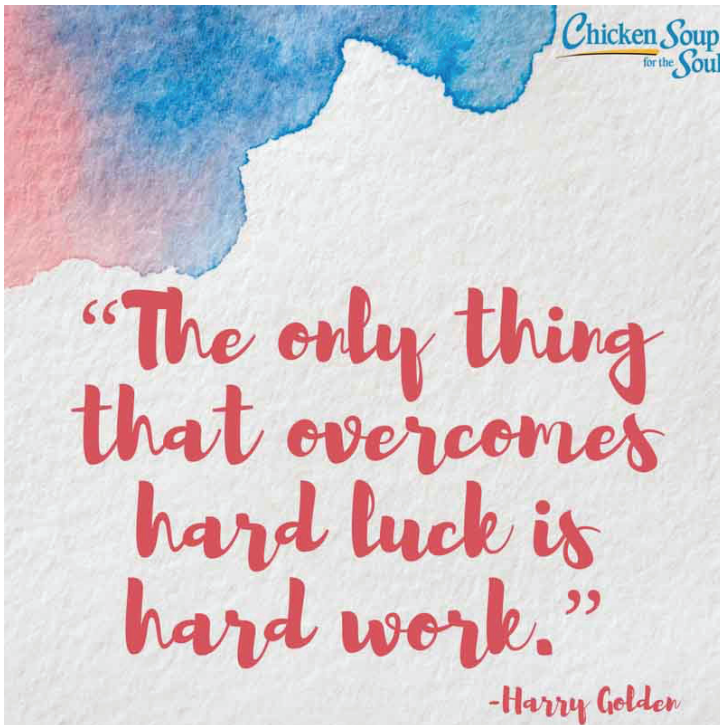


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- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 1- Dakota Tree Ad
- 2- Groton Care & Rehab Help Wanted Ad
- 3- Farmers Union PSA
- 3- Cage teams go 2-2 at Deuel
- 4- Boys Varsity Stat Sheet
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Removal, Grinding, Chipping, Trimming
605-725-WOOD
Mason Dinger: 605-216-6098
Trevor Zeck: 605-216-8910



DAKOTA TREE COMPANY

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

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

Saturday

Wrestling at LaMoure High School, 10 a.m.

**Boys and Girls Basketball Doubleheader
with Leola/Frederick Here**

Girls JV at 2 p.m.

Boys JV at 3 p.m.

Girls Varsity at 4:30 p.m.

Boys Varsity at 6 p.m.

Boys JV and both varsity matches will be carried live on GDILIVE.COM

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Left Photo: Jennie Doeden gets the jump ball.

Right Photo: Seric Shabazz looks for an open player.

(Photo by Julianna Kosel)



NEW SIGN-ON BONUSES!

☆☆☆ \$1,500 for CNAs ☆☆☆

☆☆☆ \$3,000 for LPNs ☆☆☆

☆☆☆ \$4,500 for RNs ☆☆☆

Alzheimer's Care Unit Director Medication Aid

Contact Brynn Pickrel or Nellie Hatfield at 605-397-2365
or apply in person.



GROTON
CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton



All auto owners!
Save \$2-\$4 /tank
& grow your local economy
by choosing low carbon
Super Premium E30's
94 octane, more power,
same mileage, fewer
carbon deposits, lower
maintenance costs,
slashed benzene & related
genotoxic, carcinogenic
tailpipe emissions;
*see sdfu.org's E30 tab for
info, E30 prices\locations.

***Farmers Union's
PSA: Courtesy Merle
Anderson (Merle is 94
year old founder of Ace
and legendary ethanol
supporter... "because it is
the right thing to do")**

Cage teams go 2-2 at Deuel

The Groton Area basketball teams went 2-2 Friday evening in Clear Lake as the 2017-18 basketball season begins.

The girls teams won both of their games while the boys teams lost both.

The Lady Tigers won the junior varsity game, 42-17. Scoring for the Tigers were Eliza Wanner with 11, Nicole Marzahn and Kaycie Hawkins with eight each, Tadyn Glover, Caitlyn Barse and Kenzie McInerney each had three and Grace Wambach, Tessa Erdmann and Ameile Hartwig each added two points.

The girls varsity team won its game, 60-35. Harleigh Stange led the Tigers with 19 points while Payton Maine had 10 and Jessica Bjerke nine for the leaders. Bjerke had seven rebounds and Jennie Doeden had five. Stange made three three-pointers while Maine and Bjerke each made one.

The boys junior varsity team lost a heartbreaker after leading the entire game. At the end, the Cardinals stole the ball and on a fast break with two on one, the Cardinals made the winning basket with half a second left on the clock.

Groton Area led at the quarterstops at 8-4, 19-12 and 22-21. Deuel won the game, 30-28.

Scoring for the Tigers were Kaden Kurtz with seven, Tristan Traphagen five, Lucas Simon, Cade Guthmiller, Austin Jones and Peyton Johnson each had three and Cole Larson and Austin Schinkel each had two points.

Groton jumped out to a quick lead in the varsity game, but the Cardinals flew back and took an 11-10 lead at the of the first quarter and went on to win, 59-39. The Tigers had closed to within seven early in the fourth quarter, but cold shooting by the Tigers allowed the Cardinals to win.

Groton Area made 26 percent of its field goals while Deuel made 35 percent. Groton Area was three of 19 in three-pointers while Deuel was eight of 24. Groton Area had 25 team fouls that allowed the Cardinals to make 13 of 29 free throws. Deuel had 12 team fouls as Groton Area made eight of 11 free throws. Deuel had the edge in rebounding, 41-40 with Brodyn DeHoet having nine rebounds for Groton Area and Kellan Bench had 11 for the Cardinals.

DeHoet led the Tigers with 16 points followed by Seric Shabazz with 12, Jonathan Doeden had seven and Brandon Keith and Kaden Kurtz each had two. The leaders for Deuel were Zach Stoltenburg with 19, Kellan Bench with 15 and Tyson Palmquist with 10.

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Boys Varsity Stat Sheet vs. Deuel

| GROTON | | TOT-FG | | 3-PT | | FT | | FTA | | REBOUNDS | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|--------|----|------|----|-----|----|-----|-----|----------|-----|----|----|---|----|----|---|-------|
| NO | PLAYER | P | FG | FGA | FG | FGA | FT | FTA | OFF | DEF | TOT | PF | TP | A | TO | BK | S | MIN |
| 20 | KEITH, BRANDON | F | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0:00 |
| 42 | DEHOET, BRODYN | C | 6 | 14 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 16 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 24:00 |
| 3 | SIPPEL, ANTHONY | G | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 24:00 |
| 4 | DOEDEN, JONNY | G | 3 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 24:00 |
| 5 | SHABAZZ, SERIC | G | 3 | 14 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 12 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 8:00 |
| 10 | LANE, MARSHALL | | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 8:00 |
| 14 | KURTZ, KADEN | | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16:00 |
| 22 | GUTHMILLER, CADE | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8:00 |
| 30 | LARSON, COLE | | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8:00 |
| 34 | JONES, AUSTIN | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8:00 |
| 40 | JOHNSON, PEYTON | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8:00 |
| 55 | DIEGEL, TREYTON | | 0 | 7 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 24:00 |
| TEAM REBOUNDS | | | | | | | | | 0 | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | |
| Team Totals | | | 14 | 52 | 3 | 19 | 8 | 11 | 8 | 32 | 40 | 25 | 39 | 9 | 23 | 0 | 4 | 160 |

Total FG% - 1st: 6/27 0.222 2nd: 8/25 0.320 Game: 0.269 Deadball
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 0/8 0.000 2nd: 3/11 0.273 Game: 0.158 Rebounds
 Total FT% - 1st: 3/4 0.750 2nd: 5/7 0.714 Game: 0.727 (2,0)

| DEUEL | | TOT-FG | | 3-PT | | FT | | FTA | | REBOUNDS | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------|--------|----|------|----|-----|----|-----|-----|----------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| NO | PLAYER | P | FG | FGA | FG | FGA | FT | FTA | OFF | DEF | TOT | PF | TP | A | TO | BK | S | MIN |
| 2 | Stoltenburg, Zach | * | 6 | 15 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 19 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 32:00 |
| 3 | Benck, Kellan | * | 4 | 15 | 4 | 11 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 11 | 3 | 15 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 24:00 |
| 4 | Palmquist, Tyson | * | 3 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 10 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 24:00 |
| 30 | Homan, Preston | * | 3 | 10 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 16:00 |
| 34 | Reichling, Tyler | * | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16:00 |
| 11 | Ronne, Isaac | | 2 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 16:00 |
| 15 | Baer, Mason | | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8:00 |
| 23 | Lovre, Scott | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8:00 |
| 24 | Stoltenburg, Logan | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8:00 |
| 33 | Bauman, Payton | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8:00 |
| TEAM REBOUNDS | | | | | | | | | 0 | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | |
| Team Totals | | | 19 | 54 | 8 | 24 | 13 | 29 | 10 | 31 | 41 | 12 | 59 | 10 | 10 | 0 | 11 | 160 |

Total FG% - 1st: 8/28 0.286 2nd: 11/26 0.423 Game: 0.352 Deadball
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 5/17 0.294 2nd: 3/7 0.429 Game: 0.333 Rebounds
 Total FT% - 1st: 6/16 0.375 2nd: 7/13 0.538 Game: 0.448 (9,0)

| SCORE BY PERIODS | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | TOTAL |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Groton | 10 | 5 | 12 | 12 | 39 |
| Deuel | 11 | 16 | 13 | 19 | 59 |

Last FG: Groton 4th-08:00, Deuel 4th-08:00
 Largest lead: Groton by 7 1st-08:00, Deuel by 22 4th-08:00
 Score tied: 1 times, Lead changed: 1 times

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Boys JV Stat Sheet vs. Deuel

| GROTON | | TOT-FG | | | 3-PT | | | REBOUNDS | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------|--------|----|-----|------|-----|----|----------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|---|----|----|---|-------|
| NO | PLAYER | P | FG | FGA | FG | FGA | FT | FTA | OFF | DEF | TOT | PF | TP | A | TO | BK | S | MIN |
| 34 | JONES, AUSTIN | F | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 32:00 |
| 40 | JOHNSON, PEYTON | C | 1 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 8:00 |
| 10 | THURSTON, RILEY | G | 0 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16:00 |
| 14 | KURTZ, KADEN | G | 3 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 24:00 |
| 22 | GUTHMILLER, CADE | G | 1 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 16:00 |
| 3 | SCHINKEL, ANTHONY | | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8:00 |
| 4 | DEHOET, CYRUS | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8:00 |
| 5 | COGLEY, JACKSON | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0:00 |
| 20 | SIMON, LUCAS | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 16:00 |
| 30 | LARSON, COLE | | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8:00 |
| 32 | LARSON, CHANDLER | | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0:00 |
| 42 | TRAPHAGEN, TRISTAN | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 24:00 |
| TEAM REBOUNDS | | | | | | | | | 2 | 4 | 6 | | | | | | | |
| Team Totals | | | 11 | 35 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 6 | 16 | 22 | 18 | 28 | 6 | 15 | 0 | 5 | 160 |

Total FG% - 1st: 8/24 0.333 2nd: 3/11 0.273 Game: 0.314 Deadball
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 1/5 0.200 2nd: 1/3 0.333 Game: 0.250 Rebounds
 Total FT% - 1st: 2/3 0.667 2nd: 2/6 0.333 Game: 0.444 (1,0)

| DEUEL | | TOT-FG | | | 3-PT | | | REBOUNDS | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------|--------|----|-----|------|-----|----|----------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|---|----|----|---|-------|
| NO | PLAYER | P | FG | FGA | FG | FGA | FT | FTA | OFF | DEF | TOT | PF | TP | A | TO | BK | S | MIN |
| 5 | Preheim, Tanner | * | 1 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 24:00 |
| 15 | Baer, Mason | * | 3 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 24:00 |
| 21 | Brandt, Dylan | * | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 24:00 |
| 23 | Lovre, Scott | * | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 16:00 |
| 33 | Bauman, Payton | * | 3 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 32:00 |
| 1 | Eide, Layton | | 0 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 16:00 |
| 13 | Knight, Brady | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 16:00 |
| 24 | Stoltenburg, Logan | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8:00 |
| 44 | Visser, Logan | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0:00 |
| TEAM REBOUNDS | | | | | | | | | 4 | 2 | 6 | | | | | | | |
| Team Totals | | | 10 | 35 | 1 | 10 | 9 | 18 | 13 | 22 | 35 | 12 | 30 | 1 | 16 | 0 | 8 | 160 |

Total FG% - 1st: 2/15 0.133 2nd: 8/20 0.400 Game: 0.286 Deadball
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 0/4 0.000 2nd: 1/6 0.167 Game: 0.100 Rebounds
 Total FT% - 1st: 8/16 0.500 2nd: 1/2 0.500 Game: 0.500 (5,0)

| SCORE BY PERIODS | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | TOTAL |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Add New Team | 8 | 11 | 4 | 5 | 28 |
| Add New Team | 4 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 30 |

Last FG: Add New Team 4th-08:00, Add New Team 4th-08:00
 Largest lead: Add New Team by 9 2nd-08:00, Add New Team by 2 4th-08:00
 Score tied: 3 times, Lead changed: 3 times

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Today in Weather History

December 9, 1961: A snowstorm moved through the area and dropped 3 to 6 inches of snow east of the Missouri River and 1 to 3 inches to the west of the river from late afternoon on the 8th through late afternoon on the 9th. The storm was accompanied by high winds, blowing snow, icy highways, and temperatures falling to near zero. Three men were killed and one injured in a two-car crash near Watertown as snow and blowing snow sharply reduced visibilities. A skidding accident on a slippery highway near Winner resulted in an automobile fatality of one man. In a rural area near Vale, in Meade County, one man abandoned his stalled vehicle and was found the next day, frozen to death. 6 inches of snow fell at Sisseton and Wheaton, with 5 inches at Aberdeen and Watertown and 3 inches at Mobridge. Only an inch fell at Pierre.

1786 - A second great snowstorm in just five days brought another 15 inches of snow to Morristown NJ, on top of the eight inches which fell on the 7th and 8th, and the 18 inches which fell on the 4th and 5th. The total snowfall for the week was thus 41 inches. New Haven CT received 17 inches of new snow in the storm. Up to four feet of snow covered the ground in eastern Massachusetts following the storms. (9th-10th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

December 9, 1917: A severe winter storm struck the Ohio Valley and the Great Lakes Region. It produced 25 inches of snow and wind gusts to 78 mph at Buffalo NY. The storm produced 26 inches of snow at Vevay Indiana, with drifts fourteen feet high.

1987 - The fifth storm in nine days kept the northwestern U.S. wet and windy. Winds along the coast of Washington gusted to 75 mph at Oceans Shores and at Hoquiam, and the northern and central coastal mountains of Oregon were drenched with three inches of rain in ten hours, flooding some rivers. Snowfall totals in the Cascade Mountains of Washington State ranged up to 36 inches in the Methow Valley. High winds in Oregon blew a tree onto a moving automobile killing three persons and injuring two others at Mill City. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1988 - A winter storm blanketed the Southern and Central Appalachians with up to ten inches of snow. Arctic air invaded the north central U.S. bringing subzero cold to Minnesota and North Dakota. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A strong storm produced wind gusts of 40 to 65 mph from the Alaska Peninsula to the North Gulf Coast of Alaska. Southeasterly winds gusted to 75 mph in the Anchorage hillside. Gusty winds associated with a strong cold front caused a power outage across much of the island of Hawaii. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

December 9, 2003: Although it never threatened land, a subtropical storm became Tropical Storm Peter approx. 700 miles WNW of the Cape Verde Islands. Combined with Tropical Storm Odette from earlier in the month, this is the first time since 1887 that two tropical storms formed in the Atlantic Basin in December.

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| Today | Tonight | Sunday | Sunday Night | Monday | Monday Night | Tuesday |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Decreasing Clouds | Partly Cloudy | Mostly Sunny | Mostly Cloudy then Partly Cloudy and Blustery | Breezy. Slight Chance Snow then Mostly Cloudy | Mostly Cloudy | Partly Sunny |
| High: 31 °F | Low: 21 °F | High: 41 °F | Low: 27 °F | High: 37 °F | Low: 15 °F | High: 33 °F |

Turning A Little Milder

Today Highs: 30s and 40s
Few Flurries East

Sunday Highs: 30s to 50s.
Partly Sunny

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
Aberdeen, SD
www.weather.gov/abr

Graphic Created 12/9/2017 3:46 AM

Published on: 12/09/2017 at 3:48AM

Temperatures will be on the upswing across the region, especially for Sunday. Other than some flurries in the east today, it should be mostly dry.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 34.0

Low Outside Temp: 24.1

High Gust: 23

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 61° in 1939

Record Low: -27° in 1955

Average High: 27°F

Average Low: 8°F

Average Precip in Dec: 0.16

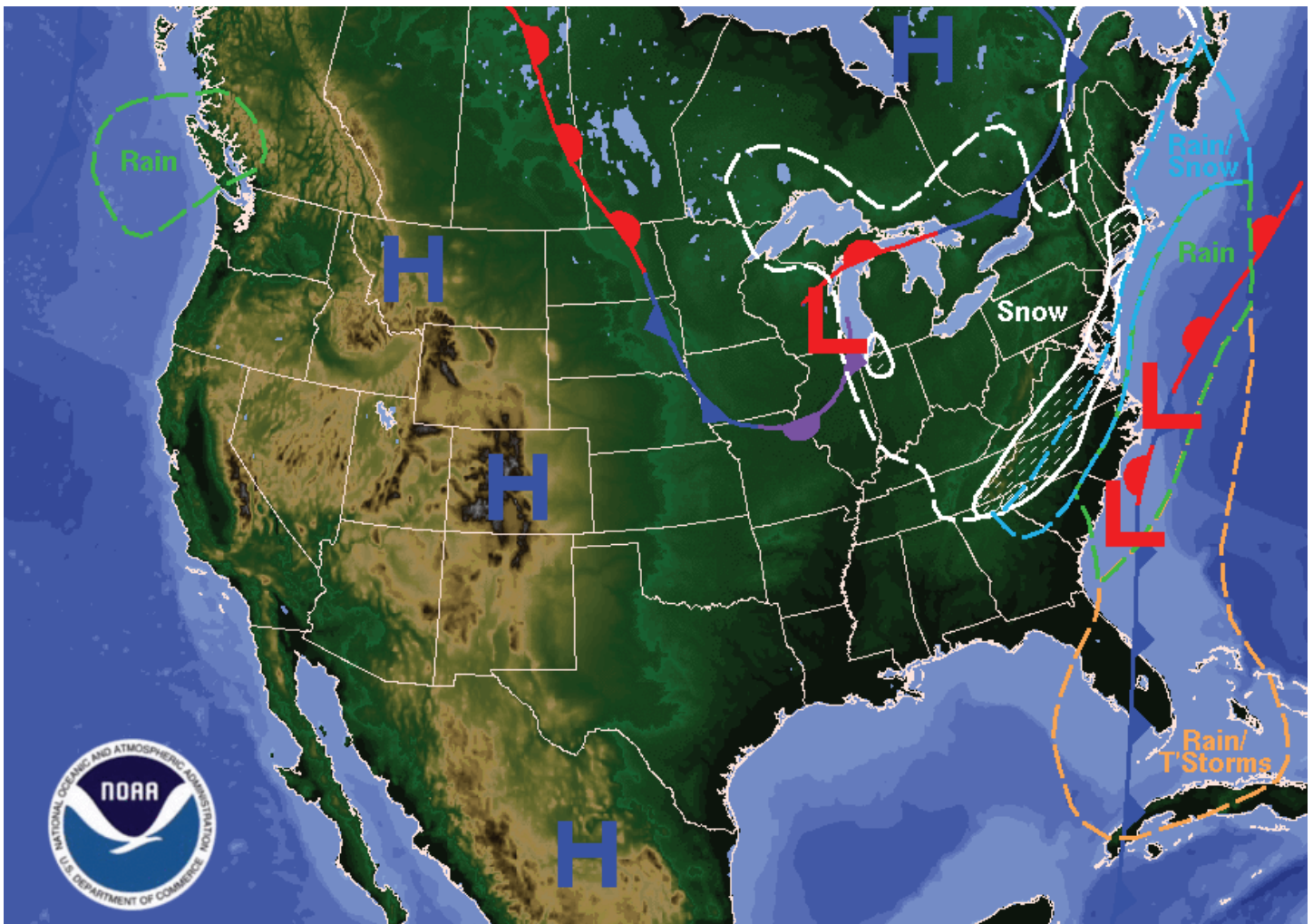
Precip to date in Dec: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.36

Precip Year to Date: 13.47

Sunset Tonight: 4:50 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:02 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sat, Dec 09, 2017, issued 4:51 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain

Rain and T'Storms

Rain and Snow

Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)

Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)

Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)

Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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THE PROMISE OF PEACE

A professor stood before his class and boasted, "The Bible is false. It cannot be believed. It says, 'Peace and good will toward men.' History cannot account for a time when there were no wars!"

