. There's no doubt about it," Trump said.

While calling the visit significant, a top Chinese expert on North Korea relations downplayed any connection with Trump's statements in Beijing, saying it fit a pattern of traditional exchanges between the two parties following significant events such as national congresses.

"Representatives are dispatched to brief the other side at a chosen time and chosen level. It is a tradition and it is unnecessary to connect it with Trump's visit to China," said Guo Rui, researcher at the Institute for North Korean and South Korean Studies at Jilin University in northeastern China.

However, he said the visit "shows China's willingness to see a continuous development of the friendly relations between the two sides."

"Although the Korean Peninsula situation has been evolving fast with worrisome indications, the two parties are maintaining normal exchanges, and that is of significance for stabilizing the bilateral relations and the peninsular situation," Guo said.

The nature of Song's visit as a party-to-party exchange rather than one between the two governments appears to paint it as a bilateral attempt to strengthen relations, said John Delury, a professor at Seoul's Yonsei University who specializes in Korea and China.

The fact that Song was identified as Xi's special envoy also suggests that Xi is personally making a push to open the channel at a higher level and engage more constructively with Kim, Delury said.

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"This is a chance to see if he can open things up," he said. "The relationship has been so frosty, it will be interesting to see if there's some improvement in the bilateral ties."

North Korea staged its sixth nuclear test on Sept. 3, detonating what it claimed was a hydrogen bomb, and last launched a ballistic missile on Sept. 15, firing it over the Japanese island of Hokkaido into the Pacific Ocean.

Since then, there has been a lull in such activity, leading to some hopes in Beijing that Pyongyang might be responding to international pressure and becoming more amenable to talks.

Song's visit to Pyongyang also comes as China and South Korea are repairing their relations, with South Korean President Moon Jae-in scheduled to visit next month for talks with Xi.

Previously warm ties soured last year over Seoul's decision to deploy a sophisticated U.S. missile defense system aimed at guarding against North Korean threats.

Beijing claimed the THAAD system damaged its own security because its radars could observe military movements within northeastern China and retaliated by banning Chinese tour groups from visiting and interfering in the China operations of South Korean companies.

While South Korea resisted China's demands to withdraw the system, Beijing appeared satisfied with a pledge from Seoul not to expand it, among other commitments.

Associated Press writer Foster Klug in Seoul, South Korea, contributed to this report.

Sessions denies lying on Russia, pleads hazy memory

By ERIC TUCKER and SADIE GURMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A defiant Attorney General Jeff Sessions told Congress on Tuesday he never lied under oath about Russian interference in the 2016 election and said sleep deprivation and the "chaos" of the Trump campaign clouded his recollections of campaign contacts with Russians.

Sessions sought to explain away apparent contradictions in his public statements by portraying President Donald Trump's campaign as an exhausting operation and said he could not be expected to remember specific encounters from more than a year ago.

"In all of my testimony, I can only do my best to answer all of your questions as I understand them and to the best of my memory," Sessions told the House Judiciary Committee. "But I will not accept, and reject, accusations that I have ever lied under oath. That is a lie."

Sessions, then a senator from Alabama, led a foreign policy advisory council for the Trump campaign. He has been dogged since January by his evolving explanations about his own foreign contacts during the campaign and about how much he knew of communication between Trump associates and Russian government intermediaries.

Those questions have only deepened since the guilty plea last month of George Papadopoulos, a former Trump adviser who served on the council Sessions chaired and who proposed arranging a meeting between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. As well, another aide, Carter Page, told Congress in private statements that he had alerted Sessions about a meeting he planned in Russia during the campaign.

Sessions said he had no recollection of the conversation with Page. And he said that though he did not initially recall a March 2016 conversation with Papadopoulos, he now believes after seeing media reports about it that he told Papadopoulos that he was not authorized to represent the Trump campaign with the Russian government or any other foreign government.

Papadopoulos was arrested by the FBI and pleaded guilty to lying to authorities about his own foreign contacts during the campaign.

"I pushed back, I'll just say it that way," Sessions said under questioning, later adding that he was concerned that "he not go off somewhere pretending to represent the Trump campaign."

Sessions insisted that his story had never changed and that he had never been dishonest. But he also suggested to the committee that it was unfair to expect him to recall "who said what when" during the campaign.

"It was a brilliant campaign in many ways," he said. "But it was a form of chaos every day from day one. We traveled all the time, sometimes to several places in one day. Sleep was in short supply. And I was still a full-time senator keeping a very full schedule during this time."

The oversight hearing came one day after the Justice Department said Sessions had directed federal prosecutors to look into whether a special counsel might be merited to investigate allegations that the Clinton Foundation benefited from an Obama-era uranium transaction involving a Russia-backed company.

On Tuesday, Sessions said that any such review would be done without regard to political considerations.

Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

AP Exclusive: US scientists try 1st gene editing in the body

By **MARILYNN MARCHIONE**, AP Chief Medical Writer

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Scientists for the first time have tried editing a gene inside the body in a bold attempt to permanently change a person's DNA to try to cure a disease.

The experiment was done Monday in California on 44-year-old Brian Madeux. Through an IV, he received billions of copies of a corrective gene and a genetic tool to cut his DNA in a precise spot.

"It's kind of humbling" to be the first to test this, said Madeux, who has a metabolic disease called Hunter syndrome. "I'm willing to take that risk. Hopefully it will help me and other people."

Signs of whether it's working may come in a month; tests will show for sure in three months.

If it's successful, it could give a major boost to the fledgling field of gene therapy. Scientists have edited people's genes before, altering cells in the lab that are then returned to patients. There also are gene therapies that don't involve editing DNA.

But these methods can only be used for a few types of diseases. Some give results that may not last. Some others supply a new gene like a spare part, but can't control where it inserts in the DNA, possibly causing a new problem like cancer.

This time, the gene tinkering is happening in a precise way inside the body. It's like sending a mini surgeon along to place the new gene in exactly the right location.

"We cut your DNA, open it up, insert a gene, stitch it back up. Invisible mending," said Dr. Sandy Macrae, president of Sangamo Therapeutics, the California company testing this for two metabolic diseases and hemophilia. "It becomes part of your DNA and is there for the rest of your life."

That also means there's no going back, no way to erase any mistakes the editing might cause.

"You're really toying with Mother Nature" and the risks can't be fully known, but the studies should move forward because these are incurable diseases, said one independent expert, Dr. Eric Topol of the Scripps Translational Science Institute in San Diego.

Protections are in place to help ensure safety, and animal tests were very encouraging, said Dr. Howard Kaufman, a Boston scientist on the National Institutes of Health panel that approved the studies.

He said gene editing's promise is too great to ignore. "So far there's been no evidence that this is going to be dangerous," he said. "Now is not the time to get scared."

WOE FROM HEAD TO TOE

Fewer than 10,000 people worldwide have these metabolic diseases, partly because many die very young. Those with Madeux's condition, Hunter syndrome, lack a gene that makes an enzyme that breaks down certain carbohydrates. These build up in cells and cause havoc throughout the body.

Patients may have frequent colds and ear infections, distorted facial features, hearing loss, heart problems, breathing trouble, skin and eye problems, bone and joint flaws, bowel issues and brain and thinking problems.

