

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Dec. 29, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 173 ~ 1 of 30

Chicken Soup  
for the Soul

"The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written. We can help write that story by setting goals."

-Melody Beattie

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**Dakota Outdoors**

**Erik Dean**

402 N Main St  
Aberdeen, SD 57401  
605.229.0123

dakoutdoors@midconetwork.com

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

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

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Ah - feels so good to be back in my chair after a long morning of activity. Tina had to wake me up at 5 a.m. as the pain medicine apparently knocked me out cold. I didn't hear my alarm clock going off.

The girls and I did the paper routes and when we got home, we were settled back into bed (sofa for me) for more rest when my alarm went off again. Rats - I had an appointment at 8:45 a.m. for a wrapping change. So it was off to Aberdeen in the snow. We got to our appointment and I saw the staples in my ankle for the first time. I'm surprised it doesn't hurt more than it does from the way it looks. But I'm not complaining.

After the wrapping was done, we stopped at Great Western Bank to try and open up our HSA for 2018. We went through the drive-through and I asked if we could get the necessary paperwork to complete. They wanted me to

come inside as everything was on the computer. I wasn't up for the task so we left there.

Then it was downtown to see what it would cost to fix Jeslyn's iPhone. She accidentally dropped it last night while helping me with the paper. Tina told me the price quote, and then it dawned on me that we had insurance. So we stopped at the phone place in Aberdeen. Tina went inside to turn in the claim and one will be shipped out in 24 hours for about \$75 less than what it would have cost to get it fixed.

Jeslyn also needed a new winter coat so Tina and girls went into Walmart to do some shopping. I stayed in the pickup where I actually applied for an HSA on-line through Thrivent Financial - as I already have life insurance with them.

Then it was time to come home. We stopped at the office downtown to do something at the fitness center with the keypad controller. The girls shoveled the sidewalk and we came home.

When we got home, our dog, Jake, was heading for the door to go outside and I headed for the sofa to rest my ankle. All is well and it's another great day!

## 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**

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## WE ARE ALL FIRST RESPONDERS

The Year 2017 brought high winds, fire and floods to our nation in the form of devastating wildfire and hurricane seasons. These events impacted millions of individuals and families across the country and devastated countless communities. The response to these events challenged the nation's emergency management capabilities, and recovery efforts will go on for years to come.

FEMA has a central role in both response and recovery efforts as the federal government's coordinator of emergency management operations. But that role is often misunderstood, with FEMA being viewed as a first responder rather than an extension of state and local capabilities. In reality, when an event occurs, response is led by local leaders and officials, who have the greatest understanding of impacts to a community and have vital local knowledge needed to respond immediately. When local resources are insufficient, the state and ultimately the federal government can be called upon to fill needs and provide financial and technical support.

The disasters of 2017 demonstrated that this country must continue to build up its emergency management capacity at all levels. FEMA continues to hire outstanding individuals who strongly believe in the mission of supporting our communities after a disaster. But that alone is not enough. We must continue to work with our state, local and tribal partners to build capabilities and we must be able to work with each other, whether it be a flood in South Dakota, a wildfire in Montana or a tornado in Colorado.

Even more important may be instilling a culture of preparedness and resiliency within our population. To that end, I believe here in the West we already have a great deal of that in our makeup. In communities across the Plains and Rockies, we understand the importance of helping neighbors and relying on ourselves. Our close-knit communities are one of our greatest advantages when it comes to dealing with natural hazards.

Building a strong national emergency management capability is like building a house brick by brick. There are the bricks for government agencies, for voluntary organizations, the business community, and the individual, with FEMA serving as the mortar. In order to ensure that our communities will be able to withstand and rebuild after any hazard event, it is vital that as Americans we understand that we are all first responders.

In November 2017, Lee dePalo was named as the Regional Administrator for FEMA Region 8, serving Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming and the 28 Tribal Nations located within those states.



Lee dePalo



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")**

## South Dakota Community Foundation Announces Round 3 Community Innovation Grant Recipients

Round 3 of the South Dakota Community Foundation (SDCF) 2017 Community Innovation Grant (CIG) program has been completed. Fifteen South Dakota nonprofits will receive grant awards. Offered in partnership with the Bush Foundation, the Community Innovation Grant program supports efforts to find breakthrough solutions to community challenges across the state.

"The South Dakota Community Foundation received thirty-four applications in Round 3 and selected these fifteen nonprofits to implement inclusive, collaborative and resourceful solutions that will benefit all our state's citizens," says Ginger Niemann, SDCF program officer. "Round 3 resulted in over \$141,000 being distributed between the selected grantees. We are grateful to the Bush Foundation for their past and continued investment in our state."

The SDCF Grantmaking Committee chose to financially support the following projects:

### Statewide

- Call to Freedom, Inc.: \$10,000

Call to Freedom's mission is to assist individuals transitioning out of sex trafficking and transitioning to self-sufficiency. Funds will help support the development of a comprehensive strategic plan that will allow Call to Freedom to better address the increase in sex trafficking incidents. They seek to expand efforts to help sex trafficking victims by creating a multi-system collaboration involving current Call to Freedom staff and task force members, law enforcement, members of the judicial systems, parents, teachers, medical providers, therapists, Department of Social Services staff, professional advisors as well as sex trafficking survivors.

- Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment (CPCM): \$10,000

Born out of the work of Jolene's Law Task Force, CPCM aims to end child maltreatment in the state. CPCM at the University of South Dakota is the first organization to join tribal, state and federal efforts in the fight against sexual abuse and other forms of maltreatment. The Advisory Board will explore three new phases in this process and will include leaders in law enforcement, child protective and advocacy services, the judicial system, state departments and state legislators.

- NAMI South Dakota: \$10,000

With their focus on volunteer retention, NAMI South Dakota will create a series of training modules for volunteer leaders based on survey results. An Education and Training consultant will work with the nine NAMI State Affiliates as well as the Pine Ridge, Rosebud and Cheyenne River Reservations to strengthen, increase and retain volunteer leadership. The consultant will lead the focus groups and follow up with a survey to determine the most critical issues faced by each of the affiliates and identify strategies to deal with them.

- SDSU Extension: \$10,000

SDSU Extension is partnering with several key stakeholders to pilot a nutrition incentive program called Double Up Food Bucks! in South Dakota. This program doubles the amount of money that SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) participants can spend on locally grown fruits and vegetables at farmers markets. The pilot program will initially support five farmers markets including urban, rural and native communities, two mobile markets and shared branding across South Dakota.

- South Dakota 4-H: \$10,000

South Dakota 4-H adopted the Science of Agriculture (SOA) process to engage youth in science, technology and engineering through hands-on exploration of Ag issues. The SOA process emphasizes youth working closely with adult mentors who guide them through their projects and provide insight into potential Ag

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careers and pathways. Pilot sites will be chosen across the state from many different areas (urban, rural and reservations). Teams from middle and high school will be formed and a statewide SOA Challenge will be held in May at SDSU to showcase the projects.

- South Dakota State University (SDSU): \$9,252

SDSU is implementing a Proof of Concept pilot project that will provide education and training to Nurse Practitioners in the use of digital healthcare. Partners on this project include CareSpan USA, Advanced Practice Nurses, SDSU and Health Associates, Inc. The project will introduce a digital cloud-based system in South Dakota capable of providing low cost, high quality primary and chronic care management to clients in their own home regardless of the location of the doctor and patient.

## Eastern South Dakota

- Eureka Community Development Company (Eureka): \$10,000

Partnering with Dakota Resources and the City of Eureka, the Eureka Community Development Company is being guided by Empower! Dakota to help make things happen in Eureka. A team has come together to get behind Eureka's "Building Hometown Possibilities". Initiative teams are promoting identified priorities. Monthly team coaching is developing leadership in team members as they work on goal setting, action plans, finding necessary resources and putting plans into action.

- Family Visitation Center (Sioux Falls): \$9,784

Family Visitation Center provides supervised visitation services for children in a safe, monitored environment in which they can establish, maintain and further develop a relationship with an adult. Through meetings with attorneys and judges to discuss gaps in service, they have drafted a proposed tiered system, for safe supervised visitations. Their intent is to incentivize non-custodial parents by providing opportunities to them to earn longer or more frequent visits with fewer restrictions based on their compliance with rules and/or guidelines.

- Habitat for Humanity – South Dakota (Brookings): \$10,000

Partnering with multiple organizations, Habitat for Humanity – South Dakota will initiate an increased energy efficiency pilot program for manufactured homes, with a focus on mobile homes. Heating and cooling an older mobile home can cost twice as much as a site-built home of comparable size and age. This pilot program will promote a healthy and safe environment while educating occupants to ensure energy savings for homeowners.

- Leola Community Advancement (Leola): \$10,000

Leola is working to identify community needs and desires. One area of interest is the development and uniform access to the area's lake. Leola Community Advancement will focus particularly on addressing their housing shortage, developing ways to attract a workforce and improving access to wellness and health care resources in the community.

- Tripp Area Community Foundation (Tripp): \$10,000

The Tripp Area Community Foundation plans to work with Dakota Resources through their Empower Dakota Community Engagement process. A comprehensive plan will be laid out for the city of Tripp that will help address growth and demands that the community may face for decades to come. Partners in this endeavor include the Tripp Area Community Foundation, the Tripp Action Group and community leaders.

- United Way & Volunteer Services of Greater Yankton (Yankton): \$6,500

According to Feeding South Dakota, 1 in 6 people in the greater Yankton community are food insecure. There are currently 12 direct hunger relief agencies working in the Yankton area. The United Way & Vol-

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unteer Services of Greater Yankton will investigate the possibility of development of a Greater Yankton Hunger Collaborative. Twenty key stakeholders have signed on and they have identified a consultant to spearhead this effort. They plan to engage the community, develop a needs assessment and collect data that will impact families.