Disturbed, Arthur went to his pastor and related the incident. Calmly, his pastor said, "Art, that's not what the angels said. They said, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth among men with whom He is pleased.'"

Politicians speak of peace through treaties and boundaries, threats and sanctions, wars and rumors of wars. But that is not the peace that God speaks of in His Word. His Word speaks of a peace that comes through salvation and surrender to the Prince of Peace. It is a peace that comes from the new heart that He implants within us. It is a peace that Christians enjoy when we open the door to our hearts and allow Him to come in and rule our lives.

The peace that Scripture speaks of will never come from a non-peaceful source. It is a peace that comes through the risen Christ and has its source in God Himself.

We cannot find peace in a turbulent, war-torn world until we make peace with God through Jesus Christ. Only when we go to Him with humility and faith and ask for His forgiveness will He grant us His peace.

Prayer: We pray, Heavenly Father for Your peace – a peace that comes from the God of all comfort Who gives us His peace that assures us of His presence and power. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Luke 2:13-14 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

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

South Dakota prosecutors to include dashcam video in trial

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Prosecutors intend to present a dashcam video as evidence during the upcoming trial of a Washington state man accused of trying to kill a Highway Patrol trooper in South Dakota two years ago.

The Rapid City Journal reports that 35-year-old Donald Willingham faces trial on charges including attempted murder, aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer and possession of marijuana with the intent to distribute.

Deputy State's Attorney Josh Hendrickson says Willingham was in a vehicle when trooper Zachary Bader pulled the car over in October 2015 for speeding on Interstate 90 in Pennington County. Hendrickson says the video will show Bader requesting to search the vehicle after smelling marijuana.

Police say Willingham beat Bader and caused serious injuries, including facial fractures.

Willingham is being held at the Pennington County Jail.

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

Indianapolis Colts kicker reunited with high school jersey

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Indianapolis Colts kicker Adam Vinatieri has been reunited with his jersey from his high school playing days in South Dakota, thanks to a high school coach in Texas.

The Rapid City Journal reports that high school football coach Steve Svendson first came across Vinatieri's Rapid City Central jersey many years ago. Svendson coached the Cobblers, Rapid City Central's football team, from 1999 to 2007. He now coaches a team in Conroe, Texas.

During his time in Rapid City, his daughters asked to borrow old jerseys to wear to a "throwback night" at a basketball game. Another coach pointed out that one of Svendson's daughters was wearing Vinatieri's old jersey.

Svendson held onto the jersey for years before returning it to Vinatieri during a Nov. 5 game between the Colts and the Houston Texans.

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

Nebraska students to be offered in-state tuition as USD

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The University of South Dakota has announced it will offer in-state tuition to first-year students and transfer students from Nebraska.

The Omaha World-Herald reports that the school in Vermillion, South Dakota, made the announcement Thursday, describing the change as a pilot program that has been formally approved by the South Dakota Board of Regents.

The university enrolls about 10,000 students.

USD competes in the Summit League, as does the University of Nebraska at Omaha. For football, the Coyotes play in the Missouri Valley Football Conference. USD says a similar program last year in Iowa substantially increased its enrollment of Iowa residents.

In-state tuition and fees at USD total \$8,772 this year for 30 credit hours.

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

New Standing Rock Tribal Chairman addresses challenges

By JESSICA HOLDMAN, The Bismarck Tribune

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Like many of his predecessors, new Standing Rock Tribal Chairman Mike Faith is aiming to combat the issues of unemployment, housing and drug abuse on the reservation.

While these are long-standing issues for the people of Standing Rock, Faith said he thinks there has been a shift within the communities of people wanting to see a positive change.

"The elders, the grandmas saying enough is enough," Faith said. "And the young people are hearing them and know (drugs) are not welcome."

Like the rest of the state and nation, the people of Standing Rock are battling the crisis of opioid abuse. The tribe, along with a number of other tribes and cities in the state, recently received a grant — Standing Rock's in the amount of \$70,000 — to provide drug treatment and prevention, the Bismarck Tribune reported .

Under his leadership, Faith said he hopes the tribal council will approve working agreements with other governmental agencies to continue to better care.

"Partnership is the only way to solve this," he said.

But he is also calling on the people of Standing Rock to work for this change among themselves. In his first months in office, he has trips planned to each community to ask how the council can help the communities help themselves.

In addition to drug abuse, Faith said he plans to look for employment solutions. He said the tribe has the casino and a number of other business ventures through Standing Rock Industries. Faith said he wants to work toward even more ventures so those tribal members who receive a higher education have somewhere to work within their home communities.

Faith has 19 years of experience as an employee of the tribe, having worked for Standing Rock's Game and Fish Department. He has also served a term as a councilman at large on the tribal council.

Faith said he chose to run for chairman because he feels he's in touch with people and can make a difference.

"My heart is there for people," he said.

Information from: Bismarck Tribune, <http://www.bismarcktribune.com>

Anniversary of South Dakota building collapse tragedy

By STU WHITNEY, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — On the one-year anniversary of his death, Ethan McMahon is still here.

The construction worker and former U.S. Marine, killed last December in a downtown building collapse that staggered the Sioux Falls community and drew national headlines, left behind a fiancée and two children who feel his presence every day.

"There are certain songs that come on the radio that he played or sang," says Ashley Pesicka, who had a son, now 7, when she met McMahon in 2015 and later gave birth to Ethan's son, Hayden, five months before the tragedy.

"It's not just the anniversary that's hard — it's every day," she added in an exclusive interview with Argus Leader Media. "There are milestones like Hayden's first words or first steps he wasn't there for, or the changing weather, when it gets cold or starts to snow. It reminds you. It takes you back to that day and forces you to remember."

The 24-year-old McMahon was working for Hultgren Construction with his younger brother, John, to renovate the Copper Lounge at 10th and Phillips when the 100-year-old building buckled, the result of two load-bearing walls being removed without proper temporary support, according to a federal investigation.

John got out alive. So did third-floor loft resident Emily Fodness, who was buried underneath the rubble but ultimately pulled to safety by firefighters as downtown crowds cheered.

Elation turned to despair as darkness arrived and McMahon's lifeless body was recovered. Rescue work-

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ers formed a line as Ethan's father, John, paid his respects and a city began to mourn.

Ethan's parents, John and Nancy, and siblings, John and Kendall, have guarded their privacy since that day but issued a statement earlier this week thanking the community for its support as they learn to cope with the loss, the Argus Leader reported .

Fodness, who spent three hours underneath the rubble in freezing temperatures before being rescued, is still affected by the incident but knows her outcome could have been worse.

"I'm grateful that I'm here, but I'm mourning the life that was lost," she said of McMahon last December. "We will be forever attached because of what happened. Then you sort of think, Why? I'm thankful that I got out, but I wish the story was different with Ethan."

McMahon is recalled fondly by friends and former co-workers at PAve, the nightclub adjacent to the collapsed building, which he helped build. He worked weekend security and occasionally played open mic nights at the popular downtown spot, where a wall mural featuring deceased rock stars also bears his image.

On the edge of the drama was Pesicka, whose plans to marry and raise a family with McMahon were lost in the wreckage along with the man that she loved. She avoided interview requests to maintain privacy but now feels ready to talk about the positive impact that the 2010 Washington High School graduate had on those around him.

"We're constantly pulling out pictures and videos and talking about him and keeping his memory alive as much as we can," says Pesicka, 27, who works as a hair stylist in Sioux Falls. "Of course Hayden won't have any memories of his own, and that's just hard."

Still, McMahon's love of music rubbed off on the 1-year-old, who sways to the melody of certain songs and mimics the act of singing. Bentley, meanwhile, recalls reliable lessons from a man who entered his life as a ray of light and ultimately became his father.

The second-grader takes care of his mom and younger brother, just as McMahon instructed. He has taken to wearing cowboy boots, as Ethan did, and adheres to certain rituals.

"It's kind of a joke in our house that Bentley has to wear a belt, because Ethan was adamant that men wear belts," says Ashley. "So every morning I'll say to him, 'Do you have your belt on?' And he'll say something like, 'I almost forgot. Dad's probably shaking his head at me right now.'"

They met in the summer of 2015, shortly after McMahon returned from North Carolina after four years in the Marines, including a stint in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

That time in the military fostered a sense of purpose in Ethan that Ashley found endearing.

Their first date was at Lucky's downtown, where they played pool and darts and learned more about each other's lives.

"He had this Southern gentleman charm to him," says Ashley, who grew up in Canistota and graduated from Colman-Egan High School before moving to Sioux Falls. "There were just simple things like opening the door for me, which you don't always see these days. He was a good person."

She also appreciated McMahon's passion for music, dating back to high school when he participated in show choir and played the role of the Major General in "Pirates of Penzance."

When the bearded former Marine reached for his guitar and performed a stripped-down version of Stevie Nicks' "Landslide" with a confident drawl, Ashley admits to being smitten.

She was open about the fact that she had a 5-year-old son from a previous relationship, and Ethan was clear in his acceptance. What might have been a troubling ripple in other relationships became a symbol of shared commitment — and another thing for Ashley to love.

Her mother, Karmon Hoiten, met McMahon after one of those early dates and observed how comfortable and attentive he was with Bentley, serving as a positive role model from the start.

"He took to it like a natural," says Hoiten, who lives in Canistota with her husband and works in Mitchell. "Some kids might rebel against a new relationship because (Bentley) was very close to his mother and protective of his mom. But that was never a problem. They were almost instantly a family."

During excursions to the dog run or Falls Park or just hanging out at their apartment in south Sioux Falls, Ashley figured that fate had shined upon her. Having endured failed relationships and false starts,

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she found in Ethan someone who allowed her to find faith in the future at last.

McMahon briefly attended South Dakota State before entering the military and was still figuring out his career path.

He took a job with Hultgren Construction that allowed him to work outdoors and become part of downtown projects, including PAve. Though Ethan spoke of going back to school to get his engineering degree someday, he took pride in his contributions.

"He loved working with his hands and appreciated that sense of accomplishment," says Hooiten.

His relationship with Ashley reached a new level when she became pregnant with their child, giving birth to Hayden last July.

The qualities she admired in Ethan's interactions with Bentley were magnified when he became a new father, embracing the responsibilities of parenthood.

"I was surprised it came so naturally to him," says Ashley. "You always worry about things like, Are you holding the baby right? Do you know how to change that diaper? And he did. He loved every second of it. Ethan was always trying to make him laugh and giggle, and he'd come from work and Hayden would just be instantly smiling at him. He was such a daddy's boy."

It was important to Ethan that Ashley stay home with the baby, so he added weekend shifts at PAve as a bouncer to help pay the bills. By this time Bentley had started calling him Dad as they attended baseball practices and school functions together.

Though no official engagement was announced, it was understood that Ethan and Ashley would get married when their finances allowed them to take that step. In all other respects, they were together for better or worse.

The morning of Dec. 2, 2016, which fell on a Friday, was part of a frenzied and emotional week. Ashley's grandmother had died the previous Monday and a prayer service was to be held that night in Salem.

Ashley's mother visited the apartment Thursday night, talking about how she and Ethan would perform a duet as part of the service. Ethan had done some shopping that night and brought home a keyboard for Ashley, telling her to pretend on Christmas morning that it was a surprise.

He wasn't supposed to work construction that Friday but had taken Monday off to console Ashley, so the schedule changed. He would continue to tear down the Copper Lounge building with the help of his younger brother, who had just recently started working for Hultgren.

"Usually I was asleep when he left for work, but I was up early that morning making Hayden a bottle, so I hugged and kissed him and told him to have a good day and that I loved him," says Ashley.

"He called me at 9:22 that morning because he knew I was sad about my grandma and he said, 'I want to see you smile. Let's have a date night soon and see a movie or go Christmas shopping or something.' I told him I loved him and he told me he loved me, and that's the last time I ever talked to him."

It was around 10:30 a.m. when Ashley started seeing social media reports that something terrible had occurred downtown.

"I had just put Hayden down for a nap," she says. "I looked at my phone and saw on Facebook this picture of the collapsed building and I panicked. I called Ethan and he didn't answer, and that wasn't like him. He always answered no matter how busy he was, so I called again and he still didn't answer. So then I called his brother. I said, 'Where's Ethan? Why is he not answering his phone?' And he told me, 'Ethan's in there. They're digging for him, but he's in there.'"

As media coverage showed fire rescue workers sorting through rubble to locate Fodness and McMahon, Ashley was surrounded by family and friends at her apartment. She knew she would be held back if she tried to approach the collapse site downtown and she wanted to be with her children.

She watched as Fodness' dog was pulled from the twisted wreckage around 1:20 p.m., improving spirits downtown and offering hints of hope. Soon after, Fodness was lifted from the rubble to a waiting ambulance.

Ashely was heartened by those images. Unconfirmed reports that "knocking" had been heard from underneath the collapsed building led her to believe that a positive result was possible. She now dismisses those reports while saying with conviction that Ethan did not suffer that day.

Around 6 p.m., as she was feeding Hayden, she heard a commotion and knew that McMahon had been

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found.

"We hadn't gotten a phone call, but everybody started bawling," she says. "I went to my room and watched the livestream and saw all the fire rescue workers and everyone in line, and I didn't believe it. He's a Marine, he's been through so much worse than this and we had hope all day. I didn't believe it until I got to go see him for myself."

She went to the hospital with Ethan's parents to identify the body and returned an hour later. Her mom was watching the kids and everyone else had left, which allowed Ashley to have a private moment with Bentley.

"I didn't shield him," she says. "I had to tell him. I mean, he's going to know each day at 5:30 when Dad's not home for supper that something's going on. So I just sat him down and I was honest with him and hugged him and told him that Dad's an angel now."

She headed upstairs and took a shower, letting reality wash over her. The sobs kept coming. She no longer tried to hold them back.

Ethan's funeral was held the same day as Hayden's baptism at Zion Lutheran Church, adding to the emotional maelstrom at a time when most families prepared for the holidays.

There was also a community vigil held three days after the tragedy at First Lutheran downtown, where Pastor John Christopherson spoke of the "incredible paradox of life, where joy and grief somehow hang together."

Ashley found it hard to sleep for several days while contemplating the scope of the tragedy. At times, though, she found herself marveling at the compassion and generosity shown by friends and strangers alike as the community rallied around those affected.

"I don't think Ethan knew how many people he impacted," she says now. "He was so humble and kind and would go out of his way to give help to anyone who needed it. It was so overwhelming to see the way that people responded."

To ward off the feeling that fate had betrayed her, she sought to keep Ethan's memory alive and appreciate the impact he made on her own life, as well as those of her children.

On the day of the funeral, after Hayden had been baptized and people chatted in small groups, Ethan's casket was situated near the altar, an American flag draped over it.

Bentley quietly approached the coffin and placed his hand on it before taking a step back. Then he stood straight up and saluted, holding it for a few seconds before running off to join the other kids.

It's a moment that Ashley holds close, offering confirmation that she's not alone.

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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

06-37-46-60-70, Mega Ball: 24, Megaplier: 2

(six, thirty-seven, forty-six, sixty, seventy; Mega Ball: twenty-four; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$176 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$212 million

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Jenkins, Flatten help South Dakota St flatten Concordia (NE)

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — David Jenkins scored 19 points, Skyler Flatten added a career-high 18 and South Dakota State rolled to a 103-67 win over NAIA Concordia Nebraska on Friday night.

Mike Daum added 16 points, Ian Theisen 15, Reed Tellinghuisen 14 and Tevin King 12 for the Jackrabbits (8-3).

Brevin Sloup had 13 points and Clay Reimers 12 for the Bulldogs (9-3).

Brandon Key scored twice around a Flatten 3-pointer midway through the first half for a 7-0 that put the lead into double figures for good. Late in the half a 13-3 run that included a Flatten 3 and a dunk broke the game open. The Jackrabbits led 50-29 at the half.

Jenkins had a 3-pointer and three free throws to highlight an 11-0 run early in the second half that turned into an 18-2 surge as Theisen made a layup followed by a 3 before two Jenkins free throws.

SDSU made 17 of 30 from distance and shot 54 percent overall. They turned 20 Concordia turnovers into 33 points.

South Dakota attorney general warns of 'grandparents scam'

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota attorney general is warning people about the so-called grandparents scam that has resurfaced throughout the state.

Attorney General Marty Jackley says his office has received eight reports in two days. He says three people have given away cash ranging from \$17,000 to \$145,000.

The scam begins with a telephone call from someone claiming to be a grandchild or another family member who requests money for a critical situation such as legal proceedings, theft of their personal belongings or medical conditions.

Jackley says the scammers are making a "relentless number of calls" and use threats to quickly swindle cash from seniors.

2 sunflower seed competitors in spitting match over slogans

By DAVE KOLPACK, Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — Two sunflower seed competitors in the Dakotas are accusing each other of false advertising.

Giant Snacks Inc. started the exchange last month by filing a lawsuit against Wild Dutchman Products Inc. and one of its partners, alleging that Wild Dutchman is misleading consumers about the amount of salt in its products. Wild Dutchman came back with a countersuit earlier this week for what it calls bogus claims Giant Snacks is making about its relationship with sunflower farmers.

Each company wants the other to drop packaging claims and pay the other damages to be determined by the court.

Joel Leviton, attorney for Giant Snacks, would not comment about the counterclaim, but said the Wahpeton, North Dakota-based company "looks forward to proving its case and remedying the situation."

The original complaint filed by Giant Snacks also names Southern Sun LLC, which markets Wild Dutchman seeds. The suit centers on Wild Dutchman's packaging and a statement that reads: "Half the salt. All the flavor." Giant Snacks highlights a comment in National Sunflower Association magazine by one of Wild Dutchman's founders who said the product has "half the salt than other seeds."

The suit says Wild Dutchman is falsely implying that Giant Snacks' seeds, which are often sold next to Wild Dutchman's, have twice as much salt. Giant Snacks cites studies by two laboratories showing that its seeds have less sodium than Wild Dutchman's.

Wild Dutchman, based in Mound City, South Dakota, responded that it did not intend to compare its seeds to all or more other seeds, but primarily only to one of its "major competitors." The company says it hasn't been provided with any independent tests on the amount of salt and the advertisement was "true at the time it was initially made."

Furthermore, Wild Dutchman adds, it's not the company that's making bogus claims. The countersuit criticizes Giant Snacks for saying it's the "only U.S. company to work directly with our own farmers and fields to ensure you are receiving GREAT GIANTS seeds in every bag." Giant Snacks calls its seeds "Giants" and that's what they're called on their packaging.

Wild Dutchman and its partner work directly with their own farmers and fields, the countersuit says, proving that the Giant Snacks slogan is false or misleading.

South Dakota to assist workers laid off from plant

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Department of Labor is beginning efforts to find new jobs for the 409 people who will be unemployed after a fiber glass company closes its plant in the northeast part of the state early next year.

Molded Fiber Glass announced Wednesday that it will close its Aberdeen plant no later than Feb. 15, the Aberdeen American News reported. Dan Thielsen, manager of the state Department of Labor office in Aberdeen, said that the workers projected to be laid-off is not a true reflection of the number of people who will be affected by the closure. He said it could easily be double that amount.