"Many are in wheelchairs ... dependent on their parents until they die," said Dr. Chester Whitley, a University of Minnesota genetics expert who plans to enroll patients in the studies.

Weekly IV doses of the missing enzyme can ease some symptoms, but cost \$100,000 to \$400,000 a year and don't prevent brain damage.

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Madeux, who now lives near Phoenix, is engaged to a nurse, Marcie Humphrey, who he met 15 years ago in a study that tested this enzyme therapy at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland, where the gene editing experiment took place.

He has had 26 operations for hernias, bunions, bones pinching his spinal column, and ear, eye and gall bladder problems.

"It seems like I had a surgery every other year of my life" and many procedures in between, he said. Last year he nearly died from a bronchitis and pneumonia attack. The disease had warped his airway, and "I was drowning in my secretions, I couldn't cough it out."

Madeux has a chef's degree and was part owner of two restaurants in Utah, cooking for US ski teams and celebrities, but now can't work in a kitchen or ride horses as he used to.

Gene editing won't fix damage he's already suffered, but he hopes it will stop the need for weekly enzyme treatments.

Initial studies will involve up to 30 adults to test safety, but the ultimate goal is to treat children very young, before much damage occurs.

HOW IT WORKS

A gene-editing tool called CRISPR has gotten a lot of recent attention, but this study used a different one called zinc finger nucleases. They're like molecular scissors that seek and cut a specific piece of DNA.

The therapy has three parts: The new gene and two zinc finger proteins. DNA instructions for each part are placed in a virus that's been altered to not cause infection but to ferry them into cells. Billions of copies of these are given through a vein.

They travel to the liver, where cells use the instructions to make the zinc fingers and prepare the corrective gene. The fingers cut the DNA, allowing the new gene to slip in. The new gene then directs the cell to make the enzyme the patient lacked.

Only 1 percent of liver cells would have to be corrected to successfully treat the disease, said Madeux's physician and study leader, Dr. Paul Harmatz at the Oakland hospital.

"How bulletproof is the technology? We're just learning," but safety tests have been very good, said Dr. Carl June, a University of Pennsylvania scientist who has done other gene therapy work but was not involved in this study.

WHAT COULD GO WRONG

Safety issues plagued some earlier gene therapies. One worry is that the virus might provoke an immune system attack. In 1999, 18-year-old Jesse Gelsinger died in a gene therapy study from that problem, but the new studies use a different virus that's proved much safer in other experiments.

Another worry is that inserting a new gene might have unforeseen effects on other genes. That happened years ago, when researchers used gene therapy to cure some cases of the immune system disorder called "bubble boy" disease. Several patients later developed leukemia because the new gene inserted into a place in the native DNA where it unintentionally activated a cancer gene.

"When you stick a chunk of DNA in randomly, sometimes it works well, sometimes it does nothing and sometimes it causes harm," said Hank Greely, a Stanford University bioethicist. "The advantage with gene editing is you can put the gene in where you want it."

Finally, some fear that the virus could get into other places like the heart, or eggs and sperm where it could affect future generations. Doctors say built-in genetic safeguards prevent the therapy from working anywhere but the liver, like a seed that only germinates in certain conditions.

This experiment is not connected to other, more controversial work being debated to try to edit genes in human embryos to prevent diseases before birth — changes that would be passed down from generation to generation.

MAKING HISTORY

Madeux's treatment was to have happened a week earlier, but a small glitch prevented it.

He and his fiancée returned to Arizona, but nearly didn't make it back to Oakland in time for the second attempt because their Sunday flight was canceled and no others were available until Monday, after the treatment was to take place.

Scrambling, they finally got a flight to Monterey, California, and a car service took them just over 100 miles north to Oakland.

On Monday he had the three-hour infusion, surrounded by half a dozen doctors, nurses and others wearing head-to-toe protective garb to lower the risk of giving him any germs. His doctor, Harmatz, spent the night at the hospital to help ensure his patient stayed well.

"I'm nervous and excited," Madeux said as he prepared to leave the hospital. "I've been waiting for this my whole life, something that can potentially cure me."

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This Associated Press series was produced in partnership with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Senate GOP intent on scrapping health mandate in tax bill

By MARCY GORDON, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republicans are intent on scrapping the Affordable Care Act's requirement that Americans get health insurance, targeting a repeal of the individual mandate to help finance deep tax cuts in their tax overhaul.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, chairman of the Finance Committee, confirmed late Tuesday he was revising the bill to include repeal of the insurance mandate "to help provide additional relief to low- and middle-income families."

The surprise renewal of the failed effort to scrap the law's mandate came a day after President Donald Trump renewed pressure on GOP lawmakers to include the repeal in their tax legislation. It has sharp political stakes for Trump, who lacks a major legislative achievement after nearly 10 months in office.

The move by Republicans on the Senate Finance Committee upended the debate over the tax measure just as it was inching closer to passage following months of fine-tuning and compromise. It turned the debate into an angry partisan referendum on health care and President Barack Obama's signature law.

Republican efforts to dismantle the law collapsed this past summer as moderate Republicans joined with Democrats in rejecting the repeal — a bitter disappointment for Trump, who lashed out at the Senate GOP for failing. Adding the repeal of the mandate to the tax measure would combine two of Trump's legislative priorities.

Beyond Trump's prodding, the repeal move also was dictated by the Republicans' need to find revenue sources for the massive tax-cut bill, which calls for steep reductions in the corporate tax rate and elimination of some popular tax breaks.

"We are optimistic that inserting the individual mandate repeal would be helpful; that's obviously the view of the Senate Finance Committee Republicans," Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., told reporters.

The "Obamacare" mandate requires most people to buy health insurance coverage or face a fine. Without being forced to get coverage, fewer people would sign up for Medicaid or buy federally subsidized private insurance. Targeting the mandate in the tax legislation would save an estimated \$338 billion over a decade, which could be used to help pay for the deep cuts.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated repealing the requirement that people buy health coverage would mean 4 million additional uninsured people by 2019 and 13 million more by 2027.

It "will cause millions to lose their health care and millions more to lose their premiums," Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, the senior Democrat on the Finance Committee, angrily insisted when the panel reconvened to work on the tax bill and word came of the Republicans' move on the mandate.

Feeling ambushed without advance notice, minority Democrats exploded in anger.

The completed House tax bill, pointed toward a vote in that chamber Thursday, does not currently include repeal of the health insurance mandate. Trump plans an in-person appeal to House Republicans before the vote.

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To win over moderate Senate Republicans to the tax legislation, the Senate may take up at the same time a bipartisan compromise to shore up health care subsidies, Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., indicated Tuesday. Thune is a member of the Finance panel.

Hatch's revised version also doubles the child tax credit to \$2,000 from the current \$1,000 — a change that presidential daughter Ivanka Trump has pushed for. The credit would rise to \$1,600 under the House bill.

Also, Hatch's revision makes slight reductions in individual tax rates for three moderate income brackets, numbers three, four and five of a total seven. The rates are reduced from the original Senate bill and the current system. The new rates would be 10, 12, 22.5, 25, 32.5, 35 and 38.5 percent.

The House bill shrinks the current seven brackets to four: 12, 25, 35 and 39.6 percent.