## Western South Dakota

- Catholic Social Services (Rapid City): \$6,000

Catholic Social Services brought together more than twenty community non-profits and agencies with an interest in moving children and families out of poverty creating Uplifting Parents. The Uplifting Parents Program will result in the formation of the UP Parents Group, comprised of both current and past Program UP participants. These participants will provide continual feedback on the program structure and ways staff can change or strengthen intervention efforts. The council will also develop gatherings and events so that families have a chance to network and improve their support systems through peer mentoring.

- Children's Home Society of South Dakota (Rapid City & Hot Springs): \$10,000

The Children's Home Society of South Dakota formed the "Why Not You?" Task Force to address the shortage of foster and adoptive families in Western South Dakota. Of concern are those children who "age out" of the system without ever finding a family. Children's Home Society will promote public awareness, host recruitment events in both Rapid City and Hot Springs and provide outreach, education and retention activities to current foster care and adoptive families.

- Custer Economic Development Corporation (Custer) \$10,000

The Custer Economic Development Corporation will continue their work with a Dakota Resources Community coach on Empower! Dakota. Ultimately, their goal is to develop a community plan that the community owns, takes responsibility for and will hold themselves accountable. Five initiative areas they have identified to work on include: housing, education, recreation, business, economic development and tourism.

A total of \$400,000 will be available to nonprofits in 2018. The first round for 2018 will open on January 15, 2018 and closes on February 16, 2018. Interested organizations can visit <https://sdcommunityfoundation.org/for-nonprofits/community-innovation-grants/> to review the grant guidelines, deadlines and application instructions. In order to qualify, a nonprofit must be IRS Publication 78 verified or have a fiscal sponsor. Any questions regarding the program can be directed to Ginger Niemann by phone at 800.888.1842 or by email [gniemann@sdcommunityfoundation.org](mailto:gniemann@sdcommunityfoundation.org).

## About the SDCF

Since 1987, the South Dakota Community Foundation has helped people reach their philanthropic goals and strengthened communities across the state. The SDCF administers over \$300 million in total assets for over 850 funds. By commingling endowed assets, the SDCF gives its partners enhanced investment opportunities that provide long-term support to charitable causes. In 2016, the SDCF distributed nearly \$12.9 million in grants from all funds administered. For more information, visit [SDCommunityFoundation.org](http://SDCommunityFoundation.org).

## About the Bush Foundation

The Bush Foundation invests in great ideas and the people who power them. Established in 1953 by 3M Executive Archibald Bush and his wife Edyth, the Foundation encourages individuals and organizations to think bigger and think differently about what is possible in communities across Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geographic area.

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## Art Students! Art Teachers!

Wood ducks on a pond, snow geese flying in V formation, yellow fuzzy goslings in a nest –

Students K – 12 are invited to create a drawing or painting of a waterfowl species in its natural habitat and enter the art into the South Dakota Junior Duck Stamp Contest.

It is as easy as researching a waterfowl species, learning about its habitat, then painting or drawing an original creation sharing the details and information discovered.

The artwork must be 9" x 12", and horizontal. It must be a portrayal of a native North American waterfowl such as a duck, swan, or goose. The entry may be multi-color, black and white, or a single color in ink, paint, pastel crayon or pencil.

Many prizes will be awarded in the different age groups at the state level. In addition, the winning entry will be entered in the national contest. All the states and territories in the United States are part of the program. The 2017 SD winner was Rachel Henderson of Ipswich.

The Junior Duck Stamp Program connects youth with nature through science and art. It teaches a greater awareness, increasing respect and appreciation for natural resources. Pairing science with visual art strives to initiate curiosity in both subjects. The program is an outreach youth education project of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife.

The entries need to be submitted by March 15, 2018 to the SD Junior Duck Stamp Contest, D.C. Booth HNFH, 423 Hatchery Circle, Spearfish SD 57783.

For more information check the website [sdjuniorduckstamp.org](http://sdjuniorduckstamp.org) or email Karen Holzer at [director@dc-boothfishhatchery.org](mailto:director@dc-boothfishhatchery.org)

## First 2018 Ballot Question Petition Validated by Secretary of State

PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Secretary of State Shantel Krebs announced that the petition submitted for an initiated amendment to the South Dakota Constitution changing campaign finance and lobbying laws, creating a government accountability board, and changing certain initiative and referendum provisions was validated and filed by her office. It is the first ballot question to be placed on the November 6, 2018 General Election Ballot. It will be Constitutional Amendment W.

“My staff have been working diligently to review petitions,” stated Secretary Krebs. “An Initiated Constitutional Amendment requires 27,741 valid signatures in order to be placed on the ballot. This initiated constitutional amendment petition included 49,966 signatures. We reviewed a random sample of signatures, and 71.37 percent were found to be valid.”

Any citizen may challenge the Secretary of State’s approval of a ballot measure and must submit an original, signed affidavit to the South Dakota Secretary of State’s office within 30 days of validation. Electronic submission of affidavits will not be accepted. In this case, the deadline for a challenge would be Monday, January 29, 2018 by 5 p.m. central time.

The remaining seven petitions will be reviewed by the Secretary of State’s office in the order in which they were received. The South Dakota Legislature also has the ability to include constitutional amendments on the 2018 ballot and South Dakota citizens have the ability to submit a referendum petition concerning laws passed during the 2018 Legislative session.

For more detailed information on potential 2018 Ballot Questions, [click here](#).

2-1-17.1. Submission of affidavit challenging petition to secretary of state--Appeal. Within thirty days after a statewide petition for an initiated constitutional amendment, initiated measure, or referendum has been validated and filed, any interested person who has researched the signatures contained on the petition may submit an affidavit to the Office of Secretary of State to challenge the petition. The affidavit shall include an itemized listing of each specific deficiency in question. Any challenge to the following items is prohibited under this challenge process:

- (1) Signer does not live at address listed on the petition;
- (2) Circulator does not live at address listed on the petition;
- (3) Circulator listed a residence address in South Dakota but is not a South Dakota resident;
- (4) Circulator did not witness the signers;
- (5) Signatures not included in the random sample; and
- (6) Petition that was originally rejected.

Any challenge by the same person or party in interest shall be included in one affidavit.

The original signed affidavit shall be received by the Office of Secretary of State by 5:00 p.m. central time on the deadline date. If the affidavit challenges any item that is prohibited by this section, only that line item shall summarily be rejected. A challenge to a line item is not a challenge to the petition as a whole.

The secretary of state’s decision regarding a challenge may not be challenged a second time with the secretary of state, but may be appealed to the circuit court of Hughes County. If a person fails to challenge a petition pursuant to this section, it does not deny that person any other legal remedy to challenge the filing of an initiative or referendum petition in circuit court. A challenge to a petition in circuit court may include items prohibited in this section.



**Secretary of State Shantel Krebs, Deputy Secretary of Elections Kea Warne and State Election Coordinator Christine Lehrkamp receiving petitions from ballot question sponsor Mitch Richter on October 18, 2017**



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## Today in Weather History

December 29, 2005: Heavy snow of 6 to 14 inches fell across parts of north central and most of north-east South Dakota from the morning of the 29th through the early afternoon of the 30th. Big Stone and Traverse counties in west central Minnesota had 7 to 8 inches of snow the evening of the 29th through the early afternoon of the 30th. Light rain and freezing rain fell before the snow, creating some slick roads which resulted in some accidents. Some snowfall amounts included 7 inches at Watertown, Big Stone City, and Artichoke Lake; 8 inches at Waubay, Browns Valley, and Wheaton; 9 inches northeast of Isabel and Hecla; 10 inches at Wilmot and Clear Lake; 12 inches at Milbank; and 14 inches at Summit.

1830 - A very heavy snowstorm ushered in the "winter of the deep snow." The storm produced 30 inches of snow at Peoria IL and 36 inches at Kansas City MO. Cold and snow continued until the middle of February causing great suffering among pioneers. (David Ludlum)

December 29, 1876: The Pacific Express train was crossing the Ashtabula River in Ohio when the bridge collapsed. The bridge collapsed at 7:28 PM, during a snowstorm that left two feet of snow and produced 40 mph winds. The only railcar not to fall into the icy river below was the first locomotive.

1894 - A severe freeze hit Florida destroying fruit and causing considerable damage to trees. (David Ludlum)

1954 - Fort Scott, KS, was buried under 26 inches of snow in 24 hours to establish a state record. (28th-29th) (The Weather Channel)

1984 - One hundred cities in the central and eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures. Kansas City, MO, experienced its warmest December day of record with a morning low of 60 degrees and an afternoon high of 71 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1987 - A storm off the Middle Atlantic Coast produced heavy snow in the Appalachians and the north-eastern U.S. Snow and high winds created blizzard conditions in southeastern Massachusetts. Cape Cod received thirteen inches of snow, and snow drifts three feet deep were reported around Chatham MA. Strong winds produced wind chill readings as cold as 60 degrees below zero in southwestern New England. In the western U.S., a Pacific coast storm produced heavy snow in the Sierra Nevada Range of California, with 24 inches reported at Mammoth Mountain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1988 - A cold front brought rain and snow to the northwestern U.S. The rainfall total of 2.70 inches at Astoria OR was a record for the date. High winds along the eastern slopes of the Northern Rockies gusted to 81 mph at Livingston MT. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Snow and ice prevailed from the southwestern U.S. to the Great Lakes Region. Flagstaff, AZ, received nine inches of snow in just six hours. Bitter cold weather continued over Maine. Portland ME reported a record twenty-two straight days with highs 32 degrees or colder. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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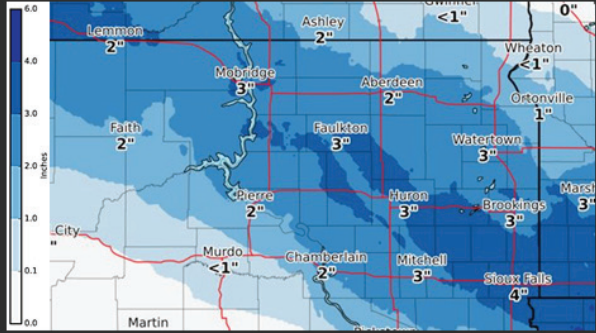
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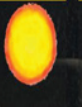