The state Labor Department will help laid-off employees find new jobs with comparable pay and benefits. Department staff will train company officials to register employees on the state job search system.

Thielsen said the goal is to keep as many workers in the Aberdeen area as possible. "We want to keep them here, and we want to keep Aberdeen strong," he said.

Thielsen said the company will likely have a job fair for outgoing employees in January.

Molded Fiber Glass listed the expiring production tax credit and amendments to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act as reasons for the closure of its plant.

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

FEC: Former Sen. Tim Johnson has \$800K in leftover funds

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Former Democratic Sen. Tim Johnson is still using leftover campaign money to make political donations, nearly five years after announcing his retirement.

The South Dakota Democrat still has more than \$800,000 in campaign funds, the Rapid City Journal reported. Data from the Federal Election Commission reveal Johnson has been slowly disbursing unused money from his Senate campaign committee and political action committee, South Dakota First, since his 2013 retirement.

Johnson's committees have contributed at least \$150,000 to South Dakota ballot-question committees so far.

Johnson gave \$50,000 in September to TakeItBack.org-Advocacy, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization, for a petition drive to put redistricting reforms on the 2018 general election ballot. Rick Weiland runs the nonprofit with Johnson's former chief of staff. He said the nonprofit gave the money to a ballot-question committee to collect signatures for a state constitutional amendment to establish an independent redistricting commission. The amendment would also strip state lawmakers of their redistricting power.

It's uncertain whether enough validated signatures were collected to get the measure on the 2018 ballot.

Johnson's committees gifted \$60,500 to the state Democratic Party and \$37,000 to the University of South Dakota, his alma mater.

Failed South Dakota congressional candidates Corinna Robinson, Rick Weiland and Jay Williams all received \$10,000 each from Johnson's committees.

Surprisingly, the South Dakota Department of Revenue received the most money from Johnson's fund. The committees have reported paying \$67,000 in taxes since 2013. Some of these taxes could have been due on products or services purchased before Johnson's retirement.

Johnson suffered stroke-like symptoms caused by brain bleeding from an arteriovenous malformation in 2006. He has since withdrawn into private life. Former Republican governor Mike Rounds succeeded

Johnson.

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

Fatal fire victim identified in Hermosa

HERMOSA, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified the victim of a house fire in southwestern South Dakota. Investigators say an autopsy shows 58-year-old Diane Skelly died of smoke inhalation. The Custer County Sheriff's Office says the cause of Wednesday's fire is accidental.

Several agencies responded to the fire, including Pennington County Fire Service, Hermosa Town and South Dakota fire marshals, Custer County Sheriff's Office and Emergency Management.

World War II Marine from Aberdeen buried at Arlington

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — The military says the remains of a World War II Marine from Aberdeen will be buried with military honors at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C.

A burial for Marine Corps Private Archie Newell is to take place Friday. Remains of the serviceman killed in November 1943 were identified after they were disinterred by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency from the National Memorial Cemetery in Honolulu last year.

The 22-year-old Newell was among the Marines who landed against Japanese resistance on the small island of Bertio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. Newell was killed on the first day of the battle that killed about 1,000 Marines and sailors.

To identify Newell's remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis.

Rapid City casino robbed at knifepoint; no one hurt

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City police are searching for a man who robbed a casino at knifepoint. Authorities say a man brandishing a knife entered a Jackpot Casino early Thursday and demanded money from an employee. The man fled with an undisclosed amount of cash.

The worker wasn't injured.

Student facing expulsion in school knife attack

EDGEMONT, S.D. (AP) — An Edgemont high school student faces expulsion after cutting another teen in the neck with a utility knife.

Edgemont School District Superintendent Dave Cortney says the wounded student was treated and released at the hospital and has returned to school. Cortney says the attack earlier this week happened in art class where utility knives were being used.

The Rapid City Journal says the school was locked down after the attack.

The Fall River County Sheriff's Office is investigating.

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

Spink County rancher pays government for false drought claim

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Spink County rancher has settled with the government over a false claim for federal drought aid.

Authorities say Jason Sparling, of Athol, submitted an application for a disaster payment for a loss of grazing during the summer of 2014, and received nearly \$100,000.

The federal Agriculture Department later determined that none of Sparling's cattle were on drought-stricken pasture land.

U.S. Attorney Randolph Seiler says Sparling has paid the federal government \$180,000 to settle the debt

under the False Claims Act. Seiler says people who knowingly submit false claims are required to pay back more than they received.

AP sources: Yankees agree to deal to land Marlins' Stanton

By RONALD BLUM and STEVEN WINE, AP Sports Writers

MIAMI (AP) — After helping the New York Yankees to five World Series titles, Derek Jeter might help them win another.

The Yankees and Jeter's Miami Marlins have agreed to a trade that would send slugger Giancarlo Stanton to New York, pending a physical, a person familiar with the negotiations said Saturday. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the teams hadn't announced the agreement.

Infielder Starlin Castro would go to Miami as part of the deal, a second person familiar with the negotiations said.

Stanton has a no-trade clause in his record \$325 million, 13-year contract, and he must still approve the deal. The St. Louis Cardinals and San Francisco Giants said Friday he had vetoed trades to them, but he has appeared willing to approve going to New York.

As for the physical, injuries curtailed Stanton's season four of the past six years, but he played 159 games in 2017.

If the Yankees complete the trade with a team run by their former captain, the new Marlins CEO, the Bronx Bombers would acquire a slugger who hit a major league-high 59 home runs last season and pair him with Aaron Judge, who led the AL with 52 in his rookie season. That would give them a one-two punch to rival Gehrig-Ruth or Mantle-Maris.

An eight-year veteran with 267 home runs, Stanton has never played on a winning team, and might now go to a perennial title contender. The Yankees reached Game 7 of the AL Championship Series this season in the first full year of a youth movement.

Yankees prospects would likely be involved in any deal. Gary Denbo, the Marlins' new vice president of scouting and player development, spent the past eight years with New York and oversaw a farm system that ranks among the best in baseball.

The acquisition of the 28-year-old Stanton would be reminiscent of the Yankees' trade for Alex Rodriguez after his MVP season with Texas in 2003. Rodriguez signed a \$275, 10-year contract after the 2007 season that ran through age 42; Stanton's deal runs through age 38.

The Yankees could obtain the NL home run champion for the second offseason in a row. Chris Carter hit 41 homers for Milwaukee in 2016 but was released by the Yankees in July after hitting .201 with eight homers in 208 plate appearances.

Stanton is owed \$295 million over the final decade of his contract. The All-Star right fielder led the majors in homers and RBIs, but his salary will rise to \$25 million in 2018, which made him too pricey for the revenue-starved Marlins to keep.

Jeter is expected to reduce payroll by at least 20 percent to \$90 million or less. The Marlins shed \$38 million of salary through 2020 by trading two-time All-Star second baseman Dee Gordon to the Seattle Mariners on Thursday for three prospects.

Castro, who hit .300 with 16 home runs this year, could replace Gordon at second base, or he might also be dealt by Miami because of his contract. He's due \$10 million in 2018 and \$11 million in 2019, with a club option of \$16 million in the final year of his contract in 2020.

More Marlins deals are possible at the winter meetings beginning Sunday in Orlando, Florida, with Castro and outfielders Christian Yelich and Marcell Ozuna possibly on the trading block.

The Yankees' payroll for purposes of baseball's luxury tax was about \$209 million this year, and owner Hal Steinbrenner has promised to reduce it below next year's \$197 million threshold, which would reset the team's base tax rate from 50 percent to 20 percent in 2019. That would put the Yankees in better position for next offseason's free-agent class, which includes Bryce Harper, Manny Machado and possibly

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Clayton Kershaw.

Stanton counts as \$25.05 million for purposes of the luxury tax, but trading Castro cuts New York's tax payroll by \$8,801,786. Alex Rodriguez (\$27.5 million) comes off the payroll after this season, and five high-priced Yankees have become free agents: CC Sabathia (\$20 million), Matt Holliday (\$13 million), Michael Pineda (\$7.4 million), Todd Frazier (\$4,918,033) and Jaime Garcia (\$4,961,721).

New York also figures to try to trade third baseman Chase Headley (\$13 million), expendable because of prospects Gleyber Torres and Miguel Andujar. Outfielder Jacoby Ellsbury, who counts as \$21,857,143, also appears to be superfluous in an outfield that includes Stanton, Judge, Aaron Hicks and Brett Gardner. Ellsbury is owed \$21,142, 857 in each of the next three years as part of a deal that includes a \$21 million team option for 2021 with a \$1 million buyout.

But after missing out on Japanese right-hander Shohei Ohtani, the Yankees are expected to seek starting pitching to bolster a rotation currently projected to include Luis Severino, Masahiro Tanaka, Sonny Gray, Jordan Montgomery and Luis Cessa.

Stanton has the right to opt out of his contract and become a free agent after receiving \$77 million over next three seasons.

Stanton would take a cut in take-home pay for his games in the Bronx. While Florida has no state income tax, New York State has an 8.82 percent top rate on income and New York City a 3.876 percent top rate. But he might make up the difference in new endorsements.

Blum reported from New York.

More AP baseball: <https://apnews.com/tag/MLBbaseball>

Snow slows or shuts down much of normally sunny Deep South

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr., Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Snowfall shrouding much of the Deep South began tapering off early Saturday, but freezing temperatures kept roads slick and thousands without electricity throughout the region while planes remained grounded at the world's busiest airport.

Forecasters warned that moisture on the roadways could freeze and cause black ice to form. The National Weather Service said that while snow flurries would end by midday in areas including metro Atlanta, temperatures at or below freezing could cause transparent layers of thin ice to form on bridges and other elevated roadways.

The frigid temperatures behind a cold front combined with moisture off the Gulf of Mexico to bring unusual wintry weather to parts of the South.

Preliminary reports to the weather service showed up to 10 inches (25 centimeters) of snowfall in north-west Georgia, with 7 inches (18 centimeters) of accumulation in parts of metro Atlanta. Another 10 inches (25 centimeters) of snow was reported in Anniston, Alabama, while up to 7 inches (18 centimeters) were reported in Mississippi. Rare flurries were even reported in New Orleans.

"It's very, very abnormal and rare that we would get totals like that this time of year," said Sid King, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service in the Atlanta area. "It's really not even winter yet. I would not be surprised if we broke a lot of records."

But the snow wasn't expected to outlast the weekend. King said warming temperatures and sunny skies should melt most of it in time for shivering Southerners to return to work and school Monday.

Officials at the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, which holds the world record for annual number of passengers, said delays and cancellations were expected.

"Passengers should monitor their airline's media channels for flight info," the airport said via Twitter. Airport spokesman Reese McCranie said more than 400 flights were cancelled Saturday morning.

Not everyone was anxious to flee, though. Members of a central Florida family found their way to Atlanta specifically to witness the white drifts.

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"It's beautiful," said Tim Moss, while his two sons and wife threw snowballs at each other near a McDonald's parking lot early Saturday. He said the family - including his mother - made a spontaneous decision late Friday to leave 80-degree weather in Florida and drive seven hours to see snow for the first time.

"A lot of people who live here are staying in," said Moss. "They don't want to get out in it. But we want to get out and run around in it."

The snowstorms knocked out electricity to thousands across the South. More than 382,000 homes and businesses were still without electricity Saturday in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. Southern Pine Electric Co-operative, which had nearly 19,000 customers without power Friday in south Mississippi, said restoration could take several days.

Snowfall and icy roads in North Carolina on Friday closed government offices and schools, sent cars sliding off the road and altered the governor's travel plans.

Forecasters said heavy snow was falling in the mountainous western part of the state with up to 6 inches likely in areas including Asheville. A winter storm warning was in effect through Saturday morning for western counties.

Accumulations of 6 inches (15 centimeters) were reported in Mississippi and northern Georgia, while at least 5 inches (13 centimeters) fell in Alabama. Rare snow flurries were spotted in New Orleans. Motorists were urged to stay off the road in Louisiana for fear of ice.

The weather band also brought a rare snowfall to parts of South Texas.

"It's the first snow of the season and any time you even mention snow in the South, you're going to get people a little panicky," said David Nadler, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service's office south of Atlanta.

The weather service said the snow is expected to move into the Mid-Atlantic, parts of the Northeast and New England this weekend.

A freeze warning was in effect Saturday for parts of northern Florida, southeast Alabama and southwest Georgia. The weather service said freezing temperatures can harm vulnerable plants and animals.

Highway department officials were monitoring the elevated roadways and bridges that stretch across much of south Louisiana, warning that motorists to stay home if possible. Some highways were shut down Friday, as snow fell in cities and towns that have little experience with it. Truckers were urged to stay off of Interstate 10 in Mississippi.

Short, squat snowmen — some already melting by Friday afternoon — dotted yards and parks around Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Josh Black, a 30-year-old LSU graduate student, took photos of one tiny snowman outside the State Capitol building near the gravesite of former Louisiana Gov. Huey Long.

Black, who hails from the Toronto, Canada, area, chuckled about southern Louisiana's reaction to the snow. "They canceled school this morning, which is funny to me, for an inch of snow that is going to melt in an hour," he said, smiling. "This is like May or October where I'm from."

Associated Press writers Jeff Martin and Don Schanche in Atlanta and Jay Reeves in Birmingham, Alabama, contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to ... Recasts, updates throughout with new details, new quotes, electricity outages, updated forecast.

Tears, pomp, extravagance as France mourns rocker Hallyday

By THOMAS ADAMSON and ANGELA CHARLTON, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — France bid farewell to its biggest rock star Saturday, honoring Johnny Hallyday with an extravagant funeral procession down Paris' Champs-Elysees Avenue, a presidential speech and a televised church ceremony filled with the country's most famous faces.

Few figures in French history have earned a send-off with as much pomp as the man dubbed the "French Elvis," who notched more than 110 million in record sales since rising to fame in the 1960s.

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Hallyday died Wednesday at 74 after fighting lung cancer.

In an honor usually reserved for heads of state or literary giants like 19th-century novelist Victor Hugo, Hallyday's funeral cortege rode past Napoleon's Arc de Triomphe monument and down the Champs-Élysées to the Place de la Concorde plaza on the Seine River.

Adding a rock touch to the event, hundreds of motorcyclists accompanied the procession. It was a nod to the lifelong passion that Hallyday, born Jean-Philippe Smet, had for motorcycles. His biker image included signature leather jackets and myriad tattoos.

French President Emmanuel Macron — a Hallyday fan himself, like three generations of others across the French-speaking world — delivered an eulogy on the steps of Paris' Madeleine Church for the star known to the public affectionately by only one name.

"Johnny belonged to you. Johnny belonged to his public. Johnny belonged to his country," said Macron, whose voice was broadcast via speakers to the many thousands of often tearful mourners in central Paris.

"He should have fallen a hundred times, but what held him up and lifted him was your fervor, the love," said Macron of the star's health troubles and famously excessive lifestyle.

Hallyday's death unleashed a wave of emotion across France, where he had been a symbol of national identity and stability for more than half a century — even though his private life had been far from stable.

Aside from the drinking, smoking and partying chronicled in juicy detail by the French press, Hallyday had been linked to a string of glamorous women and had married five times.

Chants of "Johnny! Johnny!" and thunderous applause rose up Saturday as fans broke out singing Hallyday classics including "Que je t'aime" ("How I love you").

About 1,500 police officers secured the area in Paris, a police helicopter flew overhead and emergency vehicles filled nearby streets as tens of thousands of fans lined the procession route. Many dressed to emulate Hallyday's flashy, rebellious style. Some climbed on fences or stoplights or even the roof of a luxury hotel to get a better view.

Catherine Frichot-Janin, 61, and her husband traveled from Switzerland to pay their respects — saying that the only thing older than their 39-year marriage was their mutual love for Hallyday.

"He's the companion who's always there when you have a worry. There will always be his music playing in a bistro," she said.

Dubbed by some "the biggest rock star you've never heard of" — Hallyday's position as one of the greatest-selling musical artists of all time is unusual as he remained largely unknown outside the Franco-phone world. But in France, he influenced styles, music and even children's names.

Laura Dublot, a 30-year-old Parisian, and her brother David are among many who were named after Hallyday's older children, Laura and David.

"He's a national icon. This scale of funeral is not surprising — he's united three generations of French," Dublot said.

Laurenne Coral, 25, from Lyon, explained that "for the French, he's like what Queen Elizabeth is for the English."

A lineup of speakers paid homage inside the neo-classical Madeleine Church, including actors Marion Cotillard and Jean Reno and singer Patrick Bruel.

Bruel, an old friend, said when Hallyday died "it's like they took away the Eiffel Tower in the middle of the night."

Fittingly, the words "Thank you Johnny" are being displayed on the famed Paris monument over the weekend.

Hallyday likely would have approved of this send-off, having told French media he dreaded the idea of an isolated funeral like the one he attended for his father in 1989.

"That day, I was the only one there. Not a woman, not a friend. Absolute solitude in death. I wouldn't like to end like that," he said.

Other funeral guests included actor Jean Dujardin as well as former Presidents Francois Hollande and Nicolas Sarkozy, who officiated at Hallyday's last marriage.

The scale of the French adoration for him impressed even those who were not fans.

"I don't know Johnny. But today is a rare opportunity to walk down the Champs-Elysees with no cars," said Qiao Pin, a 27-year-old student from Beijing. "Now, I see he's a very famous star. There's no one that popular in China."

Hallyday is expected to be buried in the French Caribbean island of St. Barts where he owned a house. He is survived by his wife Laeticia, two of his former wives, four children and three grandchildren.

Thomas Adamson can be followed at [Twitter.com/ThomasAdamson_K](https://twitter.com/ThomasAdamson_K)

Firefighters forced to step aside as winds powered infernos

By **JULIE WATSON and KRYSTA FAURIA, Associated Press**

FALLBROOK, Calif. (AP) — Firefighters in Southern California were on high alert for dangerous fire potential even before the first blazes broke out.

But once flames met ferocious winds, fire crews were mostly powerless to stop infernos that destroyed more than 500 buildings, killed dozens of horses and forced hundreds of thousands of people to run from six out-of-control fires that have burned over 260 square miles (673 square kilometers) since Monday.

"The crews were trying to stay out ahead of this as quickly as they could," said Capt. Kendal Bortisser of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention. "As we know, when a tornado hits the Midwest, there's no stopping it. When a hurricane hits the East Coast, there's no stopping it. When Santa Ana winds come in, there's no stopping them."

Firefighters gained ground Friday, and some of the earliest evacuees who fled from flames Monday were being allowed to return home.

Yet new fires were popping up, and danger persisted. Vegetation is bone dry, there's been hardly any rainfall and winds were expected to gusts up to 40 mph (64 kph) Saturday and up to 50 mph (80 kph) Sunday in the Los Angeles and Ventura areas, the National Weather Service said.

Fires have taken people by surprise over a large swath of Southern California since the biggest fire broke out Monday evening in Ventura County, where the only death attributed to the fires, so far, involved a 70-year-old woman who was found dead in a wrecked car on a designated evacuation route in the small city of Santa Paula.

Three people were burned trying to escape a fast-moving fire that started Thursday 50 miles (80 kilometers) north of San Diego that overran a mobile home retirement community and a race horse training facility.

John Knapp did not initially believe a sheriff deputy's order to leave when he first spotted the fire outside his home in the Rancho Monserate Country Club.

"I thought he was full of bologna, but once I saw the flames and the smoke I thought that maybe he's right," Knapp said.

After leaving, he watched from a nearby highway for five hours as the community went up in smoke.

More than a third of the community's 213 mobile homes burned as fire zigzagged along a hillside, skipping some streets and razing others. On one street, all 24 mobile homes were gone, with only hulls of cars and twisted metal remaining.

Knapp was sure he had seen his house burn on the television news, so he was expecting the worst when he snuck past a police barricade to witness the damage and was surprised to find it still standing.

Others who managed to get out with little more than the clothes on their backs were not as fortunate.

Dick Marsala was too overwhelmed to speak as he searched through the smoldering remnants of his house, trying to find his wallet. A framed photo of him playing golf was still hanging on a blackened wall.