Outside Congress, as word spread of the Senate Republicans' intention, major organizations representing insurers, doctors and hospitals urged lawmakers to keep Obamacare's unpopular requirement that most Americans have health insurance — at least for now.

Ending the "individual mandate" would prompt healthy people to leave the insurance market in droves, driving up premiums, the groups argued in a letter Tuesday to congressional leaders.

Republican Sens. Rand Paul of Kentucky and Tom Cotton of Arkansas had pushed for the repeal in the tax bill just months after GOP efforts to dismantle the 2010 health care law had collapsed in the Senate.

"Repealing the mandate pays for more tax cuts for working families and protects them from being fined by the IRS for not being able to afford insurance that Obamacare made unaffordable in the first place," Cotton said in a statement.

Congressional Republicans projected confidence earlier in the day about delivering the legislation.

"This bill will make things better for hard-working Americans," House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., told reporters.

House GOP leaders rallied support with the rank-and-file at a closed-door meeting.

Earlier in the Senate panel's work on the bill, the Democrats complained that the bill would enable U.S. corporations with foreign operations and wealthy individuals and families to exploit loopholes to skirt millions in taxes.

On Monday, a nonpartisan analysis of the Senate bill showed it would increase taxes for some 13.8 million moderate-income American households.

Promoted as needed relief for the middle class, the House and Senate bills would deeply cut corporate taxes, double the standard deduction used by most Americans and limit or repeal completely the federal deduction for state and local property, income and sales taxes. Republican leaders in Congress view passage of the first major tax revamp in 30 years as imperative for the GOP to preserve its majorities in next year's elections.

Associated Press writers Kevin Freking and Andrew Taylor in Washington contributed to this report.

Gunman targeted neighbors then continued rampage

By DON THOMPSON and PAUL ELIAS, Associated Press

RANCHO TEHAMA RESERVE, Calif. (AP) — A Northern California man killed two neighbors with whom he had been feuding before he went on a shooting rampage Tuesday at apparent random sites — including an elementary school that successfully locked him out — in a series of attacks where he killed two more people and injured 10 before police fatally shot him, officials said.

Police said surveillance video shows the shooter unsuccessfully trying to enter a nearby elementary school after quick-thinking staff members locked the outside doors and barricaded themselves inside when they heard gunshots.

Tehama County Assistant Sheriff Phil Johnston said the gunman spent about six minutes shooting into Rancho Tehama Elementary School before driving off to continue shooting elsewhere. Johnston said one student was shot and injured and is expected to survive.

"It was a bizarre and murderous rampage," Johnston said.

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He said the 45-minute spree ended when a patrol car rammed the stolen vehicle the shooter was driving and killed him in a shootout. Johnston said the shooter was facing charges of assaulting one of the feuding neighbors in January and that she had a restraining order against him.

"I think the motive of getting even with his neighbors and when it went that far — he just went on a rampage," Johnston said. He said there was a "domestic violence" report Monday involving the gunman, but didn't provide any further details.

At least one of the victims has life-threatening injuries, he said.

Johnston declined to identify the shooter until his relatives were notified, but he confirmed the gunman was charged with assault in January and had a restraining order placed against him. The district attorney, Gregg Cohen, told the Sacramento Bee he is prosecuting a man named Kevin Neal in that case.

Neal's mother told The Associated Press he was in a long-running dispute with neighbors he believed were cooking methamphetamine.

The mother, who spoke on condition she be named only as Anne, lives in Raleigh, North Carolina, where she raised Neal. She said she posted his \$160,000 bail and spent \$10,000 on a lawyer after he was arrested in January for stabbing a neighbor. Neal's mother said the neighbor was slightly cut after Neal grabbed a steak knife out of the hand of the neighbor who was threatening him with it.

She wept as she told The Associated Press she spoke to Neal on the phone on Monday.

"Mom it's all over now," she said he told her. "I have done everything I could do and I am fighting against everyone who lives in this area."

She said Neal apologized to her during their brief conversation, she thought for all the money she had spent.

He also told her that "Mom you know what, my whole life you gave me such a good happy life and nobody could have a better mother than I had."

Then he said:

"All of a sudden, now I'm on a cliff and there's nowhere to go. No matter where I go for help here I get nobody who will help me. All they are doing is trying to execute me here."

She said until recently Neal seemed content living in the rural neighborhood of modest homes and trailers and he grew marijuana on his property. Recently she said he began complaining about failing health he attributed to the nearby methamphetamine labs.

Neal's sister, Sheridan Orr, said the family was trying to reach the sheriff's department Tuesday evening but still had not been notified. She said her brother had struggled with mental illness throughout his life and at times had a violent temper.

"We're stunned and we're appalled that this is a person who has no business with firearms whatsoever," Orr said. "Our deep, deep sympathy for the victims and it sounds trite but our hearts are breaking for them."

Brian Flint told the Record Searchlight newspaper Tuesday that his neighbor, whom he knew only as Kevin, was the gunman and that his roommate was among the victims. He said the shooter stole his truck.

"The crazy thing is that the neighbor has been shooting a lot of bullets lately, hundreds of rounds, large magazines," Flint said. "We made it aware that this guy is crazy and he's been threatening us."

The shootings occurred in the rural community of Rancho Tehama Reserve, a homeowners association in a sparsely populated area of rolling oak woodlands dotted with grazing cattle about 130 miles north of Sacramento described on its website as a "quiet private country community" where "the people are friendly and the pace is relaxed."

Johnston said officials received multiple 911 calls about gunfire at an intersection of two dirt roads. Minutes later, more calls reporting shots flooded in from different locations, including the school.

Witnesses reported hearing gunshots and children screaming at the school, which has one class of students from kindergarten through fifth grade.

Johnston said the shooter was armed with a semiautomatic rifle and two handguns at seven locations. He said another weapon was seen in one of the vehicles he drove but hadn't been recovered yet.

Salvador Tello said the gunman fired at a truck in front of him as he went to drop off his three children

at school. Tello said he was about three blocks from the school when bullets made "big holes" in the truck. He said he forced his children to duck down, slammed his vehicle into reverse and headed to the children's grandmother's house.

"I put my kids down and put my truck in reverse and went out," he said. "I don't believe it, because I wake up, take my kids, feed them cereal and put them in the truck and say, 'Let's go to school like a normal day.'"

Elias reported from San Francisco. Associated Press writers Jocelyn Gecker, Janie Har and Olga Rodriguez in San Francisco, Michael Balsamo in Los Angeles and researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York also contributed to this story.

3 UCLA players face punishment at home after China incident

By BETH HARRIS, AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Three UCLA basketball players detained in China on suspicion of shoplifting returned home, where they may be disciplined by the school as a result of the international scandal.

Freshmen LiAngelo Ball, Jalen Hill and Cody Riley arrived at Los Angeles International Airport late Tuesday afternoon after a 12-hour flight from Shanghai. They ignored reporters' shouted questions while making their way through a horde of media outside and getting into a van that took off from the departure level.

Pac-12 Commissioner Larry Scott said the matter "has been resolved to the satisfaction of the Chinese authorities."

The players were detained in Hangzhou for questioning following allegations of shoplifting last week before the 23rd-ranked Bruins beat Georgia Tech in their season-opening game in Shanghai as part of the Pac-12 China game. The rest of the UCLA team returned home last Saturday.