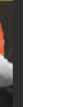
**Wind Chill Warning**

This Afternoon	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	New Year's Day
 50%			 30%			
Chance Snow	Mostly Cloudy	Cold	Chance Snow then Mostly Cloudy	Cold	Mostly Clear	Cold
High: 4 °F	Low: -19 °F	High: -11 °F	Low: -23 °F	High: -7 °F	Low: -23 °F	High: -1 °F

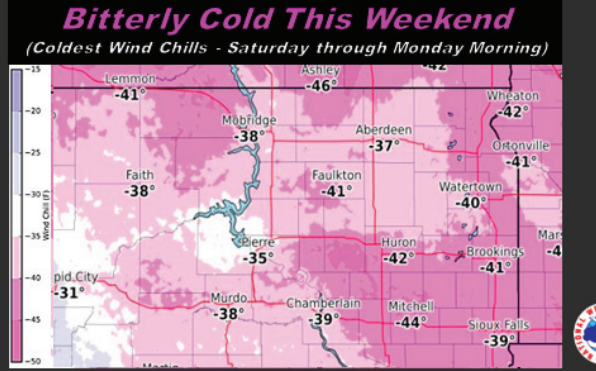
## Light Snow Today And Saturday, While Becoming Bitterly Cold

### Expected Snowfall Amounts through Today (Midnight to 6 pm Friday)



Today	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu
						
4° -18° 100% N 8-12	-11° -20° 35% N 8-12	-7° -23° 10% NW 6-10	-1° -13° 0% SW 5-9	14° -5° 5% NW 9-13	6° -10° 5% N 9-13	11° 2° 5% S 7-11

### Bitterly Cold This Weekend (Coldest Wind Chills - Saturday through Monday Morning)



**Take It Slow** when encountering snow covered roads. Visibility in falling snow could be reduced to less than 1 mile at times.

**Limit time spent outdoors**  
If you go outside, dress warmly and cover all exposed skin

**National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD**  
Updated: 12/29/2017 4:12 AM Central

Published on: 12/29/2017 at 4:17AM

One to three inches of snow today, then another 1 to 2 inches possible Saturday, especially out along the Interstate 90 corridor in south central South Dakota. Turning dangerously cold with the kind of wind chills that can cause frostbite on exposed skin within minutes. Stay warm and safe this New Year's Holiday weekend!

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## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 12.2**

**Low Outside Temp: -5.9**

**High Gust: 2**

**Precip: 0.00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 59° in 1999**

**Record Low: -35° in 1917**

**Average High: 23°F**

**Average Low: 3°F**

**Average Precip in Dec: 0.48**

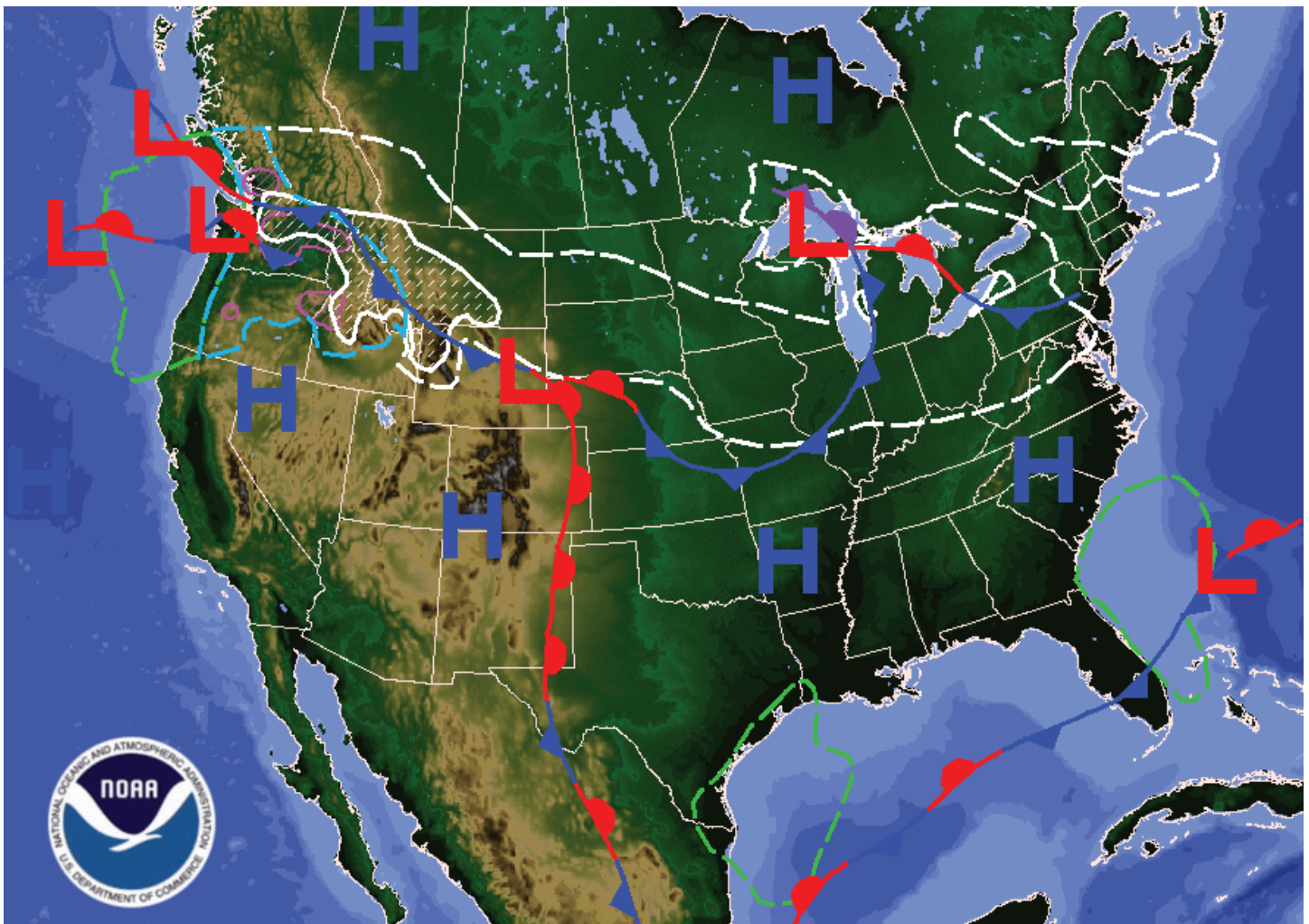
**Precip to date in Dec: 0.00**

**Average Precip to date: 21.68**

**Precip Year to Date: 13.47**

**Sunset Tonight: 4:58 p.m.**

**Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:13 a.m.**



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, Dec 29, 2017, issued 3:53 AM EST  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by Tate 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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## WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2018

As we come to the close of this year and face the uncertainties that are before us in the year to come, it is important to pause, listen to and accept a promise from our God:

"For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you search for me with all your heart, you will find me, declares the Lord."

This is one of God's if – thens. There can be no misunderstanding of what He is talking about in this passage of Scripture. God knows our future. He very carefully designed it in our best interest to enable us to find and follow His will. Because He knows our future, He assures us that it can be one of goodness and hope – not one of disaster.

But if we want this future that contains goodness and hope we must study His Word and go to Him in earnest prayer. He assures us that He will listen to us but then we must also search for Him with all of our hearts.

Perhaps we have prayed and even searched for Him in years past, but did not do so with all our heart.

Prayer: Lord, may we come to You this year with a sincerity and singleness of heart to find Your plans. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

## 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 woman dies from cold exposure after car crash**

REVILLO, S.D. (AP) — Police say an 83-year-old woman died from exposure to the cold after crashing her car in eastern South Dakota.

KELO-TV reports that police believe Nina Brandenburg left her car to look for help after crashing on a gravel road near the tiny rural town of Revillo last weekend. Revillo is just west of the Minnesota state line and about 115 miles (185 kilometers) north of Sioux Falls.

Police officers found the car first, but with no driver inside. They found Brandenburg's body in a ditch the next day. Authorities said she had died of exposure. The National Weather Service says temperatures in the area fell as low as 2 degrees (-17 Celsius) overnight.

Information from: KELO-TV, <http://www.keloland.com>

### **Winter-weary US dealing with headaches at home, on highways**

By **JOHN SEEWER, Associated Press**

TOLEDO, Ohio (AP) — The glow of a white Christmas is long gone. Now it's just winter across much of the Midwest and East Coast, where bitter temperatures and snow squalls have been blamed for a handful of deaths and canceled a long list of New Year's celebrations.

Already winter-weary parts of the nation are dealing with a mounting number of weather-related headaches, from highway pileups to frozen pipes and a rash of car thefts.

Icy roadways in central Michigan caused more 30 crashes on highways near Flint on Friday morning. Coastal South Carolina saw a rare bout of freezing rain and drizzle on Friday that forced bridges from Charleston to Myrtle Beach to shut down for de-icing.

Police in the Cincinnati area say a half-dozen cars have been stolen in recent days after being left running unattended by owners trying to warm them up. Cincinnati police warned in a Tweet that leaving your car running means "the only person who will be warm is the thief who stole your car."

More snow is on the way in Erie, Pennsylvania, where 65 inches have fallen since Christmas Eve. Now parts of the surrounding county could get up to 16 inches of more snow by Sunday.

A call center set up to help people dig out has been overwhelmed. "The phones have been ringing off the hook," said Josh Jaeger, a coordinator for the center told the Erie Times-News.

Cleanup continued inside Michigan State University's basketball arena after a frozen water pipe burst and flooded a hallway, but the mess wasn't expected to interrupt a game Friday.

Several deaths have been linked to the wintry weather during the past week.