"I'll be darned," he said, his eyes tearing up as he put on sunglasses

Tom Metier, whose home was spared, zipped through the mobile home park in a golf cart, giving bad news to some of the neighbors who called him.

"It's really horrible to see some of these little streets look like a moonscape," he told a friend whose home was reduced to black rubble.

The flames that tore through Fallbrook, the self-proclaimed "Avocado Capital of the World," also hit hard in nearby town of Bonsall, where an estimated 30 to 40 elite thoroughbreds perished when the flames swept into barns at the San Luis Rey Training Facility.

Pandemonium broke out as hundreds of horses were set free to prevent them from burning in their stables. They nearly stampeded trainer Kim Marrs as she rescued a horse named Spirit World.

Marrs said it was devastating to see the remains of once regal animals.

"It's pretty apocalyptic," she said. "When you touch them it's just ash."

Associated Press writers Amanda Lee Myers in Bonsall, Elliot Spagat in San Diego, Brian Skoloff in Ojai, and Brian Melley, Michael Balsamo, Robert Jablon and John Antczak in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

For complete coverage of the California wildfires, click here: <https://apnews.com/tag/Wildfires>.

Israeli strikes kill 2 Hamas men after Gaza rocket attack

By **FARES AKRAM** and **ARON HELLER**, Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli airstrikes killed two Hamas members early Saturday following a rocket attack on Israel, in the latest fallout from President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital — a development that has roiled the region and the larger Muslim world.

The Israeli military said it targeted four Hamas facilities in response to rockets fired the previous night, including one that landed in the town of Sderot without causing casualties or major damage. The military said it struck warehouses and weapons manufacturing sites, after which Hamas said it had recovered the bodies of two of its men.

Israel considers Hamas responsible for all rocket fire emanating from Gaza, which is home to other armed groups. Some residents of Sderot and other border towns spent the night in shelters, fearful of a resumption of rocket attacks from Gaza that have led to three Israel-Hamas wars over the past decade.

Protests and demonstrations continued across the West Bank and Gaza on Saturday on the third and final so-called Palestinian "day of rage" following Trump's announcement. The military said there were clashes in some 20 locations. In Bethlehem, Palestinians hurled stones at Israeli troops, who responded with tear gas, rubber bullets and stun grenades. The Israeli military said some 600 Palestinians were throwing firebombs and rolling burning tires toward Israeli forces. It said it dispersed the crowds and arrested one rioter.

Along the border with the Gaza Strip, some 450 Palestinians clashed with Israeli troops at eight main locations. About 20 were lightly wounded. Some 4,000 demonstrators gathered in Gaza City and demonstrations resumed in Pakistan, Turkey and elsewhere across the Muslim world as well.

In Jerusalem, police forces — some on horseback — scuffled with protesters near the Old City and arrested six people who were involved in what they called an illegal protest. Two policemen were injured.

"President Trump cannot take what he doesn't have," said Zuheir Dana, one of the protesters from east Jerusalem.

Israel has mobilized troops in case further violence breaks out. The clashes in the West Bank and east Jerusalem have yet to claim lives or spiral into the kind of violence some had feared following Trump's move.

The flare-up followed clashes Friday between Palestinian protesters and Israeli troops in dozens of West Bank hotspots and along the Gaza border. Two Palestinians were shot dead in Gaza and dozens were wounded in the West Bank. In Jerusalem, Friday prayers at Islam's third-holiest site dispersed largely without incident. Large crowds of worshippers across the Muslim world staged anti-U.S. marches Friday, some stomping on posters of Trump or burning American flags.

Trump's announcement on Jerusalem, and his intention to move the U.S. Embassy there, triggered denunciations from around the world, with even close allies suggesting he had needlessly stirred more conflict in an already volatile region. The status of the city lies at the core of the Israeli-Palestinians conflict, and Trump's move was widely perceived as siding with Israel. Even small crises over Jerusalem's status and

that of the holy sites in its ancient Old City have sparked deadly bloodshed in the past.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah movement and other groups have called for mass protests while its rival, the Gaza-based Islamic militant group Hamas, is calling for a third violent uprising against Israel, though such appeals have largely fizzled as Palestinians have become disillusioned with their leaders.

Hamas, which seeks Israel's destruction, killed hundreds of Israelis in suicide bombings and other attacks during the second Palestinian uprising in the early 2000s.

Most countries have not recognized Israel's 1967 annexation of east Jerusalem and maintain their embassies in Tel Aviv. Under a longstanding international consensus, the fate of the city is to be determined in final status peace negotiations. Israel says it hopes others will follow Trump's lead, but the United States found itself alone in the U.N. Security Council on Friday, fielding criticism from the other 14 members over the proposed move.

Palestinian official Hanan Ashrawi said the council took a strong stance against "American violations of international law."

"They have no mandate to give away Jerusalem to an occupying power or to violate international law in such a blatant and egregious manner," she said.

While Trump's announcement was warmly welcomed in Israel as an acknowledgement of its longtime seat of government and the ancient capital of the Jewish people, it was greeted with outrage from Palestinians who considered it a slap in the face and an abandonment of the longtime American role as mediator in the conflict.

After two decades of halting peace negotiations that have failed to bring Palestinians closer to statehood, some in Abbas' inner circle have begun to speak openly about abandoning the two-state formula in favor of a single binational state. In a sign of Palestinian frustration with the Americans, Abbas' political adviser Majdi Khaldi said the Palestinian president will not meet with Vice President Mike Pence when he visits the region later this month.

"The U.S. crossed the red line in its decision about Jerusalem," he told The Associated Press.

Heller reported from Tel Aviv, Israel.

Archaeologists discover 2 ancient tombs in Egypt's Luxor

By NARIMAN EL-MOFTY, Associated Press

LUXOR, Egypt (AP) — Egypt on Saturday announced the discovery of two small ancient tombs in the southern city Luxor dating back some 3,500 years and hoped it will help the country's efforts to revive its ailing tourism sector.

The tombs, located on the west bank of the river Nile in a cemetery for noblemen and top officials, are the latest discovery in the city famed for its temples and tombs spanning different dynasties of ancient Egyptian history.

"It's truly an exceptional day," Antiquities Minister Khaled al-Anani said. "The 18th dynasty private tombs were already known. But it's the first time to enter inside the two tombs."

Al-Anani said the discoveries are part of the ministry's efforts to promote Egypt's vital tourism industry, partially driven by antiquities sightseeing, that was hit hard by extremist attacks and political turmoil following the 2011 uprising.

The ministry said one tomb has a courtyard lined with mud-brick and stone walls and contains a six-meter (yard) burial shaft leading to four side chambers. The artifacts found inside were mostly fragments of wooden coffins. Wall inscriptions and paintings suggest it belongs to era between the reigns of King Amenhotep II and King Thutmose IV, both pharaohs of the 18th dynasty.

The other tomb has five entrances leading to a rectangular hall and contains two burial shafts located in the northern and southern sides of the tomb.

Among the artifacts found inside are funerary cones, painted wooden funerary masks, clay vessels, a collection of some 450 statues and a mummy wrapped in linen who was likely a top official. A cartouche

carved on the ceiling bears the name of King Thutmose I of the early 18th dynasty, the ministry said.

Afterward, al-Anani headed to a nearby site where the famous Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut is located to open for the first time the temple's main sanctuary known as the "Holy of Holies."

Since the beginning of 2017, the Antiquities Ministry has made a string of discoveries in several provinces across Egypt — including the tomb of a royal goldsmith, in the same area and belonging to the same dynasty, whose work was dedicated to the ancient Egyptian god Amun.

Boycotts, protests to greet Trump on Mississippi visit

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump's celebration of the heroes of the civil rights movement is set to go on without at least one leader from that era who plans to be a no-show for the Mississippi gathering.

Other activists were ready for protests Saturday, citing what they say is Trump's sowing of racial division instead of racial harmony.

Trump, at the invitation of Gov. Phil Bryant, R-Miss., was scheduled to attend the opening of the Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum in Jackson, the capital.

But U.S. Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., a leader of the civil rights movement, no longer intended to speak at or attend the event.

Lewis, who was among scores of Democratic lawmakers who skipped Trump's inauguration in January to protest his record on race, said Trump's presence at the museum opening was an insult.

The White House accused Lewis and others of injecting politics into a moment it said could be used to bring people together.

"It's a little unfortunate that a moment like this, that could be used for unification and bringing people together, some folks are choosing to play politics with it," said White House spokesman Raj Shah. "But that's not going to deter us from honoring heroes in the civil rights movement," which he said include Lewis.

Shah said Trump "has always condemned racism, violence and bigotry and hatred in all forms. We stand by that."

Others accuse Trump of harboring racial animosity, citing his blaming of "both sides" for deadly violence at a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, over the summer. Trump has also relentlessly criticized NFL players for kneeling during the national anthem to protest racism and police brutality largely directed at African-American males.

During the presidential campaign, Trump called for a "complete and total shutdown" of Muslims entering the U.S.

U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson, Mississippi's only Democrat in Congress, announced his exit from the event in a joint statement with Lewis.

"To come and somehow give the impression that things are all right, that we're getting along, was absolutely the wrong message," Thompson told The Associated Press in a telephone interview this week, saying he views Trump's agenda as too destructive to paper over differences, even for a couple of hours.

The NAACP, which is led by a Mississippian, has said Trump should cancel the appearance. The White House said the thought never crossed the president's mind.

Trump was to tour the civil rights museum, make brief remarks and depart before the celebration ended.

Lewis was arrested in Jackson in 1961 with Freedom Riders who were protesting segregated bus travel, and was held at the infamous Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman. Later, as head of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Lewis helped organize Freedom Summer, a volunteer effort to register voters in Mississippi in 1964.

Lewis had been expected to be one of the event's main speakers, along with Myrlie Evers, the widow of assassinated Mississippi NAACP leader Medgar Evers. Evers has said she will address Trump's presence.

Thompson, NAACP President Derrick Johnson and others plan to gather Saturday at a local black history museum in Jackson to address what they say is the "contradiction" of Trump attending the opening

of the civil rights museum.

Other African-Americans who oppose Trump say they'll attend the dedication.

Associated Press writer Jeff Amy in Jackson, Mississippi, contributed to this report.

Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap>

Trump trying to help push Moore across Alabama finish line

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and BILL BARROW, Associated Press

PENSACOLA, Florida (AP) — President Donald Trump is trying to push embattled GOP Senate candidate Roy Moore across the finish line in Tuesday's election in Alabama by contending the Democratic nominee would oppose "what we must do" for the nation.

Trump, in a tweet early Saturday, hours after boosting Moore's campaign during a Florida rally, framed the race as a referendum on his efforts to reshape the country and said Democrat Doug Jones would work in lockstep with his party's leaders on Capitol Hill to oppose the Trump agenda.

With Moore denying allegations of sexual misconduct that have arisen late in the campaign, Trump basked in what he called "a big contingent of very enthusiastic Roy Moore fans" at the Friday night event in Pensacola, the Florida Panhandle city near the state line with Alabama.

In a rally cry to Alabama voters, the president tweeted that "we can't have" a liberal in the mold of Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., holding the seat in a Senate where the GOP holds a slim 52-48 edge.

"Need your vote to Make America Great Again! Jones will always vote against what we must do for our Country," Trump wrote.

At the campaign-style event in Pensacola, Trump claimed Jones was the Democratic leaders' "total puppet and everybody knows it."

Trump's wide-ranging speech also touched on the immigration system and the nation's economic performance since he took office. As Trump spoke about Moore, the Republican candidate tweeted Trump's comments to his own followers.

Trump also taunted Beverly Nelson, one of Moore's accusers, who had presented a yearbook inscription by Moore as a key piece of evidence that the candidate knew his accuser. Nelson said Friday she had added a notation marking the date and place where it was signed.

"Did you see what happened today? You know, the yearbook? Did you see that? There was a little mistake made," Trump said, shifting to singsong. "She started writing things in the yearbook."

Nelson's attorney, Gloria Allred, said a handwriting expert has found Moore's signature in the 1977 yearbook to be authentic.

Moore, who is 70, is facing multiple allegations of sexual misconduct, including accusations that he molested two teenage girls and pursued romantic relationships with several others while in his 30s. Moore has denied the allegations.

During the rally, Trump also crowed about stock market gains and other upbeat economic indicators. He said he was confident he'd win re-election in 2020, despite his dismal approval rating.

The White House said the rally was a campaign event for Trump. But the location — so close to Alabama and feeding its television markets — stoked speculation that it was a backdoor way for the president to boost Moore's campaign without actually setting foot in the state.

White House spokesman Raj Shah said the president and White House have made clear that the Moore allegations are "troubling and concerning" and "should be taken seriously." He also noted that Moore has maintained his innocence, and said that should be considered as well.

"Ultimately his endorsement is about the issues," Shah said.

Trump, who overcame allegations of sexual misconduct to win last year's presidential election, looked past the charges against Moore and formally endorsed the former Alabama judge this past week for the seat once held by Jeff Sessions, now U.S. attorney general.

Friday's campaign rally was Trump's first since September, when he went to Alabama to campaign for Sen. Luther Strange, who lost the GOP runoff election to Moore.

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap>

Japanese pitcher-hitter Shohei Ohtani chooses the LA Angels

By GREG BEACHAM, AP Sports Writer

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Shohei Ohtani has decided he's on the side of the Angels.

The Japanese two-way star announced Friday he will sign with the Los Angeles Angels, ending the sweepstakes surrounding his move to the majors in a surprising destination.

Ohtani, who intends to be both a starting pitcher and an everyday power hitter, turned down interest from every other big-league club to join two-time MVP Mike Trout and slugger Albert Pujols with the Angels, who are coming off their second consecutive losing season and haven't won a playoff game since 2009.

The Angels' combination of a promising core and a beautiful West Coast location clearly appealed to the 23-year-old Ohtani, who has confounded baseball experts at almost every step of his move to North America as one of the most coveted free agents in years.

Ohtani and his agent, Nez Balelo, issued a statement Friday announcing the decision after meeting with several finalists for his services earlier in the week.

Balelo said the 2016 Japanese MVP "felt a true bond with the Angels. He sees this as the best environment to develop and reach the next level and attain his career goals."

After his unusual courtship, Ohtani will attempt to chart a unique career path as the majors' first regular two-way player in several decades. Ohtani already has drawn numerous comparisons to Babe Ruth, who excelled as a hitter and a pitcher early in his Hall of Fame career.

Ohtani is expected to be both a right-handed starting pitcher and a left-handed designated hitter for the Angels, who are expected to give him ample playing time in both roles.

Many baseball observers have long assumed Ohtani would choose a higher-profile franchise such as the Yankees or Dodgers, who would have both welcomed him into their rotation and lineup. He received serious attention from Seattle and Texas, who both could have given him more money than the Angels.

Ohtani listened to his suitors' final pitches in Los Angeles before choosing the Angels, who play about 28 miles from downtown LA in laid-back Orange County. Most of the Angels live in coastal Newport Beach and enjoy a comfortable, warm-weather lifestyle with ample big-market media attention, but without the withering scrutiny of other top destinations.

Yet Angels general manager Billy Eppler is very serious about winning, and he has spent several years scouting Ohtani, ever since his previous job with the Yankees.

"We are honored Shohei Ohtani has decided to join the Angels organization," the franchise said in a brief statement. "We felt a unique connectivity with him throughout the process and are excited he will become an Angel. This is a special time for Angels fans."

Ohtani has ample opportunity to fulfill his biggest ambitions with the Angels, who are in need of a top starting pitcher. They should also be able to fit him into their lineup when he isn't pitching: Pujols has largely been a designated hitter for the past two seasons, but the three-time NL MVP is expected to be healthy enough to play first base more frequently in 2018.

Ohtani's new teammates greeted the news joyously. Left fielder Justin Upton tweeted, "So pumped right now..."

Trout, who is getting married this weekend to his longtime girlfriend, simply sent out the emoji of two bugged-out eyes.

Ohtani's disappointed suitors included Rangers general manager Jon Daniels, who had hoped Ohtani would follow in the footsteps of Yu Darvish, their former Japanese ace, instead of going to one of their

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AL West rivals.

"We're disappointed we weren't Shohei Ohtani's choice, but wish him the best in Anaheim," Daniels said. "He impressed us on and off the field at every turn. However, had he asked our opinion, we would have suggested the National League."

Ohtani was coveted by every team because of his exceptional pitching talent and powerful bat, but also because he represents an extraordinary bargain due to baseball's rules around international players.

The Angels will have to pay the \$20 million posting fee to Ohtani's previous club, the Nippon Ham Fighters, but Ohtani will not be paid a huge salary for the next three seasons. Ohtani, who will be under the Angels' contractual control for six years, will sign a minor league contract and can receive up to \$2,315,000 in international bonus money from the Angels.

Ohtani likely could have received a deal worth more than \$100 million if he had waited two years to move stateside, but Ohtani wasn't interested in delaying his progress for money.

Ohtani should get an immediate spot in the front of the rotation for the Angels, who have endured brutal injuries to their starting pitchers in recent years.

Los Angeles' ostensible ace is Garrett Richards, but he has been limited to 62 1/3 innings over the past two seasons. The rotation also currently includes Matt Shoemaker, Andrew Heaney and Tyler Skaggs, who have all dealt with major injury setbacks.

Ohtani was 3-2 with a 3.20 ERA this year while slowed by thigh and ankle injuries, but those numbers don't indicate the incredible potential seen in a pitcher whose fastball has been clocked above 100 mph. While he has occasionally struggled with control, Ohtani is widely thought to be a surefire big-league pitching prospect.

Scouts are more divided on Ohtani's ability to hit big-league pitching consistently, but the Angels intend to find out. He hit .332 in 65 games with eight homers and 31 RBIs last season, occasionally unleashing the tape-measure blasts that had teams salivating.

In 2016, Ohtani hit .322 with 22 home runs and 67 RBIs in 104 games. He also was 10-4 with a 1.86 ERA.

The Angels could ease Ohtani's transition to the majors by resting him on the days before and after he pitches, as he did in Japan. Los Angeles also has thought about trying a six-man starting rotation, which would allow Ohtani to have ample arm rest after pitching roughly once a week in Japan.

The Angels have missed the playoffs in seven of the last eight seasons, but Ohtani's arrival is only the latest in a series of big moves for Eppler, who is determined to build a World Series contender during the remaining three years on Trout's contract.

Shortly after the World Series ended, the Angels secured a five-year, \$106 million deal with Upton, their late-season trade acquisition. The veteran slugger is an ideal solution after years of underperformance in left field for the club.

Earlier this week, Eppler bolstered his much-improved farm system reaching an agreement to sign 17-year-old Venezuelan shortstop Kevin Maitan, a prospect considered the best of 13 players recently taken away from the Atlanta Braves for violating international signing rules.

More AP MLB: www.apnews.com/tags/MLBbaseball

Iraq says its war against IS has ended

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq said Saturday that its war on the Islamic State group is over after more than three years of combat operations drove the extremists from all of the territory they once held.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced Iraqi forces were in full control of the country's border with Syria during remarks at a conference in Baghdad, and his spokesman said the development marked the end of the military fight against IS.

A senior military commander confirmed that combat operations had been completed.

"All Iraqi lands are liberated from terrorist Daesh gangs and our forces completely control the international Iraqi-Syrian border," Lt. Gen. Abdul-Amir Rasheed Yar Allah said in a statement released shortly

after al-Abadi's remarks. Daesh is an Arabic acronym for IS.

The U.S.-led coalition congratulated Iraq on the "significant victory" Saturday, according to an official statement posted to Twitter. "We stand by the Iraqi people as they set the conditions for a secure and prosperous future," it read.

IS fighters overran nearly a third of Iraqi territory, including Mosul, the country's second largest city, in the summer of 2014.

Over the past three and a half years, Iraqi ground forces closely backed by the U.S.-led coalition have retaken all of that territory. However, IS fighters remain capable of carrying out insurgent attacks in Iraq, and the group has recovered from past setbacks.

In November, Iraqi forces retook the last town held by IS — Rawah, near the border with Syria. Over the following weeks Iraqi forces continued to clear patches of the country's vast western deserts.

