

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Monday

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., Groton Community Center

GBB hosts Britton-Hecla: 7th grade at 5 p.m., 8th grade at 6:30 p.m., varsity game to follow (NO JV Game)



[www.harrmotors.com](http://www.harrmotors.com)

605-225-3078 ~ 1-800-658-3463

**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**

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## Jones Notches an Eighth Place finish from the Midwest Classic

Indianapolis – Kenny Jones led the Northern State University Wolves with an eighth place finish from the Midwest Classic. Jones went 1-2 on the day.

The freshman opened the day with an 8-7 decision victory over Hunter Haralson of Lindenwood. Jones battled in a tiebreaker match with Josh Walker of Upper Iowa but ultimately fell 11-7. He dropped his final match of the day to Naquan Hardy in a medical forfeit to finish eighth overall from the Classic.

Northern returns to action following the holiday break with the NSIC Opener versus Augustana. The dual is set to start at 7 p.m. from Sioux Falls.

## 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**

## Rural Medicine By Richard P. Holm MD

I first met Dr. Alonzo Peeke (AKA Doc Peeke) when he was already in his late 80s. It was 1982, just before the holidays, during a District Medical Society meeting in Flandreau. The meeting started with Christmas carols that were accompanied by Doc Peeke playing on his violin.

I later learned how Doc Peeke had been one of South Dakota's truly rural doctors, practicing his whole professional life in the small town of Volga. He was entirely familiar with delivering babies at home and performing minor surgery on kitchen tables. He had to drive early automobiles on dirt roads and figure out ingenious ways to make house calls during dreary winter storms. He was famous for inventively transforming a car into a snowmobile so that he could provide home visits to patients when other doctors couldn't make the trip. There are many stories about how he earned the trust and respect of many families in that small town and the surrounding farming communities; how he even started a hospital in Volga so that patients could receive their medical and surgical care there. The picture of his life was almost like a Terry Redlin painting.

It was a time when doctors knew their patients from the cradle to the grave and had a general knowledge of all medicine, only referring to specialists for especially complicated or peculiar cases. For Doc Peeke, this meant consulting the experts at Mayo clinic, the now world-renowned Minnesota based medical center.

Doc Peeke was a "General Practitioner" who provided rural health care in the Midwest. It was the end of an era. When many of these small-town doctors retired, there was no new doctor to replace their practice. And though the rural landscape has changed, the lack of competent doctors has remained the same. Patients now have increased mobility; the General Practitioners have become Family Practitioners, Pediatricians, and General Internists; and in this new era, we have expert sub-specialist doctors right here in South Dakota with specialty care centers in our cities, providing some of the finest advanced health care there is.

But with all this good, something important has been lost. The picture of a rural, all-knowing, and personal Doc Peeke is not to be painted again except by memory.



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")**

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## Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

The Minnesota Vikings have officially clinched the NFC North, and the playoffs, with their 34-7 win over the Cincinnati Bengals on Sunday, December 17. The Vikings were expected to win this game, and they didn't disappoint. The Bengals were held without a point until halfway through the fourth quarter, and by that time the Vikings defense was comprised of mostly backups. The big news of the day came in the fourth quarter, where Teddy Bridgewater got to enter the game and take a snap in an actual game for the first time since January 10, 2016.

The Vikings offense played very well on Sunday, amassing 346 total yards and gaining 18 first downs (compared to the Bengals' eight). Case Keenum completed 20 of 23 passes for 236 yards and two touchdowns. The Vikings run game was also on point, as they rushed for 124 yards and a touchdown as a team. Adam Thielen and Stefon Diggs were nearly invisible on Sunday – eight catches for 80 yards combined – but Jerick McKinnon was more than willing to pick up the slack, as he finished the day with seven receptions for 114 yards. McKinnon and Latavius Murray combined to touch the ball 37 times for 242 total yards in the game.

A week after giving up too many big plays in a loss to the Carolina Panthers, the Vikings' defense held strong and limited the Bengals to only four plays that gained over 10-yards – and only one of those was over 16 yards. Andy Dalton, the Bengals' quarterback, was held to 113 passing yards, no touchdowns, and two interceptions. The Bengals also couldn't get anything going on the ground, rushing for only 46 yards. Eric Kendricks was the star of the day for the Vikings, leading the defense in tackles to go along with his tackle for a loss and an interception that he returned for a touchdown. Kendricks was the player of the game on defense, but Terence Newman had the play of the game, as the 39-year old tipped a pass before catching it between his legs for the Vikings' second interception of the game.

This was Mike Zimmer's first game against his former team, so it was undoubtedly fun to get the victory over his former mentor Marvin Lewis. Speaking of Lewis, it was announced before the game started that he would not be returning as the Bengals head coach after this season. The Bengals are 5-9 this season, and have only had seven winning seasons – and no playoff wins – over the past 15 years that Lewis has been the head coach.

Looking ahead, the Vikings will travel to Green Bay and battle the rival Packers. The Green Bay Packers will be looking to avenge an earlier loss to the Vikings, and there will likely be some players looking to pay Anthony Barr back for breaking Aaron Rodgers' collar bone earlier this season (even though the tackle was completely legal and wasn't even flagged). Aaron Rodgers has recovered from the injury and played this past Sunday, although he ended up throwing three interceptions and failing to lead the Packers to a win against the Carolina Panthers. The Packers are basically eliminated from the playoffs, so it's unclear if Rodgers will play against the Vikings. The game will be on Saturday, December 23, and will start at 7:30 p.m. on NBC.

## S & S Lumber

of Groton

**will be closing at Noon  
on Wednesday, Dec. 20th  
for Inventory**

**Will reopen at regular hours on  
Thursday, Dec. 21st**

*Thank you for your patronage!*



## Christmas At The Capitol

If you want to see the Christmas season in full display, make time to visit your state capitol for the annual displays created for Christmas at the Capitol. Each morning, as I walk into the Capitol Building, I am greeted by the rich aroma of pine trees and the sparkling reflection of Christmas lights on the ornaments that decorate those trees.

This season marks the 37th year of Christmas at the Capitol. The idea was spearheaded by Dottie Howe of Pierre in 1981. That first year there were 12 decorated trees. In 1988, Christmas at the Capitol organizers started inviting groups and organizations from throughout the state to send decorations for 30 Capitol trees. The popularity of the Christmas tree display kept growing and growing, and by 1997 groups were decorating 50 trees.

This year the theme is "The Colors of Christmas" and we have over 90 trees in our display. The largest tree, a 27.5-foot Colorado Blue Spruce, has been decorated by the Fort Pierre Bicentennial Committee and was donated by Mary and Iver Finnesand of Grenville. After being trimmed, the tree stands at 24.5 feet in the rotunda.

In addition to the beautiful decorations, we also have music. At noon and 5 p.m. each day I can hear the Christmas music in the Rotunda from my office. We have groups from all over the state who come to offer music: High school bands, children's choirs, orchestras, piano students, and soloists. One Saturday we even had the Nordic Nimble Feet Norwegian Dance group from Brookings perform.

Many volunteers have devoted precious hours to decorate the Capitol building for the holidays. As always, they have done an excellent job.

I hope you will find time this holiday season to come to experience Christmas at the Capitol. The display is open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days each week through Tuesday, Dec. 26, and there is no admission charge.

I hope to see you there!



## **SD Highway Patrol Presentation at GHS**

SD Highway Patrol officers John Berndt and Jordan Melius were guest speakers at Groton High School on Thursday, Dec. 14. The officers spoke to the high school Physics class and to interested high school students about Accident/Crash Scene Reconstruction including mapping and mathematical and scientific evaluation as well as about careers in law enforcement.

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## Today in Weather History

December 18, 1985: On one of the coldest mornings of the year, most places in South Dakota experienced low temperatures of less than 20 degrees below zero. The coldest temperature was 30 below zero at Huron in Beadle County and Canton in Lincoln County. Aberdeen dropped to 22 below zero, Highmore and Mobridge fell to 23 below zero; Britton fell to 24 below zero, and Summit bottomed out at 25 below.

December 18, 1996: A powerful Alberta Clipper and a slow-moving deep Arctic high-pressure system brought widespread prolonged blizzard conditions to the entire region from the 16th to the 19th. The clipper dropped from 1 to 5 inches of snowfall on top of the already extensive snow cover of 1 to almost 4 feet. Across central and north central South Dakota, northerly winds increased to 25 to 40 mph with gusts to 55 mph late in the morning of the 16th. Temperatures also fell, and widespread blizzard conditions and dangerous wind chills of 40 to 70 below zero developed, prevailing through noon on the 18th. Across northeast South Dakota, conditions changed through late in the day of the 16th, with widespread blowing snow, falling temperatures, and dangerous wind chills. Widespread blizzard conditions developed on the morning of the 17th and continued into the evening of the 18th. Conditions changed throughout the afternoon of the 16th in west central Minnesota, with a full-fledged blizzard by the morning of the 17th.






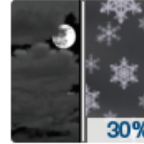

North winds of 30 to 40 mph gusting to 50 mph brought visibilities to near zero and caused heavy drifting, making travel difficult. Many people had to be rescued from their vehicles after getting stuck in massive snowdrifts or going into ditches because of low visibilities. Some people had to wait to be rescued for many hours, for some over a day. Due to the massive amount of blowing snow, widespread heavy drifting occurred across the entire area, blocking roads, making travel difficult, and leaving some people stranded to wait out the storm. Some snowdrifts from the storm were as high as 15 feet with a few houses almost buried. A Burlington Northern locomotive became stuck in a 12-foot drift near Hazel and had to be dug out. Due to the weight of the snow, the roof of a hanger at the Gettysburg Airport collapsed on an airplane.

All schools were let out early on the 16th with some schools not reopening until the 20th. Several school buses went into the ditch or got stuck in drifts and had to be pulled out. There were several accidents, most with minor injuries; however, one accident in Dewey County resulted in serious injury. Most of the roads, state highways and Interstate 90 were closed for a day or two until road crews could get to them. Interstate 29 also received heavy drifting, with parts of it closed for a while during the storm. Most snow plows had to be called back because they could not see the roads or the roads would be drifted over shortly after they were plowed. Some county snow removal budgets were already depleted or were close to being consumed. Emergency personnel and road crews were working extended hours to keep up with the storm. Rescue vehicles had a difficult time responding to emergencies. In one case, a lady from Mobridge had to be brought to Aberdeen. The 100-mile trip took six hours. Also, a rural Westport man died because the rescue units could not get to him in time.

Airports were closed or flights were canceled or delayed. Mail was delayed for some people up to several days with a massive backup of Christmas packages. Some government offices and many businesses were closed for several days. All sports and other activities were postponed or canceled. Farmers and ranchers had a difficult time getting feed to their livestock. Many cattle were loose and had to be found as they walked on snow drifts over fences. The storm also killed several animals and a countless number of pheasants with some buried in the snow. Several dairy producers had to dump thousands of pounds of milk because trucks could not get to them in time. Fortunately, there were only spotty power outages throughout the storm. For several hours on the night of the 16th in the extreme cold, 3000 people in Pierre were without power for several hours.