A person with knowledge of the Pac-12's decision said any discipline involving the trio would be up to UCLA. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the conference doesn't plan any sanctions.

UCLA Chancellor Gene Block said the school is weighing its options.

"I want to be clear that we take seriously any violations of the law," he said in a statement. "In this particular case, both Athletics and the Office of Student Conduct will review this incident and guide any action with respect to the involved students. Such proceedings are confidential, which limits the specific information that can be shared."

There was no immediate word on the trio's status for the team's home opener Wednesday night against Central Arkansas.

The school said the three players, along with coach Steve Alford and athletic director Dan Guerrero, will make their first public comments about the matter at a campus news conference Wednesday, but won't take questions.

Scott thanked President Donald Trump, the White House and the State Department for their efforts in resolving what he called "the incident with authorities in Hangzhou, China." He indicated that UCLA made "significant efforts" on behalf of its athletes.

It wasn't clear under what terms the players were freed to return to the U.S.

"We are all very pleased that these young men have been allowed to return home to their families and university," Scott said.

Trump said Tuesday he had a long conversation about the three players' status with Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping.

Ball, Hill and Riley were expected to have an immediate impact as part of UCLA's highly touted recruiting class. Instead, they are being talked about solely for their actions off the court.

Ball, a guard whose brother Lonzo is a rookie for the Los Angeles Lakers, averaged 33.8 points as a high school senior. The elder Ball played one season in Westwood and left early for the NBA draft.

The Balls' outspoken father, LaVar, was in China at the time of the incident. He spent some time promoting the family's Big Baller Brand of athletic shoes with his youngest son, LaMelo, while his middle son was detained.

Forwards Hill and Riley, both four-star recruits, figure to bolster 7-foot senior Thomas Welsh in the frontcourt.

The Bruins traveled to China as part of the Pac-12's global initiative that seeks to popularize the league's athletic programs and universities overseas. The China Game is in its third year, and while the scandal was developing the league announced that California and Yale will play in next year's edition.

The game is sponsored by Alibaba Group, the Chinese commerce giant that both UCLA and Georgia Tech visited before the shoplifting incident occurred.

AP photographer Jae Hong contributed to this report.

More college basketball: <http://collegebasketball.ap.org> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

Washington GOP boosts pressure on Alabama party on Moore

By ALAN FRAM and KIMBERLY CHANDLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Washington Republicans tightened pressure Tuesday on Alabama's GOP to keep a defiant Roy Moore from being elected to the Senate next month, with many voicing hope that President Donald Trump could use his clout to resolve a problem that Republicans say leaves them with no easy options.

With Alabama Republicans reluctant to block Moore and enrage his legions of loyal conservative supporters, national GOP leaders were turning to Trump as their best chance of somehow turning the tide. Two women by name have said Moore molested them in the 1970s when one was 14 and the other 16 and he was a local district attorney, and three others said he pursued romantic relationships with them around the same time.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, in all-out warfare with Moore, said there'd be conversations about the anti-establishment firebrand after Trump returns Tuesday night from Asia. He said he'd already spoken about Moore to the president, Vice President Mike Pence and White House chief of staff John Kelly.

"He's obviously not fit to be in the United States Senate and we've looked at all the options to try to prevent that from happening," said McConnell, who Monday said he believed Moore's accusers. "This close to election, it's a complicated matter."

Maintaining his political brand as an unrepentant outsider, Moore again denied abusing the women in an email that reminded voters of their loyalty to him: "He's the same man you've always known him to be." It added, "On to victory!"

At the God Save America Conference later Tuesday in Jackson, Alabama, Moore said there is a "spiritual battle" going on in American politics.

"Why do you think they're giving me this trouble?" he asked the Baptist church audience. "Why do you think I'm being harassed in the media and people (are) pushing for an allegation in the last 28 days of the election?"

Twice removed from his post as state Supreme Court chief Justice, Moore's candidacy in the Dec. 12 special election confronts Republicans with two damaging potential outcomes. A victory saddles GOP senators with a colleague accused of abusing and harassing teen-agers, a troubling liability heading into next year's congressional elections, while an upset victory by Democrat Doug Jones would slice the already narrow GOP Senate majority to an unwieldy 51-49.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions told Congress he has "no reason to doubt" the women. Sessions, a former Alabama senator and still one of the GOP's most influential voices in the state, didn't rule out a Justice Department probe of the allegations, telling the House Judiciary Committee, "We will evaluate every case as to whether or not it should be investigated."

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The national Republican Party ended a fundraising arrangement with Moore's campaign, Federal Election Commission documents showed. And House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., joined the pile of congressional Republicans saying Moore should drop out, saying, "If he cares about the values and people he claims to care about, then he should step aside."

Two Washington Republicans, speaking on condition of anonymity to describe private conversations, said they didn't know what Trump would do, but said the White House shares McConnell's concerns about Moore. While few think Trump could persuade Moore to step aside, several are hoping he can convince the Alabama state party to take some action.

At a forum Tuesday organized by The Wall Street Journal, McConnell said Trump is discussing what to do in the Alabama race "in great detail."

Despite the building pressure from national Republicans, state GOP office holders have taken a measured response.

It's already too late to remove his name from the ballot. That leaves the state party with limited options.

The 21-member party steering committee could vote to revoke Moore's GOP nomination and ask election officials to ignore ballots cast for him Election Day, but that would risk a lawsuit and backlash from Moore supporters. The party has little interest in alienating Moore's followers a year before elections in which the governor's office and entire state legislature will be in play, but it remains possible.

In an interview, Moore campaign chairman Bill Armistead said he'd seen no indication the state party will "back off in any way." He said some in the party want it to pass a resolution embracing Moore.

A spokesman for GOP Gov. Kay Ivey reiterated that she would not postpone the election to give Moore's opponents more time to organize. That would spark a legal challenge, but a possible delay remains an option, Republicans say.

Also possible is a write-in campaign, but national and Alabama Republicans consider that a longshot to succeed. Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill said no write-in candidate has ever won a statewide election in the state.

McConnell praised Sessions Tuesday as a possible contender who is "totally well-known and is extremely popular in Alabama," but conceded Sessions might not run.

Sessions held the Senate seat before joining Trump's administration this year. Some Republicans said they believe Sessions is reluctant to run but expressed hope that Trump — who's soured on him after he appointed a special prosecutor to investigate Trump's 2016 campaign's ties to Russia — might urge him to enter the race.

Republicans think GOP Sen. Luther Strange, whom Moore defeated in a September party primary, would have little chance against Moore. Strange has called such a move unlikely.

If Moore is elected, top Senate Republicans already are threatening to vote to expel him as soon as he's elected. That risks leaving the seat unfilled for a period of time.

Chandler reported from Montgomery, Alabama. AP reporters Andrew Taylor and Matthew Daly in Washington and Steve Peoples in Birmingham, Alabama, contributed to this report.

Police hunt killer after 4th slaying in Tampa neighborhood

By TAMARA LUSH, Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Police and federal agents with rifles checked car trunks, banged on doors and gathered forensic evidence in a Tampa neighborhood Tuesday as they hunted for the killer believed responsible for gunning down four people for no apparent reason in just over a month.