In South Dakota, an 83-year-old woman died from exposure to the cold after she crashed her car and then got out to look for help. Search crews found her body in a ditch on Sunday. Three people were found dead in a canal along Lake Erie earlier this week after their car slid off an icy road.

The National Weather Service predicts another blast of arctic air will chill much of the eastern two-thirds of the U.S. through the weekend and into 2018.

Temperatures could fall into the single digits as far south as Oklahoma and sink to zero or below Friday night in Nebraska and Iowa and remain there for at least three days.

"It's pretty unusual to get that long of a streak where it's completely below zero," said Iowa's State Climatologist Harry Hillaker. "Historically, that doesn't happen very often in Des Moines."

The Pacific Northwest and northern Rockies were bracing for storms that forecasters warned could bring several feet of mountain snow and freezing rain.

With the bitter cold expected to stick around, many New Year's Eve plans are being scuttled.

Shore towns in New Jersey canceled plans for polar bear plunges in the Atlantic Ocean and organizers

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pulled the plug on the annual light bulb drop in Sunbury, Pennsylvania.

Fireworks shows have been called off in Omaha, Nebraska and at Six Flags Great Adventure in New Jersey. And New York City's Coney Island says it will be too cold for free rides on the Wonder Wheel and Thunderbolt roller coaster.

Animal advocates urged people to protect their pets from the cold. Wild animals weren't immune from the dangers of winter either.

In Ohio, wildlife officers mulled how to rescue a deer whose legs were stuck in an ice-covered river. They managed to lasso the deer with a rope and pull it to shore Friday, but they later had to euthanize the injured animal.

## Government ethics measure approved to appear on 2018 ballot

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Supporters of a proposed government ethics constitutional amendment turned in enough valid signatures to put it before voters in 2018, South Dakota's chief elections official said Friday.

Secretary of State Shantel Krebs' office said in a statement that the amendment is the first question to be placed on the November 2018 ballot. The measure's approval could be challenged; the deadline is Jan. 29.

Backers needed nearly 28,000 valid signatures for the amendment to go before voters. Krebs says they turned in about 50,000 signatures, and a random sampling found roughly 71 percent were valid.

The newly dubbed Constitutional Amendment W would tighten campaign finance and lobbying restrictions, create an independent ethics commission and prevent the Legislature from altering or rejecting laws approved by voters without returning to the ballot, among other provisions.

It would replace a voter-imposed ethics overhaul that South Dakota lawmakers repealed this year.

More than 51 percent of voters supported that government ethics initiative last year, but Republican lawmakers scrubbed the initiative from law just months later citing constitutional concerns.

If passed, the new constitutional amendment would largely be protected from legislative changes.

The new amendment would create a seven-member state government accountability board with broad powers to serve as a citizen ethics commission. It would require lawmakers to put \$389,000 annually indexed to inflation into a fund administered by the board.

The panel would investigate allegations of corruption and violations of lobbying, campaign finance and government ethics regulations. It would also have the authority to conduct audits of disclosures including for lobbying and campaign finance and impose sanctions such as fines on public officials.

The new amendment would also lower campaign donation limits. For example, it would decrease the contribution limit for a state representative from \$1,000 a year from individuals to \$500 per election cycle. It would ban donations from corporations and labor unions to candidates or political parties. It also would bar gifts from lobbyists to many public officials.

Currently, there's an annual \$100 limit on gifts that legislators and other public officials can accept from lobbyists, but gifts don't include food, beverage or entertainment for immediate consumption, among other things.

The proposed amendment also prevents the Legislature from changing the ballot question process without a public vote.

## Wheeler County herd quarantined over bovine tuberculosis

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A cattle herd in north-central Nebraska's Wheeler County where a cow tested positive for bovine tuberculosis remains in quarantine as authorities test other animals.

Nebraska Agriculture Department spokeswoman Kristin Kamm said Thursday that none of the cattle has yet been similarly diagnosed. Department staffers also are looking for cattle that may have been pastured next to and had fence line contact with the infected herd. The disease is primarily transmitted through nose to nose contact.

The South Dakota Animal Industry Board earlier this year contacted the Nebraska department as they traced cattle into and out of South Dakota's infected herd. The testing of cattle that were moved into

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Nebraska led to the infected cow in Wheeler County.

Bovine tuberculosis causes severe coughing, fatigue, emaciation and debilitation in cattle and results in reduced milk and meat production.

## Thursday's Scores By The Associated Press

### BOYS' BASKETBALL

Irene-Wakonda 60, Hanson 45  
Jones County 65, Burke/South Central 56  
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 63, Hitchcock-Tulare 47  
Stanley County 57, Kadoka Area 24  
West Central 46, Colman-Egan 43  
Hunkpapa Classic  
Crow Creek 76, Standing Rock, N.D. 62  
Little Wound 60, McLaughlin 44  
Mandaree, N.D. 62, Pine Ridge 59  
Mike Miller Classic  
Bridgewater-Emery 79, Wauwatosa West, Wis. 76  
Prairie Seeds Academy, Minn. 74, Lower Brule 66  
Snowball Classic  
Canton 65, Winner 43  
Hill City 56, Gregory 36  
St. Thomas More Tournament  
Aberdeen Roncalli 64, Belle Fourche 27  
Swiftel Classic  
Canby, Minn. 63, Estelline 38  
Deuel 43, St. Francis Indian 41  
Wilmot 72, Lake Preston 68  
Wolsey Big Bo Classic  
Kimball/White Lake 66, Iroquois 33  
Potter County 64, James Valley Christian 54  
Wolsey-Wessington 71, Leola/Frederick 61

### GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Belle Fourche 62, Aberdeen Roncalli 54  
Burke/South Central 65, Jones County 37  
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 81, Bennett County 32  
Hanson 63, Irene-Wakonda 51  
Howard 64, Sioux Valley 62  
Kadoka Area 64, Stanley County 28  
Lennox 59, Dakota Valley 46  
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 47, Hitchcock-Tulare 39, OT  
Sisseton 58, Northwestern 48  
St. Thomas More 53, Madison 24  
Wyndmere-Lidgerwood, N.D. 55, Britton-Hecla 43  
Hunkpapa Classic  
Little Wound 69, Standing Rock, N.D. 43  
Pine Ridge 90, McLaughlin 80  
Parkston Classic  
Menno 41, Parkston 39



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Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 60, Gayville-Volin 42  
Platte-Geddes 54, Canistota 46  
Redfield/Doland 46, Wagner 42  
Sully Buttes 77, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 44  
Todd County 72, Highmore-Harrold 51  
Snowball Classic  
Winner 64, Canton 33  
Swiftel Classic  
Ethan 53, Alcester-Hudson 16  
Langford 50, Lake Preston 44  
Wolsey Big Bo Classic  
Herreid/Selby Area 47, Kimball/White Lake 36  
Leola/Frederick 51, Wolsey-Wessington 35  
Potter County 59, James Valley Christian 24

## Rising energy costs eyed amid brutal cold snap gripping US

By DAVID SHARP, Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Plunging temperatures across half the country on Thursday underscored a stark reality for low-income Americans who rely on heating aid: Their dollars aren't going to go as far this winter because of rising energy costs.

Forecasters warned people to be wary of hypothermia and frostbite from an arctic blast that's gripping a large swath from the Midwest to the Northeast, where the temperature, without the wind chill factored in, dipped to minus 32 (minus 35 Celsius) on Thursday morning in Watertown, New York.

Even before the cold snap, the Department of Energy projected that heating costs were going to track upward this winter, and many people are keeping a wary eye on their fuel tanks to ensure they don't run out.

The burden caused by higher prices and higher energy usage is felt by all Americans, especially those who struggle to stay warm.

Elizabeth Parker, 88, of Sanford, Maine, said she lives in fear of running out of heating fuel and remains vigilant in monitoring the gauge outside her trailer. She said she is allowed to request a fuel delivery thanks to federal aid, but only when her gauge dips to one-eighth of a tank.

"I couldn't get along without it," said Parker, who lives with her husband, Robert Parker, 93, along with a cat, a dog and four birds.

Prolonged, dangerous cold weather this week has sent advocates for the homeless scrambling to get people off the streets and to bring in extra beds for them. Warming centers also were set up in some locations. Frozen pipes and dead car batteries added to the misery across the region.

President Donald Trump said the East Coast could be facing "the COLDEST New Year's Eve on record" and poked fun at scientists who say the earth, in general, is getting warmer.

"Perhaps we could use a little bit of that good old Global Warming that our Country, but not other countries, was going to pay TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS to protect against," Trump tweeted. "Bundle up!"

Trump has repeatedly expressed skepticism about climate change science, calling global warming a "hoax" created by the Chinese, and has announced his intention to pull the U.S. out of the Paris climate agreement aimed at curbing greenhouse gas production. The U.N.'s weather and climate agency, though, has said 2017 is on track to be the hottest year on record aside from those impacted by the El Nino phenomenon.

In western New York and Erie, Pennsylvania, residents were still cleaning up from massive snowfall. Firefighters had to use a bucket loader to rescue someone trapped in her home in Lorraine, New York.

In Ohio, a dog was found frozen solid on the porch of a house in Toledo, and a third body was recovered near a car that slid off an icy road and flipped into a canal days earlier in the city of Oregon.

Despite the cold, there was some good news for recipients of federal aid from the Low-Income Home

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Energy Assistance Program. Trump, a Republican, released nearly \$3 billion, or roughly 90 percent, of the funding in October after previously trying to eliminate the program.

But projected energy cost increases will effectively reduce the purchasing power by \$330 million, making it imperative that the remaining funds be released, said Mark Wolfe, executive director of the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association.

This winter, energy costs were projected to grow by 12 percent for natural gas, 17 percent for home heating oil, 18 percent for propane and 8 percent for electricity, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Energy prices may even be higher than those projections. According to Wolfe, colder weather could lead to even higher levels of consumption, and resulting prices could push the cost of winter heating up to \$1,800 this winter for those using heating oil, 45 percent more than last year's level.