In the most significant victory over the extremists, Iraqi forces retook Mosul earlier this year. Al-Abadi declared the fight concluded in July, but clashes continued in the city for weeks afterward.

Iraq now faces the daunting challenge of reconstruction. The fighting caused massive devastation in many areas, and some 3 million Iraqis are still displaced.

Ex-aide: Rep. Franks offered \$5 million to carry his child

By JULIET LINDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A former aide to Republican Rep. Trent Franks has told The Associated Press the congressman repeatedly pressed her to carry his child, at one point offering her \$5 million to act as a surrogate mother.

The eight-term lawmaker abruptly resigned Friday, bowing to an ultimatum from House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis. Ryan told Franks that he would refer the allegations to the Ethics Committee and urged him to step aside.

The former staffer said the Arizona congressman asked at least four times if she'd be willing to act as a surrogate in exchange for money. Franks, in his statement announcing his resignation, said he and his wife, who have struggled with infertility, have twins who were carried through surrogacy.

The former aide said the conversations took place in private, sometimes in the congressman's car, and that she repeatedly told him she wasn't interested. She said she never filed a formal complaint because until recently she didn't know where to go, but that his behavior had made her feel uncomfortable.

The Associated Press verified the identity of the staffer and confirmed that she worked in Franks' office. She asked that her name be withheld out of concern for her privacy.

"During my time there, I was asked a few times to look over a 'contract' to carry his child, and if I would conceive his child, I would be given \$5 million," she said, adding that she refused to look over the contract and has never seen a copy.

The woman said the requests shocked her, and made her feel afraid that if she didn't agree, she would face professional consequences. She said she spoke to another aide in the office, who had also been approached about surrogacy.

The aide cited the surrogacy requests as "a main reason" for leaving the office, adding that she felt retaliated against after turning down the congressman, ignored by Franks and not given many assignments.

A spokesman for Franks would not comment on whether the congressman offered aides money in exchange to act as surrogates.

Franks, a staunch conservative, said in his statement Thursday that he never physically intimidated, coerced or attempted to have sexual contact with any member of his congressional staff.

The surrogacy process typically involves removing an egg from the mother, fertilizing it with sperm from the father, then placing the fertilized egg in the uterus of the surrogate, who carries it to term.

Franks, 60, said he had become familiar with the surrogacy process in recent years and "became insensitive as to how the discussion of such an intensely personal topic might affect others."

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He said he regrets that his "discussion of this option and process in the workplace" with two female staffers made them feel uncomfortable.

Ryan on Thursday said in a statement that he was briefed on the allegations last week, and found them to be "serious and requiring action."

Ryan said that he presented Franks with the allegations, "which he did not deny," and filed them with the House Committee on Ethics.

A senior congressional official said Ryan's general counsel was contacted about two weeks ago by someone with information about "troubling behavior" by Franks involving a former staffer. Ryan's lawyer interviewed two women with similar complaints and verified them through a third party. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the official was not authorized to discuss the deliberations.

Andrea Lafferty, President of Traditional Values Coalition, said she is the one who reported Franks' conduct to the speaker's office. Lafferty told AP that the former aide came to her about a year ago and told her about the surrogacy requests. Lafferty said she contacted Ryan's office last month, after the staffer agreed to discuss the incident with leadership.

"I was approached last year about the situation, she came to me wanting some advice about how to handle this. She came to me shaking and sobbing, and she shared a story that I think is horrific, a powerful man hiring young women, procuring staff, to potentially surrogate children for him," Lafferty said. "I accompanied (the former aide) to the meeting in the speaker's office where she said Congressman Trent Franks offered her \$5 million if she conceived him a child."

Franks' net worth of nearly \$33 million makes him one of the wealthier members of Congress. While surrogacy regulations and costs vary from state to state, services typically run in the range of the low hundreds of thousands of dollars. The former aide said she never received details about payment or where the process would occur.

Franks is one of three lawmakers to step aside in a week as sexual misconduct allegations rocked the Capitol.

He said in a statement Friday: "Last night, my wife was admitted to the hospital in Washington, D.C., due to an ongoing ailment. After discussing options with my family, we came to the conclusion that the best thing for our family now would be for me to tender my previous resignation effective today, December 8th, 2017."

On Thursday, liberal Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn., announced his resignation after facing allegations of sexual harassment by at least eight women. Franken said some of those accusations were false and that he remembered others differently than his accusers did. He said he'd depart in a few weeks.

On Tuesday, Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., resigned effective immediately. He faced accusations from women of improper sexual behavior that he's contesting.

Franks, an abortion opponent, drew a sharp response from Democrats during a 2013 House committee debate when he said, "The incidence of rape resulting in pregnancy are very low." He sought to clarify the comment, saying later-term abortions linked to pregnancies caused by rape are infrequent.

Franks is a strong backer of President Donald Trump, represents a district encompassing suburbs north and west of Phoenix.

Before winning election to Congress, he served in the Arizona Legislature and founded the Arizona Family Research Institute, an organization associated with Dr. James Dobson's "Focus on the Family." The group later changed its name to the Center for Arizona Policy, and continues to be a force at the Arizona Capitol. It pushes anti-abortion, religious freedom and school choice legislation and publishes a yearly scorecard tracking how lawmakers vote on its proposed bills.

Associated Press writers Andrew Taylor, Anita Snow and David Crary contributed to this report.

Trainers rushed to save terrified horses as flames closed in

By **AMANDA LEE MYERS** and **JOHN ROGERS**, Associated Press

BONSALL, Calif. (AP) — A routine day at an elite training center for racehorses transformed into terror and chaos in minutes, with hundreds of thoroughbreds stampeding out of their stalls in a desperate attempt to flee a Southern California wildfire that set their barns ablaze.

Turned loose by their trainers in a last-ditch effort to save their lives, the huge, muscular animals, their eyes wide with fear, charged through thick smoke and past dancing flames.

While hundreds made it to the safety of a nearby racetrack, others galloped in circles, unsure which way to run. Still others, too frightened to leave their paddocks, stayed there and died.

Workers at San Luis Rey Downs said an estimated 30 to 40 horses perished Thursday in the wildfire still raging out of control north of San Diego on Friday. At least two stable workers were injured, and their conditions were not immediately known.

Trainers described a terrifying scene that erupted at the facility Thursday afternoon, recalling how only minutes after smelling smoke, they saw flames roaring down a nearby hillside.

"I was heading to my barn to drop my equipment off and I smell smoke," trainer Kim Marrs said Friday as she stood outside the still-smoldering facility. "Within two minutes, I look up the hill and you could just see it come up over the ridge."

She and others tried to turn back the flames with hoses and fire extinguishers before firefighters arrived. But when embers from burning palm trees began igniting the roofs of barns, they realized they had no other alternative than to turn loose the approximately 450 horses stabled there.

"The next thing, there's a stampede of 100 horses coming through here," said Marrs, who was trying to lead one of the horses she trains, a 5-year-old named Spirit World, through a tunnel. "We almost got trampled to death."

At one of the center's many barns, video showed a group of trainers frantically tearing down a wooden fence and shouting at their horses to run.

One large black horse, its forelocks wrapped in white leggings, bolted toward safety but then spooked by the burning palm trees, turned and fled back toward its stable. Scores of others charged through thick smoke to safety.

Trainer Cliff Sise suffered burns on his chest and arm trying to get a 2-year-old filly named Scat Home Lady out of her stable. She wouldn't budge, and he said she burned to death there.

"She was one of my favorites," Sise said as he sat outside the facility.

Trainer Jerry Contreras said one of his best friends, a fellow trainer, was hospitalized.

"He was trying to get his horses out and was burned," Contreras said.

At San Luis Rey Downs, the phone rang unanswered and the owners quickly barred outsiders from the sprawling facility.

It is Southern California's premier training center for thoroughbreds, with a competition-sized racetrack, a smaller one for training, numerous trails for horses to relax on and even a swimming pool for them to work out in.

The center can house as many as 500 horses and states proudly on a sign out front that it is the "Home of Azeri," racing's U.S. Horse of the Year in 2002.

Other thoroughbreds that have trained there include Kentucky Derby winner Ferdinand.

The facility sits among rolling hills, picturesque vineyards and farms down a winding, two-lane road just a few miles off busy Interstate 15, the main thoroughfare connecting Southern California to Las Vegas.

The horses that fled were quickly rounded up, and many were taken to the nearby Del Mar racetrack, where a veterinary center was set up for the injured.

The tragedy resulted in an outpouring of support from the racing community, with Southern California's Los Alamitos Race Course canceling its daytime thoroughbred program Friday out of respect.

The Del Mar Thoroughbred Club and the Stronach Group, owners of San Luis Rey Downs, have set up a GoFundMe account to help pay for hospital and rehab costs.

Santa Anita racetrack officials in the Los Angeles suburb of Arcadia collected clothes and other items for stable workers who lost their possessions.

"I lost everything. Forty years. I lost all my tack, all my machines, my webbings. It was all burned. My whole livelihood. I feel like quitting," the 66-year-old Sise said.

Rogers reported from Los Angeles. AP Racing Writer Beth Harris in Los Angeles contributed to this story.

Fast-moving flames force people to flee on a moment's notice

By JULIE WATSON and ELLIOT SPAGAT, Associated Press

FALLBROOK, Calif. (AP) — Flames were practically on top of Dick and Joan Marsala's home when they got an urgent knock on the door and were told to leave.

The couple, in their mid-80s, grabbed only a change of clothes and medications before fleeing Thursday through wind gusts and smoke as fire swallowed the row of mobile homes behind their place in the Rancho Monserate Country Club north of San Diego.

It's a story that has played out in communities across much of Southern California this week as ferocious winds whipped sparks into massive infernos that have killed one person, destroyed nearly 700 homes and buildings, killed dozens of horses and forced hundreds of thousands of people to run from fires that have burned more than 260 square miles (673 square kilometers) since Monday.

On Friday, the first fire-related death was confirmed by the Ventura County medical examiner's office.

Virignia Pesola, 70, of Santa Paula, was found dead Wednesday night along an evacuation route near a fire northwest of Los Angeles. Her death was caused by crash injuries, smoke inhalation and burns, the medical examiner's office said in a statement.

The flames that tore through Fallbrook, self-proclaimed "Avocado Capital of the World," and nearby Bonsall, home to a premier racehorse training facility, traveled so far that even people who found temporary refuge had to move again when the fires got too close.

Flames sprang up so quickly and moved so fast that three people were burned Thursday trying to escape. Many of those who managed to get out unscathed did so with only the clothes on their backs after abandoning a lifetime of possessions to fate.

The Marsalas and other unlucky homeowners returned Friday to find their homes in ruins.

Dick Marsala was too overwhelmed to speak as he searched through the smoldering remnants in search of his wallet. It was still too hot, so he climbed back out. Peering through a broken window, he spotted a framed photo still hanging on a blackened wall. It was a picture of him golfing.

"I'll be darned," he said, his eyes tearing up as he put on sunglasses.

The charred gray remains of much of the 55-and-over community stood in stark contrast to the bright green nine-hole golf course where Marsala and others in the community played regularly.

Many residents were on the course when the fire swept into the area, driven by dry desert Santa Ana winds that surpassed 35 mph (56 kph). That was too fast for firefighters to stop the flames.

"The crews were trying to stay out ahead of this as quickly as they could," said Capt. Kendal Bortisser of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention. "As we know, when a tornado hits the Midwest, there's no stopping it. When a hurricane hits the East Coast, there's no stopping it. When Santa Ana winds come in, there's no stopping them."

Tom Metier was brushing his teeth to get ready for a doctor's appointment when sheriff's deputies pulled up and yelled, "Get out now!"

He grabbed the key to his safety deposit box, prescription pills and some cash. Winds were howling outside, and flames leaped through the brush on a nearby hillside.

Metier, who expected to lose everything, was surprised to find his place intact Friday. He zipped through the mobile home park in a golf cart, fielding calls from neighbors and reporting whose homes survived and whose were gone.

More than a third of the community's 213 mobile homes burned as the fire zigzagged along a hillside,

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skipping some streets and razing others. On one street, all 24 mobile homes were gone, with only hulls of cars and stoves left.

"It's really horrible to see some of these little streets look like a moonscape," he told a friend whose home was reduced to black rubble.

The fire 50 miles (80 kilometers) north of San Diego ignited for unknown reasons and destroyed at least 105 structures as it burned 6 square miles (16 square kilometers).

Meanwhile, firefighters northwest of Los Angeles gained some control over the largest and most destructive fire in the state, which destroyed 476 homes and buildings. The blaze in Ventura County grew to 223 square miles (533 square kilometers) since igniting.

Some of the first evacuees from the fire who had to flee on Monday were allowed to return on Friday, including everyone from the city of Santa Paula, the first city threatened by the week's fires.

Along the coast between Ventura and Santa Barbara, tiny communities had so far survived close calls. Slopes along U.S. 101 were blackened, but homes still stood at La Conchita and Faria Beach. Sections of Carpinteria were under mandatory or voluntary evacuation orders, but no flames were in sight.

Fire crews made enough progress against other large fires around LA to lift most evacuation orders.

The Fallbrook fire broke out along State Highway 76 and quickly jumped six lanes to the other side.

Horse trainers took stock of the damage at the elite San Luis Rey Downs training facility for thoroughbreds in Bonsall, where many of the more than 450 horses were cut loose to prevent them from being trapped in burning stables.

Frantic herds galloped through smoke and past flaming palm trees in a chaotic escape from a normally idyllic place.

"We almost got trampled to death," trainer Kim Marrs said. "One gal got knocked down. I thought she was going to get crushed. You just had to stand there and pray they didn't hit you."

Most of the loose horses were corralled and taken to Del Mar Fairgrounds, but about 25 died as barns and pasture burned.

The fire, on the eastern border of the Marine Corps' Camp Pendleton, was uncontained, although winds subsided significantly overnight. Forecasters said they would return later in the day but be less widespread.

Authorities said 1,000 firefighters battled the flames with help from a fleet of air tankers and helicopters. Crews were also dispatched to stamp out a small new fire that began to the east in the Cleveland National Forest near the mountain town of Alpine.

Associated Press writers Krysta Fauria and Amanda Lee Myers in Bonsall, Brian Skoloff in Ojai, and Brian Melley, Michael Balsamo, and John Antczak in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

For complete coverage of the California wildfires, click here: <https://apnews.com/tag/Wildfires> .

American evangelist leads rare event in communist Vietnam

By YVES DAM VAN, Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — More than 10,000 Vietnamese filled up a stadium in a rare Christian evangelistic event led by the Rev. Franklin Graham, who said he wants the communist government to consider Christians its best citizens.

Despite sweeping economic reforms over the past 30 years that made Vietnam one of the fastest growing countries in the region, the ruling Communist Party maintains strict control over all aspects of society, from media to religions. According to Human Rights Watch, more than 100 Vietnamese are in prison for peaceful religious and political activities.

Graham told The Associated Press that the prayer rally in Hanoi on Friday was unprecedented in size for Vietnam and the government did not attach any conditions for the event, which took a year to organize. Authorities granted permission last week, he said.

"This is unprecedented really for us and for the government," Graham said. "We don't want to do anything

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that would embarrass the government or the people of Vietnam. Again we're guests, the government has not told me what to say or not say. I'm going to talk about God we are not here to talk about politics."

Graham said he hoped the government through the event will see Christianity in a different way.

"I hope the government will see that Christians are not enemies, but Christians are some of the best citizens in Vietnam and people that they can trust and depend on," he said. "I hope it would be good for the churches and I hope this meeting would be good for the government and they will see us in a different light after this week."

A second prayer rally is scheduled for Saturday night.

The government was not available for comment Saturday.

Graham, who is president and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and one of the most prominent American preachers, said that religious freedom has gradually improved in Vietnam.

"The fact that we are here today and that I'm going to be preaching Friday and Saturday in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, that is huge," he said. "It shows you how much the government has changed in the last 20 years."

Despite some improvements, the U.S. State Department said in its annual global report on religious freedom that authorities continued to limit activities of unrecognized religious groups and those without certificates of registration for religious activities, particularly those groups believed to be engaged in political activity. Some religious leaders reported various forms of harassment, including physical assault, short-term detention, prosecution, monitoring, restrictions on travel, property seizure or destruction, it said.

Thadeus Nguyen Van Ly, a Roman Catholic priest and founder of the democracy group Bloc 8406, was released last year after serving eight years in prison on charges of conducting anti-government propaganda.

Those attending Friday's rally said they were thrilled.

"It's very impressive," said Nguyen Thi Lan, who watched the event on a large screen set up outside the Quan Ngua Sports Stadium. "I hope through this event, more people would come to know Jesus and believe in God."

There are about 6.5 million Catholics and more than 1 million Protestants among Vietnam's 95 million people, majority of whom are Buddhists.

Trump says US 'cannot afford' Roy Moore loss in Alabama

By **DARLENE SUPERVILLE** and **BILL BARROW**, Associated Press

PENSACOLA, Florida (AP) — President Donald Trump on Friday urged voters to elect a Republican Senate candidate in Alabama who has been dogged by allegations of sexual misconduct, warning that America "cannot afford" to have a Democrat win the hard-fought campaign instead.

Trump gave a boost to the campaign of GOP Senate candidate Roy Moore during a raucous campaign rally in the Florida panhandle, near the state line with Alabama.

"Get out and vote for Roy Moore. Do it. Do it," Trump told the crowd.

"We cannot afford, the future of this country cannot afford to lose the seat," Trump said, referring to his party's razor-thin 52-48 advantage in that chamber of Congress.

Trump said Moore's opponent, Doug Jones, is a "liberal Democrat" who would be "completely controlled" by Democratic leaders Nancy Pelosi in the House and Chuck Schumer in the Senate.

"He's their total puppet and everybody knows it," Trump said during a wide-ranging speech that included riffs on the U.S. immigration system and the nation's economic performance since he took office. He touched briefly on the closely watched Senate race that will be decided when voters in next-door Alabama go to the polls Tuesday.

"We need somebody in that Senate seat who will vote for our Make America Great Again agenda, which involves tough on crime, strong on borders, strong on immigration," Trump continued.

As Trump spoke about Moore, Moore tweeted Trump's comments to his own followers.

Trump also taunted Beverly Nelson, one of Moore's accusers, who had presented a yearbook inscription by Moore as a key piece of evidence that the candidate knew his accuser. Nelson said Friday she had

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added a notation marking the date and place where it was signed.

"Did you see what happened today? You know, the yearbook? Did you see that? There was a little mistake made," Trump said, shifting to a sing-songy voice. "She started writing things in the yearbook."

Trump then mentioned Nelson's lawyer, Gloria Allred, and said, "Anytime you see her, you know something's gone wrong."

Trump had reinforced his support for Moore earlier Friday by tweeting a similar message.

Moore, who is 70, has been dogged by multiple allegations of sexual misconduct, including accusations that he molested two teenage girls and pursued romantic relationships with several others while in his 30s. Moore has denied the allegations.

During the rally, Trump also crowed about stock market gains and other upbeat economic indicators. He said he was confident he'd win re-election in 2020, despite his dismal approval rating.

"I think it's going to be very hard for somebody to beat us in a few years," Trump said, pointing to the impact on 401(k) investments. "All you have to say is: With us it goes up, with them it goes down. And that's the end of the election, right?"

The White House said the rally was a campaign event for Trump. But the location — so close to the Alabama state line and feeding its television markets — stoked speculation that it was a backdoor way for the president to boost Moore's campaign without actually setting foot in the state.

"It's not that he's not going to Alabama. It's that he is going to Pensacola," White House spokesman Raj Shah told reporters on board Air Force One as Trump flew to Florida. "Pensacola is Trump country. This is a part of the state that voted overwhelmingly for the president in 2016. He'll be traveling back to Florida from time to time, and it's a key state."

Shah said the president and White House have made clear that the Moore allegations are "troubling and concerning" and "should be taken seriously." He also noted that Moore has maintained his innocence, and said that should be considered as well.

"Ultimately his endorsement is about the issues," Shah said.