The normally quiet, working-class Seminole Heights section of bungalows and palm trees was sealed off with yellow crime-scene tape after the latest killing in the neighborhood — that of a 60-year-old man who was shot from behind as he crossed a street shortly after 5 a.m.

Interim Tampa Police Chief Brian Dugan said it is extremely possible that the killer — or killers — live in the neighborhood.

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"Whoever is doing it, they're familiar with the neighborhood and they're able to vanish very quickly," Dugan said.

Residents and police have been on edge since Oct. 9, when 22-year-old Benjamin Mitchell was shot to death. Two days later, 32-year-old Monica Hoffa, was slain. And on Oct. 19, Anthony Naiboa, 20, was killed after taking the wrong bus home from his new job.

On Tuesday, Ronald Felton, an unemployed construction worker who volunteered at a food bank, was gunned down.

Police cars with flashing lights sat at dozens of intersections, and one major thoroughfare was entirely shut down for much of the day. Law enforcement took over the parking lot at a Baptist church, and a federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives bus was parked at the makeshift command center. Law officers questioned people and took down cell numbers.

"This was a very decent neighborhood until the last couple of months," sighed Sherry Street, 50, a cook who has lived in the area for seven years. "Up until recently I used to accidentally fall asleep with the door unlocked."

Street said she has stopped walking to the store, taking the bus or sitting outside to smoke at night. Her friends would often stop by and hang out on her porch to talk, but "now they're like, 'I'm not coming to see you.'"

Her neighbors have also changed their routines. Gone were the Halloween decorations of years past. Gone are the dog walkers. And the young woman with the beautiful redheaded twin girls — Street hasn't seen them in weeks.

"At 7 o'clock you can come out this door and you won't hear a sound," she said.

All of October's victims were either getting on or off a city bus, or were at a bus stop, when they were shot, police said. It was unclear if Tuesday's victim was near a bus stop.

"When I first divorced and moved here, I stayed in some pretty rough areas. But I've never seen anything like this. Maybe I need to consider moving," Street said, shaking her head. "It's some crazy person. That's all you can explain it. Because why? They're just targeting innocent people and shooting them."

Police gained a better description of the suspect after the fourth killing, saying a witness described him as a black male, 6 feet to 6-foot-2, with a thin build and light complexion. He had a large black pistol and was last seen all in black.

Previously, officers didn't have much to go on other than a grainy black-and-white video of a person running near one of the crime scenes.

Bryanna Fox, a criminology professor at the University of South Florida in Tampa, said it is unusual for a serial killer to use a gun.

"A lot of serial killers prefer other methods such as knives or strangulation," she said. "Those tend to be more one-on-one, and that's what most serial killers prefer, a more intimate experience."

Follow Tamara Lush on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/tamaralush>

Trump in Asia: A break from the past but uncertain results

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

President Donald Trump declared his first Asian tour "tremendously successful" as he hopped on a plane bound for Washington. But when he landed at the White House late Tuesday he arrived with few concrete accomplishments in hand.

As he jetted across the region, to five nations, six cities and three summits over 12 days, Trump pushed regional leaders to reshape trade deals to America's liking, but he won no firm commitments from his hosts. He opened the door to negotiations with North Korea, but then seemed to shut it again by deriding the dictator Kim Jong Un as "short and fat."

He did not try to push leaders to end human rights abuses.

Trump has said he'll have more to say about the trip's achievements in a "major statement" at the White

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House this week. The White House would not discuss the details in advance.

The trip did reveal much about Trump's traveling style. He soaked up the pageantry and was well practiced at the art of flattery.

For all his tough campaign talk on trade, Trump appeared reluctant to take a confrontational stance. He cajoled and flattered leaders in Tokyo and Seoul without eliciting firm commitments for a more balanced economic relationship. At a summit in Vietnam, he vowed to hold rising superpower China accountable for unfair business and trade practices. Yet in Beijing, the president said, "I don't blame China" for a growing trade gap.

In the White House view, Trump accomplished what he set out to do: strengthen relationships with world leaders and lay the groundwork for more equitable trading deals.

"I think the fruits of our labor are going to be incredible, whether it's the security of our nations, whether it's security of the world or whether it's trade," Trump said before leaving the Philippines on Tuesday bound for home.

But across the Pacific, Trump was reminded of the challenges that were awaiting him in Washington.

As Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping wrapped up their joint statements to the press in Beijing, they ignored shouted questions from American reporters in the Great Hall of the People. When they ducked backstage, Xi summoned his interpreter and posed an inquiry to Trump:

"Who is Roy Moore?" Xi asked.

That moment, described by two White House officials who weren't authorized to speak publicly about private conversations, underscores Trump's domestic challenges. He must grapple with the uncertain fate of his tax cut plan, face the threat of a government shutdown and decide whether to cut ties with Moore, the Republican candidate in Alabama's special Senate race, who is accused of sexually assaulting under-age girls decades ago.

For most of the trip, Trump was able to leave domestic affairs behind, though he did reignite the Russia firestorm by revealing that President Vladimir Putin had insisted to him in Vietnam that Moscow didn't hack the 2016 election. Trump added: "And I believe — I really believe — that when he tells me that, he means it." Trump later clarified that he was "with" the U.S. intelligence agencies that concluded Russia was behind the interference.

In Seoul, Trump delivered a sharp warning to North Korea, saying: "Do not underestimate us. And do not try us." But he also, for the first time, signaled a willingness to negotiate with Kim, though he didn't elaborate.

Just as vital as the message Trump delivered to Pyongyang was the one he sent to China, which supplies most of North Korea's economic lifeblood. His message to Beijing: It's time to do more.

At each stop on his trip, Trump both bemoaned the current state of U.S. trade relations in the region and announced new business deals, including more than \$250 billion in China. But most of those agreements were older, already agreed-upon or only promises. In Vietnam, he scolded China for unfair trade practices and delivered a forceful advocacy for bilateral trade deals, only to have 11 nations strike a multinational agreement hours later.

Breaking with previous presidents, Trump largely abandoned publicly pressing foreign leaders on human rights. He said nothing about restrictions on civil liberties or press freedoms in China and Vietnam and, most notably, did not rebuke Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte for overseeing a violent drug war that includes extrajudicial killings.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer called Trump's trip a "flop."

"He seemed far more interested in pomp and circumstance — red carpets, fancy meals, and the flattery of foreign leaders — than advancing American interests in a region that is increasingly looking to China for leadership," said Schumer, D-N.Y. "And after the president's performance, those countries are going to turn more to China. At least they have strength and direction, even though China will take advantage of them for sure as they have taken advantage of us."

Ever the showman, Trump reveled in the imagery of the trip, including a private tour at sunset of Beijing's

Forbidden City, golf with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and lavish state dinners. But he was denied the dramatic moment he desired.

Trump planned a secret visit to the demilitarized zone at the heavily fortified Korean border. But with Marine One just five minutes away, heavy fog forced his helicopter to turn around.

Associated Press writers Matthew Pennington and Zeke Miller contributed to this report from Washington.

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Experts: Bush groping allegations would be hard to prosecute

By NOMAAN MERCHANT, Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Allegations that former President George H.W. Bush inappropriately touched six women involve potential crimes punishable by fines or jail time, if they had been prosecuted.