In North Carolina, the governor signed an emergency declaration to allow heating fuel to be more easily distributed during the chilly blast.

On Thursday, cold weather records were set from Arkansas to Maine, and the cold air will linger through the weekend, reaching as far south as Texas and the Florida Panhandle through the weekend.

In New Hampshire, the cold set a record for the day of minus 34 (minus 37 Celsius) atop the Northeast's highest peak, Mount Washington, where a video was posted showing a weather observer emptying a pitcher of boiling water into the air, where it immediately turns to snow.

In the Midwest, temperatures in Minneapolis aren't expected to top zero (minus 18 Celsius) this weekend, and it likely will be in the teens (minus 11 Celsius to minus 7 Celsius) when the ball drops on New Year's Eve in New York City.

It was so cold officials in New Jersey canceled a New Year's Day polar bear plunge, in which swimmers dash into the Atlantic Ocean.

A winter storm warning was in effect for much of Montana, calling for significant snowfall followed by dangerously cold temperatures as 2017 comes to an end.

## Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorial

By The Associated Press

### Capital Journal, Pierre, Dec. 22

State's attorney resignation another sign of tough fiscal times for counties

The pending resignation of Hughes County State's Attorney Wendy Kloepfner provides yet another example of the struggles county governments are facing.

Kloepfner, as has been noted twice this week in the Capital Journal, has been offered the state's attorney job in Lake County. The job there pays close to \$15,000 more than the position in Hughes County. According to the state's Unified Judicial System, the Lake County job also comes with about a quarter of the felony caseload. It's not hard to understand why the job in Lake County might be pretty attractive.

We all should wish Kloepfner well in her new position. She's done a great job as Hughes County's chief prosecutor. She'll do a great job in Lake County, too.

Still, Kloepfner's resignation will present a bit of a problem. It could be tough to find a replacement. Hughes County currently pays its state's attorney less than other eastern South Dakota counties with comparable populations and less work for prosecutors. Yankton County actually pays its prosecutor a bit more than \$67,000 a year to work part-time, for example.

Data held by the Unified Judicial system show that Hughes County filed 393 felony cases between July 2015 and June 2016. This doesn't count cases filed earlier but that are still pending during the year in question. In simple terms, there's a lot of work to be done.

In fact, national recommendations for criminal defense attorney caseloads max out at about 150 felony cases or about 400 misdemeanor cases per year. There doesn't appear to be a similar recommendation for prosecutors but a prosecutor's workload isn't any easier than a defense attorney's. It should be harder.

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Hughes County does have an assistant state's attorney. The position tends to handle misdemeanors and criminal cases involving juveniles, though.

Criminal prosecution is the biggest part of a state's attorney's job but it isn't the only part. They also are asked to provide county commissions, other elected offices and county government departments with legal advice when needed. That's a big job in and of itself.

What all this boils down to is that we, the residents of Hughes County, ask a heck of a lot from our chief prosecutor and can't pay enough. Based on the fiscal year 2016 SDUJS' filings report, Hughes County filed the fourth highest number of new felony cases of any county in the state at 393. Minnehaha with 3099 new filings, Pennington with 2070 and Coddington with 612 were the top three counties for new felony filings.

Just by way of comparison, Lake County, which likely will be paying Kloeppner \$99,650.64, filed a total of 113 new felony cases in FY16. There were quite a bit fewer misdemeanor cases filed, too. That's important because there's no deputy in Lake County to handle misdemeanors. The Hughes County Commission had been set to raise the state's attorney salary to around \$83,970 next year. For the record, that's a difference of about \$15,680.

That Hughes County can't pay its prosecutor a wage that is commensurate with the work she is asked to complete, isn't the county's fault. A county government's budget is almost entirely made up of mandates created by state government. Those mandates include road maintenance, indigent healthcare and the jail, in addition to criminal prosecution.

Meanwhile, the state legislature has put strict limits on the growth of any given county's main source of revenue — property taxes. Over the last decade or so, property tax revenue just hasn't kept pace with county expenses because it's limited by growth and to the consumer price index or 3 percent, whichever is lower.

Low taxes are great. No one wants to pay more than is required of them. Anyone who says otherwise is blowing smoke. That being said, the time is fast approaching when we're going to have to pay more just to maintain the current level of service.

Hopefully, the Hughes County Commission is able to fill the state's attorney position quickly and without having to blow their budget. If they can't, well that's a bridge we'll need to cross. Provided it's in good repair, which is doubtful given the state of county road funding these days.

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## Madison Daily Leader, Madison, Dec. 27

Upgrades seem costly, but pay off during cold

Local electric utilities, including Madison's municipal department and local rural cooperatives, spend millions to maintain and upgrade their systems.

In Madison's case, a multi-year plan to replace transformers, bury lines underground, and other system changes is well underway and will continue in upcoming years.

Rural electrics are also upgrading their systems, but their circumstances are a bit different. Long distances between some customers mean more miles of wires and poles subject to freezing rain and wind. Wooden poles have a certain lifespan, which can be extended, but still need periodic replacement.

In Sioux Valley Electric's case, about 2,000 miles of a previous generation of underground wires have also been replaced in a multi-year project.

These upgrades always seem expensive at budget-setting time. And when the actual upgrades are made, on a calm, sunny June afternoon, we wonder if it's all necessary.

That answer came this week, when temperatures plummeted below zero in our area. The lack of news about a power outage was the reward. We heard about outages in other parts of the country, perhaps due to unique circumstances, but also perhaps because the utilities there didn't make expensive upgrades to assure reliability.

We all take electric service for granted, but most of us understand in the back of our minds that it's because of previous investment and good planning that we stay warm on such cold days.

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## American News, Aberdeen, Dec. 26

Presentation sisters set the example

Seven of the local Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary recently celebrated milestone jubilees — 50 years, 60 years or 70 years. The women have combined for 440 years of faithful service.

What a great message to send during this holiday season.

Imagine having sparkling records of service for decades, let alone years, months or weeks.

Think about thinking about service to others from the minute you get up until the moment you go to sleep. And when you walk away from conversations with most of these Presentation sisters, you consistently think "what a joyful soul."

Serving with a smile.

Think if all of us were to awaken with a "how can I be a service to others" attitude when we awake. What a difference we would make in our communities, state and world.

Because kindness is contagious.

Sometimes, serving others is easier during the holidays. But what if we, the residents of this region, were to continue those acts of kindness for the rest of the year?

It is so easy to put our heads down and think, "Oh, you are talking about someone else or the person next to me."

But if you are reading this, we are talking about you.

And we are not talking about using money.

Nothing wrong with that, giving your money to the numerous great organizations is a great way of helping those groups achieve their worthy missions.

But at the end of the day, it doesn't cost a penny to be kind to others.

— Words of encouragement lift spirits.

— Helping a fellow shopper in a grocery store can turn a crappy day into a decent one.

— Opening a door for someone else might open that person to helping someone else later in the day.

— And in all cases, do the right thing. We've all experienced times where we thought we were doing the wrong thing in darkness only to look up to see someone else saw us.

We never know who is watching us and how our actions, good or bad, will serve as a lesson to others.

Often, the good people in life talk about the role models in their life who brought out the goodness in them.

Look back to our Dec. 10 story about those seven Presentation sisters in service:

"I went to Presentation College. I met some sisters there who I admired. I was pretty serious about life as a young person. It seemed to me that I only had one life and I wanted to make it special," said Sister Francene Evans, who is celebrating her 60th year as a Presentation sister.

We can all be role models. Every day.

Again, at no cost to us.

Please, do special things in 2018. Brighten up someone else's life. Make your world better.

Do that, and you can become one of those "joyful souls" roaming the earth.

As our friends at Presentation College, nicknamed the Saints, so cleverly worded in their marketing campaign to recruit students: The world needs more Saints.

## Officials: Deadly NYC fire lit by child playing with stove

By JENNIFER PELTZ and DAVID JEANS, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A preschooler toying with the burners on his mother's stove accidentally sparked New York City's deadliest fire in decades, an inferno that quickly overtook an apartment building and blocked the main escape route, the fire commissioner said Friday.

A dozen people died, and four others were fighting for their lives a day after the flames broke out in the century-old building near the Bronx Zoo.

The 3½-year-old-boy, his mother and another child were able to flee their first-floor apartment. But they

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left the door open behind them, and it acted like a chimney that drew smoke and flames into a stairwell. From there, the fire spread throughout the five-story building, authorities said.

At least 20 people scrambled out via fire escapes on a bitterly cold night, but others could not.

"People had very little time to react," Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro said. Firefighters arrived in just over three minutes and saved some people, but "this loss is unprecedented."

The dead included girls ages 1, 2 and 7, and a boy whose age was not given, authorities said.

Fernando Batiz said his 56-year-old sister, Maria Batiz, and her 8-month-old granddaughter also died, though the baby's mother survived.

"The smoke, I guess, overcame her. Everything happened so quick," Batiz said. He described his sister, a home care attendant, as a selfless person who helped him when he was homeless.

"I don't know what to think. I'm still in shock," he said.

Excluding 9/11, it was the deadliest blaze in the city since 87 people were killed at a social club in the same Bronx neighborhood in 1990. A fire in a home in another part of the Bronx killed 10 people, including nine children, in 2007.

The building had roughly 20 apartments, which were home to people from the U.S. and immigrants from the Dominican Republic and Guinea.

About 170 firefighters worked in 15-degree weather to rescue dozens of people.

Residents described opening their front doors to see smoke too thick to walk through and descending icy fire escapes with children in hand. Some escaped barefoot or in their nightclothes.

Huddled in a deli on the block with her family, Crisbel Martinez, 10, cried Friday as she recalled escaping from her fifth-floor apartment with her three older brothers.

One brother's girlfriend was coming into the building when she saw smoke, called him and called police. With their mother at work, the siblings checked and saw the smoke.

"Then we got changed and went through the fire escape," Crisbel said. She spent the night at an aunt's house.