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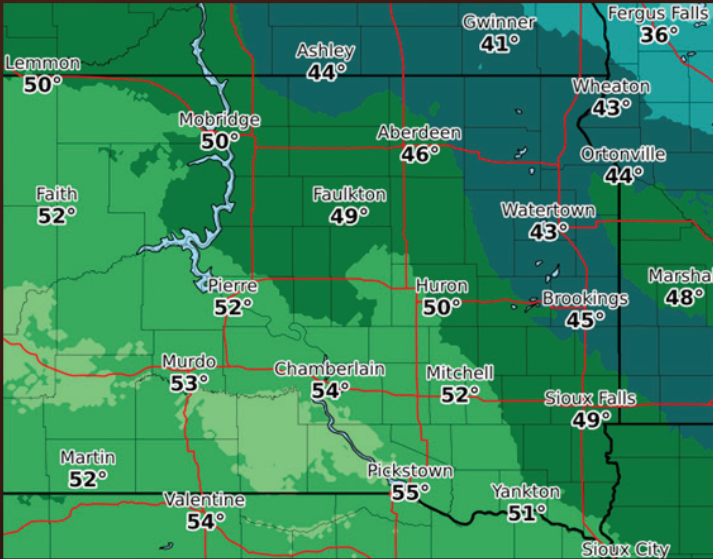
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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
						
Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance Snow then Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Snow	Chance Snow
High: 46 °F	Low: 25 °F	High: 38 °F	Low: 22 °F	High: 34 °F	Low: 13 °F	High: 17 °F

## Warm Today

Temperatures 20° Above Normal


≡ **Breezy**






**Colder Starting Thursday!**

Travel Plans?



**Gusty Winds & Light Snow possible Thursday**



**National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD**

Updated: 12/18/2017 4:48AM Central

Enjoy the warmth while it lasts. Highs this afternoon will end up around 20 degrees above normal, on breezy winds. The strongest west to southwesterly winds are expected near the Sisseton Hills. A significant change will occur Thursday as we flip the switch to winter. Temperatures will be much colder, and there is even a chance of snow and gusty winds creating blowing snow Thursday. Monitor later forecasts for updates on this changing system, especially if you have travel plans later this week.



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## Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 38.9

Low Outside Temp: 26.0

High Gust: 14

Precip: 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 58° in 1979

Record Low: -32° in 2016

Average High: 25°F

Average Low: 5°F

Average Precip in Dec: 0.30

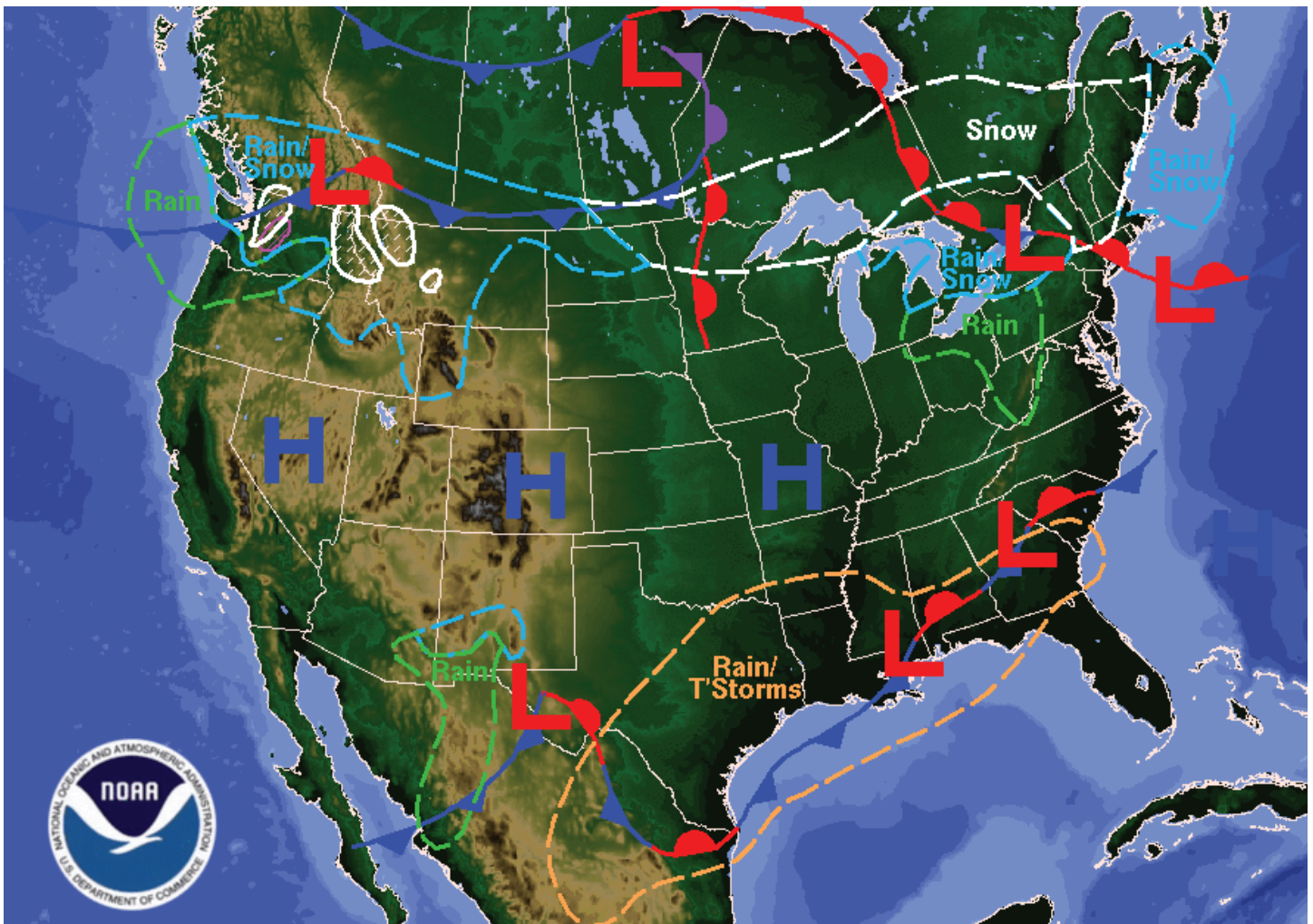
Precip to date in Dec: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.50

Precip Year to Date: 13.47

Sunset Tonight: 4:51 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:09 a.m.



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Mon, Dec 18, 2017, issued 4:50 AM EST  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by Mcreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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## ARE YOU READY FOR CHRISTMAS?

Hal and Matt, two longtime friends, accidentally met in a department store a few weeks before Christmas. They gave each other a forced smile – as if they were happy to see each other – but wished their meeting was under different circumstances.

“You know,” said Hal, “I’ve come to the conclusion that Christmas has become a wrap race.”

“I agree,” replied Matt. “And I’ll tell you something else. I’ve finally discovered the real meaning of the word Yule.”

“Oh,” responded Hal. “What is it? I’d like to know myself.”

“It’s my wife saying in a very convincing voice, ‘You’ll buy me this and then you’ll buy me that!’ I feel like I have no choice but to buy her whatever she asks for,” replied Matt. “Every thing seems to be about things.”

It would be a wise investment of our time this Christmas to try to imagine what God might have seen when He looked into the manger. Certainly it was more, much more, than a Baby. Did He see the crowds ridiculing and mocking His Son? Did He turn His head when He saw the “kiss of betrayal” from Judas? Was His mind troubled by the trial that unjustly condemned His Son? Did He weep when He saw Jesus hanging from the cross? Certainly. But let’s not forget to see the smile that was on His face and the peace that flooded into His heart when He saw the empty tomb.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to get ready for Christmas by seeing its sights and sounds thru Your eyes. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: John 14:9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

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## 2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- 11/18/2017-3/31/2018 Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/28/2018 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 3/24/2018 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/5/2018 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/28/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program at the Cemetery, Lunch to follow at the American Legion (Memorial Day)
- 6/14/2018 Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- 6/15/2018 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/16/2018 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2018 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/22/2018 Summer Fest (4th Sunday in July)
- 9/8/2018 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/6/2018 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/12/2018 Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2018 Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/10/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
  
- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

## News from the Associated Press

### South Dakota woodworking business awarded fellowship

By JIM HOLLAND, Rapid City Journal

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — Jamey and Amber Nehring are all about salvaging old wood and turning it into new and useful things and helping to rebuild lives.

That's what they do.

Even the name of their Sturgis woodworking business, Renatus, is based on the Latin word for reborn.

"This is both our name and mission as we give old wood a new lease on life, and also as we look to bigger things," said Amber Nehring, in announcing Renatus Woodworks as one of eight statewide recipients of a two-year Dakota Rising Fellowship, which includes \$10,000 and mentoring to put the funds to good use.

Jamey had always had a knack for woodworking. Prior to marrying Amber in 2012, he had built a queen-sized bunk bed with a closet under it.

Jamey was living in a 400-square-foot (37-sq. meter) apartment. He and Amber were engaged and he knew she would be moving in after they were married.

"We needed a place for her to put all her clothes and all her stuff," he said.

A friend saw the bunk bed on a Facebook post and told Jayme he should venture into the furniture-making business. Jamey, then working for a contractor, decided to build his own business.

His first projects included a toy chest that looked like a Minecraft chest for his nephew and a doll crib for his niece.

He then made a coffee table for a fundraiser in Lead and a pedestal for a friend's taxidermist business. Jamey was also commissioned to build furniture, countertops and other projects from reclaimed wood for Campfire Coffee in Deadwood, the Rapid City Journal reported .

The proceeds from the Campfire jobs allowed Jamey to invest in new tools, but from that point the couple decided their fledgling business needed to accomplish bigger things.

They decided to donate 50 percent of any profits to organizations that are about saving lives, such as orphanages in Africa or elsewhere. "It's where we felt led," Jamey said. "We're doing this on lots of prayer and lots of faith."

The Nehrings initially located their business in a former gasoline and service station on Lazelle Street in Sturgis.

"We had driven by there many times. When it finally sold we went and talked to the guy who bought it and asked if we could rent it," Jamey said.

The front of the station was what Amber described as "itty-bitty." They quickly overwhelmed the space.

"At the time I remember I only had a couple things to put in it," she said. "Then, after a year of being set up in there we were just bursting at the seams."

Sturgis Economic Development Director Pat Kurtenbach helped them find a bigger space. The new location, the old Dakota Mill & Grain company building on west Main Street, offered yet another chance for a renewal.

Dakota Mill & Grain closed its doors in 2012. The owners of the elevator said at the time that the building, dating back to the 1940s, has outlasted its useful life, and that repairing it would be more costly than it was worth.

But the Nehrings saw the potential. They rented the building, and after receiving the go-ahead, have slowly been renovating. An expansive showroom area even allows them enough space to seek other vendors for an area of downtown ripe for further rebirth.

"With the new laundromat and Indian Motorcycles, we believed this could be poised to be a new area of town," Amber said.

Along with furniture building, Renatus does general contracting, exterior staining including fences, decks, and cabins, and reclaiming barn wood.

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They currently have between 35 and 40 barns to tear down across the state for refurbishing and creating wood furniture.

"We don't pay for (the barns). We offer to tear them down and clean up the mess in exchange for the material," Jamey said.

They employ two full-time carpenters. One builds picture frames from reclaimed barn wood, which are sold to old-time photo tourist shops in the region.

Dakota Resources, a community development fund certified by the U.S. Treasury Department, raises money for small businesses through a capital investment fund that augments revolving loan funds for local development projects.

Dakota Resources President Beth Davis said selecting this year's fellows from an impressive field of candidates was difficult.