All but one of the cases is ineligible under state laws that limit when a prosecution can begin after an alleged crime, and several lawyers interviewed said that it would be difficult to win a conviction against Bush, who has vascular parkinsonism, a rare syndrome that mimics Parkinson's disease.

"You're still going to be facing prosecuting a 93-year-old man in a wheelchair that's a former president," said Toby Shook, a lawyer who previously served as a prosecutor in Dallas. "I doubt if you could ever find a jury that would ever want to convict him."

There's no indication prosecutors are planning to pursue a case against Bush. Jordana Grolnick, an actress who alleged that Bush groped her behind last year as his wife, Barbara, stood nearby, told The Associated Press that she has no plans to report the 41st president to authorities. That appears to be the only incident that hasn't reached the local statute of limitations on how long a crime can be prosecuted after it occurs.

The six incidents occurred in three states over a decade. In all of the cases, the women say Bush touched their buttocks as they stood next to him to take photos. All three states have laws against touching someone without their consent.

The women's stories broadly follow the same outline: Bush patted them below the waist as they stood next to him to take photos, sometimes with a joke about his favorite magician or writer being named "David Cop-a-Feel."

Bush has issued repeated apologies through a spokesman "to anyone he has offended." The spokesman, Jim McGrath, said in a statement last month that Bush has used a wheelchair for roughly five years, and that "his arm falls on the lower waist of people with whom he takes pictures." In a statement Monday, McGrath said, "George Bush simply does not have it in his heart to knowingly cause anyone distress, and he again apologizes to anyone he offended during a photo op."

McGrath did not respond to a request for additional comment Tuesday.

Actress Heather Lind was the first to accuse Bush of groping her, saying in an Oct. 24 Instagram post that Bush "touched me from behind" and told "a dirty joke" while they posed for a photo at a Houston screening of the AMC television series "Turn."

Five more women have come forward since then, including Roslyn Corrigan, who told Time magazine Monday that Bush groped her as they took a photo in 2003, when Corrigan was 16, during an event in The Woodlands, a Houston suburb.

The AP generally does not identify victims of sexual assault without their consent, but is using the names of women who have spoken publicly on social media or in news reports.

Three of the incidents are reported to have occurred in Texas. Shook said that under Texas law, touching someone's buttocks over the person's clothing would most likely be grounds for a misdemeanor assault charge, with only a \$500 fine and no jail time.

In Maine, where Bush is accused of grabbing two women, those allegations could give rise to a charge of assault or unlawful sexual touching, punishable by up to a year in jail, said Walt McKee, a defense attorney in Augusta, Maine.

And in Pennsylvania, where a retired newspaper journalist has accused Bush of touching her during an event in Erie, the state's law against indecent assault could apply, said Richard Settgest, an adjunct law professor at Penn State University.

A key question in any prosecution, the lawyers said, would be whether the suspect touched the victim for sexual gratification or by accident. While age and physical disability would factor into any determination, Settgest said, "I don't necessarily think that just because someone's infirm, they wouldn't be able to be held accountable."

Bush, who served as president from 1989 to 1993, is a beloved figure in both Texas and Maine, the two states where he lives. Two days after the first woman accused Bush of misconduct, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner tweeted that Bush was "a statesman and role model to me." Days later, Bush joined his son, former President George W. Bush, on the field before Game 5 of baseball's World Series to throw out the ceremonial first pitch.

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Rise in teen suicide, social media coincide; is there link?

By LINDSEY TANNER, AP Medical Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — An increase in suicide rates among U.S. teens occurred at the same time social media use surged and a new analysis suggests there may be a link.

Suicide rates for teens rose between 2010 and 2015 after they had declined for nearly two decades, according to data from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Why the rates went up isn't known.

The study doesn't answer the question, but it suggests that one factor could be rising social media use. Recent teen suicides have been blamed on cyberbullying, and social media posts depicting "perfect" lives may be taking a toll on teens' mental health, researchers say.

"After hours of scrolling through Instagram feeds, I just feel worse about myself because I feel left out," said Caitlin Hearty, a 17-year-old Littleton, Colorado, high school senior who helped organize an offline campaign last month after several local teen suicides.

"No one posts the bad things they're going through," said Chloe Schilling, also 17, who helped with the campaign, in which hundreds of teens agreed not to use the internet or social media for one month.

The study's authors looked at CDC suicide reports from 2009-15 and results of two surveys given to U.S. high school students to measure attitudes, behaviors and interests. About half a million teens ages 13 to 18 were involved. They were asked about use of electronic devices, social media, print media, television and time spent with friends. Questions about mood included frequency of feeling hopeless and considering or attempting suicide.

The researchers didn't examine circumstances surrounding individual suicides. Dr. Christine Moutier, chief medical officer at the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, said the study provides weak evidence for a popular theory and that many factors influence teen suicide.

The study was published Tuesday in the journal *Clinical Psychological Science*.

Data highlighted in the study include:

—Teens' use of electronic devices including smartphones for at least five hours daily more than doubled, from 8 percent in 2009 to 19 percent in 2015. These teens were 70 percent more likely to have suicidal thoughts or actions than those who reported one hour of daily use.

—In 2015, 36 percent of all teens reported feeling desperately sad or hopeless, or thinking about, planning or attempting suicide, up from 32 percent in 2009. For girls, the rates were higher — 45 percent in 2015 versus 40 percent in 2009.

—In 2009, 58% of 12th grade girls used social media every day or nearly every day; by 2015, 87% used social media every day or nearly every day. They were 14% more likely to be depressed than those who

used social media less frequently.

"We need to stop thinking of smartphones as harmless," said study author Jean Twenge, a psychology professor at San Diego State University who studies generational trends. "There's a tendency to say, 'Oh, teens are just communicating with their friends.' Monitoring kids' use of smartphones and social media is important, and so is setting reasonable limits, she said.

Dr. Victor Strasburger, a teen medicine specialist at the University of New Mexico, said the study only implies a connection between teen suicides, depression and social media. It shows the need for more research on new technology, Strasburger said.

He noted that skeptics who think social media is being unfairly criticized compare it with so-called vices of past generations: "When dime-store books came out, when comic books came out, when television came out, when rock and roll first started, people were saying 'This is the end of the world.'"

With its immediacy, anonymity, and potential for bullying, social media has a unique potential for causing real harm, he said.

"Parents don't really get that," Strasburger said.

AP reporter P. Solomon Banda contributed to this story from Littleton, Colorado.

Follow AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner on Twitter at @LindseyTanner .

Trump Jr.'s WikiLeaks exchange adds intrigue to Russia probe

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's oldest son released a series of private Twitter exchanges between himself and WikiLeaks during and after the 2016 election, including pleas from the website to publicize its leaks.

Donald Trump Jr.'s release of the messages on Twitter came hours after The Atlantic first reported them Monday. In the exchanges — some of them around the time that the website was releasing the stolen emails from Democrat Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman — WikiLeaks praises his father's positive comments about WikiLeaks and asks Trump Jr. to release his father's tax returns to the site.

The revelations are sure to increase calls in Congress to have Trump Jr. testify publicly as part of several committee probes into Russian interference in the 2016 election. And they add a new element to the investigations that have been probing for months whether Trump's campaign colluded in any way with the Russian government.