Twum Bredu still did not know Friday what had become of his brother, Emmanuel Mensah, 28. He was staying with a family that escaped the fire safely, but no one could find Mensah, despite checking four hospitals. Still, his family kept looking and hoping for word of him.

"That's my prayer," Bredu said.

Four families sought emergency housing Thursday night from the Red Cross, and the organization expected to get more requests in the coming days, spokesman Michael de Vulpillieres said.

Catastrophic fires at the turn of the 20th century ushered in an era of tougher fire-code enforcement. But the building was too old to be required to have modern fireproofing such as sprinkler systems and interior steel construction.

Building owner Annal Management Co. declined to comment Friday.

The boy who accidentally started the fire had played with stove burners before, Nigro said.

He noted that it's not rare for children to start fires. The fire department gets 75 or more referrals a year to a program that aims to educate children fascinated with fire about its dangers.

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Associated Press Writer Larry Neumeister contributed to this report.

## Mystery writer Sue Grafton dies in California

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Mystery writer Sue Grafton has died in Santa Barbara, California. She was 77.

Her daughter, Jamie Clark, posted news of her mother's death on Grafton's web page Friday.

She says her mother passed away Thursday night after a two-year battle with cancer and was surrounded by family, including Grafton's husband, Steve.

Grafton was the author of the so-called Kinsey Millhone Alphabet Series in which each book title begins with a letter from the alphabet. The last was "Y is for Yesterday."

Her daughter concluded her posting by saying, "the alphabet now ends at Y."

## Trump trains crosshairs on favorite target, again - Amazon

By JOSEPH PISANI, AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump returned to a favorite target Friday, saying that Amazon.com should be charged more by the U.S. Postal Service for the packages it sends around the world.

Amazon has been a consistent recipient of Trump's ire. He has accused the company of failing to pay "internet taxes," though it's never been made clear by the White House what the president means by that.

In a tweet Friday, Trump said Amazon should be charged "MUCH MORE" by the post office because it's "losing many billions of dollars a year" while it makes "Amazon richer."

Amazon lives and dies by shipping, and increasing rates that it negotiates with the post office, as well as shippers like UPS and FedEx, could certainly do some damage.

In the seconds after the tweet, shares of Amazon, which had been trading higher before the opening bell, began to fade and went into negative territory. The stock remained down almost 1 percent in late trading Friday.

Amazon was founded by Jeff Bezos, who also owns The Washington Post. The Post, as well as other major media, has been labeled as "fake news" by Trump after reporting unfavorable developments during his campaign and presidency.

He has labeled Bezos' Post the "AmazonWashingtonPost."

The Seattle company did not respond to a request for comment Friday. A spokeswoman for the Postal Service said, "We're looking into it."

Between July and September, Amazon paid \$5.4 billion in worldwide shipping costs, a 39 percent increase from the same period in the previous year. That amounts to nearly 11 percent of the \$43.7 billion in total revenue it reported in that same period.

In 2014, Amazon reached a deal with the Postal Service to offer delivery on Sundays.

Trump has also attacked U.S. corporations not affiliated in any way with the news media.

Just over a year ago, he tweeted "Boeing is building a brand new 747 Air Force One for future presidents, but costs are out of control, more than \$4 billion. Cancel order!"

Shares of Boeing Co. gave up almost 1 percent when trading opened that day, but recovered.

Several days later, and again on Twitter, he said that Lockheed-Martin, which is building the F-35 fighter jet, was "out of control." Its shares tumbled more than 5 percent, but they too recovered.

The Postal Service has lost money for 11 straight years, mostly because of pension and health care costs.

One part of the operation that is not suffering, however, is shipping and packages, which handles Amazon and other online orders from retailers. In the year that ended Sept. 30, the postal service reported higher-than-expected revenue of \$19.5 billion, "due to e-commerce growth."

The post office does not break down what is driving that growth, but online orders from retailers, particularly Amazon.com, has revolutionized the way goods are bought and delivered. Analysts at Bain & Co. expected Amazon to capture 50 percent of all online shopping growth during the holiday shopping season.

Amazon has taken some steps toward becoming more self-reliant in shipping. Earlier this year it announced that it would build a worldwide air cargo hub in Kentucky, about 13 miles southwest of Cincinnati.

Shares of Amazon.com Inc. slipped almost 1 percent Friday to \$1,174.86. The Seattle company's stock is up more than 57 percent this year and surpassed \$1,000 each for the first time in April.

Associated Press writer Catherine Lucey contributed to this report from Palm Beach, Florida.

## Gunman opens fire on Cairo church; shootout kills at least 9

By MENNA ZAKI, Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — A gunman on a motorcycle opened fire Friday outside a church in a Cairo suburb and at a nearby store, sparking a shootout that killed at least nine people, including eight Coptic Christians,

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Egyptian authorities said. It was the latest attack targeting the country's embattled Christian minority.

The gunman was also killed, along with at least one police officer, officials said.

The attack began when the gunman tried to break through the security cordon outside the Coptic Church of Mar Mina. It was not clear how many assailants were involved. Egypt's Interior Ministry referred to only one, but the Coptic Orthodox church mentioned "gunmen."

Five people were wounded, including another police officer, Health Ministry spokesman Khaled Megahed said.

The attack came amid tightened security around churches and Christian facilities ahead of the Coptic Orthodox Christian celebrations of Christmas on Jan. 7. Police have been stationed outside churches and in nearby streets across Cairo. President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi has personally chaired meetings with his top security chiefs in recent days to discuss security during New Year's Eve and the Orthodox Christmas.

A video circulating on social media after Friday's attack apparently showed the gunman lying on the ground with his face covered in blood. Authorities closed off the area around the church.

The Interior Ministry identified the assailant as Ibrahim Ismail Mostafa, who, the agency said, was involved in several previous militant attacks. The Interior Ministry said he was wounded and arrested but made no mention of his death, which was reported by the Health Ministry.

The assailant had earlier opened fire at the nearby store owned by a Christian, the Interior Ministry said.

No group took immediate responsibility for the attack, which bore the hallmarks of Islamic militants, who for years have battled security forces in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula in an insurgency now led by a local affiliate of the extremist Islamic State group. It is centered in the turbulent northern part of Sinai but has also carried out attacks in the mainland.

The militants are targeting mainly security personnel and Egypt's Coptic Christian minority.

The latest attack, in the southern Cairo suburb of Helwan, showcases the difficulties faced by security forces in containing an insurgency that is growing in sophistication and brutality. The assault came a little more than a month after militants killed 311 worshippers inside a mosque in Sinai, the deadliest attack by militants on civilians in Egypt's modern history.

Last week, they fired a guided rocket that destroyed an army helicopter at the airport of the city of el-Arish in northern Sinai during an unannounced visit there by the defense and interior ministers. At least one senior officer was killed and two wounded in that attack, which pointed to an unusually high level of intelligence available to the militants.

Samir Gerges, a witness to Friday's church attack, said people inside the church closed the gates when the shooting began but that some bullets penetrated the building. Gerges said he was walking along a nearby street when the gunfire broke out. He saw people running and some taking cover in a nearby restaurant.

Another witness, 40-year-old Raouth Atta, was praying inside the church when the violence broke out.

"People were terrified and wanted to check on their families in other buildings of the church," she told The Associated Press by phone. "We stayed inside for 30 minutes before we were able to get out."

Once she was able to leave, Atta said, she saw blood everywhere.

"We kept praying," said the Rev. Boules, who was teaching a class in the church complex. On hearing gunfire, he went to check on his students, who were panicking and terrified.

Since December 2016, Egypt's Copts have been targeted by the militants, who waged a series of attacks that left more than 100 dead and scores wounded. The country has been under a state of emergency since April after suicide bombings struck two Coptic Christian churches on Palm Sunday.

The IS affiliate has claimed responsibility for all the bombings targeting Christians.

Christians make up about 10 percent of Egypt's population. They have long complained of discrimination in the Muslim-majority nation and claim that authorities have often failed to protect them from sectarian attacks.

Just last week, hundreds of Muslim demonstrators stormed an unlicensed church south of Cairo, wounding three people. The demonstrators shouted anti-Christian slogans and called for the church's demolition, according to the local diocese. The demonstrators destroyed the church's fittings and assaulted Christians inside before security personnel arrived and dispersed them.

Associated Press Writer Maggie Michael contributed to this report.

This story has been revised to indicate that nine people were killed in the attack, not including the assailant, who also died.

## Police investigate if shooting death followed prank call

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — Authorities are investigating whether a deadly police shooting in Wichita stemmed from someone making up a false report to get a SWAT team to descend upon a home in a prank common in the online gaming industry known as “swatting.”

Deputy Police Chief Troy Livingston said the shooting happened Thursday while an officer was responding to a report that a father had been shot in the head and that the shooter was holding his mother, brother and sister hostage, The Wichita Eagle reports. Livingston said a 28-year-old man was shot as he came to the front door. Livingston said that when officers got inside the house, they didn’t find anyone with gunshot wounds.

Livingston didn’t say what caused the officer to shoot the man or whether he was armed. Police don’t think the man fired at officers, but the incident is still under investigation, he said. The man died at a hospital.

The man hasn’t been identified by police. But Madeline Finch identified the victim as her nephew, Andrew Finch. She said the family was “saddened” but declined to comment further.

Livingston says police are investigating whether the call that led to the shooting was a prank. Officer Paul Cruz told The Associated Press that more information would be released at a news conference, which has been moved to 4 p.m., and that he couldn’t comment.

The officer who fired the shot — a seven-year veteran of the police department — will be placed on administrative paid leave, which is department policy. Several people inside the home are being interviewed.

Swatting is believed to be more common among the online gaming community. The FBI estimates that roughly 400 cases of swatting occur annually, with some using caller ID spoofing to disguise their number.

In January, three families in Florida had to evacuate their homes in Florida after a detective received an anonymous email claiming bombs had been placed at the address.