"Our new class of fellows comes from all across the state with vastly different backgrounds. We are confident these rural entrepreneurs are going to do great things for themselves and for their communities," Davis said in a release.

In applying for the fellowship the Nehrings first had to prove their business was rural-based and not in Sioux Falls or Rapid City, and they had to submit a business plan.

After making the final 12 candidates, they interviewed with Dakota Rising officials in Watertown in October. From that they were selected to be fellows in the program.

The fellowship includes business mentoring throughout the program.

"We've taken our business as far as we could take it on our own. For the business to continue to grow and prosper, this opportunity will make a world of difference," Amber said.

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

## South Dakota ranch hosts pheasant hunt for youth

By **NICK LOWREY, Pierre Capital Journal**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A big, red blur shot straight into the sky above the narrow strip of corn he'd been eating an early lunch in.

He veered right following a slight breeze, hoping, no doubt, that the wind would speed his escape. It did but he wasn't fast enough to escape the flurry of lead a trio of young pheasant hunters sent his way. Feathers flew and the ringneck pheasant fell from the sky.

It would be the first bird of a few dozen that 19 kids from the Pierre and Fort Pierre area would shoot on the Steffen Brothers Ranch on Dec. 9. They'd been given the chance to hunt the ranch thanks to the Fowled Up chapter of conservation organization Delta Waterfowl, which was holding its second youth pheasant hunt on the ranch.

Delta Waterfowl, as the name suggests, is an organization dedicated to duck and goose conservation. As such, until 2016, the Fowled Up chapter had organized an annual youth duck hunt during South Dakota's youth duck season in September.

Getting youngsters involved in hunting is big part of what the Fowled Up chapter does. To that end they sponsor youth shooting sports teams in the area and several shooting events in addition to the youth hunt.

Dry conditions in central South Dakota over the last few years, however, forced the usually duck minded organization's members to look for a different opportunity last year, the Pierre Capital Journal reported .

"There's just not enough water around," said Willie Gloe chairman of the Fowled Up chapter.

As luck would have it, many of the Fowled Up chapter's members work part-time as guides at area pheasant hunting operations. Dave, Larry and Ernie Steffen offered up a few hours on a Saturday in December for a youth pheasant hunt in 2016. Cheyenne Ridge and Northstream Outfitters loaned a few busses and other items to the hunt as well.

That first hunt was a cold, blustery affair but it worked out pretty well nonetheless, Gloe said. This year's hunt was an altogether different experience. There was little wind, the sky was blue and the sun

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was bright. Morning temperatures were a little cool, which only served to keep the hunters from sweating from all the walking.

The hunters, ranging in age from 12 to 17, were split into three groups, each of which was given different areas of the ranch to hunt before coming together and surrounding a slough for what everyone hoped would be a final bonanza of birds.

Gloe's group was able to walk three corn strips, from which they flushed sever dozen roosters, many of whom fell to the keen eyed youngsters carrying all the guns. The last walk, the one through the slough, turned out to be a bust. Two hens and one rooster were the only birds to flush.

Still, the hunt was an unqualified success.

"It's amazing how happy these kids got from the time we left to when we got back," said Terry Fauth, who helped guide the young hunters.

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

## Hagedorn, S. Dakota rally from 12-point deficit, beat SJSU

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — Tyler Hagedorn scored 19 of his career-high 27 points in the second half and Matt Mooney finished with 18 points to help South Dakota pull away in the second half for a 76-62 win over San Jose State on Sunday.

Hagedorn hit six 3-pointers on eight attempts, both career highs and made 5 of 6 from the free-throw line and Mooney hit four 3s. Trey Burch-Manning and Carlton Hurst added 11 points apiece for South Dakota (11-3).

The Coyotes have won four in a row since a 96-80 loss at Duke on Dec. 2.

Hurst hit two free throws to give South Dakota the lead for good before he and Hagedorn made back-to-back layups to make 46-41 early in the second half. Hagedorn hit 3s about 30 seconds apart to push the lead to nine a couple minutes later and Mooney scored seven consecutive points in an 11-0 run that made it 68-54 with just fewer than five minutes to play.

Brandon Mitchell scored 17 on 6-of-6 shooting for San Jose State (2-8). Ryan Welage added 13 points and Keith Fisher 10 for the Spartans, who have lost five in a row.

South Dakota trailed 26-14 midway through the first half but cut its deficit to 37-33 at the break.

## Custer State Park to reopen Monday, but trails still closed

CUSTER, S.D. (AP) — Custer State Park is set to reopen on a limited basis, a week after a wildfire closed the popular park in South Dakota.

Officials say U.S. Highway 16A and State Highway 87 South will reopen to the public Monday morning. But all other roads and trails in the park will remain closed.

The park's visitor center also will reopen Monday. Superintendent Matt Snyder asks for visitors to be patient as the park evaluates the damage and repairs roads and fences.

The fire has scorched more than 84 square miles (218 square kilometers) since it started from a downed power line last Monday. Officials say the fire was 95 percent contained as of Sunday.

The park just south of Mount Rushmore National Memorial is a top tourist destination.

## City accepts input on major road project in South Dakota

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — City planners are accepting public feedback for a proposal to rebuild a major road in a western South Dakota community.

The city of Spearfish is preparing for a nearly \$8 million reconstruction of about one mile on Jackson Boulevard, a major traffic artery in the Northern Black Hills area. City planners are considering concepts to ease traffic flow and enhance safety, the Rapid City Journal reported .

One concept being considered is a three-lane road design with center medians, wide turn lanes and

protected bike lanes. City planners said traffic would flow better with this design than the existing five-lane configuration.

"I think it would be a good fit for the community," said Kyle Mathis, a city engineer.

But many residents expressed doubts about the proposed concepts during a City Council meeting recently. Resident Sharon Allard said the three-lane concept would make it difficult for motorists to make a left turn trying to access East Jackson Boulevard to get on Interstate 90.

"Sometimes traffic is backed up a whole block in front of my house," Allard said.

City planners are also considering a one-lane traffic circle, or roundabout. Mathis said parts of the project are set in stone, including replacing and upgrading city water mains and sewers. But he said input on street design and aesthetic improvements is welcome.

"We want to get as much public input on that aspect as possible, and as you can see, there's a lot of opinions," Mathis said. "We're going to try to get a conglomeration of those opinions and get the best project we can."

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

## Leaders in South Dakota city unveil options to restore lake

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — Officials in Mitchell have unveiled three proposals to restore a lake in the South Dakota community, where water quality has been a concern for decades.

The three Lake Mitchell restoration projects range in cost from \$6 million to \$87 million, the Mitchell Daily Republic reported. Some Mitchell City Council members want to put the future of Lake Mitchell to a public vote.

The proposals call for a \$6 million aluminum sulfate application, a \$31 million system to divert away water from the lake or an \$87 million watershed redevelopment plan.

Water quality specialists Fyra Engineering put the plans together as part of a nearly \$74,000 report approved by the council.

Council member Dan Allen voted against the report and said he doesn't think the proposals are feasible. Allen said he would like to see the plan put to a public vote after the public has had time to digest the 54-page report. He suggested putting the options to a vote during the November general election.

Some officials said the city would finance 40 percent of the cost and the rest would be funded through grants or other sources. Allen and council member Mel Olson voiced skepticism that the city would be able to obtain the large amount of grant funding needed to support the project.

Olson said the most affordable option, the aluminum sulfate treatment, has already been attempted in Lake Mitchell. "My metaphor would be, if five aspirin didn't cure it before, why is a quarter aspirin going to cure it now?" Olson said.

Council member Jeff Smith said there's value in having the council vote first before putting the issue to a public vote.

"We can vote on it, and that way the public knows where we're sitting, which is probably not a bad thing, and then from there they can go ahead and refer it," Smith said.

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Information from: The Daily Republic, <http://www.mitchellrepublic.com>

## Holiday travel chaos ahead after Atlanta airport outage

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr., Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — While power has been restored to the world's busiest airport, the travel woes will linger for days.

Thousands of people were stranded Monday morning at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, where more than 1,000 flights were grounded just days before the start of the Christmas travel rush.

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A sudden power outage that Georgia Power said was caused by a fire in an underground electrical facility brought the airport to a standstill Sunday about 1 p.m.

All outgoing flights were halted, and arriving planes were held on the ground at their point of departure. International flights were being diverted, officials said.

Delta Air Lines, with its biggest hub in Atlanta, will be hardest hit. By Sunday evening, Delta had already canceled nearly 900 flights and another 300 Monday, nearly all of them in Atlanta, according to tracking service FlightAware.com.

Robert Mann, an aviation consultant and former American Airlines executive, said it likely will be Tuesday before Delta's operations in Atlanta return to normal, and for passengers "it could be most of the week" because there aren't many open seats on other flights in the last week before Christmas.

One bit of good news, according to Mann: Delta has more spare planes and available crews in Atlanta than anywhere else, which should help it to recover.

Delta customers flying to or from Atlanta can make a one-time change to travel plans without incurring a \$200 change fee. The airline also encouraged travelers not to pick up their bags Monday because of anticipated congestion at the airport.

Still, when flights at Atlanta were grounded for most of one day last spring, it took Delta five days — and about 4,000 canceled flights — before it fully recovered.

Like Sunday's outage, that April storm hit Delta's largest hub at a busy travel time when there weren't many empty seats to accommodate customers from cancelled flights. At the time, CEO Ed Bastian vowed Delta would make "significant improvements" to its system for scheduling and tracking aircraft crews to recover more quickly from disruptions.

Other airlines also canceled flights for the rest of Sunday. American Airlines canceled 24 departures and an equal number of arrivals, said spokesman Ross Feinstein. The airline also diverted three planes that were headed to Atlanta when the outage struck, sending them instead to Dallas, Nashville and back to Philadelphia.

The city of Atlanta provided shuttle service to the Georgia Convention Center on Sunday for travelers needing a place to stay.

Delta passenger Emilia Duca, 32, was on her way to Wisconsin from Bogota, Colombia, when she got stuck in Atlanta. She said police made passengers who were in the baggage claim area move to a higher floor. She said restaurants and shops were closed. Vending machines weren't working.

"A lot of people are arriving, and no one is going out. No one is saying anything official. We are stuck here," she said. "It's a nightmare."

Some passengers said there was a lack of information from airport officials and little help from first responders to get the disabled and the elderly through the airport without the use of escalators and elevators.

"They had these elderly people, handicapped people lined up in wheelchairs," said stranded passenger Rutia Curry. "The people were helpless, they can't get down the stairs. It was just a nightmare."

Passenger James Beatty said there was no real method for evacuation.

"I mean there was 40 or 50 people per the terminal area that were confined to wheelchairs and some that couldn't get through the airport very well, some of them actually couldn't walk and there was no plan at all to get them out of here without any power."

Beatty said passengers carried those who used wheelchairs down stairs.

The FAA said it would staff the airport control tower throughout the night so it could handle flights once they resume. The FAA said the tower could operate normally but flights were affected because airport equipment in the terminals was not working.

According to a Georgia Power statement, the utility believes a piece of equipment in an underground electrical facility may have failed, causing the fire. The fire was next to equipment for a backup system, causing that to also fail.

"No personnel or passengers were in danger at any time," the statement said.

No areas outside of the airport were affected by the power loss. The utility said there are "many redundant systems in place" to ensure the power supply to the airport and that such outages at the airport



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"are very rare."