In an intelligence assessment released last January, the NSA, CIA and FBI concluded that Russian military intelligence provided hacked information from the DNC and "senior Democratic officials" to WikiLeaks. WikiLeaks has denied that Russia was the source of emails it released, including those from Clinton's campaign chairman, John Podesta.

The private messages released by Trump Jr. show him responding to the WikiLeaks account three times, at one point agreeing to "ask around" about a political action committee WikiLeaks had mentioned. He also asked the site about a rumor about an upcoming leak. The messages began in September 2016 and ran through July.

Trump Jr. downplayed the exchanges as he released them.

"Here is the entire chain of messages with @wikileaks (with my whopping 3 responses) which one of the congressional committees has chosen to selectively leak," he tweeted. "How ironic!"

Trump Jr.'s lawyers had released the exchanges to three congressional committees that have been investigating Russian intervention in the 2016 election and whether there were any links to Trump's campaign.

In a statement, Trump Jr.'s lawyer said thousands of documents had been turned over to the committees. "Putting aside the question as to why or by whom such documents, provided to Congress under promises of confidentiality, have been selectively leaked, we can say with confidence that we have no concerns about these documents and any questions raised about them have been easily answered in the appropriate

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ate forum," said Alan Futerfas.

Futerfas didn't say which forum he was referring to, but Trump Jr. was interviewed behind closed doors by Senate Judiciary Committee staff in September. A person familiar with that meeting said the private Twitter messages were discussed. The person declined to be identified because the transcript of that interview hasn't been made public.

In one message dated Oct. 3, 2016, the WikiLeaks Twitter account sent Trump Jr. an article that included critical comments Clinton had made about WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange and said "it'd be great if you guys could comment on/push this story."

Trump Jr. replied: "Already did that earlier today. It's amazing what she can get away with."

Two minutes later, Trump Jr. sent another message: "What's behind this Wednesday leak I keep reading about?"

Longtime Trump associate Roger Stone had tweeted the day before that on Wednesday, "Hillary Clinton is done," referencing WikiLeaks.

The WikiLeaks Twitter account never responded, but days later WikiLeaks started rolling out Podesta's stolen emails. After the emails were released, WikiLeaks sent Trump Jr. a searchable link of the emails. Trump Jr. tweeted that link two days later, on Oct. 14, 2016, The Atlantic noted.

The rest of the messages are one-sided, with WikiLeaks sending Trump Jr. messages through July 2017. They include praise for his father for mentioning them on the campaign trail, a plea to release Trump's taxes to the site and advice on Election Day that Trump should not concede if he lost. One message suggested Trump encourage Australia to appoint Assange as U.S. ambassador.

In July, the Twitter account messaged Trump Jr. to ask him to give the site emails surrounding a meeting he and other Trump associates held with Russians during the campaign. Trump Jr. then released them himself.

Vice President Mike Pence responded quickly to the revelations, issuing a statement through his press secretary that he knew nothing about the situation.

"The vice president was never aware of anyone associated with the campaign being in contact with WikiLeaks," said spokeswoman Alyssa Farah. "He first learned of this news from a published report earlier tonight."

Assange tweeted after The Atlantic report that he couldn't confirm the messages but then defended them after Trump Jr. released them.

"WikiLeaks appears to beguile some people into transparency by convincing them that it is in their interest," Assange tweeted.

On Tuesday, former WikiLeaks spokesman Kristinn Hrafnsson said he never met anyone in the Trump campaign. Hrafnsson said he could not say whether anyone else on WikiLeaks' team had met with Trump staffers, noting that he stepped away from his full time role with the organization in early 2016, before Trump became the Republican nominee.

Democrats swiftly reacted to the report, saying Trump Jr. should provide more information. California Rep. Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the House intelligence committee, says it "demonstrates once again a willingness by the highest levels of the Trump campaign to accept foreign assistance."

Schiff also pointed to Cambridge Analytica, a data firm that worked for Trump's campaign and reached out to WikiLeaks before the election about obtaining emails related to Clinton, according to the company's CEO.

Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal, a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said the panel should subpoena the documents and force Trump Jr. to publicly testify.

"There seems to be no reasonable explanation for these messages," Blumenthal said.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley had said he would call Trump Jr. to publicly testify after the private interview in September. But negotiations over witnesses broke down last month amid disagreements with Democrats on the panel.

The House and Senate intelligence committees are also expecting to interview Trump Jr., but those interviews are expected to be behind closed doors.

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Eric Tucker, Chad Day, Tom LoBianco and Raphael Satter in London contributed to this report.

Target sees highly competitive holiday on the way

AP Retail Writer

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A cautious outlook on the crucial holiday season overshadowed a strong quarter from Target, pulling shares down sharply before the opening bell and the shares of other retailers as well.

The company on Wednesday reported higher traffic and sales at established stores rose as a campaign to improve the experience in stores and online pay off.

But it looks like it will have to spend a lot of money to get people into stores.

"While we expect the fourth-quarter environment to be highly competitive, we are very confident in our holiday season plans," said Brian Cornell, CEO of Target in a company release.

Like all traditional retailers, Target, based in Minneapolis, is in fierce competition with Amazon.com and needs to cater to more and more people who transition seamlessly between store aisles and mobile phones when they shop.

Target announced in February that it was spending more than \$7 billion to revamp its stores and online businesses over the next few years. As part of that strategy, the discounter is offering new store brands, eight of which will be available for the first time this holiday season. That includes the much-anticipated Hearth & Hand with Magnolia, a lifestyle brand from Chip and Joanna Gaines of HGTV's "Fixer Upper". Target now also has dedicated sales associates in such areas as clothing, beauty and electronics. And Target has also been expanding its online services including now shipping online orders from 1,400 of its 1,800 stores for faster delivery. Starting last month, it increased the minimum hourly pay to \$11 this holiday season, effective for the 100,000 temporary hourly workers this season. It's committing to a \$15 hourly wage by the end of 2020.

Target reported a third-quarter profit of \$480 million, or 88 cents per share, for the period ended Oct. 28. That compares with \$608 million, or \$1.06 per share, in the year-ago period.

Earnings, adjusted for one-time gains and costs, came to 91 cents per share, or a nickel better than Wall Street had expected, according to a survey by Zacks Investment Research.

Revenue was \$16.67 billion, also topping forecasts \$16.61 billion, and better than last year's third-quarter revenue of \$16.4 billion.

Revenue at stores opened at least a year rose 0.9 percent, better than the 0.4 percent that analysts had predicted. It was also the second consecutive quarter of same-store gains. Customer traffic rose 1.4 percent

For the current quarter ending in January, Target expects its per-share earnings to range from \$1.05 to \$1.25, which is shy of Wall Street projections for \$1.27.

The company expects full-year earnings in the range of \$4.40 to \$4.60 per share.

Shares of Target Corp. were down more than 5 percent, or \$3.19 to \$56.90 in pre-market trading.

Elements of this story were generated by Automated Insights (<http://automatedinsights.com/ap>) using data from Zacks Investment Research. Access a Zacks stock report on TGT at <https://www.zacks.com/ap/TGT>

Asian shares fall, tracking Wall St, drop in oil prices

By ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Shares fell in Asia on Wednesday, tracking modest losses overnight on Wall Street, where the biggest drop in crude oil prices since October weighed on oil producers and other energy stocks. Japan's Nikkei 225 index slumped 0.9 percent after a lackluster GDP report for July-September.