A 20-year-old Maryland man was shot in the face with rubber bullets by police in 2015 after a fake hostage situation was reported at his home.

Rep. Katherine Clark, a Massachusetts Democrat, introduced an anti-swatting bill in 2015 — then was herself the victim of swatting. Armed officers in 2016 responded to an anonymous call claiming an active shooter was at Clark’s home.

Information from: The Wichita (Kan.) Eagle, <http://www.kansas.com>

## Virginia GOP pushes to declare winner in disputed House race

By DENISE LAVOIE, Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — It’s time to pick the winner in a bitterly contested election that could decide the balance of power in the Virginia House of Delegates, Republican leaders said Friday, while urging a recount court to reject a bid by a Democratic challenger to reverse its decision declaring the race a tie.

Lawyers for Republican Del. David Yancey urged state elections officials to schedule a random drawing of the winner’s name no later than Jan. 9, the day before the legislature reconvenes.

In court documents, Yancey’s lawyers argued that a three-judge recount court has already reviewed a single disputed ballot and found it was cast for Yancey, declaring the Nov. 7 election a tie.

“The Court’s ruling is final and not subject to appeal,” Yancey’s attorneys wrote. “Any further delay simply deprives the people of its representative in the House of Delegates.”

Republican leaders also went on the attack in a conference call with reporters, accusing Democrats of



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deliberately trying to make it difficult for the House to get down to business when the legislature reconvenes.

"Democrats have sought to delay and obstruct at every turn," said GOP House Leader Kirk Cox.

"They've sought to litigate their way to victory."

The intense battle over the 94th District is another dramatic twist in a November election that saw Democrats wipe out a 66-34 advantage held by Republicans in the House, as voters vented anger toward Republican President Donald Trump.

If Simonds ultimately wins the 94th District, the House will be split 50-50 between Republicans and Democrats. If Yancey wins, Republicans will have a 51-49 edge.

The state Board of Elections had been scheduled to pick the winner's name out of a glass bowl on Wednesday, but postponed the drawing after Simonds filed her legal challenge.

Board Chairman James Alcorn said Friday that the three-judge election court has given no indication of whether it will reconsider its ruling declaring the race a tie. Alcorn said the board plans to reschedule the drawing next week, "unless the court intervenes."

It initially appeared that Yancey had won the race by 10 votes. But Simonds won a recount by a single vote. The next day, the recount court declared a tie based on a disputed ballot the court determined was a vote for Yancey.

The result is one of two House races still in limbo.

A lawsuit is pending over ballots in a hotly contested race in the 28th District in the Fredericksburg area.

## Mattis nixes holiday tradition of seeing troops in war zones

By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For only the second time since 9/11, America's defense secretary didn't visit U.S. troops in a war zone during December, breaking a long-standing tradition of personally and publicly thanking service members in combat who are separated from their families during the holiday season.

Pentagon boss Jim Mattis, who spent more than four decades in the Marine Corps and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, made a five-day trip through the Middle East in early December. He stopped in Kuwait and Pakistan — countries adjacent to Iraq and Afghanistan — but didn't cross the borders to see troops at war in either country. Last week, he visited troops in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and at military bases in Florida, North Carolina and South Carolina, wishing them holiday cheer.

It has been 15 years since a U.S. defense chief didn't travel to a war zone during the festive season. And the only time a holiday visit was skipped since Americans began fighting in Afghanistan was in December 2002. That year, then-Secretary Donald Rumsfeld went to a command post in Qatar that would be used a few months later to coordinate the launch of the Iraq war.

Asked recently why he wasn't going to Iraq or Afghanistan, Mattis said he didn't want to discuss his travel. "I carry out my duties to the best of my ability," said Mattis, who visited Iraq and Afghanistan earlier this year.

Dana White, his chief spokeswoman, said the secretary "wanted the troops to enjoy their holiday uninterrupted. He is keenly aware of the logistical challenges of a senior leader visit, especially in a war zone."

Defense secretary trips historically have been aimed at boosting troop morale, letting service members know that senior leaders and the U.S. public recognize their sacrifice. And generals who have chaired the Joint Chiefs of Staff have routinely done their own December trips to war zones, taking celebrities on their flights as part of a USO entertainment tour.

It is less of a tradition for U.S. presidents to make December visits to conflict zones. Such trips require much greater logistical and security planning.

President George W. Bush visited Afghanistan twice and Iraq four times, including a secret Thanksgiving voyage to Baghdad in 2003 and a trip to both nations' capitals in December 2008. President Barack Obama flew to Iraq once as commander in chief and four times to Afghanistan. Only a December 2010 trip came during the holidays.

President Donald Trump hasn't yet gone to the war front, but Vice President Mike Pence flew to Afghani-

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stan last week.

Less than three months after U.S. troops invaded Afghanistan, Rumsfeld flew into Bagram Air Base under extraordinarily high security, telling service members the World Trade Center "is still burning as we sit here, they're still bringing bodies out."

He said he made the trip to talk face-to-face with "real people who are doing real things that are part of our plan."

In two subsequent years, Rumsfeld went to Afghanistan and Iraq on Christmas Eve, mingling with troops and donning an apron to serve them holiday dinner. He fielded questions or complaints, too. In one such December troop talk, when a soldier asked Rumsfeld why troops went into battle in Iraq badly equipped, the secretary gave a now-famous response: "You go to the war with the Army you have ... not the Army you might want or wish to have at a later time."

Rumsfeld's successor, Robert Gates, maintained the tradition, traveling to the war zone around the holidays during each of his five years in office. His first trip was on Dec. 20, 2006, two days after taking the job.

Like his predecessor, Gates ended his troop talks with the traditional lineup for handshakes, photos and the much-desired commemorative coin. The coins — different for each secretary or military commander and emblazoned with their names or unit designs — are ceremonial gifts that young service members embrace. Many collect them or use them to get free drinks in bars. One game stipulates the service member with the highest-ranking coin wins.

Secretaries Leon Panetta, Chuck Hagel and Ash Carter followed suit, trailed by a military aide carrying the coins that they often handed out to hundreds after each event.

"Christmastime's coming up and from our family to your families, thank you," Carter, Obama's final Pentagon boss, told troops in Afghanistan during a December 2015 visit. "You're not with them, you're here. We don't take that for granted."

Mattis rarely gives public troop talks, in any season. Usually he meets privately with small groups of service members. And he has declined to hand out coins.

While the December visits often have been promoted as a way to thank troops, they have sometimes brought a special Christmas gift.

In 2010, Gates gave four soldiers a ride home from Afghanistan on his military plane. Beyond the faster, more comfortable flight, they got a one-night layover in the luxurious Emirates Palace hotel in Abu Dhabi, where Gates stopped to meet local leaders.

"The next time you're in touch with your families, I hope you'd let them know, whether it's email or a phone call or whatever, just pass along to them my personal thanks to them for their support to you and their patience with all of us," he told troops at Forward Operating Base Howz-e-Madad, Afghanistan, that December.

## Trump says East could use some 'global warming' this weekend

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump says the East Coast "could use a little bit of that good old Global Warming" as bitterly cold temperatures are expected to freeze large swaths of the country this holiday weekend.

Trump wrote on Twitter Thursday, "In the East, it could be the COLDEST New Year's Eve on record." He added: "Perhaps we could use a little bit of that good old Global Warming that our Country, but not other countries, was going to pay TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS to protect against. Bundle up!"

The president did not acknowledge the difference between the weather and the climate. Weather refers to the atmospheric conditions during a shorter period, while climate is a longer view of weather patterns.

Trump has repeatedly expressed skepticism about climate change science, calling global warming a "hoax" created by the Chinese to damage American industry.

He announced earlier this year his intention to pull out of the landmark Paris climate agreement aimed at curbing greenhouse gas production. The accord set goals for slowing the rate of climate change by reducing the emissions that contribute to melting Arctic ice, increasing sea levels and changing weather

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patterns across the globe.

The U.N.'s weather and climate agency said last month that 2017 was on track to become the hottest year on record aside from those impacted by the El Niño phenomenon, which can contribute to higher temperatures.

Last year set a record for Earth's average global temperature.

In an impromptu interview with The New York Times Thursday at his golf club in West Palm Beach, Florida, Trump said he thinks special counsel Robert Mueller is "going to be fair" with respect to Mueller's investigation of Russian meddling in the U.S. presidential election last year and alleged ties between Trump campaign associates and Russia.

Trump said "everybody knows" his people did not collude with Russians, insisting the "real stories" involve Democrats and their relationship with Russians during the campaign. Trump also told the Times he wasn't worried about the uncertainty concerning when the Mueller investigation might be concluded.

Of the Mueller probe, he said it makes America "look very bad, and it puts the country in a very bad position."

"So the sooner it's worked out, the better it is for the country."

## 10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

### 1. PRESIDENT TOUTS GLOBAL WARMING IN FACE OF COLD SPELL

President Trump says the East Coast "could use a little bit of that good old Global Warming" as bitterly cold temperatures are expected to freeze large swaths of the country this holiday weekend.

### 2. WHO NEEDS HELP AS COLD WEATHER PERSISTS

As a deep freeze sets in across half the country, officials are urging people to help those most vulnerable, especially the homeless and the elderly.

### 3. WHICH OIL-RICH KINGDOM IS SEEING UNPRECEDENTED DEVELOPMENTS

Saudi Arabia has laid the groundwork for momentous change next year, defying its conservative reputation for slow, cautious reforms.

### 4. GOLDEN STATE STORES STOCKING SHELVES WITH POT

Marijuana legalization arrives Monday in California with lots of hoopla, but only a handful of cities will initially have retail outlets ready to sell recreational pot.

### 5. RADICALIZATION THREATENS MUSLIM MINORITY FLEEING CHINA

As Uighurs flee a Chinese security crackdown in droves, they are often recruited with calls of jihad by militant Uighur members of Syria-based Islamic groups.