Anthony Foxx, who served as U.S. transportation secretary under former President Barack Obama, tweeted that he was among the many travelers stuck for hours on a plane on the tarmac.

"Total and abject failure here at ATL Airport today," he tweeted, adding that there was "no excuse for lack of workable redundant power source. NONE!"

In another tweet, Foxx said it seemed like the problem was "compounded by confusion and poor communication."

Once he was off the plane, Foxx tweeted that he hoped to rent a car to drive to Charlotte, North Carolina, to catch a flight Monday morning.

Sara Melillo and her husband, Greg Presto, were traveling from Kenya, where they live, to Pittsburgh to spend Christmas with his family when they were stuck on the tarmac for six hours. The couple had made stops in Nairobi and Amsterdam and landed shortly after the lights went out in Atlanta.

Melillo said the pilot didn't have a lot of information for the travelers but the plane had air conditioning and attendants offered water and juice a few times. She described the Delta terminal as "big chaos" with not enough customer service for the hundreds of people trying to find a flight to their next destination and a place to sleep for the night.

With her new boarding pass handwritten and her bags still stuck on a plane, Melillo was hopeful that she and her husband would be able to get a flight in the morning to Pittsburgh, she said as she waited for an Uber ride to a hotel. But in a Monday morning email, Melillo told The Associated Press the morning flight had been rescheduled to the evening and they were going to the airport to try to get a different flight.

Airport workers were distributing bottled water, and Dunkin' Donuts was giving out doughnuts. Chick-fil-A, which is usually closed on Sundays, opened to provide meals for travelers, according to the airport's Twitter feed.

Officer Lisa Bender of the Atlanta Police Department said officers were at the airport to help with crowd control and managing traffic around the airport.

At Southwest Airlines, about 70 Atlanta departures out of 120 scheduled for Sunday were canceled, an airline spokesman said in an email. United Airlines and JetBlue Airways were among carriers reporting delays or cancellations.

American Airlines reported only a handful of diversions and cancellations because the carrier does not use Atlanta as a hub, airline spokeswoman Alexis Aran Coello.

Hartsfield-Jackson, which serves 104 million passengers a year, is the world's busiest airport, a distinction it has held since 1998.

The airport serves an average of 275,000 passengers daily, according to its website. Nearly 2,500 planes arrive and depart each day.

AP Airlines Writer David Koenig in Dallas and Associated Press writer Robert Ray in Atlanta contributed to this report.

## Flames threaten coastal communities as firefighters mourn

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Thousands of firefighters tried Sunday to shield coastal communities from one of the biggest wildfires in California history while a funeral procession rolled past burn-scarred hillsides in honor of one of their colleagues who was killed battling the flames.

Crews cleared brush and dug containment lines above hillside neighborhoods in Santa Barbara County, taking advantage of slightly calmer winds a day after gusts fanned a flare-up that prompted more evacuations.

"Everything's holding really well," fire information officer Lisa Cox said. "Thousands of homes have been saved."

While gusts had eased somewhat, even lower intensity winds were still dangerous, she warned. The fire

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northwest of Los Angeles was 45 percent contained.

Television news footage showed at least one structure burned on property in the wealthy enclave of Montecito, and authorities said damage assessments could take days.

Mourners stood on freeway overpasses to pay respects to firefighter Cory Iverson, 32, who died Thursday of burns and smoke inhalation. His funeral procession was scheduled to wind through five Southern California counties before ending up at a funeral home in San Diego, where he was based with a state fire engine strike team. He is survived by his pregnant wife and a 2-year-old daughter.

The blaze is also blamed for the Dec. 6 death of a 70-year-old woman who died in a car crash on an evacuation route.

The fire that started nearly two weeks ago has burned more than 1,000 structures, including at least 750 homes. Some 18,000 more homes are still threatened.

Some evacuation orders were lifted to the east in Ventura County, where the blaze erupted, and officials reported making progress protecting the inland agricultural city of Fillmore.

Jim Holden returned to his neighborhood in the city of Ventura to find his home still standing amid widespread destruction. He told KABC-TV that at the height of the inferno, when it appeared his house would be lost, firefighters risked their own safety to retrieve his belongings.

"They broke in and they saved my family photos," Holden said, wiping away tears.

Mike and Dana Stoneking lost their Ventura home while many of their neighbors' properties were spared. The Stonekings planned to rebuild and found some solace after retrieving Mike's wedding ring from the ashes.

The 422-square-mile (1,093-sq. kilometer) blaze called the Thomas Fire crested a peak just north of Montecito, where evacuation orders remained in effect. Known for its star power, the enclave includes the mansions of Oprah Winfrey, Ellen DeGeneres and many other celebrities.

"Still praying for our little town," Winfrey tweeted. It was not clear if the former talk show host was in Montecito.

A portion of the city of Santa Barbara was also evacuated as a thick plume of smoke blew through city streets. At the city's zoo, workers put some animals into crates and kennels to ready them for possible evacuation.

While crews on the fire lines got a break from slightly calmer winds, much of the rest of Southern California was buffeted by powerful gusts that once again increased the wildfire risk across the region. The



**In this Saturday, Dec. 16, 2017, photo provided by the Santa Barbara County Fire Department, flames burn near power lines in Sycamore Canyon near West Mountain Drive in Montecito, Calif. One of the largest wildfires in California history is now 40 percent contained but flames still threaten coastal communities as dry, gusty winds are predicted to continue. Some 8,000 firefighters are deployed to the so-called Thomas Fire, which has burned for nearly two weeks and still threatens 18,000 homes. Swaths of Santa Barbara County remain under evacuation orders.** (Mike Eliason/Santa

Barbara County Fire Department via AP)

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National Weather Service forecast red flag conditions for extreme fire danger through Sunday evening for Ventura and Los Angeles counties. Trees came down after wind gusts topped 70 mph (113 kph) in mountain areas and 50 mph (80 kph) along the coast.

Everything about the fire has been massive, from the sheer scale of destruction that destroyed entire neighborhoods to the legions of people attacking it. About 8,300 firefighters from nearly a dozen states battled the third largest wildfire in state history, aided by 78 bulldozers and 29 helicopters.

The cause remains under investigation. So far, firefighting costs have surpassed \$117 million.

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## 10 Thing to Know for Today By The Associated Press

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

### 1. HOLIDAY TRAVEL CHAOS LOOMS

Power has been restored to the world's busiest airport but thousands of people are still stranded in Atlanta and travel woes will linger for days.

### 2. WHOSE JOB SEEMS SAFE FOR NOW

President Trump is not considering firing special counsel Robert Mueller, but takes aim at Mueller's acquisition of thousands of emails sent and received by Trump officials before his inauguration.

### 3. COMMANDER IN CHIEF'S "AMERICA FIRST" SECURITY PLAN

President Trump is set to reveal a new national security policy which could sharply alter the United States' relationships with the rest of the world.

### 4. AP EXCLUSIVE: TRAINING GROUNDS MELTING AWAY

Climate change is threatening winter sports as athletes just months away from the Olympics often have to look for snow farther and farther from home.

### 5. OFFICERS PONDER OVERDOSE RELIEF KIT

Police are divided over administering doses of naloxone, a nasal spray which can bring drug users back from the brink of death.

### 6. MIGHTY WINDS FUEL CONTINUING FLAMES



**In this photo provided by the Santa Barbara County Fire Department, a Bombardier 415 Super Scooper makes a water drop on hot spots along the hillside east of Gibraltar Road in Santa Barbara, Calif., Sunday morning, Dec. 17, 2017. Wind gusts of up to 52 mph have been recorded in the area using a hand held weather device. The Office of Emergency Services announced the orders Saturday as Santa Ana winds pushed the fire close to the community. The mandatory evacuation zone is now 17 miles long and up to 5 miles wide, extending from coastal mountains northwest of Los Angeles to the ocean. Winds in the foothill area are hitting around 30 mph, with gusts up to 60 mph.** (Mike Eliason/Santa Barbara County Fire Department via AP)

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Southern California was buffeted by powerful gusts that increased the wildfire risk across the region.

## 7. WHAT STORIED ORGANIZATION IS GETTING FRESH LEADERSHIP

A new leader is expected to be named for South Africa's ruling African National Congress party, Nelson Mandela's famed liberation movement.

## 8. KITCHEN JUSTICE

The Supreme Court's food traditions are described in a new tome, part history book, part cookbook.

## 9. HOW CUTE IS THAT PANDA IN THE WINDOW?

Baby panda Xiang Xiang makes a special appearance in Tokyo's Ueno Zoo a day ahead of the official introduction

## 10. THE MESSAGE OF MISMATCHED SNEAKERS

LeBron James made a statement during an NBA game with his shoes — one black, one white, with the word "equality" in capital gold letters on the back of each.

## Trump says he isn't considering firing Mueller over emails

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump says he is not considering firing special counsel Robert Mueller, but that didn't stop him from adding to the growing conservative criticism of Mueller's acquisition of thousands of emails sent and received by Trump officials before the start of his administration.

The disclosure came in a letter sent to two congressional committees by Kory Langhofer, general counsel of Trump's still-existing transition group, Trump for America.

In the letter to the Republican heads of the House Oversight and Senate Homeland Security panels, Langhofer said Mueller's investigators obtained the emails from the General Services Administration, a federal agency that stored the material, rather than requesting them from the transition organization.

Langhofer asserted the GSA improperly provided the transition records to Mueller's team, which he said has been "actively using" the emails. In the letter, Langhofer also contends that the disclosure by GSA was "unauthorized," and said the transition organization considers the documents private and privileged — and not government property.

While conservatives have been critical of Mueller's probe of Russian activities during the 2016 campaign, Trump said Sunday afternoon that he has no plans to fire Mueller.

The president did criticize the fact that Mueller had gained access the emails, however. Trump said it was "not looking good" and again stressed that there was "no collusion" with Russia — an important question the probe is examining.

The documents were provided to Mueller's team by the GSA in September in response to requests from the FBI, but the transition team didn't learn about it until last week, Langhofer said.

The tens of thousands of emails in question pertain to 13 senior Trump transition officials. Many of the emails that Mueller's investigators have now include national security discussions about possible Trump international aims as well as candid assessments of candidates for top government posts, said those familiar with the transition. They spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the records' sensitivity.

Langhofer also said that a GSA official appointed by Trump in May had assured the transition in June that any request for records from Mueller's office would be referred to the transition's attorneys. According to Langhofer, the assurance was made by then-GSA General Counsel Richard Beckler, who was hospitalized in August and has since died. A copy of the letter was obtained by the AP.

But late Saturday, another GSA official present for the conversation told BuzzFeed News that there was nothing improper about the disclosure of the emails to Mueller's team. The GSA has provided office space and other aid to presidential transitions in recent years and typically houses electronic transition records in its computer system.

GSA Deputy Counsel Lenny Loewentritt, whom Langhofer blames along with other GSA career staff for

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providing the transition documents to the FBI, told BuzzFeed that Beckler didn't make a commitment to the transition team that requests from law enforcement for materials would be routed through transition lawyers.

Transition officials signed agreements that warn them that materials kept on the government servers are subject to monitoring and auditing, Loewentritt told BuzzFeed, and there's no expectation of privacy.

Late Saturday, Mueller's spokesman, Peter Carr, said the special counsel's office has followed the law when it has obtained documents during its investigation.

"When we have obtained emails in the course of our ongoing criminal investigation, we have secured either the account owner's consent or appropriate criminal process," Carr said.