KEEPING SCORE: The Nikkei 225 was at 22,169.31, as manufacturers' shares were hurt by a stronger yen. Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.7 percent to 28,956.00 and the Shanghai Composite index also lost 0.7 percent to 3,405.18. Australia's S&P ASX 200 fell 0.4 percent to 5,945.50 and the Kospi of South Korea

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declined 0.3 percent to 2,519.26. Taiwan fell and shares in Southeast Asia were mostly lower.

JAPAN DATA: Japan's economy expanded at a 1.4 percent annualized rate in July-September in the seventh straight quarter of growth for the world's third-largest economy. The economy is in its longest period of expansion since 2001. But growth slowed from a 2.6 percent annualized rate of growth in April-June, the Cabinet Office reported Wednesday. Strong exports are helping offset relatively weak household demand. Private consumption fell 0.5 percent in July-September, the first such decline in seven quarters, the report said.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude sank 58 cents to \$55.12 per barrel, or 1.04 percent, in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It fell \$1.06, or 1.9 percent, on Tuesday to settle at \$55.70 per barrel, the biggest single-day decline since October. Brent crude, used to price international oils, shed 71 cents to \$61.50 per barrel. It declined 95 cents, or 1.5 percent, to close at \$62.21 a barrel in London.

ANALYST'S VIEWPOINT: "There's this perception that there's a lot of supply waiting in the wings and as prices have moved higher that's made the marginal producer want to come out and just find more oil," said Eric Freedman, chief investment officer of U.S. Bank Wealth Management.

WALL STREET: Energy companies led U.S. stocks modestly lower Tuesday, erasing small gains made a day earlier. Investors also are eyeing a vote by the U.S. House of Representatives on its version of a major tax bill this week. Expectations that the tax overhaul will sharply lower corporate taxes have helped lift share prices this year. The Standard & Poor's 500 index 0.2 percent to 2,578.87. The Dow Jones industrial average 0.1 percent to 23,409.47 and the Nasdaq composite slid 0.3 percent to 6,737.87. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks also gave up 0.3 percent, to 1,471.26.

CURRENCIES: The dollar fell to 113.21 yen from 113.43 yen on Tuesday. The euro weakened to \$1.1793 from \$1.1796.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Nov. 15, the 319th day of 2017. There are 46 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 15, 1942, the naval Battle of Guadalcanal ended during World War II with a decisive U.S. victory over Japanese forces.

On this date:

In 1777, the Second Continental Congress approved the Articles of Confederation.

In 1806, explorer Zebulon Pike sighted the mountaintop now known as Pikes (cq) Peak in present-day Colorado.

In 1864, during the Civil War, Union forces led by Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman began their "March to the Sea" from Atlanta; the campaign ended with the capture of Savannah on Dec. 21.

In 1889, Brazil was proclaimed a republic as its emperor, Dom Pedro II, was overthrown.

In 1926, the National Broadcasting Company began operating its radio network.

In 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt laid the cornerstone of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C.

In 1959, four members of the Clutter family of Holcomb, Kansas, were found murdered in their home. (Ex-convicts Richard Hickock and Perry Smith were later convicted of the killings and hanged in a case made famous by the Truman Capote book "In Cold Blood.")

In 1966, the flight of Gemini 12, the final mission of the Gemini program, ended successfully as astronauts James A. Lovell and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin Jr. splashed down safely in the Atlantic after spending four days in orbit.

In 1979, the British government publicly identified Sir Anthony Blunt as the "fourth man" of a Soviet spy ring.

In 1986, a government tribunal in Nicaragua convicted American Eugene Hasenfus of charges related to his role in delivering arms to Contra rebels, and sentenced him to 30 years in prison. (Hasenfus was

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pardoned a month later.)

In 1987, 28 of 82 people aboard a Continental Airlines DC-9, including the pilots, were killed when the jetliner crashed seconds after taking off from Denver's Stapleton International Airport.

In 1998, Kwame Ture (KWAH'-may TUR'-ay), the civil rights activist formerly known as Stokely Carmichael, died in Guinea at age 57.

Ten years ago: During a feisty Democratic debate in Las Vegas, Hillary Rodham Clinton accused her closest rivals, Barack Obama and John Edwards, of slinging mud "right out of the Republican playbook" and sharply criticized their records. Cyclone Sidr struck Bangladesh, killing more than 3,200 people and leaving millions homeless. Baseball player Barry Bonds was indicted for perjury and obstruction of justice, charged with lying when he told a federal grand jury that he did not knowingly use performance-enhancing drugs. (Bonds was later convicted on the obstruction of justice count, which was overturned in 2015.) San Diego Padres ace Jake Peavy won the NL Cy Young Award in a unanimous vote. Actress Lindsay Lohan (LOH'-un) completed her jail sentence for drunken driving in a swift 84 minutes.

Five years ago: The Justice Department announced that BP had agreed to plead guilty to a raft of charges in the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill and pay a record \$4.5 billion, including nearly \$1.3 billion in criminal fines. Four veterans were killed and 13 people injured when a freight train slammed into a parade float carrying wounded warriors and their spouses at a rail crossing in Midland, Texas. Detroit's Miguel Cabrera was named the American League's Most Valuable Player by the Baseball Writers' Association of America; San Francisco's Buster Posey was the National League MVP.

One year ago: President Barack Obama, opening his final overseas trip while in office, acknowledged in Athens, Greece, that he was surprised by Donald Trump's victory, and said it stemmed from deep-seated anxieties among working-class Americans that the government needed to do better to address. Speaker Paul Ryan unanimously won his GOP colleagues' votes for another term at the helm of the House. Jazz and blues singer, songwriter and musician Mose Allison died four days after his 89th birthday.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Ed Asner is 88. Singer Petula Clark is 85. Comedian Jack Burns is 84. Actress Joanna Barnes is 83. Actor Yaphet Kotto is 78. Actor Sam Waterston is 77. Classical conductor Daniel Barenboim is 75. Pop singer Frida (ABBA) is 72. Actor Bob Gunton is 72. Former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson is 70. Actress Beverly D'Angelo is 66. Director-actor James Widdoes is 64. Rock singer-producer Mitch Easter is 63. News correspondent John Roberts is 61. Former "Jay Leno Show" bandleader Kevin Eubanks is 60. Comedian Judy Gold is 55. Actress Rachel True is 51. Rapper E-40 is 50. Country singer Jack Ingram is 47. Actor Jay Harrington is 46. Actor Jonny Lee Miller is 45. Actress Sydney Tamiia (tuh-MY'-yuh) Poitier is 44. Christian rock musician David Carr (Third Day) is 43. Rock singer-musician Chad Kroeger is 43. Rock musician Jesse Sandoval is 43. Actress Virginie Ledoyen is 41. Actor Sean Murray is 40. Pop singer Ace Young (TV: "American Idol") is 37. Golfer Lorena Ochoa is 36. Hip-hop artist B.o.B is 29. Actress Shailene Woodley is 26. Actress-dancer Emma Dumont is 23.

Thought for Today: "In seeking wisdom thou art wise; in imagining that thou has attained it thou art a fool." — Simon Ben Azzai, 2nd century (A.D.) Jewish scholar.