Trump tweeted earlier Friday that the "LAST thing the Make America Great Again Agenda needs is a Liberal Democrat in Senate where we have so little margin for victory already." Republicans currently have a 52-48 GOP edge in the Senate. He also criticized Jones as being "bad on Crime, Life, Border, Vets, Guns & Military"

Moore tweeted that he agreed with Trump.

"You're right Mr. President! We can't Make America Great Again with another radical liberal in the US Senate," he said. "I look forward to working with you to pass the America First Agenda!"

Trump, who overcame allegations of sexual misconduct to win last year's presidential election, looked past the charges against Moore and formally endorsed the former Alabama judge this week for the seat once held by Jeff Sessions, now the U.S. attorney general.

Top Republicans, including House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, had called on Moore to step aside after the allegations were made public.

Friday's campaign rally was Trump's first since September, when he went to Alabama to campaign for Sen. Luther Strange, who lost the GOP runoff election to Moore.

Trump's visit to the Florida panhandle comes in the final days of the Alabama Senate special election campaign to fill the seat formerly held by Attorney General Jeff Sessions. The crowd included some Alabama voters who traveled across the border for the rally.

"These are lies, just malicious lies," said John Maddalena, head of the south Alabama chapter of "Bikers for Trump." Maddalena and his wife, Alisha, rode to the Trump rally from their home near Montgomery, Alabama.

Alisha Maddalena described herself as a "strong woman" who still doesn't believe Moore's accusers.

"You let him sit there and pass judgment on people" as a jurist "for 40 years and don't say anything?" she asked. "You wait until he's running for the Senate to come up with this? That makes you suspicious."

"I'm a strong female," she continued. "If things like that happen to you, you need to come out immediately."

Others were Trump supporters eager to see the president in person.

Forrest Holt, 71, came to Pensacola from neighboring Gulf Breeze with his Marine buddies for the rally. "We love Trump, because he doesn't back down from anybody," said Holt, who said a tax cut is his top priority.

Holt gave Trump credit for Republicans on Capitol Hill advancing competing bills through the process, but said he's not worried about the details.

"They're on the right track," he said. "I pay my fair share, and I just want everyone else to pay theirs too."

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap>

Ex-aide: Rep. Franks offered \$5m to carry his child

By JULIET LINDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A former aide to Republican Rep. Trent Franks has told The Associated Press the congressman repeatedly pressed her to carry his child, at one point offering her \$5 million to act as a surrogate mother.

The eight-term lawmaker abruptly resigned Friday, bowing to an ultimatum from House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis. Ryan told Franks that he would refer the allegations to the Ethics Committee and urged him to step aside.

The former staffer said the congressman at least four times asked if she'd be willing to act as a surrogate in exchange for money. Franks, in his statement announcing his resignation, said he and his wife, who have struggled with infertility, have twins who were carried through surrogacy.

The former aide said the conversations took place in private, sometimes in the congressman's car, and that she repeatedly told him she wasn't interested. She said she never filed a formal complaint because until recently she didn't know where to go, but that his behavior had made her feel uncomfortable.

The Associated Press verified the identity of the staffer and confirmed that she worked in Franks' office. She asked that her name be withheld out of concern for her privacy.

"During my time there, I was asked a few times to look over a 'contract' to carry his child, and if I would conceive his child, I would be given \$5 million," she said, adding that she refused to look over the contract and has never seen a copy.

The woman said the requests shocked her, and made her feel afraid that if she didn't agree, she would face professional consequences. She said she spoke to another aide in the office, who had also been approached about surrogacy.

The aide cited the surrogacy requests as "a main reason" for leaving the office, adding that she felt retaliated against after turning down the congressman, ignored by Franks and not given many assignments.

A spokesman for Franks would not comment on whether the congressman offered aides money in exchange to act as surrogates.

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Court papers show Manafort drafting op-ed under house arrest

By CHAD DAY, ERIC TUCKER and TOM LOBIANCO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Robert Mueller to Paul Manafort: I'm watching you.

Revealing that they know every word Manafort changed in a recently published op-ed, prosecutors for the special counsel argued Friday that the former Trump campaign chairman's attempt to mount a public relations campaign to defend himself while under house arrest "raises serious concerns about his trust-

worthiness.”

Prosecutors are now pushing for him to remain confined to his home after they discovered he was heavily involved in the drafting of an opinion piece about his involvement in Ukrainian politics. They say the op-ed was part of a public effort Manafort was trying to orchestrate that would have violated a judge’s order to refrain from trying his case in the press.

In court papers earlier this week, Mueller’s office had accused Manafort of ghostwriting the op-ed with a colleague who they said had ties to Russian intelligence.

Manafort’s attorneys had argued that Manafort had only edited the piece after receiving it from a former Ukrainian public official whom he knew through his consulting work in Ukraine. They also said Manafort hadn’t violated the judge’s order and was exercising his free speech rights to defend himself.

On Friday, prosecutors revealed that they knew nearly every detail of that editing process.

Writing in Microsoft Word, Manafort changed several sections of the essay, going line-by-line for over 30 minutes on the night of Nov. 29, court papers show.

Each change was tracked in the document, which prosecutors later compared to talking points Manafort drafted last year to respond to news reports about his consulting work in Ukraine. They found they mirrored his edits, and appeared to show he had a “public relations campaign” in mind to help his case.

Prosecutors learned of the effort last week, and earlier this week, they received assurances from Manafort’s attorney that the op-ed wouldn’t be published.

Nevertheless, the op-ed was published Thursday in an English-language newspaper in Ukraine under the byline of Oleg Voloshyn, a former Ukrainian official.

Voloshyn told The Associated Press this week that he authored the op-ed in Manafort’s defense and insisted Manafort did not help him draft it.

“I wrote it on my own initiative,” said Voloshyn, who headed the press office at the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry under President Viktor Yanukovich, Manafort’s former client in Ukraine.

Voloshyn did acknowledge that he sent Manafort a draft of the op-ed through Konstantin Kilimnik, a longtime employee of Manafort’s in Ukraine. Kilimnik appears to be the person prosecutors referred to as “assessed to have ties” to Russian intelligence.

Prosecutors have not detailed how they made that assessment. Kilimnik declined comment this week.

In a Dec. 5 email included in the court filing, Voloshyn wrote that he felt an “urgent need to inform US embassy” that he had drafted the op-ed on his own initiative and that he felt obliged to send it to Kilimnik, who forwarded it to Manafort “just to have a look as his name is mentioned there.”

“There was no plot or big scenario behind it,” Voloshyn wrote. “As far as I know Manafort just read it and that’s all. I dare claim Mueller commission deliberately twisted the reality.”

In addition to the op-ed, prosecutors also detailed that they have amassed hundreds of thousands of documents and executed 15 search warrants as part of their investigation into Manafort and his longtime business associate, Rick Gates.

The government has gathered financial records from Cyprus and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and also seized multiple electronic devices during a raid of Manafort’s Virginia home this past summer.

Manafort and Gates face multiple counts of conspiring to launder money, conspiring against the U.S. and giving false statements to the government. Both men pleaded not guilty.

Read the documents: <http://apne.ws/5YWEaDZ>

Prosecutor declines to charge officer in deaf man’s killing

By SEAN MURPHY, Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — An Oklahoma prosecutor announced Friday that he won’t charge a police officer who fatally shot a deaf man, determining the killing was legally justified after the man aggressively approached the officer while armed with a 2-foot metal pipe.

Oklahoma County District Attorney David Prater cleared Officer Chris Barnes in the Sept. 19 shooting of

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35-year-old Magdiel Sanchez outside his south Oklahoma City home. A second officer who shot Sanchez with a Taser, Lt. Matt Lindsey, also acted justifiably because of the potential threat to the officers' lives, Prater said.

"At the moment Officer Barnes discharged his pistol he was acting in self-defense and, in my opinion, had no other reasonable option to prevent Mr. Sanchez from seriously injuring or killing him," Prater said. "Both officers employed techniques in an attempt to de-escalate and bring the situation to a peaceful ending. It is due to no fault of the officers that the matter ended violently."

Both Barnes and Lindsey tried to render aid to Sanchez immediately after the shooting, Prater said.

Police have said officers who responded to a hit-and-run crash encountered Sanchez holding a metal pipe. An autopsy report shows Sanchez was hit with a stun gun and shot five times in the chest, pelvis and upper arm.

Police have said previously that witnesses yelled "he can't hear you" before the officers fired, but that the officers didn't hear them. Prater suggested Friday that the fact Sanchez was deaf was not the reason he was killed, noting that both officers were in uniform, were driving in clearly marked patrol cars with emergency lights activated and were signaling to Sanchez to put down the weapon.

"You don't have to hear to know what these officers are telling you," Prater said.

The shooting prompted protests from activists from groups including Black Lives Matter Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Association of the Deaf.

Family members of Sanchez had called for Barnes' arrest and for state and federal investigations into the matter.

Sanchez's family has said he was completely deaf, developmentally disabled, and that he used the pipe as a walking stick. The autopsy found no drugs or alcohol in Sanchez's system.

Attorneys for Sanchez's family disputed Prater's suggestion that the officers tried to deescalate the situation.

"I think it's fair to say there was absolutely zero de-escalation deployed in this case," said Melvin Hall. "They continued to pursue him. They continue to follow him. They approached him on his own property. There was no effort to fall back to a safe position. There was no effort to establish a perimeter."

Prater earlier this week charged an Oklahoma City police officer with second-degree murder for fatally shooting a suicidal man in a separate case.

"We follow the evidence, and whatever conclusions we make ... that's where we end up," Prater said. "A couple of days ago it meant we filed on a police officer for murder in the second degree and manslaughter. Today, the evidence led me to believe that these officers very appropriately acted in self-defense."

Follow Sean Murphy at www.twitter.com/apseanmurphy

New Mexico school shooter left note plotting attack, suicide

By RUSSELL CONTRERAS, Associated Press

AZTEC, N.M. (AP) — A 21-year-old gunman who disguised himself as a student to get into a New Mexico high school where he killed two students had caught the attention of U.S. investigators more than a year ago, authorities said Friday.

William Atchison, a former student at small-town Aztec High School, had legally purchased a handgun at a local store a month ago and planned the attack, authorities said. He left a message on a thumb drive found on his body that detailed his plan to wait until the students got off buses and made their way to class.

He mingled with students, then walked into school with them and went into a second-floor bathroom to "gear up." Atchison's plan was to shoot up a classroom and then kill himself.

"Work sucks, school sucks, life sucks. I just want out of this (expletive)," he wrote.

More lives could have been lost had Francisco I. Fernandez not walked into the bathroom, authorities said. The gunman shot Fernandez, then walked out into the hallway and encountered the second victim, Casey J. Marquez. He immediately killed her.

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Atchison then walked up and down the hall, firing randomly, before killing himself, authorities said. "He was determined to create as much carnage as he possibly could," San Juan County Sheriff Ken Christesen said.

The shooter did not have a criminal record, much less a traffic ticket, officials said. The only contact with law enforcement was what they described as a generic message on an online gaming forum in 2016 in which he talked about what weapons might be used in a mass shooting.

The FBI said the posting was flagged and investigators talked with the gunman at his home in Aztec, where he lived with his parents. At the time, he did not own any weapons other than an airsoft pellet gun and said he had no plans for an attack and just liked to troll sites online.

The shooting has rocked Aztec, a community of about 6,500 near the Colorado border. Hundreds gathered for prayer services and candlelight vigils and more gatherings are planned over the weekend as residents look for answers.

In one bright spot, authorities said heroes at the school helped save lives.

A substitute teacher heard the gunshots but didn't have a key to lock the door to the computer lab. So she took students into an office or storage area and barricaded the door with a couch.

Atchison came to the room and yelled that he knew they were in there and fired multiple shots into the room, authorities said.

A custodian also heard the gunshots and yelled for teachers to lock their doors.

State Police Chief Pete Kassetas said the two victims were not specific targets.

Marquez was a cheerleader and was planning to perform in the upcoming Orange Bowl. Her classmates said she came across as a student leader.

Bryn Divine, a senior at Aztec High School, remembered the victim being a vibrant and friendly student who often won dance contests at school events.

"She lit up pretty much any room we were all in," Divine said. "She was such a fun person to be around."

Fernandez was known for his interest in computers and his speed on the keyboard. His family has said he had a bright future ahead of him.

Gov. Susana Martinez said she has met with the teens' families and they talked about what great kids they were. Both of them also had jobs.

Martinez said the families are broken but are pulling together.

"I don't think anyone ever gets over this," she said.

Investigators were still combing over evidence at the school Friday, trying to determine how many shots were fired. The gunman had several magazines and reloaded multiple times, Kassetas said.

At Atchison's home, investigators found a torn note in a trash can in his room that listed what they believed to be the timeline for Thursday's shooting. The last words written on the note read "die."

Authorities don't believe anyone else knew about Atchison's intentions but said they are still investigating.

Associated Press writers Mary Hudetz and Susan Montoya Bryan contributed to this report from Albuquerque.

2 Democrats: Minnesota governor's top choice mulling '18 run

By KYLE POTTER, Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton's top pick to fill Sen. Al Franken's Senate seat, Lt. Gov. Tina Smith, is considering also running for the seat next year, as Dayton faces pressure from top Democrats in Washington to appoint more than a mere caretaker, according to two Democrats familiar with the discussions.

Franken said Thursday he would resign over allegations of sexual harassment, leaving Dayton to appoint a replacement until a special election next November to complete Franken's term, which runs through 2020.

Dayton's initial inclination was to pick Smith, a longtime aide and his second-in-command since 2015, to serve as a placeholder until next year's election, a Democratic official told The Associated Press. The

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official requested anonymity because the official was not authorized to discuss private deliberations surrounding the appointment before Dayton's announcement.

The official said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer has reached out to Dayton and pressured him to instead appoint someone who can use the opportunity as a running start for a 2018 campaign.

A senior Senate Democratic aide confirmed that Senate Democrats do not want a placeholder appointee. The aide spoke on condition of anonymity to freely discuss private discussions.

Amid that pushback, Smith is now considering running for the seat next year, according to the official and a separate Democratic operative familiar with the discussions surrounding the appointment. Smith had previously explored a run for Minnesota governor in 2018, when Dayton's second and final term ends, but she ruled it out this spring.

Smith did not immediately reply to a text or voicemail seeking comment.

Speaking to reporters earlier Friday, Dayton reiterated he plans to make the appointment "in the next couple days" but would not discuss the factors or candidates he is weighing.

In more than two decades in Minnesota politics, Smith has earned a reputation as more of a behind-the-scenes mover than a front-lines politician. She played outsized but quiet roles in the response to the 2007 Interstate 35W bridge collapse, the building of a new Minnesota Vikings stadium and a multi-million dollar investment in the state's famed Mayo clinic.

Before ascending to be Dayton's second-in-command, she served as his chief of staff, worked as the top aide to a former Minneapolis mayor and ran campaigns, including former Vice President Walter Mondale's last-minute run for U.S. Senate in 2002 after Sen. Paul Wellstone's death. She also served as a top executive at Planned Parenthood Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Soft-spoken and constantly smiling, Smith has provided a touch of polish to a governor without much of it. She's served primarily as a bridge-builder for Dayton, both to the state's business community that Dayton regularly lambastes and Republican legislative majorities with whom he has quarreled.

Her rising visibility after joining Dayton's ticket for a 2014 re-election stoked speculation that she would run for the job when he leaves office next year. But Smith eventually turned it down, citing personal reasons.

Her former boss, ex-Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak, said voters shouldn't confuse that decision with a lack of drive or grit for a grueling campaign. Rybak, for whom Smith worked as chief of staff for four years, said he thinks Smith is uniquely suited for the U.S. Senate.

"It plays to a couple of her strengths: The ability to really dig in and understand issues in depth and a pretty off the chart ability to find common ground among people who don't always agree," he said. He called her instrumental as a liaison between his office and then-Republican Gov. Tim Pawlenty in responding to the bridge collapse.

A Smith appointment and 2018 campaign would cause both celebration and heartburn among Minnesota Democrats. With a foot in the Senate, Smith would get an instant visibility boost and fundraising edge, not to mention help from Schumer and Washington Democrats in mounting a campaign in short order.

But the head start could also work against her, tying up valuable campaign time with Senate activity and risking a backlash from liberal Minnesota voters who feel their role in choosing a nominee was given to Dayton and Schumer.

Associated Press writer Donna Cassata contributed from Washington.

Dems mourn Franken's demise but see a 2018 election benefit

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Members of both parties are glum and guarded after a shocking week of resignations on Capitol Hill. But Democrats say the way they're handling the sexual misconduct issue will give them a valuable weapon for next year's congressional elections. Republicans say that's just wishful thinking.

No one knows when or where the allegations that have felled lawmakers, journalists and entertainers will end. The ax could well fall again in a Congress where the culture has long tolerated behavior that

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would trigger departures today.

For now, Democrats want voters to see a very bright line: They forced the liberal rising star Al Franken and civil rights veteran Rep. John Conyers to leave, while Donald Trump remains president and Alabama Republican Roy Moore could well be elected to the Senate next Tuesday.

"Democrats are now in a better position than ever to tie Donald Trump and Roy Moore around the necks of Republicans" running for Congress next year, said Jim Manley, a Democratic operative and former Senate aide.

Republicans are quick to contest that.

They argue that Trump was elected last year despite the election season release of a 2005 tape in which he described sexually offensive behavior, followed by accusations by several women of aggressive sexual misconduct. And they suggest Sen. Franken's departure was more politically bearable for Democrats because his home state of Minnesota has a Democratic governor who will appoint the temporary replacement.

"Do you think if Al Franken had a Republican governor they'd be doing this," asked Tom Davis, a GOP consultant and former Virginia congressman who chaired his party's House campaign committee.

While both Trump and Moore have faced and denied allegations, their political fortunes aren't likely to be damaged by the way the Democrats have handled Franken and Conyers.

What's important, Democrats say, is that the contrast heightens their chances of winning over female and suburban voters, pumping up donors and party activists and even recruiting women to run for Congress next year.

"Yes, we may lose some people that we liked quite a bit along the way," said Brian Fallon, senior adviser to the liberal group Priorities USA. He added, "In the long term, the party is better off doing right by women."

Moore has been accused of initiating sexual contact with teenage girls and pursuing dates with others when he was in his thirties during the 1970s. He has denied wrongdoing.

Trump — who backs Moore — planned a Friday evening political rally in Pensacola, Florida, about 20 miles from the Alabama state line.

On Thursday, in an extraordinary scene witnessed by teary-eyed colleagues and relatives, Franken told a wake-like Senate he was resigning. Two days earlier, it was the House's longest-serving member, John Conyers of Michigan, who quit. Both succumbed to pressure by leaders and colleagues after initially saying they'd fight to stay.

Republicans were taking action, too. Rep. Trent Franks quit Congress Friday, a day after House Speaker Paul Ryan said he'd told the conservative Arizonan to leave. A former Franks aide told The Associated Press that he repeatedly pushed her to carry his child, at one point offering her \$5 million to act as a surrogate mother.

The issue of sexual misconduct is one that few lawmakers are eager to discuss. "I'm not happy to get to it, but I will get to that," House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said at a press conference Thursday when reporters pressed her on it.

Ryan, R-Wis., struggled Thursday to articulate a standard for forcing a lawmaker to resign over allegations of sexual impropriety.

"It's a really good question," Ryan said. He said accusations must be taken seriously and processed fairly, adding, "I want my daughter to grow up in a country, going into the workplace, where she's empowered and respected, and not fearful for reporting harassment when it occurs against her."

Capitol Hill's culture has long erred on the side of protecting lawmakers. In Washington, alcohol can flow, lawmakers are often separated from their wives, and they wield power over staffs typically composed mostly of ambitious young people. The mix can breed and abide bad behavior.

It took a lengthy investigation and an Ethics Committee expulsion vote to force Oregon Sen. Bob Packwood out for sexual harassment in 1995. More recently, the parties have self-policed.

Former Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio., cracked down on Rep. Chris Lee., R-N.Y., caught in 2011 soliciting women on the Internet using a shirtless "selfie" photograph. Lee quit Congress immediately, as did former Rep. Mark Souder, R-Ind., discovered in 2010 having an affair with an aide.