In a statement, Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland, the ranking Democrat on the House Oversight and Government Reform committee, dismissed the transition's arguments that GSA shouldn't have turned over the records to Mueller.

Among the officials who used transition email accounts was former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn, who pleaded guilty to a count of making false statements to FBI agents in January and is cooperating with Mueller's investigation. Trump fired Flynn in February for misleading senior administration officials about his contacts with Russia's ambassador to the U.S.

Flynn attorney Robert Kelner declined to comment. Jay Sekulow, an attorney on Trump's personal legal team, referred questions to the transition group. Spokespeople for GSA didn't respond to AP's emailed requests for comment.

It's unclear how revelatory the email accounts maintained by the GSA will be for Mueller. Several high-level Trump advisers sometimes used other email accounts, including their campaign accounts, to communicate about transition issues between Election Day and the inauguration.

The special counsel's office also obtained at least one iPad as well as laptops and cellphones that were used by the transition, but prosecutors have assured the transition that investigators have not pulled emails and other data from those devices, Langhofer said. He did not name the transition officials who used the devices.

The media site Axios first reported on the transfer of the emails to Mueller's team.

Read the letter: <http://apne.ws/SKWSKsk>

## Trump to unveil 'America First' national security strategy

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and HOPE YEN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Prioritizing national sovereignty over alliances, President Donald Trump is poised to outline a new national security strategy that envisions nations in a perpetual state of competition, reverses Obama-era warnings on climate change, and de-emphasizes multinational agreements that have dominated the United States' foreign policy since the Cold War.

The Republican president, who ran on a platform of "America First," will detail his plan Monday, one that if fully implemented could sharply alter the United States' relationships with the rest of the world. The plan, according to senior administration officials who offered a preview Sunday, is to focus on four main themes: protecting the homeland and way of life; promoting American prosperity; demonstrating peace through strength; and advancing American influence in an ever-competitive world.

Trump's doctrine holds that nation states are in perpetual competition and that the U.S. must fight on all fronts to protect and defend its sovereignty from friend and foe alike. While the administration often says that "America First" does not mean "America Alone," the national security strategy to be presented by Trump will make clear that the United States will stand up for itself even if that means acting unilaterally or alienating others on issues like trade, climate change and immigration, according to people familiar with the strategy.

The last such strategy document, prepared by then-President Barack Obama in 2015, declared climate change an "urgent and growing threat to our national security." A senior official said the Trump plan re-

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moves that determination — following the administration's threat to pull out of the Paris climate accord — but will mention the importance of environmental stewardship.

Despite the risk of potential isolation presented by Trump's strategy, its fundamentals are not a surprise. The Associated Press last week reviewed excerpts of a late draft of the roughly 70-page document and spoke to two people familiar with it. The draft emphasizes that U.S. economic security is national security and that economic security must be ensured with military might. And they said it would stress the U.S. is interested only in relationships with other countries, including alliances like NATO, that are fair and reciprocal.

Trump, according to the senior officials, is also expected to discuss threats he'll deem as "rogue regimes," like North Korea, and "revisionist powers," like Russia and China, who aim to change the status quo, such as Moscow and its actions with Ukraine and Georgia, and Beijing in the South China Sea. Trump is also planning to renew his call for the member states in the United Nations and NATO to spend more on defense, saying that the United States will insist on its alliances being fair and reciprocal.

The senior officials said the document refers to China as a "strategic competitor," rather than the stronger accusation of "economic aggression" previewed last week by National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster.

Despite international challenges, the document cites emerging opportunities to advance American interests in the Middle East. "Some of our partners are working together to reject radical ideologies and key leaders are calling for a rejection of Islamist extremism and violence," it says. "Encouraging political stability and sustainable prosperity would contribute to dampening the conditions that fuel sectarian grievances."

The strategy document asserts that "for generations the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has been understood as the prime irritant preventing peace and prosperity in the region. Today, the threats from radical jihadist terrorist organizations and the threat from Iran are creating the realization that Israel is not the cause of the region's problems. States have increasingly found common interests with Israel in confronting common threats."

The president is also set to make the case that U.S. economic security is national security and that economic security must be ensured with military might.

The criticism of Russia will come as a break from recent warm words between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. The leaders have spoken twice in four days, with Trump calling Putin to thank him for kind words about the U.S. stock market and Putin reaching out to Trump to thank the CIA for help in stopping a terror plot in St. Petersburg.

The strategy document will not make explicit reference to Russian attempts to meddle in the U.S. political system, but an official said it would highlight the importance of ensuring the resilience of U.S. democratic institutions.

The early draft of the strategy reviewed by the AP lamented that America had put itself at a disadvantage by entering into multinational agreements, such as those aimed at combating climate change, and introducing domestic policies to implement them.

The senior officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the plan before the president's remarks.

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Associated Press writers Matthew Lee and Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

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## Facing misconduct investigation, Panthers owner selling team

By STEVE REED, AP Sports Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Facing a growing investigation that accuses him of sexual misconduct and using racist language at work, Carolina Panthers owner Jerry Richardson announced Sunday that he will sell the NFL team after the season.

The team announced on Twitter that Richardson is selling the team, linking to a five-paragraph letter by the franchise's only owner.

"I believe it is time to turn the franchise over to new ownership," Richardson wrote, saying he wouldn't

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begin discussions until after the season. The Panthers, who lost in the Super Bowl two seasons ago, are in playoff position again.

"I hope everyone in the organization, both on and off the field, will be firmly focused on one mission: to play and win the Super Bowl," said Richardson, 81.

Richardson's letter did not directly address the investigation or allegations against him.

The NFL awarded Richardson, a former player with the Baltimore Colts, an expansion franchise in 1993, and he has been the team's only owner.

"There has been no greater mission or purpose in my life than to have brought an NFL franchise to Charlotte," Richardson wrote. "The obstacles back then were significant and some even questioned whether or community could or would support professional football. But I always knew that if given the chance the Carolina would rise to the occasion. And you have."

Richardson attended Sunday's win over the Green Bay Packers at Bank of America Stadium and was photographed sitting beside his wife Rosalind in his luxury box.

He did not speak to reporters.

The NFL had no comment on the upcoming sale of the Panthers.

"While I will no longer be the team owner, I will always be the Panthers Number One fan," Richardson's letter said.

The Panthers are tied to Charlotte through June 2019.

The city of Charlotte and the Panthers reached agreement on improvements for the team's stadium in 2013. The plan called for the city to contribute about \$87 million for renovations to Bank of America Stadium in exchange for a six-year hard tether to keep the Panthers in Charlotte.

The money is less than what the team was seeking for improvements of the stadium, which opened in 1996. Forbes estimates the Panthers worth at \$2.3 billion. The Buffalo Bills sold in 2014 for \$1.4 billion following the death of owner Ralph Wilson.

Richardson and his ownership group paid \$206 million in 1993 for an expansion team.

Richardson's announcement comes after a Sports Illustrated report Sunday that cited unnamed sources who said Richardson made sexually suggestive comments to women and on at least one occasion directed a racial slur at an African-American Panthers scout. The report states that the settlements came with non-disclosure requirements forbidding the parties from discussing the details.

The NFL on Sunday said it has taken over the investigation of allegations of workplace misconduct. Panthers spokesman Steven Drummond said Sunday the team requested the league take over the investigation for "transparency reasons."

Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones called the situation surrounding Richardson "very sad."

"I'm saddened by any of the stories of the things that might have incited this at this time," Jones said after Dallas' win at Oakland on Sunday night. "He took what he made in his short time in pro football and turned it into a great business and then used that to get the Carolina franchise."

The Panthers began play in 1995 but have never delivered on Richardson's promise of winning a Super Bowl. They lost after the 2003 and 2015 seasons.

Panthers interim general manager Marty Hurney said he had never seen any evidence of Richardson displaying any sexual or racial misconduct in the workplace.

"If this (sale) happens I think it is a significant loss for the NFL," Hurney told The Associated Press. "I have the utmost respect for him as an owner. Our employees have the utmost respect for him. I came back because of the respect I have for him and for the organization he started and developed."

Panthers quarterback Cam Newton said after Sunday's win over Green Bay that Richardson has served as a father figure to him since his arrival in Carolina seven years ago.

"For me I hope things don't alter my thinking of Mr. Richardson," Newton said. "But I do know that he has given me some things that I will forever be appreciative of."

Panthers coach Ron Rivera said after the game it is important to let the process play out.

"The only thing I can speak on is for what he has been to me as far as I'm concerned," Rivera said. "A lot of you know I had a house fire, and he was there for (my wife) Stephanie and I. He was tremendous

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in supporting us. My brother passed, and Mr. Richardson was there and helped me get to the funeral and back. I can't speak to anything other than that."

Richardson was hospitalized 2008, one month after receiving a pacemaker for heart problems. He underwent quadruple bypass surgery in 2002 and was placed on a donor waiting list for a new heart. He received the new heart on Feb. 1, 2009, and has not had any known setbacks since.

It has been a wild year for the Panthers organization.

Team president Danny Morrison abruptly resigned in February. Richardson then fired general manager Dave Gettleman on the eve of training camp and replaced him with Hurney on an interim basis.

For more NFL coverage: <http://www.pro32.ap.org> and [http://www.twitter.com/AP\\_NFL](http://www.twitter.com/AP_NFL)

## **APNewsBreak: US soldier fought to end after ambush in Niger**

**By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Army Sgt. La David T. Johnson died in a hail of gunfire, hit as many as 18 times as he took cover in thick brush, fighting to the end after fleeing militants who had just killed three comrades in an October ambush in Niger, The Associated Press has learned.

A military investigation has concluded that Johnson wasn't captured alive or killed at close range, dispelling a swirl of rumors about how he died.

The report has determined that Johnson, 25, of Miami Gardens, Florida, was killed by enemy rifle and machine gun fire from members of an Islamic State offshoot, according to U.S. officials familiar with the findings. The Oct. 4 ambush took place about 120 miles (200 kilometers) north of Niamey, the African nation's capital. Johnson's body was recovered two days later.

U.S. officials familiar with the findings spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity to describe details of an investigation that has not been finalized or publicly released.

A 12-member Army special forces unit was accompanying 30 Nigerien forces when they were attacked in a densely wooded area by as many as 50 militants traveling by vehicle and carrying small arms and rocket-propelled grenade launchers.

Johnson was struck as many as 18 times from a distance by a volley of machine gun rounds, according to the U.S. officials, who said he was firing back as he and two Nigerien soldiers tried to escape.

All told, four U.S. soldiers and four Nigerien troops were killed in the ambush. Two U.S. and eight Nigerien troops were wounded.

The bodies of three U.S. Green Berets were located on the day of the attack, but not Johnson's remains. The gap in time led to questions about whether Johnson was killed in the assault and not found, or if he was taken away by the enemy.

According to the officials, a medical examination concluded that Johnson was hit by fire from M-4 rifles — probably stolen by the insurgents — and Soviet-made heavy machine guns. It is believed he died in the attack.

The officials said Johnson was found under thick scrub brush where he tried to take cover. There were no indications he was shot at close range, or had been bound or taken prisoner, as several media reports have suggested.

A U.S. Africa Command began its investigation with a team headed by Army Maj. Gen. Roger Cloutier, the command's chief of staff. The team visited locations in Niger to collect evidence and information about the attack, and will soon submit a draft of Cloutier's report to Marine Gen. Thomas Waldhauser, head of Africa Command. Waldhauser could ask for additional information. The final report is expected to be released next month.