### 6. RETURNING MIGRANTS POSE CHALLENGE ACROSS AFRICA

Some of the migrants stranded in Libya are being sent home, where they face familiar conditions: high unemployment, often weak economies and an increasingly harsh climate.

### 7. PREPARING FOR BIG APPLE'S NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION

Police promise tighter security than ever at Times Square, after a year with several deadly attacks on innocent crowds, including at the very spot where revelers will ring in 2018.

### 8. WHERE THE FREE PRESS IS UNDER THREAT

Turkey, Poland and Hungary are among the young democracies where media freedoms are facing increasing attacks from governments.

### 9. HOW MESSAGING ICONS PASS MUSTER

The Unicode Consortium is tasked with setting the global standard for emojis, a heady responsibility with consequences for modern communication.

### 10. FAREWELL TO VERSATILE PERFORMER WITH 90-YEAR CAREER

Rose Marie, who played the wisecracking Sally Rogers on "The Dick Van Dyke Show," has died at 94.

## Government seeks change to order lifting Trump refugee ban

By MARTHA BELLISLE, Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Lawyers with the Department of Justice have asked a federal judge to change his order that partially lifted a Trump administration refugee ban.

Just before Christmas, U.S. District Judge James Robart in Seattle imposed a nationwide injunction that blocks restrictions on reuniting refugee families and partially lifted a ban on refugees from 11 mostly Muslim countries. Robart limited that part of the injunction to refugees who have a bona fide relationship with people or entities in the United States. He also said that refugees who have formal agreements with refugee resettlement agencies were covered under his order.

The government does not want to include resettlement agencies.

Government lawyers filed a motion Wednesday saying that although the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has interpreted the "bona fide relationship" to include connections to resettlement agencies, the U.S. Supreme Court has stayed that ruling. That means the highest court indicates it disagrees with the appeals court on that point, the lawyers say.

Attorneys for refugee support organization HIAS and Jewish Family Service say the government's claims are wrong.

"The Supreme Court was clear in its earlier order protecting refugees with bona fide relationships to the US from the last temporary refugee ban," Mark Hetfield, president and CEO of New York-based HIAS, said Thursday. "Yet in its latest ban, the Trump administration not only ignored this admonition, but went even further to explicitly prevent refugees in the U.S. from reuniting with their spouse or minor children."

The refugee organizations and the American Civil Liberties Union filed two lawsuits, consolidated into one, challenging the Trump administration's refugee ban.

The ACLU represents a Somali man who has spent years trying to bring his wife and children to his home in Washington state.

Jewish Family Service challenged the administration's prohibition of refugees from certain countries until the vetting process could be reviewed.

Department of Justice lawyers argued in a hearing last week that the ban was a temporary and reasonable way for agencies to deal with gaps in the screening process.

But ACLU and Jewish Family Service lawyers said the government violated federal law when it implemented the ban. Robart agreed, and also said the refugee ban violated the Immigration and Nationality Act passed by Congress.

Mariko Hirose, a lawyer on the Jewish Family Service case and litigation director for International Refugee Assistance Project, said the Trump administration has attacked refugee resettlement since the first travel ban, leaving vulnerable refugees in limbo.

The plaintiffs include two Iraqi men who served as interpreters for the U.S. Army and are said to be in "extreme danger" because of their work. Other plaintiffs include an Iraqi woman who was kidnapped, raped and threatened with death for her work with an American company and a transgender woman in Egypt who faces harassment and persecution. They all were in the process of coming to the U.S. when the executive order went into effect.

In the motion filed Wednesday, government lawyers cited the Supreme Court's three stay orders on previous Trump travel bans as evidence the high court disagrees with letting the bona fide relationship include refugee resettlement agencies or humanitarian organizations.

"For individuals, a close familial relationship is required," the lawyers wrote. "As for entities, the relationship must be formal, documented and formed in the ordinary course, such as a relationship between a foreign student and an American university or between a foreign worker and an American employer.

"Unlike these types of relationships, refugees do not have a freestanding connection to resettlement agencies, apart from the refugee admissions process itself, by virtue of the agency's assurance agreement with the federal government."

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This story has been updated to correct the spelling of Mark Hetfield's name.

Follow Martha Bellisle at <https://twitter.com/marthabellisle>

## 'Obamacare' sign-up tally dips slightly to 8.7M

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More than 8.7 million people signed up for coverage next year under the Obama-era health care law, the government reported Thursday, as the program that President Donald Trump has repeatedly pronounced "a disaster" exceeded expectations.

The final tally for the 39 HealthCare.gov states showed about 80,000 fewer sign-ups than an initial count provided last week, before the Christmas holiday. A spokesman for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said the slight dip was due to late cancellations.

Still, HealthCare.gov enrollment reached nearly 95 percent of last year's level, outperforming projections in a show of consumer demand, despite a shortened sign-up season and big cuts in the ad budget.

Ahead of open enrollment, analysts had predicted somewhere around 1 million to 2 million fewer people would sign up for subsidized private coverage through the Affordable Care Act.

But the latest numbers indicate that new customers kept showing up as the Dec. 15 enrollment deadline closed. More than 66,000 new customers were added since the pre-Christmas enrollment report.

The dip in enrollment appears to be due to returning customers dropping out. There were about 145,000 fewer of those since the pre-Christmas report.

Some of those dropouts are likely to be people whose current plans were cancelled for next year, and who were reassigned to coverage that they didn't like.

A complete national tally may not be available until March, as states running their own health insurance markets are continuing to sign up consumers. In California and New York, enrollment season ends Jan. 31.

While Trump says he'll still try to repeal and replace "Obamacare," prospects in Congress appear dim with Republicans losing a Senate seat in Alabama. A bipartisan bill to shore up the health law's markets is also pending, but faces an uncertain outlook.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, Dec. 29, the 363rd day of 2017. There are two days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 29, 1170, Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was slain in Canterbury Cathedral by knights loyal to King Henry II.

On this date:

In 1808, the 17th president of the United States, Andrew Johnson, was born in Raleigh, North Carolina.

In 1845, Texas was admitted as the 28th state.

In 1890, the Wounded Knee massacre took place in South Dakota as an estimated 300 Sioux Indians were killed by U.S. troops sent to disarm them.

In 1916, James Joyce's first novel, "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," was first published in book form in New York after being serialized in London.

In 1934, Japan formally renounced the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922.

In 1940, during World War II, Germany dropped incendiary bombs on London, setting off what came to be known as "The Second Great Fire of London."

In 1957, singers Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme were married in Las Vegas (the marriage lasted until Gorme's death in 2013).

In 1967, Hyundai Motor Co. was founded in Seoul (sohl), South Korea.

In 1972, Eastern Air Lines Flight 401, a Lockheed L-1011 Tristar, crashed into the Florida Everglades near

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Miami International Airport, killing 101 of the 176 people aboard.

In 1975, a bomb exploded in the main terminal of New York's LaGuardia Airport, killing 11 people (it's never been determined who was responsible).

In 1986, former British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan died in Sussex, England, at age 92.

In 1992, David and Sharon Schoo of St. Charles, Illinois, were arrested at O'Hare International Airport upon their return from a Mexican vacation for leaving their 4- and 9-year-old daughters at home, alone. (The Schoos pleaded guilty to child neglect and were sentenced to probation; the children were put up for adoption.)

Ten years ago: Australian David Hicks, who'd fought alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan, was freed from prison in Adelaide after completing a nine-month sentence struck under a plea deal that followed more than five years' detention without a trial at Guantanamo. The New England Patriots ended their regular season with a remarkable 16-0 record following a 38-35 comeback victory over the New York Giants. (New England became the first NFL team since the 1972 Dolphins to win every game on the schedule.)

Five years ago: Maine's same-sex marriage law went into effect. Shocked Indians mourned the death of a woman who'd been gang-raped and beaten on a bus in New Delhi nearly two weeks earlier; six suspects were charged with murder. (Four were later sentenced to death; one died in prison; the sixth, a juvenile at the time of the attack, was sentenced to a maximum of three years in a reform home.)

One year ago: The United States struck back at Russia for hacking the U.S. presidential campaign with a sweeping set of punishments targeting Russia's spy agencies and diplomats; Moscow called the Obama administration "losers" and threatened retaliation. Tennis star Serena Williams announced her engagement to Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian — on Reddit. (The couple married on Nov. 16, 2017.)

Today's Birthdays: Country singer Rose Lee Maphis is 95. Actress Inga Swenson is 85. ABC newscaster Tom Jarriel is 83. Actress Barbara Steele is 80. Actor Jon Voight is 79. Country singer Ed Bruce is 78. Rock musician Ray Thomas is 76. Singer Marianne Faithfull is 71. Hall of Fame Jockey Laffit Pincay Jr. is 71. Actor Ted Danson is 70. Singer-actress Yvonne Elliman is 66. The president of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach, is 64. Actress Patricia Clarkson is 58. Comedian Paula Poundstone is 58. Rock singer-musician Jim Reid (The Jesus and Mary Chain) is 56. Actor Michael Cudlitz is 53. Rock singer Dexter Holland (The Offspring) is 52. Actor-comedian Mystro Clark is 51. Actor Jason Gould is 51. News anchor Ashleigh Banfield is 50. Movie director Lilly Wachowski is 50. Actress Jennifer Ehle is 48. Actor Patrick Fischler is 48. Rock singer-musician Glen Phillips is 47. Actor Kevin Weisman is 47. Actor Jude Law is 45. Actress Maria Dizzia is 43. Actor Mekhi Phifer (mih-KY' FY'-fuhr) is 43. Actor Shawn Hatosy is 42. Actress Katherine Moennig is 40. Actor Diego Luna is 38. Actress Alison Brie is 35. Country singer Jessica Andrews is 34. Actor Iain de Caestecker is 30. Actress Jane Levy is 28. Singer-actor-dancer Ross Lynch is 22.

Thought for Today: "The wise man must be wise before, not after." — Epicharmus (eh-pih-KAHR'-muhs), Sicilian Greek comic poet.