Pelosi forced out Rep. Anthony Weiner, D-N.Y., for tweeting lewd photos to women.

In the Internet age, the idea of a yearslong ethics process seems quaint. And social media sites can act as a de facto prosecutor, judge and jury in the span of hours.

"A lot of the stuff that used to be at best gossip, if that, now is going to be pictures on Twitter," said Michael Steel, who was a top adviser to Boehner.

AP reporters Andrew Taylor, Juliet Linderman and Kevin Freking contributed.

Trump signs 2-week spending bill to avoid shutdown

By KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Friday signed a spending bill to avoid a government shutdown and keep the federal government running through Dec. 22.

The president signed the two-week spending measure in private at the White House after the House and Senate acted to prevent a government shutdown this weekend. The funding reprieve comes as the White House and congressional leaders are negotiating a longer-term agreement, building off a Thursday meeting involving Trump and congressional leaders.

The White House and lawmakers said the bill will give them more time to negotiate several end-of-the-year agenda items, including the budget, a children's health program and hurricane aid. Administration and congressional aides were continuing the talks on Friday.

"We hope that we're going to make some great progress for our country. I think that will happen," Trump said Thursday in the Oval Office. Added Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York: "Funding the government is extremely important, helping our soldiers is very important and helping average citizens is very important. So we're here in the spirit of: Let's get it done."

The two-week measure funds government agencies from the Defense Department to the IRS. It also makes money available to several states running out of funds for the Children's Health Insurance Program. The popular health care program provides medical care to more than 8 million children.

The White House and lawmakers have been discussing relief from a budget freeze on the Pentagon and domestic agencies, extending the children's health program and providing more disaster aid to hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico, Texas and Florida.

Negotiators are also seeking ways of addressing protections for immigrants who were brought to the country illegally as children.

Republican leaders have said they agree with the need to address immigration, including the almost 1 million immigrants given protections by former President Barack Obama. Trump has sought stronger border security and immigration enforcement as part of the talks and the White House said Thursday that "negotiations on immigration should be held separately on a different track" to avoid slowing down funding increases for the Pentagon.

On Twitter follow Ken Thomas at @KThomasDC.

'I'm not in charge': Illinois governor's words may haunt bid

By SARA BURNETT, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner raised eyebrows, then questions about whether he misspoke after he declared "I am not in charge" of the state.

Now it looks like the comment could haunt him all the way until Election Day.

The Republican, who's seeking his second term in 2018, made the unusual declaration last week, telling reporters he's "trying to get to be" in charge of Illinois but has been blocked by his political nemesis, longtime Democratic House Speaker Michael Madigan. Rauner stood by the remark the next day and added, "Everyone in this state knows what I'm talking about."

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Rauner's words have reverberated across Illinois, drawing criticism from Democrats, GOP primary challenger Rep. Jeanne Ives and even some of Rauner's biggest supporters.

Billionaire businessman J.B. Pritzker, one of seven people seeking the Democratic nomination for governor, released a video that features a clip of a wide-eyed Rauner making the forceful comments, interspersed with negative news coverage about problems in state agencies. Democratic Senate President John Cullerton called on Rauner to "take charge" of drafting a new state budget, adding: "It's hard to run a state without a governor."

Even newspaper editorial boards that endorsed Rauner in 2014 and have consistently supported his pro-business agenda chastised him. "Stop griping," the Chicago Tribune wrote.

Rauner's sentiment regarding Madigan wasn't new. For years, the wealthy former private equity investor has blamed Illinois' many problems — financial and otherwise — on Madigan, who leads the state Democratic Party and is widely considered the most powerful politician in Illinois.

The governor pushed things a bit further last week, saying Madigan has gotten rich off his position and "rigged" the Democratic primary for governor, a statement Madigan's spokesman called "incoherent."

Rauner also said the Democratic-controlled General Assembly has blocked many of his legislative priorities but that he is doing an "incredible" job on things he controls, such as reforming the criminal justice system. Madigan says Democrats have rejected Rauner's agenda because it would harm the middle class.

Asked how long he plans to blame Madigan, Rauner replied: "Until he's gone." The response drew applause from onlookers attending an Illinois Farm Bureau meeting.

Christopher Mooney, a political science professor at the University of Illinois at Springfield, said the "Madigan argument" may work for Rauner among people who closely follow state government. But the typical voter expects the chief executive — whether president or governor — to be running the show. He noted Rauner assured voters during the 2014 campaign that he's been successful at everything he's done.

"If anything, it's going to make the average person nervous," Mooney said. "They may say, 'I don't know much about how state government works, but I sure hope someone is in charge.'"

Rauner's comments came after a cover story in the conservative magazine National Review called him "The Worst Republican Governor in America" and the same day that Ives, a strong fiscal and social conservative, filed petitions to challenge him in the March 20 primary.

The governor dismissed the article as "a political hit piece" and suggested Ives is a "fringe" candidate.

He also said he has the best chance of anyone in the state to win the November 2018 election and that if Democrats take the office, they'll impose a graduated income tax — in which higher earners pay a higher tax rate — that will "destroy Illinois."

"I will win the general election," Rauner said. "I will win."

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US wants world to isolate North Korea, so what's that mean?

By MATTHEW PENNINGTON, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When President Donald Trump's U.N. ambassador recently urged the world to sever diplomatic ties with North Korea, she was sketchy on the details: Should all embassies close? How about those providing the U.S. intelligence from the largely inscrutable country? And what of Sweden, which helps with imprisoned Americans?

Nikki Haley's recent call to action underscores the challenge for the United States as it tries to advance a nonmilitary strategy for resolving the nuclear standoff with North Korea. Isolating the reclusive, totalitarian state has been a central component of the U.S. plan, even though Washington says it remains open to talks.

Like international economic penalties, the Trump administration believes the diplomatic isolation serves two purposes.

It's designed to punish North Korean leader Kim Jong Un for developing an atomic arsenal of bombs and

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intercontinental missiles that potentially could deliver nuclear warheads anywhere in the United States. U.S. officials also contend that freezing out North Korea could drive Kim's government to seek negotiations.

"We do know they care a lot about their international reputation," said Mark Tokola, a former No. 2 at the U.S. Embassy in South Korea.

Trump's team has chalked up some successes in narrowing the North's diplomatic reach. Mexico, Peru, Italy, Spain, and Kuwait have expelled North Korean ambassadors from their countries. Haley said Portugal and the United Arab Emirates have suspended diplomatic relations. Others have cut trade and security ties.

But North Korea isn't and won't be completely isolated.

Last month, China, whose once-close relationship with North Korea has been strained by its adoption of tough U.N. sanctions, sent its highest level envoy to Pyongyang in two years. North Korea also recently welcomed a Russian parliamentary delegation, in a sign of increasing contacts between the former Cold War partners. And the North just hosted the most senior U.N. official to visit in years: Jeffrey Feltman, the undersecretary-general for political affairs.

Even before he departed, experts played down expectations that Feltman, formerly a senior American diplomat, could offer a breakthrough as the standoff over the North's nuclear weapons threatens to spiral into war. Feltman carried no message from Washington, State Department spokesman Heather Nauert said.

Yet Feltman's visit, which included an audience with Kim's foreign minister, added to questions about how effectively the U.S. can isolate North Korea. Feltman left Pyongyang on Saturday after four days of talks with the North Korean Foreign Ministry. "I have to brief the secretary-general first," he said when asked for details of his trip.

Also unresolved is whether Trump and his top advisers have a game plan for the second half of a strategy they've called "maximum pressure and engagement." If North Korea signals a willingness to negotiate, now that Kim has declared that he has "realized the great historic cause of completing the state nuclear force," how will the U.S. respond?

"This is probably as good a time as any to try to pivot to engagement," said Suzanne DiMaggio at the New America think tank, who has been involved in several rounds of unofficial talks with North Korean officials. She said the administration has focused almost completely on pressure.

Kim's declaration followed North Korea's test last month of its most powerful intercontinental missile yet, which led Haley, at an emergency U.N. Security Council meeting, to speak of a world "closer to war." At the same time, she pushed for others to cut trade and diplomatic ties with Pyongyang.

U.S. officials say doing so would stop North Korea from abusing diplomatic privileges that allow it to raise revenues or conduct illegal business in support of its nuclear and missile programs. It's also intended to exploit North Korean sensitivity to its international standing.

But the U.S. has given mixed messages on what form concretely the isolation should take.

Haley called all governments to sever ties. Other U.S. officials say the emphasis is on getting North Korean diplomats expelled from overseas postings, not on closing foreign embassies in Pyongyang. To date, no embassies have shut down in the North Korean capital as a result of the U.S. campaign.

According to research by the Washington-based East-West Center and the National Committee on North Korea, North Korea maintains diplomatic relations with 167 countries. It has embassies in 47 foreign capitals. Twenty-four countries have embassies in Pyongyang, and those include American rivals and friends.

"If the U.S. is really serious about depriving North Korea of diplomatic relations, it must start with its own closest ally, Great Britain," said Artyom Lukin, a North Korea expert at Far Eastern Federal University in Vladivostok, Russia.

Since the U.S. has no diplomatic presence of its own in North Korea — the two sides remain technically in a state of war — it relies to some extent on Britain, Germany and other partners to stay abreast of what's happening there. Most critically, it needs Sweden, its protecting power, to assist three currently detained Americans in North Korea, on the rare occasions when Kim's government allows consular access.

Any isolation campaign will have only marginal diplomatic and economic effect without the participation of North Korea's most powerful partners, China and Russia. Both support more dialogue with the North, not more diplomatic sanctions.

Even if only smaller countries follow America's advice, the U.S. could lose potential go-betweens, such as Vietnam and Mongolia, which have constructive relations with the U.S. and North Korea.

"If they left, I would be worried I was losing a source of information and a more neutral voice that the North Koreans might actually listen to," said Frank Jannuzi, a former Senate staff specialist on Asia.

Online:

State Department on North Korea: <https://www.state.gov/p/eap/ci/kn/>

AP FACT CHECK: Blue high-tax states fund red low-tax states

By **STEPHEN OHLEMACHER, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican leaders have spent months promoting the myth that red low-tax states are subsidizing blue high-tax states because of the deduction for state and local taxes.

An Associated Press Fact Check finds it's actually the other way around. High-tax, traditionally Democratic states (blue), subsidize low-tax, traditionally Republican states (red) — in a big way.

Republicans are trying to eliminate the deduction as part of the sweeping tax package working its way through Congress. They added back a deduction for up to \$10,000 in property taxes, in a concession to Republicans from high-tax states such as New York and New Jersey. California Republicans are pushing to extend the deduction to local income taxes, too.

It is true that taxpayers in high-tax states benefit the most from the deduction. However, these states send far more tax dollars to Washington than residents in low-tax states.

In fact, most high-tax states send more money to Washington than they get back in federal spending. Most low-tax states make a profit from the federal government's system of taxing and spending.

HOUSE SPEAKER PAUL RYAN:

— Ryan said the rest of the country is "propping up profligate, big-government states."

— "States that got their act together are paying for states that didn't," the Wisconsin Republican said.

TREASURY SECRETARY STEVEN MNUCHIN:

— "We are getting the federal government out of the business of subsidizing states. That is going to impact high-tax states."

THE FACTS:

Connecticut residents paid an average of \$15,643 per person in federal taxes in 2015, according to a report by the Rockefeller Institute of Government. Massachusetts paid \$13,582 per person, New Jersey paid \$13,137 and New York paid \$12,820.

California residents paid an average of \$10,510.

At the other end, Mississippi residents paid an average of \$5,740 per person, while West Virginia paid \$6,349, Kentucky paid \$6,626 and South Carolina paid \$6,665.

Low-tax red states also fare better when you take into account federal spending.

Mississippi received \$2.13 for every tax dollar the state sent to Washington in 2015, according to the Rockefeller study. West Virginia received \$2.07, Kentucky got \$1.90 and South Carolina got \$1.71.

Meanwhile, New Jersey received 74 cents in federal spending for tax every dollar the state sent to Washington. New York received 81 cents, Connecticut received 82 cents and Massachusetts received 83 cents.

California fared a bit better than other blue states. It received 96 cents for every dollar the state sent to Washington.

On average, states received \$1.14 in federal spending for every tax dollar they sent to Washington. That's why the federal government has a budget deficit.

Follow Stephen Ohlemacher on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/stephenatap>

Find AP Fact Checks at <https://apnews.com/tag/APFactCheck>

Conyers' House seat to remain vacant for nearly a year

By COREY WILLIAMS and DAVID EGGERT, Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Michigan's Republican governor announced Friday that Democrat John Conyers' congressional seat will not be filled until the regularly scheduled November election, leaving it vacant for nearly a year.

Gov. Rick Snyder decided the post will be listed twice on the August primary and November general election ballots. While unlikely, it is possible voters could choose one candidate to fill the vacancy until January 2019 and elect another to a full two-year term after that.

It is unusual for a congressional district to stay vacant for so long, according to a review of roughly 100 vacancies and successors listed on the House website for the last 20 years. The longest time a seat stayed empty was about 10 months — both in 2014, when Rep. Melvin Watt of North Carolina left to head the Federal Housing Finance Agency, and 2006, when Rep. Bob Menendez of New Jersey was appointed to the Senate.

Snyder said he opted against having an earlier special election to give potential candidates ample time to decide about running, provide voters in the predominantly Democratic district more options and save money.

The 88-year-old Conyers, who was facing a House Ethics Committee investigation over claims by former staffers, cited health reasons for his resignation Tuesday.

Michael Gilmore, a Detroit attorney who is running for the seat, said not having representation in the House for almost a year is unfair to residents.

"I think it's unfortunate that the governor thinks this is what we're worth," Gilmore said.

Snyder's office said it consulted with Wayne County leaders before making a decision. The 13th Congressional District Democratic Party Organization backed the decision, too.

"In order to allow several months for that to take place and to reduce the financial burden on local taxpayers, the primary and general elections will be held when regularly scheduled elections are already occurring," Snyder said in a statement.

The filing deadline is April 24 for both elections. Whoever wins the special election will serve next November and December, and — if he or she also wins the regular race — will serve a two-year term starting in 2019. A Snyder spokeswoman said it could have cost up to \$2 million if the special elections were scheduled on non-regular election dates.

Detroit, a city of about 680,000, currently does not have any resident serving in Congress.

Former Michigan Department Party Chairman Mark Brewer tweeted that Snyder "continues to give the back of his hand to urban areas whether it's emergency managers, poisoned water, and now being denied representation in Congress for nearly a year."

But Jonathan Kinloch, chairman of the 13th Congressional District Democratic Party Organization, said earlier this week that having the elections on the regular dates would avoid the typical low turnouts associated with special elections.

"We want as many voters as possible to participate in the filling of the seat," he said.

John Conyers retired amid allegations by about a half-dozen women who once worked for him that they were harassed and touched inappropriately. He has denied the allegations. Conyers first was elected in 1964.

Some colleagues in the House had urged Conyers to resign. When he did, he endorsed his 27-year-old son, John Conyers III, to succeed him. The younger Conyers, a partner with a Detroit-based, minority-run hedge fund, posted on Twitter this week that he has not decided whether he wants to run for his father's old seat. The Associated Press has been unable to reach him for comment.

The race for the district that includes parts of Detroit and some western Wayne County communities could become a free-for-all.

Gilmore said he began fundraising for his campaign in April and had planned to challenge John Conyers prior to the sexual harassment allegations.

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Democratic state Sen. Ian Conyers, John Conyers' grand-nephew, has said he will run. Fellow Democratic state Sen. Coleman Young II is expected on Monday to announce his candidacy, his spokesman said.

Young sought Detroit's mayoral seat his late father, Mayor Coleman A. Young, once held, but lost to incumbent Mike Duggan last month.

"He is battle-tested. This mayoral race has prepared him," Young spokesman Adolph Mongo told The Associated Press. "He knows the issues in the 13th District. He's been campaigning for 10 months on the issues."

Conyers III never has been elected to a public post. Ian Conyers won a special election in 2016 for his seat. Young was elected in 2010 to the Michigan Senate. He served in the state House from 2005 to 2010.

Eggert reported from Lansing, Michigan.

S&P 500 returns to record following strong US jobs report

By STAN CHOE, AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks rose Friday following a better-than-expected U.S. jobs report, and the strong finish pushed the Standard & Poor's 500 index to its third straight weekly gain despite some weakness earlier in the week.

The gains were widespread, and telecom and health care stocks helped lead the way. Overseas markets were also higher after negotiators hit a breakthrough in the United Kingdom's efforts to leave the European Union.

The S&P 500 rose 14.52 points, or 0.6 percent, to finish at 2,651.50, another record. The Dow Jones industrial average gained 117.68, or 0.5 percent, to 24,329.16, and the Nasdaq composite rose 27.24, or 0.4 percent, to 6,840.08.

The U.S. jobs report, which is the economic highlight of each month, showed that employers added 228,000 jobs last month and the unemployment rate remained at a low 4.1 percent. It's the latest evidence that the U.S. economy continues to improve, in sync with the rest of the world.

Paychecks, though, have not been getting much bigger, and hourly wages rose less last month than economists expected. Higher pay would help workers spend more, but it could also lead to higher inflation.

"The way risk markets are looking at it is it's very much a Goldilocks environment: still muted or low inflation and very positive growth," said Erin Browne, head of asset allocation at UBS Asset Management.

She said that it's encouraging that an area of strength in the job market is the manufacturing industry. It's an indication that companies are spending more on equipment and other things to grow, something that economists had been waiting years to see.

The jobs report is the last major piece of economic data before the Federal Reserve meets next week to discuss interest rate policy. Most economists expect it to approve the third increase in short-term rates for the year.

Biotechnology stocks helped lead the market, and health care stocks in the S&P 500 rose 1.1 percent for one of the biggest gains of the 11 sectors that make up the index.

Alexion Pharmaceuticals jumped \$7.68, or 7.2 percent, to \$114.46 for the biggest gain in the S&P 500 following a report from The New York Times that an activist hedge fund has bought shares in the company and pushed it to do more to lift its stock price.

Technology stocks in the S&P 500 rose 0.4 percent. The industry has been the market's biggest winner this year, but it had stumbled recently as investors moved out of tech stocks and into companies seen as benefiting more from Washington's push to overhaul the tax code, such as financial companies and retailers. The pullback was short-lived, and tech stocks erased their losses for the week.

Another potential source of worry for investors dissipated after Congress passed a spending bill that will prevent a government shutdown this weekend. The deal keeps the government running only until Dec. 22, though, when another deadline looms.

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Stock markets in Europe climbed after negotiators reached a key agreement that allows talks to continue to the next stage for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union. Investors are hoping for a smooth exit that does not disrupt global trade.

In Germany, meanwhile, political parties agreed to open talks that could renew Chancellor Angela Merkel's governing coalition. That helped Germany's DAX index gain 0.8 percent. The FTSE 100 in London rose 1 percent, and France's CAC 40 gained 0.3 percent.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index jumped 1.4 percent, the Hang Seng in Hong Kong gained 1.2 percent and South Korea's Kospi rose 0.1 percent.

The price of oil continued to recover from its sharp loss in the middle of the week. Benchmark U.S. crude gained 67 cents to settle at \$57.36 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, rose \$1.20 to \$63.40 per barrel. That helped energy stocks in the S&P 500 rise 0.9 percent.

Natural gas added a penny to \$2.77 per 1,000 cubic feet, heating oil gained 3 cents to \$1.93 per gallon and wholesale gasoline added 2 cents to \$1.72 per gallon.

Gold slipped \$4.70 to settle at \$1,248.40 per ounce, silver rose 2 cents to \$15.82 per ounce and copper added a penny to \$2.98 per pound.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury note held steady at 2.37 percent.

The dollar ticked up to 113.51 Japanese yen from 113.13 yen late Thursday. The euro dipped to \$1.1768 from \$1.1774, and the British pound slipped to \$1.3398 from \$1.3465.

A stronger global economy is helping boost the US job market

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. job market is benefiting from an unlikely source: Other countries.

The global economy is showing renewed strength, with Europe, Japan and many developing nations growing in tandem for the first time in a decade. The brightening international picture is encouraging more hiring in the United States — even among manufacturers, which have been hurt in the past by global competition.