The officials familiar with the report's conclusions said that during the attack, Johnson and two Nigerien soldiers tried to get to a vehicle to escape, but were unable to do so, became separated from the others and were shot as they were running for safety.

The report concluded that Johnson, who was athletic and a runner, was in the lead and got the farthest



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away, seeking cover in the brush. Officials said there were a number of enemy shells around Johnson, and evidence that he appeared to fight to the end. His boots and other equipment were later stolen, but he was still wearing his uniform.

As news of the ambush came out, the U.S. military sent in rescue teams to search for Johnson, not making his status public in the hope he might have gotten away and was still alive and hiding. The Pentagon only acknowledged that he was missing after his body was located two days later by local forces.

The Pentagon has declined to release details about the exact mission of the commando team. U.S. officials have previously said that the joint U.S.-Niger patrol had been asked to assist a second American commando team hunting for a senior Islamic State member, who also had former ties to al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb. The team had been asked to go to a location where the insurgent had last been seen, and collect intelligence.

After completing that mission, the troops stopped in a village for a short time to get food and water, then left. The U.S. military believes someone in the village may have tipped off attackers to the presence of U.S. commandoes and Nigerien forces in the area, setting in motion the ambush.

U.S. special operations forces have been routinely working with Niger's forces, helping them to improve their abilities to fight extremists in the region. That effort has increased in recent years, the Pentagon said.

The three other Americans killed were Staff Sgt. Bryan C. Black, 35, of Puyallup, Washington; Staff Sgt. Jeremiah W. Johnson, 39, of Springboro, Ohio; and Staff Sgt. Dustin M. Wright, 29, of Lyons, Georgia. Black and Wright were Army Special Forces. Johnson and Johnson were not commandos.

Johnson's combat death led to a political squabble between President Donald Trump and a Democratic congresswoman from Florida after Trump told Johnson's pregnant widow in a phone call that her husband "knew what he signed up for." Rep. Frederica Wilson was riding with Johnson's family to meet the body and heard the call on speakerphone. The spat grew to include Trump's chief of staff, who called Wilson an "empty barrel" making noise.

Online:

Africa Command: <http://www.africom.mil/>

## Putin thanks Trump for CIA tip he says stopped bomb plot

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV, Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin telephoned U.S. President Donald Trump Sunday to thank him for a CIA tip that helped thwart a series of bombings in St. Petersburg, the Kremlin and the White House said.

During the call, the two leaders' second in three days, Putin expressed gratitude for the CIA information. The Kremlin said it led Russia's top domestic security agency to a group of suspects that planned to bomb St. Petersburg's Kazan Cathedral and other crowded sites this weekend.

"The information received from the CIA proved sufficient to find and detain the criminal suspects," the Kremlin said.

The White House said in its readout of the conversation that "based on the information the United States provided, Russian authorities were able to capture the terrorists just prior to an attack that could have killed large numbers of people."

The White House added that Putin extended his thanks and congratulations to CIA Director Mike Pompeo and the entire agency. Trump then called Pompeo "to congratulate him, his very talented people, and the entire intelligence community on a job well done!"

"President Trump appreciated the call and told President Putin that he and the entire United States intelligence community were pleased to have helped save so many lives," the White House said in its statement. "President Trump stressed the importance of intelligence cooperation to defeat terrorists wherever they may be. Both leaders agreed that this serves as an example of the positive things that can occur when our countries work together."

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The Kremlin said Putin assured Trump that "if the Russian intelligence agencies receive information about potential terror threats against the United States and its citizens, they will immediately hand it over to their U.S. counterparts via their communications channels."

The CIA's tip to Russia comes even as Russia-U.S. ties have plunged to their lowest level since the Cold War era — first over Russia's annexation of Crimea and support for pro-Russia separatists in Ukraine, more recently over allegations that Moscow interfered in the U.S. presidential election to help Trump.

While Russian officials have said the two countries were continuing to exchange some terror-related intelligence, Sunday's statement from the Kremlin was Russia's first public assertion that information from the United States helped prevent an attack.

The conversation was the second between the Russian and U.S. presidents since Thursday, when Trump thanked Putin for his remarks "acknowledging America's strong economic performance," according to the White House.

During the first call, they also discussed during ways to work together to address North Korea's nuclear and ballistic weapons program, the White House said.

The Federal Security Service, or FSB, announced Friday that seven suspected followers of the Islamic State group had been arrested for allegedly planning to carry out terror attacks in St. Petersburg this weekend.

The agency said the suspects were plotting a suicide bombing in a church and a series of other explosions in the city's busiest areas this coming weekend on IS orders. It said a search of a St. Petersburg apartment found explosives, automatic weapons and extremist literature.

Russian news reports said that Kazan Cathedral, a landmark 19th century Russian Orthodox church on St. Petersburg's central Nevsky Prospect, was the prime target.

If the suspects succeeded in bombing the cathedral, it would have been the first major attack on a Russian Orthodox Church by Islamic terrorists, who have blown up apartment buildings, passenger planes and transport facilities in Russia.

In April, a suicide bombing in the St. Petersburg's subway left 16 dead and wounded more than 50.

Russian TV stations have aired footage daily since Friday of the suspects in the foiled attacks being apprehended and questioned. One segment showed FSB operatives outside a St. Petersburg apartment building detaining a suspect, who appeared later saying he was told to prepare homemade bombs rigged with shrapnel.

"My job was to make explosives, put it in bottles and attach pieces of shrapnel," the suspect, identified by Russian media as 18-year old Yevgeny Yefimov, said in the footage released by the FSB.

Several other suspects came from mostly Muslim regions in Russia's volatile North Caucasus, and one man was from the ex-Soviet nation of Tajikistan that borders Afghanistan.

The TV reports included footage of a metal container, which the suspects used as a laboratory for making explosives, according to the FSB. Another video showed operatives breaking the doors and raiding an apartment used by other suspects.

Last week, the FSB said it also arrested several IS-linked suspects in Moscow, where they allegedly were plotting a series of suicide bombings to coincide with New Year's celebrations.

The latest calls between Putin and Trump came after the Russian leader praised his U.S. counterpart during a marathon news conference on Thursday.

Putin hailed Trump's achievements, saying that global markets have demonstrated investors' confidence in Trump's economic policies. He said he hoped the U.S. president would be able to follow through on his campaign promises to improve ties with Russia despite pressure from his political foes at home.

During the news conference, Putin also reaffirmed his multiple denials of meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and argued that the U.S. is only hurting itself with investigations of alleged collusion between Trump and Russia. The allegations were "invented" by Trump's foes to undermine his legitimacy, Putin said.

Alexei Chepa, a deputy head of the foreign affairs committee in the lower house of Russia's parliament, hailed the CIA tip as a "step toward cooperation."

"The more such actions we have, the better it will be for both our countries," Chepa told the state RIA Novosti news agency.

\_\_\_ Jonathan Lemire contributed from Washington.

## McCain treated for viral infection, returns home to Arizona

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican Sen. John McCain has returned home to Arizona after being hospitalized for a viral infection while battling brain cancer and will miss a crucial Senate vote on the GOP tax package, his office said Sunday.

The 81-year-old senator will undergo physical therapy and rehabilitation at the Mayo Clinic in the state after spending several days at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Maryland. In a brief statement, the office provided an assessment from Dr. Mark Gilbert, chief of neuro-oncology at the National Institutes of Health's National Cancer Institute.

"Senator McCain has responded well to treatment he received at Walter Reed Medical Center for a viral infection and continues to improve," Gilbert said. "An evaluation of his underlying cancer shows he is responding positively to ongoing treatment."

McCain expressed appreciation for his care and the outpouring of support and, according to his office, "looks forward to returning to Washington in January."

Now in his sixth Senate term, McCain underwent surgery in mid-July to remove a 2-inch (51-millimeter) blood clot in his brain after being diagnosed with glioblastoma.

His daughter Meghan McCain tweeted Sunday: "My father is doing well and we are all looking forward to spending Christmas together in Arizona."

Earlier in the day, President Donald Trump told reporters he had spoken to McCain's wife, Cindy.

"They've headed back, but I understand he'll come if we ever needed his vote, which hopefully we won't," Trump said after returning to the White House from Camp David. "But the word is that John will come back if we need his vote. And it's too bad. He's going through a very tough time, there's no question about it. But he will come back if we need his vote."

Republicans hold a slim 52-48 majority in the Senate, and McCain and Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Miss., missed votes last week. The 80-year-old Cochran had a non-melanoma lesion removed from his nose earlier this week. He is expected to vote on the tax bill.

Republicans secured the support of Florida Sen. Marco Rubio and Tennessee Sen. Bob Corker last Friday for the tax measure, and they are poised to pass the bill by a narrow margin in the face of unified Democratic opposition. As a backstop, Vice President Mike Pence would be available to break a tie.

A vote is expected in the House on Tuesday and the Senate on Wednesday. If approved, the measure would head to Trump for his signature on what will be his first major legislative accomplishment since taking office 11 months ago.

After his summer surgery, McCain rebounded quickly, returning to Washington and entering the Senate on July 25 to a standing ovation from his colleagues.

In a dramatic turn, he cast a deciding vote against the Republican health care bill — a move that drew the wrath of Trump and conservatives. McCain's vote scuttled the seven-year effort by the GOP to dismantle much of President Barack Obama's health care law.

But McCain's condition has appeared to worsen in recent weeks. He suffered a minor tear in his right Achilles tendon, forcing him to wear a walking brace. McCain eventually began using a wheelchair, with members of his staff pushing him where he needed to go.

As a Navy pilot, McCain lived through a July 1967 fire that killed 134 sailors aboard the aircraft carrier USS Forrestal in the Gulf of Tonkin during the Vietnam War. The following October, his plane was shot down during a bombing mission over Hanoi. He spent more than five years as a prisoner of war. McCain also has survived several bouts with melanoma, a dangerous skin cancer.

\_\_\_ Associated Press writer Donna Cassata contributed to this report.

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## MSNBC paid woman who said Chris Matthews harassed her

By The Associated Press

A spokesman for MSNBC on Sunday confirmed a report that a staffer at the news channel nearly two decades ago had been paid and left her job after she complained she was sexually harassed by "Hardball" host Chris Matthews.

The spokesman said the woman approached CNBC executives in 1999 to report Matthews made inappropriate comments about her in front of others. CNBC is a sister company of MSNBC.

The company declined to identify the comments, other than to say they were sophomoric, inappropriate, made in poor taste and never meant as propositions.

"In 1999, this matter was thoroughly reviewed and dealt with," the spokesman wrote to The Associated Press. "At that time, Matthews received a formal reprimand."

The person representing MSNBC spoke to The Associated Press on condition that his name will not be used due to the sensitive nature of the matter.

MSNBC said the payment was "separation-related compensation," which means the payment was tied to the woman leaving her job. The company would not release the payment amount, citing confidentiality. The company also declined to elaborate on the reprimand.

Attempts to reach Matthews on Sunday were unsuccessful.

The Daily Caller first reported the allegations on Saturday.

## 'The Last Jedi' opens with \$220M, 2nd best weekend all-time

By JAKE COYLE, AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — "Star Wars: The Last Jedi" will happily settle for second.

Rian Johnson's second installment in the third "Star Wars" trilogy rocketed to a debut of \$220 million at the North American box office, according to studio estimates Sunday. That gives "The Last Jedi" the second-best opening ever, slotting in behind only its predecessor, "The Force Awakens."

The Disney blockbuster became just the fourth film to open above \$200 million domestically. Aside from "The Force Awakens" (\$248.8 million), the others are "The Avengers" (\$207.4 million) and "Jurassic World" (\$208.8 million). Accounting for inflation, the debut of 2012's "The Avengers" would roughly tie with "The Last Jedi."

"The Last Jedi" is off to a similar start overseas, too, with \$230 million in international ticket sales, said Disney. That brings its three-day global haul to \$450 million.

The opening also gave the Walt Disney Co. the opportunity to flex its muscles on the heels of the deal announced Thursday for it to purchase 21st Century Fox for \$52.4 billion. As part of the deal, Disney will take control of 20th Century Fox, one of Hollywood's six major studios.

"The weekend that we're in is a byproduct of the foresight and vision from our CEO Bob Iger to bring Lucasfilm into the fold," said Disney distribution chief Dave Hollis, alluding to Disney's 2012 purchase of Lucasfilm. "So as we think about the possibility of other things being added, you can't help but be excited about the possibilities."

Fox, as it happens, was the only studio to open another new wide-release film against "The Last Jedi." Its family film, "Ferdinand," was essentially stampeded by "The Last Jedi," grossing \$13.3 million. "Ferdinand" and other upcoming holiday season releases will look for more room in the coming weeks, once the "Star Wars" tsunami has waned.

While Abrams' reboot capitalized on a decade's hiatus for "Star Wars," Johnson's sequel didn't have the same benefit of freshness. It follows not only "The Force Awakens" (which ultimately grossed \$2.1 billion) but last year's spinoff, "Rogue One." That release opened with \$155.1 million, and grossed in total little more than \$1 billion globally.

Johnson, who wrote and directed, instead aimed to distinguish "The Last Jedi" by introducing some new tones to George Lucas' space opera. "The Last Jedi" is more irreverent than previous chapters. And it has drawn plaudits for its diverse cast, including Daisy Ridley, John Boyega and newcomer Kelly Marie Tran.

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"The results speak to the power of representation," said Hollis. "The film really reflects our world and beyond. It becomes something people can see themselves in, whether they see themselves in Rey or Finn or Poe or Rose or Captain Phasma. They can relate to all those characters."

Johnson's approach has seemed to work. Critics gave Johnson's film a 93 percent fresh rating on Rotten Tomatoes. Audiences endorsed it, too, with an A CinemaScore, though not all fans are on board with Johnson's innovations. As of Sunday, "The Last Jedi" has scored a dismal 56 percent rating from some 95,000 Rotten Tomato users.

Yet the haul for "The Last Jedi" dwarfed most all releases in the two years since "The Force Awakens." By comparison, it has in three days already bested the five-week gross of Warner Bros.' "Justice League" (\$219.5 million).

"Seeing a movie like this in the movie theater, getting the collective goose bumps and having the OMG-moments, that's something you cannot replicate at home on the small screen," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for comScore. "Rian Johnson has made a movie that showcases the movie theater experience in a truly brilliant way."

Signaling its faith in Johnson's course for "Star Wars," Lucasfilm earlier announced that Johnson will develop the next trilogy for the franchise, the first of which he'll write and direct. Abrams is set to return to direct Episode IX after he was brought in to replace Colin Trevorrow. A separate spinoff centered on a young Han Solo is due out next summer.

The massive debut for "The Last Jedi" singlehandedly brightens what has been a disappointing year for Hollywood. The weekend was far and away the highest grossing of the year. According to comScore, the industry was down about 3.9 percent from last year before this weekend. Now it's 2.9 percent off the 2016 pace. Dergarabedian estimates the year will end about 2 percent down with a little over \$11 billion in ticket sales.

"The Last Jedi" may be playing the role of savior at the box office, but the news isn't all rosy for exhibitors. Given the demand, Disney put more onerous demands on some theater owners for "The Last Jedi," including a higher percentage — 65 percent — of ticket sales. And Disney's acquisition of Fox is seen by analysts as a bid, in part, to strengthen the studio's in-development streaming platform, set to debut in 2019.

Disney and Fox combined for five of the top 10 movies on the weekend and together accounted for approximately 90 percent of ticket sales.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to comScore. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "The Last Jedi," \$220 million (\$230 million international).
2. "Ferdinand," \$13.3 million (\$6.2 million international).
3. "Coco," \$10 million (\$27.4 million international).
4. "Wonder," \$5.4 million (\$9.4 million international).
5. "Justice League," \$4.2 million (\$5.3 million international).
6. "Daddy's Home 2," \$3.8 million (\$5.8 million international).
7. "Thor: Ragnarok," \$3 million (\$1.1 million international).
8. "The Disaster Artist," \$2.6 million.
9. "Murder on the Orient Express," \$2.5 million (\$10.8 million international).
10. "Lady Bird," \$2.1 million.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at international theaters (excluding the U.S. and Canada), according to comScore:

1. "The Last Jedi," \$230 million.
2. "Youth," \$44 million.
3. "The Thousand Faces of Dunjia," \$27.9 million.
4. "Coco," \$27.4 million.

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5. "Steel Rain," \$11.6 million.
6. "Murder on the Orient Express," \$10.8 million.
7. "Paddington 2," \$9.7 million.
8. "Wonder," \$9.4 million.
9. "Ferdinand," \$6.2 million.
10. "Daddy's Home 2," \$5.8 million.

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

## **Burners beware: California pot sold Jan. 1 could be tainted**

**By Brian Melley, Associated Press**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — That legal weed you'll be able to buy in California on New Year's Day may not be as green as it seems.

Any marijuana sold when recreational sales become legal Jan. 1 in the nation's most populous state will have been grown without regulatory controls that will eventually be in place. Pot could contain pesticides, molds and other contaminants.

"Buyer beware," cautioned Donald Land, a University of California, Davis, chemistry professor who is the chief scientific consultant at Steep Hill Labs Inc., which tests marijuana in several states.

Earlier this year, Land oversaw testing that found 93 percent of samples collected by KNBC-TV from 15 dispensaries in four Southern California counties tested positive for pesticides. That may come as a surprise for consumers who tend to trust what's on store shelves because of federal regulations by the U.S. Agriculture Department or the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

"Unfortunately, that's not true of cannabis," Land said. "They wrongly assume it's been tested for safety."

Stiffer regulations and testing requirements are being phased in next year, but growers and sellers have a six-month grace period to sell existing inventory grown under the loosely regulated medical marijuana program in place two decades.

With only a year to develop a complex bureaucratic infrastructure of regulations, taxes and licensing for recreational marijuana, state officials recognized it wasn't realistic or fair to require inventory grown or manufactured under existing rules to suddenly meet testing standards.

Shops will have six months to sell the current crop of cannabis before their inventory has to pass tests. Any pot harvested or manufactured after Jan. 1, however, will be subject to testing for potency and contaminants with a high public health risk. Stricter limits will be phased in by the start of 2019.

Meanwhile, any pot that hasn't been tested will need to be labeled, said Alex Traverso, Bureau of Cannabis Control spokesman.

"That's one of the biggest reasons for regulation: to establish rules that protect public safety and improve the quality of the product," Traverso said. "When people see a sticker that says 'Not tested,' at least they know and they can choose whether they want to purchase that or not."

That means there will probably be a lot of labels required when everything from joints to cookies and oils go on sale. Land estimated that less than 5 percent of medical marijuana — the only pot legal to sell before 2018 — is now tested.

As the industry emerges from the shadows, growers, manufacturers, shops and related businesses have to navigate a maze of regulations that are still taking shape across state and local jurisdictions as sales are about to begin.

Juan Hidalgo, agricultural commissioner for Santa Cruz County, said pesticides are a top concern, and he wants to know what is being applied and whether workers on site are protected. Farmers who spray their own pesticides have to get a certificate from the commissioner that requires passing a test and taking refresher courses every three years.

"A lot of these folks, up until now, they haven't been aware of what those requirements are and the proper use of pesticides," Hidalgo said. "That's something we're hoping we can change in the coming weeks."

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The incentive will be that entire crops or batches will have to be destroyed if unacceptable levels of contaminants are discovered.

Several years ago, Steep Hill tested concentrates at a cannabis contest and found traces of solvents from extracting hash oil used in edibles and other products in all but three of 135 samples, Land said.

"At first they were mad because they couldn't sell their stuff the way they wanted to," Land said.

But eventually, manufacturers figured out how to more safely produce their products, and two years later all 140 samples the lab tested passed. He thinks a similar thing will happen with pesticides as testing becomes mandatory and the industry adapts.

Initially, though, it could mean lower yields.

Mike Winderman, manager of The Green Easy in Los Angeles, supports the idea of eliminating pesticides, but also thinks the issue has been overhyped when the vast majority of crops that people eat are grown with pesticides and even organic crops could be subject to pesticides drifting from nearby farms.

"I think it's a little funny that this year everybody's caring about pesticides," he said. "People have been smoking weed 30, 40, 50 years, and it's never been an issue."

Like many shops, Winderman's products are tested for potency, but not pesticides. Prices are dropping for the current crop because they have a limited shelf life due to the regulatory controls that will eventually go into place.

Winderman said he wouldn't be surprised to find shops snapping up inventory now to avoid taxes that will take effect Jan. 1 and because some popular products may not be available if small producers who don't want to pay registration fees drop out of the industry.

Robert Watson, assistant manager of Dutchman's Flat in San Francisco's Dog Patch neighborhood, said it isn't an issue because his dispensary always tested for pesticides and will continue to do so if it is allowed to sell recreational pot.

"It's something we believe in," Watson said. "I think most patients out there wouldn't get medicine that isn't tested."

## AP FACT CHECK: Trump and the mirage of overseas profits

By CALVIN WOODWARD, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump speaks often of a pile of money sitting overseas that will come rushing back into the U.S. once his tax plan is in place. That's something of a mirage.

Here's what he told reporters Saturday in the roar of Marine One waiting to take him to Camp David, Maryland:

TRUMP, asked about the \$20 trillion U.S. debt and his tax overhaul's effect on it: "Well this is going to bring money in. As an example, \$4 trillion will come flowing back into the country. That's money that's been stuck overseas for years and years."

THE FACTS: First, his comment should not be read to mean that the debt is going to shrink by \$4 trillion because of money returning from abroad. That's not possible.

Second, \$4 trillion is a generous estimate of the money that might return. He's referring to profits that U.S. companies have been parking overseas to avoid the higher U.S. corporate tax. The lowering of that rate is bound to result in some of those profits coming back to the U.S. That could be in the ballpark of \$2.5 trillion, perhaps more. But low taxes on those profits mean repatriation won't bring much relief to a debt forecast to swell from his tax cuts.

Third, history does not suggest that repatriated profits will make much difference to the economy.

A 2004 law temporarily cut taxes on repatriated profits to 5.25 percent from 35 percent. That prompted 843 companies to bring back \$312 billion. But those companies tended to use the money to buy back shares of their own stock, not to hire or expand operations.

A 2011 Congressional Research Service report found that the tax holiday "did not increase domestic investment or employment."

Associated Press writers Josh Boak and Paul Wiseman contributed to this report.

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

## Why GOP tax plan could mean cuts in state and local services

By JOSH BOAK, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's a tax provision that could prove costly for schools, police forces, drug treatment centers and other state and local public services.