"We're seeing demand coming from where we haven't seen it in a long, long time," said Scott Anderson, chief economist at Bank of the West. "We're riding the wave of that added global growth."

In November, U.S. employers added a substantial 228,000 jobs, the Labor Department said Friday. It was the 86th straight month of gains, the longest on record, and a sign of the job market's enduring strength in the economy's ninth year of expansion. The unemployment rate held at 4.1 percent, a 17-year low.

Friday's jobs report coincided with other signs that the U.S. economy remains on firm footing. In the past six months, economic growth has exceeded an annual rate of 3 percent, the first time that's happened since 2014. Consumer confidence has reached its highest level since 2000.

Europe's economy is poised to grow at the fastest pace in a decade, and its unemployment rate has reached its lowest level in nearly nine years. Japan's economy expanded in the fall for the seventh straight quarter, its longest period of growth since 2001. Such developing economies as China and India are growing steadily.

The overall global economy is expanding at its fastest pace in seven years, according to the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, a Paris-based think tank. It should fare slightly better in 2018, the OECD says.

Stronger economies overseas have helped boost profits at U.S. multinational corporations, a key reason why the Standard & Poor's 500 stock index has climbed 18 percent this year. U.S. companies in the S&P index derive about half their revenue from abroad.

Exports contributed 0.43 percentage point to economic growth in the July-September quarter, the most in nearly four years. Factories are making more goods for overseas markets, including agricultural and mining equipment. Exports of aircraft engines are up 13 percent, overseas shipments of semiconductors up 8 percent.

Manufacturers have stepped up hiring. In November, they added 31,000 jobs. Over the past year, they've

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added 189,000.

"More than anything, a marked improvement in the global economy is what is driving a better US manufacturing picture," said Cliff Waldman, chief economist at MAPI Foundation, a manufacturing research group.

Still, solid hiring and a low unemployment rate have yet to accelerate wages, which rose 2.5 percent in November compared with a year earlier. The last time unemployment was this low, average wages were growing at a 4 percent annual rate.

The November jobs data make it a near-certainty that the Federal Reserve will raise short-term interest rates for the third time this year when it meets next week, economists said.

Hiring last month went well beyond manufacturing. Construction firms added 24,000 jobs. Retailers added nearly 19,000 positions, a sign that physical stores are hiring for the holiday shopping season even in the face of brutal competition from e-commerce companies.

Transportation and warehousing companies, which are benefiting from the e-commerce boom, added 10,500.

Hiring has slowed slightly since last year, which is typical when unemployment falls to low levels. Employers have added an average of 174,000 a month this year, a bit below last year's monthly average of 187,000.

There are also welcome signs that the recovery is finally benefiting workers who were enjoying little benefit in earlier stages of the economic rebound, said Jed Kolko, chief economist at job listing website Indeed.

Workers with just a high school diploma are much more likely to have jobs than they were a year ago. And employees in some of the lower-paying industries are receiving the biggest pay gains: Average hourly pay has risen a healthy 3.8 percent for workers in a category that includes hotel and restaurant employees.

"In a tight labor market, employers may look to a wider set of candidates than they would when unemployment was higher," Kolko said.

Brian Ernest, who owns a small home renovation and contracting firm in Edgewater, Maryland, just hired a project manager to help him keep up with his fast-growing business. He advertises through the Thumbtack website and relies on word of mouth among Realtors.

When he has advertised jobs this year, he hasn't found many takers, given the low unemployment rate. Rather than raise base pay, he started providing profit-sharing.

"I offered what everybody is really looking for: Incentives to increase their salaries," he said. Some government measures of income growth don't always capture bonuses.

Rising confidence among consumers is translating into major purchases. Auto sales rose at a solid pace last month.

In October, newly built homes sold at their fastest pace in a decade, and existing homes sold at their quickest rate since June.

Though wages have yet to pick up, Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, said he thinks a continued decline in unemployment will lead to higher pay. U.S. metro areas with unemployment rates of 3.5 percent or lower are reporting annual wage growth of roughly 4 percent, Shepherdson said in an email.

AP Economics Writer Josh Boak contributed to this report.

Net neutrality fans speak up as FCC set to strike down rules

By TALI ARBEL, AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Net neutrality is a simple concept but a dense and often technical issue normally discussed in tech and telecom circles. Now it's hit the mainstream.

Next week, the Federal Communications Commission plans to vote on gutting Obama-era rules meant to stop broadband companies such as Comcast, AT&T and Verizon from exercising more control over what people watch and see on the internet.

Celebrity complaints and street protests aren't likely to stop the agency's vote on Thursday, but activists hope the growing outcry will push Congress to intervene and will show support for stricter regulation

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down the road.

Net neutrality has been a hot button before, thanks to assists from Silicon Valley and TV host John Oliver speaking out about what they see as threats to the internet. More Hollywood celebrities have been joining the cry against the agency's direction.

"Long live cute dog videos on YouTube! #RIPinternet. Share what you loved about The Internet," actor Mark Ruffalo tweeted as he urged people to push Congress to intervene. Big-time Hollywood producer Shonda Rhimes tweeted a link to a story about saving net-neutrality on her lifestyle website .

Net-neutrality rules bar cable and phone companies from favoring certain websites and apps — such as their own services — and give the FCC more oversight over privacy and the activities of telecom companies. Supporters worry that repealing them would hurt startups and other companies that couldn't afford to pay a broadband company for faster access to customers.

Critics of the rules say that they hurt investment in internet infrastructure and represent too much government involvement in business. Phone and cable companies say the rules aren't necessary because they already support an open internet, and have lobbied hard for their repeal.

While libertarian and conservative think tanks and telecom trade groups have spoken up against net neutrality, everyday people have been vocal in protesting the rules' repeal.

Since the FCC announced just before Thanksgiving that it was planning to gut the rules, there have been about 750,000 calls to Congress made through Battle for the Net, a website run by groups that advocate for net neutrality. By contrast, there were fewer than 30,000 calls in the first two weeks of November. While Congress doesn't need to approve FCC decisions, it can overrule the agency by passing a law.

Net neutrality also has triggered discussions all over social media, even in groups that typically don't discuss tech policy. In one Facebook group about leggings seller LuLaRoe, one woman's lament about the repeal triggered more than 270 responses. They included questions about what net neutrality was, links to explanations and statements of support. The discussion sprawled into the next day.

Meanwhile, net-neutrality supporters protested outside 700 Verizon stores Thursday, said Tim Karr, senior director of strategy for Free Press, an advocacy group involved in Battle for the Net. In midtown Manhattan, some 350 people came to chant slogans and wave signs.

"Access to a free and fair internet is necessary for a functioning democracy," said Lauren Gruber, a writer for a branding agency who joined the New York protest. If the net-neutrality rules are repealed, she said, "it's just another showcase of oligarchy upon America."

Most people don't follow what federal agencies like the FCC are doing, even though decisions can have a lot of impact on people's lives, said Beth Leech, political science professor at Rutgers University. Having celebrities speak out can help spark people's interest, she said.

"Protests that draw average people out into the streets across the country are relatively rare," she said. "It's the rarity that gives them some of their power."

The liberal organization MoveOn is urging Americans to speak up for net neutrality. Democratic senators have called for a delay in next Thursday's vote, while Democratic FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel urged backers to "make a ruckus." Some Democrats are hoping that any rollback of net neutrality rules will become a campaign rallying cry in 2018 and beyond.

"Net neutrality has the potential to motivate young and progressive voters to turn out," said Tyler Law, spokesman for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, which works to get Democrats elected to the House.

"There will be a political price to pay for those who are on the wrong side of this issue, because net neutrality's time as a campaign issue has arrived," Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., a longtime net neutrality supporter, said on a call with reporters Wednesday.

Republican campaign officials didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

The FCC's commenting system has logged 23 million comments, compared with roughly 4 million for the last blockbuster issue — when the agency approved the net-neutrality rules in 2015. An August study by a data firm backed by the telecom industry found that 60 percent of the comments made this year supported keeping the 2015 rules.

But the commenting system has been messy. The FCC says millions of comments used temporary email accounts from fakemailgenerator.com, hundreds of thousands of comments came from one address in Russia and many comments were duplicates.

Some net-neutrality supporters have become intensely personal in their advocacy. FCC Chairman Ajit Pai and his staff have called out ugly and racist tweets and death threats. Pai also said activists came to his home to post signs that referenced his children. One man was charged in November with threatening to kill U.S. Rep. John Katko and his family if the New York Republican didn't support net neutrality.

Can better policies prevent workplace sexual harassment?

By **BARBARA ORTUTAY, AP Technology Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — Sexual misconduct happens at work not because companies don't publish anti-harassment policies, experts say, but because managers don't enforce them — and because people fail to apply them to themselves.

While the floodgates on reporting abuse and sexual harassment have opened with high-profile cases in Big Tech, Hollywood and Washington, it's not yet clear whether the effects of the #metoo movement have trickled down to day-to-day offices, factories and other places regular people work.

"I do think it will be a lasting movement," said Roberta Kaplan, an attorney who won the Supreme Court case that legalized gay marriage in the U.S. But while Kaplan— who is defending a woman who is being sued by Hollywood producer Brett Ratner after accusing him of rape — thinks "most companies have policies that are pretty good," there's still a problem: Many people don't truly comprehend them.

"They understand the English language, and what the words mean in the abstract sense, but I don't think most people understood it in everyday life," she said.

In an unusual move for a large company, Facebook on Friday publicly released its policies against workplace harassment and bullying, including its enforcement procedures and how it investigates complaints. The company says it wants to help other companies create better policies, and ideally prompt them to publish their own procedures too.

"We don't think we are perfect, we don't think we have all the answers," said Lori Goler, the company's vice president of people. But she said companies should "come together to make sure that we all learn from each other."

Facebook itself has been sued for sex discrimination and harassment, in 2015 by a former employee who said she was wrongfully terminated in 2013 after she complained about being harassed. The woman, Chia Hong, later dropped the suit, and Facebook has maintained no wrongdoing.

Facebook would not disclose how many complaints of sexual harassment it has investigated, or specific details on how well its policy has actually worked. Goler said the goal is not to reduce the number of reports, but to get "as many people to raise their hand as possible."

Dan Eaton, an employment attorney and instructor of business ethics at San Diego State University, said "sexual harassment policies, like ethics policies, are only as good as the managers who implement them and are responsible for making sure there is broad compliance."

For a policy to be effective, he said, it has to be applied consistently — and if wrongdoing is found, there have to be consequences that are disclosed "not only to the person who complained but to the entire workplace."

"That sends a message that these policies are not only on paper but in action," he said. It is not clear if Facebook's policy meets that standard.

Goler said that while Facebook's policy itself has been "pretty consistent" over the years, the training around has evolved to address the "gray areas" and nuanced situations that people might encounter. For example, she said, "how many times do you ask someone out?" before backing off, and what if they don't say no outright but that they are busy? Do you ask again?

Facebook, like many other companies, will fire offenders if the company determines that sexual harassment has taken place. More difficult are the unclear cases, where it's one person's word against another's.

Facebook also has a mandatory arbitration agreement for anyone who joins the company. Experts on

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workplace harassment say these sorts of clauses can deter people who want to report harassment.

Facebook's move on Friday follows Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg's post over the weekend warning of a potential backlash against women and urging companies to put clear policies in place on how they handle sexual harassment allegations.

"We need systemic, lasting changes that deter bad behavior and protect everyone, from professionals climbing the corporate ladder to workers in low-paid positions who often have little power," she wrote. "We need to end the abuse of power imbalances due to gender - and race and ethnicity, too. We must not lose this opportunity."

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Dec. 9, the 343rd day of 2017. There are 22 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 9, 1892, "Widowers' Houses," Bernard Shaw's first play, opened at the Royalty Theater in London.

On this date:

In 1854, Alfred, Lord Tennyson's famous poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade," was published in England.

In 1917, British forces captured Jerusalem from the Ottoman Turks.

In 1935, the Downtown Athletic Club of New York honored college football player Jay Berwanger of the University of Chicago with the DAC Trophy, which later became known as the Heisman Trophy.

In 1940, British troops opened their first major offensive in North Africa during World War II.

In 1942, the Aram Khachaturian ballet "Gayane," featuring the surging "Sabre Dance," was first performed by Russia's Kirov Ballet.

In 1958, the anti-communist John Birch Society was formed in Indianapolis.

In 1962, the Petrified Forest in Arizona was designated a national park.

In 1965, Nikolai V. Podgorny replaced Anastas I. Mikoyan as chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, a job he would hold for almost 12 years. "A Charlie Brown Christmas," the first animated TV special featuring characters from the "Peanuts" comic strip by Charles M. Schulz, premiered on CBS.

In 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed a \$2.3 billion seasonal loan-authorization that officials of New York City and State said would prevent a city default.

In 1984, the five-day-old hijacking of a Kuwaiti jetliner that claimed the lives of two Americans ended as Iranian security men seized control of the plane, which was parked at Tehran airport.

In 1987, the first Palestinian intefadeh, or uprising, began as riots broke out in Gaza and spread to the West Bank, triggering a strong Israeli response.

In 1992, Britain's Prince Charles and Princess Diana announced their separation. (The couple's divorce became final in Aug. 1996.)

Ten years ago: A young man once affiliated with a missionary school shot nine people at the school near Denver and a megachurch in Colorado Springs; four of the victims died and the gunman killed himself. A British Columbia pig farmer accused of being Canada's worst serial killer was convicted of six counts of second-degree murder; he was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for 25 years.

Five years ago: U.S. special forces rescued an American doctor captured by the Taliban in Afghanistan; a Navy SEAL, Petty Officer 1st Class Nicolas D. Checque, was killed during the rescue of Dr. Dilip Joseph. Same-sex couples in Washington state began exchanging vows just after midnight under a new state law allowing gay marriage. Mexican-American singer Jenni Rivera, 43, and six others were killed in a plane crash in northern Mexico.

One year ago: The White House said President Barack Obama had ordered intelligence officials to conduct a broad review of election-season cyberattacks, including the email hacks that rattled the presidential campaign and raised fresh concerns about Russia's meddling in U.S. elections. South Korean lawmakers

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impeached President Park Geun-hye (goon-hay) over an explosive corruption scandal, a stunning and swift fall for the country's first female leader.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Kirk Douglas is 101. Actor-writer Buck Henry is 87. Actress Dame Judi Dench is 83. Actor Beau Bridges is 76. Football Hall of Famer Dick Butkus is 75. Comedian-songwriter Neil Innes is 73. Actor Michael Nouri is 72. Former Sen. Thomas Daschle, D-S.D., is 70. World Golf Hall of Famer Tom Kite is 68. Singer Joan Armatrading is 67. Actor Michael Dorn is 65. Actor John Malkovich is 64. Country singer Sylvia is 61. Singer Donny Osmond is 60. Rock musician Nick Seymour (Crowded House) is 59. Comedian Mario Cantone is 58. Actor David Anthony Higgins is 56. Actor Joe Lando is 56. Actress Felicity Huffman is 55. Crown Princess Masako of Japan is 54. Country musician Jerry Hughes (Yankee Grey) is 52. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., is 51. Rock singer-musician Thomas Flowers (Oleander) is 50. Rock musician Brian Bell (Weezer) is 49. Rock singer-musician Jakob Dylan (Wallflowers) is 48. TV personality-businessperson Lori Greiner (TV: "Shark Tank") is 48. Country musician Brian Hayes (Cole Deggs and the Lonesome) is 48. Actress Allison Smith is 48. Songwriter and former "American Idol" judge Kara DioGuardi (dee-oh-GWAHR'-dee) is 47. Country singer David Kersh is 47. Actress Reiko (RAY'-koh) Aylesworth is 45. Rock musician Tre Cool (Green Day) is 45. Rapper Canibus is 43. Actor Kevin Daniels is 41. Actor-writer-director Mark Duplass is 41. Rock musician Eric Zamora (Save Ferris) is 41. Rock singer Imogen Heap is 40. Actor Jesse Metcalfe is 39. Actor Simon Helberg is 37. Actress Jolene Purdy is 34. Actor Joshua Sasse is 30. Actress Ashleigh Brewer is 27. Olympic gold and silver medal gymnast McKayla Maroney is 22.

Thought for Today: "All sins are attempts to fill voids." — Simone Weil, French philosopher (1909-1943).

Friday's Scores By The Associated Press

BOYS BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 49, Pierre 38
Arlington 70, Elkton-Lake Benton 57
Baltic 60, Gayville-Volin 46
Bon Homme 51, Vermillion 50
Burke/South Central 59, Scotland 47
Canistota 84, Centerville 32
Castlewood 63, Colman-Egan 53
Crow Creek 72, Flandreau Indian 53
Dell Rapids 55, West Central 49
DeSmet 64, Lake Preston 41
Deuel 59, Groton Area 39
Elk Point-Jefferson 78, Canton 42
Flandreau 70, Chester 46
Florence/Henry 45, Great Plains Lutheran 38
Freeman Academy/Marion 40, Alcester-Hudson 38
Hamlin 48, Britton-Hecla 43
Hanson 61, Ethan 56
Hill City 64, Belle Fourche 29
Little Wound 73, St. Francis Indian 61
McLaughlin 65, Herreid/Selby Area 53
Milbank Area 59, Tiospa Zina Tribal 46
Oelrichs 51, Lead-Deadwood 48
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 63, Dell Rapids St. Mary 50
Redfield/Doland 70, Webster 43
Sioux Falls Christian 76, Lennox 42
Sioux Falls Lincoln 70, Brandon Valley 62
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 67, Rapid City Stevens 63

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Sioux Falls Roosevelt 80, Spearfish 58
Stanley County 50, Bennett County 37
Tea Area 73, Dakota Valley 63
Timber Lake 58, Lemmon 41
Tri-Valley 46, Garretson 40
Viborg-Hurley 69, Freeman 66
Warner 59, Aberdeen Christian 53
Watertown 52, Brookings 47
Waubay/Summit 67, Tri-State, N.D. 54
White River 82, Jones County 43
Winner 56, Wagner 36
Yankton 54, Huron 49
Gillette Invitational
Rapid City Central 48, Cheyenne East, Wyo. 47

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 61, Pierre 56
Aberdeen Roncalli 60, Northwestern 31
Alcester-Hudson 50, Freeman Academy/Marion 27
Avon 55, Gregory 33
Baltic 62, Gayville-Volin 37
Belle Fourche 61, Hill City 21
Bridgewater-Emery 51, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 39
Brookings 49, Watertown 44
Burke/South Central 52, Kimball/White Lake 32
Castlewood 67, Colman-Egan 11
Corsica/Stickney 55, Wolsey-Wessington 21
Dell Rapids St. Mary 58, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 12
DeSmet 68, Lake Preston 31
Deubrook 66, Estelline 38
Elk Point-Jefferson 59, Canton 34
Elkton-Lake Benton 48, Arlington 42
Flandreau 49, Chester 24
Florence/Henry 54, Great Plains Lutheran 29
Freeman 55, Viborg-Hurley 22
Groton Area 60, Deuel 35
Hamlin 63, Britton-Hecla 9
Harding County 43, Newell 40
Lead-Deadwood 48, Douglas 47
Lennox 57, Sioux Falls Christian 56, OT
Lisbon, N.D. 49, Sisseton 31
Lower Brule 64, Marty Indian 52
Lyman 46, Chamberlain 42
McLaughlin 65, Herreid/Selby Area 53
Milbank 46, Tiospa Zina Tribal 17
Mitchell Christian 61, Iroquois 18
New Underwood 48, Edgemont 27
Rapid City Stevens 52, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 46
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 48, Spearfish 33
Solen, N.D. 80, Wakpala 57
Sully Buttes 79, Eureka/Bowdle 21

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Tea Area 48, Parkston 42
Timber Lake 64, Lemmon 45
Todd County 74, Valentine, Neb. 24
Tri-Valley 48, Garretson 33
Vermillion 76, Bon Homme 37
Waubay/Summit 42, Tri-State, N.D. 38
Webster 53, Redfield/Doland 48
Winner 66, Wagner 37
Yankton 59, Huron 52