The sweeping tax overhaul embraced by President Donald Trump and Republican lawmakers would impose a \$10,000 limit on the combined sum of property and state and local income taxes that a household could deduct. The \$10,000 cap will help pay for corporate and personal tax cuts totaling \$1.5 trillion over the next decade.

Conservatives have argued that unlimited state and local deductions amount to a federal subsidy for the wealthy in high-tax states like New York, New Jersey and California. But many middle class families in those states face disproportionately high housing costs and depend on deducting their state and local taxes. These households could soon pressure states and localities to ease their burden by cutting taxes — which would likely force cuts to social programs and public services.

Some Republicans in high-tax states resisted their party's cap on local and state deductions. Two of them — Reps. Darrell Issa of California and Lee Zeldin of New York — oppose the overall tax measure because of the likelihood that it would hurt their constituents. And despite Republican arguments to the contrary, high-tax states already tend to send more money to Washington than they receive back in federal spending.

"On balance, this bill remains a geographic redistribution of wealth — taking extra money from a place like New York to pay for deeper tax cuts elsewhere," Zeldin said. "This bill chooses winners and losers in a way that could have and should have been avoided."

More than 73 percent of homeowners in Westchester County just north of New York City face property taxes alone that exceed \$10,000. This means they couldn't deduct any state or local income taxes. The same is true of half of Manhattan homeowners, a quarter of those in San Francisco, 17 percent of suburban Chicago homeowners and 10 percent of those in Arlington, Virginia, just outside of Washington, D.C., according to figures tracked by Attom Data Solutions.

The limit on the deduction could lead taxpayers there to demand lower taxes or to reject any additional funding requests for state pensions, schools, public safety and health services. What's more, a separate provision in the Republican tax bill would no longer subsidize employers that help their employees pay their commuter costs. This change will likely increase the cost of public transit for riders.

The overall tax bill would impose new costs on many taxpayers that would outweigh any savings on federal taxes, argues Matthew Chase, executive director of the National Association of Counties.

"We don't see it as a net gain for taxpayers," Chase said. "They want to strangle our revenue sources."

The National Education Association, a teachers union, estimated that the cap on state and local deductions could put at risk \$15.2 billion in annual public school spending, or \$304 per pupil. Marc Egan, the association's director of government relations, said the change could discourage local governments from investing in education and might eventually depress economic growth.

"We're always making the case that investing in education is a common-sense way to grow the economy," Egan said. "Why Congress continues to resist that on a number of fronts is a mystery."

Even as Republicans in Congress decided to cap the state and local tax deduction for households at \$10,000, their tax bill will continue to allow corporations to deduct their state and local taxes as a business cost.

Since the federal income tax code was introduced in 1913, Americans have been allowed to exclude the taxes they pay to state and local governments. Roughly a third of taxpayers have enough expenses to itemize their deductions. And nearly all who do so deduct their state, local and property taxes. These



deductions have helped make it affordable for cities and states to fund school systems, health care services and police forces, while making it more acceptable for a community's richest households to pay taxes that can help the poorest.

The Republican tax bill nearly doubles — to \$24,000 — a family's standard deduction, which goes to taxpayers who don't itemize their deductions. So there would automatically be fewer people who would deduct their state and local taxes. But in addition, many households in high-tax states could no longer itemize their deductions because of the new cap on state and local taxes. This could reduce the perceived value of these taxes and incentivize voters to push for lower state and local taxes — a stated goal of some conservatives.

Gov. Bill Haslam has said he thinks the tax overhaul could encourage more people to move from high-tax states to his state of Tennessee, which charges no state income tax.

"We think it actually will encourage both investment growth and population growth in Tennessee," Haslam said.

High-tax states are already considering adjustments to their policies. Steve Sweeney, president of the New Jersey Senate, has warned that the bill could derail his state's planned tax increase on millionaires. That idea, estimated to generate about \$600 million in revenue, is a central pledge of Democratic Gov.-elect Phil Murphy's agenda to help raise pension payments and school funding. Murphy has said he is still committed to the tax hike on wealthy earners. But if lawmakers now balk, its prospects become more problematic.

California lawmakers are considering ways to restructure the state's tax code to limit the impact on its taxpayers, said Assemblyman Phil Ting, a San Francisco Democrat. Speculation has centered on reducing income taxes and raising payroll taxes — in effect, shifting some of the state tax burden from workers to employers.

"We're looking at a variety of alternatives," Ting said.

Allowing up to \$10,000 of state and local taxes to continue to be deducted, he said, "takes it from horrible to slightly less horrible."

AP writers Erik Schelzig contributed to this report from Nashville, Jonathan Cooper from Sacramento and Michael Catalini from Trenton.

## Christmas tail: Europe deal could slow yuletide lobster biz

By PATRICK WHITTLE, Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — A trade deal between Canada and the European Union could amount to a lump of coal for the U.S. at Christmastime.

The Christmas season is typically a busy time of year for American seafood exporters, as the type of lobster that is native to North America is popular in some European countries around the holiday. But Canada and the EU brokered a deal this year that gets rid of tariffs on Canadian lobster exports to the 28-nation bloc.

Canada, the world's other major lobstering nation, is now at an economic advantage over the U.S. Members of the U.S. lobster industry, which is based in New England, said exports to Europe have been pretty typical this year, but they're worried about the future.

"Dealing with Christmas orders, there's going to be more pressure, and then the next year there's going to be even more," said Spencer Fuller, a lobster buyer for Cozy Harbor Seafood in Portland, Maine. "It's on the horizon."

The new trade rules, called the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement Implementation Act, or CETA, cleared their final hurdle in May. The tariffs for fish and seafood had been averaging 11 percent, and the EU is the biggest importer of seafood in the world, importing nearly \$300 million in American and Canadian lobster last year.

The rules are taking effect as American lobster exports to some key European nations have tailed some-

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what in recent years. Exports to France fell from more than \$42 million in 2006 to less than \$27 million in 2016. Spain's imports dipped from \$51.6 million to \$42.6 million in that time, and business is also down slightly in Italy, another major importer.

Canada's lobster exports to the European Union, measured in Canadian dollars, grew from about \$88 million in 2013 to more than \$192 million last year, according to statistics provided by the Canadian government. The value of the Canadian dollar has slid to about 78 cents on the American dollar in that time.

Meanwhile, lobster exports to Asia have exploded. China imported less than \$800,000 in U.S. lobsters in 2006 and took in more than \$108 million last year.

The trade rules could instead end up hurting American shippers during slower parts of the year, said Stephanie Nadeau, owner of The Lobster Company in Arundel, Maine. There might be enough demand to go around in busy times such as Christmas, but it could dry up during the slow season, she said.

"It puts us at a huge disadvantage," she said. "When it's slow, it's really going to hurt the domestic shippers."

The U.S. has more than enough lobsters to send to Europe. The country's lobster fleet, based mostly in Maine and Massachusetts, caught a record of 158.5 million pounds (71.9 million kilograms) of lobster in 2016. Some in the fishery suspect a lower figure in 2017, but statistics won't be compiled until early next year.

In Canada, members of the lobster industry cheer both the high catch volumes and the relaxed trade rules. A lot of U.S. lobsters get sent to Canada for processing and eventually find their way to Europe and beyond, said Jerry Amirault, president of the Lobster Processors Association of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

"We have a very close relationship with U.S. landings," he said.

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, Dec. 18, the 352nd day of 2017. There are 13 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 18, 1892, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's ballet "The Nutcracker" publicly premiered in St. Petersburg, Russia; although now considered a classic, it received a generally negative reception from critics.

On this date:

In 1787, New Jersey became the third state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1863, in a speech to the Prussian Parliament, Prime Minister Otto von Bismarck declared, "Politics is not an exact science."

In 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery, was declared in effect by Secretary of State William H. Seward.

In 1912, fossil collector Charles Dawson reported to the Geological Society of London his discovery of supposed early human remains at a gravel pit in Piltdown. (More than four decades later, Piltdown Man was exposed as a hoax.)

In 1916, during World War I, the 10-month Battle of Verdun ended with French troops succeeding in repulsing a major German offensive.

In 1917, Congress passed the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibiting "the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors" and sent it to the states for ratification.

In 1944, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the government's wartime evacuation of people of Japanese descent from the West Coast while at the same time ruling that "concededly loyal" Americans of Japanese ancestry could not continue to be detained.

In 1956, Japan was admitted to the United Nations. The panel game show "To Tell the Truth" debuted on CBS-TV.

In 1969, Britain's House of Lords joined the House of Commons in making permanent a 1965 ban on the death penalty for murder.

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In 1972, the United States began heavy bombing of North Vietnamese targets during the Vietnam War. (The bombardment ended 11 days later.)

In 1980, former Soviet Premier Alexei N. Kosygin died at age 76.

In 1992, Kim Young-sam was elected South Korea's first civilian president in three decades.

Ten years ago: The White House said President George W. Bush had approved "a significant reduction" in the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile, cutting it to less than one-quarter its size at the end of the Cold War. The U.N. Security Council voted unanimously to extend the U.S.-led multinational force in Iraq for one year. Jacob Zuma was elected leader of the African National Congress, South Africa's ruling party, defeating incumbent Thabo Mbeki (TAH'-boh um-BEH'-kee).

Five years ago: Classes resumed in Newtown, Connecticut, except at Sandy Hook Elementary School, the scene of a massacre four days earlier. Two bank robbers pulled off a daring escape from downtown Chicago's high-rise jail by scaling down 17 stories using a makeshift rope. (Kenneth Conley and Jose Banks were later recaptured.) Texas A&M quarterback Johnny Manziel became the first freshman to be voted The Associated Press Player of the Year in college football.

One year ago: A suicide bomber blew himself up outside a military camp in the southern Yemeni city of Aden, killing at least 52 soldiers; the Islamic State group's Yemen-based affiliate claimed responsibility. Actress Zsa Zsa Gabor died at her Los Angeles home at age 99.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Cicely Tyson is 93. Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark is 90. Actor Roger Mosley is 79. Rock singer-musician Keith Richards is 74. Writer-director Alan Rudolph is 74. Movie producer-director Steven Spielberg is 71. Blues artist Ron Piazza is 70. Movie director Gillian Armstrong is 67. Movie reviewer Leonard Maltin is 67. Rock musician Elliot Easton is 64. Actor Ray Liotta is 62. Comedian Ron White is 61. R&B singer Angie Stone is 56. Actor Brad Pitt is 54. Professional wrestler-turned-actor "Stone Cold" Steve Austin is 53. Actor Shawn Christian is 52. Actress Rachel Griffiths is 49. Singer Alejandro Sanz is 49. Actor Casper Van Dien is 49. Country/rap singer Cowboy Troy is 47. Rapper DMX is 47. International Tennis Hall of Famer Arantxa Sanchez Vicario is 46. DJ Lethal (Limp Bizkit) is 45. Pop singer Sia is 42. Country singer Randy Houser is 41. Actor Josh Dallas is 39. Actress Katie Holmes is 39. Actor Ravi Patel is 39. Singer Christina Aguilera is 37. Christian rock musician Dave Luetkenhoelter (Kutless) is 35. Actress Ashley Benson is 28. Actress-singer Bridgit Mendler is 25. Actress Isabella Cramp is 13.

Thought for Today: "Being jealous of a beautiful woman is not going to make you more beautiful." — Zsa Zsa Gabor (1917-2016).